

**Land at J10 M42 between Tamworth and Dordon/Polesworth**

## **Landscape Character Assessment**

**A Report on behalf of Hodgetts Estates**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A. Hodgetts Estates is promoting land west of Dordon for a sustainably located, mixed use development which includes proposals for substantial green infrastructure and structural landscape, as set out in a Masterplan Vision.
- B. A landscape character assessment has been carried out of land between Tamworth and Dordon adjacent to J10, M42 and the A5. The work has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects in accordance with GLVIA methodology to inform the emerging proposals.
- C. Review of planning policy context has noted policies associated with key landscape assets, the benefits of green infrastructure and the restraint associated with the need to retain a 'meaningful gap' between Dordon and Tamworth (Core Strategy policy NW19).
- D. Review of extant landscape character assessments of the area has established that the landscape is of moderate sensitivity and has the capacity to accommodate some development with appropriate mitigation.
- E. Published landscape and environmental guidelines recommend development includes new GI to assist with mitigation.
- F. A preliminary landscape and GI strategy is proposed, informed by extant planning policy and the landscape character assessment, which would maximise opportunities to avoid, minimise or mitigate for adverse effects. Such a strategy, if taken forward, will demonstrate a sensitive approach to and consideration of the landscape and visual context of the site, and local planning policy and guidance, including in relation to maintaining a 'meaningful gap' between Dordon and Tamworth.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA) was appointed in by Hodgetts Estates, to undertake a landscape character assessment of land at J10 M42 between Tamworth and Dordon/Polesworth (The Site). The Site is being considered and promoted for a comprehensive development and green infrastructure (GI) strategy through the North Warwickshire Local Plan process and this study provides an overview of the landscape character context to inform emerging development opportunities.

1.2 The work has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects, with reference to baseline appraisal methodology as set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (IEMA/ LI 3<sup>rd</sup> edition). A desktop review of landscape planning policy, designations (see figure 1) and published landscape character assessments was undertaken, key data sources are listed below. A site appraisal was undertaken in January 2018, which included consideration of the local landscape context.

1.3 The following sections of this report outline the planning, landscape and visual contexts of the site. Landscape and visual opportunities and constraints are discussed and a preliminary landscape strategy concludes the report.

1.4 Data sources:

- Natural England, (2014). 'National Character Area Profile: 97 Arden' NE337 [online] Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1819400> [Accessed 11.01.2018]
- Warwickshire County Council and the Countryside Commission, (1993). 'Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines – Arden' [online] Available at: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/landscapeguidelines> [Accessed 17.01.2018]
- North Warwickshire Borough Council prepared by FPCR LLP, (2010). 'North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment' [online] Available at: [https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/download/1668/landscape\\_character\\_assessment\\_downloads](https://www.northwarks.gov.uk/downloads/download/1668/landscape_character_assessment_downloads) [Accessed 11.01.2018]

1.5 This landscape character assessment, together with an ecological desk study and critique of the Meaningful Gap Assessment (NWBC) have informed the preparation of a strategic development master plan which is provided as a separate document.

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The Site comprises some 180 acres (72.8 hectares) of agricultural land situated between the M42 (Junction 10) and Dordon, to the immediate north of the A5. It lies within the jurisdiction of North Warwickshire Borough Council.

2.2 The Site comprises very gently undulating land, within a wide local shallow valley (see figure 2) is divided into three fields, separated by farm tracks, with narrow grass field margins, with limited sections of remnant hedgerow. The Site is bordered by:

- M42 to the west with an associated belt of tree/ shrub planting, approximately 10m wide, adjacent to the motorway;
- A5 to the south, with an associated variable hedgerow, and occasional tree/ shrub belt planting;
- Residential development to the east (Kitwood Avenue, Ashlea and Barn Close, at the western edge of Dordon);
- Agricultural and grassland to the north, together with the southern edge of Birchmoor (a small residential area).

2.3 A Public Bridleway (AE45) and Public Footpath (AE46) run north/ south along farm tracks through the site, between Birchmoor and the A5 as shown on the [definitive map](#) for Warwickshire. Informal tracks/ route appear to link the footpath with Dordon to the east.

2.4 Further public footpaths (AE52 and AE55) run south westwards from the A5.

### 3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

#### *National Planning Policy Framework*

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out guidance on good design and the following references are of relevance in relation to the effect of a development on local character (paragraph 58):

- *‘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;’*
- *‘establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;’*
- *‘optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;’*
- *‘respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;’*
- *‘are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.’*

#### *National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)*

3.2 NPPG recognises the importance of “...the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...” and that landscape character assessment is a useful tool to “...understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place...” and thus these assist in informing appropriate forms of, and designs for, development.

#### *Local Planning Policy*

3.3 The NWBC Core Strategy (Adopted July 2017) forms part of the Development Plan for the area. Policies contained within the plan, and of relevance to landscape and visual issues are as follows. The policy requirement generally relates to the protection, retention and enhancement of assets:

- ENV 4 – Trees and Hedgerows

- ENV 6 – Land Resources
- ENV 8 – Water Resources

3.4 NW19 Polesworth and Dordon - The identification of an 'area of restraint' with respect to restricting development between Tamworth and Dordon has been a long term policy objective for NWBC. The current position was established in the Council's Core Strategy (adopted 2014), under policy NW19 Polesworth and Dordon which states:

*"The broad location of growth will be to the south and east of the settlements subject to there being no unacceptable environmental impacts from surface mining and that viable and practicable coal reserves are safeguarded.*

*Any development to the west of Polesworth & Dordon must respect the separate identities of Polesworth and Dordon and Tamworth and maintain a meaningful gap between them."*

3.5 Such a policy gives some inference to the nature of the landscape on land between Dordon and Tamworth and needs consideration within development proposals to ensure a 'meaningful gap' is maintained.

#### *Green Infrastructure and Green Space Strategy*

3.6 Green infrastructure (GI) and green space strategies assist in identifying local assets which form part of the landscape character and are beneficial as part of development strategies. The following documents have been reviewed with respect to GI and green space strategies:

- Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Study (Land Use Consultants July 2011);
- North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (NWGSS) 2008 – 2018.

