

Appendix 1

Development Vision Document – Land at Cross Road, Albrighton

Taylor
Wimpey

Land at Cross Road, Albrighton

Development Vision

February 2019



Taylor Wimpey

Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land
Chase House
Park Plaza
Heath Hayes
Cannock
Staffordshire
WS12 2DD

www.taylorwimpey.co.uk
01926 516 900

Contact:
Brigid Dodds
brigid.dodds@taylorwimpey.com

Ailsa Nicol
ailsa.nicol@taylorwimpey.com



Pegasus Design
5, The Priory
Old London Road
Canwell
Sutton Coldfield
B75 5SH
www.pegasuspg.co.uk | T: 0121 308 9570

Prepared by Pegasus Design
Pegasus Design is part of Pegasus Group Ltd
Prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey plc.
March 2017 - Project code: BIR.5226_01
Contact: Pegasus Design: Sabrina Thomas

COPYRIGHT The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of Pegasus Planning Group Ltd. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100042093.

Figures

Figure 1: Aerial Site Plan	1
Figure 2: Strategic Location Plan	5
Figure 3: Site Context Plan	8
Figure 4: Land Control Plan	10
Figure 5: Core Strategy Key Diagram	15
Figure 6: Extracts from Policies Map	18
Figure 7: Albrighton Proposed Development Boundary	19
Figure 8: Green Belt Parcels at Albrighton	23
Figure 9: Green Belt Parcel 36	23
Figure 10: Assessment of Harm to the Green Belt	25
Figure 11: Accessibility to Local Facilities Plan	29
Figure 12: Local Public Transport Accessibility Plan	31
Figure 13: Flood Risk Plan	33
Figure 14: Site Analysis Plan	39
Figure 15: Development Framework	41
Figure 16: Conceptual Layout	42
Figure 17: Access and Movement Plan	43
Figure 18: Key Vision Principles Plan	43
Figure 19: Land Use Plan	44
Figure 20: Indicative Phasing Plan	45
Figure 21: Conceptual Layout for Phase One	45
Figure 22: Potential Community Facility	46

Contents

Executive Summary

















1. Introduction	1
2. The Site and Surrounding Area	5
3. Planning Policy	15
4. Green Belt Review	23
5. Is the Site Sustainable?.....	29
6. What is the Vision for the Site?.....	35
7. Conclusion	49

Appendices

Appendix 1: Taylor Wimpey UK Limited	53
--	----



KEY

	PROPOSED SITE BOUNDARY (15.76 ACRES / 6.38 HECTARES)		PROPOSED FOOTPATH		EXISTING VEGETATION (SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN)		EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
	PROPOSED VEHICULAR ACCESS		PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CIRCA 160 DWELLINGS @ 35DPH 11.14 ACRES / 4.51 HECTARE		POTENTIAL NEW PLANTING		POTENTIAL NEW PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
	EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY		PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (INC SUDS) 4.08 ACRES / 1.65 HECTARES		EXISTING VEGETATION REMOVED		
	PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN LINK		POTENTIAL BALANCING PONDS (SUBJECT TO DETAILED DESIGN)		5M WIDE LANDSCAPE BUFFER		
	POTENTIAL PROVISION OF NEW FOOTPATH TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY				EXISTING WATERCOURSE (SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN)		

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. VEHICULAR ACCESS OFF CROSS ROAD;
2. LINEAR STREET MIRRORING EXISTING URBAN PATTERN;
3. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE INCORPORATING SuDS;
4. OUTWARD FACING RESIDENTIAL FRONTAGES;
5. 5M WIDE LANDSCAPE BUFFER;
6. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE RETAINING EXISTING LANDSCAPE;
7. EXISTING HEDGEROWS AND WATERCOURSE RETAINED;
8. CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACE; AND
9. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BUILDING SET BACK TO REFLECT EXISTING BUILT FORM.

Executive Summary

This Development Vision document has been prepared by Taylor Wimpey UK Limited and demonstrates that the land at Cross Road, Albrighton, provides an ideal opportunity to create a sustainable, distinctive and attractive residential community. The site has been promoted for residential development through the Shropshire Local Plan Review and the Development Vision has been updated to specifically support Taylor Wimpey's response to Shropshire Council's Partial Local Plan Review "Preferred Sites" consultation document.

In summary:

- Albrighton is one of the most sustainable settlements in Shropshire and the site provides a natural extension to the village, being accessible by walking and cycling to a wide range of services, facilities and public transport.
- Shropshire Council has previously recognised the suitability of land to the south of Albrighton for residential development (2010 SHLAA).

- Shropshire's emerging housing need is an exceptional circumstance to justify Green Belt release and has been acknowledged by Shropshire Council as being necessary to support long term sustainability. The development of the land at Cross Road will not compromise the five purposes of Green Belt (as set out in national planning policy), being well contained with defensible and durable boundaries.

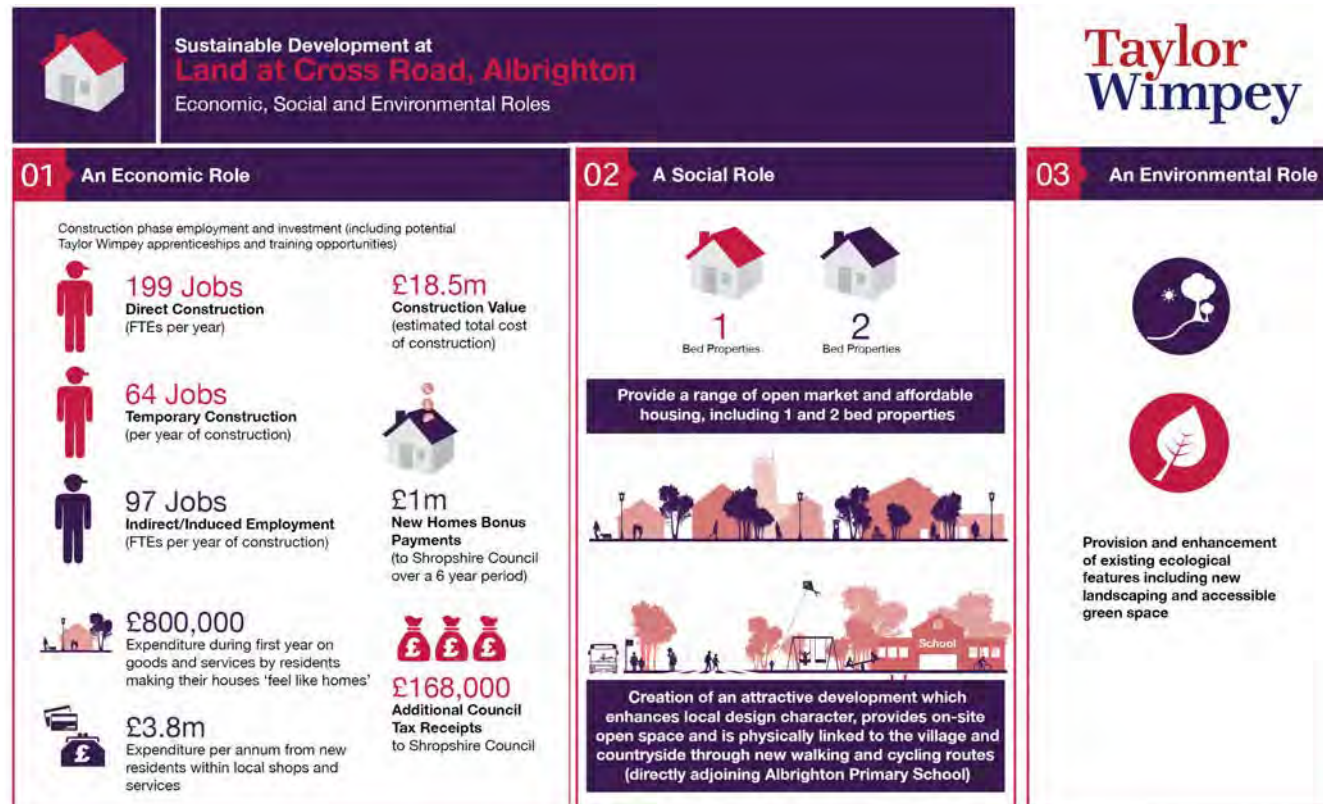
- The site will deliver significant social, environmental and economic benefits (see diagram opposite). It would provide a high-quality development at the gateway to the village and would be linked to it through the provision of new greenspace, footpaths and cycleways.

- The site is not affected by any overriding physical, environmental or technical constraints.

- The Conceptual Layout demonstrates that the site could accommodate approximately 160 dwellings with 1.7ha of open space, including retained hedgerows and trees set within green corridors. It would also be possible to accommodate an appropriate community facility, such as GP surgery.

- The development is truly deliverable and would be completed swiftly by one of the UK's leading housebuilders.

- Taylor Wimpey are committed to engaging with Shropshire Council and the local community to design a high-quality and sympathetic development which delivers real benefits for the village.







1.

Introduction





KEY

-  Land at Cross Road
15.76 Acres/6.38 Hectares
-  Albrighton train station
-  School
-  Village centre



**FIGURE 1:
AERIAL SITE PLAN**

1. Introduction

The land at Cross Road, Albrighton, provides an ideal opportunity to create a sustainable, distinctive and attractive residential community which will deliver homes to help meet the needs of the local community. The site lies at the south-western gateway to the village, directly adjoining Albrighton Primary School and being accessible to a range of community services and facilities, including the village's railway station. Taylor Wimpey are a national and respected housebuilder who are committed to working with Shropshire Council and the local community to design a high-quality and sympathetic development which delivers social, environmental and economic benefits for the village.

This document provides a vision for the development of a sustainable residential proposal and potential community facilities on land at Cross Road. It explains the technical work which has been carried out by Taylor Wimpey UK Limited to inform our initial development vision for the site, and paves the way for more detailed consultation with Shropshire Council and the local community to appropriately refine the proposals. The vision will continue to evolve following further consultation and as more detailed technical work is undertaken.

Taylor Wimpey is one of the UK's leading housebuilders, being responsible for the delivery of over 10,000 homes annually. We are committed to engaging with local communities to shape developments which best meet local needs and requirements. Further details on our company are set out in **Appendix 1**.

This Development Vision Document has been prepared in the context of Shropshire Council's "Partial Review" of its adopted Local Plan which has identified a need for housing across the County between 2016-2036 and following the publication of the 'Preferred Sites' consultation document that proposes to remove the site from the Green Belt and allocate it as 'Proposed Safeguarded Land for development beyond 2036'.

Taylor Wimpey have appointed a consultant team to assist in identifying an appropriate development vision for the site. The principal team members comprise RPS (Planning Consultants), Pegasus (Masterplanners,) M-EC (Consultant Engineers), and CSA Environmental (Landscape and Ecology).

This document:

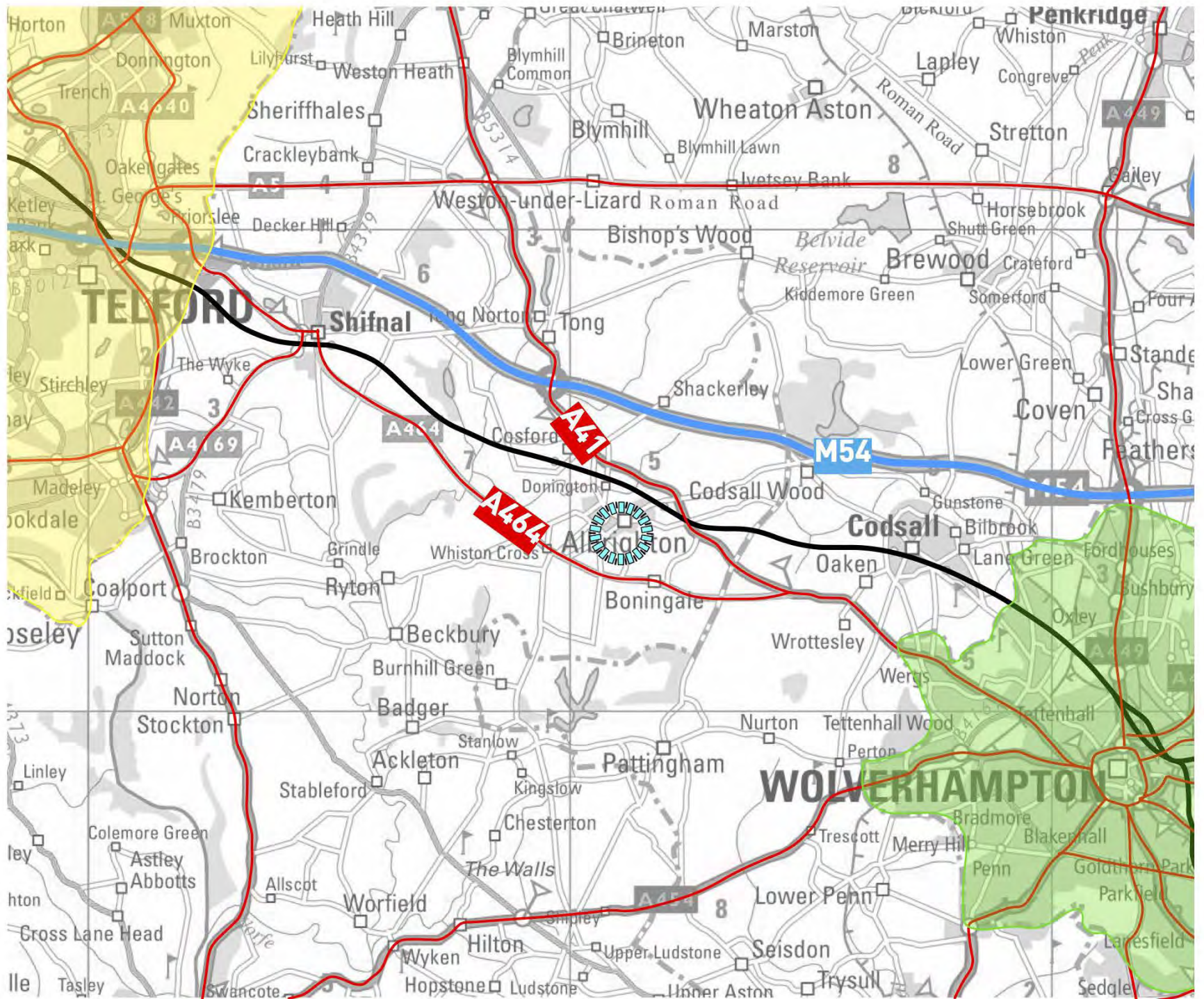
- Describes the site and surroundings (Section 2);
- Provides a brief overview of relevant planning policy and the emerging housing needs (Section 3);
- Demonstrates that the release of the site would not conflict with the five purposes of Green Belt (Section 4);
- Demonstrates that the site is sustainable, including a summary of technical work which has been undertaken to appraise the site (Section 5);
- Presents a development vision for the site (Section 6);
- Provides overall conclusions (Section 7).

2

2.

The Site and Surrounding Area





**FIGURE 2:
STRATEGIC LOCATION PLAN**

2. The Site and Surrounding Area

Albrighton is one of the largest and most sustainable settlements in east Shropshire, being defined as a “*Market Town and Key Centre*” in the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011). The village has a population of c.5,000 (excluding RAF Cosford) and is located roughly equidistant between Wolverhampton City Centre to the south-east and Telford to the north-west (c.10km from each).

Site Context and Location

Albrighton enjoys excellent accessibility to the strategic road and rail network with Junction 3 of the M54 located approximately 2km to the north (from the A41 which links Albrighton to Wolverhampton) and benefits from a railway station (refer to **Figure 2**) on the Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury Line. Trains run on an hourly basis in both directions - 15 minutes to Wolverhampton; 13 minutes to Telford; and 38 minutes to Shrewsbury.

RAF Cosford is located c.1.5km to the north-west and accommodates a significant number of military personnel and trainees.

Albrighton historically grew around St. Magdalene Church (dating from 1181) and the principal routes into the village; High Street, Cross Road and Station Road. The village grew significantly during the 1950s/60s with new housing estates developed to the north as well as the construction of the Albrighton bypass (A41). **Figure 3** shows the site in the context of the wider village and principal roads.

Much of Albrighton comprises of post-war low density housing estates. There are two separate conservation areas within the village and another at Boningale to the South.

Figure 11 in section 5 identifies the location and accessibility of the community facilities.



Albrighton Train Station



Albrighton Medical Practice

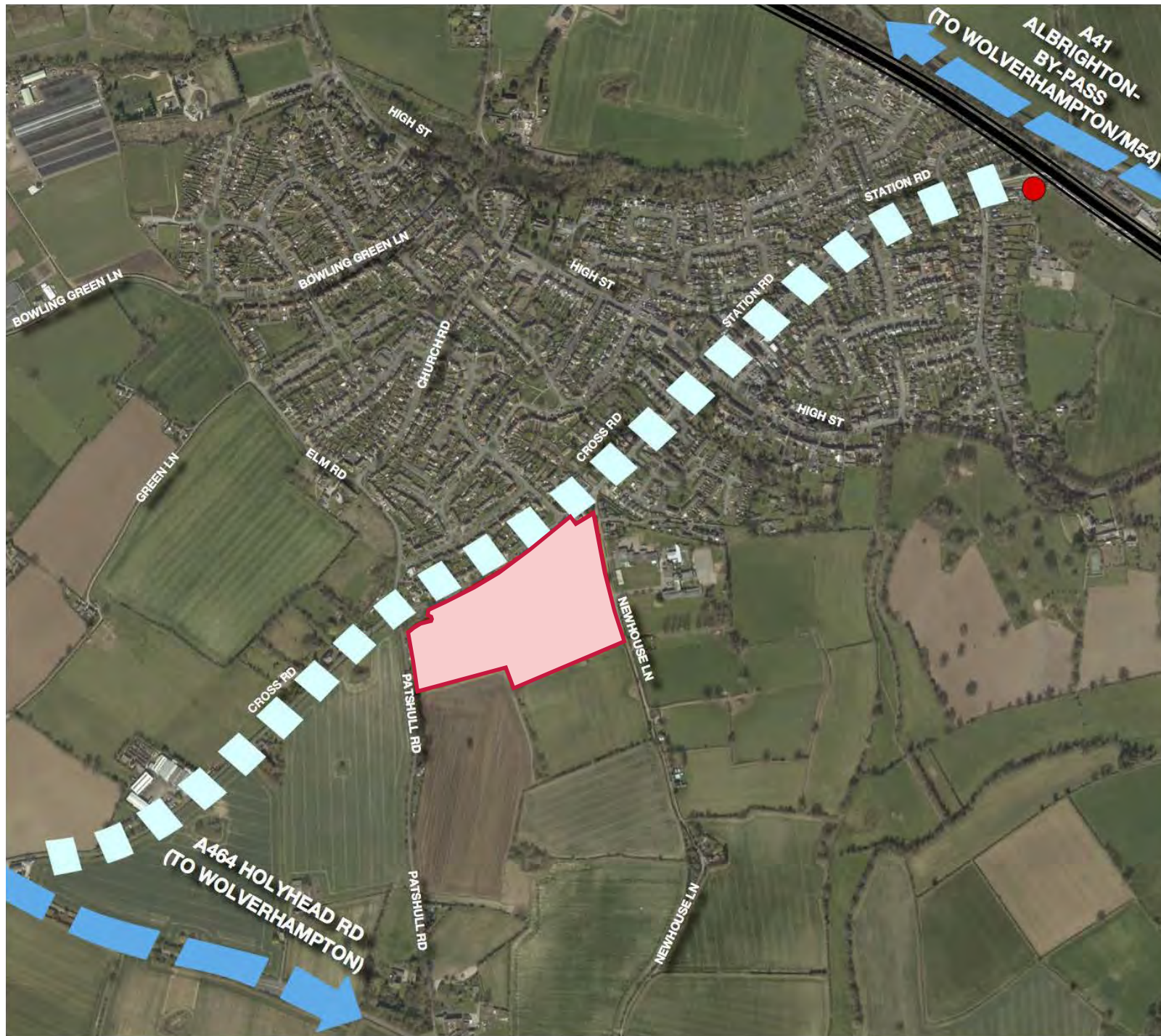


Albrighton Primary School






PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE AND ADJOINING ROADS

- 1&2. View towards west of site along Newhouse Lane
- 3. Meere Farm
- 4. Southern view of Newhouse Lane
- 5. Northern view of Newhouse Lane adjacent to Albrighton Primary School
- 6. View of site looking south from Cross Road





KEY

-  Land at Cross Road
15.76 Acres/6.38 Hectares
-  Albrighton train station
-  Railway line
-  Strategic route
-  Distributor roads

**FIGURE 3:
SITE CONTEXT PLAN**

1. Eastern boundary facing north of the site towards existing on-site farm structures
2. View adjacent northern boundary along Cross Road towards potential site access
3. South-eastern boundary adjacent to Meere Barn
4. View from edge of western boundary along Patshull Road



Land Control

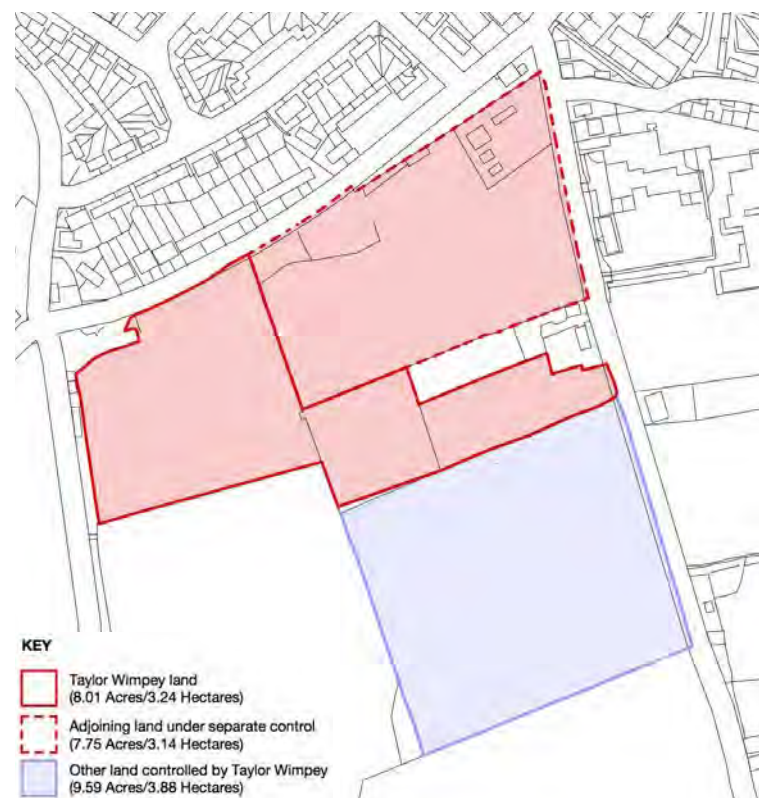
The site, edged in red and blue on **Figure 4**, comprises 10.26ha of agricultural land immediately to the south of Albrighton, at the south-western gateway to the village. It is well contained by Cross Road to the north, Newhouse Lane to the east and Patshull Road to the west. Patshull Road and Newhouse Lane provide access to the A464 to the south.

The land controlled by Taylor Wimpey (7.12ha) comprises three fields (predominantly arable but with some pasture) within the Green Belt, consistent with the majority of open land enclosing the village. There are hedgerows with trees on the field boundaries,

which include field drains. The site adjoins Meere Barn which is accessed off Newhouse Lane. There are no public rights of way crossing the site.

The land controlled by Taylor Wimpey is marked in fixed red and blue lines on **Figure 4**. The land in red has the potential to be delivered independently or as a first phase as part of a wider development to include land to the north-east (marked with a dotted, red line on **Figure 4** which is under separate control); the blue land; as explained later in this document, has largely been excluded for development purposes to ensure a robust landscape edge is provided.

The additional third party land (3.14ha) has been included as part of the development vision and masterplanning process to aid an understanding of potential uses and capacity of the whole site. This land comprises a field used for pasture but also includes a small group of farm buildings located at the north-eastern corner and accessed from Newhouse Lane.



**FIGURE 4:
LAND CONTROL PLAN**





Surroundings

Immediately to the north beyond Cross Road is residential development in the form of post-war semi-detached properties. To the east is Albrighton Primary School and to the south and west is open agricultural land extending up to the A464.

The wide range of services and facilities within the village are described in **Section 5** with plans which show the site's accessibility to them.

In terms of constraints around Albrighton, the August 2010 SHLAA states that "There are few physical or topographical constraints that would restrict development around Albrighton ... The principal constraints are the belt of woodland and watercourse, including floodplain, to the north of the settlement which has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve" (para. 7.3.1). Paragraphs 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 state that land to the south and east of the settlement scores best in terms of accessibility to local services and facilities and that there is potential for expansion to the south having regard to landscape sensitivity and good accessibility to local schools.



1. Village Centre
2. Barn Conversions on Elm Road
3. Shrewsbury Arms Public House
4. The Harp Public House
5. The Crown Public House
6. Properties to the north of Cross Road

3

3.

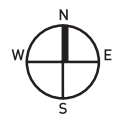
Planning Policy





Legend

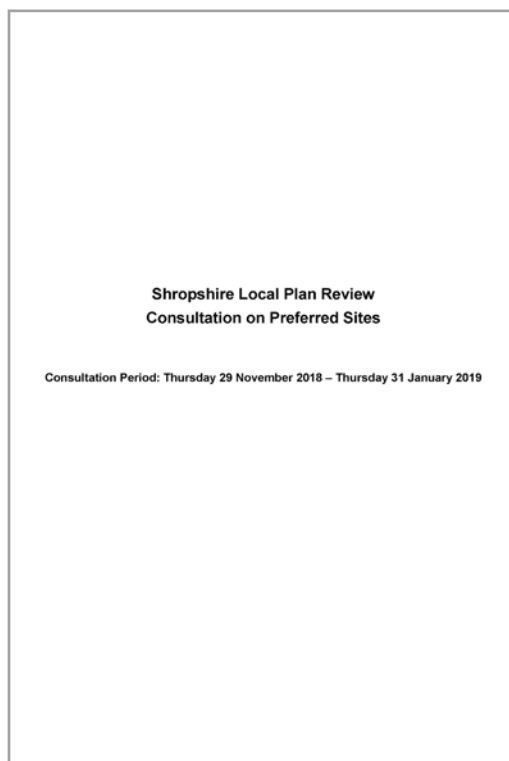
- MARKET TOWNS and Other Key Centres that are Principal Centres
- Market Towns and Other Key Centres that are District Centres
- Shrewsbury NW Relief Road preferred route Dec 07
- World Heritage Site
- European Protected Sites
- Railway Lines
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Shropshire Hills
- Green Belt
- Safeguarded Land
- Rivers
- Canals
- Principal Roads
- M54
- Rural Regeneration Zone



**FIGURE 5:
CORE STRATEGY
KEY DIAGRAM**

(c) Crown copyright. All rights reserved.
Shropshire Council 100049049. 2010

3. Planning Policy



Local Plan Review

Shropshire Council has committed to undertake a partial review of the adopted development plan to update its housing and employment land requirements to cover the period 2016-2036. This review will reconsider the strategic distribution strategy, Green Belt boundaries and the role of rural settlements in delivering development.

This Development Vision document is submitted to support the current “*Partial Local Plan Review: Preferred Sites*” consultation, and in particular the inclusion of the site as an allocation for ‘Proposed Safeguarded Land for development beyond 2036’. The Council’s Preferred Development Strategy, as set out in the Preferred sites consultation document, is to provide 28,750 dwellings over the plan period.

This Vision Document has been prepared to inform the representations to the current Consultation process and assist the understanding of how the site can make a meaningful contribution to Albrighton’s role in the Local Plan Review process.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018) is primarily of relevance in relation to the site’s Green Belt status. Green Belt serves five specific purposes (para. 134) and once established their boundaries should only be altered where “*exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified*” through the preparation or updating of plans (para. 135).

Local planning authorities are able to review Green Belt boundaries and should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development (para. 137).

The site offers a prime opportunity to accommodate a sustainable development and we support the Council’s conclusion that there is justification to release it from the Green Belt through the Partial Local Plan Review.

National Green Belt policies are relevant because Shropshire Council is currently reviewing its adopted Local Plan to deliver it’s housing need over the period 2016-2036 and this has included a detailed review of the Green Belt boundaries in the south-eastern part of the County. There is a limited supply of brownfield land within Shropshire for new housing development and the Green Belt comprises some of the most sustainable land given that it adjoins the West Midlands’ conurbation and Telford. We provide a Green Belt assessment in Section 4 which demonstrates that the site is suitable for release to help meet the housing needs of the County and local community.

Development Plan

The development plan for Shropshire comprises the Core Strategy (24 February 2011) and the “*Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan*” (SAMDev) (17 December 2015). Both documents plan for the period 2006 to 2026. The Core Strategy sets out strategic policies and the SAMDev allocates sites to meet the strategic needs and provides detailed policies to manage development proposals.

The adopted Core Strategy Key Diagram is shown as **Figure 5** and the extract of the adopted Policies Map relating to Albrighton is shown at **Figure 6**. The principal aspects of the Core Strategy are as follows:

- Around 27,500 new homes are to be delivered between 2006 and 2026. 25% are to be provided within Shrewsbury, 40% within the “*market towns and key centres*”, and 35% within the rural areas (Policy CS1).
- Albrighton lies within the “*East Spatial Zone*” and is recognised as a “*Key Settlement/ Service Centre*” within the Green Belt. Policy CS3 states that Albrighton will accommodate development to meet local needs.
- “*Safeguarded land*” within the Green Belt has been identified adjoining Albrighton to provide long-term provision for the future expansion of the settlement through future development plan documents.

The SAMDev provides various generic policies which would be of relevance to the future masterplanning of the land at Cross Road. The key policies are as follows:

- **MD2 “Sustainable Design”** – provides detailed requirements to ensure that developments are sustainable. This includes responding to local design aspirations; and delivering landscape and open space holistically with open space provision at a standard of at least 30 square metres per person (on the basis of 1 person per bedroom) and for developments of 20 dwellings or more to deliver an area of functional recreational space for play, recreation, formal or informal uses including semi-natural open space.
- **MD3 “Delivery of Housing Development”** – Requires proposals to include a mix of house types which has regard to local evidence and community consultation.

More specifically, **Policy S1** concerns the “*Albrighton Area*”:

- Around 250 dwellings will be delivered in the village to meet local needs in the form of two allocated sites and small-scale windfall sites.
- The two site allocations are ALB002 (180 dwellings at Land East of Shaw Lane) and ALB003 (20 dwellings at Land at White Acres). The former scheme benefits from planning permission and phase 1 is underway.
- Green Belt Land to the east of ALB002 is safeguarded for long-term development needs.
- New retail development is directed to the village centre.
- All proposals should have regard to the Albrighton Plan (see overleaf).

Paragraph 4.4 of SAMDev states that Albrighton has an ageing population and there is a mismatch with the existing housing stock in the village mainly comprising family housing. The above policies have been taken into account in formulating the development vision.

