

Stroud District Draft Local Plan Review

Sites Survey Response

Name: [REDACTED]

Organisation/Company: RPS Group

Client Name/Organisation: Redrow Homes Ltd

G1 – South of Hardwicke

Full support is given to the allocation of Site G1-Land South of Hardwicke to deliver 1200 dwellings together with a primary school, local centre, other community and associated ancillary uses including open space, infrastructure and drainage attenuation.

The site is being promoted by Redrow Homes Ltd, with the support of the Hardwicke Court Estate and Gloucestershire County Council and has the ability to meet the needs of both Stroud District and/or the unmet needs at Gloucester. It is recognised that at the current time, the site has been identified to meet the future housing needs of Stroud which is fully supported by the site promoters.

Importantly, the site is free from complex land assembly negotiations and the requirement for third party land to secure access.

The Land to the South of Hardwicke has already been the subject of detailed candidate site representations in January 2019 and in support of the promotion of the land, Redrow Homes has a full specialist team appointed who have undertaken a full suite of technical investigations and assessments across the site. Most recently, detailed site investigations were undertaken during the first quarter of 2019 to further refine the constraints and opportunities plan in terms of existing utilities and site infrastructure. As such, all constraints, opportunities and characteristics of the site are thoroughly understood, and illustrative masterplan options have been prepared to demonstrate how the site could be developed, with all necessary mitigation incorporated. In this regard, please refer to the updated promoter material that has been submitted in support of these representations. This technical work could therefore be swiftly converted into a planning application to ensure the site is capable of making early contribution to the housing supply.

It is therefore considered that the Land to the South of Hardwicke represents an entirely appropriate location for new homes and represents a genuinely available source of new homes, without significant constraints that can deliver housing in the short term including within the first five years of the Plan period.

In particular:

- The promotion of the site is being led by Redrow Homes with the support of both Hardwicke Court Estate and Gloucestershire County Council. Redrow Homes also hold a freehold interest in part of the site.
- The proposed development includes the provision of 1200 dwellings together with a primary school, local centre, associated community and other ancillary uses including open space, allotments, infrastructure and drainage attenuation.
- The site is free from planning and physical constraints, is economically viable and immediately available.
- The site can be accessed without third party land/complex land assembly.

- The land is not within the statutory Green Belt, not within the designated Special Landscape Area and does not associate with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In particular, the site is more visually remote from AONB and other sensitive landscape features (than sites in alternative areas (e.g Brookthorpe/Whaddon and Upton St Leonards).
- The site is not located within 1km of an internationally or nationally designed site for nature conservation.
- The site itself contains no designated or non-designated built heritage assets.
- The site is close to key employment, service, facilities with good vehicular and public transport connectivity to Gloucester City Centre.
- Other local service centres are within reach (including Quedgeley and Hunts Grove)
- The site has good road links to Gloucester City Centre and southwards (A38, B4008 and M5);
- The proposed highways strategy for the site seeks to relieve sections of Green Lane, Church Lane and Pound Lane by way of improved connectivity providing alternative routes for local traffic to gain access to the wider highway network.
- The site has good 'containment': A38/Hardwicke village (Pound Lane/Church Lane/Green Lane)/the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal and the existing Hardwicke development do all provide quite clear limits, beyond which growth and expansion would be illogical.
- The site has the potential to enrich and supplement services and facilities, to serve what would be a larger and potentially more self-sustaining community at Hardwicke.

On the basis of the above, it is therefore considered that the Land South of Hardwicke as promoted by Redrow Homes with the support of the Hardwicke Court Estate and Gloucestershire County Council, is a suitable area for future development to meet future housing needs in Stroud District.

Additional submitted information – please find attached an update of the promoter material that has been submitted in support of Land South of Hardwicke.

Berkeley PS33 – North West of Berkeley

Support is provided to the strategic allocation which is also being promoted by Redrow Homes.

PS37 – New Settlement at Wisloe

We would raise the following concerns over the viability and deliverability of the proposed new settlement at Wisloe for the following reasons:

- The identified area comprises multiple landownerships and so complex land assembly will be required, thus making the site highly likely to be undeliverable in the 5 year period. The site is also being promoted by landowners and is not affiliated with a developer. The deliverability of the site therefore has to be questioned.
- The proposal is to deliver a new 'garden village community' at this site for 1,500 new dwellings and 5ha for employment land. We would question whether a development on the Wisloe site would have the critical mass to support anything other than a very basic level of facilities (i.e. a local store, perhaps a take-away and a primary school) making travel out of the immediate environs of the development necessary for most day to day purposes. We therefore question the sustainability of the site as existing services are well over walking distances. The site would operate as an extension to Cam and/or Slimbridge and should be promoted as such. This point is effectively made by the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Stroud Draft Local Plan which defines the site as being at a Tier 3b settlement (assuming this reference refers to Slimbridge) in respect of criterion SA6 (Services and Facilities). You would not expect a 'new settlement' to already have an existing classification.
- Self-Containment – following on from above, the site has limited opportunity to grow beyond the boundary of the currently identified; owing to the M5 and proximity to surrounding settlements. We would therefore question whether the allocation is sufficient in scale to allow for self-containment and deliver a settlement based on true 'garden village' principles.

