

# **Village Housing Options and Settlement Boundaries Report**

**November 2013**

## Content

1. Introduction
2. Contextual and Policy Review
3. Green Belt and Exceptional Circumstances
4. Consultation Feedback
5. Site Selection Process and Methodology
6. Preferred Options and Village Boundaries
7. Village Plans and Housing Options
8. District Wide Site and Boundary Proposals

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

- 1.1 This publication sets out Warwick District Council's (WDC) proposed village site allocations for new housing and indicative proposals for new village boundaries. It has been prepared as a basis for public consultation to help inform a new Local Plan for Warwick District.
- 1.2 The Council's Revised Development Strategy (June 2013) set out a collection of housing growth proposals for the villages. This document provides further information about the specific preferred site options identified to support housing development in the villages. It is based upon a considerable amount of technical research which is available as separate appendices to the main publication.
- 1.3 As indicated in the Revised Development Strategy and supporting Draft Settlement Hierarchy Report on the villages, the outcome of the additional research covering a number of issues including ecology, landscape and Green Belt has been to fine-tune development levels for villages. The evidence base on the physical sites is evolving, particularly as further detailed information becomes available about deliverability.
- 1.4 This document covers housing development proposals for the following previously identified growth villages: Baginton, Barford, Bishop's Tachbrook, Burton Green, Cubbington, Hampton Magna, Hatton Park, Kingswood, Leek Wootton, and Radford Semele. Following further research and discussions, a very limited range of growth is also proposed for the smaller settlements of Hatton Station, Hill Wootton and Shrewley Common. This includes the identification of preferred housing options.
- 1.5 Feedback from this consultation on village sites and boundary considerations will be used to establish a finalised list of proposals for the villages to be potentially integrated into the Submission Draft Local Plan or a supporting Development Plan Document (DPD) on the villages, subject to timetabling.
- 1.6 The consultation period for this publication runs for 8 weeks from 25th November 2013 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The consultation has been extended beyond the traditional 6 week period due to the Christmas and New Year holiday period.
- 1.7 There are a wide range of opportunities to make comments on this document, including on-line, via e-mail and in writing – details of which are provided on the end of this publication. The Council will also be running a series of consultation events in the key villages proposed for housing growth. This is a good opportunity to find out more about the proposals.

## **Chapter 2: Contextual and Policy Overview**

- 2.1 This section of the document sets out the context as to why WDC is focusing on a limited quantity of housing mainly across identified growth villages, as part of its wider forward growth strategy. There is also consideration of the key policy issues which underpin this approach.

### **The Changing Nature of Rural Areas**

- 2.2 Recent research (1) on the future of rural development identifies a number of clear trends in rural areas. These include:
- Changing rural economies with most jobs now in the service sector – since 1997, the decline in the agricultural sector has continued to such an extent that the sector contributes a mere 0.55% of national output and only employs 4.5% of the rural workforce. The two main economic processes underlying this change are the growth in the ‘new rural economy’ – manufacturing and especially service employment and the continued use of advanced machinery in the agricultural sector.
  - The changing social composition of rural societies driven principally by selective migration, in particular counter-urbanisation and outmigration from rural areas. The trend started in the 1970’s facilitated by improvements to transport and the growth of private car use. This led to significant social change in communities often directly related to their proximity to urban areas and their associated services. The movement of young people (aged 16-29) away from rural areas has occurred alongside counter-urbanism, which tends to involve both older people and families with young children moving to rural areas.
  - An increase in display of urban characteristics in rural areas - the meaning of rurality itself is being redefined and contested between new rural dwellers and others who have lived there longer. Each of these social groups may have different requirements and aspirations, and indeed conflicting ideas of countryside.
- 2.3 Within Warwick District some of these trends are quite evident. According to the 2011 Census, within Warwick’s Rural Districts (defined in Appendix 1), the largest occupational split is Professionals at 24%, just under a percentage point less than the district average. At 16.6% Managers and Senior Officials make up the second largest occupational grouping in the District’s Rural Districts, which compares to 12.8% average for the District as a whole and 10.9% for England. People employed in some of the traditionally lower skills areas are also under-represented in the Rural District compared to the wider District, West Midlands and England averages.
- 2.4 If we look at the statistics further using 2011 Census data, 13 out of 17 of Warwick’s Rural Districts have a lower percentage of 0-15 year olds

compared to the District average and 14 out of 17 of the Rural Districts have a higher percentage of 60-74 year olds compared to the district average (See Appendix 2 for fuller information on the age structure for each rural area).

- 2.5 From 2001 to 2011, according to Census data, only the statistical areas (Lower Level Super Output Areas (LSOA)) covering Bishops Tachbrook North, Hampton Magna, Barford and Stoneleigh have witnessed residential growth above the district average and these can be explained by specific developments (2). The trend in the vast majority of rural areas is for low or no growth and declining populations in some instances. This information is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table1: Resident Population 2001 and 2011

Villages	Statistical Area	Usual Resident Population (2001)	Usual Resident Population (2011)	Absolute Change	% Change
Barford, Sherbourne and Wasperton	Barford (E01031269 LSOA)	1516	1663	147	9.7%
Bishop's Tachbrook (part), Warwick Gates	Bishop's Tachbrook North (E01031259 LSOA)	1241	1370	129	10.4%
Bishop's Tachbrook (part)	Bishop's Tachbrook South (E01031280 LSOA)	1273	1188	-85	-6.7%
Bubbenhall, Wappenbury, Weston under Wetherley, Eathorpe	Bubbenhall (E01031280 LSOA)	1294	1313	19	1.5%
Burton Green	Burton Green (E01031254 LSOA)	1513	1508	-5	-0.3%
Cubbington (part)	Cubbington East (E01031279 LSOA)	1514	1359	-155	-10.2%
Cubbington (part), Old Milverton, Blackdown	Cubbington (New)(E01031278 LSOA)	1458	1461	3	0.2%
Cubbington (part)	Cubbington West (E01031277 LSOA)	1511	1557	46	3%
Hampton Magna	Hampton Magna (E01031268)	1849	2732	883	47.8%