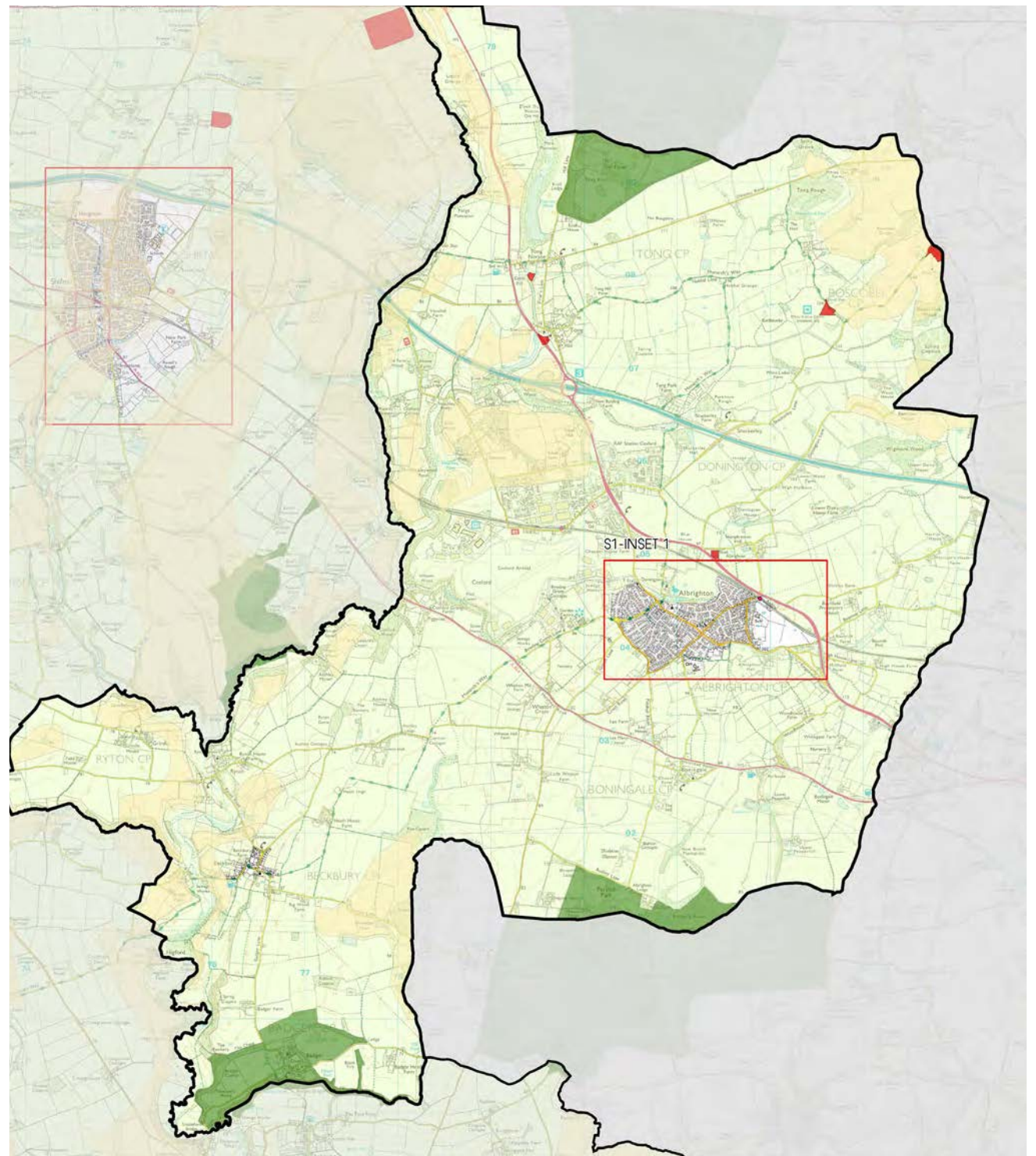
Paragraphs 1.12 and 1.13 of the SAMDev make reference to the need for an early review of the Local Plan. Paragraph 23 of the Inspector’s Report into the SAMDev made clear that this would need to include “...housing requirements ... and a review of Green Belt boundaries”.

Key

- ★ Community Clusters
- Community Hub
- Greenbelt Adopted July 2006
- Mineral Safeguarding Area
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Registered Parks
- Inset



**FIGURE 6:
EXTRACTS FROM POLICIES MAP**



Partial Review of the Local Plan

Shropshire Council are undertaking a review of the local plan in order to; allow consideration of updated information on development needs; reflect changes to national planning policy and local strategies; to extend the plan period to 2036; and to provide a plan to support growth and maintain local control over planning decisions to 2036.

The Council consulted on the 'Issues & Options' for the local plan review in March 2017 and the 'Preferred options' for the scale and distribution of growth in October 2017. The current consultation on the Preferred Sites is the next step towards the publication of the revised local plan which is due to take place in September/October 2019.

The Key Proposals of the Council's Preferred Development Strategy, as set out in the Preferred Sites consultation document, include the following:

- A 'High' housing growth of 28,750 dwellings
- A requirement for 10,250 net additional homes
- An 'urban focused' distribution of development:
 - Shrewsbury – around 30%
 - Principal Centres – around 24.5%
 - Key Centres – around 18%
 - Rural Areas – around 27.5%
- Potential release of Green Belt land to support long term sustainability.

The Consultation on the Preferred Sites document states that Albrighton has been identified as one of the key centres that will contribute towards the strategic growth objectives and deliver around 18% of the total housing growth across Shropshire. The key planning issues for Albrighton are identified as

the need to provide more affordable and low-cost market housing and the identification and delivery of employment land.

The consultation document states that a balance between housing and employment growth will be achieved in Albrighton through the provision of around 500 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment land between 2016 and 2036.

The land currently allocated as 'safeguarded land', to the east of the village, is proposed to be allocated

for housing (reference ALB017 and ALB021 on the Proposed Development Boundary Plan – **Figure 7**). The NPPF states that strategic policies should have regard to the intended permanence of Green Belt boundaries in the long term so that they can endure beyond the plan period (Para 135). To complement the proposed allocations, and to ensure that the Green Belt boundary endures beyond the plan period, three sites (including this site) are proposed to be allocated as 'Safeguarded Land' and removed from the Green Belt.

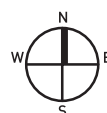
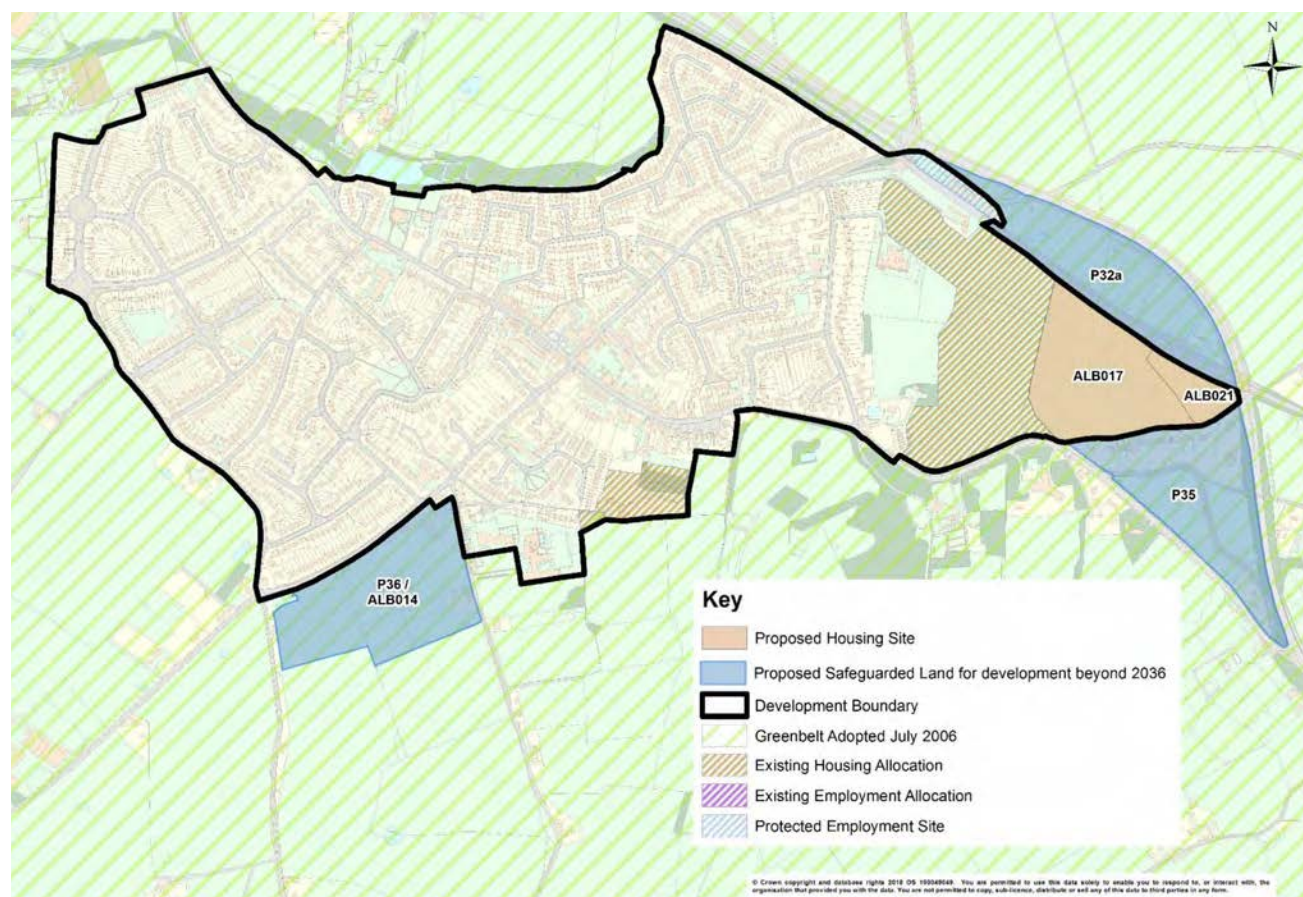


FIGURE 7:
ALBRIGHTON PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY

Other Relevant Policy

Shropshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment “Update July 2014” (SHLAA)

The majority of the land at Cross Road was assessed within the SHLAA as part of a larger area (Ref. ALB010) which included land to the east of Newhouse Lane (to the east and south of Albrighton Primary School). The site did not progress to “Stage 2” of the SHLAA purely because it was not promoted as being available for development. However, the SHLAA does recognise the suitability of this area to the South of the village.

In terms of constraints around Albrighton, the August 2010 SHLAA states that *“There are few physical or topographical constraints that would restrict development around Albrighton ... The principal constraints are the belt of woodland and watercourse, including floodplain, to the north of the settlement which has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve”* (para. 7.3.1). Paragraphs 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 state that land to the south and east of the settlement scores best in terms of accessibility to local services and facilities and that there is potential for expansion to the south having regard to landscape sensitivity and good accessibility to local schools.

We demonstrate the suitability of the site in more detail in Sections 5 and 7.

Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan “Light” (June 2013)

This document comprises a community-led plan, the contents of which are broadly reflected in the SAMDev. It was adopted by Albrighton, Donington with Boscobel and Boningale Parish Councils in June 2013 and Shropshire Council adopted it for

development management purposes in September 2013. It provides a record of the local community’s aspirations for future development in the village, and key aspects are listed below:

- The village has an ageing population and low proportions of young people.
- Predominant housing types are detached and semi-detached and there is a need for smaller and more affordable properties.
- Objectives include a desire to maintain village character/ *“ambiance”*; to retain and enhance local shops and services; and, to address/ increase parking near the Railway Station.
- Policy ALB1 seeks housing proposals of five or more units to deliver at least 20% in the form of 1 or 2 bed properties.
- Policy ALB2 proposes housing allocations consistent with the SAMDev.
- Key infrastructure requirements are identified including health (the existing medical facility having limited potential for expansion and a desire to relocate this in a new facility at the edge of the village); leisure (sports hall, football pitch, play areas and enhancement of the LNR); limited capacity at the sewage treatment works; and, extended countryside footpath links.
- Policy ALB11 provides design guidance including streets avoiding straight lines and including a variety of housing styles; maximising views from development into the countryside; provision of *“village green”* open spaces; and, foot and cycle path linkages.
- A desire to preserve and extend hedgerows and to increase native tree planting.

Place Plan for Albrighton & Surrounding Area 2014/15

This document summarises and prioritises the local communities’ infrastructure and investment requirements to deliver the community vision and aspirations for Albrighton and the surrounding parishes. It has regard to various local community documents including the Neighbourhood Plan Light, and replicates the infrastructure/development requirements listed above.

Our review of these infrastructure needs has assisted our proposals for the site including the potential for a new GP surgery site as part of the overall scheme.



4

4.

Green Belt Review



4. Green Belt Review

The view is taken that housing need will amount to an “exceptional circumstance” to justify the release of Green Belt land and to ensure that new housing is delivered in a sustainable manner.

As explained in Section 3, the adopted SAMDev makes reference to the need for an early review of the Local Plan and the related Inspector’s Report made clear that this would have to include a detailed review of Green Belt boundaries. The existing extent of the Green Belt in Shropshire lies to the south-east of the County as shown on Figure 5 in Section 3.

This review is underway and the current consultation on the Preferred Sites is supported by a detailed Green Belt review (Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2) that justifies the removal of the site from the Green Belt.

Having regard to previous assessments of land supply throughout the County (such as the SHLAA), it is our view, and that of Shropshire Council, that Green Belt land will have to be released through the partial review process in order to accommodate the County’s housing needs over the period 2016-2036 in a sustainable manner.



(FIGURE 5: CORE STRATEGY KEY DIAGRAM from Section 3)

As part of the Green Belt Assessment undertaken by the Council the following parcels to the edge of Albrighton were assessed. Figure 8 shows the parcels of land that were included within the assessment.

The assessment then appraised the Site, and the contribution that it makes to the five principles of including land within the Green Belt as a discreet ‘sub-parcel’ of the wider P36 parcel of land, as shown on Figure 9.

The Council, in the Preferred Sites consultation, reaches the same conclusion and proposes to safeguard the site for future development in order to ensure that the resultant Green Belt boundary endures and that there are justifiable exceptional circumstances for the release of the site from the Green Belt.



FIGURE 8: GREEN BELT PARCELS AT ALBRIGHTON

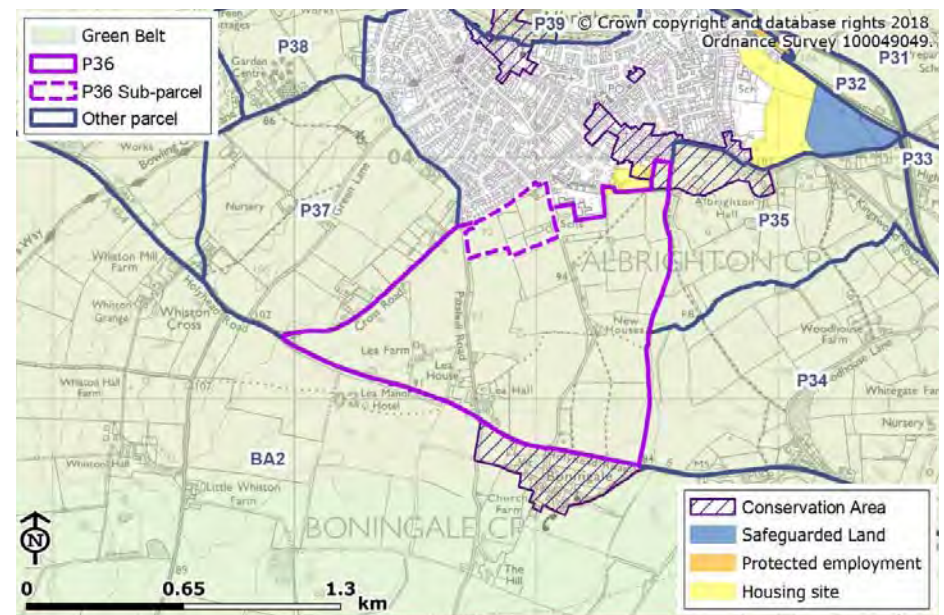


FIGURE 9: GREEN BELT PARCEL 36

We have considered the release of the site from the Green Belt in the context of the five purposes (stated in the NPPF) of Green Belt in turn. A more detailed assessment is included within the RPS Green Belt Technical Document that accompanies the representations made, on behalf of Taylor Wimpey, to the Preferred Sites consultation. The conclusions of that assessment, and of the assessment undertaken by the Council, note:

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

Albrighton is not a large built-up area in the context of the West Midlands conurbation and Telford and, therefore, the purpose of Green Belt in this area does not strictly apply.

The Council's Stage 2 Green Belt Review concludes that the wider parcel of land that contains the site (Parcel 36) makes no contribution in this regard.

However, it is important to recognise that the land at Cross Road has clearly defined boundaries on three sides:

- To the north by Cross Road and residential properties in the village;
- To the east by Newhouse Lane and Albrighton Primary School (refer to photographs 4 and 5 overleaf); and
- To the west by Patshull Road.

To the south is countryside but there are hedgerows on the field boundaries and the development would deliver a new southern defensible boundary to the village in the form of an attractive landscape buffer comprising open space with new planting. It should be noted that the southern-most field would not be developed due to its landscape sensitivity so

the village's southern built-up boundary, which is currently defined by Albrighton Primary School, would simply be rounded off. This will provide a defined and durable boundary to restrict future expansion of the built-up area and will ensure visual separation between Albrighton and the countryside to the south.

The release of the site from the Green Belt will not result in the unrestricted sprawl of Albrighton. Rather, it will represent the natural rounding off of the village's southern built-up boundary.

2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Albrighton is a significant distance from other settlements within the Green Belt and is physically well contained from the conurbation, towns and villages by the M54, other principal roads (A41 and A464) and the railway line. Bonningdale, a small Hamlet, is located approximately 1km from the site and the development of the site would not lead to coalescence. The creation of defined and durable site boundaries described above will maintain a strong gap.

The Council's Stage 2 Green Belt Review concludes that the wider parcel of land makes a weak contribution in relation to this purpose.

The release of the site will not result in the merging of any neighbouring towns or settlements.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

The presence of strong defensible boundaries is an important factor in protecting the countryside from

encroachment in this area of Albrighton. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development of any Green Belt site may result in encroachment in theory, the site will benefit from a defined and durable boundary to restrict future expansion of the built-up area and will ensure visual separation between Albrighton and the countryside to the south.

The Council's Stage 2 Green Belt Review concludes that the wider parcel of land makes a weak contribution in relation to this purpose.

The release of the site from the Green Belt will not contravene the purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

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

Whilst Albrighton includes two conservation areas and many listed buildings, the subject site is physically and visually detached from these heritage assets (as explained in Section 5) and will represent the natural extension of the existing built-up area to the south of the village. As such the release of this site from the Green Belt would not affect the setting or special character of Albrighton.

The Council's Stage 2 Green Belt Review concludes that although the wider parcel of land makes a strong contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt but that this site in particular (identified as a sub-parcel) has no intervisibility with the Albrighton Conservation Area or any other historic settlement areas and that it plays a weaker role in relation to this purpose.

The release of the site has the potential to preserve and enhance the setting and special character of the village.

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

The release of the site would not prevent the recycling of derelict and other urban land because previous land assessments have identified that there is a limited supply of deliverable/developable brownfield land throughout the County to meet housing needs, which particularly relates to Albrighton. The development of the land at Cross Road can be appropriately phased within the housing trajectory to respect the availability and delivery of brownfield land across the County.

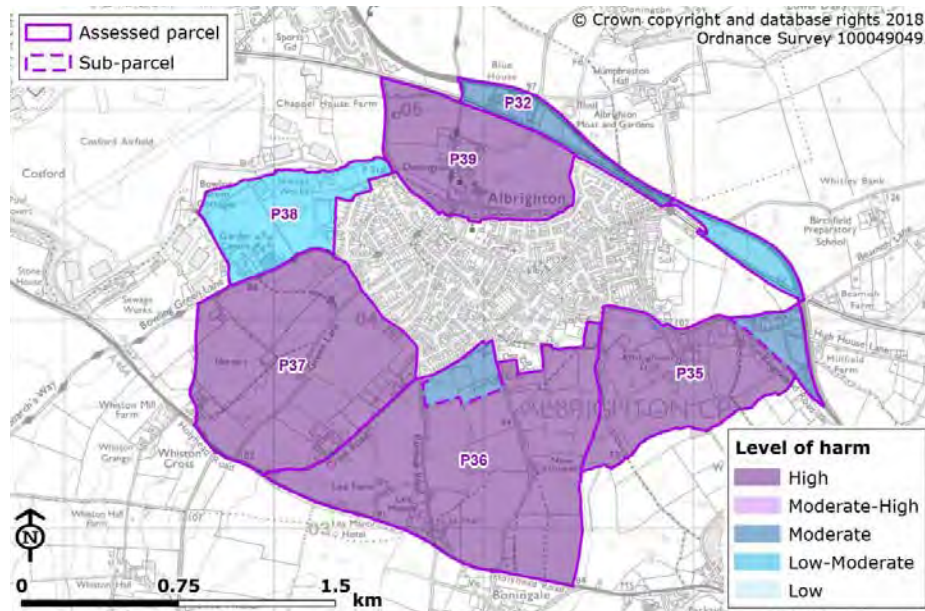
The Council's Stage 2 Green Belt Review concludes that all parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose.

The release of the site will not prejudice urban regeneration but will contribute to the delivery of housing need in a highly sustainable location.

The Conclusion of the Green Belt assessment undertaken by the Council is that the release of sub-parcel P36 would have a moderate impact on the Green Belt (see **Figure 10** below). As set out in the RPS Green Belt Technical Document, and the CSA Environmental Green Belt Assessment, the release of the site would have only a low-moderate impact.

Summary

It is apparent that the release of the site from the Green Belt will not compromise the five purposes of Green Belt and is entirely in accordance with national planning policy in relation to Green Belt land release. The Council's Stage 2 Green Belt Review comes to the same conclusion. The site is well contained with defensible and durable boundaries and will minimise encroachment into the countryside. It will not result in the merging of settlements, with clear potential to preserve and enhance the setting and character of Albrighton and will not prejudice urban regeneration elsewhere in the County. As such, the site represents an appropriate Green Belt release to contribute towards housing need in the form of a sustainable extension to Albrighton village.



**FIGURE 10:
ASSESSMENT OF HARM TO THE GREEN BELT**

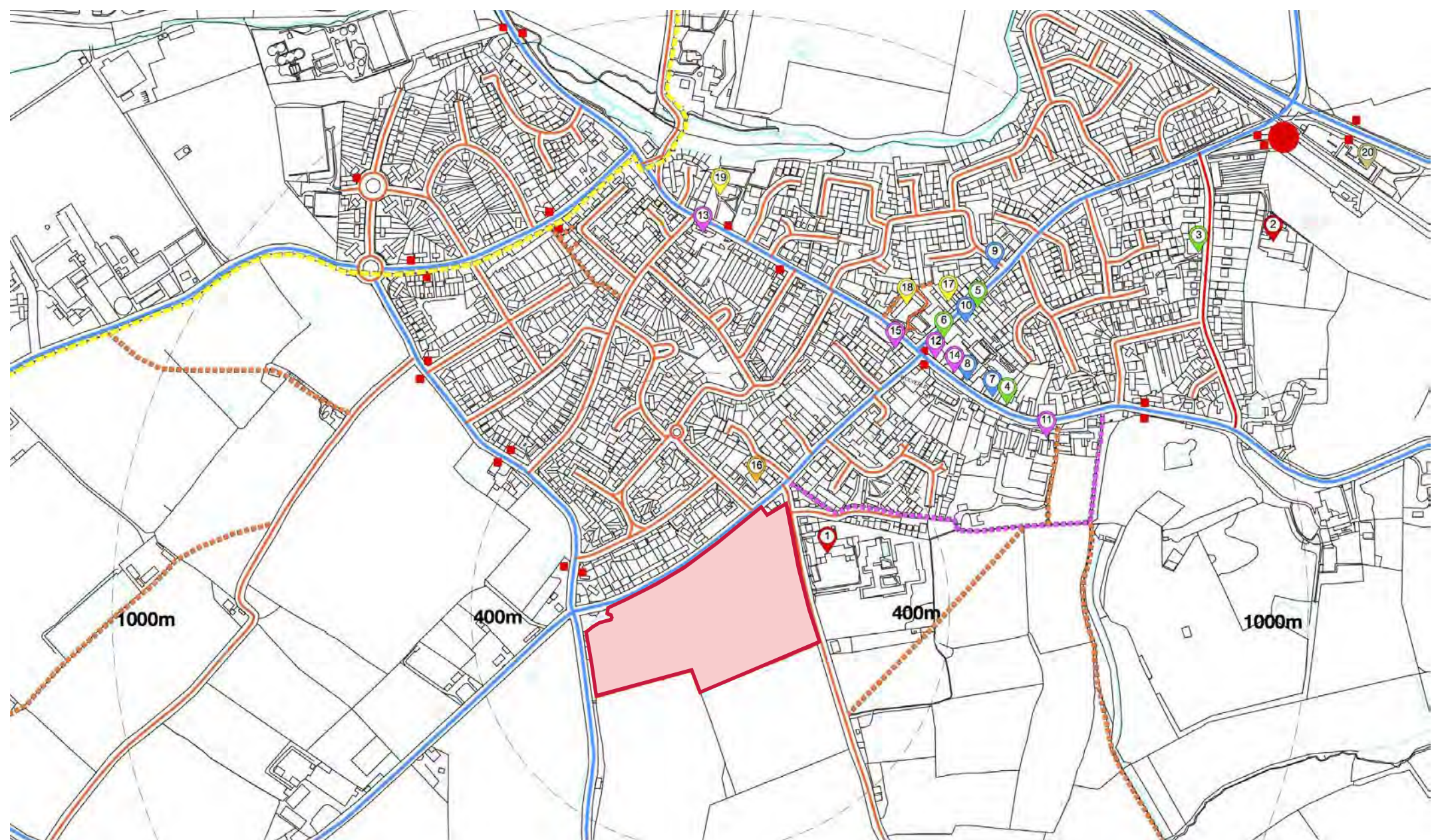


5

5.

Is the Site Sustainable?





- | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Taylor Wimpey land (8.01 Acres/3.24 Hectares) | Footpath | Education | Medical | Convenience Stores | Public Houses and Restaurants | Leisure | Employment |
| Primary Road | Bridleway | 1 Albrighton Primary School | 3 Albrighton Medical Practice | 7 Spar ATM | 11 Harp Hotel | 16 Albrighton Sports and Social Club | 20 Business Park |
| Tertiary Road | Recreational Route | 2 St Marys C of E Primary School | 4 Rhodes Chemist | 8 CO-OP | 12 Crown | Other | |
| | Bus Stop | | 5 Albrighton Dental Surgery | 9 Post Office | 13 Shrewsbury Arms | 17 Albrighton Library | |
| | Albrighton Railway Station | | 6 Albrighton Eye Centre | 10 Keith Gibson Cars (Garage/Petrol) | 14 Aroma Restaurant | 18 Albrighton Village Hall | |
| | | | | | 15 Frederiques | 19 St. Mary Magdalene Church | |



FIGURE 11:
ACCESSIBILITY TO LOCAL FACILITIES PLAN

5. Is the Site Sustainable?

Is the site in a sustainable location?

Albrighton is one of the most sustainable settlements in east Shropshire and the site is well related to the village.

The majority of the village's services and facilities are situated in the centre at the crossroads where the three principal roads meet. The centre includes various shops and services including banks, public houses, restaurants, vets, village hall, library and churches (and several listed buildings). A medical centre is located on Shaw Lane.

The village benefits from two primary schools; St Mary's CofE off Shaw Lane and Albrighton Primary on Newhouse Lane (adjoining the site). The Railway Station is located to the north-eastern edge of the village close to the A41. To the north is the Donnington and Albrighton Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (c.5ha) which defines the northern boundary to the settlement and which includes woodland, pools and meadows, providing a valuable area of public open space for the local community.

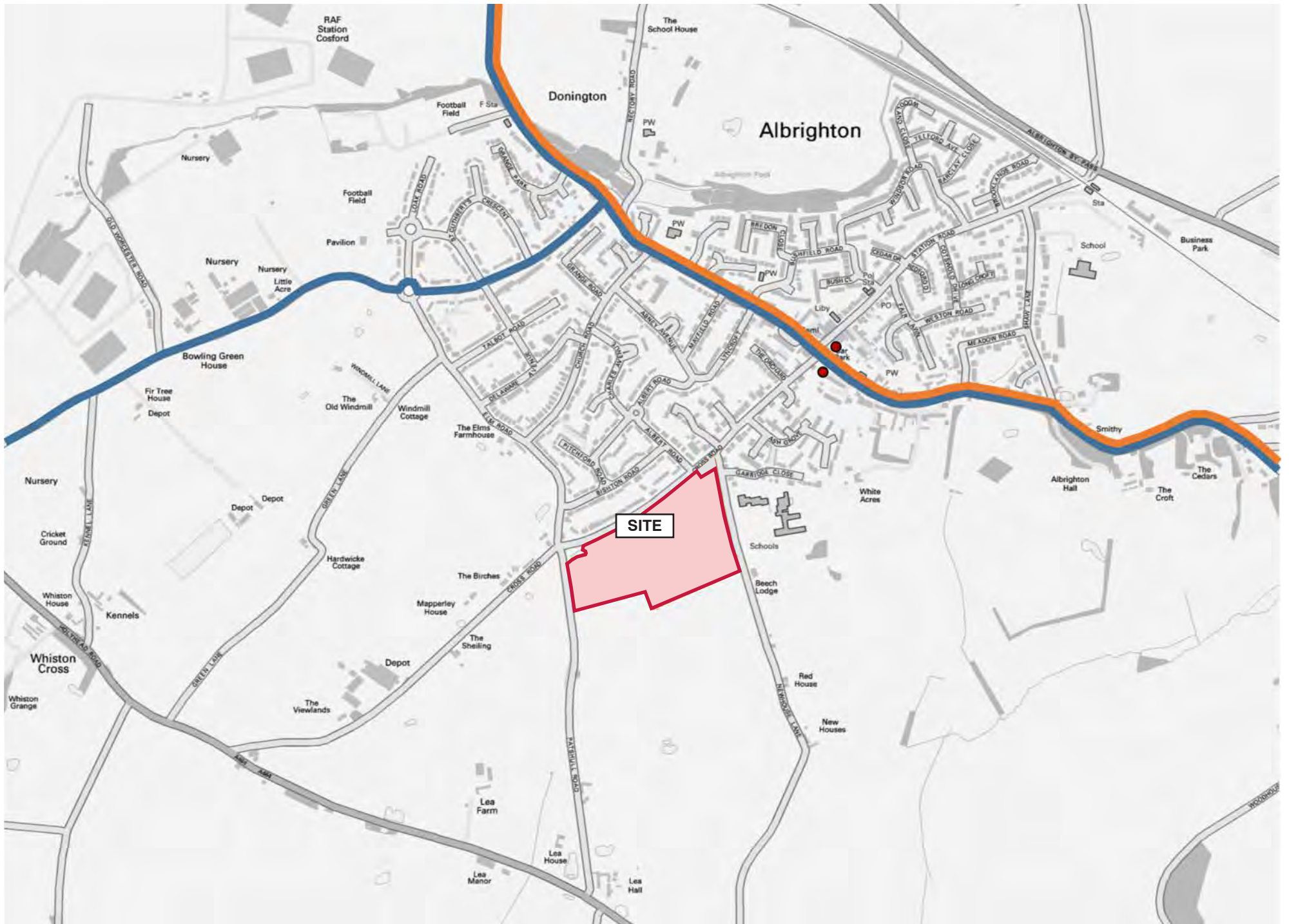
As can be seen, the site is well related to the village and within walking and cycling distance of Albrighton Primary School (c.200m) and the village centre (c.800m).