- Coalescence – as proposed, the scheme would arguably join Cam with Slimbridge and Gossington, and significantly erode the gap with Cambridge. It would be very difficult to understand how the subject site can be delivered without comprising the unique character of each surrounding settlement/hamlet. This would have an unacceptable cumulative urbanising effect and the separate identity of each of the villages would be lost. It is also noted that the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken by Stroud DC in 2017 excluded Wisloe from the assessment. The site should therefore be formally assessed as part of the Council's background evidence as it is likely that the assessment would conclude that the coalescence of the exiting individual villages would be highly inappropriate and damaging in wider visual appearance and landscape terms.
- Viability – It is not clear whether a viability assessment of the site has been undertaken 'new settlements/garden villages' often require significant abnormal costs for servicing therefore it would be helpful to understand whether the site can deliver policy compliant affordable housing etc.
- Ecology – it is noted that an ecological appraisal has been undertaken which recommends that further surveys are undertaken in respect of a number of protected species including bats, badger, dormouse, water voles, otters, birds, reptiles, amphibians (including GCN) and invertebrates. Should any protected species be found to be present, this could lead to areas of the site requiring specific mitigation that has yet to be factored into the proposals. The true capacity of the site for development therefore remains unknown.
- Landscape – as previously stated, the site has not been assessed as part of the Council's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and should have been given that it only lies 3.8km to the east of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The potential impact of the new settlement on the setting of the AONB should therefore be thoroughly examined as it is considered that the development is likely to introduce an inappropriate urbanising development into the area.
- Noise – the site is located between the railways and the M5 to the east and the A38 to the west. The site, by virtue of its location will be inherently noisy and will require the inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures, including possible landscaping, acoustic bunds or the introduction of large building blocks around the site perimeter to ensure noise levels within external amenity areas are within acceptable levels. Again, it doesn't appear that any such mitigation has been included within the design of the scheme at this current time and therefore the true capacity of the site for development or the impact of any such mitigation therefore remains unknown.

LAND SOUTH OF HARDWICKE STROUD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

JANUARY 2020



“We focus on delivering high quality homes and creating community and physical environments that help promote people’s sense of wellbeing”

Redrow Homes





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THE OPPORTUNITY

Land to the South of Hardwicke, in Stroud District is a key opportunity to assist Stroud District Council in the delivery of future housing.

The site lies outside of the statutory Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Area and is located close to local centres, employment opportunities, schools, healthcare and the range of facilities and services offered by Hardwicke itself and Gloucester City centre.

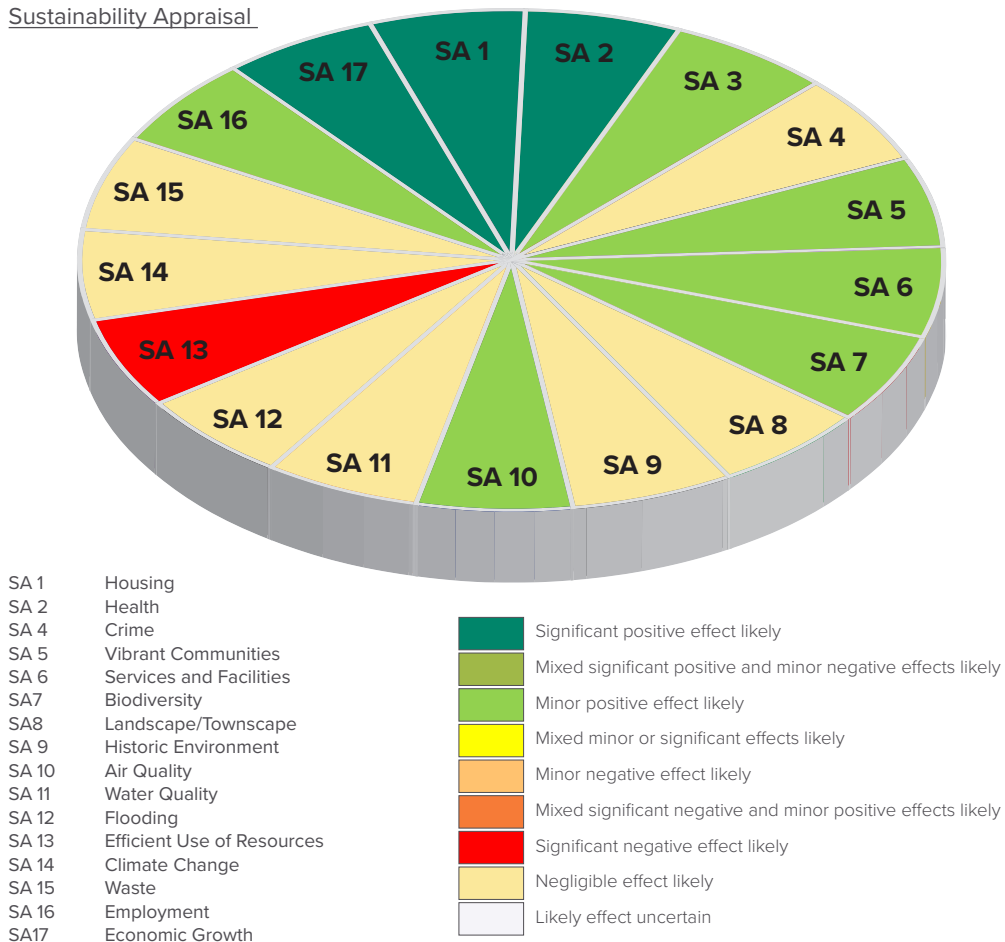
The site area equates to approximately 65ha (160.5 acres) and has an estimated minimum capacity of 1200 dwellings together with a primary school, local centre, community uses, highway improvements and associated ancillary uses including open space, green infrastructure and drainage attenuation.

