

Green Wedge Assessment

Land at Normandy Way, Hinckley.

On behalf of Morro Partnerships .

Date: 26 March 2025 | Pegasus Ref: P24-1991

LPA Ref: 24/10146 PREMAJ

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Document Management.

Version	Date	Author	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for revision
ROOIV1	18.3.25	RB	NC	
ROOIV2	27.3.25	RB	KE	Internal feedback



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group have been instructed by Morro Partnership to a Green Wedge Assessment to support the planning application for 25 affordable houses, at Normandy Way, Hinckley.
- 1.2. The assessment sets out the site and its surroundings, the policy context in terms of Green Wedges and assesses the site against the four purposes of Green Wedge as set out in The Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology (July 2011).

2. Site and Surroundings

2.1. The site has an area of 0.9ha and is located immediately north of the Hinckley urban area. To the south, the site faces Normandy Way A47 road, and to the west the site faces properties along Ashby Road. The site is bounded to the north by the residential curtilage of properties on Ashby Road, with a small proportion of the site adjoining agricultural fields to north and east.

2.2. The site is currently in use as private allotments created originally with land left over after the development of David Wilson housing estate to the south. It has been solely used by the landowner and a few close contacts that used the site since its creation as private allotments. In that time, there was no more than 6/7 people who used the site. Currently it is only the landowner who uses the site, no one else uses the site or has access to it.

2.3. The site lies immediately north of the Limits to Development which follow the A47 Normandy Way.



2.4.

Site Proposal

2.5. The planning application seeks full planning permission for the development of up to 25 affordable dwellings including a new access on to Normandy Way, amenity space, community orchard, parking and pedestrian links.

2.6. The proposal includes the provision of publicly accessible community orchard to the front of the site, with access to public open space to the east of the site.

2.7. Vehicular access is proposed from the south of the site onto A47 Normandy Way and new pedestrian routes will be installed to serve the site.



3. Policy Context

Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy (adopted December 2009)

3.1. Policy 6 (Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge) states:

Within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge uses will be encouraged that provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents and promote the positive management of land to ensure that the Green Wedge remains or is enhanced as an attractive contribution to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.

The following land uses will be acceptable in the Green Wedge, provided the operational development associated with such uses does not damage the function of the Green Wedge:

- (a) Agriculture, including allotments and horticulture not accompanied by retail development
- (b) Recreation
- (c) Forestry
- (d) Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways
- (e) Burial grounds
- (f) Use for nature conservation

Any land use or associated development in the Green Wedge should:

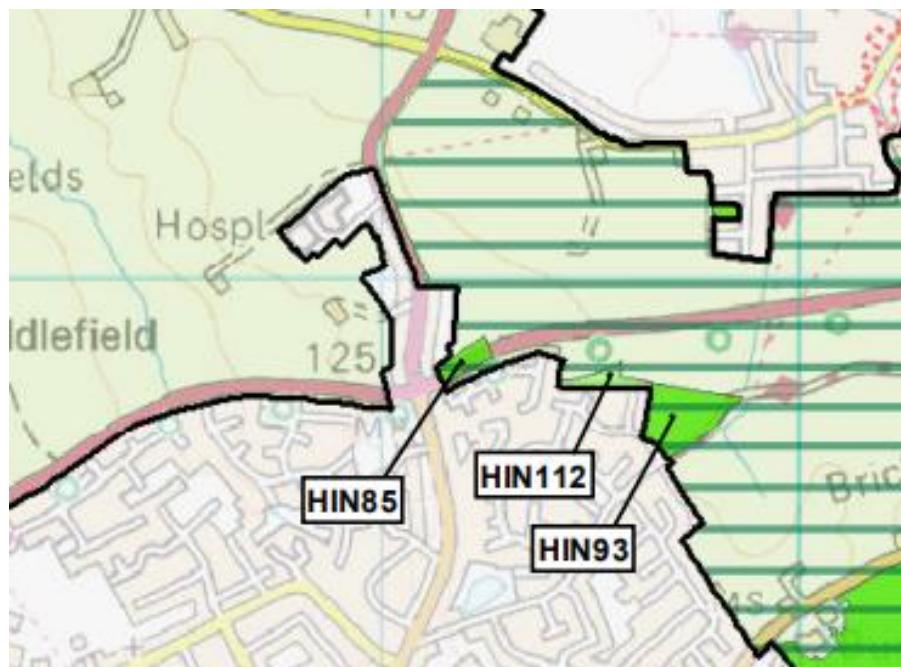
- (a) Retain the function of the Green Wedge
- (b) Retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas
- (c) Retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation and
- (d) Should retain the visual appearance of the area

