
URBAN CHARACTERISATION STUDY

Metropolitan Borough of Solihull

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

December 2011





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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 This study considers the broad physical make up of the Borough. It identifies a series of typologies and characteristics which are inherent in the different forms of development in Solihull.

Aim

The aim of this study is to provide an understanding of the physical character of settlements within the Borough, as defined by the topography, landscape, land use, activity and the arrangement, form and appearance of buildings and spaces. In doing so this study will:

- Provide a broad understanding of the physical characteristics of the main settlements of Solihull at the Borough-wide level, and an understanding of land uses and built-form at a local area level.
- Provide evidence to inform the development of the Local Development Framework, particularly the spatial portrait of Solihull and local visions for areas within the Borough.
- Provide a spatial profile of key neighbourhoods in the Borough in order that their strengths, weaknesses and opportunities can be identified.
- Provide a reference for Development Control and related disciplines in the consideration of the opportunities within neighbourhoods

and a broader understanding of the character of the different areas across the Borough.

1.2 Outline Methodology

In response to the aim and objectives of the study set out in 1.1 a three stage methodology is proposed which draws on recent comparative studies and best practice guidance.

Stage 1. Borough Wide Analysis

Desk top data analysis at a Borough wide scale which brings together the findings from a range of existing data sources in order to build a picture of the broad physical makeup of the Borough.

The Borough Wide analysis will consider:

- Topography
- Geology
- Historical Development
- Built Form
- Land Use
- Landscape Character, Green Space & Waterways
- Movement & Transport Infrastructure

Stage 1

Borough-wide Analysis

Stage 2

Character Typologies

Stage 3

Neighbourhood Characteristics

Stage 2. Defining Character Typologies

The second stage of the study is informed by on-site assessment of the Borough it categorise's the urban environment under a range of character typologies. In doing so the following factors are analysed:

- **Scale and grain** – the pattern, size and arrangement of buildings and their plots;
- **Land use** – the predominant function of land and buildings; and
- **Network Characteristics** – the arrangement of roads and paths and their relationship with surrounding buildings.

The outcome of this analysis provides a series of distinct types of urban form ranging from out of town retail parks, town and district centres to urban corridors.

Residential character typologies are also considered as they make up an extensive proportion of the Boroughs urban area. The residential typologies are considered having regard to the following key criteria:

- Architectural treatment, style and period;
- Building Density;
- Building types, height and massing;
- Enclosure, street width, setbacks;
- Landscape character, streetscape and topography

The above criteria draw on the existing guidance outlined in the Council's New Housing in Context SPG.

The outcome from stage 2 of the study is a composite typology plan of the general and residential typologies that combine to provide an overall pattern of development at the Borough-wide level. This demonstrates the main component parts of the Borough which help us to understand its broad physical structure and from which a number of conclusions are drawn.

This does not however provide any insight into the subtle differences between places which are critical in defining character and distinctiveness at the local level. This level of analysis could be carried out as a part of a Village Design Statement, Neighbourhood Plan, or Conversation Area Appraisal.

Stage 3. Neighbourhood Characteristics

The final stage in the methodology is the translation of these typologies in defined neighbourhood areas. The neighbourhood boundaries relate to the administrative areas already established by other settlements studies in order that comparatives can be drawn between evidence base material should this be required.

The outcome of this analysis informs a summary of opportunities and constraints.

Exclusions from the study:

Stage 1 of the study methodology covers the whole Borough in its entirety. However, certain areas of the Borough are excluded from stage 2 on the basis that they are designated as either Special Protection Areas or Areas of Major Change or Growth.

1. *Special Protection Areas:* Designated Green Belt, and Conservation Areas. Protection of these areas is already set out in planning policy and guidance as such they do not require further analysis.

2. *Areas of Major Change or Growth:* Birmingham International Airport/National Exhibition Centre has also been excluded as it has a unique form and character and is already subject to detailed analysis and benefits from specific planning guidance. “Towards 2030: Planning a Sustainable Future for Air Transport in the Midlands” provides the masterplan for the airport and the NEC Group also has a long term vision and masterplan for the NEC site “Destination NEC” which aims to bring about comprehensive refurbishment to existing buildings and attract new leisure uses to the site.

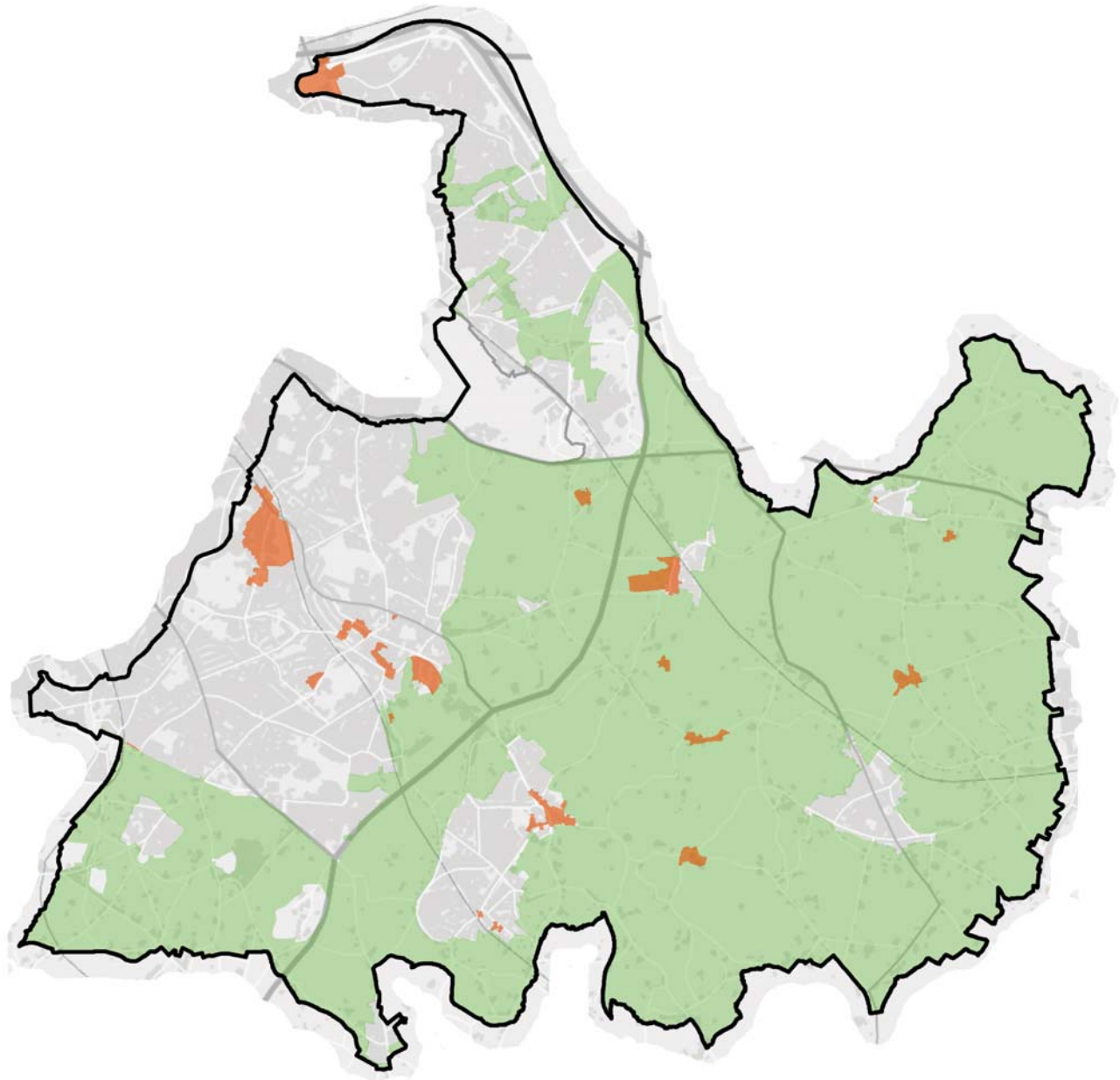
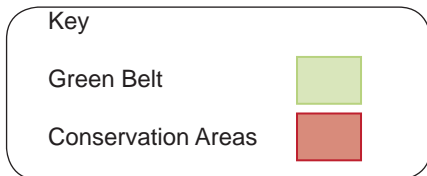


Figure 1.1: Areas of Exclusion from the Study

Areas included in the Study:

The areas to be included in the study comprise the main built areas within the following defined settlements:

North Solihull

Castle Bromich
Smiths Wood
Kingshurst
Fordbrudge
Chelmsley Wood
Marston Green

Central Urban Core

Elmdon/Lyndon
Olton
Shirley
Solihull
Monkspath

Rural Settlements

Meriden
Hampton in Arden
Catherine de Barnes
Balsall Common
Knowle
Bentley Heath
Dorridge
Hockley Heath
Cheswick Green

Key

Study Area



Area Excluded

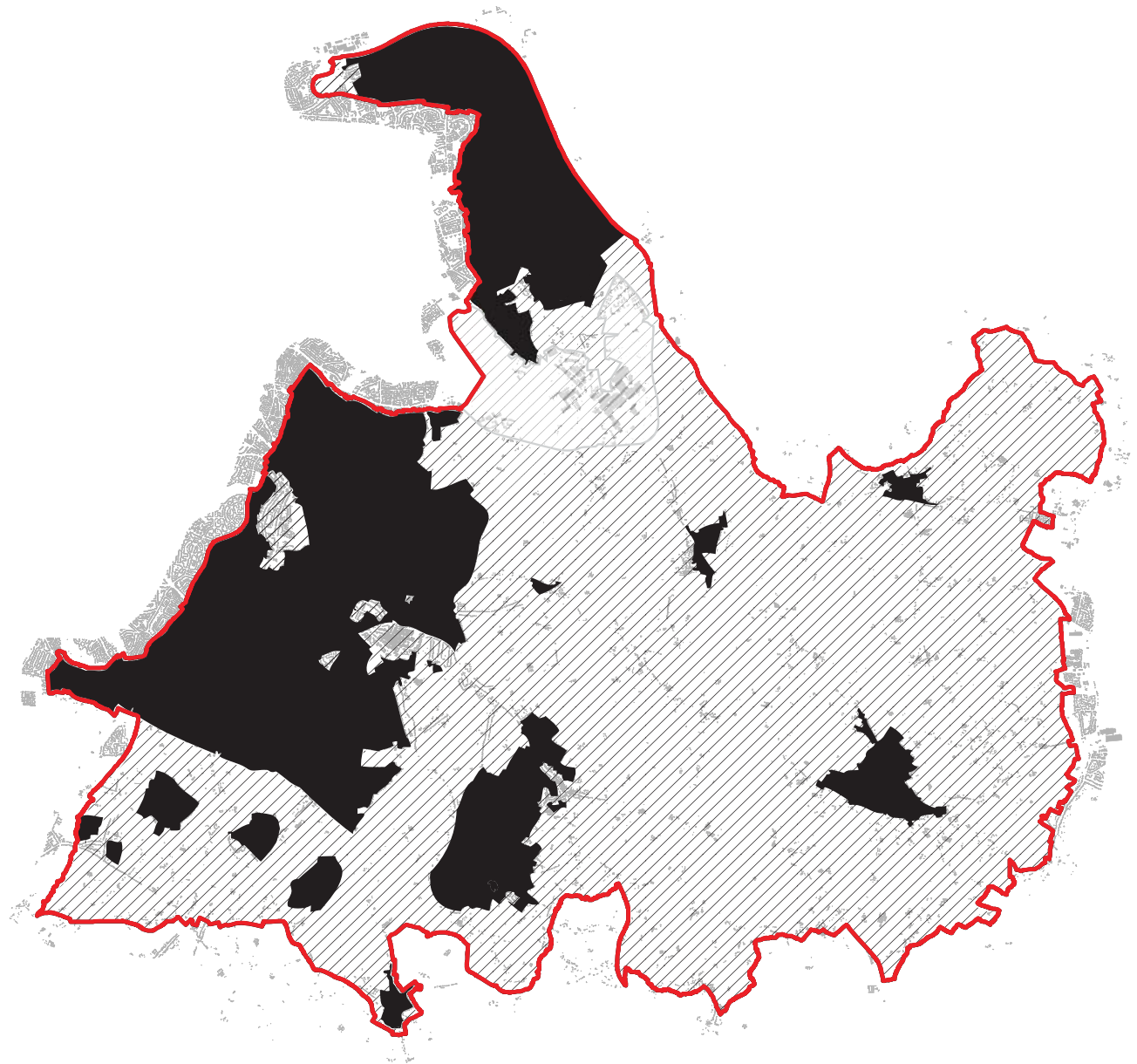


Figure 1.2: Areas of Inclusion within the Study

1.3 Structure of Report

Section II Borough-Wide Analysis – this section sets out a summary of the findings of the desk-top review of existing data at the Borough-wide level. This includes an overview of the topography, geology, historic development, built form, land use, green space & waterways, movement & transport infrastructure.

Section III Character Typologies – this section provides a summary of the general and residential character typologies and is split into two parts. The general character section shows the Borough broken down into a series of broadly defined areas with a summary of the key characteristics of each typology. The residential typology section sees these areas broken down further into a series of specific residential typologies.

Section IV Character Areas – this section shows the grouping of streets into defined character areas based on the general and residential typologies outlined above but also on a series of other features which contribute to a cohesive sense of distinctive urban character. It also includes a summary of the main opportunities and constraints that exist within each area.

Section V Conclusion & recommendations – the final section provides a brief overview of the key findings and sets out a series of recommendations to inform the Settlement Studies.



Section 2: Borough-Wide Analysis

2.1 Introduction

The Borough-wide analysis is the first stage of the study. It is based on an analysis of predominately desktop data at the urban scale and has involved pulling together and mapping a range of existing data from a variety of sources. The purpose of this is to understand the broad physical makeup of the Borough as a whole and to help focus more detailed analysis carried out in Section 3: Character Typologies.

The Borough Wide analysis will consider:

- 2.2 Topography
- 2.3 Geology
- 2.4 Natural Environment
- 2.5 Historic Development
- 2.6 Built Form
- 2.7 Land Use
- 2.8 Movement & Transport Infrastructure

2.2 Topography

2.1 Topography

Solihulls landscape is characterised by gently rolling countryside and high points.

The lowest levels of the Borough lie primarily in the North at 79 -100m above sea level and run east of the central area of the Borough to the southern edge of the administrative boundary. Areas to the east and west of this lower lying area are more similar in their topography with more gradual changes from 100 - 130m above sea level.

The highest points in the Borough are in the southwest near Earlswood and Tidbury Green and to the North East of Meriden in the east, where heights reach 183m above sea level.

Figure 2.2 shows the geographical extent of development in the Borough in relation to topography. Whilst there is housing on the lower lying land in the north of the Borough the majority of the lower lying land is largely free from development. However, at the Borough-wide level the relationship between topography and development is not particularly strong.

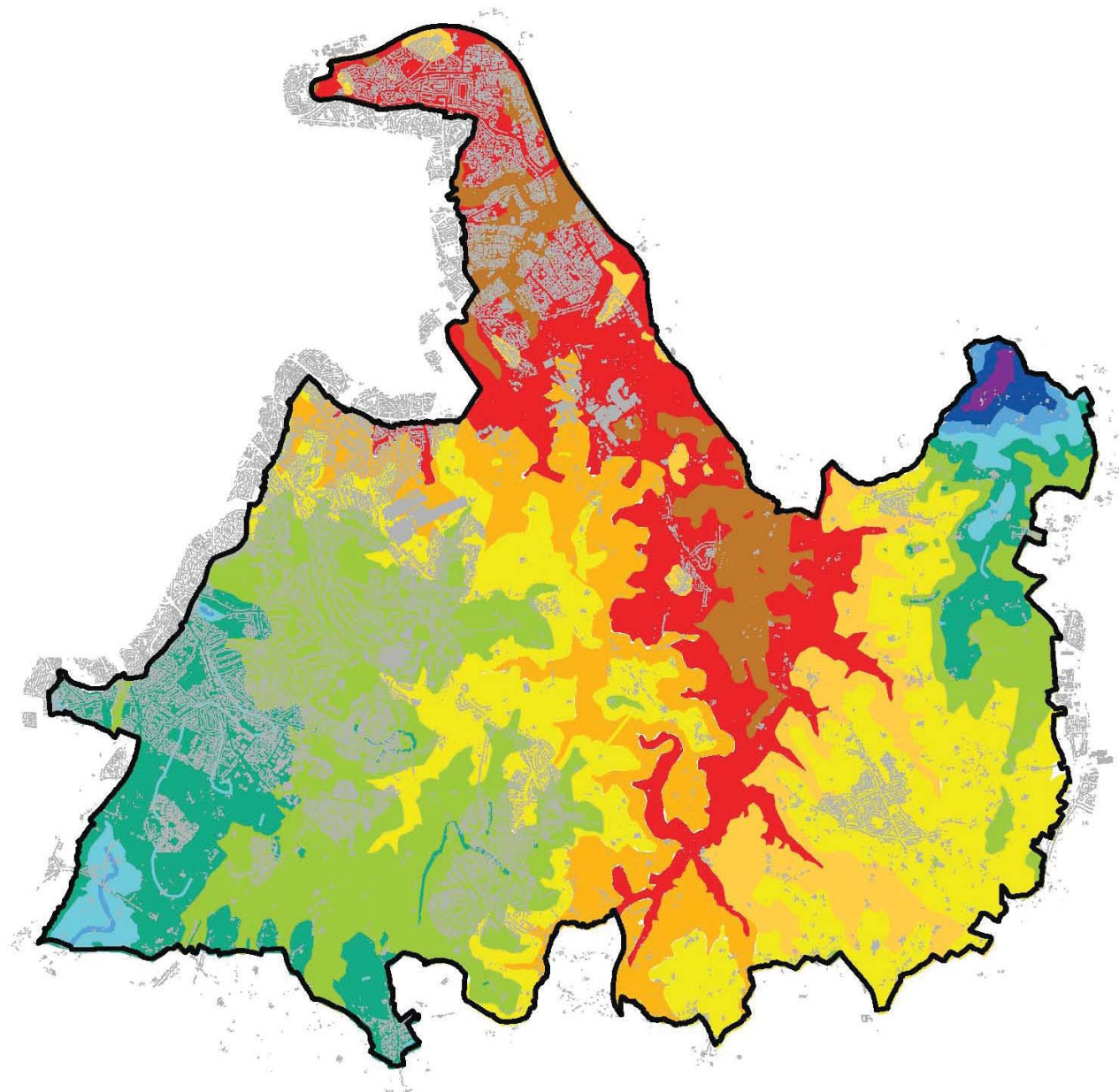
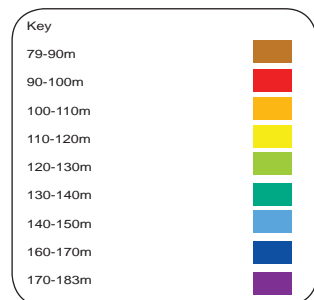


Figure 2.2: Topography & Development

2.3 Geology

Two types of geological data have been collected to inform this study. The first is bedrock and linear deposits and the second is superficial and artificial deposits.