The site is identified in the emerging Draft Local Plan to meet Stroud’s housing needs and is readily available to make an early contribution to the housing need for Stroud District, Gloucester City and the other JCS Authorities as a whole if deemed necessary via the duty to co-operate.

SUSTAINABILITY

The site is located adjacent to an existing settlement. As demonstrated below, the site benefits from a favourable Sustainability Assessment when considered against the Methodology used by Stroud District Council to determine the economic, environmental and social effects of the Local Plan Review’s allocations.

Sustainability Appraisal



In the absence of brownfield alternatives all greenfield sites will incur a significant negative effect as per criteria SA13.

OWNERSHIP AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Redrow Homes Ltd, with the support of the Hardwicke Court Estate and Gloucestershire County Council, are promoting the Land to the South of Hardwicke for residential development. Redrow Homes is leading the promotion of the site and also owns the freehold of part of the site.

The site is located adjacent to the suburb of Quedgeley at the southern edge of the Gloucester conurbation; adjacent to the 'A38' Bristol Road. The site is effectively divided into three separate areas, the majority of which is currently agricultural. Access to the site is currently achieved via Green Lane, Sticky Lane, Pound Lane and Church Lane.

The site's western boundary is formed by the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, which provides both a physical and visual barrier to the west. The eastern boundary is formed by the B4008, A38 and the large buildings of the Quedgeley Trading Estate West. To the south lies the open countryside.

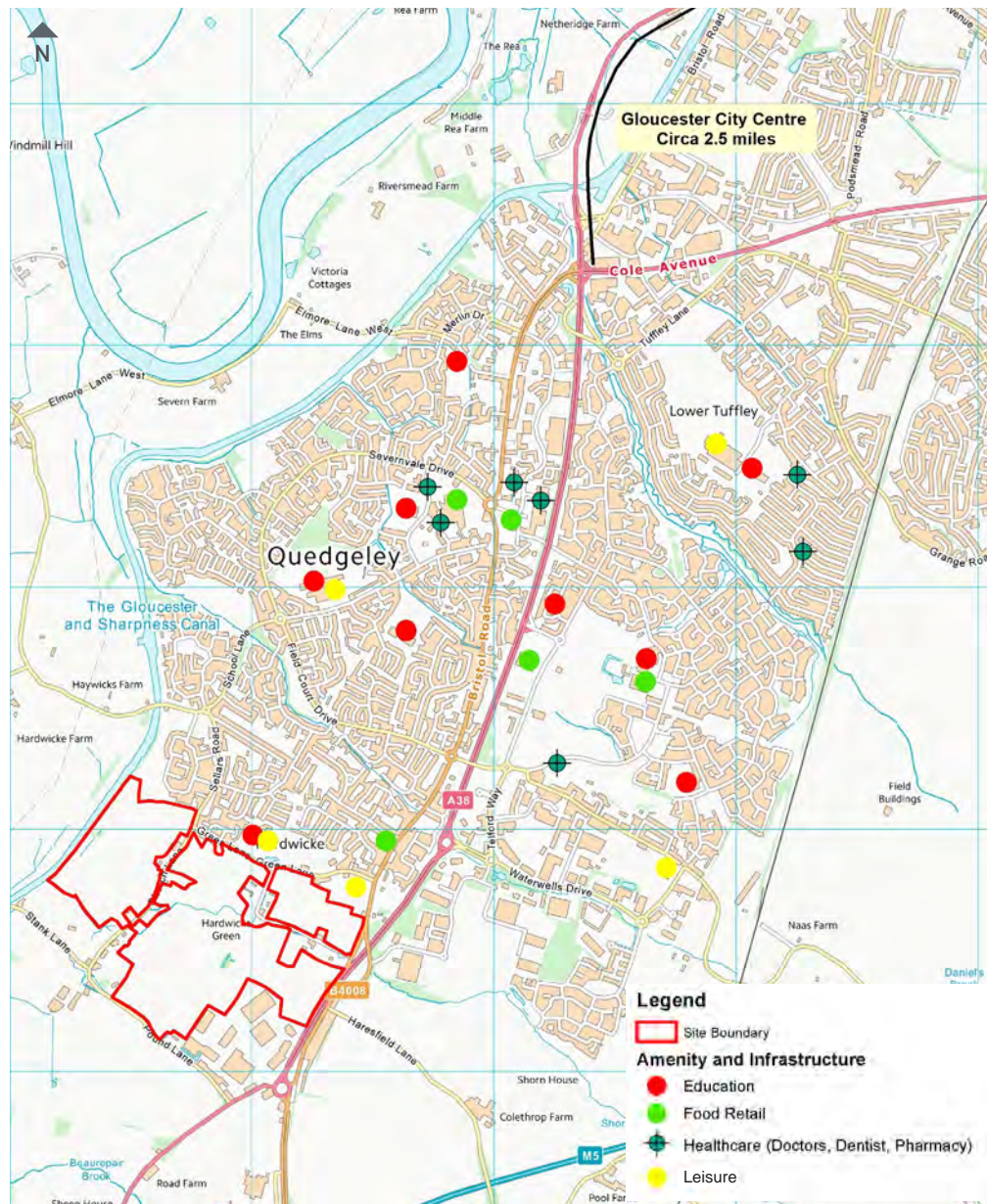
Development at Hardwicke would provide further opportunity to consolidate and enhance the development in the area including the ongoing development at Hunts Grove on the eastern side of the A38. The site itself would deliver a range of services and facilities to deliver a sustainable community including a primary school, local centre, community uses, improved allotment provision, open space and improved walking, cycling and public transport links.



