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SACHEVERELL

GROBY

LAND SOUTH OF SACHEVERELL WAY
GREEN WEDGE ANALYSIS REPORT

DECEMBER 2025

Introduction

PURPOSE

This Green Wedge Analysis Report (GWAR) has been prepared to support an outline planning application (OPA) by Bloor Homes Ltd (BHL) for the development of Land South of Sacheverell Way (the site).

The OPA relates to the delivery of up to 180 dwellings, alongside associated access via two junctions from Sacheverell Way, green and blue infrastructure (including drainage, landscaping and public open space), ancillary infrastructure and enabling ground remodelling. The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) provides more detail regarding the proposals. It highlights how the suite of site assessments have been taken into account in advancing the scheme proposals; resulting in a high-quality residential development that is sensitive to its context.

This document specifically considers the site's designation within the Rothley Brook Meadow Green Wedge ("the GW"), as defined by Policy 9 of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's (HBBC) Core Strategy. The document demonstrates that (i) the list of acceptable uses as set out in CS Policy 9 was defined ahead of the increase to HBBC's Local Housing Need (LHN) and the existing Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) shortfall and should reflect that there is a need for residential development within the designated area, (ii) that the most recent Green Wedge Report recognises that the area to the south of Sacheverell Way could potentially accommodate development and (iii) that the site itself makes a limited contribution to the function of the GW. It concludes, therefore, that the site could be released with limited harm to the GW.



THE SITE

The extents of the site are shown on Figure 1.

The site comprises an area of 10.5ha that is located on the southern edge of Groby, to the south of Sacheverell Way. Its northern boundary is defined by a tree-lined hedgerow adjacent to Sacheverell Way, beyond which lies the settlement edge of Groby. The site's eastern boundary is defined by a public right of way (ref: R116/2), and a mature woodland block that runs adjacent to the A46. A public right of way (ref: R51/3) also runs along the site's southern boundary, which itself is delineated by a tree group and some individual trees. The site's western boundary also comprises a hedgerow, beyond which is a dismantled railway.

To the immediate west of the site is additional land that is also under the control of BHL, comprising grassland with linear tree corridors and sporadic, informal tree clusters. BHL also controls land to the east of the A46. Neither of those areas of land will be subject to any built development, and are shown in a "blue line" on the adjacent plan.

The adjacent photographs provide a visual record of the site.



REPORT STRUCTURE

This Green Wedge Analysis is structured as follows;

Section 1: Introduction – this section.

Section 2: Green Wedge Policy – summarises the local planning policy context in relation to the GW designation, including the history of the GW designation and its key objectives.

Section 3: Green Wedge Analysis – presents an analysis of the role the site plays in the GW and the implications of the site's development.

Section 4: Conclusion – provides an overview of the key findings and the benefits of the proposed development.





FIGURE 1 – SITE LOCATION PLAN

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

HBBC's Development Plan comprises the Core Strategy ("CS", adopted in December 2009) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document ("SADM DPD", as adopted in July 2016). The key designations and policies in relation to the site are set out in the adjacent figure. Compliance with those key policies is considered in further detail in the submitted Pre-Application Letter.

CS POLICY 9: ROTHLEY BROOK MEADOW GREEN WEDGE

CS Policy 9 defines the Rothley Brook GW, as shown on the adjacent plan. The supporting text to the policy states that the Rothley Brook GW protects the green infrastructure of the borough, and that whilst work has been undertaken to improve its recreation and biodiversity function, there are still opportunities for enhancement to further increase its amenity, ecological value and role as a functional floodplain.

Policy 9 itself encourages uses within the GW that provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents and promote the positive management of land to ensure that the GW remains or is enhanced as an attractive contribution to the quality of life of nearby urban residents. It continues to set out land uses that are deemed to be acceptable in the GW, provided the operational development associated with such uses does not damage the function of the GW. The list of uses does not include residential development.