Bedrock & Linear Deposits

As demonstrated by Figure 2.3.1 the majority of the Borough is characterised by 'Triassic rocks' of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone with some small areas of limestone and isolated deposits of sand.

The geology of the far eastern part of the Borough is more varied and falls within the 'Warwickshire group' and is characterised by mudstone, siltstone, and sandstone.

There are four geological fault lines. One lies near the River Blythe which is a low level river on clay. The others lie to the east and form the spilt between the 'Triassic rock' and 'Warwickshire group' geology and then dissect the south eastern section of the Borough.

Parts of Solihull's' countryside contain sand and gravel deposits with the principle area of abstraction to the southwest of Meriden.

Superficial and Artificial Deposits

Figure 2.3.2 shows that there are a number of artificial deposits in the form of made ground in the region of Elmdon, NEC/Airport and Merdien. There are no recordings of open waste. Superficial deposits in the form of clay, silt, diamicton, sand and gravel are distributed throughout the Borough.

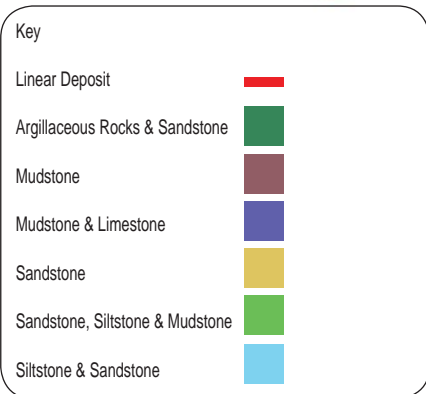
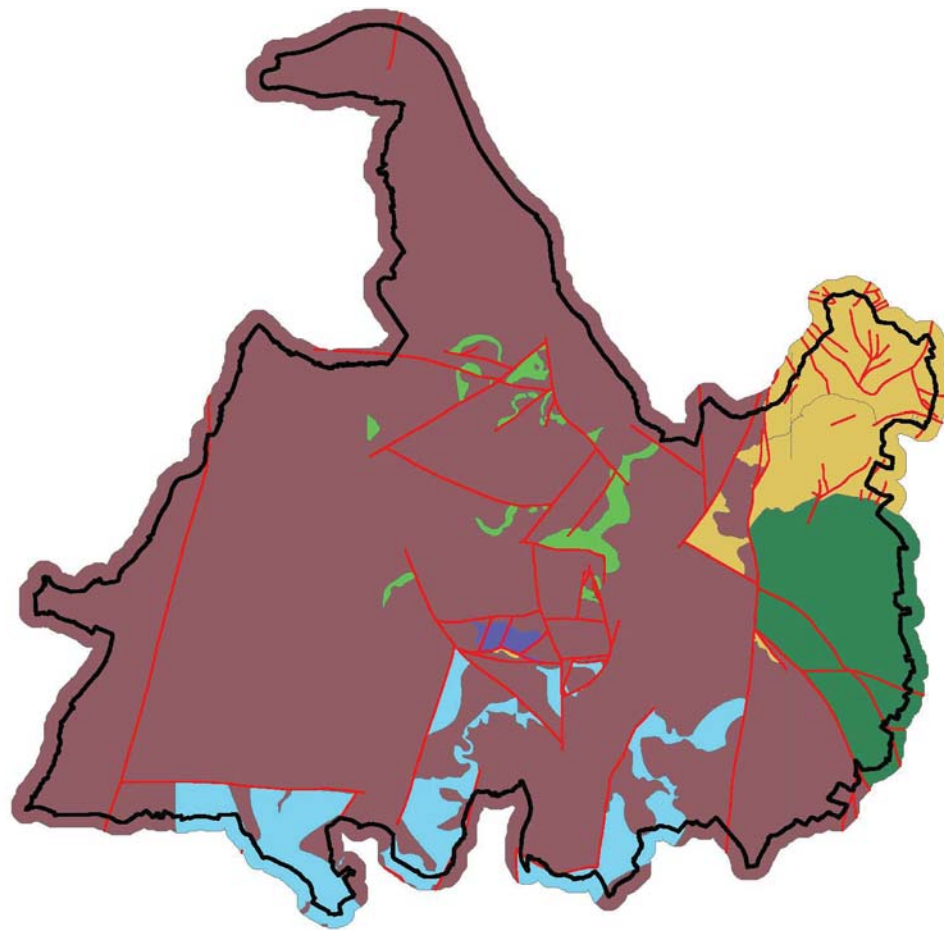


Figure 2.3.1: Bedrock & Linear Deposits

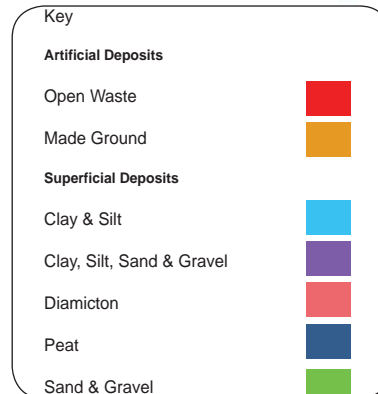
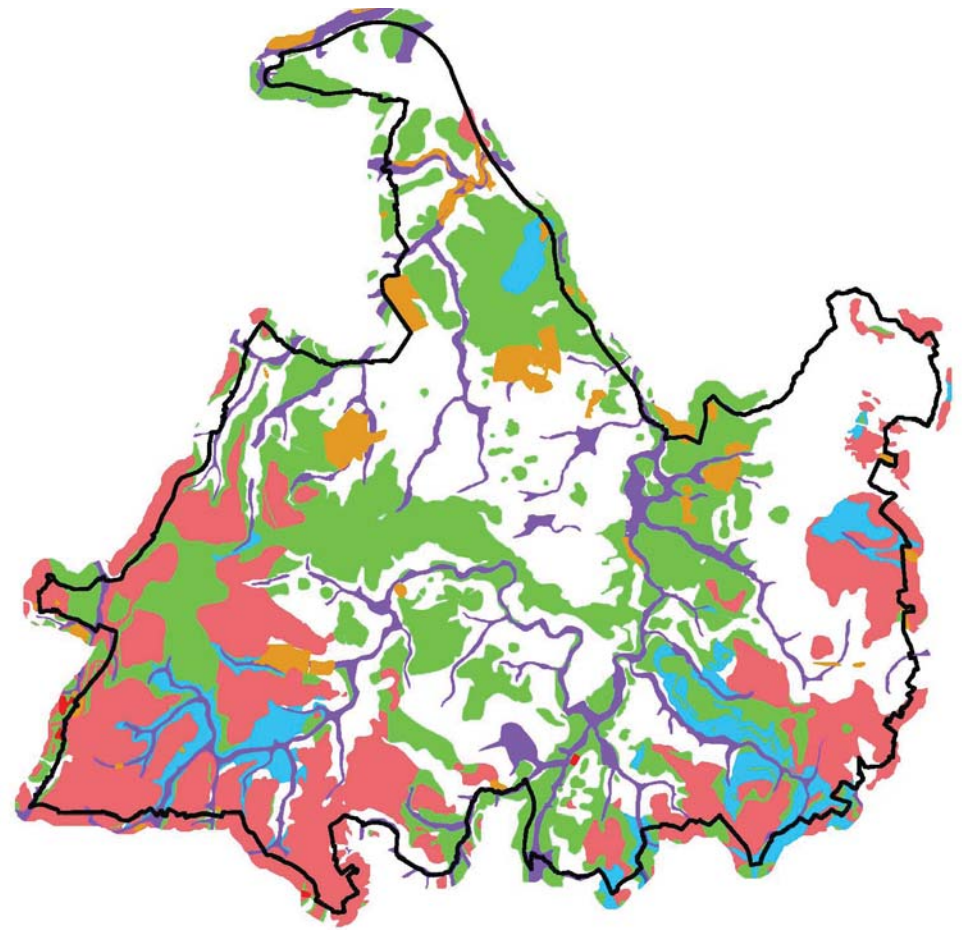


Figure 2.3.2: Superficial & Artificial Deposits

2.4 Natural Environment

The natural environment of Solihull is extensive and comprises a range of green space & waterways. 'Green Space' for the purposes of this study is taken to include all open countryside, woodlands, parks and gardens, sports grounds, golf courses, nature reserves, allotments and amenity open space. Green space also includes the network of hedgerows which exist across the Borough. The Borough's waterways include canals, rivers, ponds and lakes.

Figure 2.4 shows the extent of the natural environment in the Borough comprising both green space and waterways. There is clearly a heavy concentration of green space in the south and east of the Borough which is made up primarily of countryside under Green Belt designation. However, there are also some extensive green spaces distributed amongst the urban areas.

In order to fully understand the extent of the natural environment in Solihull, it is necessary to examine the different types of green space that exist under various categories. These categories relate to current designations utilised by Solihull MBC and draw on policy, plans and strategies for their protection and management. They also include nationally recognised designations.

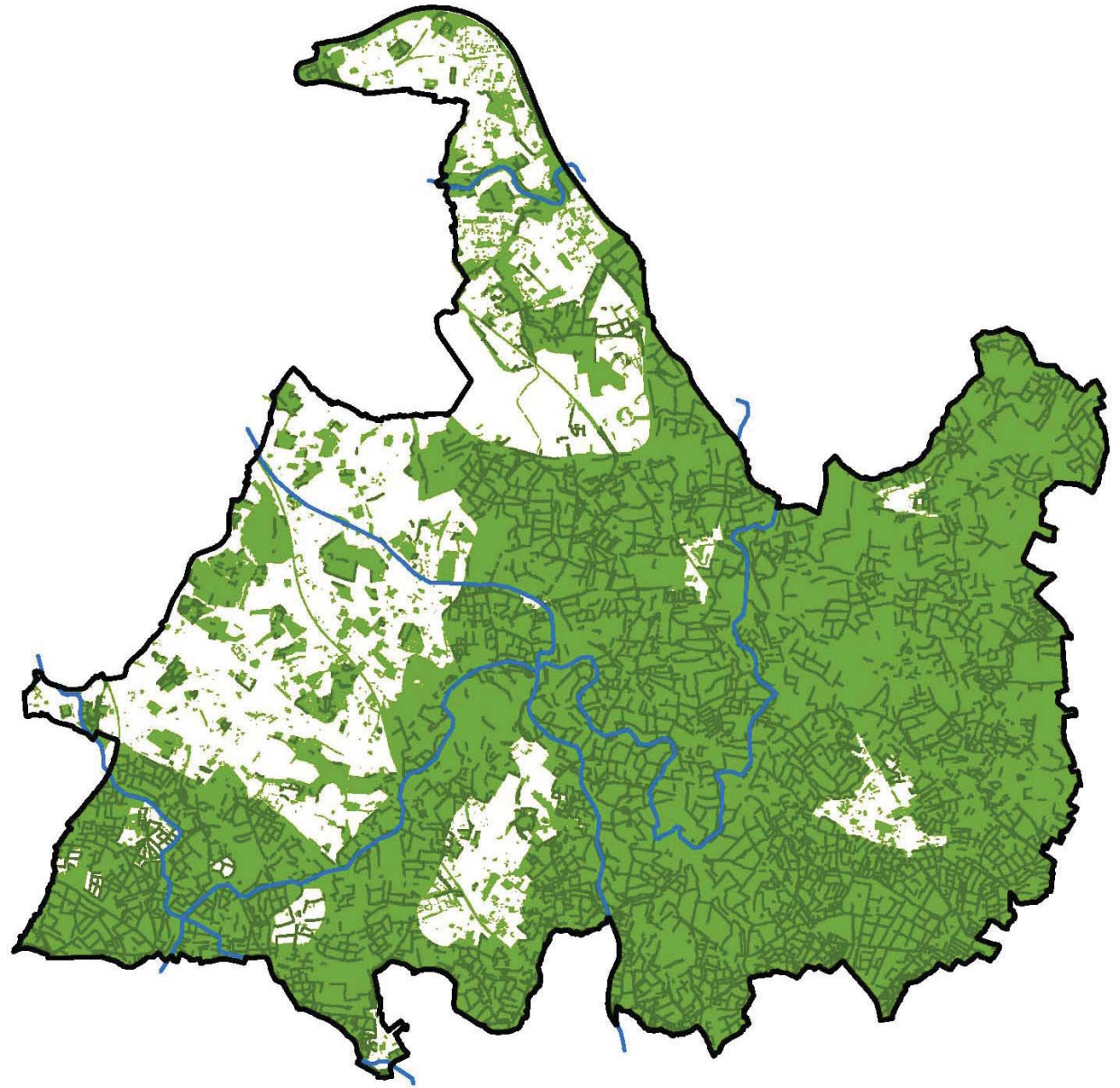
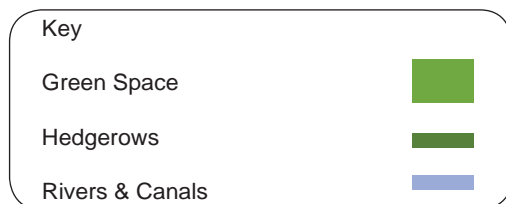


Figure 2.4.1: Green Space & Waterways (composite)

Countryside

Almost two thirds of the Borough is countryside and all of this is designated as Green Belt. The Green Belt plays an important role in shaping the character of the borough, providing a break between the West Midlands Conurbation and Coventry. The area of Green Belt to the east is known as the 'Meriden Gap' and surrounds a number of settlements in the south and east of the Borough, making an important contribution to their character and setting. The Green Belt designation is also washed over a number of smaller settlements such as Barston and Berkswell.

The countryside fulfills a wide number of different roles. It provides an environment for living, working, farming, forestry, mineral extraction, waste disposal, water supply catchment and nature conservation, amenity, historical landscapes and recreation for both rural and urban dwellers.

Solihulls Countryside Strategy First Review 2010 - 2010 seeks to control and guide future change in the countryside in order to protect and enhance its character, natural resources and biodiversity. At the same time the strategy promotes the sustainable management of a

diverse and prosperous rural economy, thereby contributing to the overall quality of life within the Borough.

A large proportion of the green belt is worked farmland. The agricultural quality of the land is generally good to moderate. There are approximately 233 holdings in the borough with around 25% focusing on cattle and sheep farming. Just over half of these holdings comprise of less than 5 hectares, the larger holdings which have in excess of 100 hectares account for around 25% of land area.

Changes in agricultural processes over the years, has led to a loss of some hedgerows and the introduction of crops such as oil seed rape and linseed oil which have altered the appearance of the landscape. In addition to this agricultural diversification has occurred such as: forestry, hostelrys, garden centres fisheries, real estate renting, business activities and recreational pursuits such as golf courses.

The extensive Green Belt provides important landscape resource for informal recreation. There is a good network of public rights of way providing residents of the borough with

easy access to the countryside and varied opportunities for walking.

Landscape Character

The character of the landscape is well documented through the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines and more recently the Historic Landscape Characterisation Study. The countryside is generally rolling with an irregular field pattern which is defined by thick mature hedgerows and a network of narrow lanes and tracks.

The Borough falls within the Arden landscape and exhibits the following characteristics of this landscape as demonstrated on Figure 2.4.2:

Ancient Arden: A small scale farmed landscape with a varied, undulating topography characterised by irregular pattern of fields and narrow winding lanes hedgerows and roadside oaks.

Arden Pastures: A small scale enclosed gently rolling landscape, characterised by small well defined fields typically bordered by mature hedgerow oak trees. (Hockley heath)

Arden Parkland: An enclosed gently rolling landscape defined by woodland edges parkland and belts of mature trees associated with estate lands. There are thick roadside hedgerows often with bracken.

Arden River Valleys: Narrow meandering river corridors and riverside trees and grazing meadows river corridors. Narrow alluvial floodplains are defined by hedgerows and willow pollards.

In recent years hedgerows have become more 'gappy' due to more intensive farming methods and excessive pruning. There has also been a loss of some of the oak trees due to disease and a failure to replace them with younger trees. The Solihull MBC Countryside Strategy recognises these threats to the Arden Landscape character and sets out measures to address the issues in order to help safeguard the distinct character of the boroughs landscape.