#### *North Warwickshire Green Space Strategy (NWGSS) 2008 – 2018*

3.7 The NWGSS refers to previous document Green Space Strategies (CABE Space 2003) with regard to the importance of Green Space; *"Green space is a vital part of the public realm. Attractive, safe and accessible parks and green spaces contribute positive social, economic and*

environmental benefits, improving public health, well-being and quality of life.” Also recognising that good quality green space can directly benefit:

- *Health - green spaces can benefit mental and physical health. They provide opportunities to enjoy the natural world and to get involved in a range of leisure activities ... The more accessible and attractive the green space, the more likely it is to be used by a wide range of people. Physical activity is now widely accepted as a major contributor to good health and can help to reduce rates of coronary heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers and mental health problems;*
- *Education - green spaces can provide a valuable resource for education providing outdoor classrooms and space for training ...;*
- *Economy - the economic benefits of green spaces are becoming more apparent. An urban area with lots of high quality green space and areas for wildlife creates a positive image and is attractive to business, bringing jobs, tourism and investment into an area. Green spaces also raise property values and support physical regeneration;*
- *Environment - green space encourages wildlife to flourish. In an increasingly urbanised society, where the expansion of urban development means that true countryside becomes ever more distant from many, and what countryside remains has often lost much of its wildlife interest, green spaces increasingly symbolise pockets of countryside in urban areas. They can act as wildlife corridors allowing plant and animal life to migrate between them, thus acting as an important link or a series of stepping stones between urban and rural areas ensuring that wildlife in both are connected.*

3.8 The NWGSS vision is: “To deliver positive and lasting change to North Warwickshire’s stock of green spaces, for the benefit of everyone.” This is supported by the objectives:

- *Improve the management and maximise the benefits of green spaces;*
- *Co-ordinate action and develop partnership working;*
- *Access more funding opportunities;*
- *Promote green space investment as a policy priority - having a Green Space Strategy will elevate the status of Green Space issues in the Borough in giving consideration to public policy priorities;*
- *Help create sustainable communities - attractive green spaces can play a vital role in creating sustainable, inclusive and cohesive communities where people will choose to live and work both now and in the future.*



3.9 The NWGSS identified some of the most important green spaces as:

- *The country parks...;*
- *Collectively the various recreation grounds in the towns and villages;*
- *Accessible natural green space and green corridors (including Rights of Way linking towns to adjacent countryside, various off road cycle paths...;*
- *Informal open space;*
- *Allotments and community gardens;*
- *Dedicated sports grounds.*

3.10 The NWGSS identified the following relevant priorities for Polesworth and Dordon:

- *AP38 - Develop an improvement plan for Kitwood Avenue Recreation Ground in Dordon in consultation with the local community;*
- *AP39 - Where appropriate, and in consultation with the local community, allow some informal open space to be developed for alternative green space uses such as new play space or for management as natural green space;*
- *AP40 - Permit the release of some informal open space only where this will secure funds to improve existing facilities and avoid the loss of all other types of publicly accessible open space across the area.*

#### *Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations*

3.11 There are no national or local landscape designations covering the site. Policy NW19 relating to the maintenance of a meaningful gap is noted above. Planning considerations with reference to 'open countryside' apply.

3.12 There are no Listed Buildings within the site. The nearest Listed Building is located south of the site adjacent to the A5 and the new Core 42 logistics/ industrial park.

## 4.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

### Landscape Character

*National Character Area Profile 97 – Arden*

4.1 The site is located within ‘National Character Area Profile 97 – Arden’ (Natural England, 2014).

4.2 The key characteristics as stated the NCA profile are described as (p. 5):

- *“Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.*
- *Geologically diverse with rocks ranging from the Precambrian to the Jurassic and overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits.*
- *Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.*
- *Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows; the River Blythe SSSI lying between the cities of Coventry and Birmingham is a good example of this.*
- *Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands. Village greens/commons have a strong association with remnant lowland heath. Fragmented heathland persists on poorer soils in central and northern areas.*
- *Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates, such as, Packington Hall and Stoneleigh Park.*
- *Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation while some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.*
- *North-eastern industrial area based around former Warwickshire coalfield, with distinctive colliery settlements. North-western area dominated by urban development and associated urban edge landscapes such as managed greenspace, for example allotments, gardens, parks, golf courses (rough areas) and public open spaces; playing fields, churchyards, cemeteries and institutional grounds (schools, hospitals).*

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- *Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that sit within the landscape of this NCA.*
  - *Shakespeare's 'Forest of Arden', featured in 'As You Like It', is still reflected through the woodland cover, mature oaks, small ancient woodlands and former wood pasture."*

4.3 The features that can be drawn out from key characteristics of the NCA that are relevant to The Site and the surrounding area are:

- The mature trees, including oak, which can be found within the hedgerows;
- The contrast of settlement patterns of neighbouring conurbations and settlements;
- Evidence of the area's industrial past associated with the former Warwickshire coalfield;
- The presence of colliery settlements; and,
- The influence of the M42 transport corridor.

4.4 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) contained within the NCA profile, offer guidance on critical issues that relate to the factors that have shaped the character of the area, and make suggestions to help achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future. The SEO's are stated as (p.3)

- *"SEO 1: Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas while balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.*
- *SEO 2: Create new networks of woodlands, heaths and green infrastructure, linking urban areas like Birmingham and Coventry with the wider countryside to increase biodiversity, recreation and the potential for biomass and the regulation of climate.*
- *SEO 3: Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource, to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history.*
- *SEO 4: Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell Reservoirs, to increase resource protection such as regulating soil erosion, soil quality and water quality."*

4.5 In support of the SEO's, landscape opportunities that further inform potential options for the NCA are stated as (p.31):

- *“Conserve, enhance and restore the area’s ancient landscape pattern of field boundaries, historic (including farm) buildings, moated sites, parkland and pasture and reinforce its well wooded character.*
- *Protect and manage woodlands particularly ancient woodlands and wood pasture to maintain the character of Arden.*
- *Manage and restore hedgerows especially in the north-eastern part of the area (enclosure patterns) and restore parkland, ancient trees and stream side trees plus manage and replace in-field trees and hedgerow trees.*
- *Maintain and restore areas of heathland particularly in southern Arden, Arden Parklands and Birmingham Hills, lowland meadows and pastures and floodplain grazing marshes.*
- *Manage arable cultivation to encourage rare arable plants and range-restricted farmland birds and mammals, following appropriate management options under Entry Level Stewardship.*
- *Restore habitats associated with river valleys particularly the Blythe and Tame.*
- *Create new green infrastructure with associated habitat creation and new public access on former mining sites and close to urban populations in the West Midlands Green Belt.”*