(part), Hatton Park, Hatton Green	LSOA)				
Baddersley Clinton, Chessetts Wood and Kingswood (part)	Lapworth North (E01031281 - LSOA)	1427	1485	58	4.1%
Kingswood (part), Lapworth, Rowington, Rowington Green, Turners Green, Lowsonford	Lapworth South (E01031282 - LSOA)	1443	1469	26	1.8%
Leek Wootton, Hill Wootton, Beausale	Leek Wootton (E01031284 LSOA)	1237	1232	-5	-0.4%
Hampton Magna (part), Hampton on the Hill, Norton Lindsey, Budbrooke	Norton Lindsey (E01031267 - LSOA)	1858	1776	-82	-4.4%
Radford Semele (part), Offchurch, Hunningham	Offchurch (E01031301 LSOA)	1466	1420	-46	-3.1%
Radford Semele	Radford Semele (E01031302 LSOA)	1028	1022	-6	-0.6%
Stoneleigh, Ashow, Baginton	Stoneleigh (E01031308 LSOA)	3049	3496	447	14.7%
Wroxall, Little Shrewley, Hatton Station, Shrewley Common	Wroxall (LSOA)	1202	1278	76	6.32%
	Warwick District	125,931	137,648	11,717	8.5%
	West Midlands	5,267,308	5,601,847	334,539	6%
	England	49,138,831	53,012,456	3,873,625	7.3%

- 2.6 It was noted above that the age structure of the Rural Districts is changing, with a loss of younger people and increase in older residents. 13 out of the 17 Rural Districts have witnessed a decrease in the percentage of 0-15 year olds compared with a district trend of just over 1% increase (the West Midlands trend is for a 1.3% increase during the two census periods). In line with District trends 16 out of 17 Rural Districts have witnessed a reduction in the percentage of 30-44 year olds. The district trend is -1.61%.
- 2.7 The trend for a reduction in 30-44 year olds detailed above is amplified quite dramatically in some rural areas: - 5.8% in Lapworth North, -11.6% in Norton Lindsey, -6.3% in Hampton Magna and -8.6% in Offchurch being four notable examples. The District trend towards an increase in the percentage of 60-74 year olds (1.38% change from 2001 to 2011) is further amplified in the vast majority of rural areas. Lapworth North 6.5%, Norton Lindsey 13.7% and Offchurch 10.8% are notable examples (see Appendix 2 for fuller information).
- 2.8 Many rural areas and villages within Warwick District also have a higher than average number of owner occupied properties and detached houses (See Appendix 3 for a full statistical profile of the rural areas). Information contained within the Warwick District Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report, March 2012 (SHMA) suggests that there are clear differences between different types of tenure groups. The owner occupied (no mortgage) sector contains a large proportion of pensioner households whilst lone parent households are concentrated in the social and rented sectors. It is also estimated in the SHMA that the average price of a home in a rural area is around 23% above the average for urban areas. However, this is partly influenced by the different profiles of the housing stock in these areas (including more detached houses).
- 2.8 The implications of these types of changes and trends in the rural districts are complex and multi-layered, but may include:
- changing and reducing requirements for education facilities, particularly primary schools - unless children arrive by bus or car from a wide catchment area;
  - the loss of community services and facilities for younger people;
  - the provision of additional outreach support services to an ageing rural population;
  - the need to consider new forms and types of housing for people looking to down size to smaller properties later in life, and
  - a significant affordability gap in some rural areas for housing.
- 2.9 The challenge in relation to village housing is two-fold:
1. It requires firstly an approach to addressing current housing trends and requirements. This means looking at opportunities to provide more movement

in local housing markets to enable older people to downsize or move to different types of housing. It also requires the provision of housing that is adaptable to changing circumstances and physical requirements.

2. If we are looking to help 're-balance' the population profile of our rural areas and villages, this will require the supply of new sites for housing, which will not only help address indigenous local housing requirements (including affordable homes) but also support the wider housing growth demands for the district. Part of this re-balancing may include diversifying the housing stock range to include the provision of smaller family and 2 bedroom homes appealing to different demographics.

### Policy Overview

#### The National Planning Policy Framework

2.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes several references to villages and sustainable development. Under paragraph 28:

'Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- Support the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.'

Furthermore to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located 'where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities', this can include supporting development in one village to support services in a nearby village (paragraph 55).

2.11 The NPPF states under paragraph 86 that if it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt. A specific discussion about the Green Belt and associated issues is covered in Chapter 3 of this report.

## Revised Development Strategy

2.12 WDC's Revised Development Strategy sets out an interim level of growth of 12,300 homes for the District between 2011 and 2029. It is also acknowledged that this figure may be revised pending the findings of ongoing work on a joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) with neighbouring authorities. Following deductions for housing completions, committed developments, small urban sites, an allowance for windfall development and the consolidation of existing employment areas, the balance of housing to be allocated is 6,622.

2.13 Under RDS4 of the Revised Development Strategy, the broad location of development to meet this housing allocation is:

- Concentrated within existing urban areas – 380 dwellings (5.7%).
- Sites on the edge of Warwick, Leamington and Whitnash – 4550 dwellings (68.6%).
- Sites on the edge of Kenilworth – 700 dwellings (10.6%).
- Village development – 1000 dwellings (15.1%).