Figure 2.4.2: Extent of Countryside/ Green Belt (inset above)

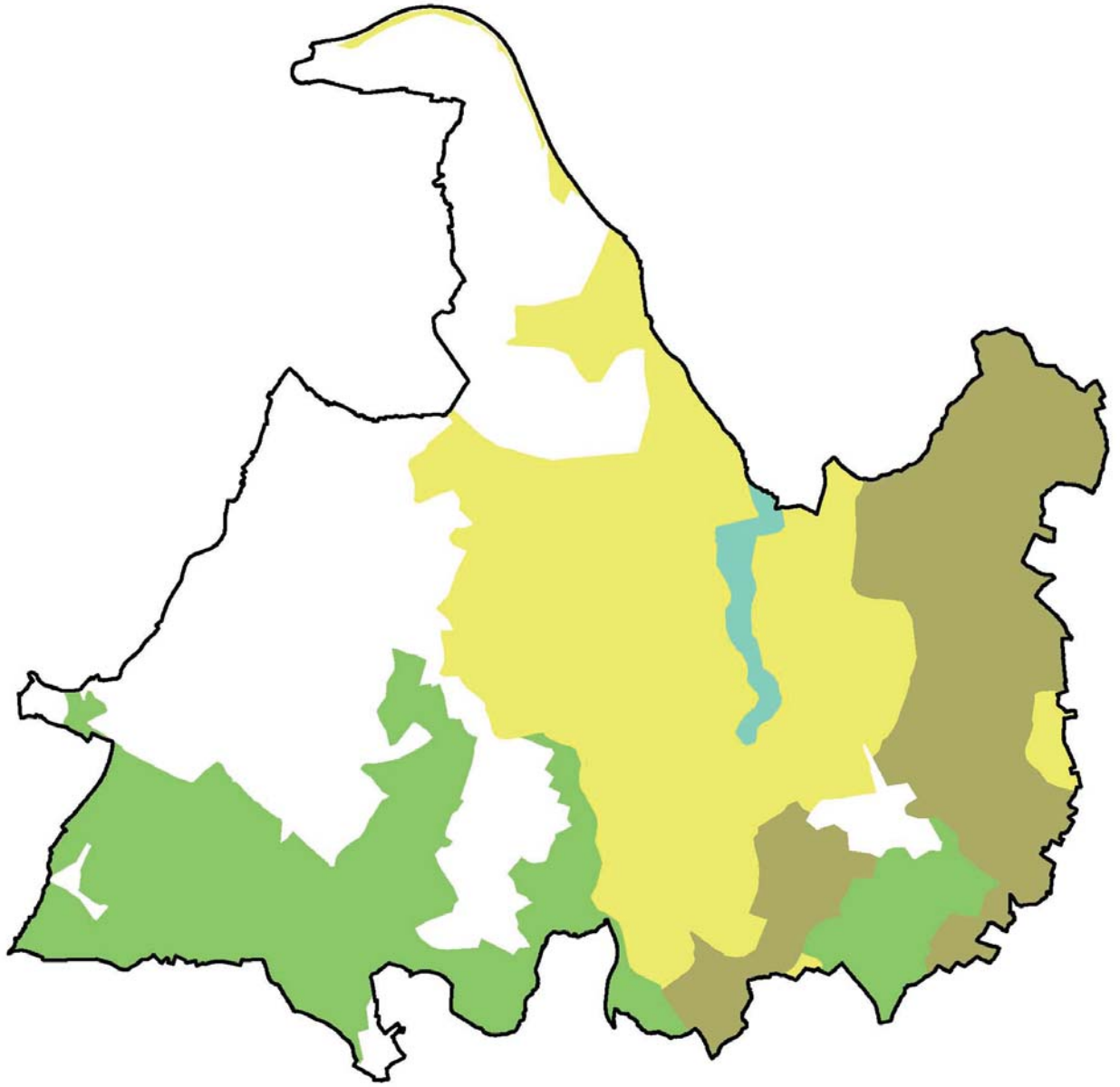






Figure 2.4.3: Countryside Landscape Character Areas (above)

Key

Ancient Arden	
Arden Pastures	
Arden Parkland	
Arden River Valleys	

Woodlands

There are 26 council owned areas of natural woodlands in the Borough, many more are in private ownership. These are split into two main types 'ancient/semi natural' and 'secondary'. Ancient/semi natural woodlands date back to the 1600's or earlier and are dominated by Oak-Ash and Oak-Birch trees though small leaved lime trees are still a significant component and reflect the woodlands ancient origins. 'Secondary' woodlands were mostly planted in the 19th Century and typically consist of birch, beech, oaks, ash, and sycamore trees. Areas of woodland vary from 0.5 ha at Small Wood and Libbards Way Wood to 10.67 ha at Millisons Wood in Meriden.

The Woodlands are valuable sites for nature conservation and they form prominent features in the landscape particularly in long distance views from high points in the Borough. The Council have produced native woodland plans and a Woodland Strategy to help safeguard and protect these natural assets which contribute to the environment, landscape character and recreational opportunities in the borough.

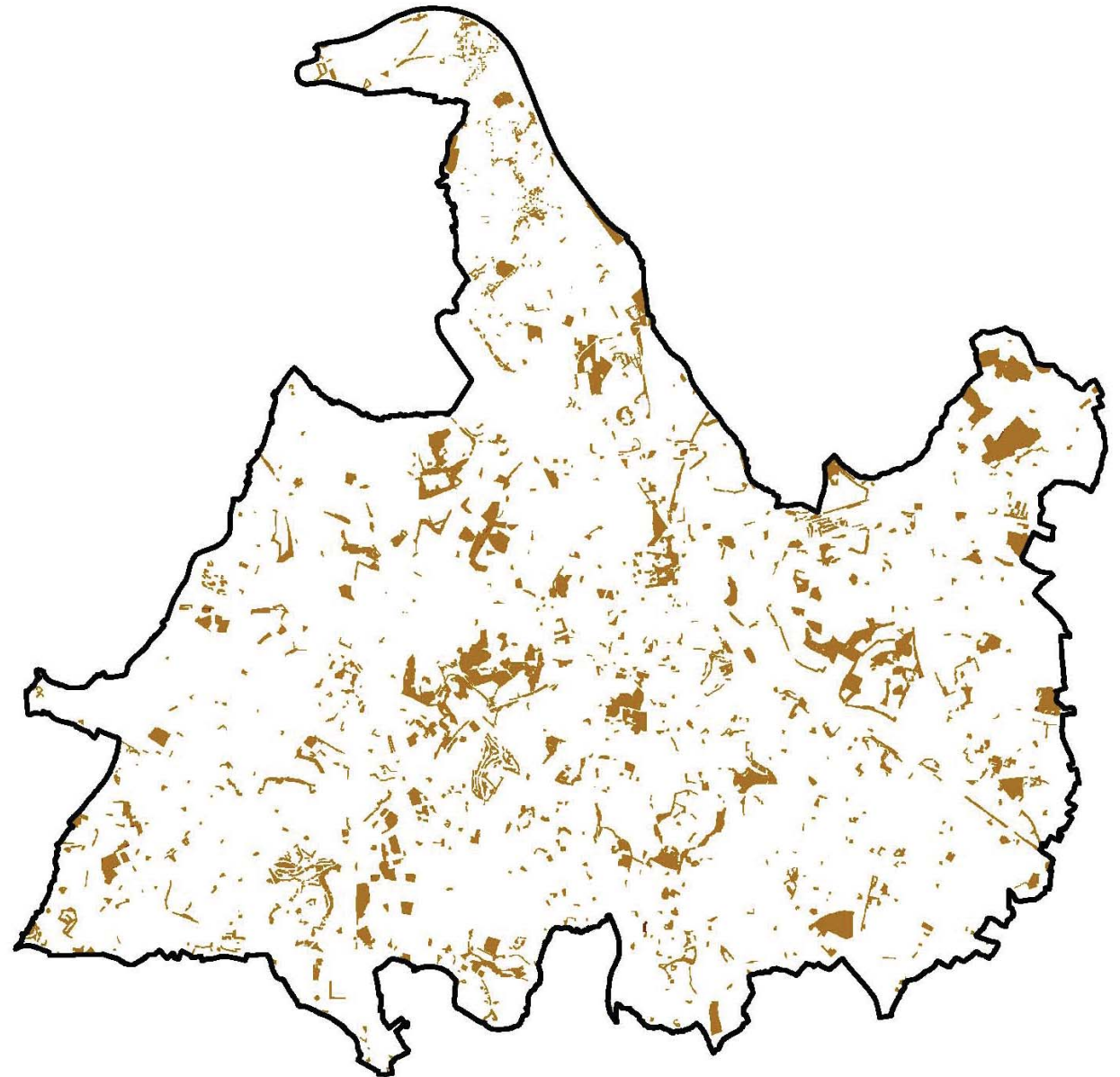


Figure 2.4.4: Woodlands

Parks and Sports Grounds

There are over 607 hectares (1500 acres) of formal, informal country and leisure parks in the Borough.

There are 18 principal parks across the Borough which provide for a range of recreational activities and provide areas of open space within the built environment. Seven of the parks have been granted the green flag award for the high standards of management and their contribution to the quality of life in the area. In addition Castle Bromwich Hall Park and Garden is on the English Heritage 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special historic Interest'. There are also a number of small parks across the Borough which provided play facilities and small areas of green space, within the built environment.

The Borough contains a number of sports grounds and golf courses many of these are owned and managed by private or commercial companies. These open green spaces provide 'relief' in the built up areas of the Boroughs townscape.

Allotments

There are 19 allotment sites across the Borough. These are managed by either the Council, Parish Council or by Association. Allotments make an important contribution to green spaces providing habitats for wildlife and providing a recreational healthy activity whilst also providing low cost food. Due to their popularity there are waiting lists for facilities across the Borough.

Cemeteries

There are two cemeteries in the Borough: the Robin Hood Cemetery in Shirley; and Widney Manor Cemetery in Bentley Heath.

The Robin Hood Cemetery and crematorium opened in 1917 and covers an area of approximately 18 hectares (45 acres). The extensive grounds consist of ancient woodland, traditional lawn sections, and landscape gardens which contain a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and roses. The Robin Hood Cemetery is now full.

Widney Manor cemetery was opened in 1992 following the closure of The Robin Hood Cemetery. The cemetery has a rural setting accommodating lawn graves, and memorial trees and roses.

These cemeteries along with historic graveyards /churchyards in the borough provide a place for reflection, habitats for wildlife and areas of open space within the built up landscape.

Waterways

There are two main rivers (the Blythe and the Cole) and two canals (the Grand Union and the Stratford on Avon) which bisect the Borough. There are also a series of lakes and ponds.

The River Cole is 43 km long and rises in Redhill in south Birmingham. It passes through Birmingham and Coleshill (where the name originates) and joins the River Blythe.

The River Blythe is 39 km long and has been declared a SSSI as it is a fine example of a low level river on clay. The River Blythe flows through the Borough to the Tame which meets the Trent before reaching the North Sea.

The Grand union canal is 220km long and links the heart of Birmingham with Paddington. Historically it was a major transport link. Today it is largely used by leisure boats and for walking/ cycling.

The Stratford-on-Avon Canal is 40 km long and starts in the suburbs of Birmingham and passes through the west of Solihull Borough where it meets the Grand Union Canal.

Lakes are an important feature of many parks in Solihull and are also formed at gravel pit extraction sites such as Ryton End in Barston and at Cornets End in Meriden. Ponds traditionally occur in the corner of fields in the countryside but also include former mill ponds and those found in housing estates and private gardens. There is also Olton Mere Reservoir which is a canal feeder reservoir for the Grand Union Canal and is the largest area of open water in the Borough and home to Olton Mere Sailing Club.

Protection of Green Space & Waterways

Most of the open country side within the Borough is designated as Green Belt and as such is protected from inappropriate development by planning policy. The Green Belt helps to maintain a sense of openness to the landscape.

There are five SSSI's (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) in the Borough at Berkswell March, BickenHill Meadows, Monkspath Meadow, The River Blythe and Clow es Wood and New Fallings Coppice. There are also a further 70 designated nature conservation areas including 11 Local Nature Reserves and over 900 TPO (Tree Preservation Orders). These provide an important recourse for wildlife and form significant elements in the Borough landscape, maintaining its 'leafy' character.

Access to Green Space

Access to green spaces across the borough is generally good. The majority of people live within 400m (this equates to a 5mins walk) of at least a small area of green space. However the quality of this green space varies across the Borough. The north of the Borough is considered to have a lower quality of open space with large amounts of amenity land used for screening and providing road boundaries.

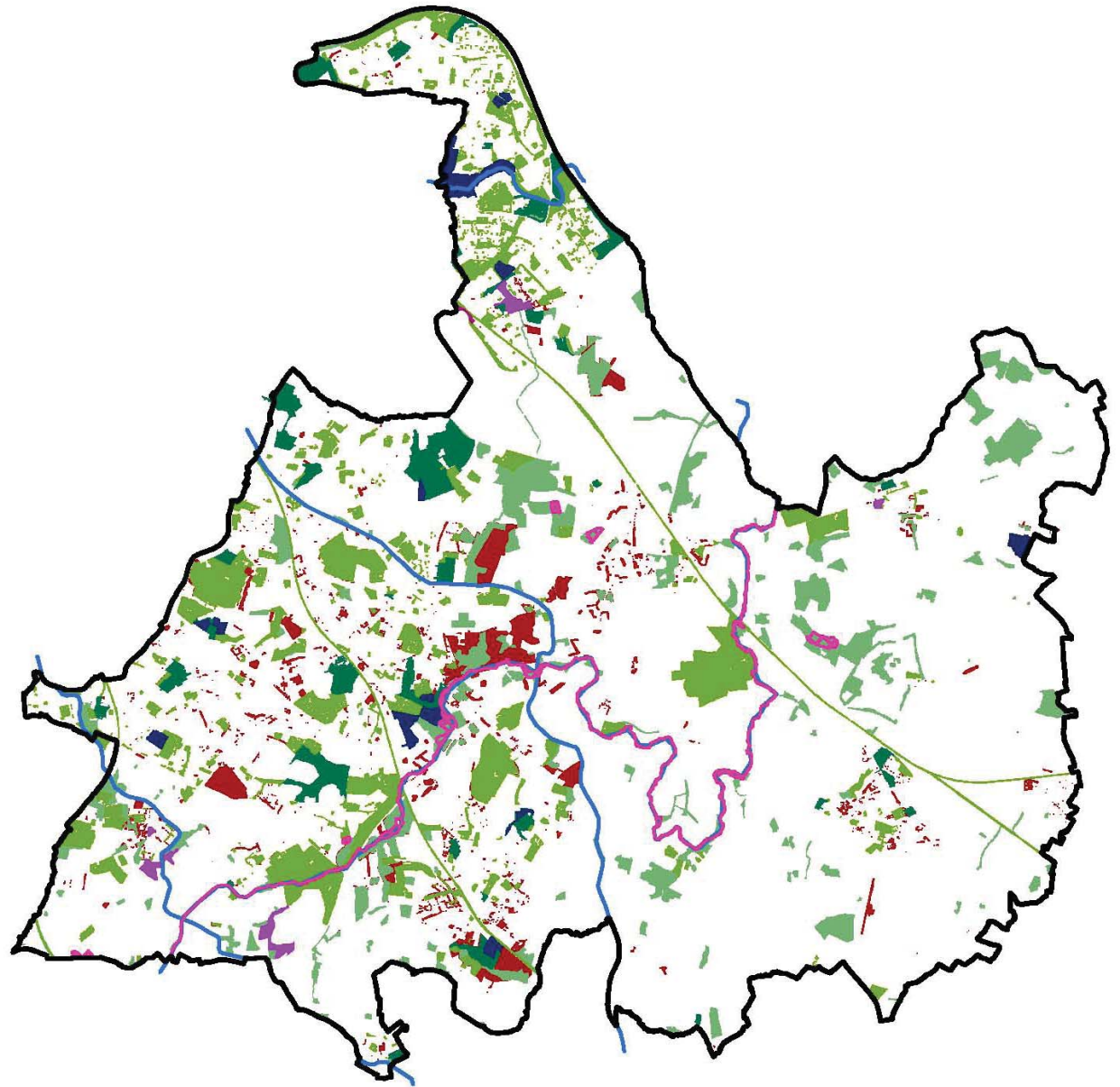
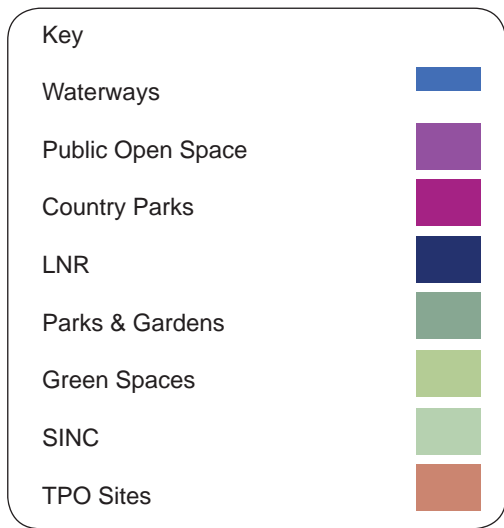


Figure 2.4.2: Green Space Types (excluding woodlands)

2.5 Historic Development

Early Origins (Pre-1300)

It is thought that Solihull was founded as a place of trade to fulfill the needs of a scattered population. The recording in the Domesday survey of 1086 indicates that the area was one of the most sparsely populated parts of the country and although Solihull is not mentioned by name the Manors of Ulverlie, Langdone and Elmdone are listed. It later became an important coaching and mail coach stop between Warwick and Birmingham.

With the founding of St Alphege Church in approximately 1220 the village as we know it today began to take shape and by 1242 it was large enough to be granted a weekly market. At about the same time, Knowle became an ecclesiastical centre for the area so the district included two distinct centers set amidst scattered settlements and much woodland. The three manors of Ulverlie, Langdone and Elmdone declined as Solihull and Knowle prospered.

1300-1800

Solihull grew slowly during the next six centuries with the main occupations alleged to have been farming and the manufacture of hunting weapons and agricultural implements. The town was known for the quality and number of its blacksmiths and it was this trade and its need for wood for fuel which led to the clearing of the woodlands.

Farmers also thinned the land and Halls were built for the rich. The general effect was to civilise what had been a remote part of the Midlands.

By the end of the eighteenth century Solihull was the seat of the Petty Sessions with its own County Court and a flourishing and well-respected Grammar School. It had become the main centre for a predominantly agricultural area of small farms and large Halls and its markets and fairs served an area between expanding Birmingham and villages such as Tamworth and Henley-in-Arden.

An account of Solihull in 1840 described it as 'remarkably neat and rural in its appearance' with 'an air of comfort and respectability [that] marks all alike and renders Solihull indisputably a delightful looking town'. (Source: anonymous author of Sketch of Solihull)

1800-1950

This period saw a major improvement in the transport infrastructure in Solihull establishing connections to Birmingham, Oxford and London. The Birmingham & Warwick Canal and the Birmingham & Stratford Canal were constructed around 1800 and both pass through the Borough, joining near Lapworth in the south.

The 1850's also saw the arrival of the railways with the GWR Birmingham to London railway line being completed. Solihull Station was developed on a grand scale with a large goods yard and goods relief line (both scaled back following the Dr Beeching report). Greater transport connections saw some growth but it was not until the latter years of the nineteenth century that the Borough experienced major change through the establishment of its position as a dormitory for Birmingham industrialists and artisans. Small villas were built in and around the old villages and larger houses along the main roads. At this time Solihull began to lose its rural scenery to the unplanned urban developments of the 1880s and 1890s. The population of Solihull during this period grew steadily from some 2581 residents in 1811 to 3831 in 1861 and 5618 in 1901. However the population then grew substantially between 1911 and 1939 from 10'282 to 52'610.

