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01 BACKGROUND

Development Proposals

The proposals are for a mixed site of residential and commercial development within a landscape led masterplan that seeks to knit together a series of currently separate sites and applications. This masterplanning exercise has been commissioned by Tesni Homes who are promoting one of these collective sites for mixed use. The report explores the potential to create a better plan through combining sites into a larger masterplan.

This report and its supporting landscape and visual appraisal document are themselves supportive of a representation made to Wrekin and Telford Council in response to the publication of their allocations plan.

Vision

The aim of the masterplanning process is to explore and understand the landscape for all of a combination of sites currently being promoted for housing to the north east of Muxton. It will also seek to understand the broader setting of Muxton and Telford and the wider Shropshire landscape. The vision is to create a masterplan for settlement expansion that responds to both the future needs of Muxton and Telford and protects the character of the landscape and townscape of this corner of Shropshire. The analysis and assessment supporting the design process suggests that the existing proposals for growth fall short of achieving both these goals and that a better plan can be achieved through the consideration and design of a larger plan area and a more collective approach.

The objective of the plan is to demonstrate that this larger masterplan area can better deliver key areas of design and development delivery that smaller, dis-connected and less ambitious proposals currently promoted cannot.



Figure 01: Aerial photo of site



Figure 02: Birds eye photo of site

Site Context

The proposal site is an area of mixed arable land over 34 hectares with some field given over to rough pasture. Fields are large with boundaries comprising post and rail fencing and/or managed hedgerows. Small woodland copses are found within these field groups and along road and field boundaries.

The topography of the proposal site is essentially flat running from 65 AOD in the north to 75 AOD in the south. The surrounding landscape is flat to the east and north but has significant local land marks in the Wrekin hill to the south west and Lilleshall hill to the north east .

Two public footpaths cross the site travelling south to north from Muxton settlement edge, these cross the A518 and appear overgrown and not used as through routes.

The A518 New Trench Road runs through the application area dividing it into two halves (indicated as land parcels A and B). The A518 is edged by a grass verge to both sides of the carriageway, with post and wire fences, managed hedgerows and occasional tree groups to the boundaries of adjacent fields. The carriage way is slightly elevated above the adjacent fields

1



Looking southwards across land parcel A towards the A518

2



Looking southwards across land parcel B from the A518

3



Looking eastwards along the A518

Adjacent Applications

A masterplan proposal for a combination of sites has been developed alongside the proposed development as part of this Design and Access Statement.

The masterplan site boundary considers a combination of proposed residential development sites currently awaiting planning decisions, sites that have been allocated for housing but as yet have no applications brought forward and sites that are proposed for development but as yet are not part of any current application.

The masterplan process undertaken has sought to examine the existing planning applications with a view to developing a proposal that combines both these sites and other available land into a single conjoined masterplan.

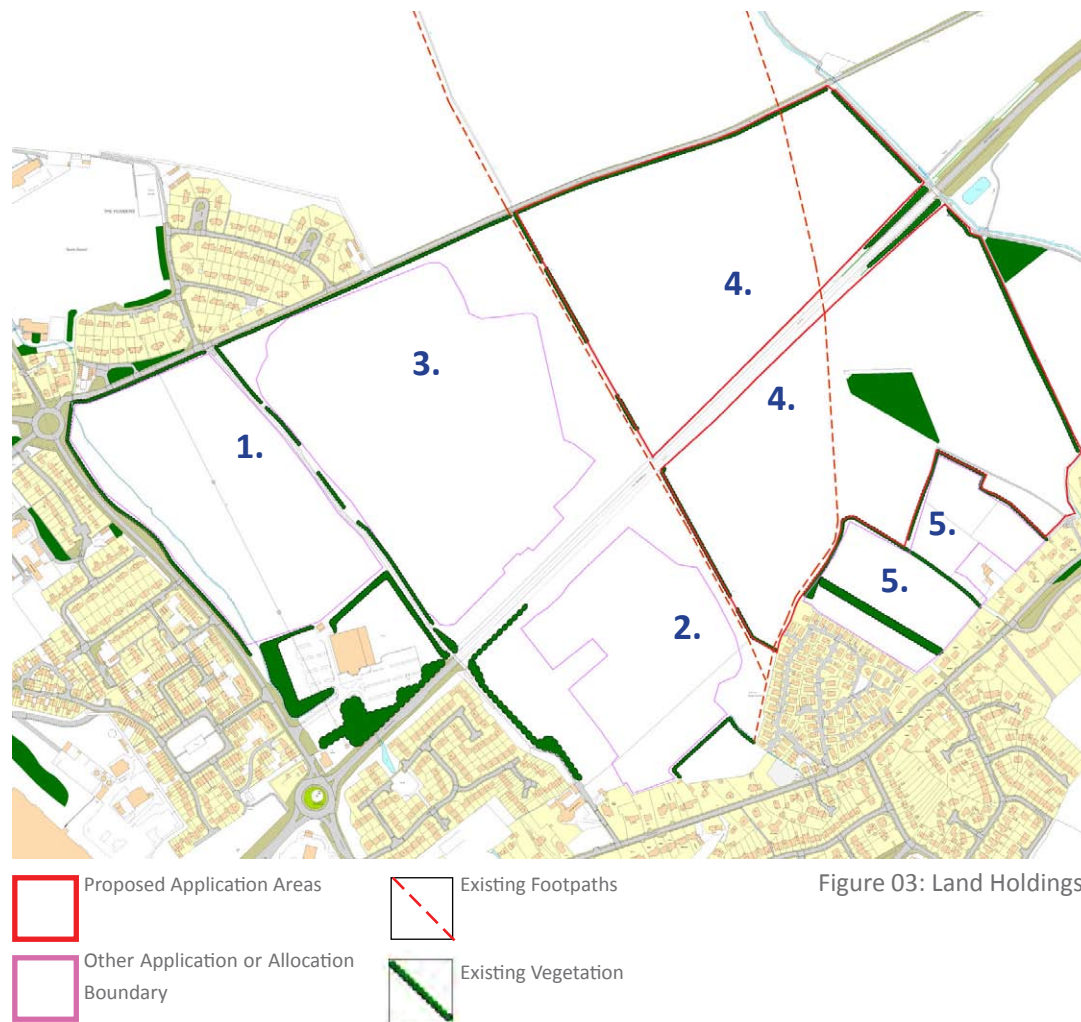


Figure 03: Land Holdings

The site boundaries are made up of a combination of separate but adjoined land holdings. Travelling from the settlement boundary with Muxton outward in an easterly direction they are:

1. The western section of allocation site H1, a narrow strip of land immediately adjacent to Station Road and north of the Wyevale Garden Centre. This land is allocated for housing due to be brought forward by David Wilson Homes. To date no application or layout has been made for this land. Up to 100 houses are indicated;
2. The southern section of allocation site H1 to the east of properties along Old Willow Road and bounded to the north by New Trench Road A518 and to the south by properties along Wellington Road. A total of 220 homes are proposed along with a doctors surgery and potential provision for a primary school as part of an ongoing application;
3. The northern section of allocation site H1 also to the east of the David Wilson site and bounded to the north by Station Road and to the south by New Trench Road. A total of 430 homes are proposed as part of an ongoing application.
4. The client's (Tesni Homes) land north and south of New Trench Road, bounded to the north by Station Road and to the south by properties off Wellington Road. The eastern boundary is formed by a low hedge, track and stream. The parameters of development for this land are to be developed alongside this report.
5. A collection of smaller interested land owners with holdings to the south of the Tesni Homes Land who wish to be included within the masterplan area.



Figure 04 : H1 Development Framework by Node

Analysis of Adjacent Applications

A Development Framework was produced as part of allocation site H1, which provided an illustrative layout of land holdings 2 and 3 described previously.

Below is an analysis of the proposed H1 Development Framework (H1 DF) with consideration towards the development proposals described in this Design and Access Statement.

- The H1 DF indicates a self contained layout, with limited connections or visual permeability to adjacent land holdings and the existing edge of Muxton.
- The H1 DF green infrastructure does not offer directed views of more prominent aspects of the wider landscape such as the Wrekin and Lilleshall Monument (refer to section 2 of this report)
- The A518 running through the centre of the site is a straight and fast carriageway with no pedestrian permeability. Although a new roundabout entrance is proposed this does not address the other adjacent land holdings

Both sites are insular in nature, with neither site offering employment land. limited recreational space with limited connections to the wider countryside and Muxton

A more detailed analysis of constraints and opportunities is covered within Section 3 of this report.

02 RESPONSE TO CONTEXT



Figure 05: Site Location Plan

Location

The proposal site is located to the east of Muxton and Telford. Muxton is an ancient village which now forms part of the new town of Telford. The site is bound by Richards Road to the north and residential properties and a caravan site along Wellington Road to the South. To the east and west are adjacent arable fields.

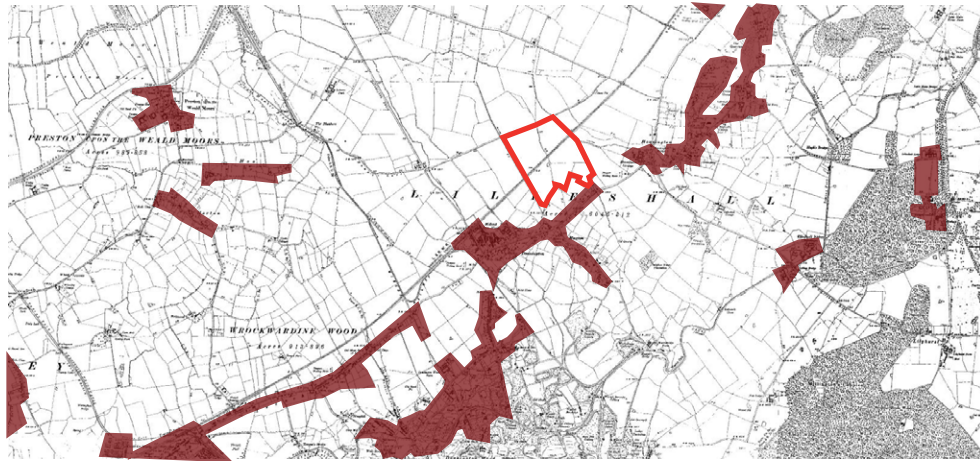
The Local Planning Authority for this area is Wreking and Telford Council.

Historic Mapping

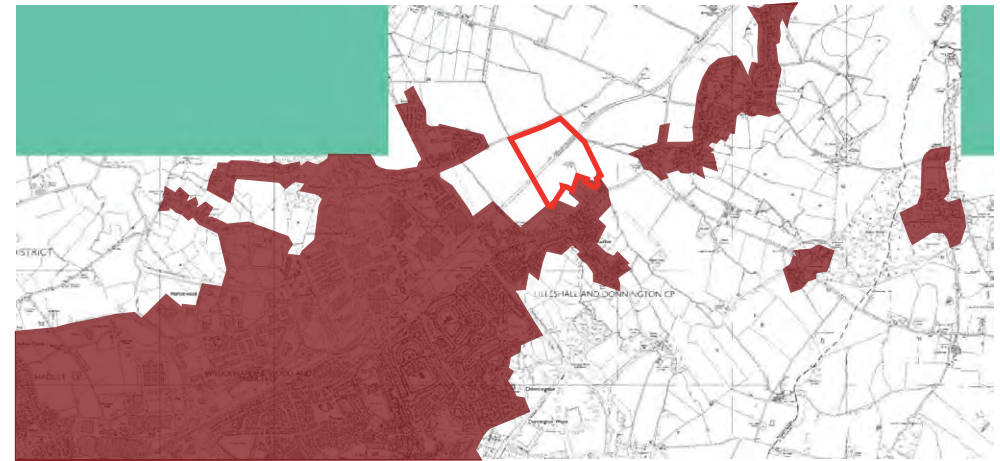
The initial growth of Muxton through the early 20th Century was in the form of ribbon development, closing the gap between Muxton and Lilleshall.