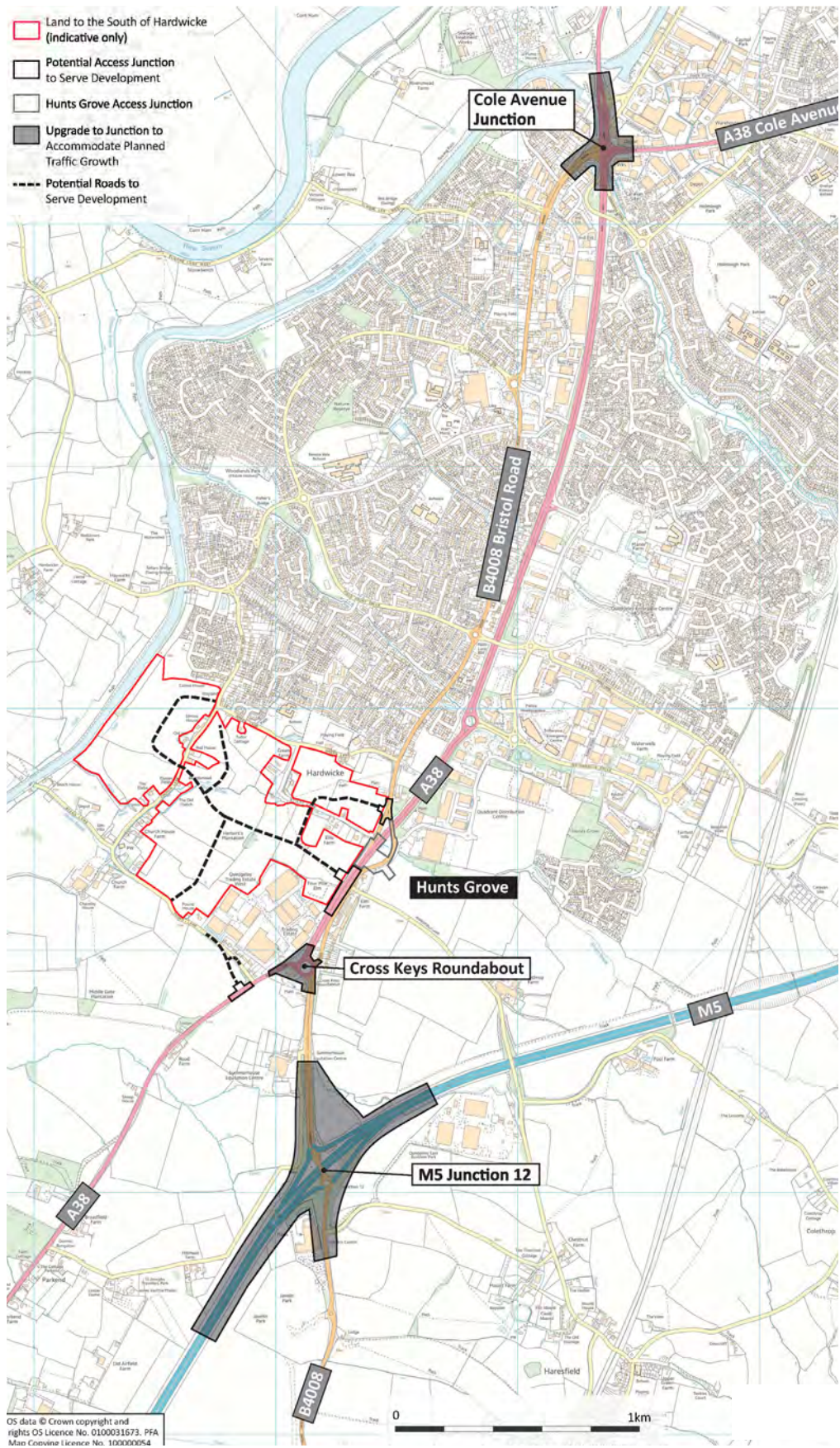
SITE SUITABILITY

ACCESSIBILITY

Land to the South of Hardwicke is located where a sustainable pattern of development can be achieved by way of access to local facilities including education, leisure, health, retail and employment on foot, by bicycle or by bus. The internal site layout and site access arrangements will be designed in a manner which facilitates walking and cycling, and a bus strategy to serve the site would be devised in consultation with Gloucestershire County Council and the local bus operator in support of the Stroud Sustainable Transport Strategy. The site is adjacent to the A38, a main arterial route leading into Gloucester, which the Stroud Sustainable Transport Strategy identifies as a potential 'multi-modal corridor' with improvements to strategic bus services, which will provide additional benefits to the economy and new developments off the road including development on Land South of Hardwicke. Existing public rights of way may need to be diverted but desire lines would be accommodated as part of the proposals and these public rights of way together with new pedestrian and cycle links to both existing and proposed routes would provide good access for these sustainable modes of transport.