The semi-rural character of the area attracted many who could afford to settle in the locality. The availability of land, particularly in the Shirley area, attracted some small firms into Solihull and at the beginning of the Second World War the Rover Company occupied a factory in Lode Lane.

From 1920, the infilling of the areas between the Coventry, Warwick and Stratford Roads began with the construction of housing estates, schools, factories and playing fields. By the 1930's Shirley, Olton, Elmdon and Solihull Lodge had emerged, filling the gap between Solihull and south-east Birmingham. An airport was established in the Borough at Elmdon which was to become Birmingham International Airport.

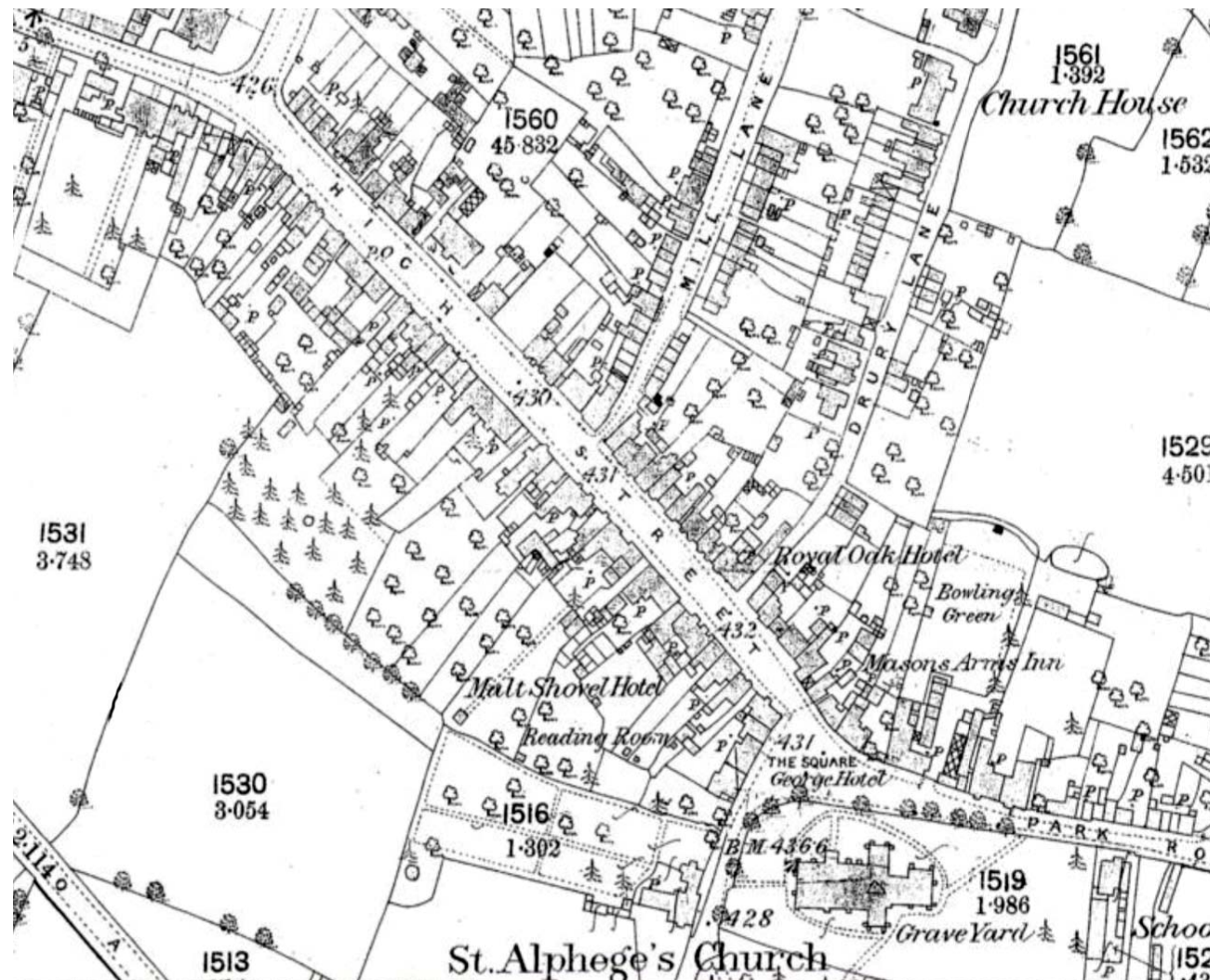


Figure 2.5.1: Historic Plan of Solihull 1904

1950-Present

The full extent of development in Solihull up to the period 1950 is shown in Figure 2.5.2. The plan clearly shows the emergence of the main urban area of Solihull expanding to the boundary with Birmingham in the west. The remainder of the Borough is largely rural. The subsequent plans chart the continued growth of development in the Borough

During the 1950s/1960s large housing estates were built to the north of the area at Smiths Wood, Kingshurst and Chelmsley Wood to accommodate overspill population from the Birmingham slum clearance programme. Large expansions to Elmdon, Olton and Shirley also occurred during this period creating an identifiable urban area of Solihull in the west of the Borough. There was also growth in the rural settlements of Knowle, Dorridge, Balsall Common and Meriden during this period.

During the 1970's/1980s the urban area expanded further with new development to the south of Shirley and large new housing estates at Monkspath and Hillfield. In addition, further expansion of the rural settlements of Knowle, Dorridge and Balsall Common also took place. In 1974 the National Exhibition Centre was opened on land adjacent to Birmingham International Airport.

In more recent years residential development has taken place at Marston Green in the north and Dickens Heath in the south of the Borough. There has also been a housing extension to Balsall Common. The Birmingham Business Park was established close to the NEC/Airport during the 1990's and more recently the Blythe Valley Business Park has been constructed in the south of the Borough adjacent to the M42 motorway.

The population of Solihull grew substantially during this period from 88,990 in 1959, 110,000 in 1969 to 199,521 in 2001. However, this is due in part to a number of successive administrative boundary changes from Solihull Rural District, Solihull Urban District, Solihull Municipal Borough, Solihull County Borough to Solihull Metropolitan Borough created in 1974.

The Metropolitan Borough includes the rural districts around Meriden and Shirley, Knowle, Dorridge, Balsall Common, Castle Bromwich and Chelmsley Wood (North Solihull).