Hinckley and Bosworth Site Allocations Document (SAD) (adopted July 2016)

3.2. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council adopted the SAD in July 2016. The SAD sets out site specific proposals and policies for the use of land to guide future development, in order to help to deliver the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy. The SAD predominantly focusses on the design and delivery of proposed developments and provides guidance as such.

3.3. A Policies Map was prepared alongside the SAD. The Hinckley and Burbage Policies Map extract shows the application site as being outside of, but adjacent to the Hinckley

Settlement Boundary, and therefore within countryside. An extract from the Policies Map with key is provided below:



3.4.

Key

	Bosworth Battlefield
	Charmwood Forest (Core Strategy Policy 22)
	Community Facility
	Community Facility Boundary
	Countryside
	Conservation Area
	Cultural and Tourism Facility
	Cultural and Tourism Facility Boundary
	Existing Employment Site
	Employment Site with Planning Permission
	Green Wedge
	Local Wildlife Site
	National Forest (Core Strategy Policy 21)
	Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space
	Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space with Planning Permission
	Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility*
	Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility Allocation
	Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facility with Planning Permission
	Residential Site with Planning Permission
	Scheduled Monument
	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
	Settlement Boundary
	Borough Boundary

*The Ashby Canal Green Corridor (HIN41) runs the length of the canal within the Borough

3.5.



0 1 2 4 Kilometers

3.6. Policy DM4 (Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation) seeks to protect the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character of the countryside, by safeguarding it from unsustainable development. The application site is located within countryside, however, the site lies immediately adjacent to the Hinckley settlement boundary, as shown on the Policies Map extract above.

3.7. Development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where:

- a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes (including ancillary buildings), and it can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme cannot be provided within or adjacent to settlement boundaries; or
- b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting; or
- c) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses; or
- d) It relates to the provision of stand-alone renewable energy developments in line with Policy DM2: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development; or
- e) It relates to the provision of accommodation for a rural worker in line with Policy DM5 – Enabling Rural Worker Accommodation and:
 - i. It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character, and landscape character of the countryside;
 - ii. It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements;
 - iii. It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development;
 - iv. If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line with Core Strategy Polices 6 and 9; and
 - v. If within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy Policy 21.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology (July 2011)

3.8. The Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology (July 2011) has been agreed by the following six local authorities of Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Leicester, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston, which form part of the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area. A Joint Methodology was prepared as many green wedges cross administrative boundaries.

3.9. The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge falls solely within Hinckley and Bosworth.

3.10. The Methodology identifies four criteria for assessing Green Wedge and these are set out below:

Preventing the merging of settlements

3.11. Green Wedges will safeguard the identity of communities within and around urban areas that face growth pressures. The coalescence of settlements should be considered in terms of both physical separation and the perception of distance between the settlements. Guiding Development Form.

Green Wedges will guide the form of new developments in urban areas.

3.12. Consideration will be given to designating new green wedges or amending existing ones where it would help shape the development of new communities' such as potential sustainable urban extensions. Providing a Green Lung into urban areas

Green wedges will provide communities with access to green infrastructure and the countryside beyond.

3.13. They are distinct from other types of open space in that they provide a continuous link between the open countryside and land which penetrates deep into urban areas. Green wedges could also provide multi-functional uses such as:

- Open space, sport and recreation facilities
- Flood alleviation measures
- Improving air quality
- Protection/improvement of wildlife sites and the links between them
- Protection/improvement of historic/cultural assets and the links between them
- Links to green infrastructure at both a strategic and local level
- Transport Corridors

Acting as a Recreational Resource

3.14. Green wedges will provide a recreational resource. This will include informal and formal facilities now and in the future. Public access will be maximised.