#### *Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines*

4.6 The ‘Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines’ (Warwickshire County Council and the Countryside Commission, 1993), identifies the regional character areas that cover the county. The Site is in the regional character area of ‘Arden’, which is defined as (p.2):

*“an historic region of former wood pasture and heath characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, ancient woodlands and mature hedgerow oaks.”*

4.7 The regional character area of ‘Arden’, is further divided into landscape types, The Site is identified as within the ‘Wooded Estatelands’ landscape type. The overall character and qualities of this landscape type are described as (p.19):

*“A well wooded estate landscape characterised by a large scale rolling topography and prominent hilltop woodlands.”*

4.8 The key characteristic features of the landscape type are identified as (p.19):

- *A large rolling topography with occasional steep scarp slopes.*
- *Large woodlands, often associated with rising ground.*
- *Mature hedgerow and roadside oaks.*
- *A semi-regular pattern of medium to large sized fields.*
- *A varied settlement pattern of small villages and scattered farmsteads.*

4.9 It should be noted that the overall character and qualities, and characteristic features are not wholly representative of The Site, as noted in the accompanying 'Wooded Estatelands' description (p.18), which describes the landscape around Birchmoor, the small settlement to the north of The Site

*"...the structure of the landscape is more fragmented creating wide open views through and beyond these areas to the surrounding industrial landscapes.*

4.10 The accompanying text goes on to describe "the remnant estatelands" including that of Alvecote Priory, located approximately 3.5km north of The Site, and alludes to the fact that the remnant estatelands contained in the landscape type "...provide more of an impression of the original landscape character." (p.18).

4.11 As described above, the surrounding industrial landscapes have an influence on the setting of this area of the 'Wooded Estatelands' landscape type, and indeed, much of the landscape type in this part of the county is encircled by the 'Industrial Arden' landscape type. Whilst The Site is not located within this landscape type, it is worth considering the effect on the surrounding landscape it has. The overall character and qualities of the 'Industrial Arden' landscape type are described as (p.15):

*"A rather variable, often run-down urban fringe landscape characterised by mining settlements, spoil mounds, and pockets of farmland."*

4.12 The key characteristic features of the landscape type are identified as (p.15):

- *A varied, often steeply undulating topography.*
- *Pockets of farmland, often surrounded on two or more sides by urban development.*
- *A generally poorly defined pattern of small hedged fields.*

- *Small, closely spaced mining settlements, often on hill tops.*
- *Rows of terraced houses along roadsides.*
- *Disused spoil mounds with semi-natural grassland and scrub.*
- *Golf courses, playing fields and other non-agricultural land.*

4.13 As described, the “pockets of farmland, often surrounded on two or more sides by urban development” is indicative of the landscape of The Site. Further to this, the “small, closely spaced mining settlements, often on hill tops” and the “disused spoil mounds with semi-natural grassland and scrub are characteristic of the surrounding environs to The Site.

*North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment (see figure 3)*

4.14 The ‘North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment’ (North Warwickshire Borough Council prepared by FPCR LLP, 2010) provides an impartial district-wide assessment of landscape character. As part of this a focussed setting assessment and capacity study of the landscape around the main settlements and local service centres are provided, this includes the settlements of Polesworth and Dordon.

4.15 Within the landscape characterisation, the site is defined within ‘Character Area 5: Tamworth – Urban Fringe Farmlands’, the key characteristics of this area are stated as (p.40):

- *“Gently undulating indistinct landform;*
- *Predominantly open arable land with little tree cover;*
- *Fragmented landscape with a complex mix of agricultural, industrial and urban fringe land uses;*
- *Heavily influenced by adjacent settlement edges of Tamworth and Dordon and by large scale modern industry at Kingsbury, and in the vicinity of the M42 motorway junction;*
- *Unifying presence of the M42 motorway, which passes through within a planted cutting;*
- *Network of busy roads in and around Tamworth;*
- *Generally large, open arable fields between urban land uses with no or low trimmed hedges and few hedgerow trees;*
- *Pockets of permanent pasture in small hedged fields survive adjacent to Freasley and Whateley;*

- *Former mining activity has created several large spoil tips, now reclaimed but remain sparsely vegetated, the large tip south of the M42 junction 10 is a significant visual detractor;*
- *Open internal views contained within wider landscape by peripheral settlement, woodland and landform, although there are longer views across the Tame Valley from the western edge of the area”.*

4.16 The Site is representative of many of the key characteristics noted in the LCA, from the underlying “gently undulating indistinct landform” upon which the open framework of “predominantly open arable land with little tree cover” is overlain. This is further demonstrated by the pattern of “generally large, open arable fields between urban land uses with no or low trimmed hedges and few hedgerow trees”.

4.17 The surroundings are indicative of the “fragmented landscape with a complex mix of agricultural, industrial and urban fringe land uses” which can be seen in the bordering settlement edges of Tamworth and Dordon, the large scale industrial units at Birch Coppice Business Park, and “the large tip south of the M42 junction 10 is a significant visual detractor”.

4.18 The landscape and management strategies for the LCA state that (p.41-42):

*“Although a few pockets of the historic landscape structure remain, generally this landscape would benefit from reconstruction;*

- *Safeguard the setting of the villages of Freasley and Whateley any development here should reinforce the existing settlement pattern;*
- *Any settlement expansion should include delivery of a robust Green Infrastructure with appropriate landscape planting to integrate the settlement edge within the landscape and bring additional landscape enhancements;*
- *Should future mining activities occur they should be accompanied by a comprehensive landscape reclamation strategy to introduce a new landscape framework;*
- *New agricultural and industrial buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to mitigate against further landscape impact from built development;*

- *Maintain a broad landscape corridor to both sides of the M42, introduction of small to medium sized blocks of woodland planting using locally occurring native species would be appropriate within this corridor;*
- *The design of any recreational facilities should seek to reintroduce landscape structure and features;*
- *Conserve remaining pastoral character and identify opportunities for conversion of arable back to pasture;*
- *Encourage development of wide and diverse field margins;*
- *Encourage retention of hedges and management practices that reinstate historic hedge lines using native locally occurring hedgerow species;*
- *Encourage planting of hedgerow oaks to increase the tree cover within the area;*
- *Encourage ecological management of remaining grassland areas;*
- *Maintain restoration planting / naturally re-vegetated spoil tips to integrate better as landscape features.*

4.19 The study area of the setting assessment for Polesworth and Dordon partially covers The Site, which falls within the landscape sub-unit defined as ‘West side of Dordon’, and as well as identifying and describing the landscape characteristics applicable to The Site, also provides an assessment of the sensitivity of the sub-unit to change and commentary on the potential suitability of the area to accommodate development and green infrastructure and land use opportunities.