It is seen that the site location is highly sustainable, relating well to shops, services and facilities within the village and accessible to wider centres of employment, including by rail/bus and proximate to the strategic road network. More detailed transport and access considerations are set out overleaf.

Sustainability Benefits

The site will deliver significant benefits in relation to the "three dimensions" of sustainable development (NPPF para. 8) as shown on the diagram within the Executive Summary.








-  891 SERVICE (BANGA TRAVEL)
(Mon-Fri)
Approximately Every 1 Hour
-  8, BA SERVICE (ARRIVA)
(Mon-Sat)
Approximately Every 1 Hour
-  BUS STOPS WITH 800m OF SITE



FIGURE 12:
LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Technical Assessments

Provided below is a summary of the results of the various technical assessments which have been undertaken to identify site opportunities and constraints to inform the development vision.

Transport and Access

Cross Road is approximately 7m wide with a 30mph speed limit and footways on both sides. The site adjoins three public highways and there are various options to create new access points to serve the development from Cross Road.

Access is proposed to be taken from Cross Road through the creation of up to two new T-junctions. Each access will comprise a 5.5m wide carriageway, 2 x 2m wide footways with visibility splays suitable to the 85th percentile speed along Cross Road. The creation of a pedestrian/cycle link onto Newhouse Lane towards Albrighton Primary School will also be provided to promote sustainable movements. These proposals are shown in Section 6.

Public transport services are present along High Street, located to the northeast of the site. Bus Services 8/8A and 891 both provide an hourly service which connect Wolverhampton with Telford. Albrighton Rail Station is located circa 1.2km east of the site, and can be accessed via the existing pedestrian network along Cross Road. The station provides a link to the neighbouring stations of Codsall and Cosford, as well as larger towns and cities including Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury. These facilities are shown in **Figure 12**.

All facilities are considered to be within suitable walking distances and as required improvements to pedestrian, cycle and public transport provision will be considered as part of the development proposals. The site is sustainable in terms of access by walking and cycling to local facilities and accessibility to public transport services and the Railway Station.

A Transport Assessment will be completed to assess impacts across the wider network. Key highway junctions include:

- Elm Road/Cross Road/Patshull Road roundabout junction;
- Albert Road/Cross Road mini-roundabout junction;
- Newhouse Lane/Cross Road junction;
- Cross Road/The Orchard mini-roundabout junction;
- Cross Road/A464 priority junction;
- Cross Road/High Street/Station Road staggered crossroad junction.

The Transport Assessment will take account of local committed development sites and any committed highway improvements. Suitable mitigation will be provided as part of the development proposals including any identified off site highway works and contributions, although there is considered to be sufficient capacity within the local highway network to accommodate the scale of development proposed.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The development sites lies in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore sequentially acceptable for development. A watercourse is noted within the middle of the site but appears to be field drains and is not identified on the Environment Agency's online flood map. Any risks from this watercourse can be managed through suitable mitigation measures.

The site is generally flat with a slight fall to Cross Road. Soakage into the ground is unlikely to be feasible although testing will be undertaken. On site attenuation will be provided with positive connections to the existing watercourse and ditch network and is likely to take the form of features such as swales and detention basins. Storage in the region of 4,000m³ is likely to be required, however this figure will be refined in due course.

Foul drainage is likely to discharge via a gravity connection to the existing combined sewer in Cross Road.



**FIGURE 13:
FLOOD RISK PLAN**

Noise

The site is bound by Cross Road to the north, Newhouse Lane to the east and Patshull Road to the west. Noise from these roads will be assessed in accordance with BS8233:2014 and World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines. Dwellings in these areas will be orientated to protect rear gardens amenity, however, noise will not be a constraint to development.

Ground Conditions

The British Geological Map for the area, indicates that the site is generally overlain by cohesive strata – Glacial Till, which can be variable, over Mercia Mudstone Formation – clay, grading to mudstone. Sandstone bands within the Mercia Mudstone are also shown in the local area and may be present below the site.

A completed Phase I Environmental Risk Assessment indicates limited risks of contamination across the site and it is unlikely that the site would be designated as statutory contaminated land by the local authority.

Utilities

No utility apparatus is located within the site boundary. Potential diversions of some apparatus may be required to facilitate access points. All utility apparatus (sewage, water, electricity, telecommunications) are present adjacent to the site and will be available to serve the proposed development. Any costs required to upgraded the network or provide suitable reinforcements will be met by the developer.

Landscape and Visual

The countryside to the South of Albrighton is typically characterised by small and medium scale rectilinear fields of mixed arable and pastoral land use. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees restrict the inter-visibility across the wider landscape and promotes containment. The northern parts of the site promote a strong relationship with the existing suburban settlement edge and would represent a natural and logical rounding off of the village built-up area. The southern field is more remote and development here would vary the shape and pattern of the village settlement edge. Overall, there is limited visibility of the existing settlement from the wider landscape and the site is generally well visually contained from public viewpoints.

The northern parts of the site, located adjacent to the settlement edge, provide opportunities to tie in to the settlement pattern in a manner which is more consistent with its existing character. This includes creating a less prominent extension to the settlement pattern and providing an opportunity to retain existing landscape features so as to enhance these as a defensible Green Belt boundary.

A suitable strategy for green infrastructure can be delivered which retains a robust green edge that is consistent with the local landscape character. This could take the form of a comprehensively designed green infrastructure and open space scheme, particularly along the site's southern edge. The new green edge would not only provide a new robust Green Belt boundary but would also respond to settlement edge character, local landscape character and visual amenity.

Ecology

The mixed land use and network of existing green infrastructure on and around the site is likely to provide opportunities for a variety of flora and fauna.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site was carried out in September 2018 (by CSA Environmental) that concluded that the number of ecological constraints identified at the site is limited and typical of a site of this nature (trees, hedgerows etc.). The site is predominantly semi-improved grassland that is of low ecological value.

There are no statutory or local ecological designations present at, or within close proximity to, the site.

Further detailed survey work will be undertaken to inform the future detailed development proposals for the site.

A green infrastructure led scheme will help to ensure that the network of existing vegetation across the site are retained as far as possible and enhanced through long term management. Equally, there is further opportunity to enhance ecological diversity through the provision of greenspace and extensive areas of landscaping across the site, as well as buffer zones to create a network of green infrastructure that connects to the surrounding countryside.

Cultural Heritage

The site does not contain any scheduled monuments, listed buildings and does not lie within, or adjoin, a conservation area.

The nearest listed buildings are located along Elm Road c.200m to the north west called “The Elms” and comprising a Grade II listed barn and Grade II listed sixteenth century house. However, these buildings are not visible from any part of the site. Approximately 500m to the south are two Grade II listed buildings situated at the junction of Patshull Road and Holyhead Road comprising a barn and house but, again, these are not visible from the subject site. There are several listed buildings and scheduled monuments further to the south within the hamlet of Boningale.

Albrighton village encompasses three conservation areas. None of these conservation areas will be affected by development of the land at Cross Road given that they are not directly visible from it.

Agricultural Land Classification

Natural England’s Land Classification Map for the West Midlands Region (ALC004) shows that the site comprises Grade 3 Agricultural Land. Grade 3 is defined as “*Good to Moderate Quality Agricultural Land*”. It is noted that Grade 2 land exists to the north, south-west and west of Albrighton. As such, it is evident that Grade 3 land to the south of the village land is most appropriate for release, particularly as it includes areas of pasture which could potentially comprise Grade 3b land which is not defined as “*best and most versatile*”.



6

6.

What is the Vision for the Site?





6. What is the Vision for the Site?

“An attractive residential development offering a choice of high quality new homes to meet local needs and being fully integrated with, and complementary to, the village of Albrighton”

Taylor Wimpey's vision for the site seeks to deliver the following objectives:

- **Deliver quality new homes** Including both smaller properties and larger family homes which make best use of the land and contribute to the needs of Albrighton and Shropshire;
- **Achieve a choice of housing** with a mix in house types, tenures and size helping to meet local needs;
- **Provide a high quality design at the gateway to the village** which will complement and enhance the existing character and ambiance of the village and wider environment and provide a good standard of living to residents;
- **Maintain and enhance integration and accessibility** with vehicular, cycle and pedestrian links for the benefit of both the existing and future community including a “walkable” neighbourhood which is fully integrated with the village and helps to support its existing shops and facilities;
- **Provide interactive greenspace** which provides opportunities for recreation and which links to the village and wider countryside;
- **Respect and capitalise on the individual site characteristics** such as the protection and enhancement of existing biodiversity, views and mature trees and hedgerows and to deliver a firm Green Belt boundary;
- **Invest in the local community** with potential provision of land for a new community facility, greenspace and by employing local people during the construction of the development; and
- **Ensure the creation of a safe and desirable place to live** with a safe and attractive environment that builds upon the strength of the local community.

Approach

Taylor Wimpey has developed a conceptual layout for the site which reflects the identified opportunities and constraints and which will deliver the above vision and objectives. It is intended that these conceptual plans will evolve further in consultation with the local community, Shropshire Council and other key stakeholders.

The conceptual plans are presented and explained on the following pages but we first provide a brief explanation of how site opportunities and constraints have been taken into account.



**FIGURE 14:
SITE ANALYSIS PLAN**

Site Constraints and Opportunities

The vision and conceptual layout plans derive from a careful analysis of site characteristics, context and opportunities and constraints. This analysis has been provided throughout the previous sections of this document although the principal constraints and opportunities are considered to be the following:

- A site which lies at the south-western gateway to Albrighton on one of its primary roads and which is accessible to the village's shops and facilities. Therefore, the site presents a prime opportunity to deliver a new community which is fully integrated with the village;
- The ability to introduce a strong defensible boundary to the Green Belt which safeguards the southern-most field in recognition of its open character and relationship with the countryside and to protect existing views;
- Respecting the character and appearance of the village by identifying the best examples of existing development and built form which can inform the design principles for the subject site (refer to photos opposite which show the mixture of house types within the village)
- Recognition that the site is within Flood Zone 1 but ensuring a successfully phased sustainable drainage strategy to reflect the level topography and existing field drains alongside hedgerow boundaries (including appropriate easement distances);

- The desirability of retaining and enhancing mature vegetation including trees and hedgerows;
- Deliver new footways, cycleways and green space which will integrate the site with the village and wider countryside including linking to the existing public right of way adjacent to Newhouse Lane;
- The need to respect existing residential amenity on the northern side of Cross Road and to the east on Newhouse Lane (Meere House/Barn and Beech Lodge); and
- The ability to successfully deliver the development in two phases in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan.

The site benefits from a lack of any significant physical/environmental constraints and provides a valuable opportunity to deliver a housing development at the gateway to the village which is fully integrated with Albrighton and sensitive to the adjoining countryside.



Historic and Post-War Buildings

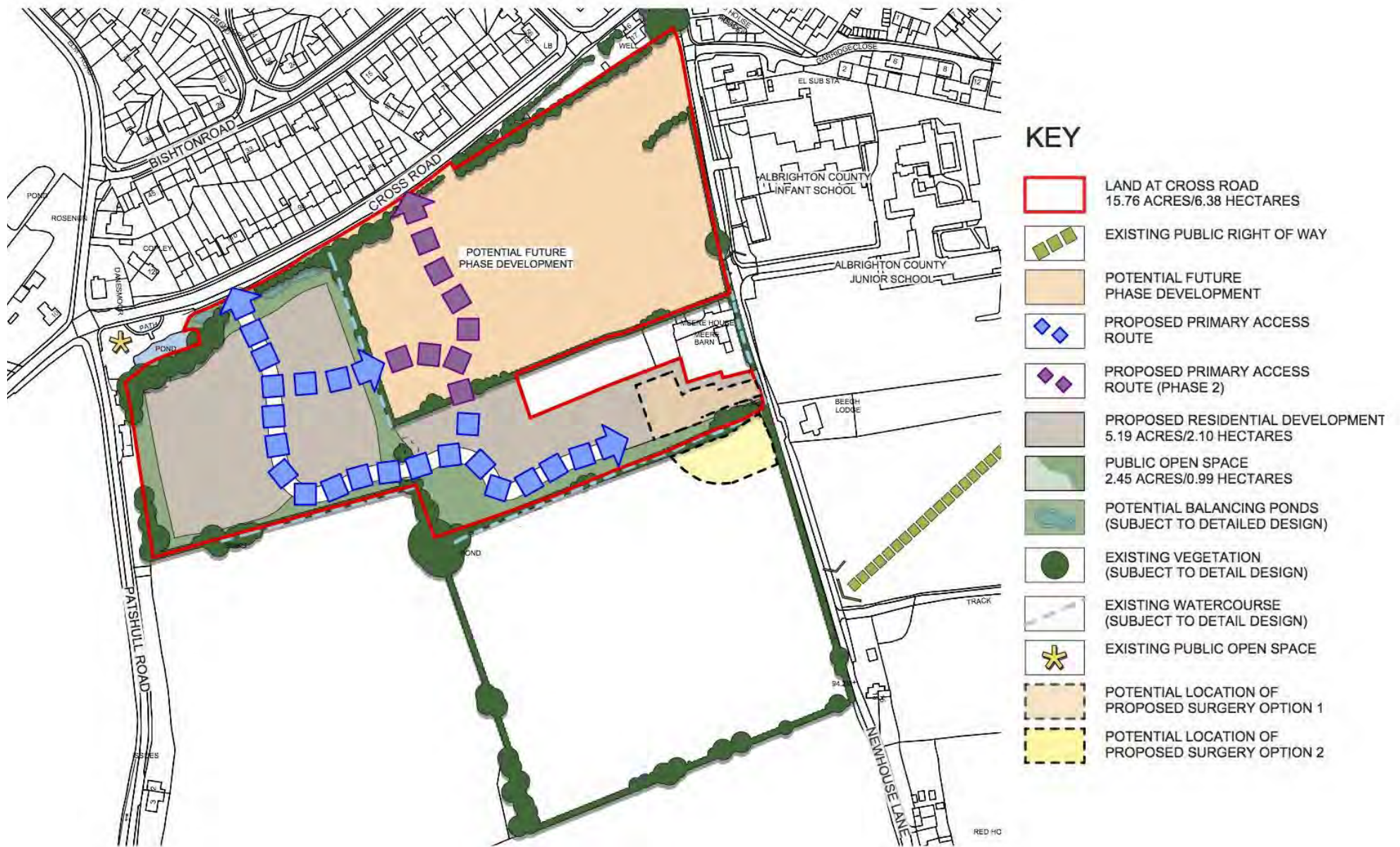


Gateway island to Albrighton towards Cross Road



Examples of Taylor Wimpey Homes





Framework and Conceptual Layout

The Development Framework for the site is shown above and provides a basic structure to deliver the vision and objectives in the form of a comprehensively planned and high quality residential extension to the village. This will ensure safe vehicular access with minimal crossings over existing mature hedgerows, will retain and enhance existing boundary vegetation to form a new defensible Green Belt boundary on its southern side, and allows for a two

phased development (as described in more detail overleaf). The southern-most field is not proposed for development – although could potentially accommodate a community building on its north-eastern corner – in recognition of its landscape character and openness.

Based upon this Development Framework, we have prepared a conceptual layout for the whole site as shown opposite, and described overleaf.



FIGURE 15:
DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



**FIGURE 16:
CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT**



KEY

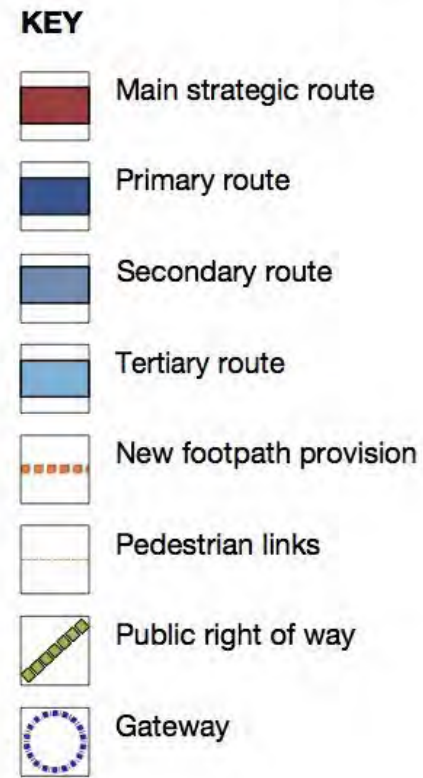
	PROPOSED SITE BOUNDARY (15.76 ACRES / 6.38 HECTARES)		PROPOSED FOOTPATH		EXISTING VEGETATION (SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN)		EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
	PROPOSED VEHICULAR ACCESS		PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CIRCA 160 DWELLINGS @ 35DPH 11.14 ACRES / 4.51 HECTARE		POTENTIAL NEW PLANTING		POTENTIAL NEW PEDESTRIAN CROSSING
	EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY		PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (INC SUDS) 4.08 ACRES / 1.65 HECTARES		EXISTING VEGETATION REMOVED		5M WIDE LANDSCAPE BUFFER
	PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN LINK		POTENTIAL BALANCING PONDS (SUBJECT TO DETAILED DESIGN)		EXISTING WATERCOURSE (SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN)		
	POTENTIAL PROVISION OF NEW FOOTPATH TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY						

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

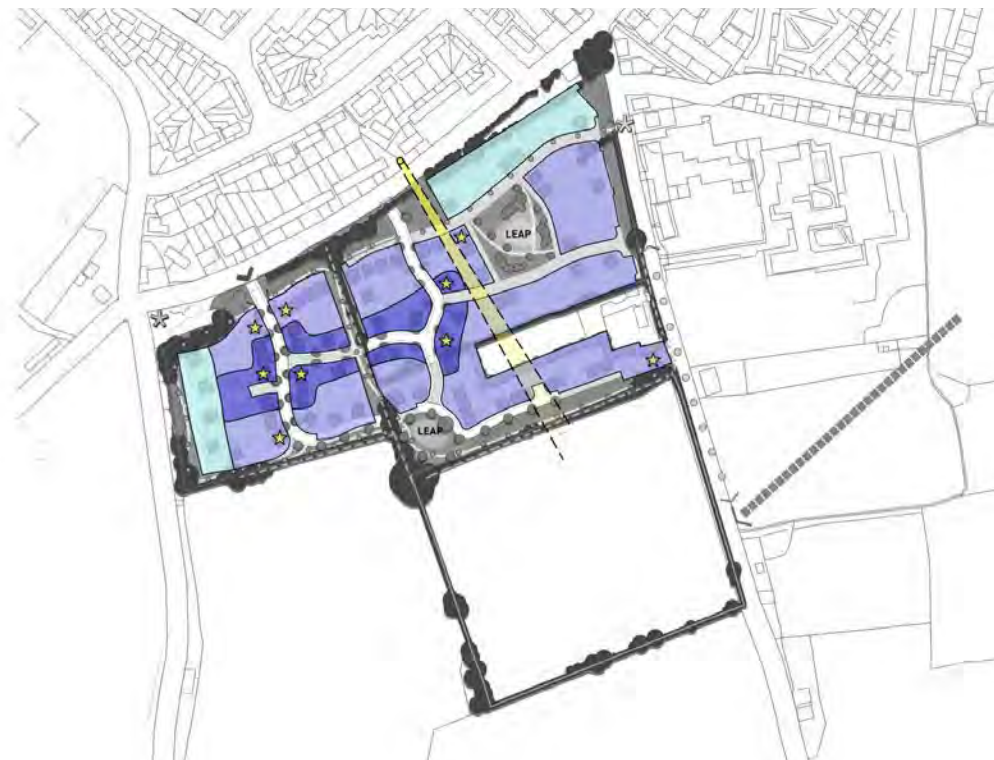
1. VEHICULAR ACCESS OFF CROSS ROAD;
2. LINEAR STREET MIRRORING EXISTING URBAN PATTERN;
3. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE INCORPORATING SUDS;
4. OUTWARD FACING RESIDENTIAL FRONTAGES;
5. 5M WIDE LANDSCAPE BUFFER;
6. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE RETAINING EXISTING LANDSCAPE;
7. EXISTING HEDGEROWS AND WATERCOURSE RETAINED;
8. CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACE; AND
9. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BUILDING SET BACK TO REFLECT EXISTING BUILT FORM.



The Conceptual Layout incorporates the following design principles and parameters:



**FIGURE 17:
ACCESS AND MOVEMENT
PLAN**



**FIGURE 18:
KEY VISION PRINCIPLES
PLAN**



KEY

- Residential development
(11.14 Acres/4.51 Hectares)
- Green infrastructure
(4.08 Acres/1.65 Hectares)
- Road infrastructure

**FIGURE 19:
LAND USE PLAN**

Access

New access points off Cross Road with the first provided approximately 100m east off the main gateway island from the A464 and a potential second identified further east to deliver the wider north-eastern development. This approach would avoid the need for a right-hand turn junction from Cross Road, and would provide a looped internal primary access road to serve the entire development and provide a permeable layout, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Potential exists to widen local footpaths along Newhouse Lane for pedestrian and cycle movement to link to the public right of way adjacent to the site.

Layout

A well-defined series of residential streets and character areas would be provided which respond to the internal road hierarchy. Greenspace would

be provided on the site boundaries, including along Cross Road to provide an attractive green entrance at this gateway to the village.

A landscape buffer would be provided adjoining Meere House/Barn to protect the residential amenity of these properties.

Scale and Design

The Conceptual Layout indicates that the entire site could accommodate approximately 160 dwellings on 6.38ha of land.

Building heights would relate to the internal street hierarchy with 2 and 2.5 storey properties adjoining the primary road and 1.5 and 2 storey dwellings throughout the wider areas. Dwellings will respond to the local vernacular and their relationship to open spaces, with attractive frontages to Cross Road to reflect the existing street pattern. Densities throughout the development vary to reflect location

and street function but will nevertheless reflect the character of recently developed housing areas with a mixture of both small and family size housing with an average density of circa 35 dwellings per hectare (based upon a net developable area of 4.5ha).

Landscape, Greenspace and Drainage

A series of green corridors will be provided to effectively contribute to site permeability and connectivity. In total, approximately 1.7ha of open space could be provided across the whole site which equates to almost 30% of the total development area. These areas will include retained hedgerows and trees and will differentiate between public and private realm whilst safeguarding and enhancing existing biodiversity and landscape character.

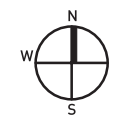
Phased Development

The Conceptual Layout allows for the development to be delivered in two phases. The first phase would comprise the fields currently controlled by Taylor Wimpey, as shown on **Figures 19 and 20** (edged in red), and is capable of being delivered independently to accommodate circa 80 dwellings with a single access off Cross Road. The first phase would be configured to include roads to link in with the second phase. The second phase would comprise the north-eastern field and is capable of delivering circa 80 dwellings.



**FIGURE 20:
INDICATIVE
PHASING PLAN**

- First Phase – (8.01 Acres/3.24 Hectares)
Indicating independent delivery of site
circa 80 no. dwellings
 - Second Phase – (7.75 Acres/3.14 Hectares)
Wider development serving an
additional 80 no units
- Total site use circa 160 no units net density of 35dph



**FIGURE 21:
CONCEPTUAL
LAYOUT FOR PHASE
ONE**

- KEY**
- PROPOSED SITE BOUNDARY (8.01 ACRES / 3.24 HECTARES)
 - PROPOSED VEHICULAR ACCESS
 - EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY
 - PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN LINK
 - POTENTIAL PROVISION OF NEW FOOTPATH TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY
 - PROPOSED FOOTPATH
 - PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (CIRCA 80 DWELLINGS @ 35DPH) 5.78 ACRES / 2.30 HECTARES
 - PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (INC SUDS) 2.45 ACRES / 0.99 HECTARES
 - POTENTIAL BALANCING PONDS (SUBJECT TO DETAILED DESIGN)
 - EXISTING VEGETATION (SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN)
 - POTENTIAL NEW PLANTING
 - EXISTING VEGETATION (REMOVED)
 - 5M WIDE LANDSCAPE BUFFER
 - EXISTING WATERCOURSE (SUBJECT TO DETAIL DESIGN)
 - EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. VEHICULAR ACCESS OFF CROSS ROAD;
2. LINEAR STREET MIRRORING EXISTING URBAN PATTERN;
3. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE INCORPORATING SUDS;
4. OUTWARD FACING RESIDENTIAL FRONTAGES;
5. 5M WIDE LANDSCAPE BUFFER;
6. PUBLIC OPEN SPACE RETAINING EXISTING LANDSCAPE;
7. EXISTING HEDGEROWS AND WATERCOURSE RETAINED;
8. CHILDREN'S PLAY SPACE; AND
9. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BUILDING SET BACK TO REFLECT EXISTING BUILT FORM.





Potential Community Facility

Taylor Wimpey have noted that there is local community aspiration to deliver for enhanced healthcare provision in the village, and we have discussed with the landowners the potential for such a use on the subject site as part of a wider residential development. Potential locations for a new and/or relocated health centre (or, indeed, some other type of community facility) are shown on **Figure 21**. Two potential sites are indicated with access from Newhouse Lane in close proximity to Albrighton Primary School.

We shall discuss the potential for this facility in further detail with the landowners, local community and Shropshire Council.



7.

Conclusion





7. Conclusion

The land at Cross Road is truly “deliverable” and should be released from the Green Belt through Shropshire’s Local Plan Review and allocated for residential development. The site provides a highly sustainable opportunity to accommodate circa 160 dwellings as part of a masterplan which delivers significant open space and green infrastructure which will create a new defensible Green Belt boundary and fully integrate with Albrighton village.

Available Now

The site as identified on the land control plan (**Figure 4**) is under the control of Taylor Wimpey, a national housebuilder who are committed to delivering a sustainable residential community on the site at the earliest opportunity following an appropriate allocation within the adoption of the new Local Plan.

This is in accordance with the recent Housing White Paper which emphasises the importance of delivering homes as swiftly as possible.

There are no legal or ownership impediments which would prevent the land from being delivered and the development has the potential to include adjoining land as a later phase.

Suitable

The site comprises Green Belt but the scale of housing need across the county amounts to an exceptional circumstance to justify the release of such land and we have demonstrated (in Section 4) that the release of the Cross Road site will not conflict

with the five purposes of Green Belt and there are no overriding technical constraints. The Partial Review of the Local Plan recognises Albrighton as a Key Centre and provides a sustainable location for an appropriate scale of housing given its accessibility and proximity to Wolverhampton, Telford and Shrewsbury.

Achievable

National planning policy and guidance state that sites are achievable where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This includes a judgement about the economic viability of the site and the capacity of the developer to complete the development over a certain period.

Albrighton is a sustainable village which is reflected in its strong housing market. The site is greenfield and will not be subject to any known major remediation or preparation costs. Taylor Wimpey have reviewed the economic viability of the site and proposals in terms of land values, market attractiveness/demand, sales rate and development costs, and can confirm that the development is economically viable. The site is, therefore, viable and, as a national housebuilder, Taylor Wimpey have the capacity to deliver the new community.

In terms of a delivery programme, if the site were to be allocated in the Local Plan, first completions could potentially occur as early as 2023 and the whole development (circa 160 dwellings) could potentially be delivered by 2027, subject to the timely grant of planning permission.

It can be concluded that the land at Cross Road is truly “deliverable”, providing a highly sustainable opportunity to create an attractive development at the gateway to Albrighton. It would deliver approximately 160 homes set within an extensive area of greenspace and fully integrated with the village.

In summary, the site will deliver a significant number of much-needed housing in the short and medium term in a sustainable location, a leading housebuilder is ready to deliver development swiftly and the proposed development is viable. As such, the site is achievable.

Taylor Wimpey are committed to working with Shropshire Council and the local community to design a high-quality and sympathetic development which delivers real benefits for the village. This document will be used to inform further discussions with Shropshire Council and the local community, and to support the proposed allocation of the site for development within the Local Plan Partial Review: Preferred site allocations document and the subsequent Local Plan examination.



Appendices

Appendix 1:

Taylor Wimpey UK Limited





Appendix 1:

Taylor Wimpey UK Limited

Taylor Wimpey UK Limited is a dedicated homebuilding company with over 126 years' experience; we have an unparalleled record in our industry. We aim to be the homebuilder of choice for our customers, our employees, our shareholders and for the communities in which we operate.

We have expertise in land acquisition, home and community design, urban regeneration and the development of supporting infrastructure which improves our customers' quality of life and adds value to their homes. We draw on our experience as a provider of quality homes but update that, to the expectations of today's buyers and strive to provide the best quality homes, while setting new standards of customer care in the industry. Our 23 regional businesses in the UK give our operations significant scale and truly national geographic coverage.

Each business builds a range of products, from one bedroom apartments and starter homes to large detached family homes for every taste and budget and as a result, our property portfolio displays a surprising diversity. The core business of the company is the development for homes on the open market, although we are strongly committed to the provision of low cost social housing through predominantly partnerships with Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords as well as a variety of Government bodies such as the Homes and Communities Agency.

With unrivalled experience of building homes and communities Taylor Wimpey today continues to be a dedicated house building company and is at the forefront of the industry in build quality, design, health and safety, customer service and satisfaction. Taylor Wimpey is committed to creating and delivering value for our customers and shareholders alike. Taylor Wimpey combines the strengths of a national developer with the focus of small local business units. This creates a unique framework of local and national knowledge, supported by the financial strength and highest standards of corporate governance of a major plc. Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land, a division of the UK business, is responsible for the promotion of future development opportunities, such as this site, through the planning system. The local business unit that will, in conjunction with Strategic Land, carry out housing and related development as part of this is Taylor Wimpey North West based in Warrington.

Taylor
Wimpey

**Land at Cross Road,
Albrighton**
Development Vision

Appendix 2

CSA Landscape Assessment



Cross Road, Albrighton

Landscape Appraisal and Green Belt Assessment

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

on behalf of
TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Report No: CSA/4021/04

January 2019

Report Reference	Date	Revision	Prepared by	Approved by	Comments
4021_04	02.10.18	-	BS	LG	First Issue
	31.01.19	A	BS	CA	Updated to Shropshire Part 2 Green Belt Study



CONTENTS

Page

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Landscape Policy Context	4
3.0	Site Context	11
4.0	Site Description And Visibility	15
5.0	Ability Of The Site To Accommodate Development	19
6.0	Conclusion	26

Appendices

Appendix A: Site Location Plan

Appendix B: Aerial Photograph

Appendix C: Photosheets

Appendix D: Magic Map and Heritage Information

Appendix E: Proposed Green Belt Boundary Plan

Appendix F: Methodology

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 CSA Environmental has been appointed by TW North Midlands (Strategic) to undertake a landscape appraisal and Green Belt assessment of land to the south of Cross Road, Albrighton ('the Site'). The Site is currently situated within the Green Belt and this report considers the impact of releasing the Site from the Green Belt in terms of its functions and purposes. The assessment also looks at a wider study area surrounding the Site in order to redefine the Green Belt boundary and determine the extents of developable land. The purpose of this report is to accompany representations to Shropshire Council in relation to their Local Plan partial review.
- 1.2 This assessment describes the existing landscape character and quality of the Site and the surrounding area. The report then goes on to discuss the ability of the Site to accommodate development and the potential landscape and visual effects on the wider area as well as the implications of releasing the Site from the Green Belt.
- 1.3 The Site comprises an area of land to the south of Albrighton, the location and extent of which is shown on the Site Location Plan in **Appendix A** and on the Aerial Photograph in **Appendix B**. It is bound by the existing settlement of Albrighton to the north, by Newhouse Lane to the east, by Patshull Road to the west and by agricultural fields to the south.