4. Green Wedge Assessment

- 4.1. The planning application site is located within the north-western area of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge, directly adjacent to the settlement of Hinckley.
- 4.2. HBBC's Green Wedge Review divides it into several 'Assessment Areas' and the appeal site, and its local landscape area are located in Area A, South of Hinckley Road, North of Normandy Way.
- 4.3. Appendix A sets out extracts of the Hinckley and Bosworth Green Wedge Assessment as it regards 'Area A'
- 4.4. Area A is described as follows:

"Area A is important in terms of preventing the merging of settlement and guiding development form. The area is one of the narrowest parts of the green wedge and one of the more sensitive areas. The sensitivity of this area was highlighted in the Landscape Character Assessment (2017) which notes that 'the generally rural character and undeveloped landscape of the green wedge... forms an important gap between Hinckley and Barwell'. North of Hinckley Road is the planned Barwell Urban Extension which contains a significant amount of built development, Area A will play an even more important role in acting as a green lung guiding and development form between Barwell and Hinckley. The area is open in nature and has an important role in relation to the adjoining countryside and neighbouring properties. The site is publicly accessible via public rights of way which are well utilised. The Landscape Character Assessment (2017) recommends a landscape strategy for this area to help maintain the gap between Hinckley and Barwell so that it acts as a multifunctional green corridor incorporating recreation"

- 4.5. Appendix A also includes the site proforma for Area A.

Green Wedge Site Assessment

- 4.6. A visit has been carried out for the site of the planning application and a proforma completed using the same criteria as used in the Councils assessment. The proforma is available at Appendix C.
- 4.7. In summary the site assessment shows the following:
 - The northern and eastern perimeters of the site are well enclosed by mature trees which control visibility from the site across the wider Green Wedge and towards the neighbouring settlement of Barwell.
 - The northern boundary of the A47/ Normandy Way is marked by mature planting so that Barwell is not visible when viewed moving along this main road. Although the site is visible from along the A47 where it passes to the south, as a consequence the site is in visual terms more closely related to the adjoining settlement than the wider – and in some places more open – agricultural green wedge.

- The site is screened to the west, north and east, with a visually more open boundary to south. Not only does this screening provide the site with a sense of enclosure, but also reinforces the relationship with existing settlement associated with the settlement of Hinckley and more specifically existing residential development around the A47 / Ashby Road junction.
- Built development would not reduce the perception of distance between Hinckley and Barwell, the site is at least partially enclosed by existing settlement to the south, west and north which would greatly limit the projection of built development into the Green Wedge. Built development would not narrow the physical gap between Barwell and Hinckley.
- The integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity in the local area could be improved with the proposal as it includes publicly accessible open space and a community orchard where currently there is no public access.

4.8. The site assessment shows that the character of the site differs from that of the local landscape of the Green Wedge in which it sits. The site is surrounded by mature vegetation and so is inward rather than outward looking, resulting in a parcel of land that is more closely visually connected with Hinckley than the wider agricultural context.

4.9. The site is small scale and enclosed which contrasts with the typically larger field sizes, more open character and large scale of the remainder of the Green Wedge.

4.10. The site, as a disused allotment, represents an 'urban edge' use which contrasts with the open agricultural fields beyond the site boundary that are characteristic of the remainder of the Green Wedge.

4.11. Apart from a public footpath, the Council's assessment records very little recreational value to the Green Wedge Area A. It should be noted that the application site was not referred to within the Council's Green Wedge assessment under recreational uses, and so the contribution of the site to this purpose was not a factor in the council's judgement to identify the site as being part of Green Wedge.

4.12. Whilst the site lies north of the A47 / Normandy Way which can be regarded as a defensible boundary, it should be noted that established residential development extends along Ashby Road adjacent to the application site. As such, existing residential development encloses the site to the south, west and much of the north. In this sense the defensible boundary of A47 has already been breached northwards, and the proposed development would not extend the built form of Hinckley closer to Barwell than the current pattern of development.

Green Wedge Functions

Preventing the merging of settlements

4.13. The proposed development would result in a very small reduction in the extent of Green Wedge, but would not result in a reduction in the physical distance separating Hinckley from Barwell.