4.20 The landscape sub-unit of ‘West side of Dordon’ is assessed as having ‘moderate landscape sensitivity’, and has been judged on the following criteria (p.8):

- Landscape character sensitivity
- Visual sensitivity
- Landscape value

4.21 ‘Moderate landscape sensitivity’, is defined as (p.10):

*“Some overall capacity for change with potential for development within pockets of land with appropriate mitigation, but there may be sensitive landscape components and or visual constraints that may limit the scope of development”*



4.22 The commentary provided in the assessment of the landscape sub-unit on its suitability for development and opportunities for green infrastructure and land use measures are as follows (p.101):

**“Potential for Built Development:**

*Generally lower sensitivity through lack of facilities, but widely open and visible. Some limited development could provide a more successful settlement edge. New built development may be possible, linked to the existing settlement on the higher ground.*

*Maximum 2 storey would link with existing settlement, brick or tile appropriate. Open space and Green Infrastructure should be located on the edge of the area, to provide a softer settlement edge and to link the settlement better into the landscape. A varied urban edge and urban form could be appropriate.”*

**“Green Infrastructure, Opportunities and Recommendations:**

*There are few features in the landscape to retain, but a new landscape structure would be appropriate. Longer views to and from the settlement on the higher ground should be retained, but a “greener” softer edge of the settlement could be established.”*

**“Other land use / management opportunities**

- *Encourage development of wide and diverse field margins;*
- *Encourage retention of hedges and management practices that reinstate historic hedge lines using native locally occurring hedgerow species;*
- *Encourage planting of hedgerow oaks to increase the tree cover within the area;*
- *Encourage planting of small native locally occurring broadleaved woodland blocks on higher land to soften the impact of peripheral urbanising elements and the settlement edge;*
- *The design of any recreational facilities should seek to reintroduce landscape structure and features.”*

*Landscape Character and Features of the Site*

- 4.23 The Site is comprised of three large, irregularly shaped arable fields divided by two public rights of way. Generally, much of the area is bounded by sections of sparse and gappy, poorly maintained hedgerows or by the double and single-tracks of the public rights of way. Mature, intermittent hedgerow trees and lines of 33kV poles and wires provide vertical elements. The lack of discernible features and poor enclosure within The Site gives an open and simple character, this in turn is contained by the influence of adjacent land uses.
- 4.24 The M42 and A5 transport corridors exert a strong influence on the western and southern edges of The Site respectively. The M42 cutting provides some concealment of the motorway corridor with a planted edge, but this is narrow and has breaks in places.
- 4.25 To the east, the edge of the settlement of Dordon presents an abrupt urban edge to The Site, with the fences of back gardens of the properties backing onto the fields and only a narrow field margin. To the north west of The Site, the settlement edge of Birchmoor provides a more sympathetic green fringe with an offset from the back gardens of properties to the field edge.

## **5.0 VISUAL CONTEXT**

- 5.1 Visibility of the site is defined by a combination of the local topography, and intervening vegetation and built form adjacent to the site and in the surrounding area (see figures 4 – 8). In general terms site visibility relates to local views from the immediately adjacent area which includes the adjacent settlements of Dordon, Polesworth and Birchmoor together with the highways especially the A5 to the south and the industrial parks. More distant views are very limited due to the effect of primarily intervening built form.
- 5.2 Views of the site available from the local area, which should be considered in terms of managing future change, design interventions and related visual assessment include those as follows.
- 5.3 Views from the south; these comprise sequential, low level views from the adjacent A5, which provide partial, glimpsed views, through roadside vegetation, across the open land of the Site toward and of the western residential edge of Dordon to the east and Birchmoor to

- the north. A group of residential properties (on the A5) immediately adjacent to the Site also have views across the open land.
- 5.4 Views from the east; these generally comprise static panoramic views from the rear of residential properties at the western edge of Dordon looking south east – north east. The views which are slightly elevated, due to the gently rising topography, are across the open land of the Site toward the largescale buildings of the existing and emerging industrial parks (eg. Core 42) to the south, beyond the A5, the edge of Tamworth beyond the M42 to the west and toward Birchmoor to the north west. Similar views are gained from public open space (Kitwood Avenue) at the western edge of Dordon, to the north east of the Site, and from the nearby Birchwood Primary School.
- 5.5 Views from the north; these comprise limited sequential, slightly elevated or low level views from Birchmoor Road and from residential properties at the southern and eastern edge of Birchmoor (Cockspur Street and Birch Grove). The views comprise low level partial, glimpsed and open views, through adjacent vegetation, across the open land of the Site. Views are south eastwards towards the residential edge of Dordon and southwards toward the A5, and the largescale buildings of the existing and emerging industrial parks (eg. Core 42) beyond.
- 5.6 Views from the west; these are largely contained by built form at the edge of Tamworth, with views from the M42 restricted due to the location within a cutting. The views, looking eastwards, available from J10 of the M42, are locally elevated and provide views across the open land of the Site, similar to those from along the A5, with the residential edge of Dordon seen on the horizon.
- 5.7 Views from the public rights of way adjacent and through the Site; these comprise transitory and sequential, open panoramic views across the open land of the Site toward the adjoining/ adjacent and to an extent surrounding built form of Birchmoor, Dordon, the industrial parks to the south (eg. Core 42) and similarly to the west (edge of Tamworth). Some remnant hedgerow south of Birchmoor, and other boundary vegetation to the south (along the A5) and west (along the M42) provides some limited local enclosure.

5.8 Overall the Site is seen as an element of open, somewhat degraded land, in arable use, with views very strongly influenced by the adjacent and nearby built form of Dordon, the western edge of Tamworth and the existing and emerging industrial parks to the south.