As Telford expanded during the mid to late 20th Century a convergence with Muxton occurred forming a nucleated settlement.

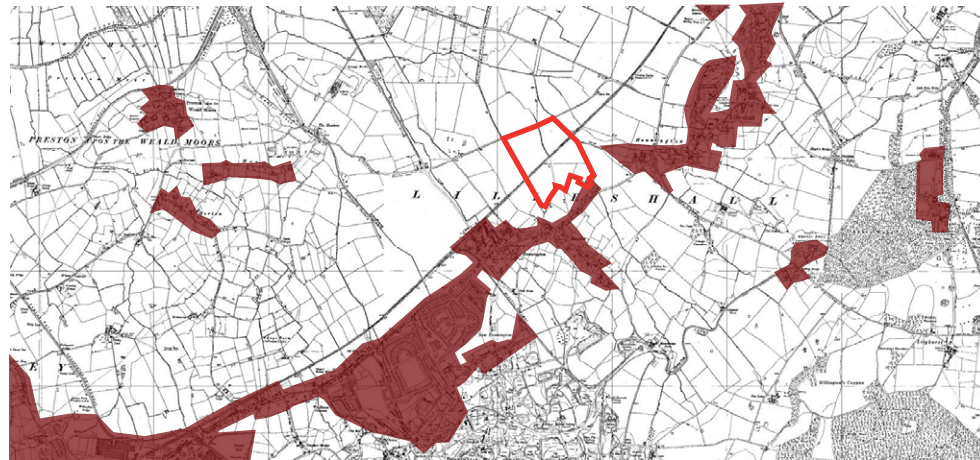
Expansion of the settlement has continued in a nucleated form and the proposal site is the logical boundary to this expansion in the north east being adjacent to the Lilleshall strategic landscape and capable of forming a defensible boundary to this landscape area.



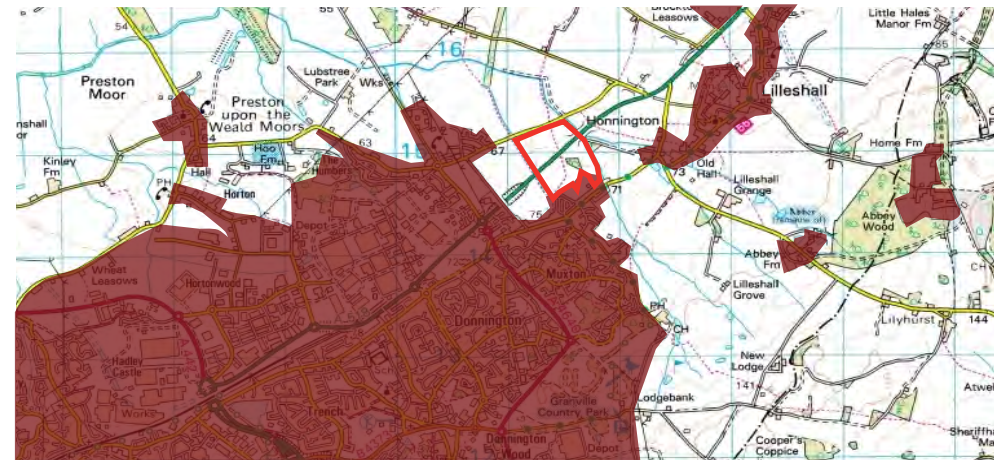
1900s



1990s



1950s



Present

Figure 06: Historic Maps

Topography

The topography of the proposal site is essentially flat running from 65 AOD in the north to 75 AOD in the south over a distance of approximately 700m. The surrounding landscape is predominantly flat to the north and west, with the Lilleshall monument at Lilleshall forming a prominent local landmark at an elevated position of 125AOD.

Approximately 10km to the south west of the proposal site is the Wrekin hill. This is a clearly visible landmark from the proposal site and surrounding landscape where vegetation and buildings do not restrict visibility.