A Draft Settlement Hierarchy Report was completed in May 2013, as part of the evidence base for the Revised Development Strategy, which proposed a focus upon 10 of the District's most sustainable village locations for the allocation of limited housing growth. The settlement hierarchy work was based upon a detailed review of services and facilities within each settlement and the accessibility of a wider range of service and employment from the villages. The settlements detailed in the table below, were identified for a range of housing growth.

Table 2: Villages and Number of Dwellings

<b>Primary Service Villages</b>	Number of Dwellings	Plan Phase
Bishop's Tachbrook	100-150	1,2,3
Cubbington	100-150	1,2,3
Hampton Magna	100-150	1,2,3
Kingswood	100-150	1,2,3
Radford Semele	100-150	1,2,3
<b>Total</b>	C 600	
<b>Secondary Service Villages</b>	Number of Dwellings	Plan Phase
Barford	70-90	1,2,3
Baginton	70-90	1,2,3
Burton Green	70-90	1,2,3
Hatton Park	70-90	1,2,3
Leek Wootton	70-90	1,2,3
<b>Total</b>	C 400	

2.14 The more sustainable village locations were provided with an initial assessment of a range of housing, based upon:

- Where possible feedback was gathered from the Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan teams about potential housing growth levels;
- A varied percentage increase in household levels, proportional to the existing size of the settlement, and
- An outline assessment of key factors which may impact upon the ability of settlements to accommodate growth, including primary school capacity and sustainability of services/facilities, role and character of the settlements; strategic or headline assessment of the suitability of sites, environmental impact and the overall vision for the settlement.

2.15 The Revised Development Strategy also recognised that supporting only the larger, more sustainable village locations across the semi-rural and rural parts of the district, risks ignoring the housing needs of other areas and the importance of their often dispersed local services and facilities. Indeed it was argued that a policy which ignores these smaller villages may put at further risk local services and facilities – making the areas more unsustainable over the course of the plan period. However, for development to be supported in these smaller locations there are clear requirements for:

- Parish Council / Neighbourhood Plan support;
- An up-to-date housing needs survey;
- A supportive social housing landlord to ensure take-up and deliverability of affordable housing;
- A development site(s) which is located within a defined village boundary, and
- A housing project to assist in delivering clear improvements to local services and facilities.

2.16 In the Settlement Hierarchy Report and Revised Development Strategy it was mentioned that further detailed work was required on Green Belt assessment, habitat and landscape impact and other site development issues. This villages report pulls together the main findings from this detailed assessment work.

### **Chapter 3: Green Belt and Exceptional Circumstances**

- 3.1 This chapter outlines the exceptional circumstances for allocating housing growth in a limited range of Green Belt village locations.

#### **The National Planning Policy Framework and Green Belt**

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out how important the Green Belt is as well as how to establish any new designated areas. 'The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (Paragraph 79).
- 3.3 Under the NPPF, Green Belt serves five purposes:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. (Paragraph 80)
- 3.4 The NPPF also states that 'Planning Authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances'. The appropriateness of boundaries should only be considered when a Local Plan is being prepared or reviewed, and 'at that time, Authorities should consider the Green Belt Boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period'. (Paragraph 83).
- 3.5 Under paragraph 84 of the NPPF, 'When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, Local Authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development' as well as 'the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt Boundary'. Paragraph 86 also talks about the important contribution the open character of some villages can make to the openness of the Green Belt, as discussed earlier in this report (paragraph 2.11).
- 3.6 The Government encourages councils to tailor the extent of Green Belt land in their area to reflect local circumstances and emphasise that there is considerable previously developed land in many Green Belt areas, which could be put to more productive use. There is also a duty for adjoining local authorities to co-operate in the planning process, to ensure that strategic

priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans.

### Promoting Sustainable Development

3.7 It is clear in the Revised Development Strategy that Warwick District will need to accommodate a substantial level of new homes during the plan period. This equates to an allocation of 6,622 new dwellings based evidence informing the Revised Development Strategy. The Council will continue to ensure that the vast majority of development (77.77% percentage of the total allocation) is directed to:

- urban and brownfield sites (605 dwellings – 9.14%);
- non-Green Belt sites on the edge of Warwick and Whitnash (4215 dwellings – 63.65%), and
- non-Green Belt villages with good service / facility levels (330 dwellings – 4.98%).

However, it is recognised in the Revised development Strategy that in order to meet the full needs of a growing population and maintain a focus upon sustainable development a more distributive approach to housing is required, including looking at options in the District's more sustainable Green Belt located villages.

3.8 The consequences for sustainable development of channelling development to these non-Green Belt areas have been carefully considered. With supporting levels of community and transport infrastructure this level of growth can be accommodated in these non-Green Belt areas. However there is a limit to growth, beyond which sustainable development would be best served through identifying supporting growth options in other locations.

### Environmental Limits

3.9 In terms of non-Green Belt villages, the work discussed later in this report on landscape, ecology and a review of green field parcels suggest that there are environmental limits to growth in many locations. This relates to four main issues:

1. Additional development may lead to substantial landscape impact – across areas of high landscape value.
2. Due to the natural configuration and evolution of the landscape (the open river plain for example near Barford) development in some areas could not be accommodated without substantial mitigation measures.
3. There are strong ecological / habitat features in a number of locations near the non-Green Belt villages – the Tach Brook towards the north of Bishop's Tachbrook - being an example.
4. There is a strong need to protect villages from coalescence with nearby larger settlements. The landscape and green field parcel review indicates that it is important to maintain the individuality and open setting, identity and character of smaller settlements. This is a

critical issue within Warwick District as there is often only a short distance between villages and large towns / urban areas.