Methodology

- 1.4 This appraisal is based on a site visit undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced Landscape Architect in September 2018. The weather conditions at the time were overcast although visibility was generally good in near, middle and long distance views.
- 1.5 In landscape and visual appraisal, a distinction is drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, from residential properties and also from public rights of way and other areas with general public access). This report therefore considers the potential impact of the development on both landscape character and visibility. The methodology utilised in this report is contained in **Appendix F**.
- 1.6 Photographs contained within this document (**Appendix C**) were taken using a digital camera with a lens focal length approximating to

50mm, to give a similar depth of vision to the human eye. In some instances images have been combined to create a panorama.

2.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)

- 2.1 National policy is set out in the Revised National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and those parts relevant to this assessment are summarised below.
- 2.2 Paragraph 10 and 11 of the NPPF states that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be applied in relation to both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 2.3 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for, among other elements, the '*(d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*'
- 2.4 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high quality buildings and places. Paragraph 125 states that '*... design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.*'
- 2.5 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments, amongst others:
- '*will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - '*are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping;*
 - '*are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change...*'
- 2.6 In Section 13 'Protecting Green Belt Land' paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that the essential character of Green Belts is their openness and their permanence, with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl. Paragraph 134 sets out the five purposes which Green Belt should serve:

- *'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.'*

2.7 Paragraphs 136 to 139 outline the national planning policy relating to the definition of Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 136 states that, *'Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans...'*. Paragraph 139 outlines the elements that should be considered when defining Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 139 (f) states that plans should, *'define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*

2.8 Paragraph 143 and 144 deal with inappropriate development, which is by definition deemed to be harmful in the Green Belt. These paragraphs state that only in very special circumstances should inappropriate development be approved, and these circumstances will not be considered to exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

2.9 Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 170 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, *'... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'*. The paragraph also outlines that the planning system should recognise the, *'...intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.'*

Planning Practice Guidance

2.10 As set out on the Planning Policy Guidance ('PPG') website, the PPG will in due course be updated to reflect the changes following the publication of the Revised NPPF, and any hyperlinks to NPPF 2012 should be disregarded. The PPG paragraphs as set out on the website

will therefore remain relevant until they are updated, insofar as they are consistent with the Revised NPPF 2018. The guidance as relevant to this assessment covers landscape and the natural environment and the design of new developments.

- 2.11 The Design section of the guidance describes the importance of good design as an integral part of providing sustainable development. Paragraph 6 (ID: 26-006-20140306) states:

'Design impacts on how people interact with places. Although design is only part of the planning process it can affect a range of economic, social and environmental objectives beyond the requirement for good design in its own right. Planning policies and decisions should seek to ensure the physical environment supports these objectives.'

- 2.12 The following issues should be considered:

- local character (including landscape setting)
- safe, connected and efficient streets
- a network of greenspaces (including parks) and public places
- crime prevention
- security measures
- access and inclusion
- efficient use of natural resources
- cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.

- 2.13 Paragraph 7 of the Design section notes that the successful integration of all forms of development with their surrounding context is an important consideration.

- 2.14 Paragraph 001 of the Natural Environment Section of the Guidance notes that one of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. It notes that *'Local Plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.'*

Shropshire Development Plan

- 2.15 The current Development Plan for Shropshire Council includes two key documents; the Adopted Core Strategy (2011) and the Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (2015).

Adopted Core Strategy (2011)

- 2.16 The Core Strategy sets out the council's strategic objectives, vision and broad spatial strategy to guide future development and growth in Shropshire up to 2026. Albrighton is described as a town surrounded by metropolitan Green Belt, except on its far eastern edge. The demographic of the town is heavily influenced by the presence of nearby RAF Cosford, where numbers of trainees can vary widely. Further investigation is needed in the preparation of the Site Allocation and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev) DPD in order to determine the sustainable levels of growth that can be accommodated.

- 2.17 The main landscape policies relevant to the Site are as follows:

- 2.18 **Policy CS5: Countryside and Green Belt** states that within the Green Belt there will be additional control of new development in line with government guidance in PPG2. The Green Belt boundary and all relevant policy areas are shown on the Proposals Map in the SAMDev DPD, which sets out the detailed approach to development in the Green Belt.

- 2.19 **Policy CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles** states that development will be designed to a high quality using sustainable design principles, respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness through, among other things, taking account of the local context and character, having regard to national and local design guidance and landscape character assessments.

- 2.20 **Policy CS17: Environmental Networks** states that development will, among other things, protect and enhance the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment and will not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and function of these assets.

Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (2015)

- 2.21 The Site Allocation and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev Plan) sets out proposals for the use of land and detailed policies for the management of new development, in order to deliver the vision and

objectives of the Core Strategy and provide a greater level of detail on a number of planning issues.

- 2.22 The main landscape policies relevant to the Site are as follows:
- 2.23 **Policy MD2: Sustainable Design** states that development should, among other things, respond positively to local design aspirations as set out in Neighbourhood Plans and contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value. Proposals should also embrace opportunities for contemporary design where it reinforces distinctive local characteristics to create a positive sense of place and consider design of landscaping and open space holistically, including existing landscape character, trees, hedges, woodland and watercourses. Developments should provide adequate open space of at least 30sqm per person and where over 20 dwellings in quantum, should include functional recreational space for play, recreation, formal or informal use.
- 2.24 **Policy MD6: Green Belt** states that development proposals in the Green Belt must be able to demonstrate that they do not conflict with the purposes on the Green Belt.
- 2.25 The SAMDev Plan goes on to say that a detailed review of the Green Belt boundary will be undertaken in the Local Plan review, when considering sustainable growth options.
- 2.26 **Policy MD12: The Natural Environment** states, among other things, that proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on a number of factors including visual amenity and landscape character, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there are no alternative means of avoiding such impacts (or alternative sites), the social or economic benefits of the proposals outweigh the harm and mitigation and compensation measures are provided.
- 2.27 **Policy S1: Albrighton Area** states that Albrighton will deliver around 250 dwellings over the plan period, identifying two allocated sites on the Policies Map, with small windfall sites within the development boundary making up the balance. It also identifies safeguarded land to the east of Albrighton for long term development needs.

Shropshire Local Plan Review (2017)

- 2.28 Shropshire Council are currently undertaking a partial review of the Local Plan, which will consider housing and employment land requirements, the distribution of development and a review of Green Belt boundaries.

Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan 'Light'

- 2.29 The Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan 'Light' was adopted for development management purposes by Shropshire Council in September 2013. The main landscape policies relevant to the Site are as follows:
- 2.30 **Policy ALB10: Landscape and Wildlife** states that all new development should demonstrate how they protect and enhance the appearance of the surrounding area. The quality of landscape design will be a significant consideration when assessing schemes, and the planting of native trees is encouraged as well as preserving and extending the network of hedgerows. Any development which would adversely affect the ponds and streams in Albrighton will be strongly resisted.
- 2.31 **Policy ALB11: Design** states that development should recognise and respect the distinctive and historic settlement pattern of the area, by among other things, allowing views out of the village to the surrounding countryside and providing open spaces that reflect the village green character of the older parts of Albrighton. It also states that large scale new development should seek to include footpaths and cycleways to link to the existing parts of the village.

Shropshire Green Belt Assessment (September 2017)

- 2.32 The Shropshire Green Belt Assessment was undertaken by LUC on behalf of Shropshire Council. The purpose of the report was to provide an independent assessment of how the Shropshire Green Belt contributes to the five national Green Belt purposes asset out in the NPPF. Whilst the study may identify areas of Green Belt which are performing less well against the purposes, it does not advise on the suitability or potential of land in the Green Belt for development. Such findings would indicate the need for a separate Green Belt Review.
- 2.33 The Site lies wholly within land parcel P36, which extends southwards to Holyhead Road as well as encompassing land to both the east and west of the Site. The assessment found that parcel P36 plays no contribution in checking the unrestrictive urban sprawl of a large built up area, plays a weak role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging and plays a moderate role in assisting in the safeguarding of countryside from encroachment. The parcel is assessed as playing a strong role in preserving the setting and special character of historic towns, with a small portion of the north eastern parcel corner lying within the Conservation Area. The study does however state that the land adjacent to the settlement edge in the north west (in the vicinity of the Site) has no intervisibility with the Conservation Area and therefore performs a weaker role against this purpose. All parcels within

the study make an equally significant contribution to assisting in urban regeneration through the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Shropshire Green Belt Review Stage 2 (November 2018)

- 2.34 The Shropshire Green Belt Review Stage 2 was undertaken by LUC on behalf of Shropshire Council and follows on from the Stage 1 assessment, using the same parcel references. The main aim of the Stage 2 assessment is to assess the potential harm of releasing areas of potential development opportunity from the Green Belt. The level of harm is graded on a 5-point scale (from high to low) and informed by a number of key factors including the potential implications of the loss of openness, the contribution to the NPPF Green Belt purposes and the strength of the Green Belt boundary / urban edge. The assessment states that professional judgement is used to rate the level of harm to the Green Belt, taking the above factors into consideration.
- 2.35 The assessment found that parcel P36 is strongly associated with the wider area of open countryside to the south of Albrighton and contains a limited amount of built development. The assessment states that the release of parcel P36 from the Green Belt would lead to a significant level of encroachment into the countryside and would compromise the role this Green Belt land plays in preserving the setting of the historical settlement area within Albrighton. Overall the assessment states that release of parcel P36 would result in a High level of harm to the Green Belt.
- 2.36 The Part 2 assessment goes on to identify a sub-parcel within the north west of parcel P36, which comprises land at the Site together with the properties and narrow field which indent the Site's eastern boundary. The sub-parcel is stated as being more closely related to the settlement edge than the wider countryside, being contained on two sides by the settlement edge and not playing a significant role in contributing to the setting of the historic settlement. The assessment states that the release of sub-parcel P36 is unlikely to significantly weaken the role neighbouring areas of land are playing as Green Belt. It is considered within the assessment that its release would lead to a Moderate level of harm to the Green Belt.
- 2.37 A number of mitigation measures associated with the release of sub-parcel P36 are identified in the assessment. These include the retention and strengthening of the southern boundary hedgerow with new trees and infill hedgerow planting; the strengthening of the hedgerows along Patshull Road; and restricting of development to low density two storey residential development.

3.0 SITE CONTEXT

Site Context

- 3.1 The Site is located on the southern settlement edge of Albrighton, within Shropshire. The Site location and its immediate context are illustrated on the Site Location Plan and Aerial Photograph in **Appendices A** and **B**, and on the photographs contained within **Appendix C**.
- 3.2 The Site is bound to the north by Cross Road and the built up settlement edge of Albrighton, comprising residential development along the northern edge of Cross Road, together with the Albrighton Sports and Social Club. An area of incidental open space including a pond lies immediate adjacent to the north western boundary of the Site. The built up area continues north, with predominantly residential development. Albrighton High Street, including a mixture of retail, commercial and residential development is located approximately 0.35km to the north east at its closest point. Albrighton railway station lies approximately 1km north east of the Site. RAF Cosford which includes large areas of built form, lies approximately 1.5km north west of the Site.
- 3.3 To the east, the Site is bound by Newhouse Lane, together with three residential properties and an associated paddock which indent the eastern Site boundary. The Albrighton Primary School is situated to the immediate east of Newhouse Lane, and comprises single and two storey buildings together with large areas of hardstanding for outdoor play. Land to the east of the school is predominantly agricultural, although several large properties and Albrighton Hall are located along Kingswood Road, beyond the eastern settlement edge.
- 3.4 The Site is bound to the south by agricultural fields which continue towards Holyhead Road (A464), approximately 0.75km south of the Site. Palshull Road and Newhouse Lane both extend southwards to join Holyhead Road, with several scattered properties along both roads. A cluster of buildings at the junction of Palshull Road and Holyhead Road includes Lea Hall and Lea Farm.
- 3.5 To the west, the Site is bound by a single residential property and associated garden which separates the Site from Palshull Road. To the west of the road lies predominantly agricultural land, which is bisected by Cross Road as it leads south west towards Holyhead Road. Several detached properties are located along the northern edge of Cross Road beyond the western settlement edge, as well as a cluster of large industrial warehouses at Enterprise Business Park.

National Landscape Character

- 3.6 Natural England has produced profiles for England's National Character Areas ('NCA'), which divides England into 159 distinct natural areas, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, cultural and economic activity. The Site lies on the boundary between the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain Character Area (NCA 61) to the north and the Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau Character Area (NCA 66) to the south.
- 3.7 The Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA is described as an extensive, gently undulating plain dominated by dairy farming, with patches of arable and mixed farming in the north and south east. Field patterns are generally strong, with well-maintained hedgerow and dense hedgerow tree lined field boundaries. Woodland cover is sparse and generally confined to the area around Northwich and within estates. The area is crossed by several National Cycle Routes and nearly 5,000 km of public rights of way.
- 3.8 The Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau NCA is described as comprising an undulating landscape with tree-lined ridges on the plateau in the core and east of the NCA, whilst the west comprises irregular topography and steep wooded gorges of the Severn Valley. The field pattern on the plateau comprises large, open arable fields with a weak hedgerow pattern, whilst the west comprises a mixture of arable and pasture with smaller, irregular shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees. Mixed woodland and orchards interlock across the NCA to give a well wooded landscape, whilst conifer plantations and parklands give an estate character.
- 3.9 From our own assessment of the Site and its surroundings we would note that it is more typical of the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire NCA, with the landscape generally comprising well vegetated field boundaries with a mixture of arable and pastoral fields and generally sparse woodland cover.

District Landscape Character

The Shropshire Landscape Typology

- 3.10 The Shropshire Landscape Typology was produced by Shropshire County Council, together with a number of organisations, in September 2006, with the overall aim of managing landscape change in a sustainable way.
- 3.11 The assessment identifies 27 different Landscape Types (LTs), with the Site lying within the Sandstone Estatelands LT. Key characteristics of the Sandstone Estatelands LT include:

- Arable land use;
- Regular field patterns;
- Parkland with associated country houses;
- Clustered settlement pattern; and
- Medium – large scale, open landscapes.

3.12 The landscape is described as a gently rolling open landscape formed over largely Permo-Triassic sandstones. The landscape today is predominantly arable with some mixed farming and areas of parkland and associated country houses occurring throughout the landscape. Beyond the parkland, tree cover generally comprises thinly scattered field and hedgerow trees, with occasional blocks of planted woodland, some of which are of ancient origin. Modern day farming practices have favoured the intensive arable regime, creating enlarged fields and open vistas.

3.13 From our own assessment of the Site, we would note that whilst it exhibits some characteristics of the Sandstone Estatelands LT, it is in pastoral use and has a more enclosed character owing to its established field boundaries, with few opportunities to view the Site from its wider area.

Designated Sites and Heritage Assets

3.14 The Site is not covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality. The Site lies wholly within the Green Belt.

3.15 The Albrighton Conservation Area lies to the north east of the Site, approximately 260m at its closest point, continuing east to include Albrighton Hall. The Boningale Conservation Area lies due south of the Site, approximately 820m from the Site at its closest point. A number of Listed Buildings lie within the wider vicinity of the Site (**Appendix D**).

Tree Preservation Orders ('TPO')

3.16 Two trees situated on the eastern boundary of Area B of the Site, adjacent to Newhouse Lane are covered by TPO SC/00019/10. This information was ascertained through email correspondence with Shropshire Council's Natural Environment department on 10th October 2018.

Public Rights of Way

3.17 There are no public rights of way crossing or adjoin the Site boundaries.

3.18 Public footpath 0102/9/1 leads north east from Newhouse Lane to the south east of the Site, past the Albrighton Primary School before

connecting with the wider network of public rights of way on the southern edge of Albrighton. Public bridleway 0102/8/2 leads east from Cross Road to the north east of the Site, along Garridge Close before connecting with public footpath 0102/9/1.

- 3.19 Public rights of way within the wider context of the Site are shown on the Site Location Plan at **Appendix A**.

4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

Site Description

- 4.1 The Site occupies an area of land comprising three roughly rectangular shaped, pastoral fields which for the purpose of this report have been labelled Areas A, B and C as shown on the Aerial Photograph at **Appendix B**.
- 4.2 Area A comprises a broadly square shaped pastoral field which is currently used to keep cattle. It is bound to the north by a mixed species hedgerow with occasional hedgerow trees and a tree group which separate Area A from Cross Road and the incidental open space respectively. To the west, Area A is bound by the boundary fence to No.1 Patshull Road, with a single specimen tree along this boundary. A mixed species hedgerow defines the southern boundary to Area A, with two hedgerow trees located within the western section of hedgerow. The eastern boundary to Area A is defined by a mixed species hedgerow with occasional small hedgerow trees. A field gate on the eastern boundary of Area A provides access into the adjacent field at Area C.
- 4.3 Area B comprises a broadly rectangular shaped pastoral field which is also used to keep cattle. A cluster of agricultural barns occupy the north eastern corner of Area B at Garage Farm, with access off Newhouse Lane to the east. The barns are of predominantly corrugated steel construction and painted black. Area B's field boundaries comprise mixed species hedgerows, with occasional hedgerow trees. A small area of trees and scrub vegetation lies in the north western corner of Area B. A field gate on the northern boundary of Area B provides field access off Cross Road and a field gate on the eastern boundary provides field access off Newhouse Lane. A field gate is also located on the southern boundary of Area B, providing access to the adjacent field at Area C.
- 4.4 Area C comprises an irregular shaped field which is divided into two by post and rail fencing. The easternmost part of the field is used to keep horses, with a small pitched roof barn located in the south east corner of the field. The westernmost part of Area C is in pastoral use. Field gates provide access to the adjacent fields at Areas A & B. The field boundaries generally comprise intact hedgerows, with occasional hedgerow trees along the southern field boundary.

Topography

- 4.5 The Site is relatively flat, situated at approximately 92m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Land to the north, within the built up area of Albrighton, generally undulates between 85m and 100m AOD. Land to the south, east and west of the Site generally undulates between similar levels, although the land in the vicinity of Kingswood, approximately 3km to the south east of the Site, rises up to approximately 150m AOD.

Landscape Quality, Sensitivity and Value

- 4.6 The Site comprises three medium sized pastoral fields, with field boundaries defined by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees. The hedgerow trees are typically of Category B quality and assessed as being of medium landscape quality. A single oak tree on the southern boundary of Area A is of Category A quality and two trees on the eastern boundary of Area B are covered by a TPO. These trees are assessed as having high landscape quality. The pastoral fields are assessed as being of medium landscape quality.
- 4.7 The overall landscape character of the Site is more enclosed than is typical of the Sandstone Estate lands LT, with well-defined field boundaries comprising hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The Site is also influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge with a number of properties overlooking the Site. Overall the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape quality and sensitivity.
- 4.8 In terms of landscape value, the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character. There is no public access across the Site although it is likely to be valued at a local level for its openness by neighbouring residents. The Site is assessed as having overall medium landscape value. It is therefore not considered to be a 'Valued Landscape' for the purpose of paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

Visibility

- 4.9 The level of vegetation cover along the Site's field boundaries and within the surrounding fields limits opportunities to view the Site from its surroundings. The Site is overlooked by a number of properties to the immediate north and east as well as a single property to the west.
- 4.10 The following section describes representative views of the Site from public vantage points in the vicinity.

South

- 4.11 Views from Patshull Road on the approach from the south look across the intervening fields, with the Site screened from view by field boundary vegetation. A glimpsed view of the buildings at Albrighton Primary School is possible in middle distance views from this route (**photograph 17**).
- 4.12 Views from Holyhead Road (A464) are limited to near distance views of the adjacent fields, with field boundary vegetation preventing views of the Site (**photograph 18**).
- 4.13 Views from public footpath Shropshire 0111/1/1 to the south east of the Site look across the intervening fields, with the Site screened from view by intervening vegetation. Properties along Newhouse Lane (approximately 400m south of the Site) are visible from this route (**photograph 19**).
- 4.14 Views from public footpath Shropshire 0111/2/1 to the south east of the Site look across the intervening field, with the Site screened from view by intervening field boundary vegetation. Glimpsed views of the roofs of properties along Newhouse Lane to the south of the Site are possible from this route (**photograph 20**).
- 4.15 Long distance views from public footpath Shropshire 0111/13/1 to the south east of the Site look across the intervening landscape, with intervening landform and vegetation screening the Site and Albrighton from view (**photograph 21**).

East

- 4.16 Views from Newhouse Lane to the immediate east of the Site are predominantly screened by the roadside hedgerow and trees. A framed view of the barns at Garage Farm in the north eastern corner of the Site are possible as well as a narrow framed view into Area B at the existing field access gate (**photographs 13 & 14**).
- 4.17 Views from properties on Newhouse Lane including Meere House and Meere Barn look across Areas B and C of the Site, with views partially filtered by vegetation within the gardens of properties. These views are from predominantly first floor windows with occasional ground floor views possible (**photographs 02 & 03**).
- 4.18 Oblique first floor views are possible from a number of buildings at Albrighton Primary School, looking towards Areas B & C of the Site. Intervening field boundary vegetation provides some filtering of these views (**photographs 01 & 03**).

- 4.19 The Site is screened in views from public footpath Shropshire 0102/9/1 by intervening field boundary vegetation. Partial views of the buildings at Albrighton Primary School and properties on Newhouse Lane are possible in near distance views from this route (**photographs 15 & 16**).

North

- 4.20 Views from Cross Road to the immediate north of the Site are generally well screened by the Site's northern boundary vegetation although occasional glimpsed views into the northern parts of the Site are possible through short breaks in the boundary vegetation (**photographs 09, 10 & 11**). The Site is screened in views on the approach from the west along Cross Road by intervening vegetation, although a near distance framed view of the property at No.1 Patshull Road is possible (**photograph 07**).
- 4.21 Views from the incidental open space on Cross Road to the immediate north west of the Site are predominantly screened by intervening trees and hedgerow vegetation, although a glimpsed view into the north western corner of the Site is possible (**photograph 08**).
- 4.22 The Site's two northernmost fields (Areas A & B) are visible in first floor views from a number of properties on Cross Road, above the northern boundary hedgerow (**photographs 01, 02 & 04**). Ground floor views of the Site from these properties are prevented by the intervening vegetation.
- 4.23 Views from Albert Road look towards the established vegetation along Cross Road which screens the Site from view. Glimpsed views of the agricultural barns at Garage Farm in the north east corner of the Site are possible in near distance views from this road (**photograph 12**).

West

- 4.24 Views from Patshull Road to the immediate west of the Site look towards the property and boundary fence of No.1 Patshull Road, which together with boundary vegetation prevent views of the Site (**photographs 05 & 06**).
- 4.25 Views of Area A in the western part of the Site are possible from the single storey residential property at No.1 Patshull Road, with field boundary vegetation screening the eastern parts of the Site from view (**photograph 04**).

5.0 ABILITY OF THE SITE TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 This section provides a brief appraisal of the ability of the Site to accommodate development, in terms of the landscape and visual constraints and effects. It then continues to consider the implications of releasing the land from the Green Belt in relation to the five national purposes.

5.2 The Site is being promoted for residential development through the emerging Local Plan. Key landscape and visual principles which should be taken into consideration within any design proposals are as follows:

- Retention of the vegetated field boundaries, in particular the two trees on the eastern Site boundary which are covered by a Tree Preservation Order. This vegetation should be retained, enhanced where appropriate and incorporated into proposed green infrastructure corridors through the proposed development.
- Proposed built form to be limited to two storeys in height, reflecting the adjoining townscape and respecting the adjacent countryside to the south. The layout should also be sensitively designed to respect adjacent properties on Newhouse Lane and Patshull Road.
- Creation of public open space within the Site contributing to the amenity and biodiversity value of the Site, to include a children's play space and native planting. This open space could positively address the pond to the immediate north west of the Site.
- Provision of new tree planting along the southern Site boundary hedgerow, reinforcing this as a strong defensible Green Belt boundary and providing further screening of the proposals in views from the south.
- Creation of a pedestrian footway through the Site, linking to public bridleway 0102/8/2 adjacent to the north east corner of the Site along Garridge Close.
- Sensitive design of the proposed access road off either Cross Road or Newhouse Lane, minimising vegetation loss and mitigating any loss with new tree and hedgerow planting.

Relationship to Existing Development

- 5.3 The Site is bound to the north and in part to the east by the existing settlement edge of Albrighton, with housing along Cross Road and the buildings associated with Albrighton Primary School defining the settlement edge. The Site is also bound by properties at Meere Barn and Meere House to the east and by the property at No.1 Patshull Road. Development of the Site would therefore represent a well-connected and contained extension to the southern edge of Albrighton.

Impact of Releasing the Site from the Green Belt

- 5.4 The Shropshire Green Belt Review Stage 2 identifies the Site (together with the properties and paddock which indent it to its eastern boundary), as sub-parcel p36. Although sub-parcel p36 is not assessed in isolation within the assessment against the NPPF Green Belt purposes, it is stated to be more closely associated with the settlement edge than the wider countryside and its release is stated as being unlikely to weaken the role neighbouring areas of land are playing as Green Belt.
- 5.5 The assessment concludes that the release of sub-parcel p36 would result in a Moderate level of harm to the Green Belt. Although the assessment states that professional judgement is used to assess the overall level of harm, we would consider the grading slightly high, given the relative poor performance of the sub-parcel against the five NPPF purposes, the strength of the sub-parcel's southern boundary and the limited impact its release would have on the wider Green Belt. In our own professional judgement, we would consider Low-Moderate to be a more appropriate level of harm associated with releasing sub-parcel p36 from the Green Belt.
- 5.6 From our own assessment of establishing an alternative Green Belt boundary, we would note that the existing Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Albrighton Primary School follows the outer edges of the school buildings rather than the boundaries of the school grounds, which are well vegetated with mature trees to the eastern and southern boundaries. The Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the school could be redefined to follow the vegetated boundaries of the school, which aligns with the Site's southern boundary. This would represent a clearly identifiable and defensible boundary in Green Belt terms and would be more robust than the existing boundary at the school.
- 5.7 The whole of the Site, together with land to its immediate west, immediate east and the southern area of the school grounds could be removed from the Green Belt, with the boundary redefined along the

well vegetated southern edge of this parcel (as illustrated on the Proposed Green Belt Boundary Plan within **Appendix E**).

- 5.8 The following sections provide an assessment of the Site together with the adjacent land as described above and illustrated on the Proposed Green Belt Boundary Plan, against the first four purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF. It then considers the appropriateness of the proposed redefined Green Belt boundary against paragraph 139 of the NPPF. The 5th purpose of the Green Belt is not considered, as in the Shropshire Green Belt Assessment, on the basis that this purpose is considered to apply equally to all areas within the Green Belt.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 5.9 The Site and land to the immediate east and west, is bound by Patshull Road in the west and well vegetated field boundaries to the south and east. These represent clearly identifiable and defensible boundaries in Green Belt terms and would regularise the existing boundary at the Albrighton Primary School. These defensible boundaries would contain any development within an established landscape framework and would not lead to unrestricted sprawl of Albrighton.

To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 5.10 In terms of neighbouring towns merging, the nearest settlement to the south of Albrighton is the hamlet of Boningale. Release of the Site and land to the immediate east and west would result in a relatively minor reduction in the gap between these settlements, retaining a gap of at least 0.9km at its closest point, and would not therefore lead to coalescence. The land between these settlements has well vegetated field boundaries, preventing any perceived coalescence.

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 5.11 The Site and land to the immediate east and west, contains a number of existing buildings at Garage Farm, No.1 Patshull Road and at Meere House and Meere Barn, all of which influence the character of the land. The land is also overlooked by neighbouring properties on Cross Road to its immediate north and by the school buildings to the east. These factors all influence the land, giving it an urban fringe character, and resulting in it performing less well against this purpose than the wider open countryside. Given this and the clearly identifiable boundaries which bound the land, its planned release from the Green Belt for development would not result in encroachment into the wider countryside.

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 5.12 The Site and land to its immediate east and west do not adjoin the Albrighton Conservation Area (which lies to the north east) and there is no inter-visibility between this land and the Conservation Area. As such release of this land from the Green Belt would not affect the setting or special character of any historic town.
- 5.13 In summary, the Site and immediately adjacent land to the east and west, plays a limited role against the first four Green Belt purposes and this parcel of land could be released from the Green Belt without compromising these purposes.

Landscape Features

- 5.14 The Site comprises three pastoral fields, with the main landscape features, including established hedgerows and hedgerow trees confined to the field boundaries. A small area of trees and scrub vegetation lies in the north western corner of Area B. Two trees on the eastern Site boundary adjacent to Newhouse Lane are covered by a Tree Preservation Order and single tree on the southern boundary of Area A is a Category A oak tree. These trees should be retained within any development proposals.
- 5.15 Development proposals which retain and sensitively incorporate the Site's established field boundary vegetation into the layout, will ensure that new housing is well integrated into the wider landscape context. Where vegetation removal is required to facilitate access into the Site and between the development parcels, this should be informed by a tree survey and utilise existing breaks in the boundary vegetation where possible. Further tree and hedgerow planting should also be considered within development proposals to reinforce existing field boundaries as required, as well as softening views from neighbouring properties and from surrounding roads. This should include further tree planting to the southern Site boundary which will become the redefined settlement boundary.

Landscape Character and Quality

- 5.16 As set out in Section 4, the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality, although two trees along the eastern Site boundary are covered by a TPO. The Site is assessed as being of medium landscape quality, sensitivity and value.
- 5.17 The Site is well related to the urban edge of Albrighton and the proposed development would be contained by the well vegetated field boundaries to the south and east and by Patshull Road to the

west. It is anticipated that the majority of the Site's existing tree and hedgerow vegetation could be retained and incorporated into green infrastructure corridors within a sensitively designed layout. The proposals should also include new landscaping and areas of open space for both amenity and biodiversity value.

- 5.18 In summary, by adopting the landscape principles as set out above, we consider that appropriate landscape led proposals can be accommodated on the Site without resulting in material harm to the wider landscape and visual character.

Visibility

- 5.19 The visual appraisal in Section 4 identifies that the Site is generally well contained from its surroundings by established vegetation along its boundaries, although a number of properties overlook the Site. There are limited opportunities for views of the Site beyond its immediate surroundings. The following provides a summary of the likely views resulting from development of the Site, assuming the principles set out in section 5.2.

South

- 5.20 Proposed views from Patshull Road on the approach from the south will be predominantly screened by intervening vegetation, although occasional glimpsed views of the roofs of new houses on the Site will be possible. New tree planting to the southern Site boundary will further filter these views as it matures.
- 5.21 The proposed housing on Site will not be visible from Holyhead Road (A464), with intervening field boundary vegetation screening views.
- 5.22 The proposed housing will not be visible from public footpaths Shropshire 0111/1/1 and 0111/2/1, with intervening landform and vegetation screening views.
- 5.23 The proposed housing will be not be visible in long distance views from public footpath Shropshire 0111/13/1, with intervening landform and vegetation screening views.

East

- 5.24 Proposed views from Newhouse Lane will look towards the new housing in the east of the Site which will be visible above the boundary hedgerow which will be retained where possible, with new and retained tree planting providing additional filtering of views. Views of the new access road into the Site will also be possible, should it be located off Newhouse Lane, with framed views of the housing possible at this point.

- 5.25 The new housing in the southern and eastern part of the Site will be visible in ground and first floor views from properties on Newhouse Lane including Meere House and Meere Barn. Sensitive design and orientation of housing in the vicinity of these properties together with new tree planting will help to minimise the extent of these views.
- 5.26 The new housing in the east of the Site will be visible in ground and first floor views from a number of buildings at Albrighton Primary School. These views will look above the eastern boundary hedgerow, which will be retained where possible, with retained and new tree planting to this boundary providing further filtering of views.
- 5.27 Partial views of the new houses in the eastern part of the Site will be possible in near distance views from public footpath Shropshire 0102/9/1, seen alongside the existing properties on Newhouse Lane. Vegetation to the Site boundaries and within the adjacent school grounds will filter these views. The new housing will not be visible from this footpath as it continues east of the school, with the well vegetated eastern boundary of the school screening views.