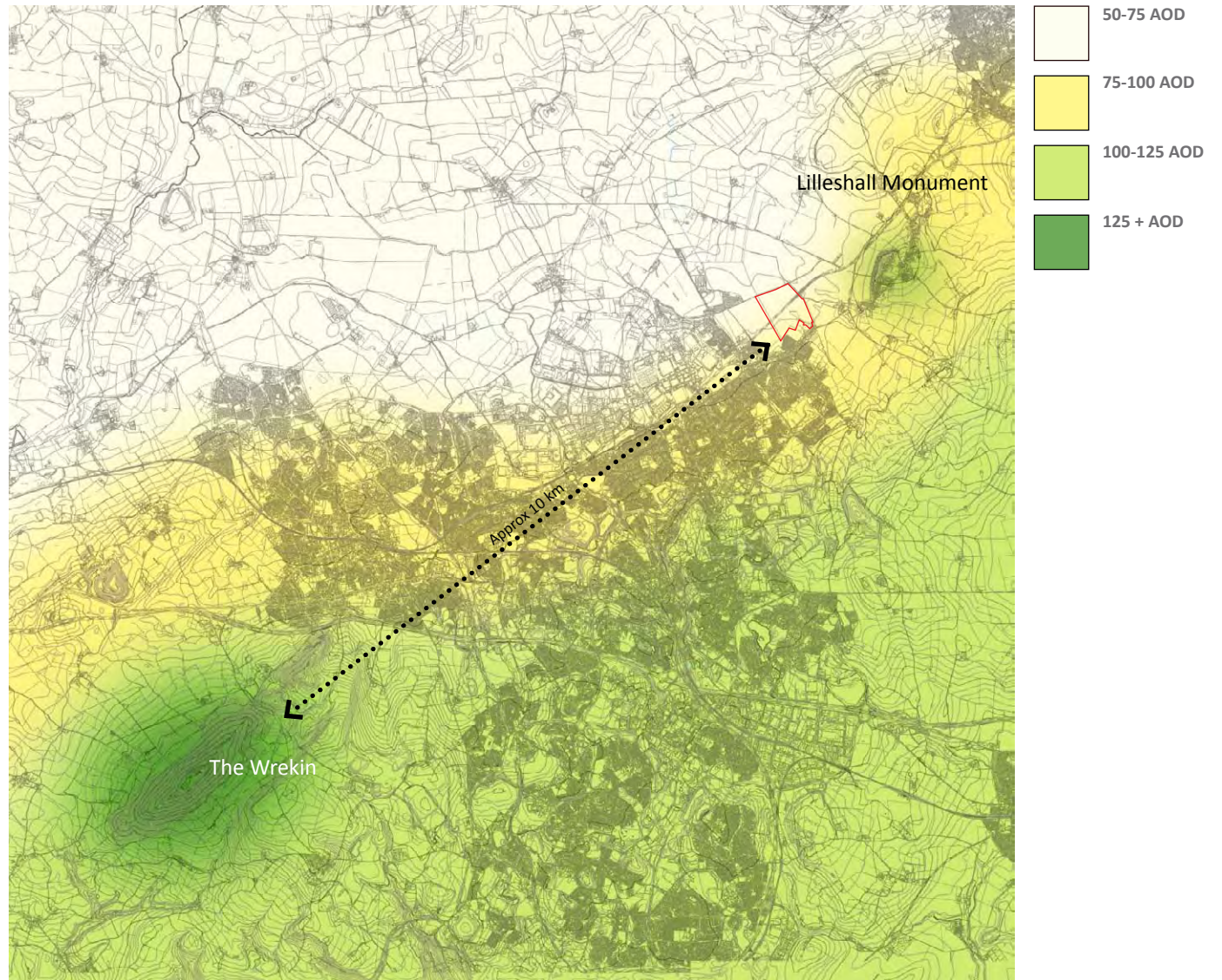


Figure 07 Topography Plan

Vegetation Cover

Muxton and the adjoining town of Telford are located amongst a patchwork of flat farmland fields, divided by hedgerows and trees.

Hedgerow boundaries are typically managed to a compact size of approximately 1.5m high and contain occasional mature hedgerow trees.

Tree cover is limited to small groupings found along hedgerows, along road embankments such as the A518, or as part of small woodland belts.

The proposal site currently comprises arable farmland and rough pasture. The site forms a small part of the field structure that characterises the surrounding farmland landscape and is bound by mature hedgerows along the edge of fields. A small mature woodland belt is located within land parcel B of the application site to the south of the A518