The policy also states that any development in the GW should:

- (a) Retain the function of the Green Wedge;
- (b) Retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas;
- (c) Retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation;
- (d) Retain and enhance function as a floodplain and infiltration basin;
- (e) Retain the visual appearance of the area.

POLICY STATUS AND WEIGHT

The submitted Planning Statement considers the status of the Development Plan, and the weight that should be applied to the plan as a whole and specific policies within it.

It demonstrates that the adopted Development Plan is out-of-date, in that (i) the plan is now well over 5 years old but has not been reviewed or updated as required by NPPF paragraph 34, (ii) the plan fails to make provision to meet the area's LHN, and (iii) therefore, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply (5YHLS).

The Planning Statement outlines how, as a result of that, the weight to be applied to key policies in relation to the provision of housing must be reduced. That means that the housing requirement for the Borough and Groby specifically should not be seen as a cap to housing delivery and instead should be exceeded to address the 5YHLS shortfall.

Similarly, the weight to be afforded to those policies that restrict growth must also be limited, given that the strategy taken in doing so was informed by the much lower housing requirement at that point in time. Therefore, whilst the site is located outside of the settlement boundary and within the GW, those restrictive policies must be given reduced weight, and the need to achieve a step-change in housing delivery should be considered in the application of those policies.

That is particularly the case given that the Council's emerging Local Plan (eLP) recognises that there is a need for the release of sites from the GW to meet the area's housing needs. As part of that, a 2025 Green Wedge Review (GWR) has been prepared, and recognises that land within the assessment parcel to the south of Sacheverell Way could potentially accommodate residential development.

GREEN WEDGE OBJECTIVES

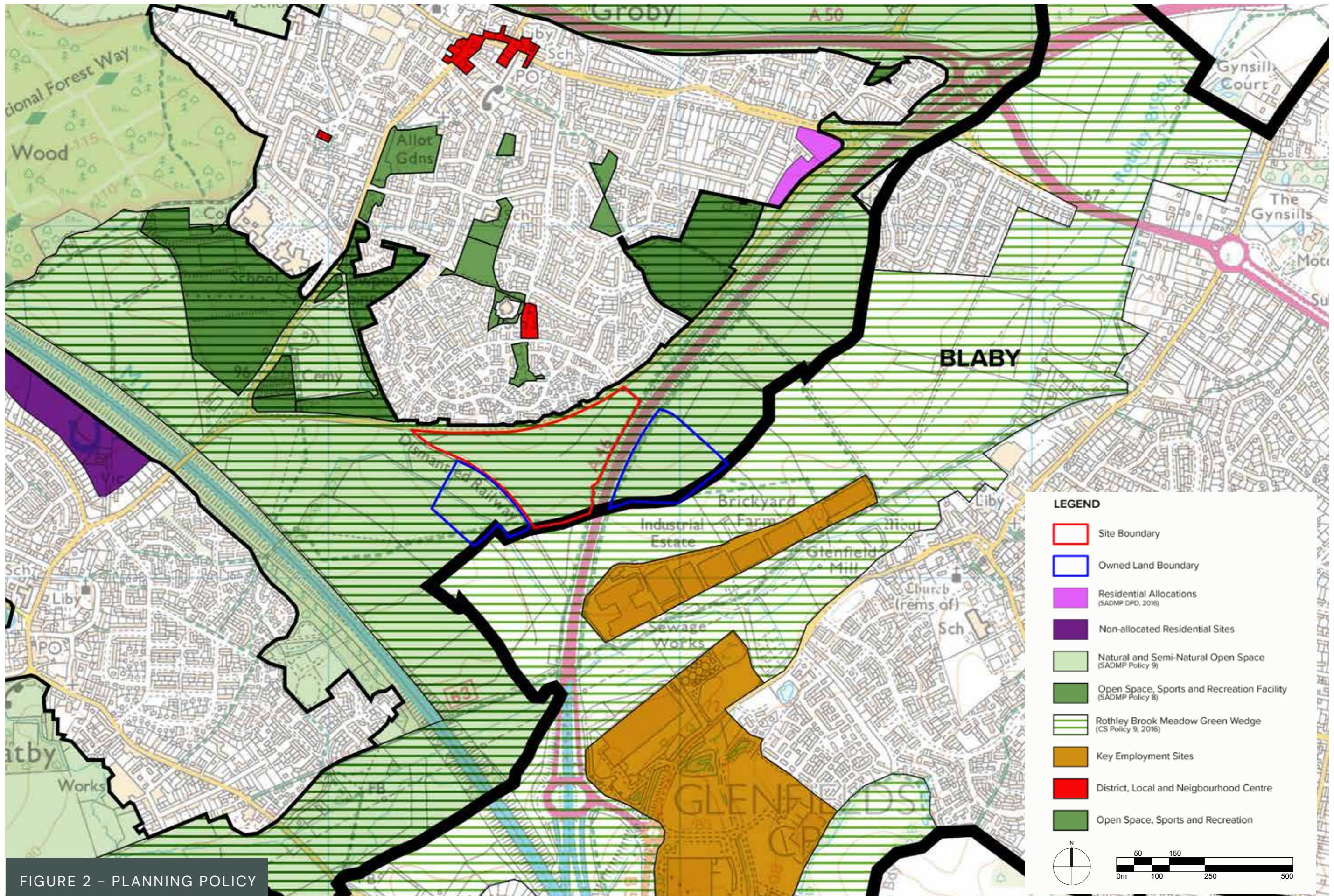
GWs in Leicestershire were introduced in the 1987 Leicestershire Structure Plan (LSP), and maintained in the 1994 LSP. The 1994 LSP stated that "**Green Wedges do not constitute a Green Belt** in the accepted sense, in that they **do not seek to restrict the growth of an urban area**. Instead Green Wedges seek to ensure that, as urban development extends, open land is incorporated within it."