4.14. The site would retain mature trees along its perimeter which provide a robust screen in terms of wider views. The proposed scheme is only visible from elsewhere in the Green

Wedge from a limited number of public vantage points, namely the public footpath between Ashby Road and Hinckley Road, Barwell. Views of the site from public footpaths are typically screened by hedgerows, and so views of the would either be filtered or not possible from much of the wider public right of way network.

4.15. The effects on this function would be limited.

Green Wedges will guide the form of new developments in urban areas.

4.16. With regard to the function of "Guiding Development Form", such is the agricultural character of the local landscape, in combination with the history of development of the settlement edge of Hinckley, that in the context of the site, the Green Wedge is still able to guide development form in terms of scale, form and character of the proposals. As such the likely effects on this function of the Green Wedge, will be very limited.

Green wedges will provide communities with access to green infrastructure and the countryside beyond.

4.17. With regard to the function of "Providing a Green Lung into Urban Areas", the planning application site does provide a contribution, but in a very marginal sense in respect of the physical and visual connectivity of the wider countryside to the north and northeast. The sub area (beyond the planning application boundary) is mainly agricultural. Given the small scale nature of the proposal and the degree of containment from which the site already benefits, the physical and visual connectivity across this part of the Green Wedge will be retained, and the variety of land uses increased. As such the likely effects on this function of the Green Wedge would be limited.

4.18. It should be noted that the Council's assessment of Area A does not identify multi-functional uses set out under this Green Wedge Methodology for this Green Wedge function.

Acting as a Recreational Resource

4.19. The planning application site currently has no formal public access (such as public rights of way or access land) and does not constitute publicly accessible recreation space. The planning application proposal includes the provision of public accessible community orchard, together with public access for the east of the site. In the context of these proposals both access and recreational opportunities will be increased. As such the likely effects on this function of the Green Wedge, will be beneficial overall.