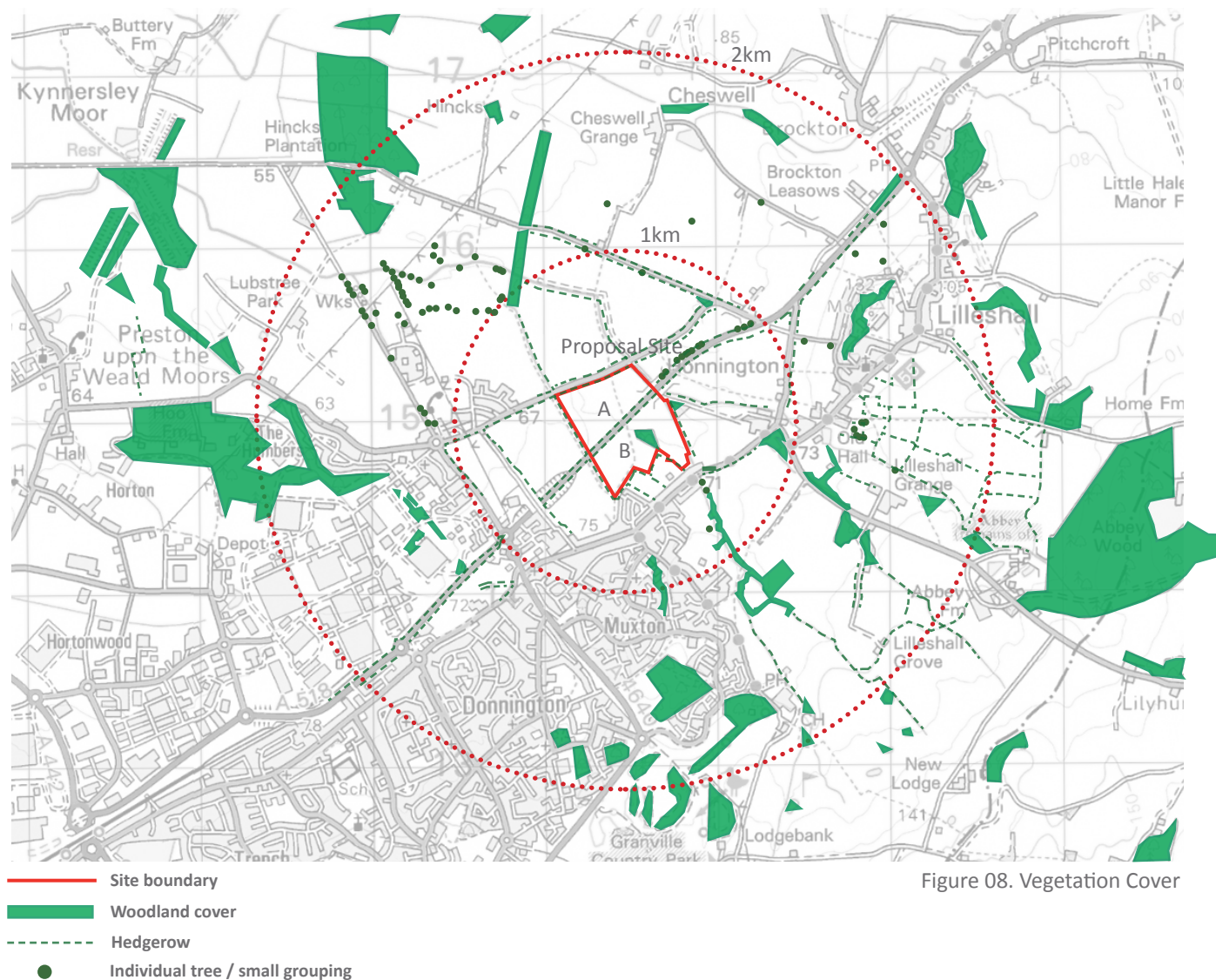


Figure 08. Vegetation Cover

Landscape Analysis

Landscape effects of development over the masterplan area would be experienced over the site area and the local landscape character areas. This would see a change from undeveloped arable farmland and other farmed and open countryside areas to a mix of residential development and open amenity or parkland areas. Some commercial development may also be part of the proposed change.

Although at a local level this would result in a loss of undeveloped countryside in the broader context of the landscape typology for Shropshire this change would not be large. Development would be broadly congruous with the existing settlement and through good design could be seen to integrate well into Muxton and Telford.

Existing landscape sensitivity studies have all identified land within the masterplan area as being of medium or low sensitivity to change and able to accommodate development. Susceptibilities that were identified related to loss of openness and mitigation proposed to manage this include landscape planting to screen views and enclose development.

Sensitive landscapes exist to the north and east and views to long distance elevated ridge lines and hills are noted as of importance to the local character.

Visual Analysis

The effects of the proposed development are potentially large for locations immediately adjacent to or within the proposed masterplan site. This includes two footpath routes and two road routes (A518 and Richards Road). Views from the settlement edge will vary but properties at: the Humbers; the caravan site off Wellington Road; upper floor views from properties on Station Road and some other locations at the edge of settlement within Muxton will have some visibility.

Effects are anticipated to be local in nature and restricted to open and visible areas within the study area. Key aspects to change will be the availability or alteration of views and vistas towards and from the Wrekin and Lilleshall monument.

Opportunities

The study has identified a number of opportunities and potential benefits of development that align with landscape and Green Infrastructure Objectives:

- The north east of Telford is noted as being short of Orchards, Outdoor Sports Facilities, Parks, Public Gardens and Recreation Grounds. Links to the countryside and between open spaces are also lacking.
- Opportunities to expand this Green Infrastructure network exist for the masterplan site.
- The characteristic features of note to protect and retain where possible are woodland, trees and hedgerows;
- The expansion of existing woodland, the planting of new woodlands and the connecting of habitat areas through the proposals is also promoted within the National Character Areas.
- Areas of flood zone are promoted as being landscape areas within new development;
- Tree planting is promoted to boundaries, particularly to the east, to help mitigate the identified loss of openness that would result through development;
- Views to and from the Lilleshall hill and monument and the Wrekin are noted as important and part of the local character of the area and should be considered and retained as part of the masterplan approach;



View from Lilleshall Monument looking westwards towards proposal site and Muxton



View from A518 looking eastwards from between both halves of proposal site



View from edge of Muxton looking eastwards towards proposal site

Access, Movement & Facilities

A study of local amenities has been carried out by Mott MacDonald, commissioned by Telford and Wrekin Borough Council for the adjacent H1 residential application site (indicated as a purple outline on the adjacent map).

This map is also cited within the Highway Report produced by DTPC for the proposal site as part of this report (added as a red area on the adjacent map). The Highway Report produced by DTPC identifies that the proposed development would not make a material difference when combined with the adjacent application in terms of access to local facilities and employment, assuming there are quality connections by all modes provided.

The site is located in a sustainable location with good access to the existing urban area, with a range of local services and facilities in walking distance.

- Community Amenities**
- Care / Nursing Home
 - Education
 - Hotel / Guest House
 - Leisure & Recreation
 - Medical
 - Place of Worship
 - Retail
 - Industrial
- Site Location
 2 Kilometre Buffer
 5 Kilometre Buffer