North

- 5.28 Proposed views from Cross Road to the immediate north will look towards the new houses in the north of the Site, which will be seen above the retained northern boundary hedgerow. Views of the new access road into the Site will also be possible, should it be located off Cross Road, with framed views of the housing possible at this point. Proposed views on the approach from the west along Cross Road will be predominantly screened by roadside vegetation although framed near distance view will look towards the upper floors and roofs of the new houses in the west of the Site, seen behind and alongside the existing property at No.1 Patshull Road.
- 5.29 Proposed views from the incidental open space on Cross Road will be predominantly screened by the retained vegetation surrounding the pond, although there will be filtered views of the new houses in the north western part of the Site.
- 5.30 The new houses in the north of the Site will be visible from a number of properties on Cross Road to the immediate north of the Site. These views will be filtered by the retained northern boundary hedgerow and hedgerow trees and will be from predominantly first floor windows with occasional ground floor views also possible. Views of the new access road into the Site will also be possible, should it be located off Cross Road, with framed views of the housing possible at this point.

- 5.31 Proposed views from Albert Road will be limited to near distance views towards the vegetation along Cross Road, with properties along Albert Road framing these views. Partial views of the upper floors and roofs of the new houses in the north east of the Site will be possible above this vegetation, seen alongside the Albert Road properties.

West

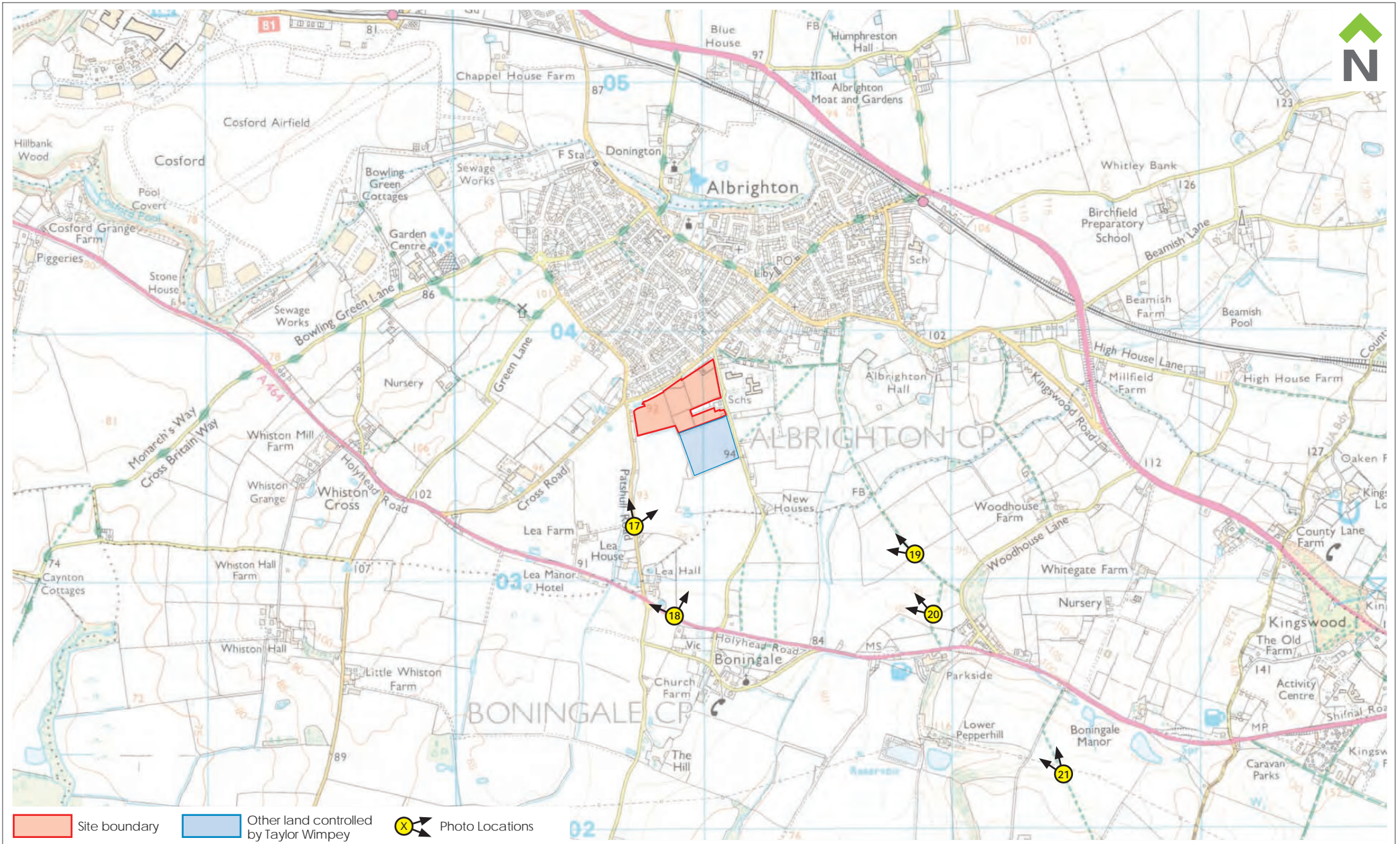
- 5.32 Proposed views from Patshull Road to the immediate west of the Site will look towards the upper floors and roofs of properties in the west of the Site, which will be seen above the boundary fence and property at No.1 Patshull Road. New tree planting to the western Site boundary will help to filter these views as it matures.
- 5.33 Proposed views from No.1 Patshull Road will look towards the new houses in the western part of the Site. Sensitive design and orientation of housing in the vicinity of this property together with new tree and understorey planting to the western Site boundary will help to minimise the extent of these views.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Site is located adjacent to the southern settlement edge of Albrighton, with the Albrighton Primary School and several residential properties located to the immediate east along Newhouse Lane and a single residential property located to the immediate west along Patshull Road. It is bound by agricultural fields to the south.
- 6.2 The Site comprises existing farm buildings at Garage Farm and three pastoral fields, with field boundaries generally comprising established hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Two trees situated on the eastern Site boundary are covered by a TPO. The Site is assessed as being of an overall *Medium* landscape quality, sensitivity and value.
- 6.3 The Site is generally well screened from its surroundings by established vegetation. A number of near distance views of the Site are possible from adjacent properties which overlook the Site, as well as glimpsed views into the Site from the adjacent roads.
- 6.4 The Site lies within the Green Belt and adjoins the existing settlement boundary to the immediate north and in part to the east. The Site, together with land to its immediate east and west could be removed from the Green Belt, without compromising the first four purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the NPPF. The revised Green Belt boundary would follow the well vegetated southern Site boundary, continuing east to the well vegetated boundary of the Albrighton Primary School. A Proposed Green Belt Boundary Plan is included within **Appendix E**.
- 6.5 The assessment also sets out key landscape principles which should be taken into account within design proposals. These include the retention of existing vegetation and incorporation of these into new green infrastructure corridors, the provision of public open space including a children's play space, the sensitive design and orientation of built form adjacent to existing properties and the inclusion of a new footway, linking to the adjacent bridleway along Garridge Close. By adopting these landscape principles, the Site can be developed without resulting in material harm to the surrounding landscape and visual character.

Appendix A

Site Location Plan



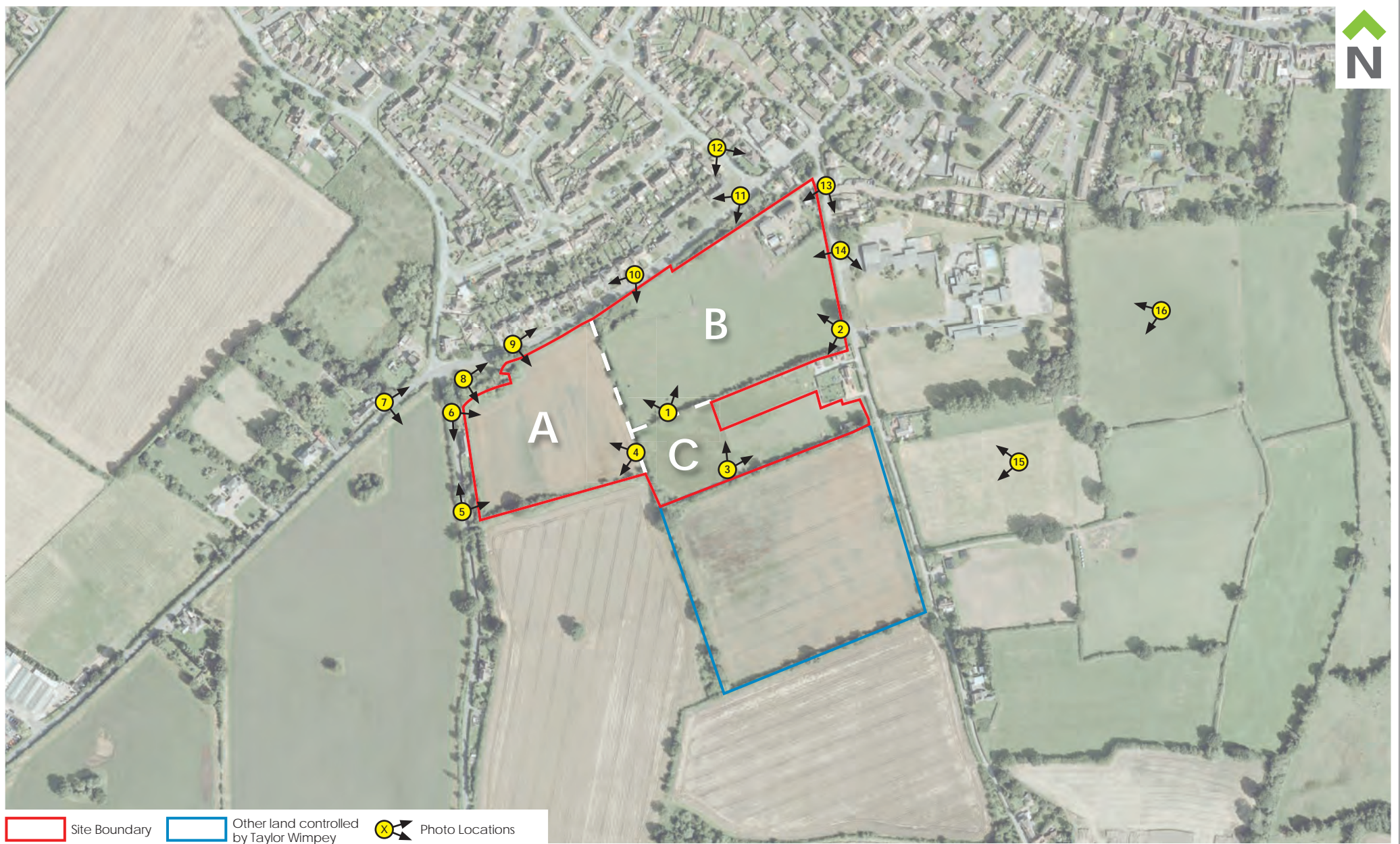
Dixies Barns, High Street,
 Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT
 t 01462 743647
 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
 w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire
Drawing Title Site Location Plan
Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Date September 2018 **Drawing No.** CSA/4021/100
Scale @ A4 NTS **Rev** A
Drawn JB **Checked** BS

Appendix B

Aerial Photograph



 Site Boundary  Other land controlled by Taylor Wimpey  Photo Locations



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Aerial Photograph

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Date September 2018

Scale @ A4 NTS

Drawn JB

Drawing No. CSA/4021/101

Rev A

Checked BS

Appendix C

Photosheets

Residential properties on Cross Road

Buildings at Albrighton Primary School



View from the southern boundary of Area B, looking north-east **Photograph 01**

Meere House

Residential properties on Cross Road

Garage Farm



View from the eastern boundary of Area B, looking west **Photograph 02**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Photosheets

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

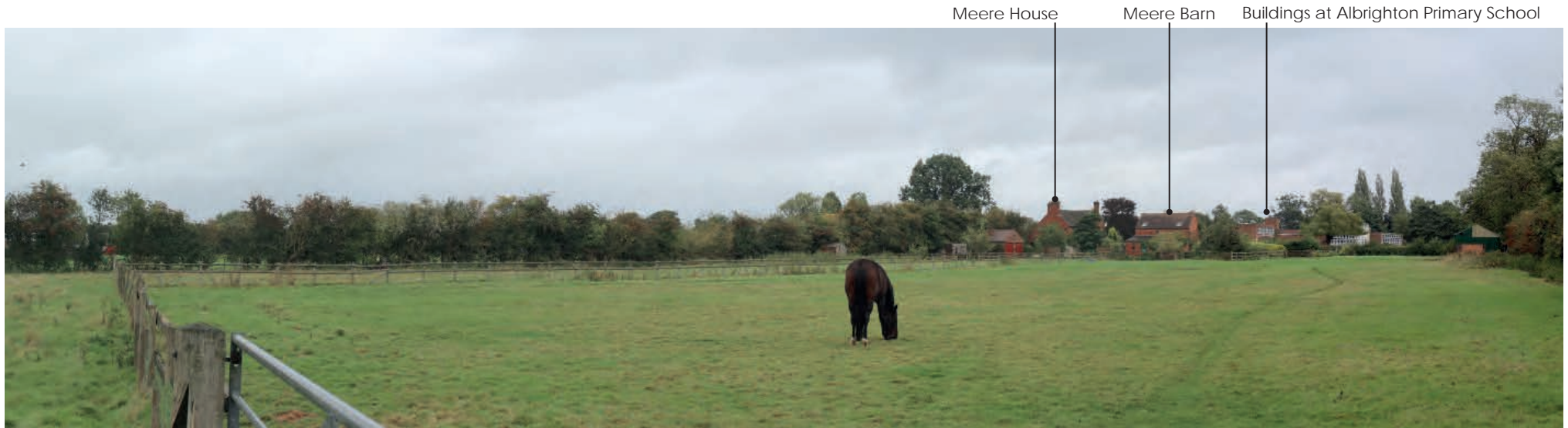
Drawing No. CSA/4021/102

Rev -

Date October 2018

Drawn JB

Checked BS



View from the southern boundary of Area C, looking north-east **Photograph 03**



View from the eastern boundary of Area A, looking west **Photograph 04**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT
t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire	Drawing No.	CSA/4021/102	Rev	-
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	October 2018		
Client	TW North Midlands (Strategic)	Drawn	JB	Checked	BS



View from Patshull Road, looking north-east **Photograph 05**



View from Patshull Road, looking south-east **Photograph 06**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Photosheets

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Drawing No. CSA/4021/102

Rev -

Date October 2018

Drawn JB

Checked BS



View from Cross Road, looking east towards the Site **Photograph 07**



View from the incidental open space on Cross Road, looking south east towards the Site **Photograph 08**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT
t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Photosheets

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Drawing No. CSA/4021/102

Rev -

Date October 2018

Drawn JB

Checked BS

Residential properties on Cross Road

Cross Road

The Site



View from Cross Road, looking south east towards the Site **Photograph 09**

Cross Road

Residential properties on Cross Road



View from Cross Road, looking south-west towards the Site **Photograph 10**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Photosheets

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Drawing No. CSA/4021/102

Rev -

Date October 2018

Drawn JB

Checked BS

Cross Road

Residential properties on Cross Road



View from Cross Road, looking south-west towards the Site **Photograph 11**

Albert Road

Agricultural building at Garage Farm

Cross Road



View from Albert Road, looking south-east towards the Site **Photograph 12**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Photosheets

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Drawing No. CSA/4021/102

Rev -

Date October 2018

Drawn JB

Checked BS

Residential property on Newhouse Lane

Newhouse Lane

Agricultural buildings at Garage Farm



View from Newhouse Lane, adjacent to Garridge Close, looking south-west towards the Site **Photograph 13**

Albrighton Primary School

Newhouse Lane



View from Newhouse Lane, adjacent to Albrighton Primary School, looking south west towards the Site **Photograph 14**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Photosheets

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Drawing No. CSA/4021/102

Rev -

Date October 2018

Drawn JB

Checked BS



View from public footpath Shropshire 0102/9/1, looking west towards the Site **Photograph 15**
Residential property on Garridge Close



View from public footpath Shropshire 0102/9/1, looking west towards the Site **Photograph 16**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT
t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire	Drawing No.	CSA/4021/102	Rev	-
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	October 2018		
Client	TW North Midlands (Strategic)	Drawn	JB	Checked	BS



View from Patshull Road, looking north-east towards the Site **Photograph 17**



View from Holyhead Road (A464), looking north **Photograph 18**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT
t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire	Drawing No.	CSA/4021/102	Rev	-
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	October 2018		
Client	TW North Midlands (Strategic)	Drawn	JB	Checked	BS

Properties on Newhouse Lane

Public footpath Shropshire 0111/1/1



View from public footpath Shropshire 0111/1/1, looking north-west towards the Site **Photograph 19**

Properties on Newhouse Lane



View from public footpath Shropshire 0111/2/1, looking north-west towards the Site **Photograph 20**



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire	Drawing No.	CSA/4021/102	Rev	-
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	October 2018		
Client	TW North Midlands (Strategic)	Drawn	JB	Checked	BS



View from public footpath Shropshire 0111/13/1, looking north-west towards the Site **Photograph 21**



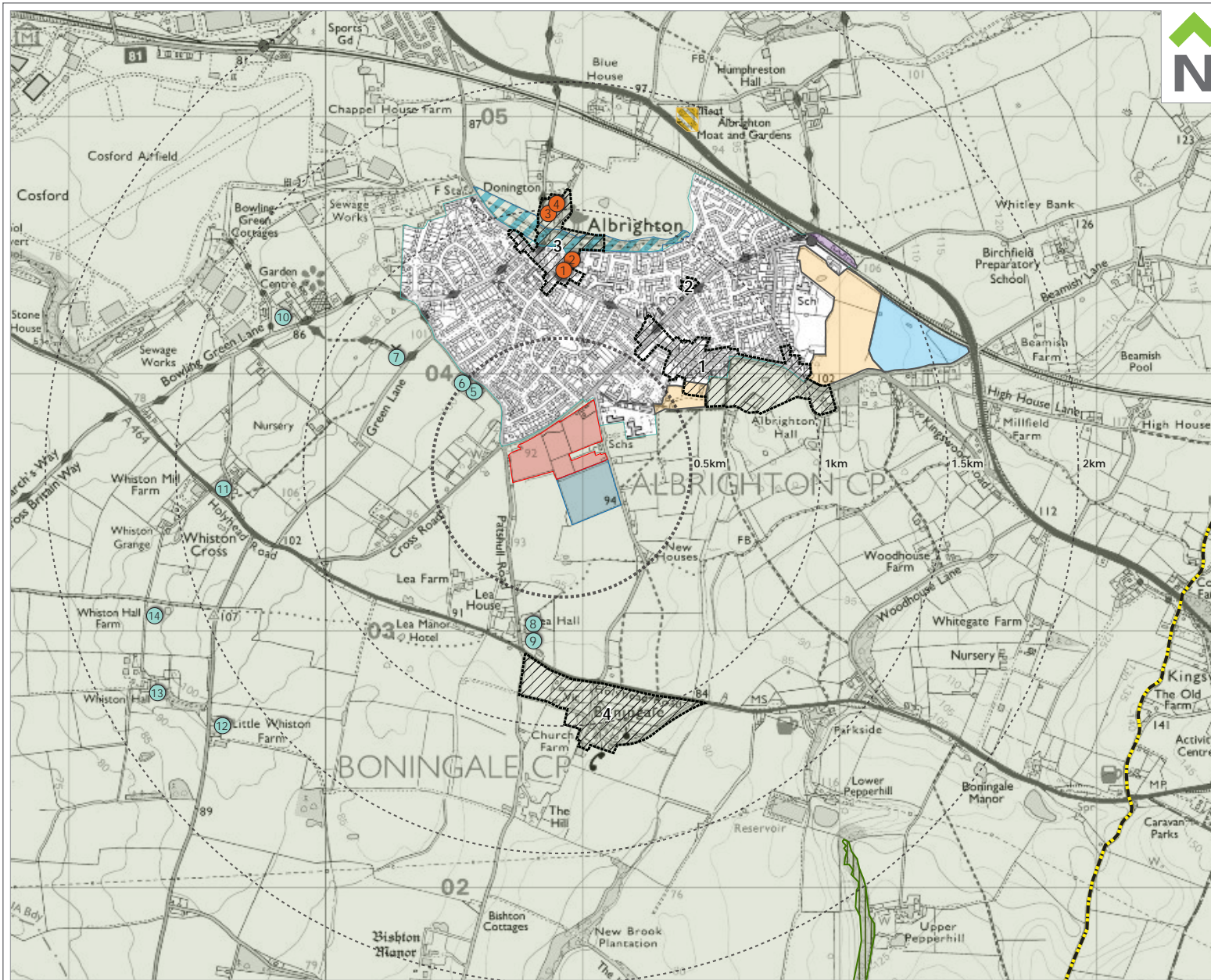
Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire	Drawing No. CSA/4021/102	Rev -
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date October 2018	
Client	TW North Midlands (Strategic)	Drawn JB	Checked BS

Appendix D

MAGIC map and Heritage Information



- Site Boundary
- Other land controlled by Taylor Wimpey
- Green Belt
- District Boundary
- Ancient Woodland
- Scheduled Monument
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Housing Allocation
- Safeguarded Land
- Employment Allocation
- Conservation Areas

1. Albrighton
2. Albrighton Station Road
3. Donington and Albrighton
4. Boningale

- X Grade II* Listed Buildings within 1.5km
 1. Churchyard Cross, South of Church of St Mary Magdalene (also Scheduled Monument)
 2. Church of St Mary Magdalene
 3. Churchyard Cross, South of Church of St Cuthbert (also Scheduled Monument)
 4. Church of St Cuthbert

- X Grade II Listed Buildings within 1.5km (Outside Conservation Areas)
 5. Barn south east of The Elms
 6. The Elms
 7. The Old Windmill
 8. Barn at Lea Hall
 9. Lea Hall
 10. Bowling Green Farmhouse
 11. Whiston House
 12. Little Whiston Farmhouse
 13. Whiston Hall and Carriage Entrance
 14. Whiston Hall Farmhouse



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title MAGIC Map Extract & Heritage Plan

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Date September 2018

Drawing No. CSA/3021/103

Scale @ A4 NTS

Rev -

Drawn JB

Checked BS

Appendix E

Proposed Green Belt Boundary Plan



The Site



Existing Green Belt Boundary



Proposed Green Belt Boundary



Dixies Barns, High Street,
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project Cross Road, Albrighton, Shropshire

Drawing Title Proposed Green Belt Boundary Plan

Client TW North Midlands (Strategic)

Date October 2018

Scale @ A4 NTS

Drawn SRW

Drawing No. CSA/4021/106

Rev -

Checked BS

Appendix F

Methodology

METHODOLOGY FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- M1 In landscape and visual impact assessment, a distinction is normally drawn between **landscape/townscape effects** (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape (or townscape), irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and **visual effects** (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from residential properties, but also from public rights of way and other areas with public access). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects (if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints nearby), or few landscape effects but substantial visual effects (if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties and/or public areas).
- M2 The assessment of landscape & visual effects is less amenable to scientific or statistical analysis than some environmental topics and inherently contains an element of subjectivity. However, the assessment should still be undertaken in a logical, consistent and rigorous manner, based on experience and judgement, and any conclusions should be able to demonstrate a clear rationale. To this end, various guidelines have been published, the most relevant of which (for assessments of the effects of a development, rather than of the character or quality of the landscape itself), form the basis of the assessment and are as follows:
- 'Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3rd edition 2013); and
 - 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014 (Christine Tudor, Natural England) to which reference is also made. This stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors.

LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

- M3 Landscape/townscape quality is a subjective judgement based on the value and significance of a landscape/townscape. It will often be informed by national, regional or local designations made upon it in respect of its quality e.g. AONB. Sensitivity relates to the ability of that landscape/townscape to accommodate change.

Landscape sensitivity can vary with:

- (i) *existing land use;*
- (ii) *the pattern and scale of the landscape;*
- (iii) *visual enclosure/openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;*
- (iv) *the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape; and*
- (v) *the value placed on the landscape.*

- M4 There is a strong inter-relationship between landscape/townscape quality and sensitivity as high quality landscapes/townscapes usually have a low ability to accommodate change.

- M5 For the purpose of our assessment, landscape/townscape quality and sensitivity has been combined and is assessed using the criteria in Table LE1. Typically,

landscapes/townscapes which carry a quality designation and which are otherwise attractive or unspoilt will in general be more sensitive, while those which are less attractive or already affected by significant visual detractors and disturbance will be generally less sensitive.

- M6 The concept of landscape/townscape value is also considered, in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. The value of the landscape is assessed in the LVIA using Table LV1. In the process of making this assessment, the following factors, among others, are considered with relevance to the site in question: landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreation value, perceptual aspects and associations.
- M7 Nationally valued landscapes are recognised by designation, such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB') which have particular planning policies applied to them. Nationally valued townscapes are typically those covered by a Conservation Area or similar designation. Paragraph 170 of the Revised NPPF (July 2018) outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes '*...in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*)'.
- M8 The magnitude of change is the scale, extent and duration of change to a landscape arising from the proposed development and was assessed using the criteria in Table LE2.
- M9 Landscape/townscape effects were assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and the quality, value & sensitivity of the landscape resource affected. The landscape/townscape effects can be either beneficial or adverse.
- M10 In this way, landscapes of the highest sensitivity and quality, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to 'substantial' landscape effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, landscapes of low sensitivity and quality, when subjected to a low magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to only 'slight' or neutral landscape effects. Beneficial landscape effects may arise from such things as the creation of new landscape features, changes to management practices and improved public access. For the purpose of this assessment the landscape effects have been judged at completion of the development.

VISUAL EFFECTS

- M11 Visual effects are concerned with people's views of the landscape/townscape and the change that will occur. Like landscape effects, viewers or receptors are categorised by their sensitivity. For example, views from private dwellings are generally of a higher sensitivity than those from places of work.
- M12 In describing the content of a view the following terms are used:
- No view - no views of the development;
 - Glimpse - a fleeting or distant view of the development, often in the context of wider views of the landscape;
 - Partial - a clear view of part of the development only;
 - Filtered - views to the development which are partially screened, usually by intervening vegetation - the degree of filtering may change with the seasons;
 - Open - a clear view to the development.
- M13 The sensitivity of the receptor was assessed using the criteria in Table VE1.

- M14 The magnitude of change is the degree in which the view(s) may be altered as a result of the proposed development and will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change. The magnitude of change in regard to the views was assessed using the criteria in Table VE2.
- M15 Visual effects were then assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and also the sensitivity of the visual receptor affected.
- M16 As with landscape effects, a high sensitivity receptor, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, is likely to experience 'substantial' effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, receptors of low sensitivity, when subjected to a low magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to experience only 'slight' or neutral landscape effects, which can be either beneficial or adverse.
- M17 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm, to give a similar depth of view to the human eye. In some cases images have been joined together to form a panorama. The prevailing weather and atmospheric conditions, and any effects on visibility are noted.
- M18 Unless specific slab levels of buildings have been specified, the assessment has assumed that slab levels will be within 750mm of existing ground level.

MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS

- M19 Mitigation measures are described as those measures, including any process or activity, designed to avoid, reduce and compensate for adverse landscape and/or visual effects of the proposed development.
- M20 In situations where proposed mitigation measures are likely to change over time, as with planting to screen a development, it is important to make a distinction between any likely effects that will arise in the short-term and those that will occur in the long-term or 'residual effects' once mitigation measures have established. In this assessment, the visual effects of the development have been considered at completion of the entire project and at 15 years.
- M21 Mitigation measures can have a residual, positive impact on the effects arising from a development, whereas the short-term impact may be adverse.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- M22 The assessment concisely considers and describes the main landscape and visual effects resulting from the proposed development. The narrative text demonstrates the reasoning behind judgements concerning the landscape and visual effects of the proposals. Where appropriate, the text is supported by tables which summarise the sensitivity of the views/landscape, the magnitude of change and describe any resulting effects.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- M23 Cumulative effects are *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.'*

- M24 In carrying out landscape assessment it is for the author to form a judgement on whether or not it is necessary to consider any planned developments and to form a judgement on how these could potentially affect a project.

ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

- M25 A ZTV map can help to determine the potential visibility of the site and identify those locations where development at the site is likely to be most visible from the surrounding area. Where a ZTV is considered appropriate for a proposed development the following methodology is used.
- M26 The process is in two stages, and for each, a digital terrain model ('DTM') using Key TERRA-FIRMA computer software is produced and mapped onto an OS map. The DTM is based on Ordnance Survey Landform Profile tiles, providing a digital record of existing landform across the UK, based on a 10 metre grid. There is the potential for minor discrepancies between the DTM and the actual landform where there are topographic features that are too small to be picked up by the 10 metre grid. A judgement will be made to determine the extent of the study area based on the specific site and the nature of the proposed change, and the reasons for the choice will be set out in the report. The proposed development is introduced into the model as either a representative spot height, or a series of heights, or a detailed 3D model of the development, and a viewer height of 1.7m is used. This is the first stage, or 'bare earth' ZTV which illustrates the theoretical visibility of a proposed development based on topography alone and does not take account of any landscape features such as buildings, woodland or settlements.
- M27 The second stage is to produce a 'with obstructions' ZTV with the same base as the 'bare earth' ZTV, but which gives a more accurate representation of what is 'on the ground'. Different heights are assigned to significant features such as buildings and woodland thus refining the model to aid further analysis. This data is derived from OS Maps and aerial photographs, and verified during the fieldwork, with any significant discrepancies in the data being noted and the map adjusted accordingly. Fieldwork is confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, the highway network and other publically accessible areas.
- M28 The model is based on available data and fieldwork and therefore may not take into account all development or woodland throughout the study area, nor the effect of smaller scale planting or hedgerows. It also does not take into account areas of recent or continuous topographic change from, for instance, mining operations.

Table LE 1

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE QUALITY AND SENSITIVITY

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of the Landscape/Townscape	<p>Landscape Quality: Intact and very attractive landscape which may be nationally recognised/designated for its scenic beauty. e.g. National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p> <p>Townscape Quality: A townscape of very high quality which is unique in its character, and recognised nationally/internationally, e.g. World Heritage Site</p> <p>Sensitivity: A landscape/townscape with a very low ability to accommodate change because such change would lead to a significant loss of valuable features or elements, resulting in a significant loss of character and quality. Development of the type proposed would be discordant and prominent.</p>	<p>Landscape Quality: A landscape, usually combining varied topography, historic features and few visual detractors. A landscape known and cherished by many people from across the region. e.g. County Landscape Site such as a Special Landscape Area.</p> <p>Townscape Quality: A well designed townscape of high quality with a locally recognised and distinctive character e.g. Conservation Area</p> <p>Sensitivity: A landscape/townscape with limited ability to accommodate change because such change would lead to some loss of valuable features or elements, resulting in a significant loss of character and quality. Development of the type proposed would likely be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.</p>	<p>Landscape Quality: Non-designated landscape area, generally pleasant but with no distinctive features, often displaying relatively ordinary characteristics. May have detracting features.</p> <p>Townscape Quality: A typical, pleasant townscape with a coherent urban form but with no distinguishing features or designation for quality.</p> <p>Sensitivity: A landscape/townscape with reasonable ability to accommodate change. Change would lead to a limited loss of some features or elements, resulting in some loss of character and quality. Development of the type proposed would not be especially discordant.</p>	<p>Landscape / Townscape Quality: Unattractive or degraded landscape/townscape, affected by numerous detracting elements e.g. industrial areas, infrastructure routes and un-restored mineral extractions.</p> <p>Sensitivity: A landscape/townscape with good ability to accommodate change. Change would not lead to a significant loss of features or elements, and there would be no significant loss of character or quality. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the landscape/townscape in which it is set.</p>

Footnote:

1. A distinction has been drawn between landscape/townscape quality and sensitivity. Quality is as a subjective judgement on perception and value of a landscape/townscape and may be informed by national, regional or local designations for its quality. Sensitivity relates to the ability of that landscape/townscape to accommodate change.