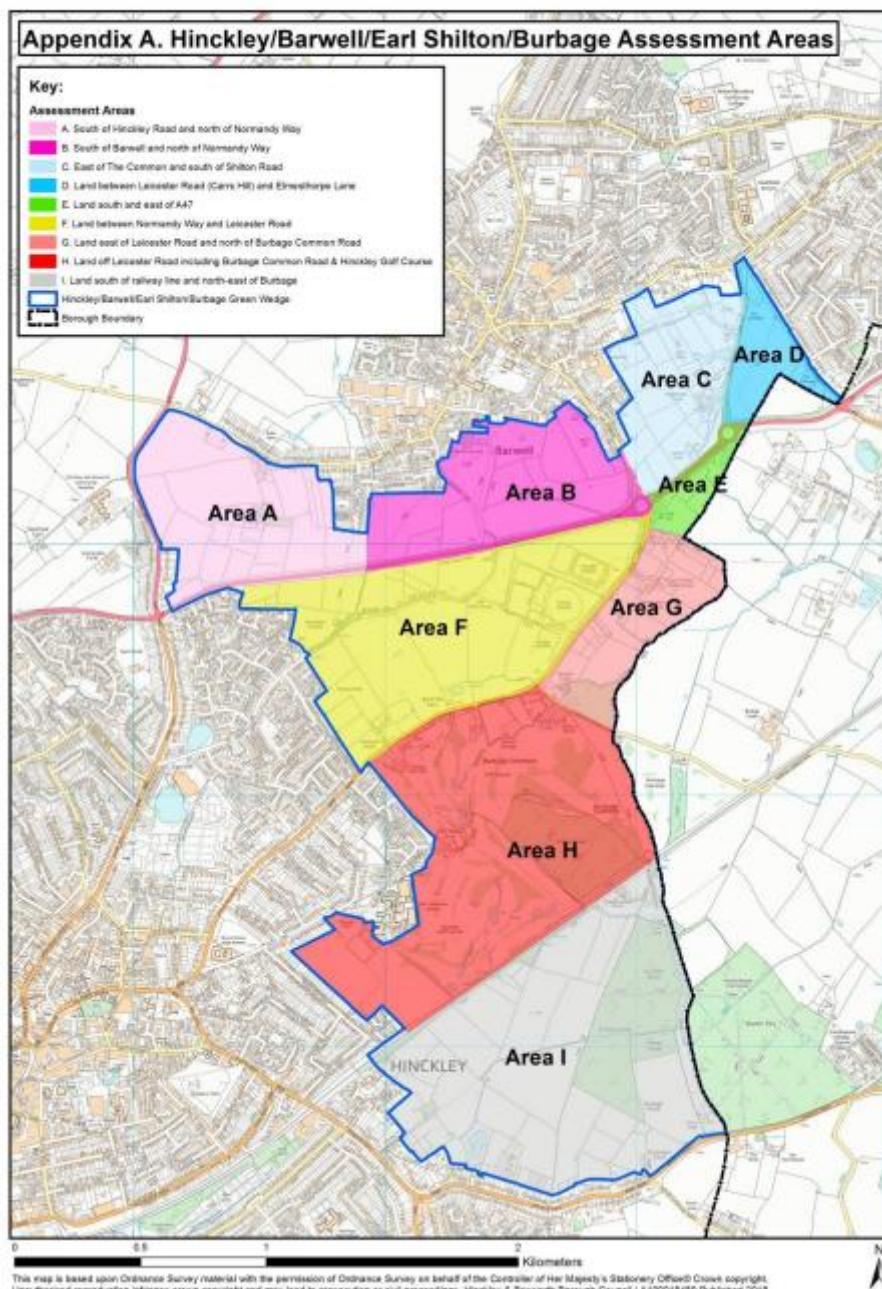
5. Conclusion

5.1. The planning application site's small scale, existing land use, its visual containment, physical and visual relationship with the settled edge of Hinckley, and lack of views to neighbouring settlements mean that it differs notably in character to the remainder of the Green Wedge in which it sits. By way of this assessment, it is not considered to play an important function in preventing the merging of settlements. Similarly, if the site was developed it would have limited effect upon the function of guiding development form and providing a green lung into urban areas. By contrast, the site, if developed, would actually represent an improvement in terms of acting as a recreational resource.

5.2. The proposal would have mixed impacts upon the functions of Green Wedge with neutral or marginal adverse impacts against three of the functions and positive impacts effects improvement in terms of acting as a recreational resource. Existing green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas would be retained. The enclosing effects of the site's well vegetated northern and eastern boundaries and consequential close association with the Hinckley urban area mean that the visual appearance of the wider Green Wedge are considered to be retained were the site to be developed. The proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy 6 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy.

Appendix A Hinckley and Bosworth Green Wedge Assessment

Appendix A: Assessment Areas



Area A: South of Hinckley Road and north of Normandy Way



- 5.3 The area is used predominately for agricultural purposes and the road that runs alongside the area links Hinckley to settlements such as Market Bosworth. The site rises upwards slightly to Hinckley Road, Barwell. Two settlements are visible from Ashby Road including, Barwell and Hinckley which are within walking distance. Hinckley and Bosworth Community Hospital overlooks the area and there is a bus stop adjacent.
- 5.4 If development were to occur in this area it would have a significant visual impact due to the openness of the area to the east of Ashby Road. It provides an important visual amenity between the settlements of Hinckley and Barwell and there is no visual break between the two. Furthermore this area contains one of the narrowest points of green wedge separating the two settlements.
- 5.5 There is a public right of way which connects Ashby Road and Hinckley Road which is linear in nature but does not appear to be well used. The sign post is damaged and no longer visible. Having said this, the footpath from St Mary's Avenue to Normandy Way has good visible signage.



Appendix C: Assessment Area Pro-formas

Location: Area A – South of Hinckley Road and North of Normandy Way

Date of site visit: 7 March 2018

Land use description	Agriculture, Allotments, Grassland, and A47	
Adjacent land uses	Residential, agriculture, and hospital	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Trees, hedgerows, and ploughed fields	
Topography	Small incline towards Hinckley Road, Barwell with some undulation.	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position?	Yes	No
Details	From the western edge of this area, it is possible to see properties in Hinckley located on the Ashby Road. Mature trees fronting Normandy Way block views towards Hinckley.	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	The area abuts the built form of Barwell and Hinckley. This area is one of the narrowest parts within the green wedge between two settlements. It is possible to walk between the settlements.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary?	Yes	No
Details	Properties on Hinckley Road, Barwell	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No
Details		
Extent of built development within the Green Wedge	There are some farm related buildings.	
What effects would built development in the green wedge in this location have?	It would impact on the separation between Barwell and Hinckley having a significant visual impact.	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No