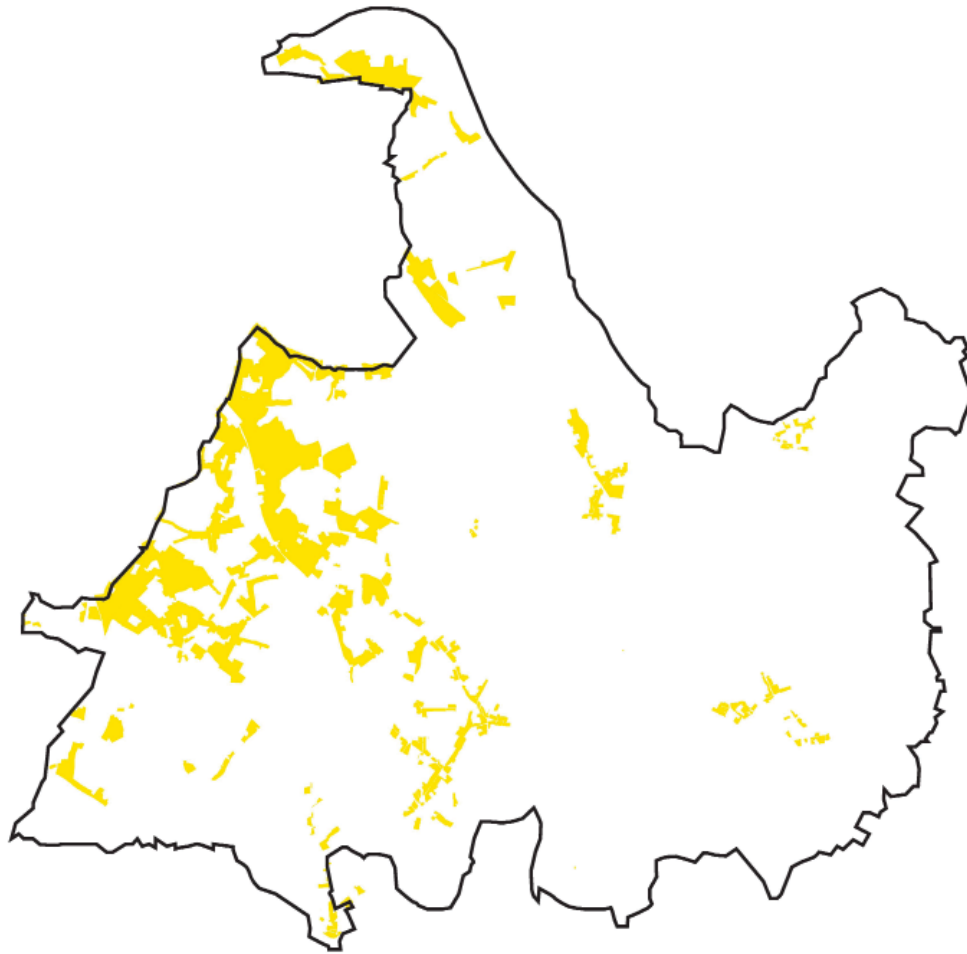


Figure 2.5.2: Development Pre-1950

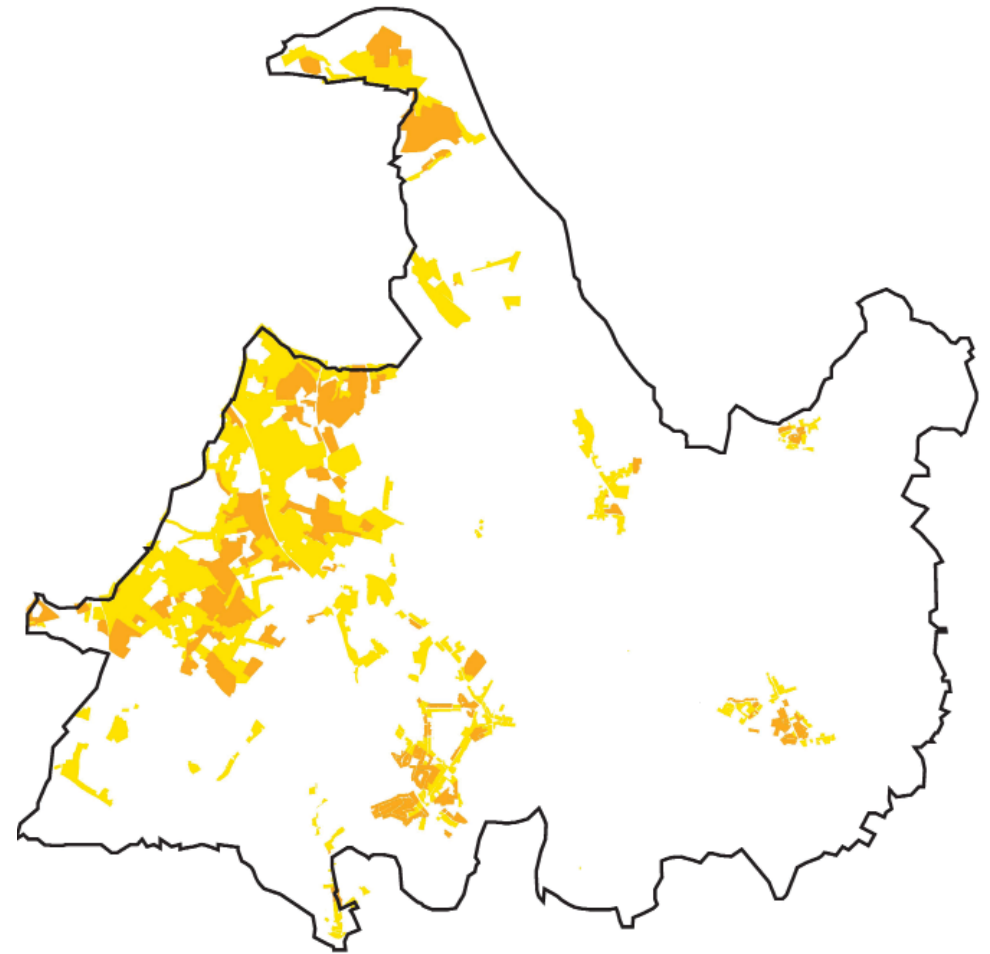


Figure 2.5.3: Development 1950-1960

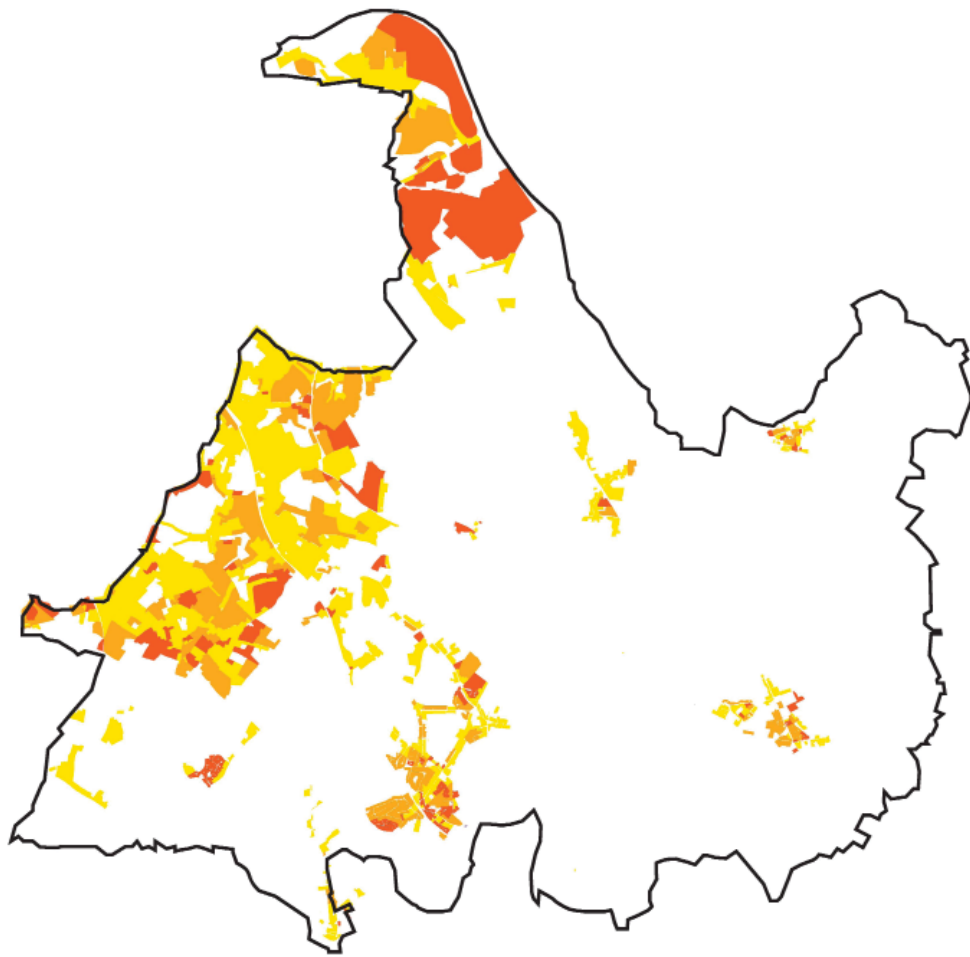


Figure 2.5.3: Development 1960-1970

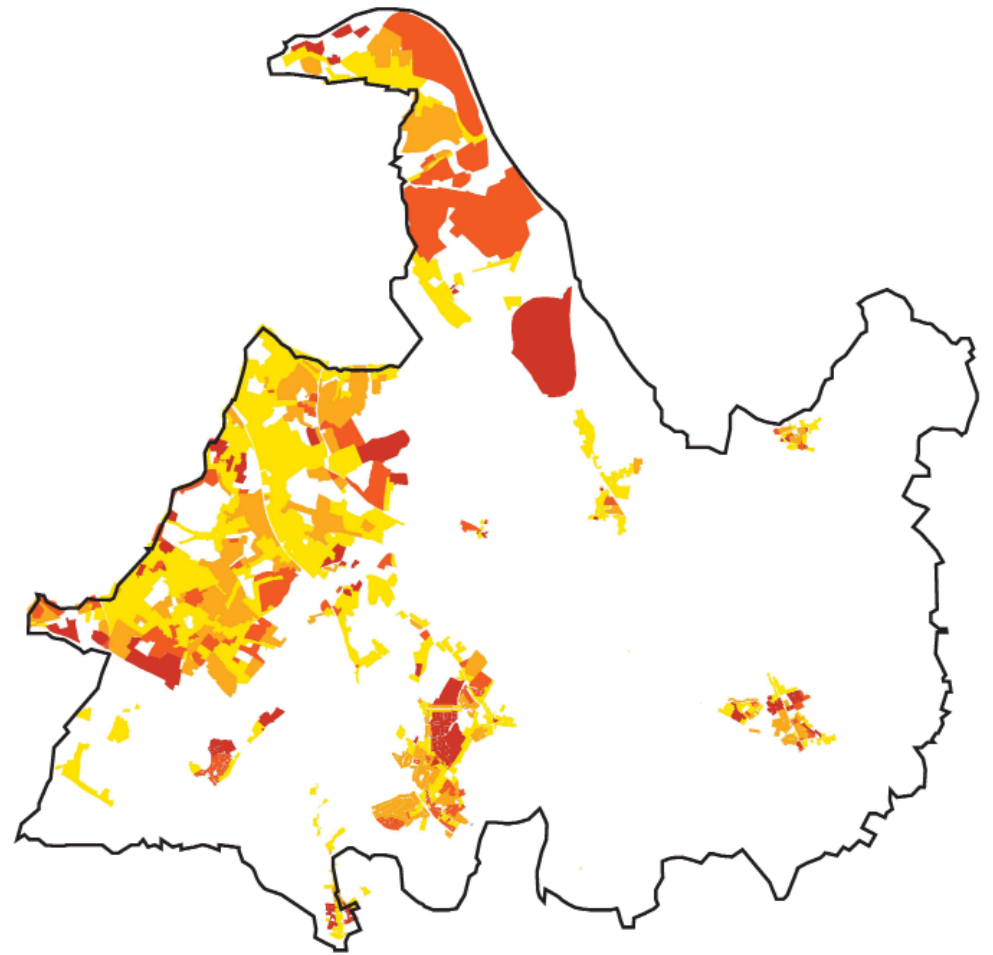


Figure 2.5.4: Development 1970-1980

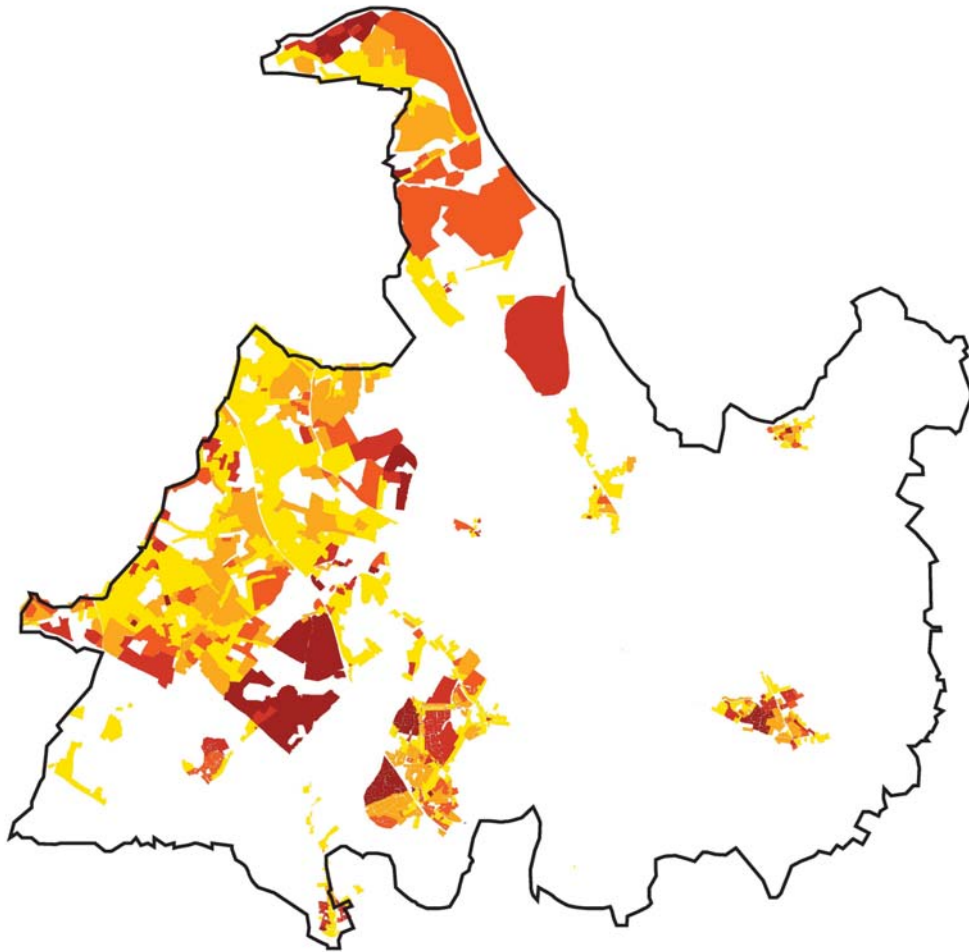


Figure 2.5.5: Development 1980-1990

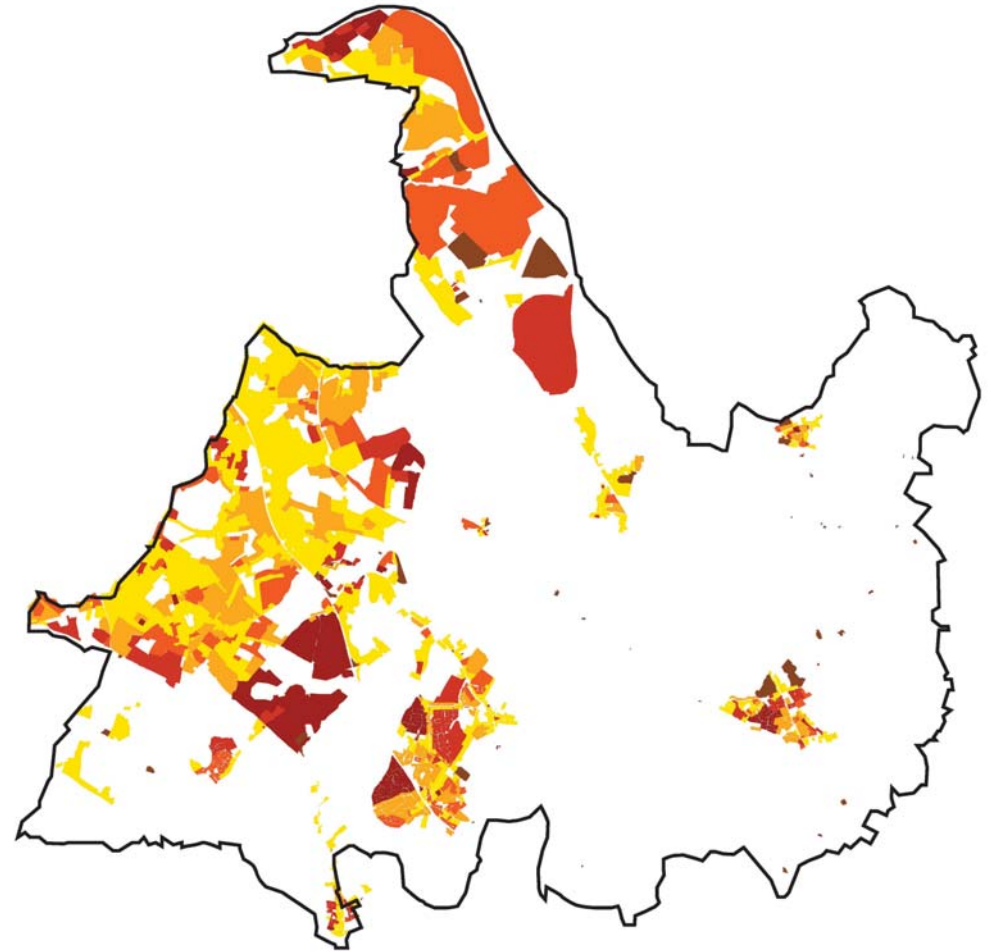


Figure 2.5.6: Development 1990-2000

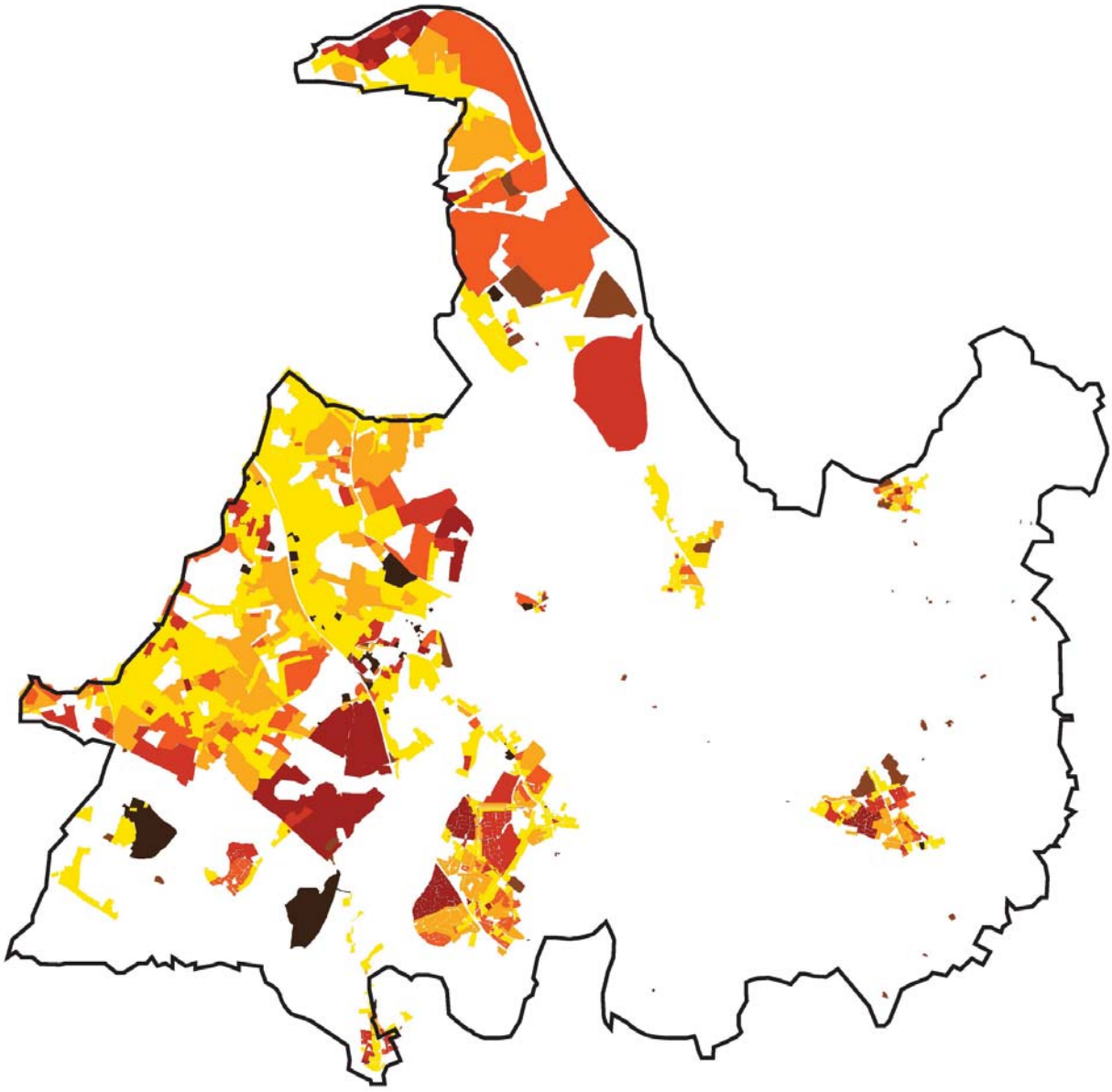
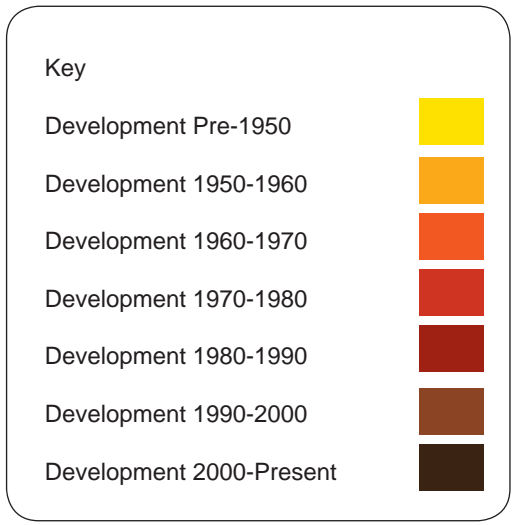


Figure 2.5.7: Development 2000-Present

Conservation Areas

Certain areas within the Borough are recognised as being of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance and have such been designated as Conservation Areas. Given the level of protection already afforded to these conservation areas, they fall outside the remit of this study. There are a total of twenty designated conservation areas in the Borough as follows:

1. Ashleigh Road
2. Barston
3. Berkswell
4. Bickenhill
5. Castle Bromwich
6. Granville Road
7. Grove Avenue
8. Hampton-in-Arden
9. Knowle
10. Malvern Hall and Brueton Avenue
11. Malvern Park Farm
12. Meriden Green
13. Meriden Hill
14. Olton
15. Solihull
16. Station Approach Dorridge
17. Temple Balsall
18. Walsal End
19. Warwick Road
20. White House Way

The Built Form in the Borough

2.6 Built Form

The following figure ground plan (Figure 2.6.1) demonstrates the broad extent and geographical distribution of built form across the Borough which merges seamlessly into the wider Birmingham conurbation along the western and northern boundaries. At the broadest level the built form can be understood as comprising three main areas or groups: the central urban core; the north Solihull estates; and the rural settlements. These broadly correspond with the Local Development Framework spatial areas.

Central Urban Core

This area represents the main urban core of the Borough comprising Solihull town centre and the adjoining neighbourhoods of Shirley, Olton, Elmdon, Hillfield and Monkspath. The area adjoins the Birmingham communities of Hall Green, Acocks Green and Yardley to the west with the 'boundary' between Birmingham and Solihull having no physical interpretation on the ground.

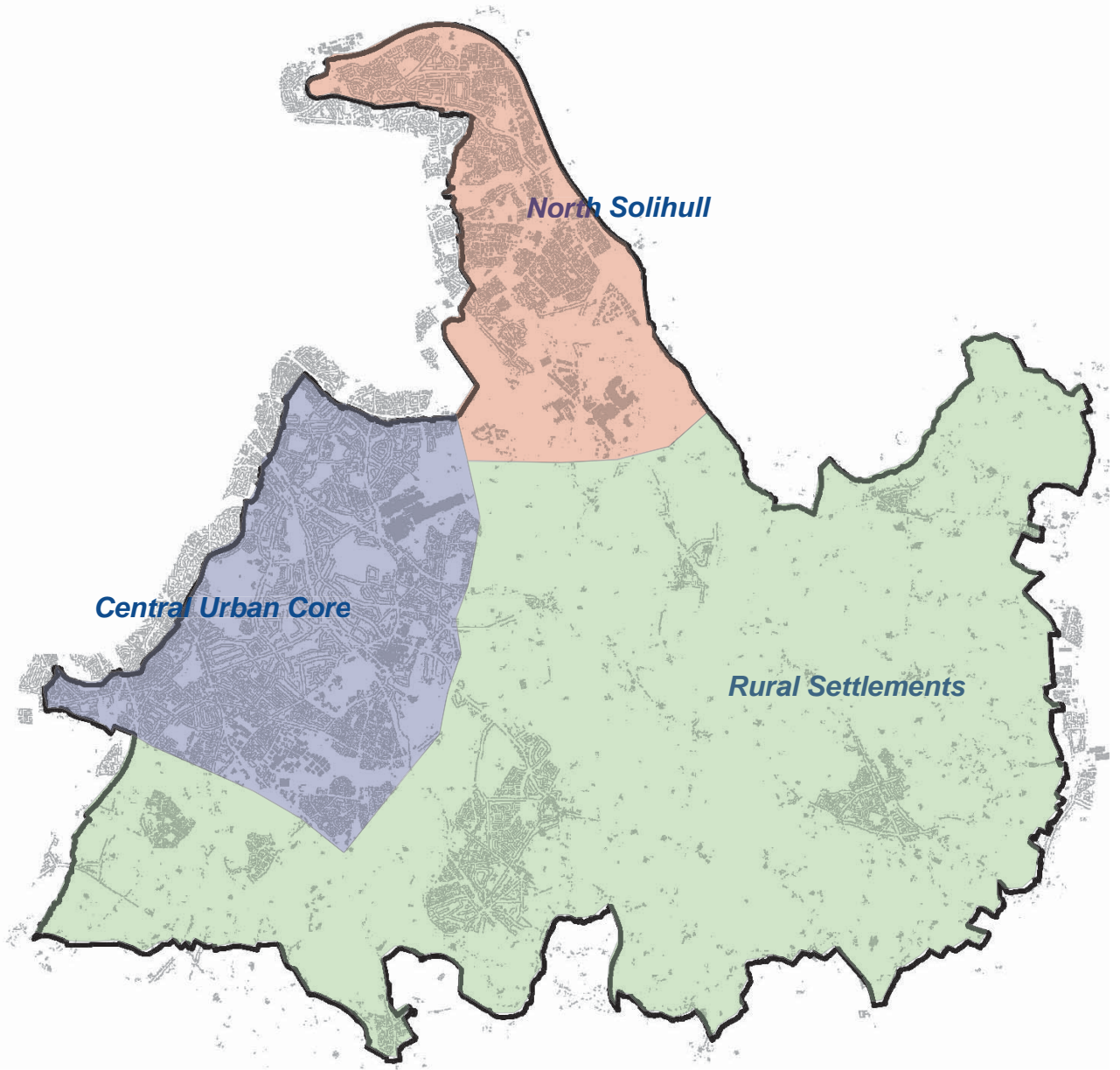


Figure 2.6.1: Borough-wide Figure Ground Plan

The central area is dissected by the major road links of the A34 Stratford Road, A41 Warwick Road and A45 Coventry Road which are all main arterial routes into Birmingham from the M42 Motorway. Blossomfield Road, Streetsbrook Road and Lode Lane dissect through the area on alternative alignments providing links to Solihull Town Centre.

Solihull Town Centre has the finest grain of development within the central urban core area. The compact town centre is defined to the north by Lode Lane and Warwick Road and to the south by Princes Way. The east boundary is less well defined with Churchill Road/ New Road cutting between the centre and St Alphege's Church. The Hospital complex and Solihull School to the north of Warwick Road fall outside of the town centre as does Solihull train station. Large housing estates of different periods radiate out from the centre to the north, south and west. These are interspersed with large parks, schools and business areas. A tight grain of development can also be identified along the A34 Stratford Road in Shirley: this denotes Shirley Town Centre.



Figure 2.6.2: Central Urban Core Figure Ground Plan

North Solihull

Castle Bromwich and Marston Green provide the northern and southern housing areas in this part of the Borough, and like more traditional residential areas they have grown incrementally. However the predominant built form of North Solihull is characterised by the large scale planned housing estates of Smith's Wood, Kingshurst, Fordbridge and Chelmsley Wood built in the 1950's and 1960's. These estates are provided in a linear formation from north to south and are separated from the Central Urban Core area to the south by the large development footprints of Birmingham Airport, Birmingham Business Park and the NEC. The M42 and M6 motorways pass to the east of the estates in parallel to the A452 Chester Road providing the east boundary. The estates merge into the Birmingham communities of Shard End and Tile Cross to west.