### Sustaining and Supporting Green Belt Villages

- 3.10 It is clear from the discussion in the preceding chapter that some Green Belt areas and villages have witnessed no or very low population growth over the Census period 2001 to 2011. Indeed Burton Green and Leek Wootton LSOAs have seen a slight decline in the usual resident population (-0.3% and -0.4%) respectively. It is also evident from the statistics that there has been a marked decline in the percentage of younger people in the more rural areas and a particular increase in the percentage of 60-74 year olds.
- 3.11 If these trends continue over the next generation, this has clear implications for the types and ranges of services / facilities in villages, including the potential loss of many. The NPPF is clear that in rural areas, housing should be located 'where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities' (paragraph 55). During the course of the last 12 months, discussions about the future of the villages have included debates about the potential closure of a community hall; post office and shop facilities; reductions in public transport services; the fragile economics of local shops and businesses and indeed notable gaps in services / facilities. While new housing, new investment, new residents and new customers might not provide all the answers to helping sustain and support local village services / facilities, it is one part of a complex solution.
- 3.12 The trend towards an ageing rural population in many parts also brings its own particular housing challenges and requirements, including requirements for more accessible / adaptable housing. With many villages washed over by Green Belt, the opportunities for new developments (which are not affordable housing) in Green Belt villages is limited. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people are leaving some Green Belt villages and locations as there are substantial restrictions on the possibility of adapting and modifying properties for new housing needs.

### Restricted Built Forms

- 3.13 A number of the Green Belt villages are extremely physically constrained and have little opportunity for 'limited infilling' under possible exceptions to Green Belt development detailed in paragraph 89 of the NPPF. Take the example of Hampton Magna. This is a planned village (late 1960's / early 1970's) with a very tight built structure washed over with Green Belt. There are very limited options to accommodate growth through infilling alone in its current 'village envelope'. Even if you apply the philosophy that a very limited range of housing growth is required, linked to the result of a local housing needs survey only, it is difficult to see where any growth could be sensitively accommodated without establishing a looser village boundary and a re-defined relationship to the Green Belt.

### Duty to Co-operate

- 3.14 As part of the Council's ongoing Duty to Co-operate with neighbouring local authorities and the joint work on the SMHA, discussions are continuing in relation to whether various aspects of housing growth can be accommodated across local authority boundaries. This work is still to be concluded on whether there are alternative non-Green Belt locations, which could accommodate a limited degree of Warwick District's housing growth.

## **Chapter 4: Consultation Feedback**

- 4.1 Consultation on the various growth levels for the villages started with the Local Plan Preferred Options Report in 2012. This was updated in June 2013 with the publication of the Local Plan Revised Development Strategy and new information on a revised Settlement Hierarchy for the Villages. This section now focuses upon the key headlines from the consultation feedback received during the most recent consultation process. A summary of the key consultation findings are also included in Appendix 4.

### **Overall Approach**

- 4.2 As part of the overall feedback on the villages a number of comments were received questioning the rationale for including the villages in the forward growth agenda for the District. There have been a number of comments about the need to focus upon using brownfield sites first, using empty properties upfront rather than build new developments and consider reducing the housing requirements for the villages if the overall housing requirement for the District was lowered.
- 4.2 Furthermore, consultation comments were also received suggesting that there are no clear exceptional circumstances for releasing Green Belt land around the villages for development and there was a potential risk of coalescence between settlements. Certain village locations were not perceived to be particularly sustainable locations to concentrate development, and may encourage further private car use and put excessive pressure on local services and facilities. In addition, some of the scoring and weighting of variables in the settlement hierarchy research was also questioned.
- 4.3 It is clear that focusing development in a limited range of village locations is part of a broader WDC strategy to enable more sustainable growth where there are suitable services and facilities and also good access (often by public transport) to larger urban areas for a wider range of services and indeed employment opportunities. We have seen in the rural parishes and villages in the District that the populations are changing – ageing considerably in some villages and losing younger residents. This brings particular challenges to sustaining and importantly enhancing village services and facilities.
- 4.4 Accommodating a limited level of sensitively managed growth in some of the District's more sustainable village locations provides an opportunity to potentially re-balance local housing stock biases, provide housing for parishioners in need of homes captured through local housing needs surveys, and scope to accommodate some of the wider District housing requirements. With new housing comes the positive benefits of:
- helping sustain marginal businesses/services;

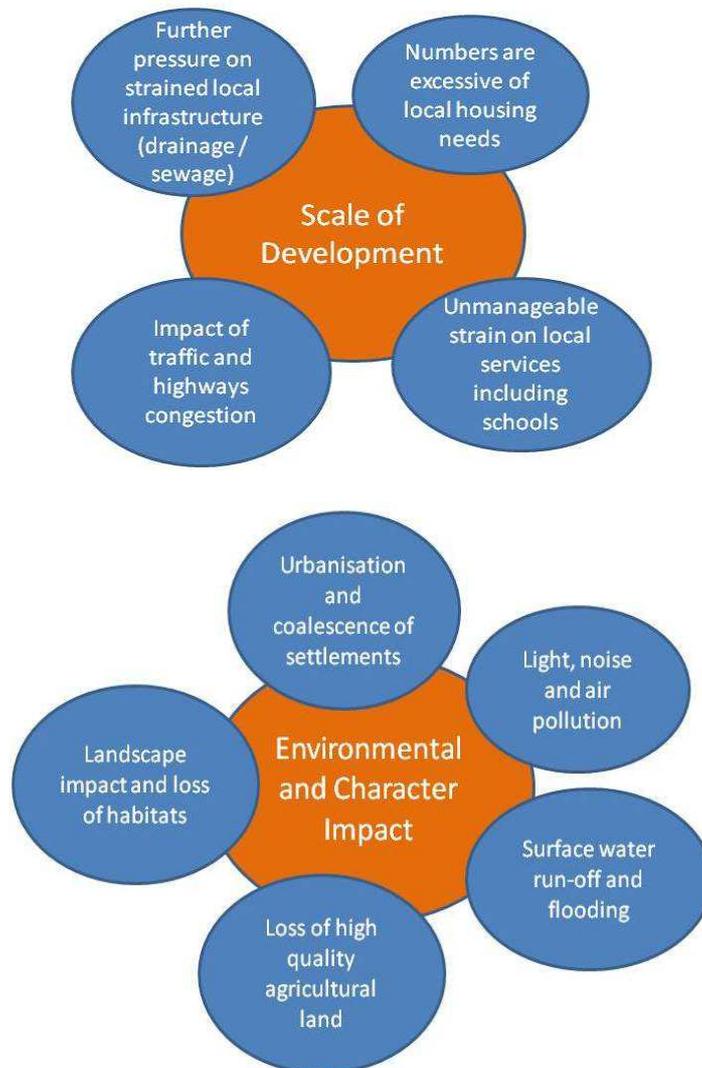
- creating opportunities for new businesses;
- enhancing the viability of rural bus services;
- more residents supporting and using village halls and community centres, and
- potentially more local children going to local schools.