The 2005 Structure Plan listed the purposes of the GWs, and the East Midlands Regional Plan (EMRP, 2009) then emphasised the need for a review of the GWs, reiterating that "Green Wedges serve useful strategic planning functions in preventing the merging of settlements, **guiding development form** and providing a 'green lung' into urban areas, and acts as a recreational resource."

Whilst the EMRP was later abolished, a GW Review Joint Methodology (GWR JM) was prepared by the Leicestershire authorities in July 2011, and itself confirmed that the GWR JM would remain legitimate despite the abolition of the EMRP, and should provide a starting point for the review of GWs. The GWR JM appended excerpts of the 1994 LSP, and reiterated that "areas of Green Wedge primarily seek to guide the development form of urban areas".

On that basis, the GWR JM set out four evaluation criteria to be applied when assessing GW either at the micro or macro scale. Whilst three of the four are broadly reflected in the criteria set out in Policy 9, the policy does not highlight that GWs should guide development form, with the GWR JM explicitly recognising the need for urban areas to extend in an appropriate manner.

It is clear, therefore, that GWs are not a blanket constraint to development, and in fact are a tool for ensuring that development is appropriately planned. That has been recognised through various appeals, both in Leicestershire and nationally, and a recent appeal in Derbyshire confirmed that the weight to be applied to GW policy should be limited where an authority has a 5YHLS shortfall.



CONTEXT

The Rothley Brook Meadow GW covers a very large area of 1,375ha within Hinckley and Bosworth, Charnwood, Blaby and Leicester City; of which 340ha falls within HBBC's jurisdiction. From Groby, it extends both southwards to Ratby, Kirby Muxloe, Glenfield and Braunstone Frith and northwards in an arc following the urban form around Beaumont Leys, Ashton Green and Birstall in Leicester City.

The site forms a very small part (10.55ha) of the GW; equating to c. 0.76% of the overall GW. Moreover, the emerging Masterplan as presented in the DAS would retain c. 53% of the site as green and blue infrastructure (5.62ha). That means there would be a "loss" of only 4.93ha from the designated GW to built development. That would present only 1.45% of the extent of the GW within the Borough, and 0.36% of the overall GW across all authority areas.