Table LE 2 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

	High	Medium	Low	Negligible	Neutral
Description of the Change predicted	Total loss of or severe damage to key characteristics, features or elements				
		Partial loss of or damage to key characteristics, features or elements			
			Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements		
				Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements	
					No loss or alteration of key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements

Table LE 3 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Neutral
Description of the Effect	<p>The proposals are damaging to the landscape/townscape in that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are at variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape/ townscape; • are visually intrusive and would disrupt important views; • are likely to degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting; • will be damaging to a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape/ townscape; • cannot be adequately mitigated. 			
		<p>The proposals are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • out of scale or at odds with the landscape; • are visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape/townscape; • not possible to fully mitigate; • will have an adverse impact on a landscape/townscape of recognised quality or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements. 		
			<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape/ townscape; • will impact on certain views into and across the area; • cannot be completely mitigated because of the nature of the proposal or the character of the landscape/townscape; • affect an area of recognised landscape/townscape quality. 	
				<p>The proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape/townscape; • incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure that the scheme will blend in well with the surrounding landscape/ townscape; • avoid being visually intrusive and adversely affecting the landscape/ townscape; • maintain or improve existing landscape/townscape character.

Footnote:

1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'.

Table LV 1

LANDSCAPE VALUE

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of value	<p>Very high quality landscape or townscape with Statutory Designation for landscape/townscape quality/value, e.g. National Park, Conservation Area, Registered Park or Garden. Contains rare elements or significant cultural/historical associations.</p>	<p>High quality landscape or lower quality landscape with un-fettered public access, (e.g. commons, public park) or with strong cultural associations. May have important views out to landmarks/designated landscapes and few detracting features. May possess perceptual qualities of tranquility or wildness.</p>	<p>An ordinary landscape of local value which may have limited public access. No recognised statutory designations for landscape/townscape quality. May have pleasant views out, or be visible in public views. May have some detracting features.</p>	<p>Landscape generally of lower quality, with limited public access, no designations or recognised cultural significance. Limited public views.</p>

Table VE 1

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

	High	Medium	Low
Description of the Receptor	<p>Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from ground and first floors and from two or more windows of rooms in use during the day.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in sensitive or generally unspoilt areas.</p> <p>Predominantly non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.</p> <p>Visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks, National Trust or other access land etc.</p>	<p>Residential properties with partial views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from first floor windows only, or an oblique view from one ground floor window, or may be partially obscured by garden or other intervening vegetation.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view e.g. sports fields.</p> <p>Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas.</p> <p>Users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside, whether motorised or not.</p>	<p>People in their place of work.</p> <p>Users of main roads or passengers in public transport on main routes.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the purpose of that recreation is unrelated to the view e.g. go-karting track.</p>



Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell,
Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647

e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk

w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Suite 1, Deer Park Business Centre, Eckington,
Persore, Worcestershire WR10 3DN

t 01386 751100

e persore@csaenvironmental.co.uk

w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Gallery 1, Citibase, 95 Ditchling Road,
Brighton BN1 4ST

t 01273 573871

e brighton@csaenvironmental.co.uk

w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Appendix 3

Green Belt Technical Assessment prepared by RPS

LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

GREEN BELT TECHNICAL DOCUMENT

ON BEHALF OF TAYLOR WIMPEY UK LIMITED

JBB8335.C6637
Green Belt Technical Document
V2
07 February 2019

Document status

Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date
V1	Green Belt Technical Report	Polly Mathews, Darren Oakley & Daniel Owen	Paul Hill		07/02/19
V2	Green Belt Technical Report	Polly Mathews, Darren Oakley & Daniel Owen		Paul Hill	08/02/19

This report was prepared by **RPS Consulting Services Ltd (RPS)** within the terms of its engagement and in direct response to a scope of services. This report is strictly limited to the purpose and the facts and matters stated in it and does not apply directly or indirectly and must not be used for any other application, purpose, use or matter. In preparing the report, RPS may have relied upon information provided to it at the time by other parties. RPS accepts no responsibility as to the accuracy or completeness of information provided by those parties at the time of preparing the report. The report does not take into account any changes in information that may have occurred since the publication of the report. If the information relied upon is subsequently determined to be false, inaccurate or incomplete then it is possible that the observations and conclusions expressed in the report may have changed. RPS does not warrant the contents of this report and shall not assume any responsibility or liability for loss whatsoever to any third party caused by, related to or arising out of any use or reliance on the report howsoever. No part of this report, its attachments or appendices may be reproduced by any process without the written consent of RPS. All enquiries should be directed to RPS.

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY.....	2
2.1	National Planning Policy Framework	2
2.2	Shropshire Council Local Plan.....	4
3	LOCAL HOUSING NEED	7
3.1	Local Housing Need in Shropshire.....	7
3.2	Role of Albrighton in Meeting Local Housing Need	11
4	HOUSING LAND SUPPLY REVIEW.....	15
4.1	Introduction	15
4.2	Shropshire Council Current Five-Year Position	15
4.3	Lead-in Times and Delivery Rates.....	20
4.4	Housing Buffer	20
4.5	Five Year Housing Land Supply	20
4.6	Conclusion	21
5	GREEN BELT REVIEW	22
5.1	The Need for a Review.....	22
5.2	The Five Purposes: NPPF Paragraph 134	25
5.3	Exceptional Circumstances: NPPF Paragraph 136	26
5.4	Other Reasonable Options: NPPF Paragraph 137	30
5.5	Promotion of Sustainable Development: NPPF Para 138.....	33
5.6	Defining Boundaries: NPPF Para 139.....	37
5.7	Safeguarded Land.....	37
6	CONCLUSION.....	39

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This report forms part of RPS representations, on behalf of Taylor Wimpey, to Shropshire Council's ongoing public consultation on the Preferred Sites Document that will deliver the preferred scale and distribution of growth within Shropshire to 2036.
- 1.1.2 This report should be read alongside the following additional documents:
- RPS main representations to the Preferred Sites consultation; and
 - CSA Environmental Landscape and Green Belt Study (2019).
- 1.1.3 The purpose of this report is to establish that there are sufficient exceptional circumstances to justify amendments to the Shropshire Green Belt boundary as part of the Local Plan Review, to support the Council's proposed urban focused distribution of development and to demonstrate that the removal of the Site at Cross Road, Albrighton, from the Green Belt would ensure that the settlement can grow in a sustainable manner, without resulting in any harm to the Green Belt.

2 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

2.1.1 National Planning Policy is set out in the NPPF as revised in July 2018. Paragraph 10 states that:

“at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”

2.1.2 Paragraph 11 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making this means that:

“a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;

b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:

i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area, or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

2.1.3 Paragraph 20 states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for, among other elements, the conservation and enhancement of the natural built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

2.1.4 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments:

“...are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change...”

2.1.5 Section 13 of the NPPF relates to the protection of Green Belt Land and Paragraph 133 states that the essential character of Green Belts is their openness and their permanence, with the fundamental aim of Green Belts being the prevention of urban sprawl.

2.1.6 Paragraph 134 sets out the five purposes which Green Belt should serve:

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

- 2.1.7 Paragraphs 136 to 139 relate to the alteration, and definition of Green Belt boundaries and sets out the circumstances for when alterations are necessary. Paragraph 136 states that:

“Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt, boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans”

- 2.1.8 Paragraph 137 states that:

“Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:

- a) Makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
- b) Optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
- c) Has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.”*

- 2.1.9 Paragraph 139 outlines the elements that should be considered when defining Green Belt boundaries and states that plans should:

- a) “ensure consistency with the development plan’s strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- d) make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;*
- e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and*
- f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.”*

- 2.1.10 Section 15 of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 170 states that:

“planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- g) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- h) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...*

- 2.1.11 Whilst the Government places great importance to the Green Belt and recognises that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence the NPPF does not state that alterations should not be made to the Green Belt and it sets out a clear process through which alterations can be made to Green Belt Boundaries. Any proposed alterations should be undertaken through the preparation or updating of plans, and as such RPS support Shropshire Council’s decision to undertake a Green Belt review of part of the partial review of the Local Plan.

2.2 Shropshire Council Local Plan

- 2.2.1 The Local Plan for Shropshire is made up of several planning documents. The two key documents are the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) and the Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan (SAMDev).

Shropshire Core Strategy (adopted 2011)

- 2.2.2 The Core Strategy sets out the strategic planning policy for Shropshire, including the spatial vision and objectives. It also sets out a development strategy that identifies the level of development expected to take place within Shropshire up until 2026.
- 2.2.3 Albrighton is identified as a key settlement / service centre within the CS that is surrounded, except on its far eastern edge, by the Green Belt. The CS states that the demographic of Albrighton (along with Cosford) is very different to most of the other Market Towns within Shropshire, and it is heavily influenced by the presence of RAF Cosford. The CS also states that further investigation will be needed as part of the preparation of Site Allocations and Management of Development DPD to determine the sustainable levels of growth that can be accommodated.
- 2.2.4 CS Policy CS3 (The Market Towns and Other Key Centres) states that Albrighton will have development to meet local needs, respecting its location in the Green Belt. No changes were made to the Green Belt boundary at Albrighton through the adoption of the Core Strategy.

Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev) (adopted 2015)

- 2.2.5 The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SAMDev) sets out proposals for the use of land and policies to guide future development to help deliver the Vision and Objectives set out in the Core Strategy for the period up to 2026.
- 2.2.6 Albrighton is again identified as a Key Centre and Policy S1 (Albrighton Area) states that Albrighton will provide for local needs, delivering around 250 dwellings over the plan period. The Policy further states that local needs will predominantly be met on two allocated sites with

additional land to the east of the village safeguarded for the village's long-term development needs. The two site allocations are ALB002 (180 dwellings at Land East of Shaw Lane) and ALB003 (20 dwellings at Land at White Acres).

- 2.2.7 The explanatory text to Policy MD6 (Green Belt) states that a detailed review of the Green Belt boundary will be undertaken as part of the Local Plan review, when the sustainable growth options for Shropshire are assessed.

Albrighton Neighbourhood Local Plan 'light' (2013)

- 2.2.8 The policies in the Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan 'light'(ANP) were endorsed and adopted for development management purposes by resolution of Shropshire Council on 26 September 2013. Paragraph 1.6 states that it is important to note that the ANP does not represent a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the provisions of the Localism Act.
- 2.2.9 The purpose of the ANP is to provide the detail that, along with the Core Strategy and SAMDev, will inform future development in Albrighton.

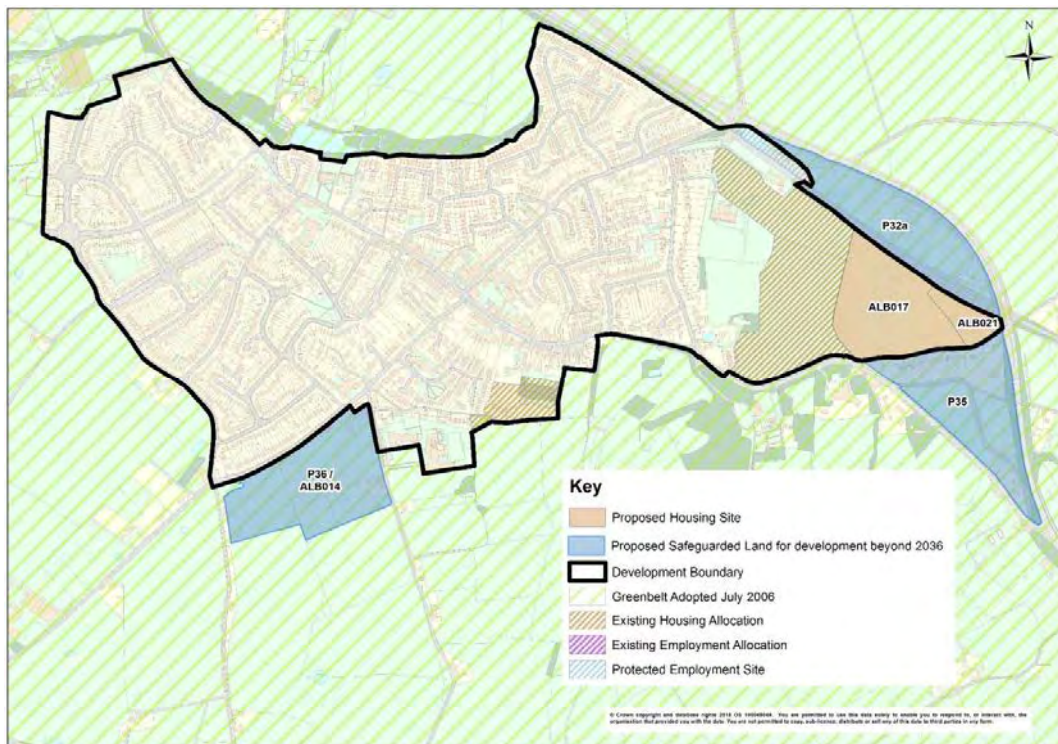
Shropshire Local Plan Review

- 2.2.10 Shropshire Council are currently undertaking a partial review of the local plan that will cover the period from 2016 to 2036. The purpose of the review is to allow for the consideration of updated information on development needs within Shropshire, so that the Local Plan reflects changes to the NPPF and local strategies, to extend the plan period to 2036 and to provide a plan which will support growth and maintain local control over planning decisions. The review includes a consideration of the housing requirements for Shropshire (taking into account the local housing need), the distribution of development across the County and a review of Green Belt boundaries (as signposted in the SAMDev) as part of the consideration of strategic options to deliver new development.
- 2.2.11 An Issues and Strategic Options consultation and a Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development Consultation were undertaken in 2017 and RPS, on behalf of Taylor Wimpey, submitted representations to Shropshire Council.
- 2.2.12 A Preferred Sites document has now been published for consultation that outlines the preferred housing policy of Shropshire Council that is intended to improve the delivery of local housing needs, establish development guidelines and boundaries. It also sets out the sites that will deliver the preferred scale and distribution of housing and employment growth to 2036.
- 2.2.13 The Local Plan Review proposes a high level of housing growth of 28,750 dwellings, equivalent to an average delivery rate of 1,430 dwellings per year across Shropshire. Taking account of existing completions and commitments an additional 10,250 dwellings will be required to the end of the extended plan period (to 2036). This is proposed to be delivered through the following urban focused distribution of development:
- Shrewsbury . around 30%
 - Principal centres . around 24.5%
 - Key centres . around 18%
 - Rural areas . around 27.5%

LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

- 2.2.14 Albrighton is included as a Key Centre and the Preferred Sites consultation states that one of the main issues identified for the village is the need to provide more affordable and low-cost market housing. To achieve a balanced level of growth the Local Plan Review seeks to provide around 500 dwellings within Albrighton between 2016 and 2036. The land previously allocated as safeguarded land is proposed to be allocated for development, which represents the full extent of land available for development within Albrighton that is not within the Green Belt (sites ref ALB017 and ALB021 show on Figure 2.1 below).
- 2.2.15 The Local Plan Review states that in order to complement the preferred allocations and following consideration of the detailed Green Belt Review undertaken by the Council, it is proposed that three further sites, including the Site, are removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development beyond 2036 (see figure 2.1 below).

Figure 2.1: Extract from the Preferred Sites Consultation document.



- 2.2.16 This document forms part of RPS representation to the Local Plan Review Preferred Sites consultation on behalf of Taylor Wimpey. The following sections address the local housing need within Shropshire and whether the local plan review caters for that requirement (Section 3), an assessment of the five-year housing land supply position (Section 4) and a comprehensive Green Belt review (Section 5) that establishes that there is a requirement for the Green Belt boundary to be amended at Albrighton and that the release of the Site from the Green Belt will not harm the fundamental purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

3 LOCAL HOUSING NEED

3.1 Local Housing Need in Shropshire

Council's Latest Position

3.1.1 Shropshire Council's latest evidence on local housing need is drawn from two main sources; Shropshire Council Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need (FOAHN 2016); and Shropshire Council Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need: Supporting Document (FOAHN 2017). The analysis within these documents underpins the Council's preferred housing requirement of 28,750 dwellings up to 2036, based on the High Growth Option originally set out in the Shropshire Local Plan Review Consultation on Issues and Strategic Options January-March 2017. It should be noted that the Council's preferred housing requirement has not been updated or altered following two rounds of public consultation (Issues & Options; and Preferred Scale and Distribution).

Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need 2016

3.1.2 In 2016, Shropshire Council published its analysis on the objectively assessed need for the area in support of the Local Plan Partial Review process (LPPR). This was produced in the context of the previous PPG methodology that was in place at the time (now superseded). The Council's preferred scenario (V5B) was based on the 2012-based sub-national population and household projections (now superseded) using a ten-year migration trend, along with other adjustments for vacant dwellings, a concealed household allowance, they also considered other factor including armed forces, prisoners, and students. Consequently, between 2016 and 2036 the FOAHN for Shropshire was estimated at 25,178 (Table 1 of the FOAHN 2016 refers).

3.1.3 The Council's preferred FOAHN was taken forward on the basis that no adjustments were considered necessary to cater for:

- declining household formation rates due to possible suppression in younger age groups;
- market signals;
- the number of homes needed to cater for the likely growth in jobs;

3.1.4 However, adjustments were made for:

- concealed households (an extra 478 dwellings); as well as
- student growth not accounted for in the 2012-based SNPP/SNHPs (an extra 1,800 dwellings)

3.1.5 It was recognised by the Council that the FOAHN did not in itself represent a housing requirement, but that it would form the basis upon which a housing requirement would be identified. This is important given the continued recognition of this in the revised PPG¹ advice on calculating local housing need. RPS considers this point in more detail below.

¹ PPG Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 2a-001-20180913 Revision date: 13 09 2018

Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need 2017 (update)

- 3.1.6 In 2017, Shropshire Council issued an update to the FOAHN 2016, which set out a comparative analysis of the FOAHN calculation based on the PPG methodology and a FOAHN calculation using the then proposed standard method for assessing local housing need (figure 2 of the FOAHN 2017 refers). The two figures were as follows:
- FOAHN based on PPG methodology . 25,178 (or 1,259 dpa); and
 - FOAHN based on [proposed] Standard Methodology 2017 . 25,400² (1,270 dpa)
- 3.1.7 Based on the Council's figures, the difference between the two estimates is relatively small, albeit in an upward direction. However, the calculation using the standard methodology was based on the average growth in household over the period 2016-26 using the 2014-based projections, as well as applying the affordability ratio figure for Shropshire for the year 2016. These figures have since been superseded by more recent published data, meaning the starting point for the calculation of local housing need should also be rebased to accord with the latest available assumptions.
- 3.1.8 Accordingly, RPS provides an updated calculation of local housing need, which is set out below.

RPS 'Rebased' Local Housing Need Calculation (Standard Method)

- 3.1.9 Table 3.1 below presents a summary of the calculation of local housing need, following the steps set out the PPG³. RPS has applied the most recent ten-year average housing growth (2019-29) based on the 2014-sub national household projections, in line with the Government's recommended approach set out in its consultation on changes to the standard method⁴ published at the end of 2018. RPS has also used more recent affordability ratio for 2017 as a basis for a revised adjustment factor. The adjustment factor is then applied to the annual average household growth in order to calculate the minimum annual local housing need figure for Shropshire.

Table 3.1 RPS updated Local Housing Need for Shropshire using Standard Method

Standard Method approach (PPG)	RPS 'rebased' local housing need	Notes
Average household growth (2019-29)	965	Taken from 2014-based SNHPs
Local Affordability Ratio (at 2017)	8.39	Table 5c
Adjustment Factor	1.27	Based on PPG Step 2

² MHCLG, (2017), *Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals* - Housing need consultation data table, www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-right-homes-in-the-right-places-consultation-proposals

³ PPG Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 2a-004-20180913 Revision date: 13 09 2018

⁴ MHCLG *Technical consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance*, October 2018

Minimum annual local housing need (hpa)	1,225.55	965 x 1.27
Minimum annual local housing need over the plan period	24,511	2016-2036

3.1.10 RPS acknowledge that the standard method figure for Shropshire based on the calculation represents a slight reduced starting point (24,511) compared to the previous published figures referred to above (3.1.6). However, as clearly stated in the PPG, the standard method identifies a *minimum annual housing need* figure. It does not produce a housing requirement. It is therefore necessary to consider those factors that might justify an adjustment to the need as a basis for determining how many homes need to be planned for. RPS considers this below.

From Local Housing Need to Housing Requirement

3.1.11 National guidance recognises that the calculation of local housing need does not represent a housing requirement for the purposes of preparing a local plan. For Shropshire, RPS suggest that there are relevant factors that need to be accounted for in determining a revised housing requirement for the period up to 2036. These include:

- Converting households to dwellings; and
- Addressing affordable housing need in Shropshire

3.1.12 RPS considers both these factors below.

Converting households into dwellings

3.1.13 The first step in moving from need to a dwelling requirement is to convert the household-based estimate of need into the need for actual dwellings. This is done by applying an uplift to account for the proportion of empty (vacant) homes at the last census count (2011). In line with the Council’s FOAHN 2016, the 2011 Census⁵ rate of 4.4% is considered to be a realistic estimate, as it includes second homes. Whilst incorporating a vacancy rate allowance is not strictly part of the standard method approach, however in this case it is considered reasonable to adjust the projection given the scale of vacant dwellings in Shropshire, which is recognised by the Council in its work on the OAN. Applying this vacancy rate to the rebased minimum annual local housing need figure produces a minimum dwelling requirement of 25,589 dwellings over the plan period (or 1,279 dpa). This figure slightly exceeds the Council’s published standard method figure of 25,400, and also the Council’s FOAHN of 25,178 based on the previous PPG, which included the 4.4% uplift.

Addressing Affordable Housing Need in Shropshire

3.1.14 In determining an appropriate housing requirement for the Shropshire, proper regard should be had to the contribution that the requirement could make to tackling the pressing need for affordable housing across the area⁶. This is an issue that was retained in the PPG following its

⁵ Census 2011 Table KS401EW *Dwellings, household spaces and accommodation type (no usual residents)*

⁶ PPG Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 2a-027-20180913 Revision date: 13 09 2018

- revision in 2018, but which has not been given sufficient consideration by the Council up to this point in determining an appropriate housing requirement.
- 3.1.15 The FOAHN 2016 (Table 52 provides a summary of the need) identified a need for 1,240 additional affordable homes each year up to 2036 (24,796 in total), which represents 97.6% of the Council's minimum annual local housing need (25,400), 101% of the rebased standard method figure advocated by RPS (24,511) and 86% of the Council's preferred housing requirement (28,750). Despite this, the Council is of the view that their preferred housing requirement (Option 3: Housing Growth) will allow the opportunity to deliver affordable housing particularly as a percentage of new open market housing schemes⁷.
- 3.1.16 RPS does not agree that the Council's approach will make any meaningful contribution towards addressing the scale of the problem facing local people in accessing suitable housing that they can afford.
- 3.1.17 It is not clear from the Council's evidence what the level of affordable housing supply is likely to be during the plan period based on the various components of supply identified to deliver the preferred housing requirement. RPS note the delivery of 441 affordable homes during 2016/17, which was the highest since 2010⁸, but still significantly below the annual need of 1,240 homes. The FOAHN 2016 also identifies a committed supply of 518 affordable dwellings as part of the assessment of affordable housing need⁹, which it is assumed will be delivered by mixed tenure private-led developments, as well as wholly affordable schemes to be delivered by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). This clearly illustrates the lack of intent by the Council to address the affordable housing crisis facing the residents of Shropshire.
- 3.1.18 In addition, the approach being taken by the Council in the allocation of land that is constrained to the residual supply needed to meet the preferred housing requirement further exacerbates the problem. This is because the residual housing required based on the Council's preferred strategy is 10,347 dwellings¹⁰, taking into account all claimed sources of existing supply. If the current adopted affordable housing target of 33%¹¹ is applied to the residual figure, the maximum possible supply of additional affordable homes would only be 3,414.
- 3.1.19 When taking all the sources of affordable supply identified above, this would generate c. 4,373 affordable homes in total (or 219 Affordable dwellings per annum), against a total need of 24,796 up to 2036, representing just 17.6%.
- 3.1.20 In this context, RPS does not consider that enough is being done to tackle current and future need for affordable homes in determining the preferred housing requirement. The 15% uplift above the defined housing need figure suggested by the Council under the High Growth (Option 3) scenario is inadequate. A 15% uplift based on the RPS rebased figure (25,589) would increase the housing requirement to 29,427. This would increase the Council's referred figure by 677 dwellings and would facilitate the delivery of 223 additional affordable homes based on a notional 33% policy target.

⁷ *Shropshire Local Plan Review Consultation on Issues and Strategic Options* (January 2017), p16

⁸ *Shropshire Council: Authority's Monitoring Report 2016-17*, Table 15

⁹ *Shropshire Council Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need (FOAHN 2016)*, Table 51

¹⁰ *Shropshire Local Plan Review Consultation on Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development* October 2017, p3

¹¹ *Shropshire Core Strategy 2006-26*, Policy CS11

3.1.21 Consequently, the preferred housing requirement should include an upward adjustment in excess of the 15% applied by the Council, in order to facilitate a meaningful supply of additional affordable homes against the significant level of need identified the Council’s own calculation of need. Furthermore, the upward adjustment should be applied to the RPS ~~rebased~~ minimum annual local housing need as a starting point, including the adjustment for vacant dwellings (25,589). Were an uplift in excess of 15% not be supported prior to adoption of the Plan, then this should be applied to the RPS rebased figure as a *minimum* requirement.

Conclusions on Shropshire’s Local housing Need and Housing Requirement

3.1.22 In summary, the RPS position is set out in the table below:

Table 3.2 Summary of RPS ‘Rebased’ Local Housing Need and Updated Housing Requirement

RPS ‘Rebased’ Starting Point (Standard Method)	24,511
Conversion of households to dwellings (Local Vacancy Rate adjustment)	1,078 (4.4%)
RPS Adjusted Annual Minimum Local Housing Need	25,589
RPS Updated Minimum Housing Requirement (2016-36) (RPS Adjusted plus 15%)	29,427
Increase applied to the Council’s preferred housing requirement (28,750)	677

3.1.23 Based on the analysis of local housing need in Shropshire set out above, RPS has demonstrated that the Council’s preferred housing requirement is inadequate and should be increased, as a minimum, by an additional 677 dwellings. Consequently, as part of the next iteration of the Plan, the Council should identify additional sites to address the minimum increase to the housing requirement based on our analysis. As demonstrated in the rest of this document, and within RPS main representations to the Preferred Sites consultation, Albrighton should be the focus for all or part of this additional growth, and that the Land at Cross Road (~~the Site~~ reference ALB014) provides a suitably sustainable location to accommodate this development within the settlement. This also provides further support and justification for the release of the Site from the Green Belt and its specific allocation for residential development, rather than the current proposal to safeguard the Site for consideration beyond 2036.

3.2 Role of Albrighton in Meeting Local Housing Need

3.2.1 Albrighton benefits from excellent accessibility to Telford and Wolverhampton, being linked by a railway station and the M54 and A41. It also lies in close proximity (less than 1.5 km) to RAF Cosford, which is likely to be the subject of MOD investment and housing need during the plan period. The Council has identified Cosford as a *strategic opportunity* within the Local Plan review

to complement the existing and potential future uses of the RAF base, as well as the role Cosford can play in supporting the investment priorities linked to the wider West Midlands Engine. However, the Council has not published any specific details as part of this consultation regarding this but will consider the potential for any land allocations [at Cosford] within the planned consultation on strategic sites in Shropshire¹². Therefore, it would appear that future development needs (and opportunities) of Albrighton and Cosford are being considered in isolation, rather than in an integrated way. This can be inferred in the Council's own evidence, which recognises the need to take into account the, '*...proximity and inter-relationship between Cosford and Albrighton, the latter being a key centre, when considering future development needs and the Green Belt Study in this part of Shropshire*'¹³.

- 3.2.2 Based on this, it is crucial that the Council considers the potential for Albrighton to accommodate additional growth emanating from Cosford, recognising the role that Albrighton plays in the settlement hierarchy. Albrighton settlement provides a highly sustainable location for residential development, as demonstrated in this submission, to accommodate additional development that can assist in meeting a proportion of the likely future needs emanating from Cosford.
- 3.2.3 Section 4 of the Preferred Sites Consultation sets out the development strategy for Albrighton Settlement. This expands on information set out in Appendix 3 (Settlement Strategies) of the Preferred Scale and Distribution Consultation document in relation to Albrighton. The proposed development strategy for Albrighton (paragraph 4.14 refers) remains unchanged following previous consultations, with provision for 500 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment land over the plan period (2016-36). The Consultation Document (paragraph 4.15 refers) maintains that a further 241 dwellings will need to be identified on new housing sites to support the housing growth objectives of the Local Plan Review.
- 3.2.4 Paragraph 4.9 of the document then sets out the identified critical infrastructure priorities, which include provision of a replacement GP surgery, additional leisure and recreation facilities, and highways improvements. As shown within the Development Vision Document that is appended to RPS main representations to the Preferred Sites consultation, Taylor Wimpey have expressed a willingness to accommodate a GP surgery within or adjacent to the site, on additional land that they control. RPS, and Taylor Wimpey, look forward to discussing this possibility, and any further alterations that may be required to the Green Belt boundary, with Shropshire Council and Albrighton Parish Council.
- 3.2.5 The proposed development strategy recognises (paragraph 4.12 refers) that Albrighton will continue to act as key centre and contribute towards the strategic growth objectives in the east of the County. However, as set out in Table 3.3 below, the level of historical completions from 2006. 17 at Albrighton was only 54, which is the lowest level of completions of any of the Principal and Key centres. Development has therefore been extremely limited, reflecting the constraints of the Green Belt. Of this, there has only been limited delivery of 12 dwellings within the Local Plan Review period up to 2017.