LOCAL FACILITIES AND AMENITIES PLAN



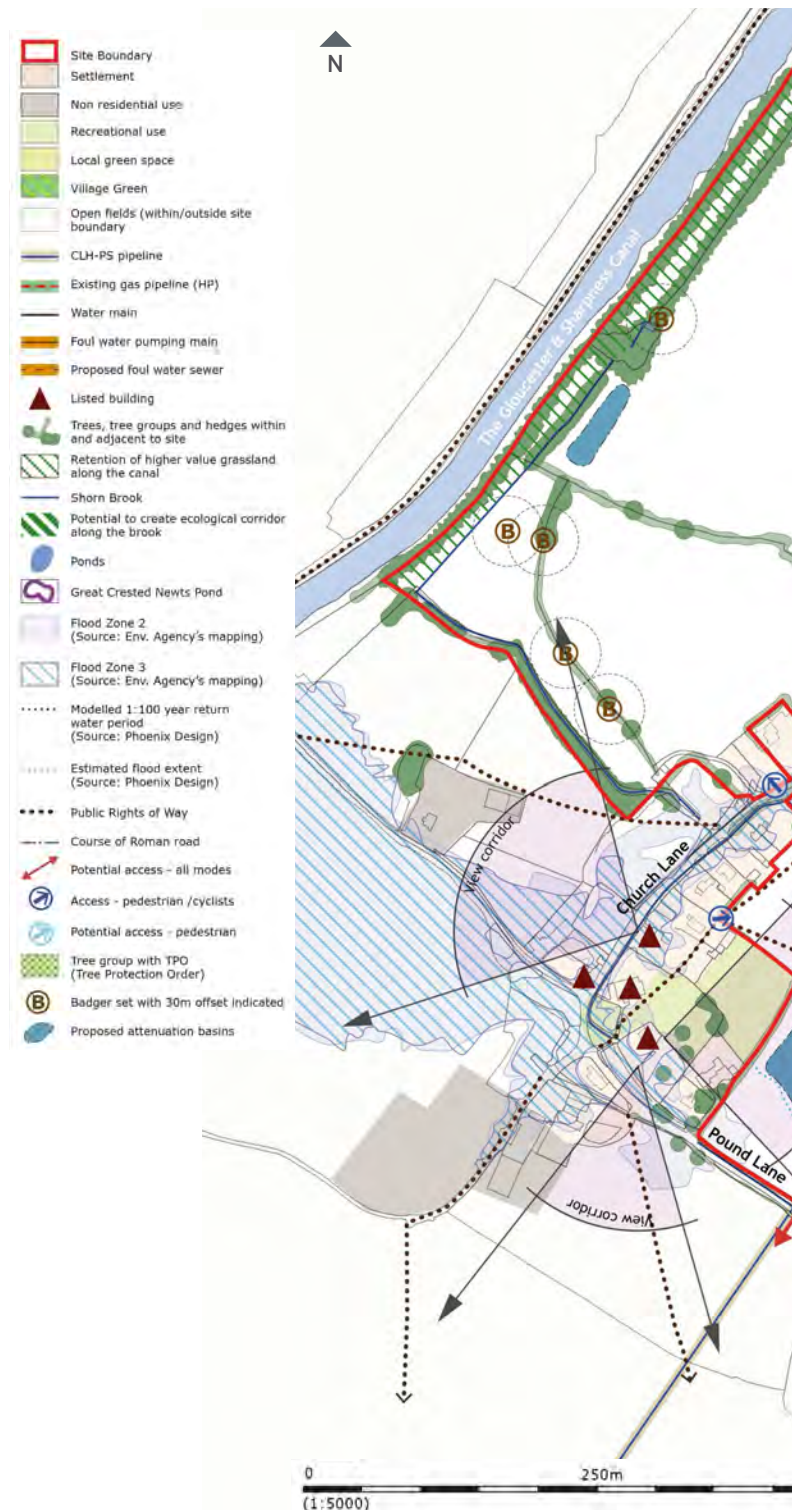
KEY JUNCTIONS AND HIGHWAY LINKS PLAN

It is proposed that the primary access to development on Land to the South of Hardwicke would be from the A38 by way of a new signal controlled junction that would operate in conjunction with the Hunts Grove access and would be compatible with the County Council's Cross Keys roundabout improvement scheme completed in October 2019.

A secondary access via a roundabout on the B4008 Bristol Road positioned at the 'top' of the A38 Northbound Off-Slip is also proposed. This slip road is part of a form of grade separated junction that provides connections between the B4008 and the A38. The proposed roundabout would act as an effective speed control feature and would be compatible with the consented signalised junction onto the A38/B4008 to serve the Hunts Grove development (the Hunts Grove access), which includes the conversion of the existing overbridge to two-way traffic.

In addition to the proposed accesses from the B4008 Bristol Road and the A38, it is possible other accesses to roads surrounding the site could be formed, which, in combination with a network of new roads crossing the site would relieve sections of Green Lane, Church Lane and Pound Lane by way of improved connectivity providing alternative routes for local traffic to gain access to the wider highway network. In order to facilitate relief to the lanes there is the potential to 'stop-up' Church Lane to vehicular traffic and create a 'Quiet/Green Lane'. The key junctions and highway links together with a potential network of roads to serve development on the site are shown on the illustrative masterplan options.