That scale of loss is insignificant in itself, and yet the delivery of up to 180 dwellings would make an invaluable contribution to addressing the acute market and affordable housing needs in a highly sustainable location where limited development has taken place in recent years.

RECENT ASSESSMENTS

As part of the preparation of the eLP, HBBC have published a 2025 GWR. The 2025 GWR recognises the need to pragmatically review the GWR's extents in light of the housing needs arising in the Borough, and its ultimate conclusion is that the site could potentially be removed from the GW subject to sensitive design. That conclusion is welcomed, and has ultimately resulted in HBBC proposing to allocate the site for development within the recent Regulation 18 consultation document.

The GW around Groby is divided into different sub-areas / assessment parcels for the purposes of the 2025 GWR. The site falls within Assessment Parcel E (Land South of Sacheverell Way), as identified on the adjacent page (excerpt from the GWR).

The assessment parcel is a large area that includes the entirety of the land between Sacheverell Way and the Borough boundary, and which forms the entirety of the physical and visual gap between Groby and Ratby. It is characterised as being agricultural in nature, gently sloping with low hedgerows and significant sapling planting. Therefore, it is inevitable that some of the findings applied to Assessment Parcel E in the 2025 GWR do not necessarily relate to the application site.

Rather, the determination of this application should consider the case for the removal of this site from the GW; given that it is a well-contained parcel that is related closely to the existing built form. That is considered in the coming analysis. That demonstrates that, when considering the site specifically, it does not make a particularly strong contribution to the function of GWs, that the site's release would not undermine the function of the retained GW and that, in practical terms, the development of the site would actually align with the objective of the GW designations.

Indeed, it is clearly capable of accommodating much-needed development, without significant harm to the extent and function of the wider GW.