The housing areas are interspersed with large parks and schools. The River Cole passes east-west through Fordbridge effectively dissecting the residential area into two parts. The Airport, Birmingham Business Park and NEC are clearly separate entities with no direct connections to or relationship with the housing areas in north Solihull. This complex of facilities are orientated to have direct connection into the regional and national transport networks in the form of the A45/M42/M6 and national rail links.

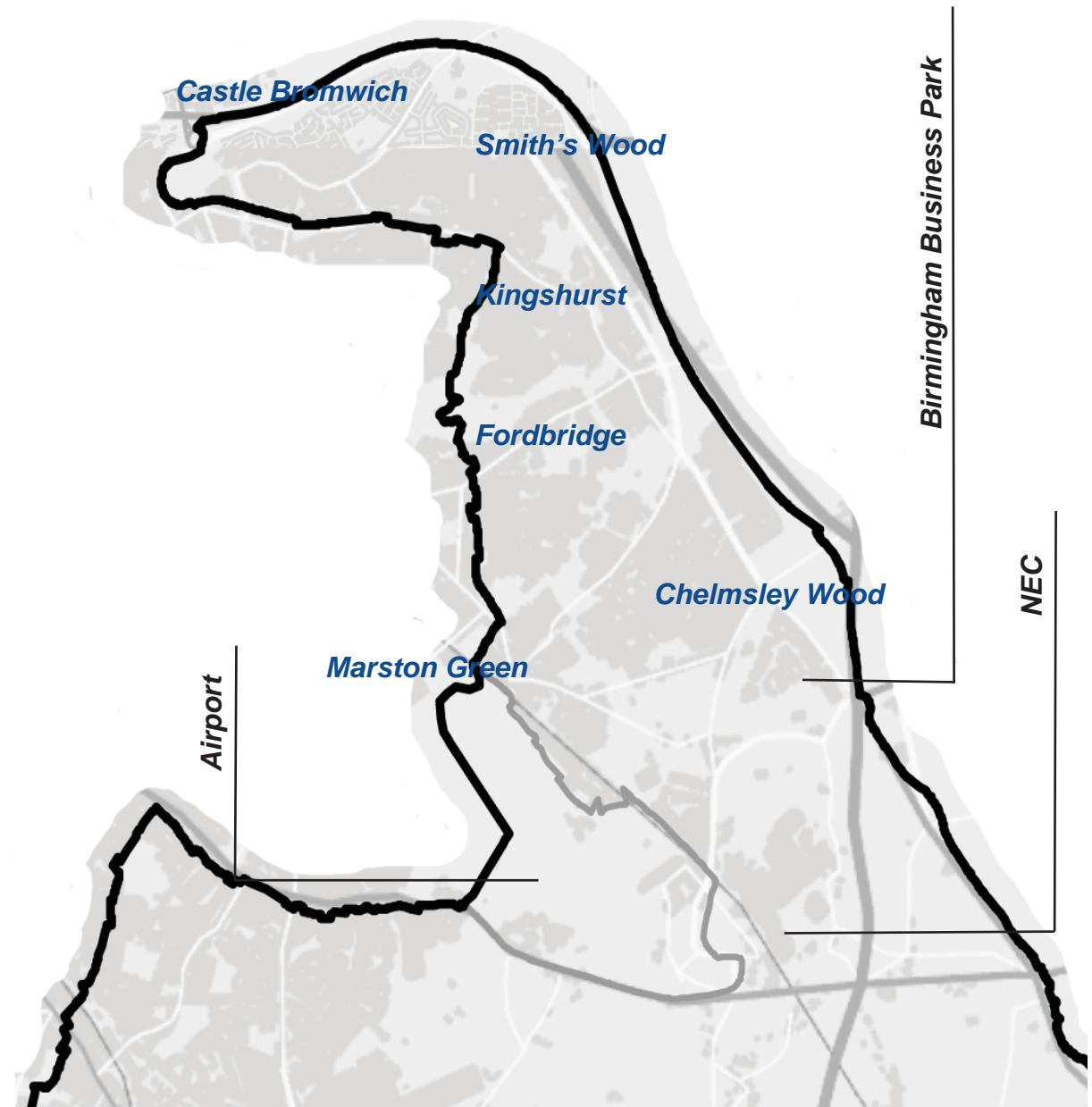


Figure 2.6.3: North Solihull Figure Ground Plan

Rural Settlements

The 'rural' area makes up over 60% of the total land area of the Borough and is predominantly covered by green belt. There are however a number of settlements contained within the area including Knowle, Dorridge, Hockley Heath, Dickens Heath and Cheswick Green in the south and Balsall Common, Hampton-in-Arden, Catherine-de-Barnes and Meriden in the east. The area also includes the Blythe Valley Business Park located in the southern area adjacent to the M42.

Knowle and Dorridge are the largest settlements in terms of built form having largely merged into one sizeable settlement following a series of planned extensions for housing development in the 1950s/60s/70s and 80s. Development in Knowle was historically clustered around the A4141 Warwick Road which connects to Solihull in the north-west. This development extended south along the B4101 Station Road to Dorridge. Development in the form of planned estates expanded predominately to the west of the B4101 to fill the gap. The combined settlement of Dorridge/Knowle is separated from the main central urban core area by Green Belt and the M42 motorway.

The next largest settlement in terms of built form is Balsall Common in the far south-east of the Borough. Balsall Common is located at the junction of two important routes the A452 Kenilworth Road running north south and the B4101 running east west. Development has essentially expanded east and west from the A452 but been contained to the north of the B4101.

Hampton-in-Arden, Meriden, Catherine de Barnes and Hockley Heath all share some characteristics with Balsall Common in plan form in so far that all settlements were founded at the junction of two or more important routes with later development expanding to fill the gaps between these routes. Cheswick Green on the other hand takes the form of ribbon development along Creynolds Lane with a bolt-on housing estate to the west. Similarly, ribbon development on Dickens Heath Road has been engulfed by a planned settlement expansion in the form of Dickens Heath village.

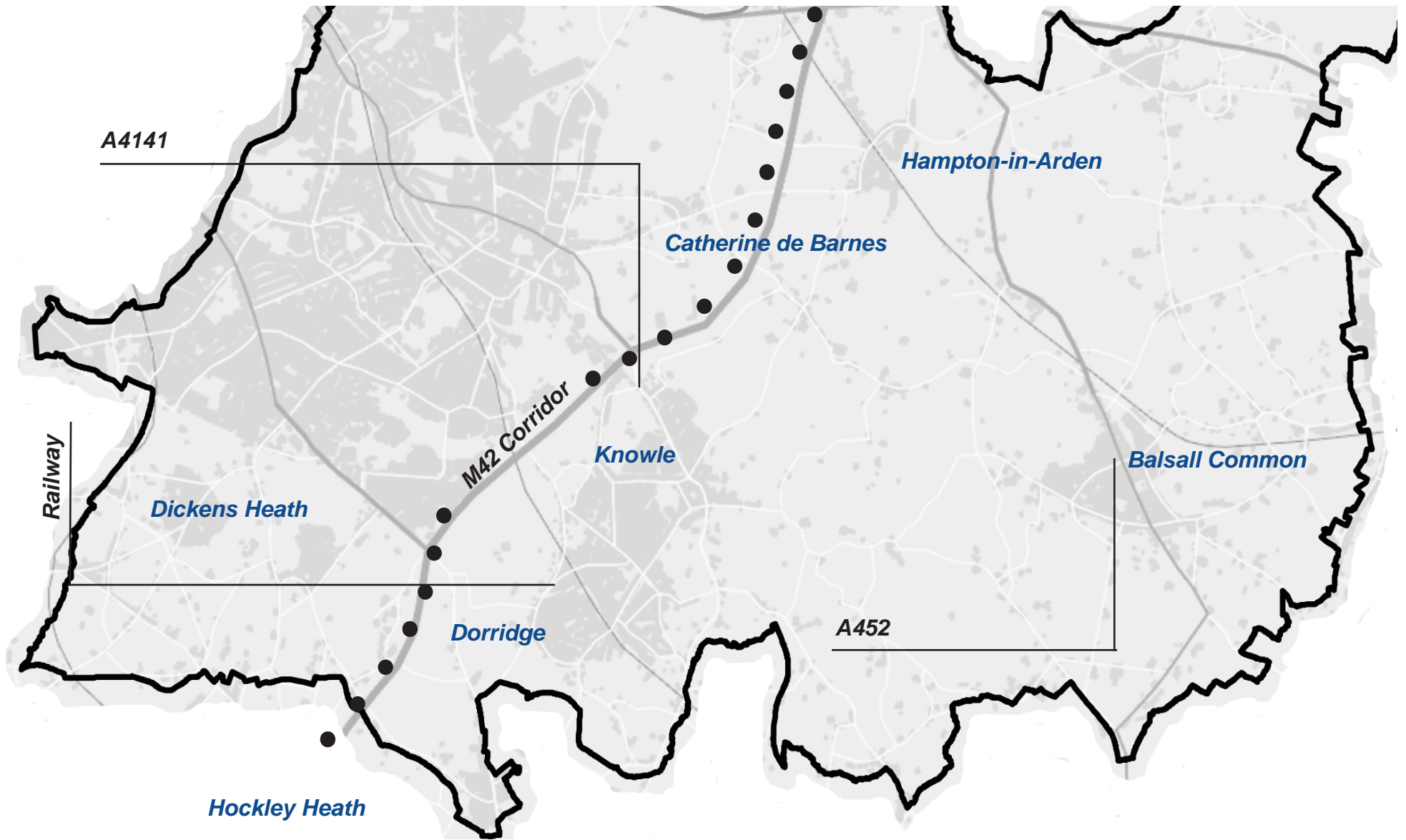


Figure 2.6.4: Rural Settlements Figure Ground Plan

2.7 Land Use

The following plan (Figure 2.7.1) illustrates the general pattern of land use across the Borough at the strategic level.

Residential

The built environment of the Borough is dominated by residential land use. Some of the smaller settlements in the south area of the Borough are comprised almost entirely of residential use. In the central and north areas large residential estates surround compact mixed-use centres and are interspersed with a mix of other uses including employment, leisure and education and community uses.

Despite this broad categorisation there are a great many variations in building types and composition within the 'residential' category which provide for a very mixed character from area to area.

Employment/Business

At the Borough-wide level only a proportion of the Borough's employment and business areas are clearly distinguishable. These are generally major sites comprising either business parks or large-scale independent employers. Other smaller employment and business uses are integrated into residential and other land use typologies. The main employment and business as identified in Figure 2.7.1 are:

Business Parks

- Blythe Valley Business Park
- Birmingham Business Park
- Monkspath Business Park
- The Green Business Park

Large-scale Employers

- Birmingham International Airport
- NEC
- Land Rover

Leisure

Major leisure uses are distributed throughout the Borough in the form of leisure centres including North Solihull Sports Centre and Tudor Grange Sports Centre, private health clubs including Virgin Active and David Lloyd, numerous golf clubs including Stonebridge/ the West Midlands Golf Club and the Robin Hood Golf Club, Olton Mere Sailing Club, riding schools and other uses. The Borough-wide plan only identifies those with a substantial land-take and so the golf courses across the Borough feature prominently.

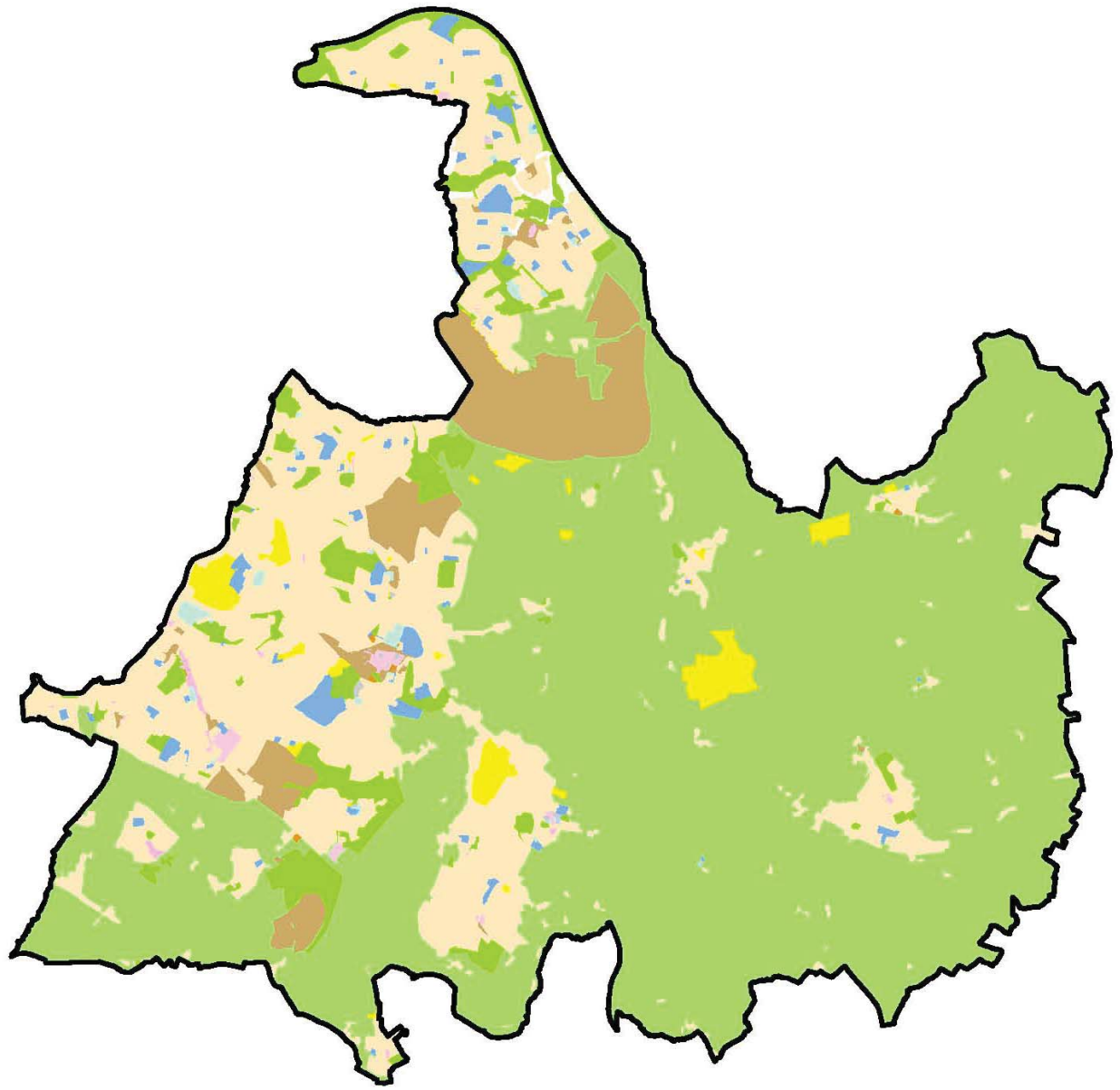
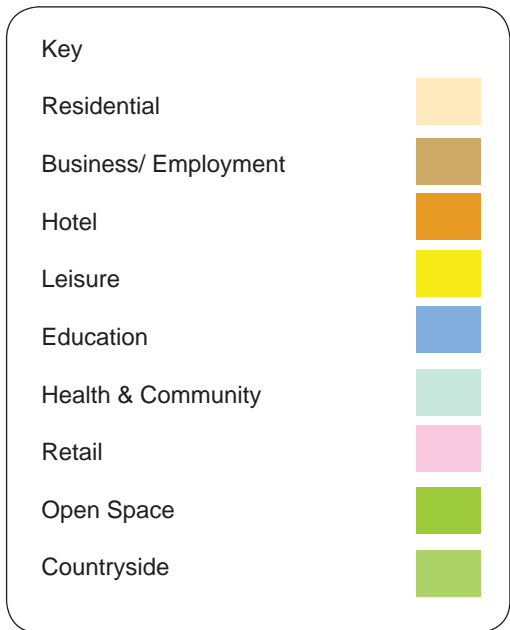


Figure 2.7.1: Land Use Plan

Education, Health & Community Uses

Land used for education purposes in Solihull is largely occupied by schools. The local council run 41 Primary schools, 12 Infant schools, 11 Junior schools, 12 Secondary schools and 3 Academies distributed throughout the Borough. In addition, there are also a number of independent schools including Solihull School, Ruckleigh School and Kingswood School. Solihull College is the main further education college in the Borough with two main campuses at Blossomfield Road South-West of Solihull Town Centre and Woodlands Campus at Smith's Wood in North Solihull. The College also has a construction centre at Chelmsley Wood.

Health related uses include a range of larger scale health centres and hospitals both NHS and private including the main Solihull Hospital, Spire Parkway Hospital and Brooklands Hospital. Community uses identified at this scale largely comprise of churches and cemeteries on account of their generally large footprints. Other types of community uses are generally incorporated into mixed-use centres or residential areas.

Mixed-use Centres

At the Borough-wide scale there are three main mixed-use centres that can be identified in the form of Solihull Town Centre, Shirley Town Centre and Chelmsley Wood Town Centre.

Solihull Town Centre is located at the heart of the main central urban area and is the principal centre serving the Borough. It is a compact centre contained between the railway-line to the south and Warwick Road to the north. The centre comprises predominantly retail uses at its core with business uses, hotels and leisure uses at its periphery. The railway station is also located at the periphery. To the north of the centre land use is dominated by Solihull School and Solihull Hospital and to the South-West by Tudor Grange Leisure Centre and Park and Solihull College. The remainder is residential.

Shirley Town Centre is a linear centre located along the A34 Stratford Road in the South-West of the main central urban area. There is no definitive boundary to the 'centre' with retail and business uses stretching along the length of this road, albeit the main bulk of retail uses are located between the Haslucks Green Road /Olton Road cross-roads in the north and the School Road/Union Road roundabout in the south. The Solihull Retail Park is located to the south of Shirley Town Centre at the junction with Marshall

Lake Road although there is limited connection between the two.

Chelmsley Wood Town Centre is located at the heart of the north Solihull area. This 1960's purpose built centre was developed to serve the residents of the north Solihull estates. The centre is square in formation surrounded by two inner loop roads comprising Chelmsley Circle and Ceolmund Crescent and a dual-carriageway outer ring road comprising Bosworth Drive, Moorend Avenue and Chelmsley Road. Retail use is concentrated within a shopping mall type development with a new Asda superstore adding to this footprint. Business uses and a new library/council offices are also included.