Some of these advantages were also highlighted in the community consultation feedback.

### Scale and Impact

4.5 It is clear from a review of the consultation comments on specific villages that there are a number of shared themes emerging, particularly relating to the scale of potential village developments and their environmental and character impact. These themes are captured in the figure illustrated below.

Figure 1: Key Consultation Themes



- 4.6 One of the key sub-themes regarding the scale of development relates to the number of housing proposed for various village locations which was perceived as completely out of scale to the local housing requirements as indicated through parish planning and housing needs surveys. In response, there are two main issues here:
1. A number of parishes have village affordable housing needs requirements from older surveys which are increasingly dated and often based upon relatively small survey returns. WDC has been working with Warwickshire Rural Community Council and Parish Councils to improve the quality of the housing needs survey work which now includes an assessment of market housing requirements. For the major growth villages and parishes connected to these settlements, the Parish Councils are being encouraged to move forward with a new generation of updated housing needs surveys to provide enhanced information about very local affordable and market housing requirements. Summary information about rural housing needs requirements across the villages is included in Appendix x to this document.
  2. It is recognised by WDC that proposals for growth in the villages are not purely about meeting very local indigenous housing need, but also include an element of village expansion to support / enhance villages and their services as well as provide some opportunities to help meet the forecast growth needs of the overall district.
- 4.7 There are a wide range of issues relating to pressures on infrastructure (drainage / sewage); traffic impact and congestion, and local services highlighted in the consultation feedback. The level of growth forecast in the Revised Development Strategy was subject to a strategic review of pressures on primary schools and highways. From this review it was felt that the level of development proposed could be accommodated, albeit that it would depend upon more specific development proposals.
- 4.8 As part of the detailed site assessment work, information has been included in the site selection appraisal process, which includes a review of site infrastructure requirements (drainage / sewage issues); flooding and surface water issues; vehicle access requirements and physical site constraints and impact, amongst others. A Sustainability Appraisal also accompanies this report, which looks strategically at a range of infrastructure issues for each village settlement.
- 4.9 It is understandable that there are community concerns over the potential environmental and character impact of new development in the villages. This has also been a key concern of WDC. Prior to establishing a list of preferred housing options, detailed work has been undertaken on landscape impact and habitat survey work, reviewing the function of Green Belt and Green Field land

parcels surrounding the villages, as well as reviewing core environmental health issues such as noise pollution and land contamination. It was noted above that a detailed assessment has also been undertaken reviewing current and potential flooding issues.

- 4.10 Following the outcomes of the detailed site assessment work, this has had a substantial impact in some village locations, reducing the number of suitable housing options. The implication of this work is a reduction in the total number of village housing numbers. This is down from about 1000 dwellings across the originally identified 10 settlements (Revised Development Strategy figure) to approximately 835 for the same settlements. This reduction in figures primarily reflects environmental and access restrictions to a number of sites. This figure is similar to the level of growth indicated at the Preferred Options stage of the Local Plan. In line with community concerns about the coalescence of settlements, this has also been another key consideration regarding the suitability of sites both within Green Belt and non-Green Belt locations. A number of sites have been rejected based on this factor, as well as other concerns.
- 4.11 Appendix 4 also provides a statistical summary of the representation received, which relate to the 10 primary and secondary service villages outlined in the Revised Development Strategy. By far the highest number of representations received objecting to development, were for Hampton Magna. However, it should be noted that the planning system does not place weight on the quantity of responses received in relation to a site or an issue, but rather gives weight to the strength of the arguments put forward.
- 4.12 In addition to the Local Plan consultation stages, discussions have been ongoing with Parish Councils over the last 12 months. Some of the key feedback on the various housing sites options is outlined in Appendix 5 to this report, which forms part of the site selection methodology.

## **Chapter 5: Site Selection Process and Methodology**

- 5.1 A detailed site selection process and methodology has been developed for appraising village site options. This builds upon the types of information reviewed as part of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), but has also included commissioning bespoke research on landscape impact, habitat / species impact and the function and performance of Green Belt and green fields parcels around the villages. Detailed assessments have also been undertaken by professional teams responsible for highways, environmental health and drainage/sewage and potential flooding issues.