Details	This area is mainly agricultural in nature.	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities? (including footpaths / cycle ways / bridle paths)	Yes	No
Details	There is a public right of way that runs across the site from Hinckley Road to Ashby Road.	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes	No
Details	Via public right of way	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (signposted, stiles / gates, surface condition etc.)	Yes	No
Details	It is a relatively small right of way, but is well signposted from the access points. There is no stile or kissing gate to access.	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths / bridleways?	The right of way looked well used	
What visible informal uses are there?	There appears to be an informal walkway between Hinckley Road and Normandy Way.	
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved?	Limited recreational opportunity on this area although it is being actively farmed so it would have an impact on this. It would also have an impact on the visual break between Hinckley and Barwell.	

6. Appendix B Site Photographs

6.1. View looking south footpath U43 – Footpath From Hinckley Road, Barwell to Ashby Road, Hinckley, opposite Sunnyside Hospital.



6.2. View looking south footpath U43 – Footpath From Ashby Road, Hinckley, opposite Sunnyside Hospital, to Hinckley Road, Barwell.



6.3. View looking south footpath U43 – (Footpath from Ashby Road, Hinckley, opposite Sunnyside Hospital, to Hinckley Road, Barwell).



6.4. View from Hinckley Road, Barwell looking south (at the point where the footpath meets the road). This is the most easterly point along Hinckley Road where there are public views to the south towards the application site.



6.5. View of Hinckley Road Barwell. The houses along this road face south towards the application site.



6.6. View looking northwest from the junction of A47 and Ashby Road towards the planning application site.



6.7. View from south side of A47/ Normandy Way over the application site



6.8. View of the application site from the site entrance.



6.9. View towards the planning application site taken from the east from A47/ Normandy Way



7. Appendix C Proforma for Site at Normandy Way

Land Use Description	Disused allotments	
Adjacent Land Uses	Residential to west with A47 forming boundary of site to south with residential development south of A47. Agricultural to north and east.	
Landscape features (high hedgerows etc)	Perimeter trees, disused allotment paraphernalia	
Topography	Flat	
Can more than one settlement be seen from current position	Yes	No
Details	<p>The northern perimeter of the site is marked by mature trees which limits views beyond the site towards the neighbouring settlement of Barwell.</p> <p>The northern boundary of the A47/ Normandy Way is marked by mature planting so that Barwell is not visible when viewed moving along this main road.</p>	
Perception of distance to neighbouring settlements	The site is screened to the west, north and east which limit views out of the site towards neighbouring Barwell. This screening gives the site a sense of enclosure which means the site reads as part of the settlement of Hinckley.	
Does the current green wedge have a strong defensible boundary	Yes	No
Details	Built form along Ashby Road, A47	
Does an alternative strong defensible boundary exist?	Yes	No

Details	Perimeter of site has strong defensible boundary marked by mature planting.	
Extent of built development within Green Wedge	The site has some disused allotment paraphernalia.	
What effect would built development in the green wedge in this location have	Built development would not reduce the perception of distance between Hinckley and Barwell, the site is enclosed to the west and north by existing development which would greatly limit the projection of built development into the Green Wedge. Built development would not narrow the gap between Barwell and Hinckley	
Does this green wedge provide green open space in a predominantly urban environment?	Yes	No
Details	The site is largely disused private allotment	
Does this green wedge provide recreational opportunities (including footpaths/ cycle ways / bridleways)	Yes	No
Details	The site is largely disused private allotment	
Can this green wedge be accessed by the public?	Yes	No
Details	The site is largely disused private allotment.	
Are the footpaths and bridleways of a good quality? (sign posted stiles / gates, surface conditions etc.)	Yes	No
Details	There are no footpaths or bridleways	
Is there any evidence of the level of use on the footpaths / bridleways?	N/A	

What visible informal uses are there?	The site is largely disused private allotment.
Could the integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be maintained if the green wedge boundaries were moved	The integrity and quality of the recreational opportunity be improved with the proposal as it include publicly accessible open space and community orchard where currently there is no public access.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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