Small scale centres exist in the south area settlements such as Knowle, Dorridge, Dickens Heath, Balsall Common and Meriden albeit their scale is small.

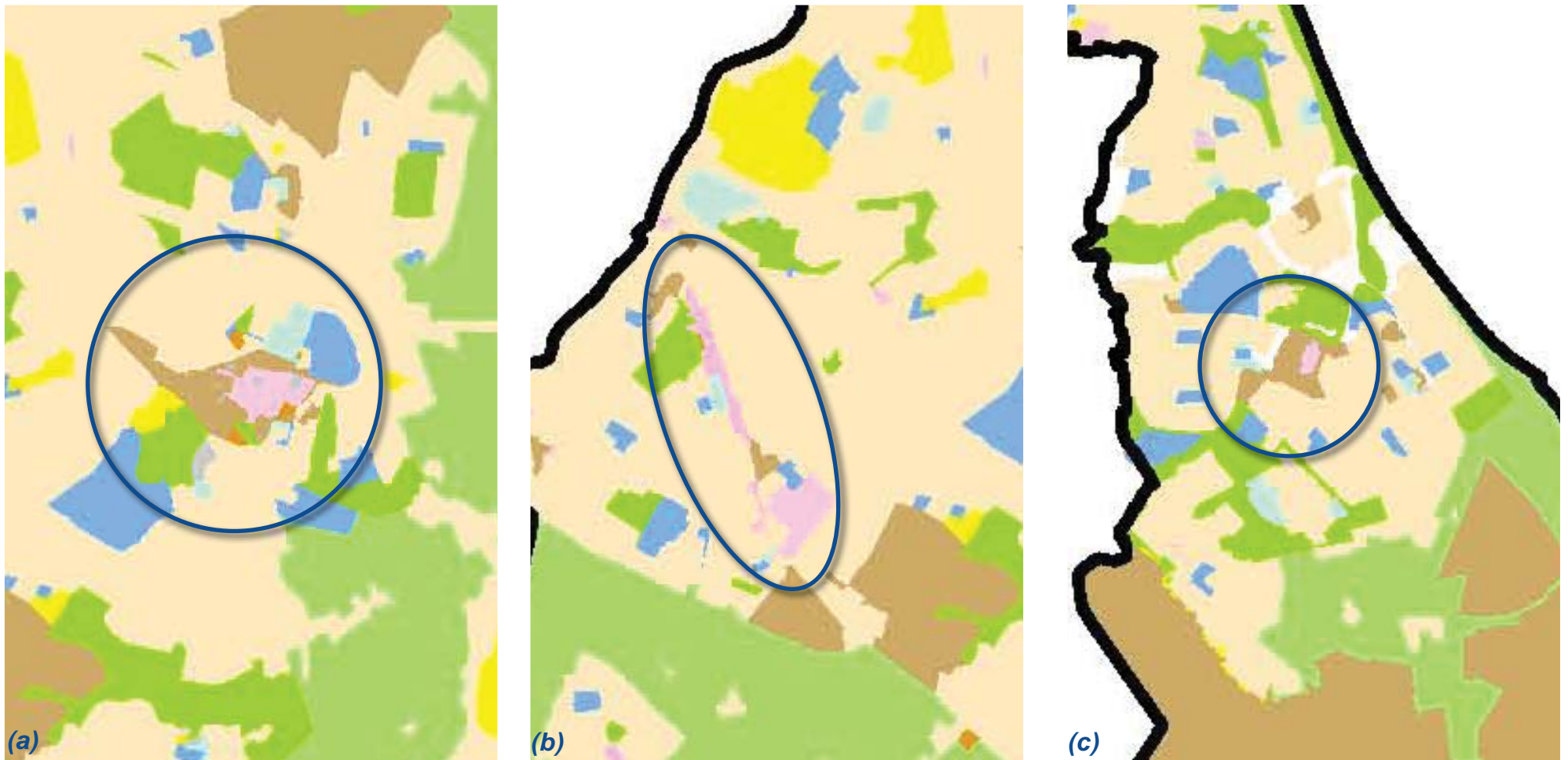


Figure 2.7.2: Main Mixed-Use Centres; (a) - Solihull Town Centre; (b) Shirley Town Centre; (c) Chelmsley Wood Town Centre

2.8 Movement & Infrastructure

Transport Network

Solihull has good transport links which provide convenient road, rail and air links throughout the Borough and further afield.

Vehicle movement

The borough is bordered by the M6 and the M40, whilst the M42 divides the urban centre of the borough from the rural south and east. Similarly the A45 divides the south from the north of the Borough. These routes are large in scale and provide part of the Country's strategic network which links the north of England to the south and west of the country and vice versa.

Most of the significant transport growth occurred in the 1970 and 1980s. The development of the M42 was a big catalyst to the growth of the road transport infrastructure in the Borough and region.

Across the Borough there are a number of 'A' roads, many of which are dual carriageway like in their character. These routes are often defined by grass verges and landscape corridors which separate the roads from the built up areas and surrounding landscape. These routes connect the Borough with large neighbouring settlements such as Warwick, Leamington, Kenilworth, Coleshill Coventry and Birmingham. Within the built up areas distributor routes are typically wide with development set back from the main carriageway and accessed off individual driveways.

At a local level there are numerous country lanes which link the rural settlements with the main network.

The Airport

Birmingham international airport is located within the Borough of Solihull. The airport is one of the busiest in the UK and is a base for many of the major airlines. The airport operates regular flights to destinations within the UK, Europe and around the world.





The airport was first opened at Elmdon on the 8th July 1939 and was owned and operated by Birmingham City Council. In 1983 the airport was privatised. A new terminal was built in 1984 and a second terminal opened in 1991 during this period the capacity of the airport doubled. There are plans for future growth of the airport and a masterplan has been drawn up for its development until 2030. Changes to terminals, airport layout including the extensions of the runways and off site infrastructure are incorporated.

The growth of the airport and its level of operation have a significant effect on the landscape character of the Borough in this locality but it also provides a significant attractor of economic growth and development for the Borough.

Rail Lines

There are two main railway lines which run from the south west to the north west of the Borough. 11 train stations serve the Borough providing good links to Birmingham and London. The railway lines provide an important role in providing sustainable travel movements across the Borough. Bus stops are located within close proximity to stations in order to provide an integrated public transport network.

Key

Motorway	
A Road	
B Road	
Minor Road	

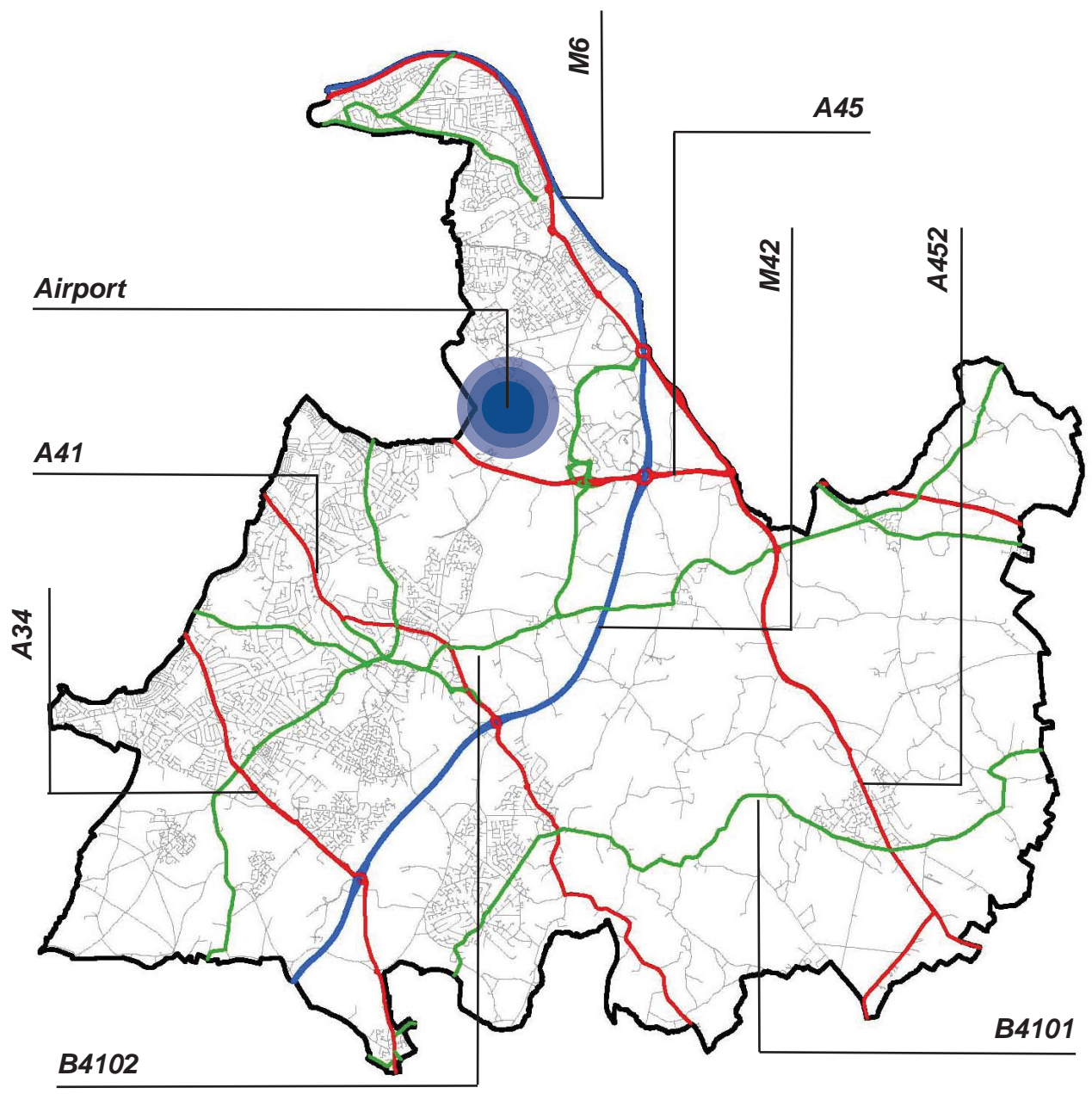


Figure 2.8.1: Highways Network

Section 3: Character Typologies

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding section of this study we have outlined a number of the key characteristics of the Borough drawing on a range of desk-top data at the Borough-wide level. This second stage of the study begins to explore these key characteristics in greater detail at the local area level. Using a combination of on-site survey work and desk-top data analysis, a series of character typologies have been identified. These typologies are used to recognise areas of the built environment that share common characteristics in their size, layout and built form.

There are two different levels of character typology used for this study: primary and secondary typologies. The former sets out broad development types at the urban scale and is applied on an area basis. The latter provides a particular focus on residential development which makes up such a large proportion of the Borough.

Within this section of the study the primary and secondary character typologies are identified and analysed as follows:

Primary Typologies

- 3.2 Methodology
- 3.3 Major Urban Corridors
- 3.4 Box Development
- 3.5 Campus Development
- 3.6 Core Centres
- 3.7 Residential Streets

Secondary Typologies

- 3.8 Methodology
- 3.9 Building Age

Primary Typologies

3.2 Methodology

This section highlights the outcome of the analysis and categorisation of the urban area into broad primary land use typologies. Areas such as Birmingham Airport/NEC, North Solihull and Solihull Town Centre which have development plans have been excluded from this analysis for the reasons highlighted at the beginning of the study.

Solihull Borough has a diverse built environment. Development ranges from large scale commercial/ industrial and leisure buildings to suburban residential estates and small rural farmsteads. Such types of development are often defined by a distinct set of physical characteristics which differentiate them from other types of development. Some of these characteristics will be distinct to certain types of uses or to geographical areas while others will be widely replicated throughout the Borough and beyond.

The most proficient way of identifying these characteristics at an area level is by using an approach which categorises the urban environment into character typologies. A character typology in the urban planning context relates to the clarification of common characteristics evident in the physical form of development. This could relate to land use, street patterns, scale, layout, period of construction and architectural features and materials etc.

An understanding of what we have is therefore an effective way of establishing the context for future protection, intervention and development.

The following criteria have been adopted in order to identify primary typologies in the Borough:

Scale and Grain: The size and arrangement of buildings and plots and the pattern of development that this creates at the area level. The scale of buildings can be defined in both building footprint in plan form and building storey height and massing in elevation. The grain of development is defined by the concentration and layout of buildings within a given area.

Land use: the use and function of a place can make a significant contribution to its physical form and appearance. The assessment looks at both current and historic land uses where they have influenced the layout and form of development.

Network Characteristics: The arrangement of streets and their role (for all users) within the wider context. The connectivity of a place and the flows of people and vehicles passing through it, has a significant impact on the physical and social character of the place.

Primary Typologies

Following an extensive survey of the Borough using desk-top and on-site data sources; Five primary character typologies have been identified:

- Box Development (Supermarkets, light industry and commercial uses);
- Campus (business parks, educational facilities, Health and public leisure facilities);
- Urban Corridors (strategic vehicular routes with diverse frontage)
- Core centres (town and village centres)
- Residential streets (accommodating primarily residential uses)

The following section provides an overview of these primary typologies identified in the Borough.



Photo: Office Building Birmingham Business Park

Primary Typologies

3.3 Box Development

Box development typically comprises units with very large floor plans. In Solihull they are evident as both standalone units and as part of a complex of other units in the form of industrial estates and retail parks. They are often located on the fringes of the urban area with good access to the main distributor roads and M42 Motorway. Some of the smaller scale box developments are located around existing retail centres in core areas.

There are three main concentrations of 'big box' development in the Borough:

- The Land Rover works;
- Monkspath Business Park;
- Solihull Retail Park.

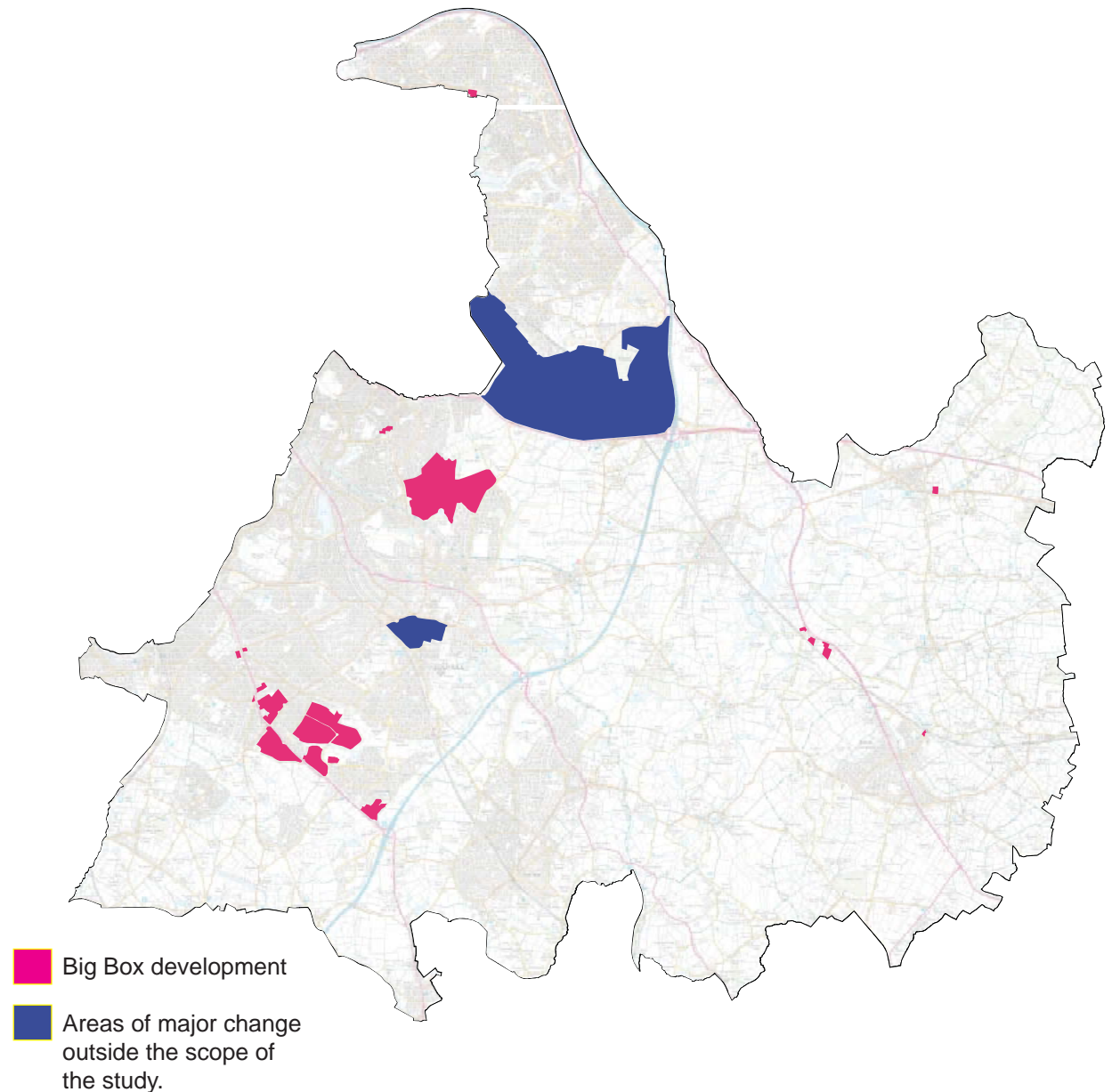


Figure 3.3.1: Extent of Box Development in Solihull

Primary Typologies

Box Development

Scale and Grain

Box development can be distinguished by the sheer scale and footprint of buildings and the extent of space surrounding the buildings. They are typically arranged to suit commercial and operational requirements rather than to satisfy any urban design principles and are surrounded by large dedicated parking areas, service yards and access roads. They also have limited relationship with the wider landscape and are often segregated from other forms of development.

One of the defining characteristics of 'box development' is their steel frame construction and large cavernous interiors. They are usually single storey but may occasionally incorporate a mezzanine. The shell of the buildings usually adopt some form of metal cladding system within minimal architectural detailing or fenestration. Roofs maybe pitched or flat.