## 6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

6.1 The landscape and visual opportunities and constraints associated with potential development of the site, in summary comprise:

- Existing boundary vegetation along the A5, and remnant hedgerows;
- Public footpath and bridleways through, and adjacent to, the site;
- The physical and visual influences of adjoining and nearby existing settlements to the south and west of the site;
- The physical and visual influence of the open landscape of the site with respect to its inherent character and to maintaining a separation between settlements – as a ‘meaningful gap’.

6.2 Overall due to the degraded character and existing strong influence urban influences the landscape is considered to offer potential to accommodate development and change. Recognising and accepting that such change will result in landscape and visual impacts, it will be important to ensure that a high quality, robust and enduring landscape framework is provided which seeks to minimise such impacts.

## 7.0 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

7.1 The background landscape related national and NWBC planning policy and landscape character assessment context, including strategic environmental opportunities and guidelines, provides a basis for a landscape strategy, including green infrastructure (GI) to inform emerging development proposals. The use of such a strategy will maximise opportunities for a high quality design and assist in avoiding, minimising or mitigating for adverse effects. Such a strategy, if taken forward, will demonstrate a sensitive approach to and consideration of the landscape and visual context of the site, and local planning policy and guidance.

7.2 The following provides a preliminary landscape strategy, to inform the development proposals:

- Restore, as far as practicable, the local area's historic/ previous landscape pattern of field boundaries.
- Seek opportunities for an early creation of a well wooded character to reconstruct an appropriate landscape framework of trees, hedgerows, woodland and grassland.
- Manage and restore existing hedgerows with gaps infilled with an appropriate mix of native species, and where appropriate, replant hedgerow trees and identify opportunities to plant new hedgerow oaks. Where appropriate, reinstate historic hedge lines and replant with appropriate, locally occurring native hedgerow species.
- Create a new landscape framework and network of multi-functional green infrastructure, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) if appropriate, with links to adjacent settlements and the existing public rights of way, increasing opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation for different species, balanced with public access, amenity and recreation benefits.
- Introduce small woodland blocks of native, locally occurring broadleaved species on higher land to soften the impact of peripheral urbanising elements.
- Ensure new recreational facilities reintroduce landscape structure and features to sensitively integrate into the surrounding landscape.
- Ensure new development relates well to the existing settlement pattern and the settlement edge is successfully integrated into the landscape through green infrastructure, open space and appropriate planting.
- High quality design, with the density of buildings, heights of roofs and building materials of brick or tile appropriate to, and achieving a good fit with the existing settlement context of Dordon.

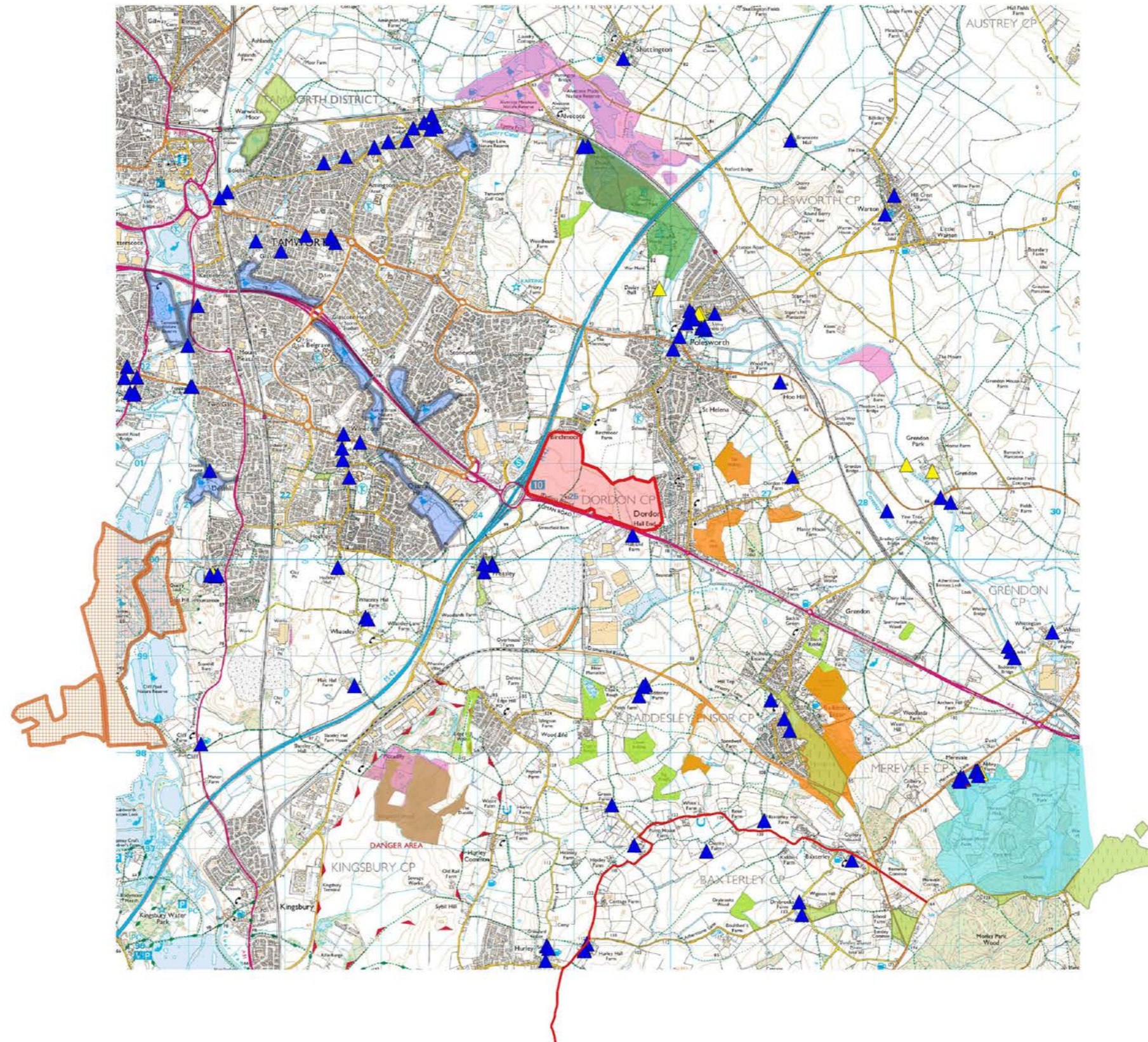
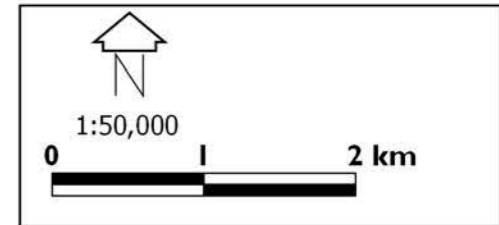
- Ensure that possible future commercial or industrial uses are strategically located with buildings sited and designed sensitively and with an appropriate landscape treatment.
- Maximise opportunities for new planting within future development, including native species, to provide biodiversity in addition to amenity benefits.
- Enhance the landscape buffer to the M42 corridor through the introduction of woodland planting using appropriate, locally occurring native species.
- Seek to put in place suitable long term management landscape management plan or plans to ensure the landscape is enduring.