¹² Shropshire Local Plan Review: Consultation on Preferred Sites November 2018, paragraph 4.35

¹³ Shropshire Green Belt Assessment, November 2018, Appendix 4, p165

Table 3.3 Housing Completions in Shropshire by Settlement: 2006-17

	Completions (2006-17)	% of Completions (2006-17)	Settlement Type
Albrighton	54	0.40%	Key Centre
RURAL	4,120	32.20%	Rural
Shrewsbury	3,361	26.20%	Strategic
Oswestry	731	5.70%	Principal
Bridgnorth	728	5.70%	Principal
Shifnal	698	5.40%	Key
Market Drayton	437	3.40%	Principal
Whitchurch	400	3.10%	Principal
Ludlow	388	3.00%	Principal
Wem	364	2.80%	Key
Ellesmere	321	2.50%	Key
Cleobury Mortimer	279	2.20%	Key
Church Stretton	205	1.60%	Key
Highley	168	1.30%	Key
Minsterley & Pontesbury	150	1.20%	Key
Broseley	127	1.00%	Key
Craven Arms	109	0.90%	Key
Much Wenlock	95	0.70%	Key
Bishops Castle	77	0.60%	Key
Total:	12,812	100%	

- 3.2.6 Based on this, housing delivery at Albrighton has been extremely modest, principally reflecting the constraints of the Green Belt. The Council acknowledges this in the consultation document. RPS therefore contend that, in order to deliver the step change in the scale of development, not only should Green Belt land be released (which RPS supports in relation to Land at Cross Road) but the Plan should go further and specifically allocate additional land as part of the Local Plan review, over and above the 241 dwellings currently assigned to Albrighton. As set out above, the allocation of the Site (and any additional land as necessary) could also ensure that the replacement GP surgery that has been identified as part of the critical infrastructure priorities for Albrighton by the Council. This would be wholly in line with the role that Albrighton is expected to play in delivering the overall development (urban focused) strategy, as well as providing further flexibility (in line with para 11a of the NPPF) and choice in supply to ensure that every

LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

effort is taken to support the delivery of the housing guideline of 25 dwellings per year at Albrighton.

- 3.2.7 In support of the above, RPS continues to recommend that the Preferred Development strategy should increase the onus upon Shrewsbury and the Principal and Key Centres.

4 HOUSING LAND SUPPLY REVIEW

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In relation to the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to maintain the supply and delivery of new housing, NPPF Paragraph 73 states that:

“Local Planning Authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old”.

4.1.2 This section is a high-level assessment of Shropshire Council’s published five-year housing land supply statement. The purpose of this assessment is for RPS to act as a critical friend to Shropshire Council through the Local Plan examination process. RPS has appeared at many Local Plan examinations and wants to work with Shropshire Council to assist in ensuring the local plan process runs smoothly. This assessment is not intended to undermine the Council or the Local Plan process and RPS agree with the Council that the adoption of a sound, up-to-date Local Plan will generate certainty for investment in Shropshire. RPS look forward to working with the Council during this process in a constructive manner.

4.1.3 The following assessment of the Council’s five-year housing land supply has been undertaken against the Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement published in 2017. Clearly that document cannot have taken account of the new version of the NPPF that was published in July 2018, and in particular the amended definition of what constitutes a deliverable site.

4.1.4 Most of the reductions in the five-year housing land supply that RPS identify for removal in the following assessment are due to the changes in the definition of deliverable. As such it is anticipated that when Shropshire Council publish the Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement for the year ending 31 March 2018 it will be fully compliant with the NPPF (and the updated guidance within the NPPG) in relation to the level of evidence that is required to support the inclusion of sites that benefit only from outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in the development plan or identified on a brownfield register.

4.2 Shropshire Council Current Five-Year Position

4.2.1 As states above, the Council’s latest Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (5YHLS) was published on 11 September 2017 and includes completions and planning permission granted up to 31 March 2017. The report was published in advance of the updated NPPF and therefore could not have been carried out in accordance with the revised definition of deliverable included within Annex 2 of the NPPF.

4.2.2 The definition of what constitutes a deliverable housing site, as contained within the updated NPPF of deliverable is as follows:

“To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. Sites that are not major development, and sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will

not be delivered within five years (e.g. they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). Sites with outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in the development plan or identified on a brownfield register should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years”.

4.2.3 The amended definition of deliverable firmly places the onus on Local Planning Authorities to demonstrate that there is clear evidence to show that for sites with Outline planning permission and those sites that are allocated in a development plan, housing completions will occur within the five-year period.

4.2.4 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides further guidance on what constitutes a deliverable site with particular regard to the inclusion of sites with Outline planning permission:

“For sites with outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in a development plan or identified on a brownfield register, where clear evidence is required to demonstrate that housing completions will begin on site within 5 years, this evidence may include:

- *any progress being made towards the submission of an application;*
- *any progress with site assessment work; and*
- *any relevant information about site viability, ownership constraints or infrastructure provision.*

For example:

- *a statement of common ground between the local planning authority and the site developer(s) which confirms the developers’ delivery intentions and anticipated start and build-out rates.*
- *a hybrid planning permission for large sites which links to a planning performance agreement that sets out the timescale for conclusion of reserved matters applications and discharge of conditions.”*

4.2.5 The NPPG also provides further guidance on what should be included within a 5YHLS and states that they will be expected to include the following information:

- *“for sites with detailed planning permission, details of numbers of homes under construction and completed each year; and where delivery has either exceeded or not progressed as expected, a commentary indicating the reasons for acceleration or delays to commencement on site or effects on build out rates;*
- *for small sites, details of their current planning status and record of completions and homes under construction by site;*
- *for sites with outline consent or allocated in adopted plans (or with permission in principle identified on Part 2 of brownfield land registers, and where included in the 5 year housing land supply), information and clear evidence that there will be housing completions on site within 5 years, including current planning status, timescales and progress towards detailed permission;*
- *permissions granted for windfall development by year and how this compares with the windfall allowance;*

- *details of demolitions and planned demolitions which will have an impact on net completions;*
- *total net completions from the plan base date by year (broken down into types of development e.g. affordable housing); and*
- *the 5 year land supply calculation clearly indicating buffers and shortfalls and the number of years of supply.”*

4.2.6 The Council has provided a comprehensive review of their current supply, including proposed trajectories for each site detailing when they will come forward within the Plan period. The majority of the Supply comes from Sites with Planning Permission and Dwellings on Allocated Sites estimated to be completed within 5 years. Table 4.1 shows a summary of the Council’s deliverable housing land supply, as of 1 April 2017.

Table 4.1 Summary of Deliverable Housing Land in Shropshire

Category	Net Dwellings
A. Dwellings on sites with Planning Permission	9,050
B. Dwellings on sites with Prior Approval	126
C. Selected sites with a resolution to grant	181
D. Dwellings on Allocated Sites estimated to be completed within 5 years	2,155
E. SHLAA Sites deliverable within 5 years	233
F. Emerging Affordable Housing Sites	78
G. Windfall Sites (Based on historic delivery rates and expected future trends)	598
Total	12,421

4.2.7 RPS has undertaken a high-level critique of the major sites included within the Council’s Supply, dwellings with planning permission, dwellings on allocated sites estimated to be completed within five years and SHLAA Sites identified as being deliverable within five years. As stated above, RPS acknowledges that the 2017 5YHLS was published well before the publication of the NPPF in 2018 and that, understandably, the assessment was not completed in accordance with the subsequently amended definition of deliverable. When the Council publish the 2018 5YHLS it is anticipated that the level of housing supply identified by the Council will make reference to the required level of clear evidence, where necessary.

Dwellings with Planning Permission

4.2.8 Most of the Council’s anticipated supply within the five-year period relies upon large-scale developments that are already under construction. Therefore, the Council potentially has a relatively consistent supply in the short term. However, there are several sites within the anticipated supply that benefit from outline planning permission and since the publication of the report have not come forward as expected.

- Old Station Yard, Brownlow Road, Ellesmere. Planning reference: 14/01744/OUT (56 dwellings). Outline planning permission was granted in November 2015 and the three-year

LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

deadline for the submission of a Reserved Matters (November 2018) has now passed without it being submitted. This application has therefore expired.

Site	LPA 5 Year Period	RPS 5 Year Period	Difference
14/01744/OUT	56	0	-56

- b) Proposed Marina, South of Canal Way, Ellesmere. Planning reference: 14/04047/OUT (250 dwellings). Outline planning permission was granted in December 2016 with a three-year time period within which a Reserved Matters application must be submitted. No such application has yet been made and RPS are not aware of anything to suggest that housing completions will occur within the five-year period.

Site	LPA 5 Year Period	RPS 5 Year Period	Difference
14/04047/OUT	126	52	-74

- c) Land South East of Whittington Primary School, Station Road, Whittington. Planning reference: 14/03027/OUT (56 dwellings). Outline planning permission was granted in August 2014. A Full planning application for the first phase of the development (34 dwellings . reference: 18/01990/FUL) was submitted in May 2018 but has not yet been determined. RPS understands that there are land ownership problems that are causing the delays with the proposal and that ransom strips are controlled by the owners of Phases 2 and 3 of proposal. If this site is to be included within the 2018 5YHLS then supporting evidence should be published to address this issue and demonstrate that completions are likely to come forward within the five-year period.

Site	LPA 5 Year Period	RPS 5 Year Period	Difference
14/03027/OUT	56	0	-56

- d) Land at Rhosyllan Farm, Overton Road, St Martins, Oswestry. Planning reference 15/03726/OUT (80 dwellings). Outline planning permission was granted in August 2016 with a three-year time period within which a Reserved Matters application must be submitted. No such application has yet been made and RPS are not aware of anything to suggest that housing completions will occur within the five-year period.

Site	LPA 5 Year Period	RPS 5 Year Period	Difference
15/03726/OUT	80	50	-30

- e) Flax Mill, St Michaels Street, Shrewsbury. Planning reference: 10/03237/OUT (120 dwellings). Outline permission was granted in March 2011 for the re-development of the Flax Mill and for 120 new dwellings on adjacent land. Whilst some works have been undertaken to repair the building no further planning applications have been submitted in relation to the new housing. Whilst the deadline for the submission of the Reserved Matters

application is March 2021 RPS would expect to see further evidence that completions are likely to come forward within the five-year period when the 2018 5YHLS is published.

Site	LPA 5 Year Period	RPS 5 Year Period	Difference
14/01744/OUT	91	15	-76

4.2.9 Based on a high-level review of the Council’s Supply relating to sites with Planning Permission (9,050 dwellings in total), RPS considers that 292 dwellings should be removed from the anticipated five-year housing supply, based on the revised definition of ‘deliverable’ and due to the lack of published supporting evidence. As stated above, RPS anticipates that the Council will address this issue in the 2018 5YHLS when it is published.

Dwellings on allocated sites

4.2.10 A total of 2,155 dwellings are included within the Council’s anticipated supply from allocations within the adopted Local Plan. Following the guidance within the NPPG as set out above, RPS has undertaken a high-level review of the ‘major’ sites (those with an allocation of 10 dwellings or above) within the anticipated supply to assess whether they benefit from planning permission. A total of 35 sites have been assessed by RPS and only 16 of those sites benefit from either outline or full permission.

4.2.11 Therefore, based on the application of the revised definition of ‘deliverable’, RPS considers that a further 1,000 dwellings (across 19 sites) would need to be removed from the anticipated five-year supply without the publication of further supporting evidence to demonstrate that those sites will come forward within the five-year period. A full list of these sites can be found in Appendix 1.

SHLAA Sites

4.2.12 The Council estimate that a total of six sites identified within the SHLAA, of 10 or more dwellings, will deliver a total of 233 new dwellings within the five-year period. However, none of these sites benefit from planning permission. The redevelopment of Shrewsbury Prison was included within the SHLAA for the provision of 50 dwellings, however the planning application that related to that development was refused by the Council in February 2017. RPS are not aware of an appeal having been lodged against that decision or a new application having been submitted.

4.2.13 RPS considers that 134 of the dwellings (across the six sites listed below) would need to be removed from the anticipated housing land supply due to the lack of evidence to demonstrate that those sites will come forward.

- Land adjacent to County Primary School, Hodnet (10 dwellings)
- Land at Home Farm, Condover (25 dwellings)
- The Hollies, Sutton Road (18 dwellings)
- Land at the Elms, Belvidere (15 dwellings)
- Shrewsbury Training and Development Centre (16 dwellings)
- Shrewsbury Prison (50 dwellings)

4.3 Lead-in Times and Delivery Rates

4.3.1 Shropshire Council has included a review of the standard lead-in times and build out rates across the District within the 2017 5YHLS. RPS considers that the build-out rates applied to the anticipated supply of housing are broadly realistic. The lead-in times utilised by the Council, however, are overly optimistic in relation to the length of time it takes for planning applications to be determined following submission. Shropshire Council suggest an overall lead-time from the preparation of an application to the build of a first dwelling ranges from 10-27 months. The summary has not been separated into application types (it is not clear whether this relates to full or outline planning applications) or site size, therefore it is not appropriate to use this range for all site sizes.

4.4 Housing Buffer

4.4.1 The supply of sites should also include a buffer of either 5%, 10% or 20%. A 10% buffer is applied where the LPA wishes to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing through an annual position statement or through a recently adopted Plan. The term *recently adopted* is defined as *a plan adopted between 1 May and 31 October will be considered 'recently adopted' until 31 October of the following year; and a plan adopted between 1 November and 30 April will be considered recently adopted until 31 October in the same year*.

4.4.2 NPPF paragraph 73 states that a 20% buffer should be applied where there has been *“significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years”* and that *“from November 2018, this will be measured against the Housing Delivery Test, where this indicates that delivery was below 85% of the housing requirement”*.

4.4.3 The Council’s 2017 5YHLS includes a 20% buffer as the number of housing completions dating back to 2006 (the start of the plan period) had been significantly below the housing requirement. This was the appropriate method to calculate the buffer at that time as the previous version of the NPPF allowed for a longer period of assessment to establish whether under-delivery had been persistent.

4.4.4 As set out above, the 2018 NPPF states that a 20% buffer applies where the level of housing delivery over the preceding three-year period is below 85% of the housing requirement, and that this will be measured against the Housing Delivery Test (HDT). The Government has not published the result of the HDT (that was due for publication in November 2018) and the Council’s 5YHLS does not include completions for the most recent financial year (2017/18).

4.4.5 However, based on the number of completions that have occurred in the three-year period between 2014/15 and 2016/17 (4,467 dwellings) and the requirement at that time (4,170 dwellings), the level of delivery is in excess of 85% of the requirement and a 5% buffer should be applied to the forward supply.

4.5 Five Year Housing Land Supply

4.5.1 Table 4.2 below presents RPS’s calculation of the Council’s current housing land supply position when compared with the Council’s calculation. As set out in Table 3.1 above, RPS consider that the adjusted housing requirement over the plan period should be 29,427 dwellings, or 1,471 dwellings per annum. This provides a five-year requirement of 7,355 dwellings.

4.5.2 Based on the assessment set out above, RPS considered that, based on an assessment of the information published at this time, the Council is able to demonstrate a housing land supply of between 5.2 and 5.9 years.

Table 4.2: Five Year Housing Land Supply

Five Year Requirement	LPA 5YHLS	LPA 5YHLS	RPS 5YHLS	RPS 5YHLS
Requirement				
5 year requirement	7,090	7,090	7,355	7,355
Shortfall	1,478	1,478	1,478	1,478
Total Requirement	8,568	8,568	8,833	8,833
Requirement 5 year Supply				
Total Requirement + 5% Buffer	8,996		9,275	
Total Requirement + 20% Buffer		10,282		10,600
Annual Requirement	1,799	2,056	1,855	2,120
Supply				
Supply based on 5YHLS Report	12,421	12,421		
RPS Supply			10,995	10,995
Total Supply	12,421	12,421	10,995	10,995
Years Supply with 5% Buffer	6.9		5.9	
Years Supply with 20% Buffer		6.0		5.2

4.6 Conclusion

4.6.1 It is noted that within the adopted Core Strategy, it is proposed to increase the housing requirement every five years. The Preferred Sites Consultation does not propose a stepped trajectory and makes reference to an annual average of 1,430 new dwellings per year. With a 5% buffer the Council would be required to find sufficient housing land to accommodate approximately 1,500 dwellings per year, a figure that has been achieved only once between 2006/07 and 2016/17.

4.6.2 After speaking with a planning officer at the Council, an updated 5YHLS report will be published in the upcoming months, due to delays surrounding the preparation of the Local Plan Review. As stated above, it is anticipated that the updated report will include completions from 2017/18 and that it will also be completed in light of the updated definition of deliverable, and the requirement for Councils to publish clear evidence to support their assessment, are taken into account. RPS are happy to work with the Council to provide further advice on this matter and will provide further comments once the updated 2018 5YHLS has been published.

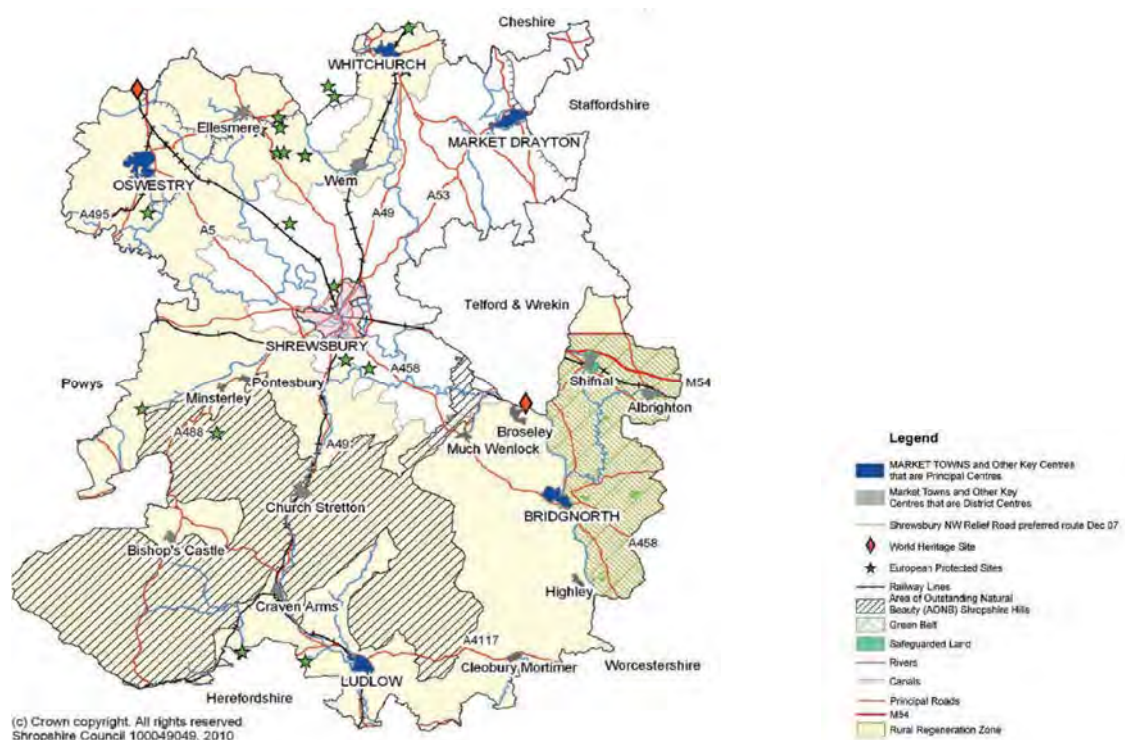
4.6.3 What this assessment does show is that the probable level of housing land supply over the next five-years is only marginally above the minimum level required to meet Shropshire's Local Housing Need. Local Plans should regard their local housing need as the minimum, rather than the maximum, level of housing that should be delivered and they should also allow for sufficient flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. The allocation of this Site for housing within the Local Plan period, rather than as safe-guarded land for development beyond 2036, would help to ensure that the Local Plan is sound and positively prepared in this regard.

5 GREEN BELT REVIEW

5.1 The Need for a Review

5.1.1 The Shropshire Green Belt forms part of the wider West Midlands Metropolitan Green Belt that surrounds the conurbation and Coventry and was designated in 1975. The general function of the Green Belt is to constrain the expansion of these Metropolitan areas. However, the Shropshire Green Belt also constrains the growth potential of settlements in east Shropshire, from the eastern edge of Bridgnorth to the eastern boundary of the County, including Albrighton, a matter that has been acknowledged by Shropshire Council ¹⁴. The following extract from the Core Strategy identifies the extent of Green Belt within Shropshire.

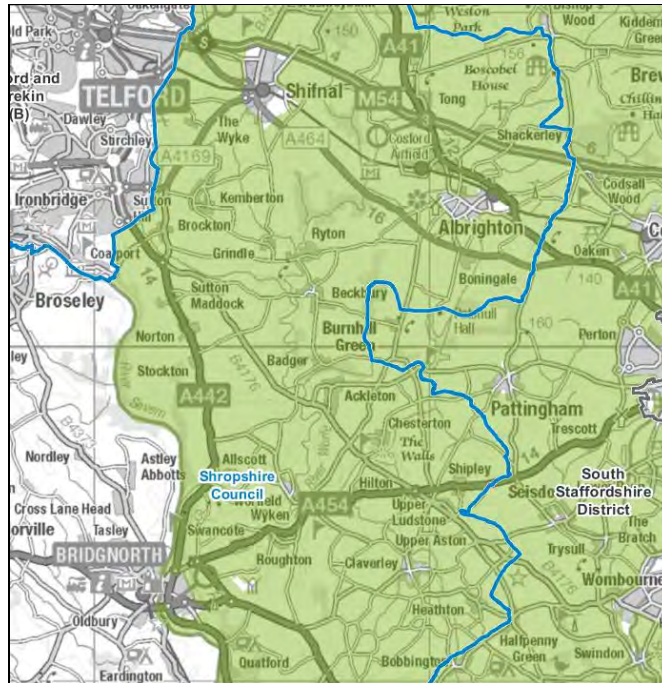
Figure 5.1: The Core Strategy Proposals Map



5.1.2 Until now, the Shropshire Green Belt has not been assessed or reviewed since the preparation of the Bridgnorth Local Plan which was adopted in 2006 and as a result the effects of the constraint on those settlements within the Green Belt have been felt for some time. The following figure (Figure 5.2) shows the extent of the Green Belt in greater detail.

¹⁴ Shropshire Local Plan Review, Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development (2017), Page 23, Paragraph 5.1.

Figure 5.2: Shropshire Green Belt



Source: Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2, LUC, 2018

- 5.1.3 The Shropshire Core Strategy (CS) was adopted in 2011 (prior to the publication of the NPPF). It proposed no changes to the designated Green Belt and simply maintained the existing boundaries in place at that time. The subsequent Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev), that along with the CS form the Development Plan for Shropshire, was adopted in 2015. The CS did not identify any need for SAMDev to review the Green Belt boundaries to accommodate development. However, the Inspectors Report on the Examination highlights that concern was raised through the local plan Examination process that SAMDev would not provide enough housing to meet an up-to-date assessment of objectively assessed housing need.
- 5.1.4 In the Report on the Examination into SAMDev, the Inspector stated that any review of objectively assessed needs would be a matter for the review of the Local Plan, which Shropshire Council committed to commence in 2015. The Inspector then directed (through the Main Modifications) that a review of Green Belt boundaries in Shropshire should be undertaken as part of the review of the potential strategic options to deliver new development through the Local Plan ¹⁵. Paragraph 3.28 of SAMDev states:

“ A detailed review of the Green Belt boundary will be undertaken in the Local Plan review, as part of looking at sustainable growth options. The review of the Green Belt will use a methodology that is consistent with neighbouring authorities.”

¹⁵ Report on the Examination into the SAMDev Plan, Page 8, Paragraphs 20 to 23.

LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

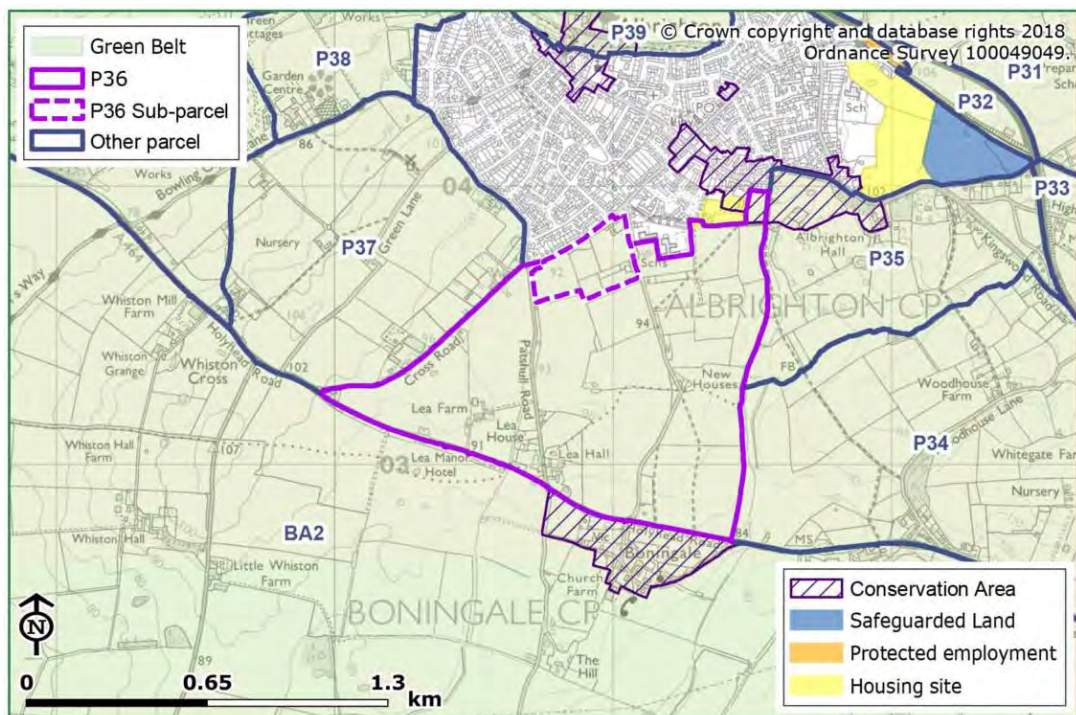
5.1.5 The first stage of the committed Green Belt review was contained within the Shropshire Green Belt Assessment (Prepared by LUC for Shropshire Council), that was published in September 2017. The LUC study assessed the extent to which the land within the Shropshire Green Belt performs against the five purposes of Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF (2012)) with the overall aim of informing the review of the Local Plan and providing Shropshire Council with an:

*“Objective; evidence-based; and independent assessment of how the Shropshire Green Belt contributes to the five Green Belt purposes”.*¹⁶

5.1.6 It is clearly stated within the LUC report that there is a difference between a Green Belt Assessment, which is intended to assess the relative performance of the Green Belt, and a Green Belt Review which looks at the potential for areas to be removed or added to the Green Belt, either to recognise the urbanised character of the land, to safeguard land to satisfy future needs, or to promote land for development.

5.1.7 Following on from the publication of the initial Green Belt Assessment, a Stage 2 Green Belt Review was undertaken (also by LUC) and published in 2018, alongside the Public Consultation on the Preferred Sites document. The Site is contained within Parcel 36 and has been identified within the Stage 2 Review as a sub-parcel of that wider area of assessment (see Figure 5.3 below).

Figure 5.3: Green Belt Parcel 36





Source: Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2, Prepared by LUC for Shropshire Council (November 2018).

¹⁶ Shropshire Green Belt Assessment, Final Report, LUC, September 2017, Page 2, Paragraph 1.8.

- 5.1.8 As stated in Section 2 above, the NPPF provides the detailed criteria against which a review of the Green Belt should be assessed. The following section contains a detailed assessment of that process in relation to how it applies to Shropshire and the Site at Cross Road, Albrighton in particular.

5.2 The Five Purposes: NPPF Paragraph 134

- 5.2.1 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes that the Green Belt serves:

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

- 5.2.2 RPS main representation to the Preferred Sites consultation includes a detailed appraisal of the Site (and the wider parcel of land) in relation to its contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt. As can be seen from the assessments undertaken by CSA Environmental on behalf of Taylor Wimpey (dated January 2019 and appended to RPS main representations to the Preferred Sites consultation), and by LUC on behalf of Shropshire Council there is a general level of agreement that the Site does not make a significant contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. On the identified 5-point scale of overall harm (High, High-Moderate, Moderate, Low-Moderate and Low), CSA Environmental conclude that the overall impact of the removal of the Site from the Green Belt would be **Low-Moderate** based on the following assessment.

Purpose 1 - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 5.2.3 The Site and land to the immediate east and west, is bound by Patshull Road in the west and well vegetated field boundaries to the south and east. These represent clearly identifiable and defensible boundaries in Green Belt terms and would regularise the existing boundary at the Albrighton Primary School. These defensible boundaries would contain any development within an established landscape framework and would not lead to unrestricted sprawl of Albrighton.

Purpose 2 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 5.2.4 In terms of neighbouring towns merging, the nearest settlement to the south of Albrighton is the hamlet of Boningale. The release of the Site would result in a relatively minor reduction in the gap between these settlements, retaining a gap of at least 0.9 km at its closest point, and would not therefore lead to coalescence. The land between these settlements has well vegetated field boundaries, preventing any perceived coalescence.

Purpose 3 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 5.2.5 The Site and land to the immediate east and west, contains several existing buildings which influence the character of the land. The Site is also overlooked by neighbouring properties on Cross Road to the north and by the school to the east. These factors all influence the Site, giving it an urban fringe character, and resulting in it performing less well than the wider open countryside. Given this and the clearly identifiable boundaries which bound the land, its planned release from the Green Belt for development would not result in encroachment into the wider countryside.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 5.2.6 The Site and land to its immediate east and west do not adjoin the Albrighton Conservation Area (which lies to the north east) and there is no inter-visibility between this land and the Conservation Area. As such, the release of this land from the Green Belt would not affect the setting or special character of any historic town.

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

- 5.2.7 The LUC assessment was undertaken on the assumption that all parcels make an equally significant contribution to this purpose and as such the CSA assessment did not include an appraisal against this purpose.
- 5.2.8 In summary the Site plays a limited role against the first four purposes of including land within the Green Belt and it could be released without compromising these purposes.

5.3 Exceptional Circumstances: NPPF Paragraph 136

- 5.3.1 The NPPF requirement that changes to the Green Belt should only be made through the Local Plan process is set out in Paragraph 136 which states that:

“Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans”¹⁷.

- 5.3.2 If changes are to be made to the Green Belt, this should include the demonstration of exceptional circumstances, which can include the consideration of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, i.e. planning for economic growth, housing need, health and wellbeing, accessibility and biodiversity, cultural heritage and climate change resilience.
- 5.3.3 The LUC Stage 2 Green Belt Review states that a common interpretation of this policy is that plans should identify the most sustainable locations for growth and that this strategy should be maintained unless it is outweighed by adverse effects on the overall integrity of the Green Belt, according to an assessment of the whole of the Green Belt based around the five purposes. Following the initial Stage 1 assessment of the contribution of Green Belt land to the five purposes an assessment of the potential harm of the release of land was undertaken by LUC for each parcel (the Stage 2 Review). LUC confirm within the Stage 2 Review that this approach is consistent with case law (reference is made to Calverton Parish Council v Greater Nottingham

¹⁷ NPPF (2018), Page 40, Paragraph 136.

Councils & others (2015) which found that planning judgments setting out the exceptional circumstances for the amendment of Green Belt boundaries require consideration of the nature and extent of harm to the Green Belt.

Development Strategy

5.3.4 The Local Plan Review: Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development consultation (October to December 2017) acknowledged that the Green Belt had constrained the growth potential of settlements in east Shropshire from the eastern edge of Bridgnorth to the eastern boundary of the County. The consequences of this constraint are clearly evident in the limited number of new dwellings that have been completed within Albrighton since the start of the period of the adopted Core Strategy (2006) relative to the other Key Settlements. As shown in Table 5.1 below, only 54 new dwellings were completed in Albrighton in the 11 years between 2006 and 2017 (with 12 of these completions occurring in 2016/17), fewer than in any other Key Settlement across Shropshire.