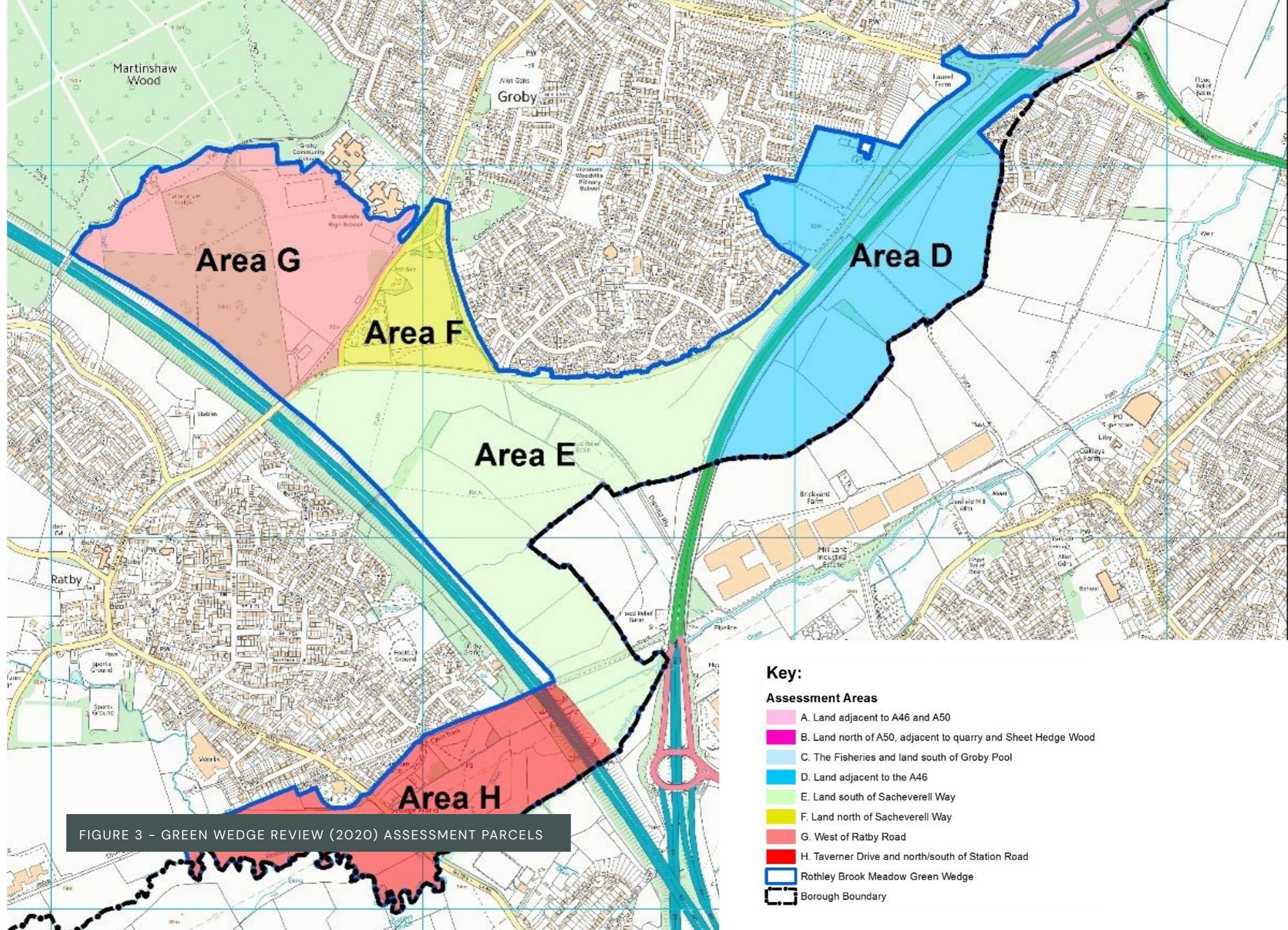


FIGURE 3 – GREEN WEDGE REVIEW (2020) ASSESSMENT PARCELS

Key:

Assessment Areas

- A. Land adjacent to A46 and A50
- B. Land north of A50, adjacent to quarry and Sheet Hedge Wood
- C. The Fisheries and land south of Groby Pool
- D. Land adjacent to the A46
- E. Land south of Sacheverell Way
- F. Land north of Sacheverell Way
- G. West of Ratby Road
- H. Taverner Drive and north/south of Station Road
- Rothley Brook Meadow Green Wedge**
- Borough Boundary**

PREVENTING THE MERGING OF SETTLEMENTS

The GWR JM states that GWs help safeguard the “identity of communities within and around urban areas that face growth pressures”.

The GWR JM states that, in assessing merging between settlements, assessments should consider the physical separation between settlements, and the perceived distance between the settlements (i.e. how it is actually experienced on the ground). The 2025 GWR recognises that, in physical terms, the A46 and M1 form “clear physical boundaries” that provide a “strong and defensible edge” to the GW and that, whilst there is some intervisibility and intravisibility between Groby, Ratby and Glenfield, views are limited by the presence of mature vegetation. They are key conclusions that point towards the assessment parcel and site making a limited contribution towards this purpose.

GROBY AND RATBY

Figure 4 shows that the gap between the existing settlement edge of Groby and Ratby is 570m. At its closest point, new residential development within the site would be located c. 650m from Ratby, and therefore would not reduce the gap between the settlements. That is a result of the carefully considered Masterplan; which provides an offset between the built form and the southern boundary.

Moreover, the proposed development would not extend the built form any further west along Sacheverell Way / Groby Way, which is the only vehicular route that connects the two settlements. In physical terms, therefore, there would be no merging of the settlements.