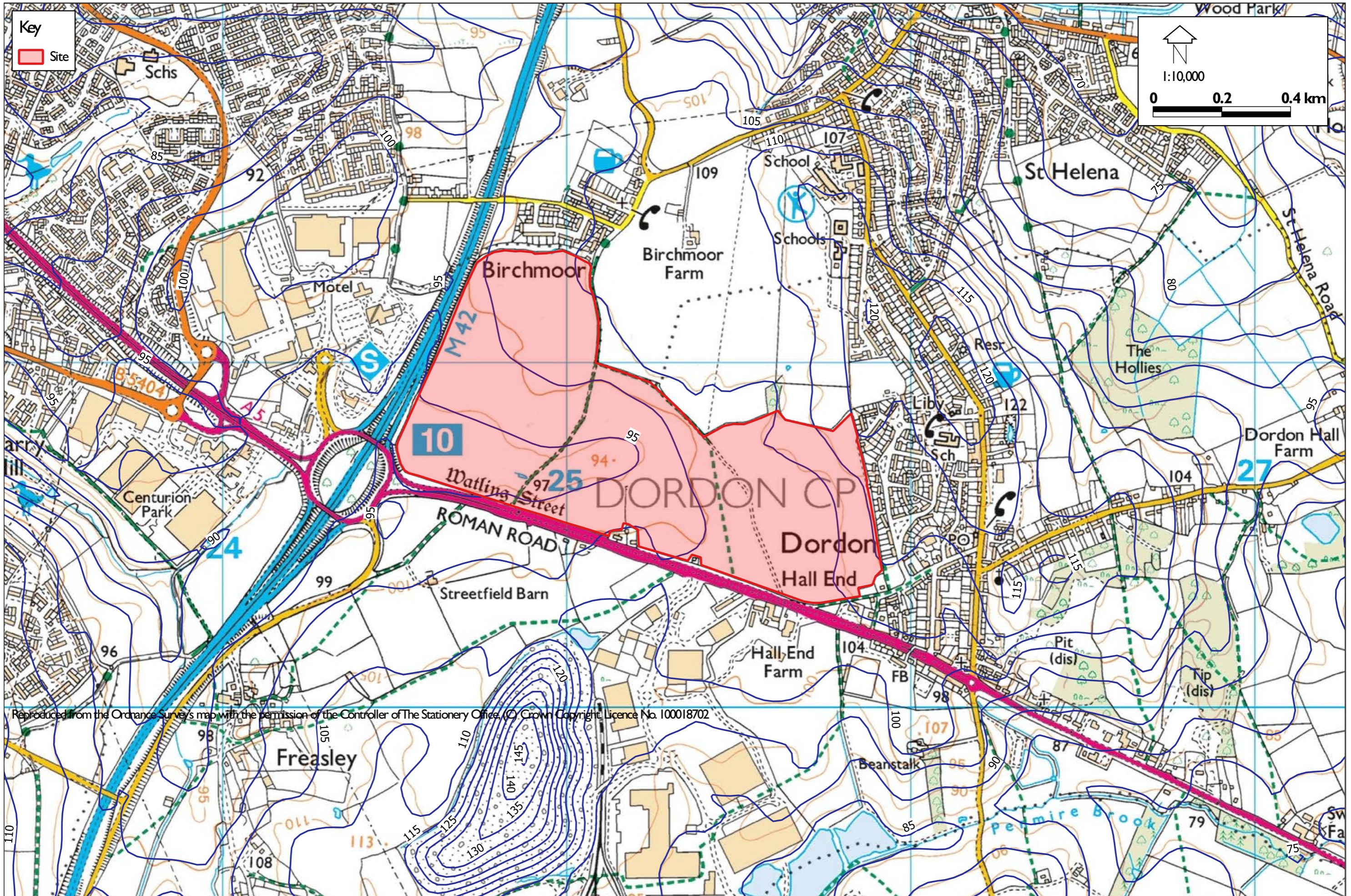
## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 A landscape character assessment has been carried out of land between Tamworth and Dordon adjacent to J10, M42 and the A5. The work has been undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects in accordance with GLVIA methodology.
- 8.2 Review of planning policy context has noted policies associated with key landscape assets and the restraint associated with the need to retain a 'meaningful gap' between Dordon and Tamworth.
- 8.3 Review of extant landscape character assessments of the area has established that the landscape is of moderate sensitivity and has the capacity to accommodate some development with appropriate mitigation.
- 8.4 Published landscape and environmental guidelines recommend development includes new GI to assist with mitigation.
- 8.5 A preliminary landscape and GI strategy is proposed which would maximise opportunities to avoid, minimise or mitigate for adverse effects. Such a strategy, if taken forward, will demonstrate a sensitive approach to and consideration of the landscape and visual context of the site, and local planning policy and guidance, including in relation to maintaining a 'meaningful gap' between Dordon and Tamworth.