### Site Selection Process

- 5.2 The selection of potential housing sites has gone through a number of key stages, which are outlined below in Figure 2. The first stage of the process involved the establishment of an original 'long list' of potential sites, pulling together information from WDC's SHLAA and supplemented with early site visits and discussions with Parish Councils. Only sites with capacity for 5 dwellings or more have been included in the overall site selection process in line with the SHLAA methodology. The next major stage in the process has involved receiving information about new site options from landowner / developer interests following local Parish Council meetings / discussions and consultation at various stages in the local plan process (Preferred Options and Revised Development Strategy).
- 5.3 This work then progressed to establishing a revised long list of sites which were first sieved for:
- sites of excessive size with marginal connection to village settlements;
  - negative SHLAA commentary and obvious impacts / site restrictions;
  - isolated development options with limited connectivity to village settlements, and
  - sites connected to often smaller less sustainable villages where the Parish Council was not supportive of growth.

Following this strategic sieving exercise a fine-tuned list of sites moved forward for detailed appraisal.

- 5.4 At the pre-sieve stage, WDC was in receipt of 190 site options. This was then reduced to a set of 77 sites for detailed appraisals, resulting in 28 preferred housing options covering 13 village settlements and two additional urban fringe sites, which also came through the appraisal process as potential housing options. The full list of site appraised sites is detailed in Appendix 5.

Figure 2: Site Selection Process



5.5 For sites undergoing a detailed site appraisal, the key criteria used for assessment is outlined below:

- An understanding of the physical capacity of the site to accommodate housing at or above 5 dwellings, which is broadly based upon a standard calculation formulae set out in the SHLAA (3). Sites with capacity of less than 5 dwellings have not been included in the site selection process but could come forward as potential housing windfall sites, depending upon their individual circumstances.
- Any physical site constraints such as layout, site gradient, access, flooding and service infrastructure.
- The potential impact of the site on areas of heritage or habitat importance, landscape and residential amenity.
- Key environmental constraints in terms of noise, air and light pollution as well as site contamination.
- A detailed review of sewage and drainage infrastructure together with site flooding and surface water issues using an in-house specialist team.

- A partial review of the Green Belt and Green Field parcels surrounding the villages, with almost 100 individual parcel assessments – this work is summarised in the overall site assessment appendix and is also available as a separate technical appendix (Appendix 7).
- Key findings from a new technical report on ecology covering habitats and species, which has included new survey work.
- Key findings from a new report on landscape character and housing sensitivity which has included expensive surveying and primary research.
- A review of key sustainability appraisal findings.
- Parish Council feedback – although there is not agreement on all of the sites.

### Technical Studies and Research Findings

- 5.6 The evaluation criteria and content detailed in the site appraisal matrix has been informed by a number of detailed technical studies (see Appendix 6), some of which were specifically commissioned for this report and area of work. WDC is piloting an approach to appraising sites, which builds upon a methodology first initiated in Stratford Upon Avon, through the Ecology and Geological Study of Local Service Villages (39 Villages report) (2010). The more detailed approach undertaken by WDC is also now being taken forward by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to consider development options around their main settlements. A technical study of the function and role of the Green Belt and also major Green Field areas around the key growth villages is also an important study referenced earlier in this document (Appendix 7). The Green Belt appraisal work was also externally appraised as part of a critical review and the key findings to this report are also available as a technical appendix (Appendix 8).
- 5.7 From the technical studies undertaken there are four strategic headlines, which are worth highlighting.
1. The Green Belt plays a varied and often important role in preserving the character and setting of many of the District's villages. One of the first tasks in undertaking the research was to breakdown the overall Green Belt around the villages into defined Green Belt Parcels (often defined by permanent features such as major road, rivers and canal infrastructure). A significant number of the Green Belt parcels are very large in scale and contain often different types of landscapes. While the overall function and role of the Green Belt parcel is a critically important assessment criteria when considering housing options, it was clear that the landscape impact and ecology research would provide a more fine-grained or detailed approach to better

understanding areas within the Green Belt which may be less sensitive to change or are better suited to accommodating housing growth.

2. The technical research has covered both Green Belt and non-Green Belt villages. It was clear from the research that the non-Green Belt villages (Radford Semele, Barford and Bishop's Tachbrook) had particular environmental, infrastructure and landscape restrictions that limited their options for growth. The research indicates clear environmental limits of developing in non-Green Belt areas. Particular issues include:

- Radford Semele – high landscape impact scores for land to the east of the village running down to the Foss way and a major gas pipeline running near the village.
- Barford – an important historic landscape associated with Barford House which is central to the character of the settlement, the nearby river corridor and open plain with high ecology value and the very open green field parcels to the east of the village.
- Bishop's Tachbrook – the importance of the Tach Brook for ecology value and providing a landscape setting to the north of the village.

3. Within a number of the Green Belt villages the research has indicated some substantial environmental and development restrictions which have reduced the ability of several villages to accommodate the level of growth originally indicated at an early stage of the process.

Notable examples include:

- Baginton – a number of contaminated sites, some major flooding issues in one location and potentially significant historic and visual landscape impact in others.
- Cubbington – very open highly visible Green Belt and landscape parcels, some linked to areas of high ecology value – also access issues on a number of sites.
- Kingswood – high landscape and ecology values along the canal and river corridor together with site access and flooding issues on a number of sites.

These types of considerations have resulted in a substantial reduction in housing numbers for these particular Green Belt settlements.

4. The Green Belt and landscape assessment work has also emphasised the need to protect villages from coalescence with nearby larger settlements. This was seen as important as it helps maintain the open setting, identity and character of individual settlements. It's a critical issue in Warwick District which has relatively short distances between many of its villages and large towns and urban areas. On occasions where coalescence may be an issue, a strong approach will be required to define or redefine the village edge and establish a rigorous approach to environmental screening and the design of effective landscaping.

### Summary of Findings

- 5.8 Table 3 attempts to summarise some of the key findings from the technical studies and site evaluation matrix as they relate to individual settlements. It is not a definitive list of findings but provides a brief overview of issues at a village level. Further information is available in the relevant technical studies and appendices to this report.