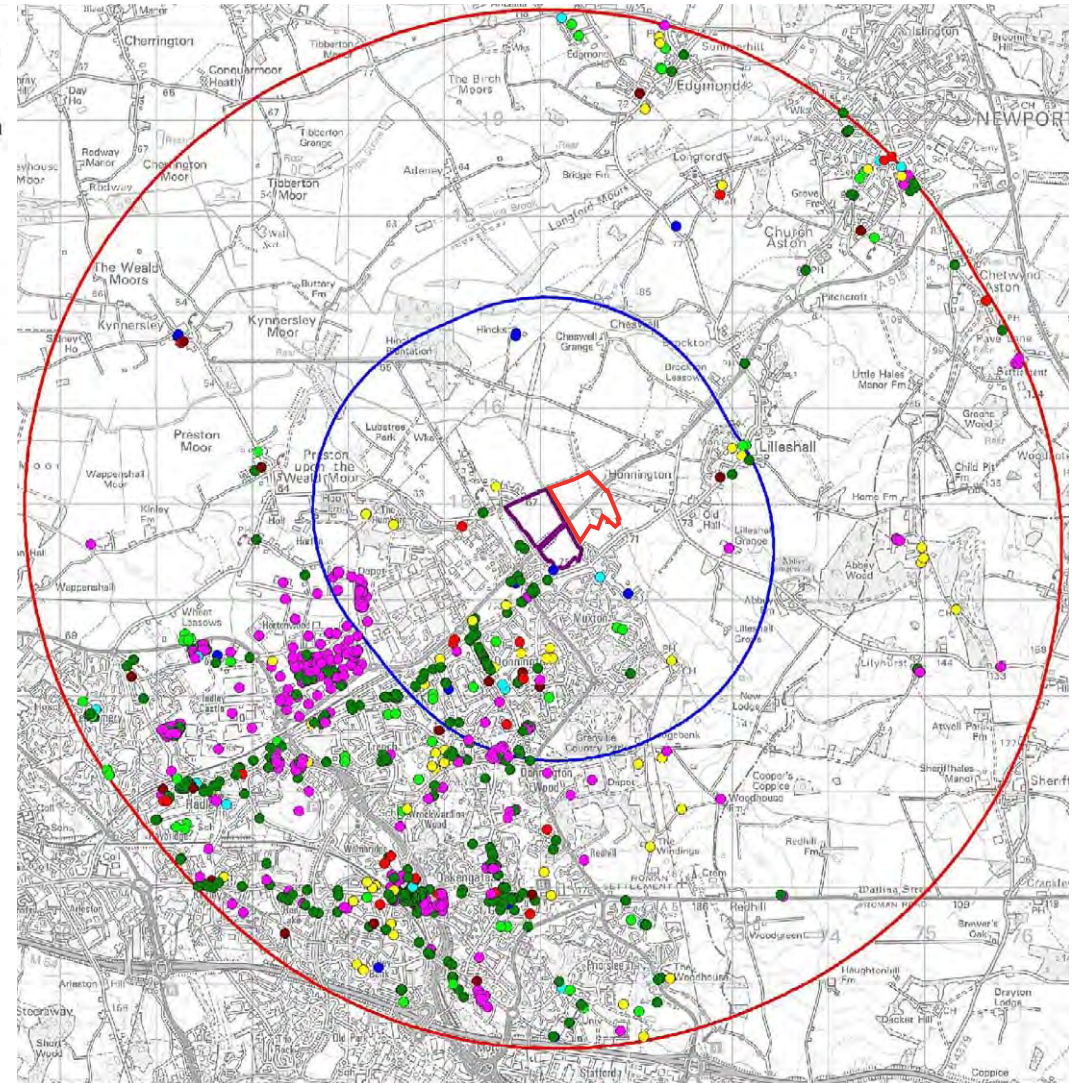


Figure 09 Local Services & Facilities Map
(Mott MacDonald for H1 Application)

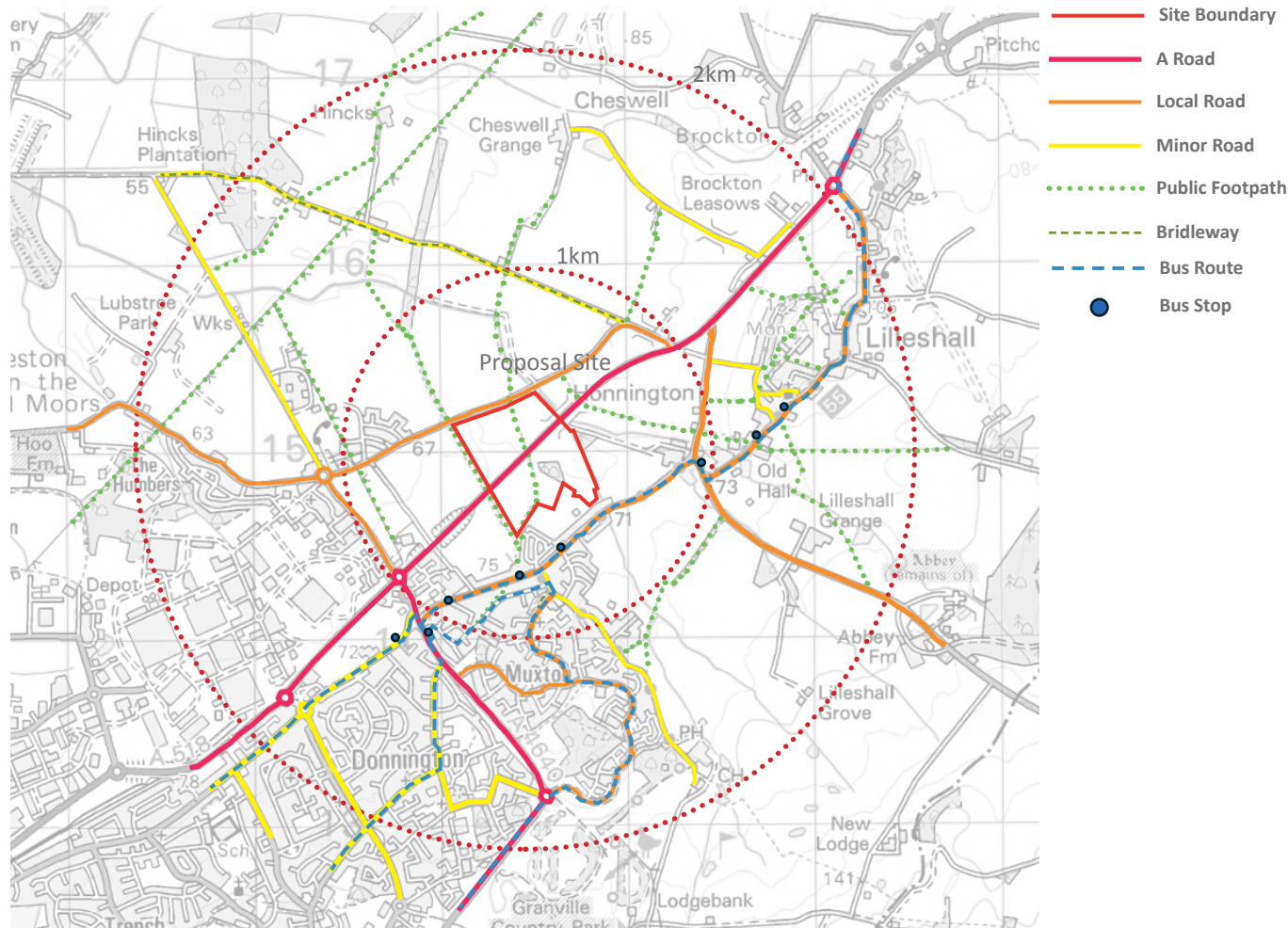


Figure 10 Access Map

The proposal site is located at the edge of the Muxton settlement and in close proximity to a network of local roads and Public Rights of Way.