Table 5.1 Housing Completions in Key Settlements

Settlement	Completions (2006/07 to 2016/17)	% of completions (2006/07 to 2016/17)
Shifnal	698	5.40%
Wem	364	2.80%
Ellesmere	321	2.50%
Cleobury Mortimer	279	2.20%
Church Stretton	205	1.60%
Highley	168	1.30%
Minsterley & Pontesbury*	150	1.20%
Broseley	127	1.00%
Craven Arms	109	0.90%
Much Wenlock	95	0.70%
Bishops Castle	77	0.60%
Albrighton	54	0.40%

* Minsterley & Pontesbury are proposed as community hubs in the Preferred Sites Consultation

5.3.5 The Council's Preferred Development Strategy, as set out in the Preferred Sites consultation, is for a high level of housing growth of 28,750 dwellings with an Urban Focused distribution of development. The amount of net additional housing required for the plan period (2016 to 2036) has been calculated by the Council to be 10,250 dwellings taking account of existing housing completions, commitments and allocations of 18,500 dwellings.

- 5.3.6 The principal of an Urban Focussed distribution of development is generally supported by RPS, and the Council propose, in the Preferred Sites Allocation consultation, that this approach would result in Shrewsbury accommodating around 30% of development, the Principal Centres accommodating around 24.5%, the Key Centres (which includes Albrighton) accommodating around 18% and the Rural Areas accommodating around 27.5%.
- 5.3.7 RPS main representation to the Preferred Sites consultation sets out that the housing requirement is likely to be higher than that currently proposed in the Local Plan review, and consequently the distribution to each of the Key Centres, including Albrighton, should also be increased. In terms of distribution, notwithstanding the concerns RPS has with the overall scale of growth being planned for in the Borough, RPS maintains its previous position regarding the emphasis being placed on rural areas within preferred distribution strategy. In our view, the distribution of 27.5% of the total amount of development to the rural area is too high, compared to just 18% in those settlements (including Albrighton) acknowledged as being more sustainable.
- 5.3.8 As part of the proposed Development Strategy, Shropshire Council has identified Albrighton as a key centre that can contribute towards the strategic growth objectives in the east of the County and RPS support this strategy. Shropshire Council has acknowledged that new housing has been delivered at a modest rate (as set out in Table 5.1 above) and that this reflects the constraints of the Green Belt on the growth of the settlement.¹⁸
- 5.3.9 The proposed strategy in the Preferred Sites consultation seeks to ensure that 500 new dwellings will be delivered within Albrighton across the plan period (2016 to 2036) which would equate to an average annual build out rate of 25 dwellings per annum. This would require development to come forward at a significantly higher rate that has been achieved historically (as shown in table 1 above). A total of 12 dwellings have already been completed and the existing allocations total a further 247 dwellings, leaving a requirement to identify land for a minimum of 241 dwellings.
- 5.3.10 To achieve this, Shropshire Council propose to allocate the land currently allocated within the Core Strategy as safeguarded land for development, and to complement those allocations, and provide long term locations for growth, with three additional sites being proposed for removal from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development (including this Site (as shown on Figure 2.1 on Page 6 above)). Having regard to the Green Belt Assessment (Stage 1) and the Green Belt Review (Stage 2) Shropshire Council consider that:

“justifiable exceptional circumstances for release [of Green Belt land] exist given that in the absence of these areas of safeguarded land and limited opportunities to meet future development requirements”.¹⁹

Harm to the Green Belt

- 5.3.11 As set out in more detail within the RPS main representation, the LUC Stage 2 Review of the site (when considering sub-parcel 36) concludes that:

¹⁸ Shropshire Local Plan Review: Consultation on Preferred Sites (November 2018), Page 21, Paragraph 4.16

¹⁹ Shropshire Local Plan Review: Consultation on Preferred Sites (November 2018), Page 22, Paragraph 4.26

"It is considered that the release of this sub-parcel from the Green Belt would lead to a Moderate level of harm to the Green Belt in this area".²⁰

5.3.12 As highlighted above CSA Environmental, on behalf of Taylor Wimpey, have undertaken their own assessment of the potential harm that could be caused by removing the Site from the Green Belt (Appendix C to the main representations) that concludes that the impact would be low-moderate rather than moderate.

5.3.13 It is also important to note that the LUC Stage 2 Review also states that:

"Whilst development on Green Belt land may inevitably lead to some degree of encroachment into the countryside within the Green Belt, for most of the opportunity areas assessed, the strategic function of the West Midlands Green Belt within Shropshire will not be affected by the releases of land. At both a strategic level and local level, there will be no harm to the role played by the West Midlands Green Belt in checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built areas, preventing the merging of neighbouring towns, or preserving the setting and special character of historic towns."²¹

5.3.14 The consideration of the potential harm to the Green Belt, resulting from the release of land for development, is an essential aspect of establishing the exceptional circumstances for making alterations to Green Belt boundaries. It is clear from the work undertaken by LUC on behalf of Shropshire Council, and by CSA Environmental on behalf of Taylor Wimpey that there would be limited localised harm from the release of the Site from the Green Belt there would be no harm to the strategic function of the wider Green Belt.

5.3.15 It is acknowledged that other factors also need to be considered to establish the necessary exceptional circumstances, and these generally relate to potential environmental and sustainability effects of future development.

Environmental considerations

5.3.16 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site was carried out in September 2018 (by CSA Environmental) that concluded that the number of ecological constraints identified at the site is limited and typical of a site of this nature (trees, hedgerows etc.). The site is predominantly semi-improved grassland that is of low ecological value. There are no statutory or local ecological designations present at, or within close proximity to, the site. Further detailed survey work will be undertaken to inform the future detailed development proposals for the site.

5.3.17 The Site is not covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality. The Site lies wholly within the Green Belt. The Albrighton Conservation Area lies to the north east of the Site, approximately 260 m away at its closest point, continuing east to include Albrighton Hall. The Boningale Conservation Area lies to the south of the Site, approximately 820 m away at its closest point. There are several Listed Buildings within the wider vicinity of the Site, but none have a direct visual relationship with the Site.

²⁰ Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2, Appendix 1, Page 57.

²¹ Shropshire Green Belt Review: Page 48, Paragraph 4.7.

- 5.3.18 RPS main representations to the Preferred Sites consultation (and the attached CSA Environmental Landscape Appraisal and Green Belt Assessment) sets out a detailed appraisal of the potential visual impact of the site. That concludes that the Site is generally well screened from its surroundings by established vegetation. Several near distance views of the Site are possible from adjacent properties which overlook the Site, as well as glimpsed views into the Site from the adjacent roads but by adopting key landscape principles, the Site can be developed without resulting in material harm to the surrounding landscape and visual character
- 5.3.19 There are no known environmental considerations that would rule out the development of this site. As stated above Shropshire Council is clear that there is sufficient evidence that form the exceptional circumstances that are required to release Green Belt land. RPS fully concur with this position and support the release of the Site from the Green Belt.

5.4 Other Reasonable Options: NPPF Paragraph 137

- 5.4.1 In relation to whether the necessary exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the release of land from the Green Belt the NPPF states (at Paragraph 137) that:

“Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development”²².

- 5.4.2 Paragraph 137 provides further clarity on this and states that the assessment of the Strategic Policies within the Local Plan, that will occur during its examination, will consider whether the strategy:

- a) *‘makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
- b) *optimises the density of development...including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres, and other locations well served by public transport; and Can the ‘preferred’ level of growth be accommodated on non Green Belt sites?*
- c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.’*

Brownfield and underutilised land

- 5.4.3 Both the Council’s adopted Development Strategy (as set out in the Core Strategy and SAMDev) and the Preferred Development Strategy as set out in the Preferred Sites consultation, promote an Urban Focused distribution of development that with the majority of new development identified within Shrewsbury and the Principal and Key Centres. Whilst RPS have reservations about the overall level of development proposed for the remaining rural area(as set out in the

²² NPPF (2018), Page 41, Paragraph 137.

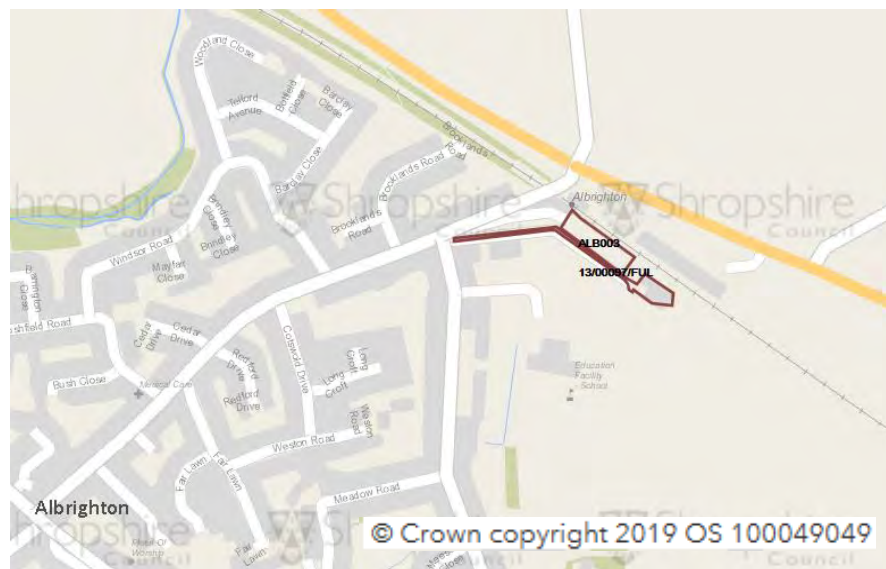
LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

main representation to the Preferred Sites document) the overall principal of promoting the majority of growth within the most sustainable settlements is supported.

5.4.4 Albrighton has seen very limited growth since the start date of the Core Strategy in 2006, as evidenced by the low number of housing completions since then (see Table 5.1 above). As set out above, Shropshire Council has acknowledged that this is due to the constraint of the Green Belt boundary around Albrighton.

5.4.5 RPS is not aware of any brownfield sites within Albrighton that could accommodate the scale of development that is proposed within the Preferred Sites allocation. Both the existing and the proposed housing allocations are on greenfield land to the edge of the settlement. There are currently two sites within Albrighton that are registered on the Shropshire Council Brownfield Land Register that relate to the existing Albrighton Caravan storage facility to the eastern edge of the Village that is within the existing village boundary, and not therefore, within the Green Belt. One of the sites has full planning permission (Planning application reference 17/02469/FUL) for the creation of eight new dwellings, primarily through the conversion of existing buildings. Given that there is an extant planning approval for the site, this would have been included within the 247 dwellings either allocated or with planning permission that are identified by the Council (see paragraph 5.3.8 above).

Figure 5.4: Extract of Shropshire Council Brownfield Land Register



5.4.6 RPS is not aware of any other sustainable sites within Albrighton that could provide any meaningful contribution towards the additional 241 dwellings that are proposed over the course of the plan period.

Optimises the density of development

5.4.7 Section 11 of the NPPF sets out the National Planning Policy in relation to making effective use of land. Paragraph 122, Achieving appropriate densities, states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

(a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;

(b) local market conditions and viability;

(c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;

(d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and

(e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.”

5.4.8 Shropshire Council does not have any adopted planning policies that require development to be carried out to a minimum development density. Policies CS6 of the Core Strategy (Sustainable Design and Development Principles) and MD2 of SAMDev (Sustainable Design) both refer to the density of new development. Policy CS6 seeks to ensure that new development:

“Protects, restores, conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and is appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character, and those features which contribute to local character, having regard to national and local design guidance, landscape character assessments and ecological strategies where appropriate.”

5.4.9 Policy MD2 states that new development should:

“1. Respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible, both in terms of visual appearance and how a place functions, as set out in Community Led Plans, Town or Village Design Statements, Neighbourhood Plans and Place Plans.

2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by:

i. Responding appropriately to the form and layout of existing development and the way it functions, including mixture of uses, streetscape, building heights and lines, scale, density, plot sizes and local patterns of movement; and

ii. Reflecting locally characteristic architectural design and details, such as building materials, form, colour and texture of detailing, taking account of their scale and proportion; and

iii. Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13; and

iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12.”

5.4.10 It is clear from the currently adopted Policies relating to the design of new development and the density of housing, that Shropshire Council wants new development to respect and positively respond to, existing form, layout and density of development. Shropshire is predominantly a rural County and, with the possible exception of the centre of Shrewsbury, any large scale, high-

density residential developments are likely to be completely out of character with the prevailing local context.

- 5.4.11 In relation to Albrighton Policy MD2 is a key consideration as it requires new development to respond to local design aspirations as set out in Neighbourhood Plans. The Albrighton Neighbourhood Plan Light does not set out a minimum density for new residential development but there is a requirement (Policy ALB1: Housing Requirements) for all new housing proposals of five or more units to deliver at least 20% of those units as one and two-bedroom properties. This is reflected within the Albrighton Place Plan Area ²³ that states that one of the Key planning issues for Albrighton is the need to provide more affordable and low-cost market housing.
- 5.4.12 The requirement for one and two-bedroom dwellings within Albrighton should help to ensure that development can be delivered on this site that respects the overall (generally rural) character of this edge of settlement site, whilst ensuring that the overall density of development is maximised to make the most effective use of the land as possible and resulting in the provision of the low-cost market housing that is needed in Albrighton.
- 5.4.13 Shropshire Council published a Strategic Land Availability Assessment as part of the evidence base that supports the Preferred Sites consultation. As part of that assessment an average density of 30 dwellings per hectare has been assumed for all sites 0.2 hectares or greater in size. Given the rural nature of Shropshire it is considered that this is

Can neighbouring authorities accommodate some of the need?

- 5.4.14 Shropshire Council are not proposing, within the Preferred Sites consultation, for any of their housing need to be accommodated within neighbouring authorities. It will be for Shropshire Council to demonstrate through the Local Plan Examination process that they have complied with the Duty to Cooperate as required under Section 20(5C) of the 2004 Act.
- 5.4.15 Based on the above, RPS support the conclusion of Shropshire Council that exceptional circumstances exist that justify changes to the Green Belt boundaries.

5.5 Promotion of Sustainable Development: NPPF Para 138

- 5.5.1 Once it has been established that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to a Green Belt boundary it is necessary to consider the consequences for sustainable patterns of development. Paragraph 138 of the NPPF states consideration should be given towards:

“...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. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport.”

- 5.5.2 As set out above, it has been established that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to the Green Belt boundary and Shropshire Council, in concluding that the boundary at Albrighton

²³ Shropshire Local Plan Review: consultation on Preferred Sites, November 2018, Section 4, Page 19.

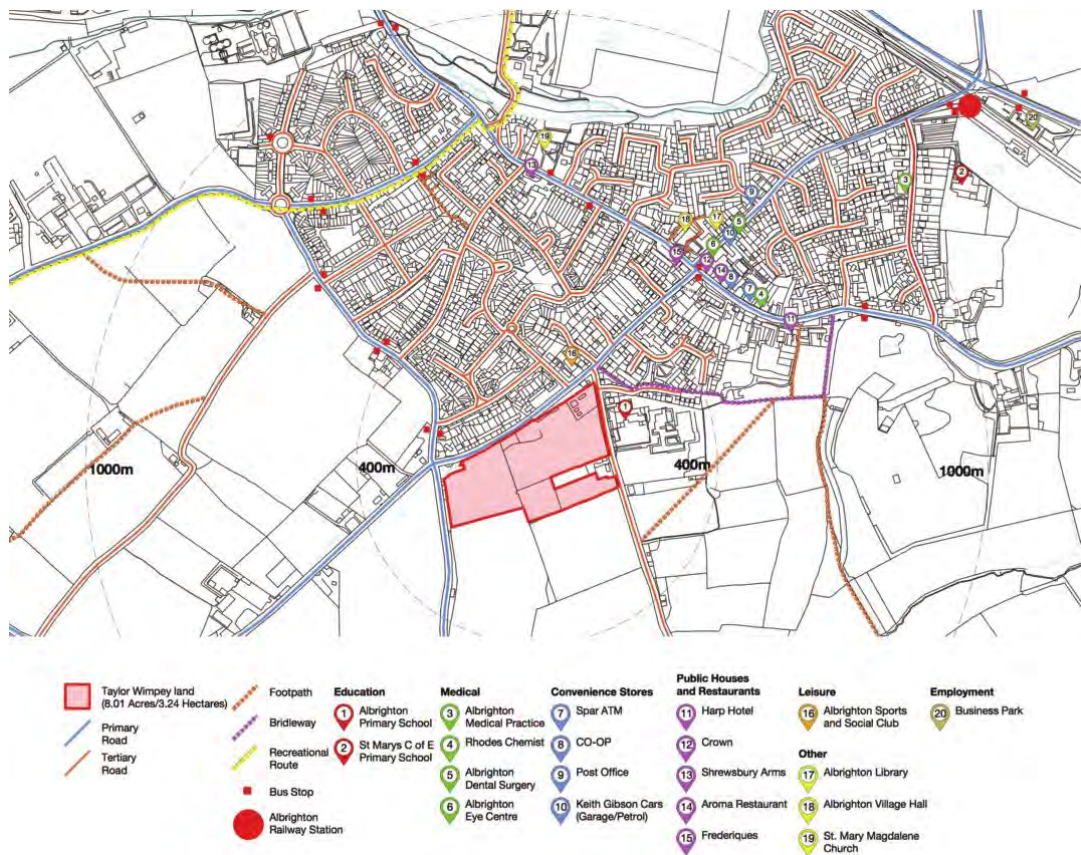
LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

should be amended to remove this Site, have had regard to a detailed Green Belt Assessment (Stage 1) and Green Belt Review (Stage 2).

5.5.3 As set out in the main representation to the Preferred Sites consultation, RPS has previously argued that Albrighton is limited in terms of how it can expand in the future. Further expansion of Albrighton to the east is problematic due to the physical barriers of the A41 and railway line. Development to the west of Albrighton would be relatively less sustainable due to the increased distance from the railway station and the services and facilities provided in the town centre, as well as other community facilities such as the primary school. Furthermore, much of the northern part of Albrighton abuts the woodland within the Donnington and Albrighton local nature reserve, which provides a strong physical barrier to the northern boundary of Albrighton. Consequently, development to the south of Albrighton is therefore considered to offer a more sustainable option at this time, including the Site.

5.5.4 Albrighton is one of the most sustainable settlements in east Shropshire and the site is well related to the village. Most of the village's services and facilities are situated in the centre of the village at the crossroads where the three principal roads meet (as shown on Figure 5.5). The centre includes various shops and services including banks, public houses, restaurants, vets, village hall, library and churches (and several listed buildings). A medical centre is located on Shaw Lane.

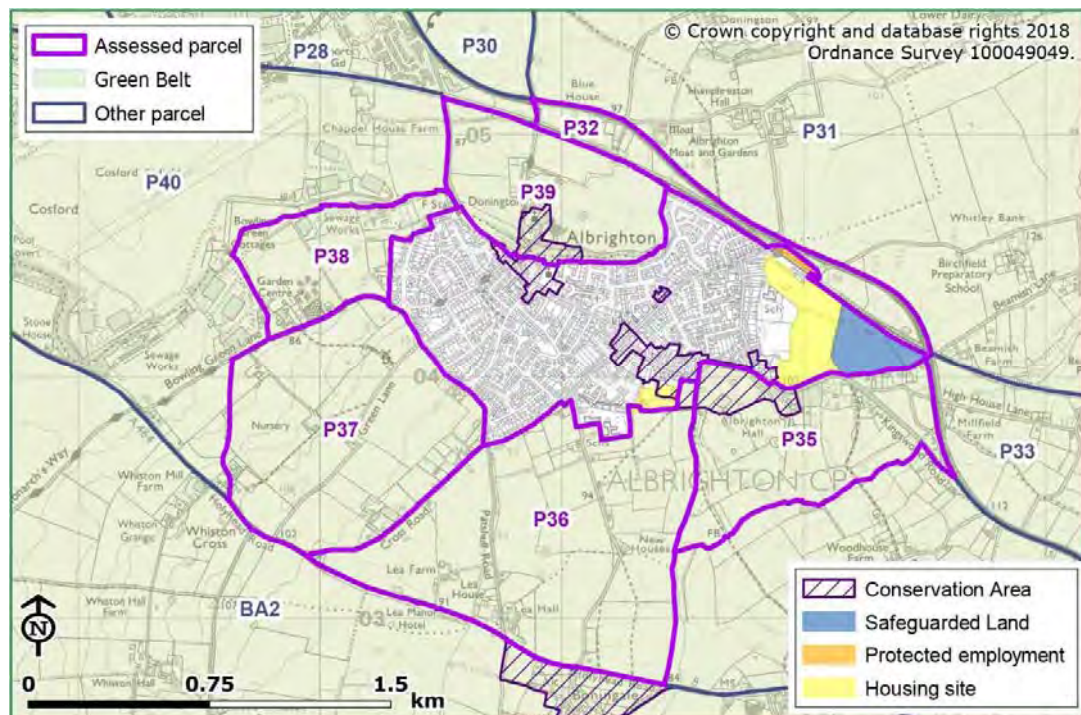
Figure 5.5: Accessibility to Local Facilities



LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

- 5.5.5 The village benefits from two primary schools; St Mary’s Church of England School off Shaw Lane and Albrighton Primary on Newhouse Lane (adjoining the site). The Railway Station is located to the north-eastern edge of the village close to the A41. To the north is the Donnington and Albrighton Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (c.5ha) which defines the northern boundary to the settlement and which includes woodland, pools and meadows, providing a valuable area of public open space for the local community.
- 5.5.6 As can be seen on Figure 5.5 the site is well related to the village and within walking and cycling distance of Albrighton Primary School (c.200m) and the village centre (c.800m). The site location is highly sustainable, relating well to shops, services and facilities within the village and accessible to wider centres of employment, including by rail/bus and proximate to the strategic road network.
- 5.5.7 Furthermore, Albrighton is limited in terms of how it can expand. Further expansion to the east of the village is not possible due to the physical barriers of the A41 and the railway line. Development beyond the western boundary of the village would be less sustainable than the Site due to the increased distance from the railway station and the services and facilities provided in the town centre. Much of the northern part of Albrighton abuts the woodland within the Donnington and Albrighton Local Nature Reserve, which provides a strong physical barrier to the northern boundary of the village.
- 5.5.8 It is also important to note that the Green Belt Assessment (2018) undertaken by LUC on behalf of Shropshire Council included a detailed appraisal of land around Albrighton, in order to assess any harm that may be caused to the Green Belt as a consequence of releasing land for development. The Parcels of land that were assessed are shown on figure 5.6 below.

Figure 5.6: Green Belt Parcels surrounding Albrighton

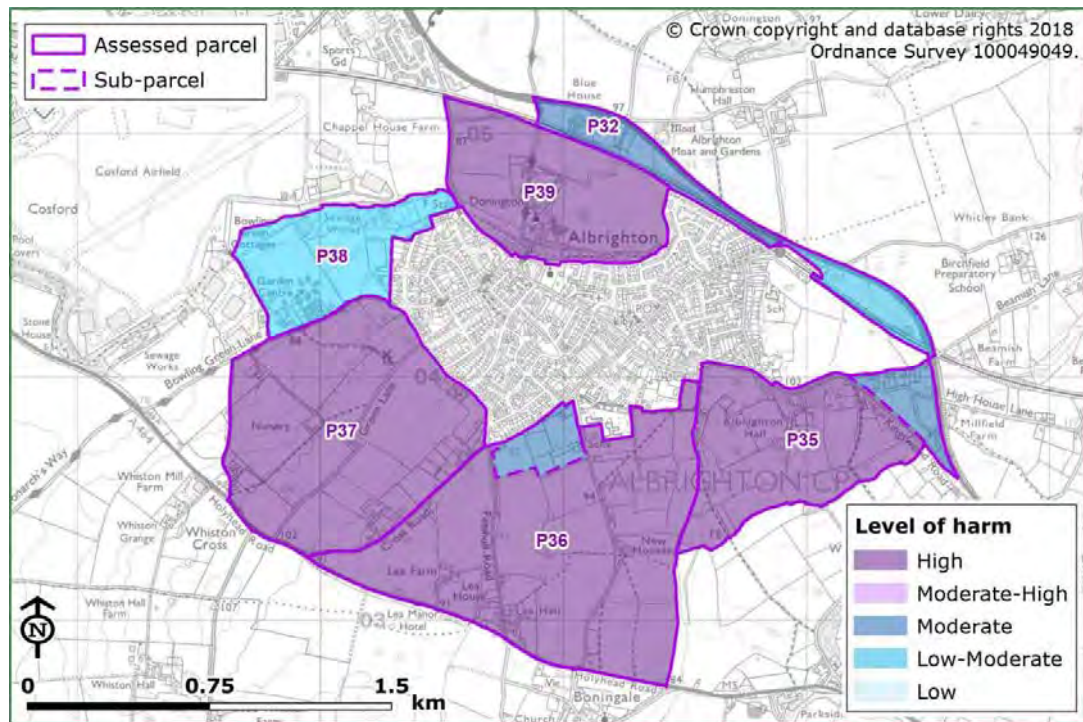


Source: Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2 (LUC) November 2018

LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

5.5.9 The conclusion of the LUC Green Belt Assessment was that the release of the majority of the parcels from the Green Belt would result in a High level of harm to the Green Belt (see figure 5.7 below). As set out above, the Site has been assessed as a sub-parcel of Parcel 36 and that it plays a limited role against the first four purposes of including land within the Green Belt and it could be released without compromising these purposes.

Figure 5.7: Individual harm from release of Parcels surrounding Albrighton



Source: Shropshire Green Belt Review: Stage 2 (LUC) November 2018

5.5.10 Although the Green Belt Review concludes that other Parcels could result in a lower degree of harm to the Green Belt, as set out above, those sites are less sustainable than the Site at Cross Road for other reasons, namely their degree of separation from the site due to the A41 and the railway line, and the distance and accessibility to the key services within the Village. RPS consider that the Site is the most sustainable location for additional development at Albrighton.

5.5.11 In reviewing Green Belt boundaries NPPF Paragraph 138 also states that plans should:

“... also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

5.5.12 It is considered that the most appropriate method of ensuring improvements to any remaining Green Belt land would be through the planning application process. This could be achieved through the strengthening of the southern boundary of the site, which would become the redefined settlement boundary, with additional planting. There are also opportunities to further enhance ecological diversity through the provision of greenspace and extensive areas of

landscaping across the site, as well as buffer zones to create a network of green infrastructure that connects to the surrounding countryside and increasing the biodiversity value of the Site. Taylor Wimpey look forward to engaging with Shropshire Council and relevant stakeholders on how they could deliver such improvements.

5.6 Defining Boundaries: NPPF Para 139.

5.6.1 Paragraph 139 of the NPPF sets out the following criteria that local planning authorities should give consideration to when defining Green Belt boundaries:

- “(a) ensure consistency with the development plan’s strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- (b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- (c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- (d) make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;*
- (e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and*
- (f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.”*

5.6.2 The release of the Site from the Green Belt as safeguarded land fully complies with the criteria set out in Paragraph 139. The release of the site would be consistent with the Preferred Development Strategy set out in the Preferred Sites consultation document, in that it would allow for Albrighton, a Key Settlement, to grow in a planned and sustainable manner. Notwithstanding RPS clear opinion that the site should be allocated for development within the plan period, the proposed revisions to the Green Belt boundary at Albrighton should ensure that the amended boundary would ensure that the boundary should not need to be assessed again until after the end of the plan period. However, with a plan period that would run until 2036 it cannot be ruled out entirely that further changes to the Green Belt boundary may be necessary depending on any number of potential variables, including future changes in National planning policy, the housing requirement for Shropshire or the delivery of housing.

5.6.3 As set out above, the redefined southern boundary of the Site could be reinforced and strengthened with additional landscaping / planting that would result in clearly permanent boundary.

5.7 Safeguarded Land

5.7.1 There is a requirement in NPPF Paragraph 139 for plans to identify safeguarded land, where necessary, to meet longer-term development needs. As stated above, the Site is included within the Preferred Sites consultation document as safeguarded land for development beyond the end of the plan period (2036).

LAND AT CROSS ROAD, ALBRIGHTON

- 5.7.2 There is no specific guidance provided by the Government in relation to the process of identifying safeguarded land, and to when this should be regarded as being necessary. However, it is likely that the degree of weight that is attached to the importance of Green Belt boundaries being permanent, and the desirability for boundaries to endure beyond the end of the plan period, is the key driving factor.
- 5.7.3 RPS main representation to the Preferred Sites consultation explains that whilst it agrees with the removal of the site from the Green Belt, it does not agree with the Council's proposed allocation of the site as safeguarded land.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 The requirement for Shropshire Council to undertake a Green Belt review is set out within the adopted Site Allocations and Management of Development and was included on the insistence of the Planning Inspector as part of the Examination process.
- 6.1.2 The Council are currently reviewing the Local Plan and as part of the ongoing consultation on the Preferred Sites document they have set out that their preferred approach to development is for a high level of housing growth that has an urban focus.
- 6.1.3 RPS considers that the housing requirement is likely to be higher than that currently proposed in the Local Plan review, and consequently the distribution to each of the Key Centres, including Albrighton, is also likely to increase. In terms of distribution, notwithstanding the concerns RPS has with the overall scale of growth being planned for in the Borough, RPS maintains its previous position regarding the emphasis being placed on rural areas within preferred distribution strategy. In our view, the distribution of 27.5% of the total amount of development to the rural area is too high, compared to just 18% in those settlements (including Albrighton) acknowledged as being more sustainable. RPS continue to recommend that the Strategic Housing Distribution strategy should increase the onus upon Shrewsbury and the Principal and Key Centres.
- 6.1.4 To accommodate the identified level of growth, and to ensure that the preferred distribution of development occurs, RPS supports the acknowledgement by the Council that Green Belt land will need to be released. This is of importance in Albrighton, where the Green Belt designation has significantly restricted housing growth. This report clearly establishes that the exceptional circumstances are in place to justify alterations to the Green Belt boundary at Albrighton.
- 6.1.5 RPS supports the recognition that the Site should be considered distinct from other areas of Green Belt that surrounds Albrighton. RPS also supports the recognition that development of the Site has potential and is acceptable in principle, given the Council's own position following its review of the Green Belt at Albrighton. The conclusions reached by the Council are broadly consistent with the assessment undertaken on behalf of Taylor Wimpey by CSA Environmental. The conclusion of both assessments is that the removal of the Site from the Green Belt will not harm the overarching purposes of including land within the Green Belt, whilst ensuring that the Council's Preferred Spatial Distribution for development is achieved.
- 6.1.6 RPS suggest that Land at Cross Road is the most sustainable of all the sites assessed by the Council, providing clear justification to support the allocation of the Site in the Plan given there is no logical reason that prevents its inclusion on sustainability grounds. Furthermore, based on our assessment of the available evidence relating to land availability, landscape, flood risk, and consideration of Green Belt purposes, RPS contends that there is no evidential basis preventing the allocation of Land at Cross Road for residential development in the Local Plan review.
- 6.1.7 As demonstrated in our submissions, the site is highly sustainable being accessible to a range of services and community facilities within the village and enjoys excellent accessibility to the strategic road (A41/M54) and rail network (Albrighton Railway Station links the village with Wolverhampton, Telford and Shrewsbury).
- 6.1.8 The Vision for the development is *"An attractive residential development offering a choice of high-quality new homes to meet local needs and being fully integrated with, and complementary to, the village of Albrighton"*.

- 6.1.9 A conceptual layout has been prepared which reflects the identified opportunities and constraints and which will deliver the above vision that indicates that the site can accommodate approximately 160 dwellings set amongst 1.7 ha of open space including retained trees and hedgerows. The development will deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits and will be truly “*deliverable*” in relation to NPPF para. 47, being “*suitable*”, “*available*” and “*achievable*” (as set out in Sections 5 and 7 of the Development Vision document).