Redrow Homes is liaising with Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council, the Local Highway Authority, over the district wide traffic modelling that is being undertaken in connection with the emerging Local Plan to determine the highway upgrades that would be required to support the proposed development plan, including development on Land South of Hardwicke. Redrow Homes is also in communication with Highways England, which is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England, including the M5. Highways England is supporting the development of the transport evidence for the Local Plan review and is in the process of undertaking a high-level optioneering study to address the capacity constraints in respect of M5 Junction 12.





CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES PLAN



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Hardwicke is visually well contained located adjacent to the developments of Hunts Grove and Sellars Farm, both of which have been found to constitute appropriate urban extensions to Gloucester. There is no reason to believe that the same should not be true for Hardwicke. Furthermore, Hardwicke does not extend any further south than Quedgeley Business Park and therefore does not represent urban sprawl in this regard.

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken and it has been established that from a landscape perspective, it will be possible to introduce development onto the site without any adverse character effects taking place within the wider area. This is predominantly due to existing vegetation and the fact that the development character will mimic that of the surrounding area.

With regard to the visual appraisal, due to the topography of the site, existing built form and vegetation, views of the site are contained to the site itself and the immediate vicinity. The development, from a distanced perspective, will integrate into the wider built panorama and constitute a small extension to the current urban form.

The principles contained within the illustrative masterplan are considered to be appropriate in terms of its setting and the landscape character of the site. The masterplan has green corridors and large area of green space at the interface with the land to the South and West.