Furthermore, the nature of the settlement form and landscape framework means that there is a clear separation between the two settlements in their current form. The M1 passes through the gap between the two, and is a very prominent feature in the landscape; particularly in terms of the related infrastructure, vegetation, movement and noise. Therefore, it acts as a significant threshold in the landscape that provides clear separation between the two (as the 2025 GWR recognises); and that would not be affected by the proposed development. In addition, the existing landscape framework very much limits intervisibility between the two settlements (a point that the 2025 GWR also recognises). That includes the existing, wide linear vegetation blocks either side of the M1, and the more recently planted vegetation on the south-western edge of the “blue lined” land. The additional planting within the site will enhance that further.

It is clear, therefore, that there would be no physical or perceived merging between Groby and Ratby.

GROBY AND GLENFIELD

The 2025 GWR recognises that the distance between the settlements “and the presence of intervening vegetation and infrastructure, such as the A46 and M1 help preserve their separate identity”.

Figure 4 shows that the existing gap to the residential built form of Glenfield is the key matter of consideration; as the recent employment development does not form part of Glenfield or contribute to maintaining settlement separation. The existing gap between the existing residential built forms is 850m. The proposed residential development would not substantially and materially diminish that gap. Indeed, new residential development within the site would be some 785m from the residential edge of Glenfield and would not, therefore, affect the separate identity of the two settlements in physical terms.

Moreover, the nature of the relationship between the two settlements means that there will be no perception of merging between them. The A46 passes between the two, and is a very prominent feature (particularly when accounting for the associated infrastructure, vegetation, movement and noise) that visually and physically severs the gap between the two. Therefore, it is a significant threshold in the landscape that provides a clear separation between the two settlements. That will diminish any perceived merging between Groby and Glenfield.

Furthermore, in visual terms, whilst there is some inter-visibility between the two settlements, the existing landscape framework means that the settlements are seen in the background of views, being well-contained by the landscape. Moreover, there are no direct routes between the two where a visual perception of coalescence could arise.

THE SITE AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Development within the site would be visually and physically well contained by Sacheverell Way to its north, the dismantled railway line and notable tree belts that are readily recognisable landscape features and would, therefore, be well-contained with a clear boundary to the retained GW. Its relationship with the existing settlement and the key services and facilities on offer therein also means that the site would be a natural and sustainable extension to Groby.

Moreover, those strong physical boundaries and the robust landscape framework will define a clear settlement edge, beyond which will be the retained GW; which itself is a much more open area of land that clearly forms part of the gap between Groby and Ratby / Glenfield.

Therefore, it is clear that the physical and perceived separation between Groby and nearby settlements will be protected, and the actual harm to the GW in this respect will be extremely limited.

GUIDING DEVELOPMENT FORM

The GWR JM states that, in designating new GWs or revising existing ones, consideration will be given to how that can “help shape the development of new communities such as potential sustainable urban extensions.” In the current context, a pragmatic review of the GW is required to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of housing to meet the area’s market and affordable housing needs and remedy the 5YHLS shortfall in the Borough.

In that context, the 2025 GWR pragmatically recognises that, whilst development within Area E would initially be noticeable (as with any greenfield development), “the landscape’s scale and transitional character offer potential for carefully managed change.” Therefore, the GWR states that “any boundary amendments would need to consider the area’s visual sensitivity and its role in maintaining settlement separation, while recognising opportunities for growth that respond to the surrounding infrastructure and landscape features.” That is the approach that the Masterplan proposes to take.

However, the suggestion that Sacheverell Way forms a boundary to strong development is not accepted. Whilst development beyond the road may not be acceptable in some cases (i.e. towards the west of the assessment parcel), it is not universally the case that the road is a boundary that should not be breached. Rather, the road is suburban in character, as opposed to the M1, A46 and A50; which provide clear and defensible boundaries to the settlement. Development to the south of Sacheverell Way could, therefore, be appropriate so long as it is in a suitable location, and designed in a sensitive manner.

The site clearly meets that criteria, and could be developed sensitively as a natural extension to the built form that would not undermine the remainder of the GW. It is contained by the A46, the dismantled railway line and notable tree belts that are readily recognisable landscape features and would, therefore, be well-contained with a clear boundary to the retained GW. Its relationship with the existing settlement and the key services and facilities on offer therein also means that the site would be a natural and sustainable extension to Groby.