**Key**

- Site
- National Cycle Network
- Listed Buildings**
- I
- II
- II\*
- Access Land
- Country Parks
- Park and Gardens
- SINCs
- RSPB Reserves
- SSSI
- Local Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodlands

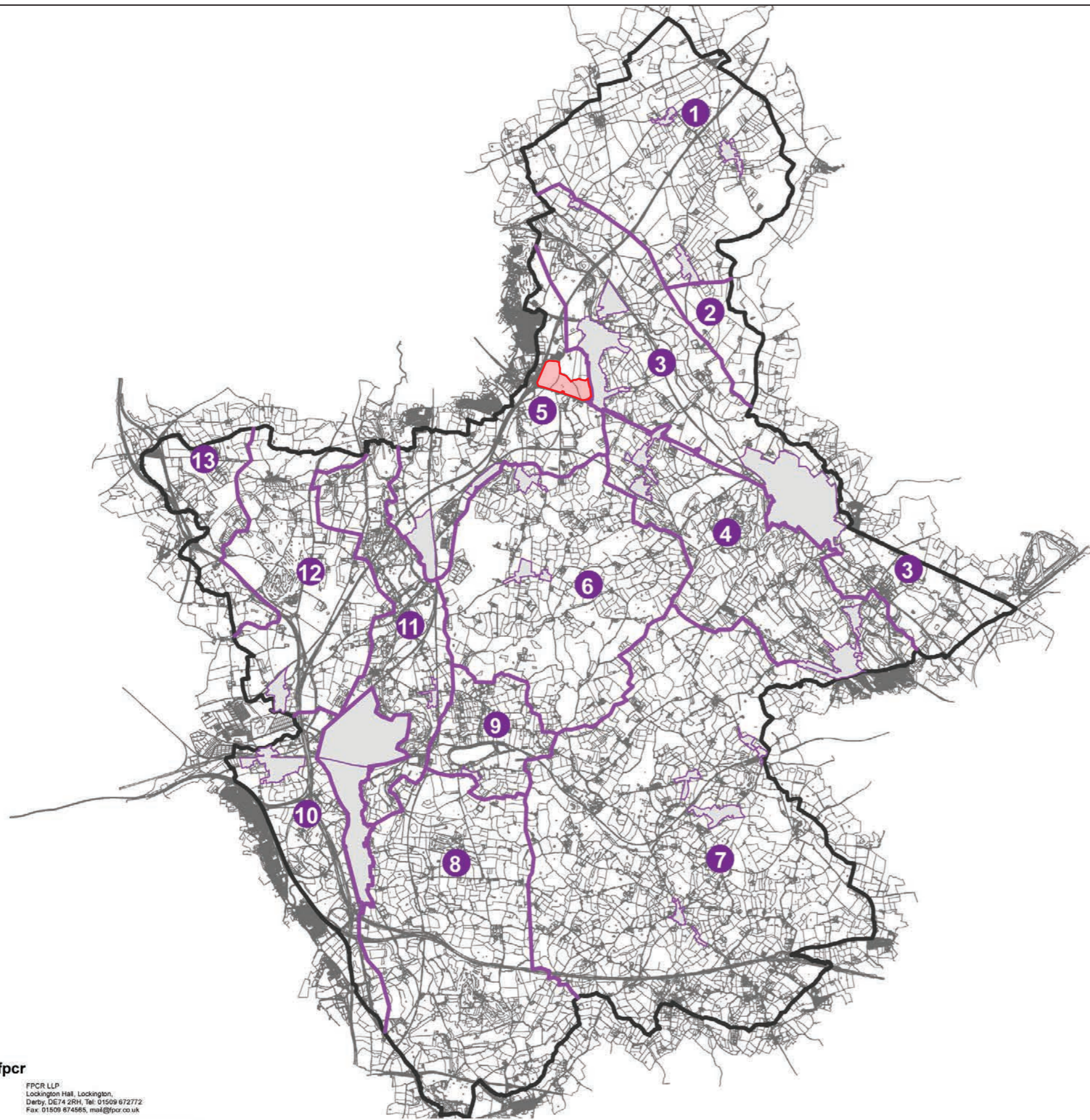




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 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNERS • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS • ECOLOGISTS		PROJECT NO:	I0987 HID	CLIENT:	HODGETTS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS (TAMWORTH) LTD	FIGURE NO:	02
		DATE:	January 2018	PROJECT:	J10, M42, TAMWORTH AND DORDON	TITLE:	Contour plan
		ISSUE STATUS:	<b>PRELIMINARY</b>		LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT		





- North Warwickshire Borough boundary
  - Proposed Landscape Character Area boundary
  - Current settlement area boundary
- Landscape Character Areas**
- 1** No Man's Heath to Warton Lowlands
  - 2** Little Warton to Fields Farm-Fen Lanes
  - 3** Anker Valley
  - 4** Baddesley to Hartshill Uplands
  - 5** Tamworth Fringe Uplands
  - 6** Wood End to Whitacre Upper Tame Valley Farmlands
  - 7** Church End to Corley Hills and Valleys
  - 8** Blythe Valley Parkland Farmland
  - 9** Hoggrill's to Furnace End Hamlets
  - 10** Cole Valley
  - 11** Tame Valley Wetlands
  - 12** Middleton to Curdworth Tame Valley Farmlands
  - 13** Wishaw to Trickleby Coppice Wooded Uplands
- Site