Table 3: Overview of Findings

<b>Key Growth Villages</b>	<b>Green Belt / Green Field Function</b>	<b>Landscape and Habitat Impact</b>	<b>Environmental Issues</b>	<b>Site Access and Deliverability</b>	<b>Options and Impact</b>
Baginton	Generally mixed character Green Belt parcels which play a substantial role in protecting the setting of Baginton Village and providing a green buffer to Coventry.	Historic landscape important with a number of elevated option sites potentially having a significant impact. Pockets of habitat value.	A number of landfill sites with potentially high remediation costs. Flooding, noise issues and odour from the nearby sewage works impacts on a number of sites	Only one site with reasonable vehicle access.	One small site identified on edge of village which may re-define the entrance to the village from the south. Will require substantial environmental screening.
Barford	Small lower function parcels to the west of the settlement linked to the bypass. Large open greenfield parcels with strong functionality to the east of the village.	Barford House and surrounds plays an important role in the centre of the settlement with an eroded landscape character obvious in land linked to the bypass.	Flooding along river course. Some noise issues associated with the bypass. Development sites will require investment in appropriate sewage / drainage systems.	Site access is difficult to a number of development options in the land between the bypass and village.	Limited portfolio of sites proposed linked to the degraded land between the village and bypass. Focus upon incremental development where possible.
Bishop's Tachbrook	Land between the north of the	Tack Brook corridor is a	Potential noise issues	New site access to the south of	Generally larger sites, with

	village and south of Warwick Gates, plays an important role in preserving the setting of the village.	strong local landscape and habitat feature. Hedgerows also of key importance in a number of locations.	associated with sites towards the south of the village (near M40 corridor).	the village off Oakley Wood Road, will require further detailed analysis.	preferred option for southern extension of the village with regenerative impacts. Phasing will be important.
Burton Green	Strategically important areas of Green Belt which maintains the setting and character of Balsall Heath, Burton Green and Kenilworth and Coventry.	Pockets of high habitat value linked to ancient woodland and local wildlife sites. Slightly elevated village location with high landscape value for a number of sites.	HS2 restricts the use of a number of sites. High water table in some locations.	Site access is difficult to a number of sites – some are backland areas, and others are within the Red Lane corridor area.	Preferred option focuses upon better connecting the village and creating a new village centre.
Cubbington	Number of highly visible open Green Belt parcels, play an important role in preserving the open setting of the village.	Open landscape character a key feature of the village edge. Ancient woodland corridor to the east of the settlement requires protection.	Need to avoid adding to local flooding problems. Appropriate measures required to manage surface water run-off.	Site access is constrained with a number of options.	Preferred option(s) focus upon minimising landscape impact and regenerating a small corner of the settlement edge, subject to suitable site screening and the relocation of existing allotment use.
Hampton Magna	Generally large Green Belt parcels which that provide a valuable role in maintaining the openness of the landscape and protects the character of Hampton Magna and Hampton on the Hill.	Medium to high landscape value for a number of sites in Hampton Magna. Land to the west of the settlement scores highest. Habitat value mainly associated with field edges and hedgerows.	Development sites will require investment in appropriate sewage / drainage systems. Surface water issues will also need to be effectively managed.	Reasonable site access to a number of sites, but differences in site topography may have an impact on deliverability.	Preferred option minimises environmental impact and provides some connectivity to school. Some potential for enhancement of community facilities.
Hatton Park	Mixed character Green Belt parcels dominate the south of the village. Very large parcels	Strong landscape and habitat values along the canal corridor and adjacent areas of land.	Surface water flooding on Birmingham Road will need to be resolved.	Speed surveys required and further technical work on sites with sub-standard visibility splay.	Preferred option site has lower landscape impact than other sites and would fit with the existing build

	preserve the northern boundary of the settlement and links onwards to the A46/ eastern Warwick edge and Leek Wootton.				form.
Kingswood	Complex mix of Green Belt parcels which play an important role in maintaining the setting and character of the settlement. Quite small parcels around the core village area – some of degraded quality.	High landscape and habitat values along the canal and brook watercourses. Number of pockets of importance to local wildlife in other locations – particularly towards the south and east of the settlement.	Detailed flood modelling required for the centre of the village to forecast and alleviate localised flooding. Impacts on a number of sites.	Access constrained in a number of option areas. Significant environmental impact to facilitate vehicle access.	Mixed portfolio of smaller site options identified as part of an incremental approach to village development.
Leek Wootton	Surrounded by strategically important Green Belt parcels which fulfil a very valuable role in maintaining the open space between settlements to the north and south.	Strong corridor of important habitat sites particularly around the north of the settlement. Historic landscape setting important for Woodcote House.	Surface water flooding may be an issue from elevated sites.	Site access acceptable for a cluster of sites on the Woodcote House Estate. Potential, for site access onto other sites.	Preferred options mainly focus around lower impact opportunities around the Woodcote House Estate.
Radford Semele	Surrounded by very large Green Field or strategically important parcels which plays a major role in preserving the setting of the village and also the openness of the landscape from the east of Leamington.	Landscape openness a particularly strong feature towards the east of the settlement. Need to avoid coalescence of Radford Semele and Sydenham to the west.	Substantial flooding issues along The Valley corridor.	Substantial restrictions on site access to the east of Radford Semele.	Preferred option focuses upon land to the north of the village, subject to a detailed landscape appraisal.
<b>Smaller</b>	<b>Green Belt /</b>	<b>Landscape and</b>	<b>Environmental</b>	<b>Site Access</b>	<b>Options and</b>