The release of the site would, therefore, be consistent with this GW objective; in that it would direct growth to a sustainable location that would form a logical extension to the built form by releasing what is a small area of the wider GW.

LEGEND

- Application Boundary
- Other land controlled by applicant
- Settlement edge (built form only)
- Existing gap between settlements
- Proposed gap between settlements

GROBY

PROVIDING A GREEN LUNG INTO URBAN AREAS

The GWR JM states that this objective seeks to provide a continuous link between the open countryside and land which penetrates deep into Leicester city's urban area. The contribution that the site plays to this objective is, therefore, questionable, given that the countryside to the south of Groby is not part of the tract of land that runs into Leicester from its west (which relates more so to the north of Groby).

However, the GWR refers to the contribution that the GW makes in providing a green lung for residents of Groby and Ratby. The contribution that the site makes in that regard is limited, and the loss of the site would not fundamentally undermine this objective; particularly when taking account of the recreational improvements referred to under the following heading. Nor does the site contain any of the historical features of local interest and potentially valuable habitats that are referred to in the GWR.



Indicative vignettes for illustrative purposes only (Not to Scale)

ACTING AS A RECREATIONAL RESOURCE

The GWR JM highlights that GWs are intended to provide a recreation resource, including both informal and formal facilities, where public access would be maximised.

The site, however, is in private ownership and agricultural use, and is very unlikely to be brought into public use without development. Therefore, it currently has no recreation role beyond the short public right of ways that run along the eastern and southern boundary that, since the A46 was constructed, have been used less frequently.

The proposed development would actually enhance its recreational resource, with just over half (53%) of the site being retained as green and blue infrastructure, comprising a mix of public open space, naturalistic parkland, a formal play space, strategic tree / woodland planting and orchards, SuDS, and biodiversity enhancement; as set out on the adjacent page. That includes a more formalised area of open space, including a play area, at the east of the site (right), and a more naturalistic green corridor along the south-western boundary (below).

That land will be publicly accessible for residents of the site and surrounding area, and would significantly improve the access from within Groby to the surrounding countryside. Therefore, in terms of the recreation function of the GW there would be a significant material benefit resulting from the proposed development.



- 1 Footpath
- 2 Community orchard & grow zone
- 3 Informal tree planting
- 4 Shared private drive
- 5 Shared footpath/cycleway
- 6 Retained boundary vegetation
- 7 Neutral grassland
- 8 Existing ditch
- 9 Swale

- 1 Retained hedgerow & ditch
- 2 Existing footpath
- 3 Native woodland block
- 4 Attenuation basin
- 5 Informal tree groups outside of easements
- 6 Surface water swale
- 7 Neutral grassland
- 8 Footpaths
- 9 Teenage social space
- 10 Children's play area
- 11 Community orchard & grow zone
- 12 Retained boundary vegetation



FIGURE 5 – ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

4 Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Whilst the site currently lies within the designated GW, the designation was never intended to be a blanket constraint to development, and instead sought to guide development to suitable locations. Moreover, the boundaries of the GW are inherently informed by what is now an out-of-date housing requirement. The Council's LHN figure identifies that there is a pressing need to significantly boost the supply of housing in the Borough above that housing requirement in order to meet the area's full housing needs and address the existing 5YHLS shortfall.

However, there are very limited opportunities for development at Groby, which is a highly sustainable Key Rural Centre, outside of the GW; with the settlement otherwise bordered by hard constraints, including the A46, M1, M50, and ancient woodland.

The release of some areas of the designated GW is, therefore, required. That has been recognised by HBBC through the preparation of the eLP, and the recently updated 2025 GWR takes a pragmatic approach to identifying areas of the GW with development potential. It recognises that Assessment Parcel A, which includes the site, could potentially accommodate well-designed development, and on that basis the eLP proposes to allocate the site.