HERITAGE

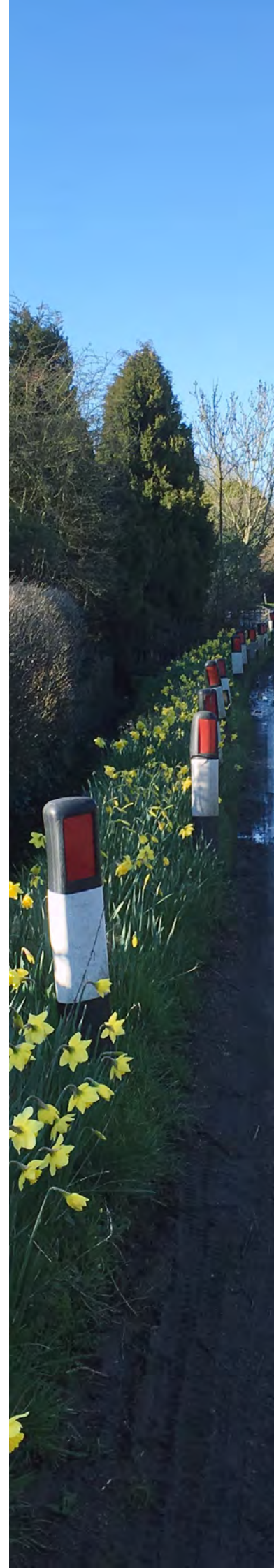
The site itself is not located within a conservation area, nor does the site contain any designated or non-designated built heritage assets. In terms of non-designated archaeological assets, these are limited to the course of a Roman road, some relict ridge and furrow and, bounding the site, the Gloucester & Sharpness canal. There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the site including The Church of St Nicholas, Pound Lane (Grade I) and its associated Grade II Listed monuments which are located within the churchyard, Old Vicarage, Pound Lane (Grade II), Church House, Pound Lane (Grade II), Church House Farmhouse, Church Lane (Grade II), Old Thatch, Church Lane (Grade II), Old Hall, Church Lane (Grade II), Tudor Cottage, Green Lane (Grade II), The Cottages, Sticky Lane (Grade II) and the Milestone located on Bristol Road (Grade II). The location of the Listed buildings are shown on the Constraints and Opportunities Plan.

The illustrative masterplan seeks to ensure that the character and setting of each of the built heritage assets are protected, mainly secured through the use of appropriate undeveloped buffers and screening. Listed buildings which lie further afield would also be unaffected due to distance from the proposed site and intervening natural screening. Green corridors are to be created to protect the rural setting of the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, Green Lane and Church Lane and the historic settlement clusters on Sticky Lane and at Hardwick. In order to further protect settings, localised orchard planting of historic Gloucestershire varieties of apples and perry pears is proposed in order to further screen the new built development. Because of the designed-in mitigation, it is considered that this site can be developed whilst protecting (and in some cases making more apparent) the local historic environment.

ARCHAEOLOGY

A desk-based archaeological assessment has been undertaken, there are no designated or non-designated archaeological assets recorded on the site. Additionally, geophysical investigations and trial trenching has also taken place within the north-eastern area of the site. Based on the findings of the investigative surveys, the LPA advisor confirmed that no further fieldwork was required in this specific area.

While it is not possible to extrapolate this potential across the whole of the wider site, the results of the investigations to date indicate that there may be a limited archaeological potential across the rest of the wider site. It is therefore concluded that there is no indication of any absolute constraint to development arising from the presence of archaeological remains within the wider site.



ECOLOGY

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the candidate site was undertaken in August 2018. In spring/summer 2018 protected species surveys were undertaken for bats, water vole (along Shorn Brook), great crested newts and breeding birds.

The reports confirm that the site largely comprises intensively farmed arable fields which are of low ecological value. Ecological features of interest in the context of the site, such as boundary hedgerows, grassy field margins and Shorn Brook, are almost entirely retained within the illustrative masterplan. The small number of mature and semi-mature trees will also be retained. The existing vegetation is not species-rich, but the retention of tree/hedgerow corridors is necessary in order to allow for bats to travel freely and unhindered by the development. There are limited opportunities on the site for badgers, hedgehogs and other small mammals to be accommodated.

The species surveys have confirmed that water vole are resident in Shorn Brook, great crested newts (GCN) breed in one of the on-site ponds and in a second pond within 250m of the boundary, as such the development of the site will be covered by a GCN European Protected Species Mitigation Licence.

Taking into account the overall low ecological value of the site and with the incorporation of appropriate species protection measures and the proposed habitat creation and enhancement, it is considered that the principles included within the illustrative masterplan will successfully deliver no biodiversity net loss and will result in no significant, adverse effects on existing, ecological features of the site.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

A Desk Top Assessment of the flood risk in the area based on Environment Agency and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment data has been undertaken. The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1. Areas of the site associated with Shorn Brook, which runs through the middle of the site from Church Lane, and an un-named water course at Pound Lane are located within Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b. The submitted constraints and opportunities plan illustrates the extent of the flood zones.

The flood risk from all sources to the site and the surrounding area has been investigated and it has been demonstrated that areas within and adjacent to the site that are within flood zone 2, 3a and 3b are not at risk of flooding. The illustrative masterplan directs built development away from these areas. The plan also assumes that attenuation basins will be located at the lowest points of the site. The exact size and location of the basins will be subject to detailed analysis later however, it is considered that surface water flooding risk as a result of the proposed development can be adequately managed on site within attenuation ponds.

The drainage review undertaken to date demonstrates that the development accords with National and Regional Policy requirements and satisfies Environment Agency criteria. The site can therefore be safely developed without flood risk and without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

CONTAMINATION/POLLUTION/LAND STABILITY

The site is greenfield and has only been used for agricultural purposes. The site is therefore considered to be of little or no risk of contamination to future land uses. There are no known land stability issues.