<b>Settlements</b>	<b>Green Field Function</b>	<b>Habitat Impact</b>	<b>Issues</b>	<b>and Deliverability</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Hatton Station	Mixed range of Green Belt parcels, some of which have a strong role in preserving the open character of the Green Belt and contributing to the setting and character of Hatton Station.	Habitat and landscape value mainly linked to brook, canal and railway infrastructure.	Local drainage and sewage problems. Flooding in parts of the village. High noise levels from the M40.	Only one of the larger sites has acceptable site access.	Two small edge of settlement options proposed with stronger build form integration possibilities. Role to play in helping support and sustain the railway station.
Hill Wootton	Surrounded by very large Green Belt or strategically important parcels which plays a major role in preserving the setting of the village	Habitat value linked to watercourses and hedgerows. Pockets of historic landscape value.	Noise from railway and major roads.	Only one site identified – informal access standards for up to 6 dwellings.	Relatively small well integrated site suggested by Parish Council. Hill Wootton is within close proximity to Leek Wootton.
Shrewley Common	Green Belt plays an important role in maintaining a critical distance between a scattered range of settlements in Shrewley and Rowington Parishes.	Habitat value linked to watercourses, canal, railway and hedgerows.	Noise from railway and motorway.	Access generally of an acceptable standard.	Two small edge of settlement sites would help strongly define the village edge and assist in supporting the viability of services in the village.

### Other Sites

5.9 In addition to strictly village related housing options, two additional sites have been identified through the development of this report, which may provide some limited housing options. These sites are linked mainly to the facilities and services of larger built up areas. The sites in question are:

- Site 14 – the former Aylesbury House Hotel and surrounds in Lapworth Parish, but located on the border of Hockley Heath, Solihull.
- Site 15 - the Oak Lea Farm site on the edge of Finham, Coventry (split between Stoneleigh and Baginton Parishes).

Both sites are located within the Green Belt and are included in Chapter 7 of this report for consultation.

## **Chapter 6: Preferred Options and Village Boundaries**

- 6.1 Having considered the advantages and disadvantages of each housing option which went through the detailed appraisal process a number of preferred housing options have been selected for the main growth villages of Baginton, Barford, Bishop's Tachbrook, Burton Green, Cubbington, Hampton Magna, Hatton Park, Kingswood, Leek Wootton and Radford Semele.
- 6.2 In addition to these settlements, preferred housing options are also being considered for the smaller rural villages of Hatton Station, Hill Wootton and Shrewley Common. This limited focus on a selection of less 'sustainable' smaller villages follows discussions with the relevant Parish Councils which recognises that development in one village may support services in a village nearby. As indicated previously two additional potential housing options are also being considered for edge of urban locations which have been identified through the site collection and evaluation work.
- 6.3 This document does not go into detail about the exact design, layout and phasing of individual sites. However, there are some key principles which will need careful consideration, much of which was set out in the Revised Development Strategy:
- There is a need for an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing.
  - Housing proposals should ensure acceptable design, layout and scale has been established through a collaborative approach to design and development, involving Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Plan teams and local residents.
  - Proposals should be of a high quality and consider its relationship to local housing styles and position or setting within the wider landscape.
  - Detailed consideration will need to be given to the appropriate phasing of developments – particularly larger scale sites and how they best accommodate local housing need and supporting infrastructure requirements.
- 6.4 The preferred housing options, includes a wide portfolio of sites. Some of these will appeal to national volume house builders, but there are also opportunities for regional and smaller scale developers. Some sites might also appeal to self-builders. With the selection of the various housing options there is also a focus upon helping regenerate some village environments.
- 6.5 This publication is not only concerned about gathering comments on the preferred village housing options but also early feedback about indicative village boundaries or envelopes. This work takes into consideration some of the village envelopes established in the currently adopted, but expiring Local Plan.

### Green Belt Villages and Insetting

- 6.6 The villages which are currently in the Green Belt are technically 'washed over' with Green Belt which substantially limits development or growth options. In order to accommodate limited growth through the preferred housing options, the proposal is to remove the identified villages from the Green Belt and establish village boundaries or inset plans. By insetting a village in the Green belt, this provides a slightly less restrictive planning policy environment and will support opportunities to develop the identified preferred option sites.
- 6.7 However, careful attention needs to be paid to ensure that the village boundary is snapped to the right edges or points to avoid potentially facilitating over-development or excessive 'infilling' and an unequal approach to treating private boundaries and public areas. For some villages it might make sense to draw very 'tight' village boundaries to protect the broad character of an area or historic form, while in others a more 'loose' boundary might be appropriate to take advantage of potential small infill or modest development options to enhance the built form.
- 6.8 The inset boundaries are only suggestions at this stage and comments are welcomed with regard to the area covered in the plans and also any specific issues which may arise through insetting the individual villages.

### Village Boundaries and Non-Green Belt Villages

- 6.9 In the NPPF, there is no mention of the phrase 'village envelopes' anywhere in the document, although it is implied through the concept of insetting. However, it is still considered that the concept of envelopes or boundaries is an important one and may help channel development in non-Green Belt villages to the most appropriate areas, helping maximise the use of previously used land within the village and restrict development in more sensitive areas outside the agreed village boundary. For these reasons indicative village boundaries have also been identified for non-Green Belt villages.

### Using the Consultation Feedback

- 6.10 Feedback from this consultation on village sites will be used to establish a finalised list of options for the villages to be potentially integrated into the Submission Draft Local Plan or a supporting Development Plan Document on the Villages, subject to timetabling.
- 6.11 It is anticipated that the consultation feedback on village boundaries will link into further detailed work on a set of possible boundary principles or drafting concepts, which will then establish a finalised list of village boundaries. In non-Green Belt villages which are covered by neighbourhood planning, this type of work could be taken forward through the relevant neighbourhood planning working groups.