That is a reflection of the site's suitability, but also the limited role that it plays in contributing towards the GW's objectives. Indeed, when compared to the wider GW designation (be that solely within the Borough or including neighbouring authorities), the scale of loss associated with the development of this site would be insignificant; particularly when the extent of the retained green and blue infrastructure is considered.

Moreover, in terms of the GW objectives, the nature of the site and the robust landscape framework in its surrounds means that any potential harm in terms of the physical and perceived coalescence of Groby with Ratby and Glenfield can be effectively negated through the careful consideration of the built form within the site and the implementation of a robust landscape strategy.

Furthermore, it is clear that the site currently has no significant role in respect of the other stated GW objectives (bringing into question its designation) and that, conversely, the proposed development of the site would provide a significant element of enhanced multi-functional green and blue infrastructure within the site that can be retained as GW in perpetuity to complement the residual GW within its immediate surrounds. Notably, the provision of a significant public space with landscape, drainage and biodiversity enhancements and improved pedestrian links with the wider countryside are significant material benefits that would only arise from the site's development.

It is clear, therefore, that the site does not contribute significantly to the GW objectives and that it could be developed without undermining the remaining GW, and that the development would actually align with a number of the objectives by realising a number of recreational benefits and defining a new strong boundary to the GW.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The site is an entirely appropriate location for sustainable development in terms of its relationship with Groby, a Key Rural Centre, and its relationship with the city of Leicester. Furthermore, the assessment and design work to date has indicated that there are no technical or environmental constraints to development that cannot be appropriately mitigated, and it is immediately available for development.

In that context, the proposal for the delivery of up to 180 new homes accords with the provisions of the NPPF and would constitute "sustainable development." Indeed, the proposed development would result in a number of significant economic, social and environmental benefits.

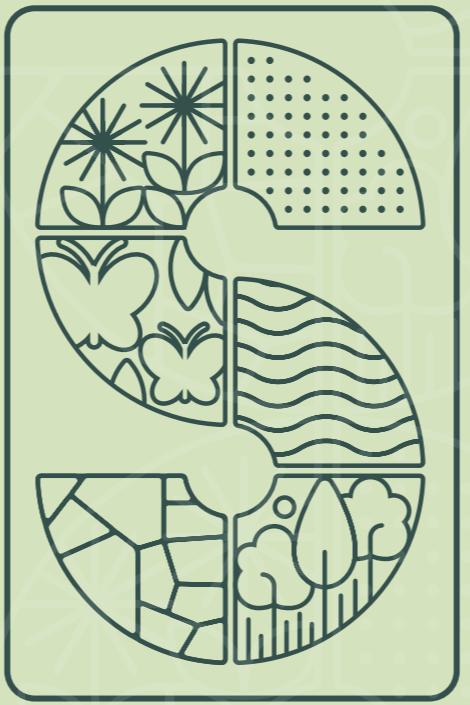
The development would provide much needed housing, including affordable housing, on a suitable site in a sustainable location, where residents have direct access to, and provide support for, a range of local facilities and services in the local area and have good access via public transport to higher level services and employment opportunities provided in the city of Leicester.

The Masterplan clearly demonstrates how the development would relate well to the urban area, respects its relationship with the surrounding countryside, uses the site in an effective and efficient manner and provides positive environmental enhancements. It effectively demonstrates the site's capacity for development and, critically, its deliverability.

Therefore, this site can and should contribute positively to the growth and development of Groby, as well as helping to meet the identified market and affordable housing needs within the Borough and the unmet needs arising in Leicester. In that regard, BHL supports the eLP's proposal to remove the site from the GW, and permission should now be granted for its development at the earliest possible opportunity.



FIGURE 6 - SCHEME VISUALISATION (FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY)



Prepared by:

Define.

Unit 6 | 133-137 Newhall Street | Birmingham | B3 1SF
T: 0121 2371914 W: www.wearedefine.com