PIPES, SEWERS AND OVERHEAD LINES

Extensive discussions have taken place with utilities providers during 2019. The routes of all known pipes, sewers and overhead lines (including relevant diversions) are identified on the constraints and opportunities plan and are respected in the masterplan design for the site.



DESIGN AND AMENITY

The submitted constraints and opportunities plan for the site has been submitted to demonstrate the consultant teams clear understanding of the site. The constraints plan also accommodates Severn Trent Water’s recent sewerage upgrade which has utilised the land at Hardwicke in collaboration with the development proposals.

A number of possible development options and land use arrangements for the site are currently being considered. The development options shown by the two illustrative masterplans demonstrate how the land at Hardwicke Court Estate could be developed in a sustainable manner and as a positive response to the site constraints, opportunities and characteristics of the site. These development options however remain a working draft and as such, are open for discussion.

The illustrative masterplans demonstrate how the site could provide for approximately 1200 dwellings at an average density of between 35 to 40 dwellings per hectare. This density range is considered appropriate and in keeping with the rural feel of neighbouring developments. Both options also include a primary school, local centre, community uses, green infrastructure, open space, strategic landscaping and enhanced vehicular, pedestrian and cycling routes.

The main principles that have informed the framework of the development relate to the retention of existing landscape features, flood zones, the establishment of green links, movement desire lines and built heritage assets. In particular, development has been directed away from the flood zones, listed buildings and the existing hedgerows and trees are retained where possible. In



turn, this has formed the basis of the structure of the scheme and open space provision. A green corridor has also been formed by the location of the high-powered gas main as well as the stream corridor and the location of great crested newts and bat corridors. Transportation routes have also been designed to try and relieve pressure on the existing lanes within the site and aid permeability. Additional pedestrian and cycling connections into surrounding areas are also proposed to aid connectivity into Hardwicke.

KEY FEATURES

- New road alignments will provide easier movement options and pedestrian access alongside the carriageway whilst reducing pressure on the existing lanes.
- A new primary school and local centre will serve the new and existing residents.
- The existing allotments along the A38 will be relocated and upgraded.
- Proposed new green areas and corridors within the development will act as green fingers crossing the site and provide opportunities to enhance the existing Village Green.
- Informal open spaces will be located around existing trees and tree groups throughout the site and provide undeveloped green buffers to existing heritage assets whilst providing biodiversity gains.
- Public footpaths crossing the site will be retained, where possible, or diverted to improve movement desire lines.
- Residential development is arranged in a clustered formation within the site. Low density housing is proposed along the edge of the development around small incidental spaces to retain the semi-rural character of the area.



DELIVERABILITY AND VIABILITY

Redrow hold a freehold interest in part of the site and confirm that it is immediately available should a site allocation/planning permission be forthcoming.

From a start of 50 homes being completed in the first year the whole site could be completed in 10 years on the basis of delivering circa 100 homes each year.

Redrow has a full specialist team appointed in the respect of the site. This team, the majority of which has been in place for over 4 years, is actively working up the proposals for the land with a full package of technical works and surveys. These include:

- Phase 1 Ecology Report
- Protected Species Surveys and Reports including in respect of Great Crested Newts and Bats
- Drainage Strategy
- Services and Utilities
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Arboriculture Assessment
- Heritage Assessment
- Archaeological Assessments
- Highways and Transportation

The above suite of detailed technical investigations and assessments can be quickly converted into a planning application to support future development of the site.



CONCLUSION

- The promotion of the site is being led by Redrow Homes with the support of both Hardwicke Court Estate and Gloucestershire County Council. Redrow Homes also hold a freehold interest in part of the site.
- The proposed development includes the provision of 1200 dwellings together with a primary school, local centre, associated community and other ancillary uses including open space, allotments, infrastructure and drainage attenuation.
- The site is free from planning and physical constraints, is economically viable and immediately available.
- The site can be accessed without third party land/complex land assembly.
- The land is not within the statutory Green Belt, not within the designated Special Landscape Area and does not associate with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The site is not located within 1km of an internationally or nationally designed site for nature conservation.
- The site itself contains no designated or built heritage assets.
- The site is close to key employment, service, facilities with good vehicular and public transport connectivity to Gloucester City Centre.
- Other local service centres are within reach (including Quedgeley and Hunts Grove)
- The site has good road links to Gloucester City Centre and southwards (A38, B4008 and M5);
- The proposed highways strategy for the site seeks to relive sections of Green Lane, Church Lane and Pound Lane by way of improved connectivity providing alternative routes for local traffic to gain access to the wider highway network.
- The site has good 'containment': A38/ Hardwicke village (Pound Lane/Church Lane/ Green Lane)/the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal and the existing Hardwicke development do all provide quite clear limits, beyond which growth and expansion would be illogical.
- The site has the potential to enrich and supplement services and facilities, to serve what would be a larger and potentially more self-sustaining community at Hardwicke.



Land South of Hardwicke represents a key opportunity to assist Stroud District in the delivery of future housing



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