One public footpath runs across the proposal site, with another running directly adjacent to the western site boundary. Although these footpaths are not currently delineated by a formal hard surface treatment, they are marked routes providing access by foot to the wider countryside.

The A518 runs through the proposal site area, dividing it into two land parcels. The A518 is one of the most significant service roads in the area, providing longer distance vehicle connections. The road is fast and a significant barrier for movement north and south across this landscape.

Richards Road runs along the northern boundary of the proposal site and connects between the Muxton settlement and the A518.

03 EVALUATION & EVOLUTION

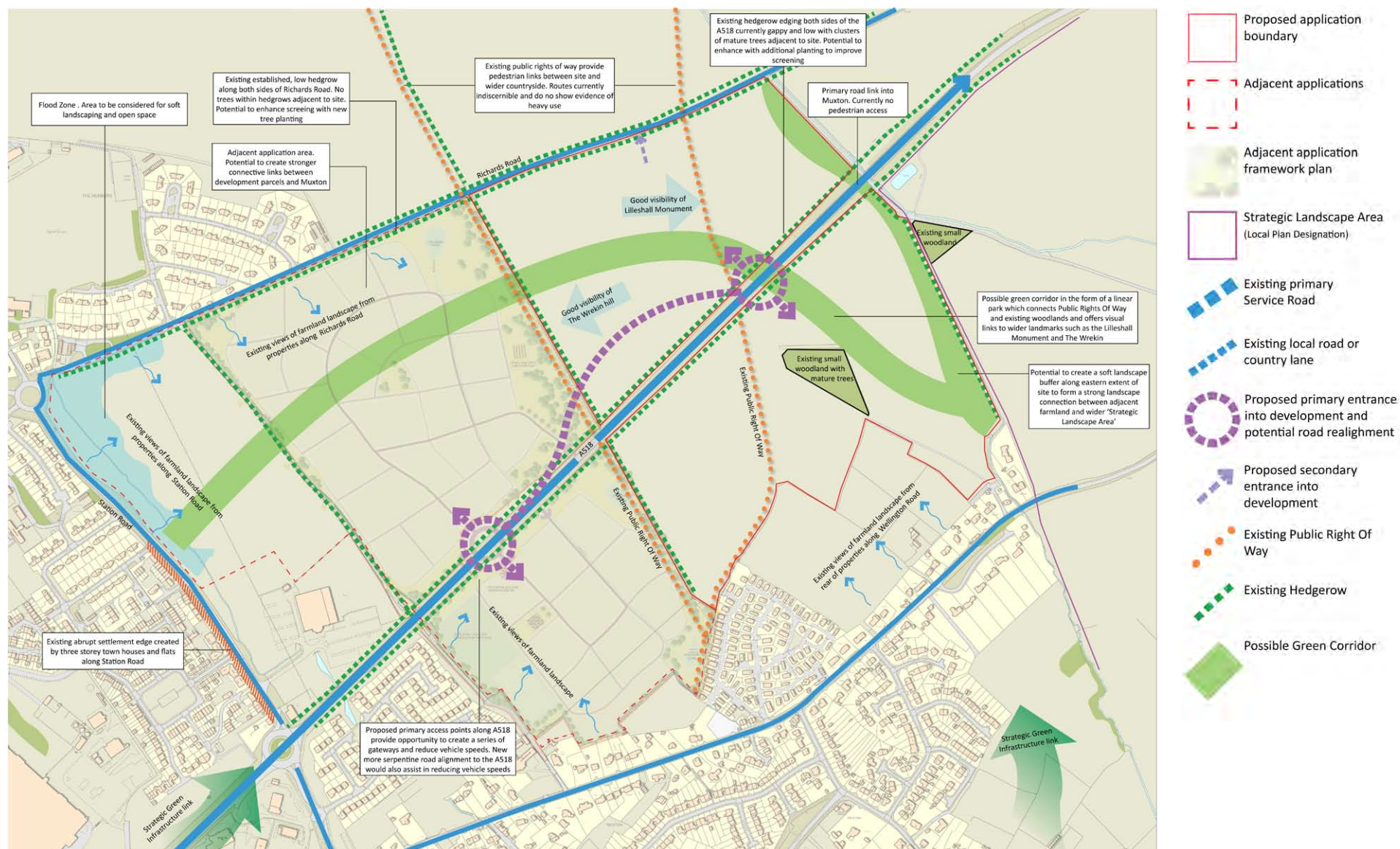


Figure 11 Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities and Constraints

The evaluation of the site through site visits and desk top research and its context has identified key on and off-site features which have helped to inform the design process of the development proposals.

Opportunities

- To retain and enhance existing boundary vegetation trees and woodland to contain the development within this structure and to create new hedgerow, tree and woodland groups to form connections to the wider Green Infrastructure of Telford;
- To connect into existing networks for vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian access, developing links across the masterplan area and into the existing settlement;
- Alter the character of the A518 seeking to reduce speeds and lessen its ability to act as a barrier across this area;
- To provide a linear park, connected to the countryside and PROW network and to add recreational resource to an area of Muxton and Telford noted for its deficiencies in this area;
- To provide an urban infrastructure that is not insular and inward looking but interconnected and permeable allowing movement for different user groups easily across the masterplan area;
- To provide for employment within the plan area;
- To protect the important visual connections to local landmarks and develop these into new vistas and views within the plan and development area.