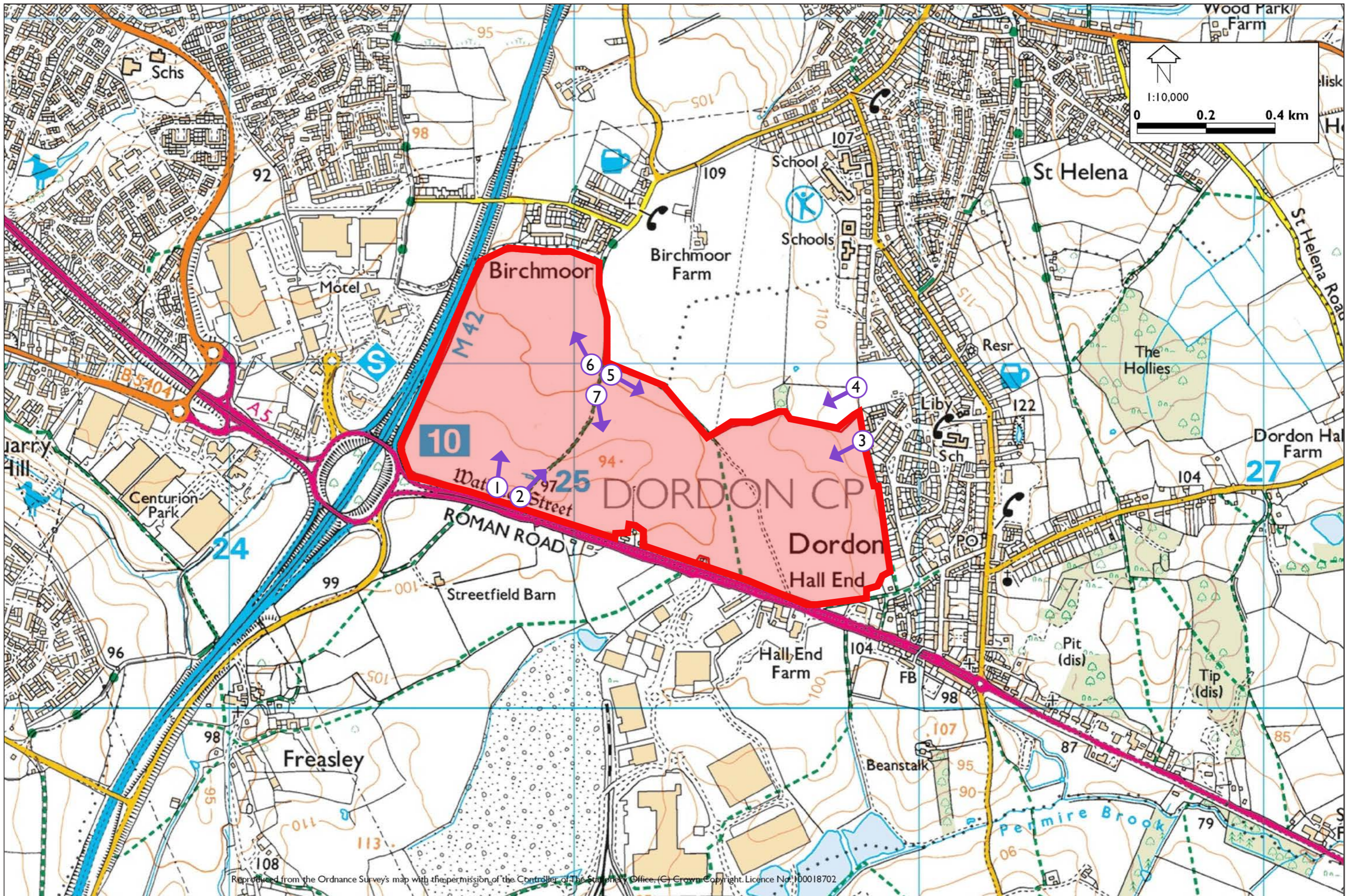


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North Warwickshire Borough Council  
**North Warwickshire Landscape Character Assessment**  
 Landscape Character Areas  
**Figure 11**

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 File: J:\4100\4189\GIS\Fig 11- Landscape Character Areas

 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNERS · LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS · ECOLOGISTS	 <b>HODGETTS ESTATES</b>	 <b>indigo.</b>	PROJECT NO:	I0987 HID	CLIENT:	HODGETTS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS (TAMWORTH) LTD	FIGURE NO:	03
			DATE:	January 2018	PROJECT:	J10, M42, TAMWORTH AND DORDON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT	TITLE:	Landscape character areas
			ISSUE STATUS:	<b>PRELIMINARY</b>				



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		DATE:	January 2018	PROJECT:	J10, M42, TAMWORTH AND DORDON	TITLE:	Viewpoint locations
		ISSUE STATUS:	PRELIMINARY		LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT		



Viewpoint 01: View looking north from A5, (east of J10, M42) with Birchmoor in the distance.



Viewpoint 02: View looking north/ north east from public right of way (AE45) with Birchmoor and Dordon in the distance.




PROJECT NO:	I0987 HID	CLIENT:	HODGETTS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS (TAMWORTH) LTD	FIGURE NO:	05
DATE:	January 2018	PROJECT:	J10, M42, TAMWORTH AND DORDON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT	TITLE:	Viewpoint photographs 1 and 2
ISSUE STATUS:	<b>PRELIMINARY</b>				



Viewpoint 03: View looking south west/ west from west edge of Dordon (Barn Close), toward Birch Coppice Business Park and Tamworth seen in the distance.



Viewpoint 04: View looking south west from Kitwood Avenue public open space, Dordon, toward Birch Coppice Business Park and Tamworth seen in the distance.




  	PROJECT NO:	I0987 HID	CLIENT:	HODGETTS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS (TAMWORTH) LTD	FIGURE NO:	05
	DATE:	January 2018	PROJECT:	J10, M42, TAMWORTH AND DORDON	TITLE:	Viewpoint photographs 3 and 4
	ISSUE STATUS:	<b>PRELIMINARY</b>		LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT		



Viewpoint 05: View looking east from public right of way (AE46), with Dordon in the distance.



Viewpoint 06: View looking north west from public right of way (AE45) towards Birchmoor.

  	PROJECT NO:	I0987 HID	CLIENT:	HODGETTS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS (TAMWORTH) LTD	FIGURE NO:	05
	DATE:	January 2018	PROJECT:	J10, M42, TAMWORTH AND DORDON	TITLE:	Viewpoint photographs 5 and 6
	ISSUE STATUS:	<b>PRELIMINARY</b>		LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT		



Viewpoint 07: View looking south from public right of way (AE42) to Birch Coppice Business Park.

PROJECT NO:	I0987 HID	CLIENT:	HODGETTS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS (TAMWORTH) LTD	FIGURE NO:	05
DATE:	January 2018	PROJECT:	J10, M42, TAMWORTH AND DORDON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT	TITLE:	Viewpoint photograph 7
ISSUE STATUS:	<b>PRELIMINARY</b>				

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Document Title: Land at J10 M42 between Tamworth and Dordon/Polesworth.  
Landscape Character Assessment

Project No: HID/NPA/10978

This document: Original  Revision  Rev Letter:

	Name	Signature	Position	Date
Prepared by:	<u>C Mountford</u>		<u>Landscape Architect</u>	<u>30.1.2018</u>
Checked by:	<u>S Kale</u>		<u>MLI, Managing Director</u>	<u>30.1.2018</u>
Approved by:	<u>S Kale</u>		<u>MLI, Managing Director</u>	<u>30.1.2018</u>

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

## REVISION RECORD

Rev Letter	Date Prepared	Prepared by	Checker/ Approver	Description of changes

*This report has been prepared in good faith, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, based on information provided or available at the time of its preparation and within the scope of work agreement with the client.*

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