Constraints

- The visual openness of the site, particularly towards the east, will require consideration in terms of the design and landscape proposals;
- The A518 currently forms a strong barrier for movement across both the H1 allocation site and the masterplan area, both the character and speed of the road need to be addressed for this to work within a residential area more effectively;
- The current masterplan layouts for H1 that exist do not talk to, or connect with each other and have little permeability with the existing settlement;
- The Lilleshall strategic landscape area lies to the north and east of the masterplan area;
- A number of long distance views to notable land marks add to the landscape character and will need to be considered in terms of the overall plan;
- A flood zone encroaches into the westerly section of the H1 Allocation land;
- Existing residential properties, footpath routes and highway routes will all be affected by the visual change development over these areas would bring, mitigation measures including screening and the development of new views needs to be considered.

Evaluation

The site provides an opportunity for a development which integrates well with the existing settlement of Muxton. There are no significant environmental, physical or cultural constraints and the proposals provide the opportunity to establish a sustainable development.

The following development objectives are established from the evaluation of the baseline data, the sites context, constraints and opportunities:

- To promote the all of the masterplan area as a sustainable development, that is better able to address the opportunities and constraints of the site than the current H1 allocation;
- To create a new public park that connects to the countryside and PROW network and is accessible by new and existing residents;
- To protect the character of the surrounding landscape and the strategic landscape areas;
- To provide residential housing and associated services and facilities including recreational, play, educational and health provision in line with the Local Plan;
- To provide employment opportunities as part of the development in line with the Local Plan.



Access and Primary Views

The A518 includes two new access roundabouts and the alignment of the road is changed from straight to curved to reduce travel speeds and help to create a change in character for the road route towards something more appropriate for a residential area.

A primary loop road is included that connects both northern and southern parts of the masterplan, promoting inter connectivity and a less insular development than the existing masterplan layouts for the H1 allocation would deliver.

Important views are overlain onto this access network and secondary routes aligned where possible seeking to create a framework where views outward and through the masterplan play a key part in developing a character for the site and retaining the character of the existing landscape and settlement.

The existing footpath network is shown with a presumption that this will be retained allowing access to and from Muxton and north, out into the open countryside.



Figure 13 Development Areas

Development Areas

Development areas are placed onto the plan connected by the access network. The views and vistas form the spine of undeveloped landscape areas that begin to connect with the existing footpath network creating the beginnings of a linear park area that runs from the existing settlement edge towards the eastern boundary of the masterplan area.

For those sites with existing layouts within allocation area H1 the aim is to offer equivalent parameters of development or better. The whole H1 allocation site developable area is indicated as 27.5 Ha which could equate to 962 dwellings if a density of 35 houses per hectare is utilised (this is the density stated within the D&A for the existing applications for the H1 site)

A further 18.99 Ha is proposed as part of the client's land together with other interested parties. This could deliver a further 665 homes.

In addition up to 100,000 sq feet of B1 commercial development is proposed to the east of the site creating employment opportunities within the masterplan that the other sites within H1 do not deliver.



Figure 14 Development Areas and Access

Development Areas and Access Overlay

The plan is further development through the consideration of how the development areas might divide into development blocks offering visual links and accessibility across the masterplan area and out towards landmarks in the wider countryside.

Focal point locations are considered within the development and the park areas with visual markers or artwork suggested to link and connect these spaces together. Similar visual markers are also shown on the roundabout locations into the settlement offering the opportunity of developing character and gateway features for the town.

As part of this visual and vista connectivity, spaces within the development blocks are indicated where public spaces, pocket parks and urban squares could create character areas within the development.

Footpath links are considered both along these viewlines but also connecting up areas of the park and open space with links into the open countryside via the existing network and links back into Muxton and Telford. New dedicated cycle links are shown, running alongside road routes and through parkland, creating a large network of paths and routes that is not available for residents currently, or proposed as part of any of the existing applications.



Figure 15 Masterplan

Masterplan

The final plan brings together all of the layers of design through the introduction of a landscape park that links the masterplan together as well as connecting into the existing settlement.

Substantial new woodland blocks are proposed through the central spine of the park and to the east, connecting together small, existing woodland plantations, and also offering a substantive landscape buffer and visual screen to the boundary with the Lilleshall Strategic Landscape Area.

A large attenuation water body is proposed, also in the east, around which the commercial units are arranged in a landscaped park setting.

Multiple options for travel through the park and recreation generally are offered through the plan, with cycle and footpath routes joining existing public rights of way, offering connection to the open countryside as well as loop routes within the site.

As previously within the H1 allocation site to the south, a junior sports pitch is indicated along with a site for the potential location of a primary school. A Doctors surgery is also shown, again in line with the original proposal.

Several children's play areas are shown across the masterplan area, with opportunities for a wide variety of play for all ages.

Summary and Conclusions

The proposals for development fall within a landscape character described at both National and Local level as one where both open farmland and countryside sit alongside urban and industrial features. In broad terms these landscapes have been variously assessed for their sensitivity to development as being able to accommodate development of the type promoted by the masterplan.

Special landscape areas are designated to the north and east of the masterplan site with strong visual connections and view lines to and from Lilleshall hill and the Wrekin.

The existing H1 Allocation site(s) in their current form are disconnected both from each other and from the settlement of Muxton and Telford. They are bisected by the fast and busy A518 and offer a very limited level of recreational resource and connection to the countryside. The designs currently promoted appear insular and inward looking with little ambition to influence their surroundings or make connections to the wider landscape.

Although a requirement of the Local Plan, none of the existing H1 Allocation sites deliver employment opportunities within their designs.

The potential for a primary school within the H1 allocation is not currently supported by the number of residential dwellings delivered by the allocation area. A larger area of development would enable a more sustainable extension to settlement by being able to support the delivery of the school.

A series of Green Infrastructure and recreational and amenity needs are not currently being met within the north east of Telford. The existing H1 Allocation designs do little to address these short falls in parkland and access to the countryside with a larger plan area better able to deliver a meaningful response that connects the development areas with the existing settlement.

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