Land Use

Buildings within this typology tend to provide for a single function and associated car parking with minimal amenity planting. They include industrial and warehouse units, supermarkets and out-of-town retail and leisure uses.

Network Characteristics

Box development is typically organised around car parks and arranged in a cul-de-sac format. They rely primarily on access by motorised vehicles and are often remote from the main footpath and cycleway networks. This coupled with their propensity to favour peripheral urban locations adjacent to the motorway and strategic distributor routes often makes them difficult to access and permeate for both pedestrians and cyclists. Such developments tend to be relatively self-contained.



Photo: Solihull & Sears Retail Park



Photo: Solihull & Sears Retail Park

Primary Typologies

Box Development

Example: Solihull & Sears Retail Park

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Dimensions	Key Characteristics
<p>Main Feeder Road: Set backs between 5-13m with an average set back of 19m.</p> <p>Road Width: 13-25m</p> <p>Internal Road Structure: Setbacks within the park range between 10 to over 100m with an average setback of approx 40m.</p> <p>Road Width: 10-12m</p>	<p>Unit sizes range from 615m² to 9931m² (supermarket) The average unit sizes is approx. 2845m².</p>	<p>Units are arranged around large areas of surface car parking accessed off the main feeder roads. Units have limited architectural merit being 'box-like' in appearance with gable-end features demarking store entrances.</p> <p>Elevations have limited glazing and are dominated by store signage.</p>



Figure 3.3.2 Example: Solihull Retail Park (Scale 1: 4000)

Primary Typologies

Box Development

Example: Notcutts and Tesco Stores, A34 Stratford Road

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Dimensions	Key Characteristics
<p>Main Feeder Road: Set backs between 14-262m</p> <p>Road Width: 21-85m (including roundabout system)</p> <p>Internal Road Structure: Setbacks within the park are between 14- 204</p> <p>Road Width: 10-12.5m</p>	<p>Unit sizes range from 420m² to 8439m² (supermarket) The average unit sizes is 2356m²</p>	<p>Units are large brick built structures set around extensive surface car parking. They are single storey in height. The Tesco store adopts some gable-end features to demark the store entrances. The Notcutts buildings adopts a glazed dome roof in reference to traditional 'glass house' design.</p>



Figure 3.3.3 Example: Tesco & Notcutts (Scale 1: 4000)

Primary Typologies

3.4 Campus Development

Campus development typically refers to groups of large scale buildings which have been designed to interact with one another and with the landscape. This includes institutional uses such as hospitals, schools and colleges but may also include business parks where specific attention has been given to the overall site design.

Given the nature of their uses, many campus developments are embedded into the urban fabric and are located within residential areas or at the edge of core centres. Business parks however tend to be more strategically located with good access to the main distributor roads and Motorway network.

Campus development in Solihull includes:

- Solihull Hospital;
- Solihull College;
- Solihull Sixth Form College;
- Blythe Valley Business Park;
- Birmingham Business Park.

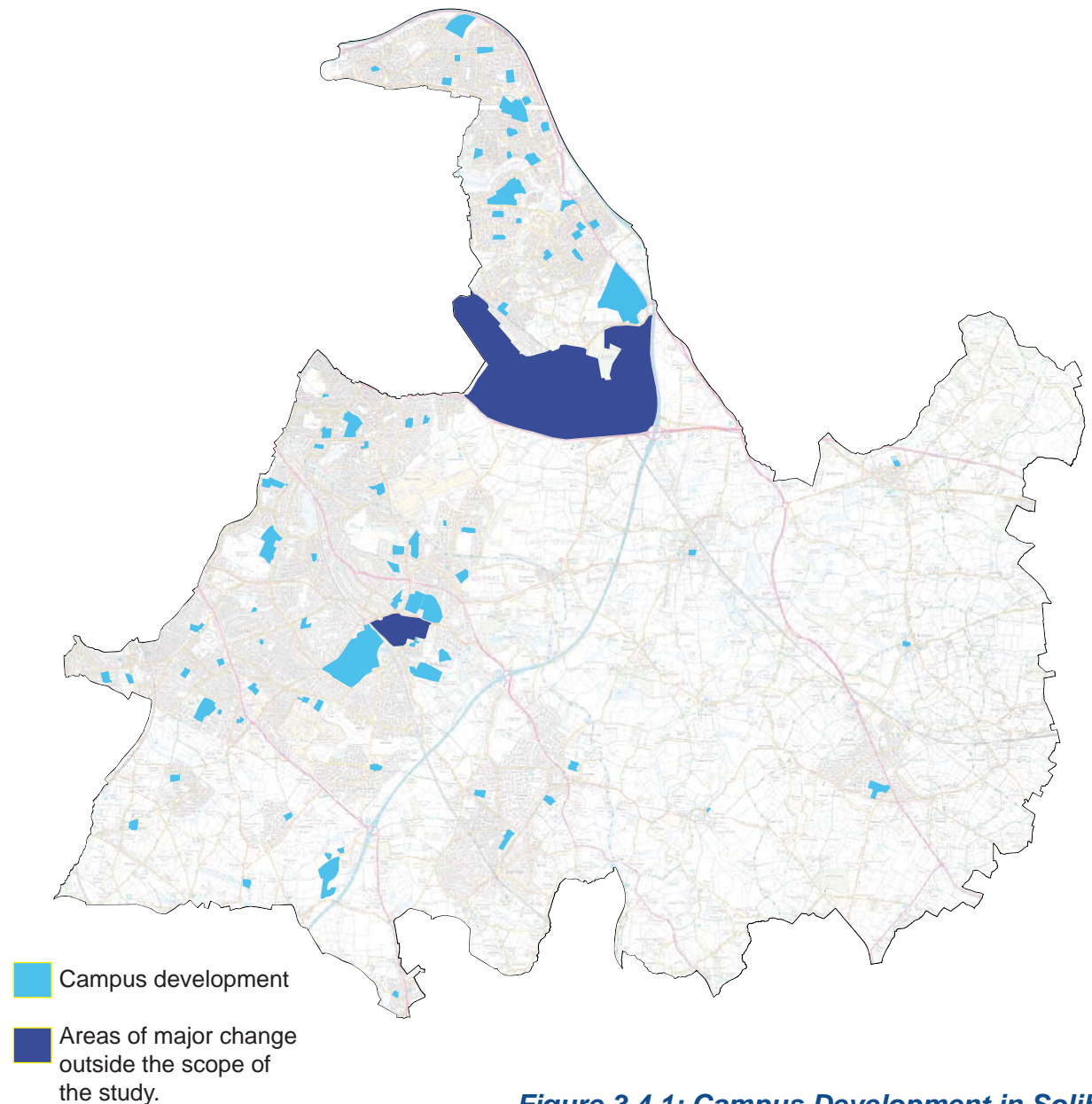


Figure 3.4.1: Campus Development in Solihull

Primary Typologies

Campus Development

Scale and Grain

The scale of buildings within campus development varies widely within and between areas. This is usually attributable to the different functions that buildings are intended to perform. For instance at Solihull Sixth Form College there are buildings that are separate from the main teaching blocks providing for sports facilities and administrative functions.

The large floor plan of buildings within campus development combined with extensive grounds providing sports pitches, landscaping and car parking creates a generally coarse urban grain.

The different function of buildings within campus development is also reflected in their physical form. Schools, hospitals and offices tend to be substantial multi-level structures with architectural detailing and fenestration. In Solihull building height commonly ranges from two to four storeys with some taller exceptions usually around core centres.

Land Use

Campus development includes educational facilities, health and public leisure facilities and office based business parks. Areas of landscaping are designed to reflect the nature of the development.

Network Characteristics

While box development is generally self contained to the individual building; campus development is self contained to the group of buildings. There is usually a defined perimeter boundary in the form of a fence or hedgerow with controlled access arrangements from the highway network. Access by vehicle is almost always controlled whereas some do provide for unrestricted pedestrian/ cycle permeability through the sites.

Within the boundary of campus development access between buildings is usually very good. Where sites are occupied by a single user, such as schools and hospitals, car parking is usually centrally located and shared between the buildings. At business parks where multiple-users are present car parking tends to be provided at the building.



Photo: Solihull Hospital



Photo: Birmingham Business Park

Primary Typologies

Campus Development

Example: Tudor Grange School

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Dimensions	Key Characteristics
<p>Main Road: 15m wide</p> <p>Access Road: 10m wide</p> <p>Internal Road: 5m wide</p> <p>Set backs from the main road between 51m – 82m</p>	<p>The campus area of the school is comprised of approx: 10% car parking; 8% school buildings; and 82% verges and playing pitches.</p>	<p>The school is largely set back from the main roads. Playing pitches front the majority of the street.</p> <p>The school is made up of a number of buildings between 1-3 storeys in height. The main school building is an imposing brick built building with a distinct institutional appearance.</p>



Figure 3.4.2 Example: Tudor Grange School (Scale 1:2000)

Primary Typologies

Campus Development

Example: Birmingham Business Park

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Dimensions	Key Characteristics
<p>Main Feeder Road: Set backs between 8m – 67m with an average set back of 28m.</p> <p>Road Width: 11.8m</p> <p>Internal Road Structure: Setbacks within the park are between 7.7m – 78m with an average setback of 43m</p> <p>Road Width: 10m</p>		<p>This is a planned business park estate with distinct parcels of development set around an internal loop road. There is generally a strong connection between buildings within individual parcels through their design and materials palette. However, there is some marked variation between the different parcels within the park.</p>



Figure 3.4.3 Example: Birmingham Business Park (Scale 1:2000)

Primary Typologies

3.5 Core Centres

There are 3 principal town centres and a network of smaller centres in Solihull Borough. The Town Centres of Solihull, Shirley and Chelmsley Wood provide the principal shopping and service centres in the Borough. They provide the focal points for social and economic activity in the Borough and are an important source of local employment. They also act as important public transport hubs.

A network of other smaller centres also exist providing for more local needs services. These centres play an important role in defining distinct 'neighbourhoods' in North Solihull and the Central Urban Core and in defining the physical and social heart of settlements in the Rural Area. Centres at Knowle, Dorridge, Dickens Heath, Balsall Common and Meriden for example are critical to the understanding of the physical and community structure of these places.

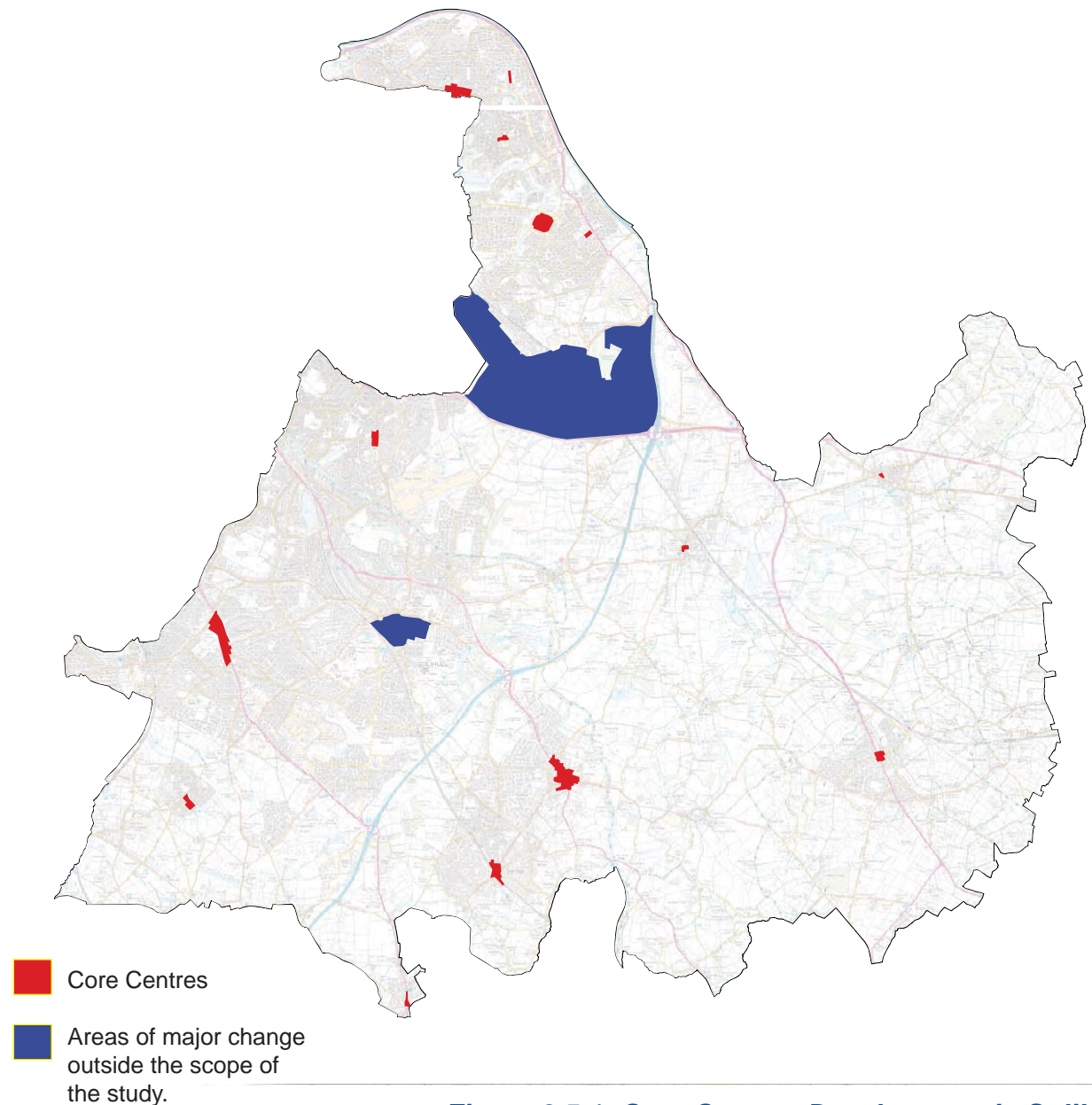


Figure 3.5.1: Core Centres Development in Solihull

Primary Typologies

Core Centres

Scale and Grain

Many of the core centres have originated from historic centres and typically contain some of the oldest parts of the urban fabric of the Borough. **Scale and Grain**

This is commonly reflected in the fine grain of development particularly along the principal streets. In Solihull Town Centre for example the predominantly unbroken frontage and tight grain of development along High Street is reflective of the medieval burgage plots that would have once lined this important route. Other rural centres such as Hampton-in-Arden also exhibit these characteristics but on a more rural scale.

Shirley Town Centre on the other hand exhibits a long linear structure with development set-back either side of a wide road. The urban grain is more coarse here than it is in Solihull due to the later growth of the 'centre' (major growth during the late 19th and early 20th Century's) and the significant alterations that have taken place in more recent years.

The effect of recent intervention has generally been to increase the scale of buildings and building plots and to increase the number of gaps in the frontage. Chelmsley Wood Town Centre is entirely the product of 1960's estate planning and design and is developed on the

principles of a precinct. The functions of the centre are grouped into a small number of large scale buildings which creates a very coarse urban grain.

Land Use

Town and village centres tend to contain a mix of uses which may include retail, office, commercial, civic, leisure and residential. The proportion and mix of uses is commonly reflective of the status or position of the centre in hierarchy of services centres in the Borough. This is influenced by planning policy.

Network Characteristics

Historically the centres of the Borough have grown up around principal road and rail links and so they are generally well served by the surrounding network. Routes generally radiate out from Solihull Town Centre connecting to the surrounding residential areas and other principal destinations. Shirley Town Centre continues to follow the alignment of the Stratford Road which is a main arterial route to Birmingham.

Chelmsley Wood Town Centre sits within a planned estate context and so it has good

vehicular connections to the wider network. The effect however is to sever pedestrian and cycle access to the centre.



Photo: Dorridge Village Centre

Primary Typologies

Core Centres

Example: Balsall Common Village Centre

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Land Uses	Key Characteristics
<p>Road widths: 16-29m High Street; 23m Station Road</p> <p>High Street: The majority of commercial properties are accessed directly off the pavement behind parking bays.</p> <p>Commercial Plot Width: 5.7 – 50.5m</p> <p>Residential Setbacks: 6-35m</p> <p>Residential Plot Width: 10-18</p>	<p>Car Parking Hotel Retail Public Houses Supermarket Estate Agents Residential Library Banks Restaurants Post office Petrol station</p>	<p>The commercial centre is located at a Crossroads. Units are generally small scale. There are 3 car parks and some on-street parking.</p> <p>There are signalled crossing points across busy roads and at key junctions.</p> <p>Large detached residential properties border the commercial centre, generally set back behind generous gardens.</p>



Figure 3.5.2 Example: Balsall Common Centre (Scale 1:2000)

Primary Typologies

Core Centres

Example: Knowle Village Centre

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Land Uses	Key Characteristics
<p>Road widths: 13-15m High Street 18m - Station Road</p> <p>Internal road widths: 7m-9m</p> <p>High Street: The majority of commercial properties have no set back.</p> <p>Commercial Plot Width: 5-85m</p> <p>Residential Setbacks: 3-7.5m</p> <p>Residential Plot Width: 5-10</p>	<p>Car Parking Churches Hotels Retail Public Houses Supermarket Estate Agents Community Halls Residential Public Open Space Banks Library</p>	<p>The residential element is limited. The commercial High Street and precinct provide the main focus for pedestrian activity. Units are generally small and have a close grain attracting a number of independent retailers and banks. The village is well served by car parks and road networks. Pedestrian only routes increase the permeability and levels of activity within the block structure.</p>



Figure 3.5.3 Example: Knowle Centre (Scale 1:2000)

Primary Typologies

3.6 Urban Corridors

Major urban corridors are the main arterial routes that dissect the Borough's urban areas. Their primary purpose is to facilitate high volumes of vehicular traffic movement between key nodal points. In order to accommodate such volumes of traffic the routes tend to comprise dual-carriage way construction. In most parts of the Borough these routes are lined by frontage development, the form and function of which varies widely between and along routes. Some major urban corridors however have no frontage development despite passing through built-up urban areas.

The common characteristic of the urban corridor is the width of the street. This in turn defines the distance between buildings across the street and contributes to the sense of enclosure or lack of enclosure. The role and function of the routes as movement corridors also has a distinct impact on land use and on the nature and form of development.

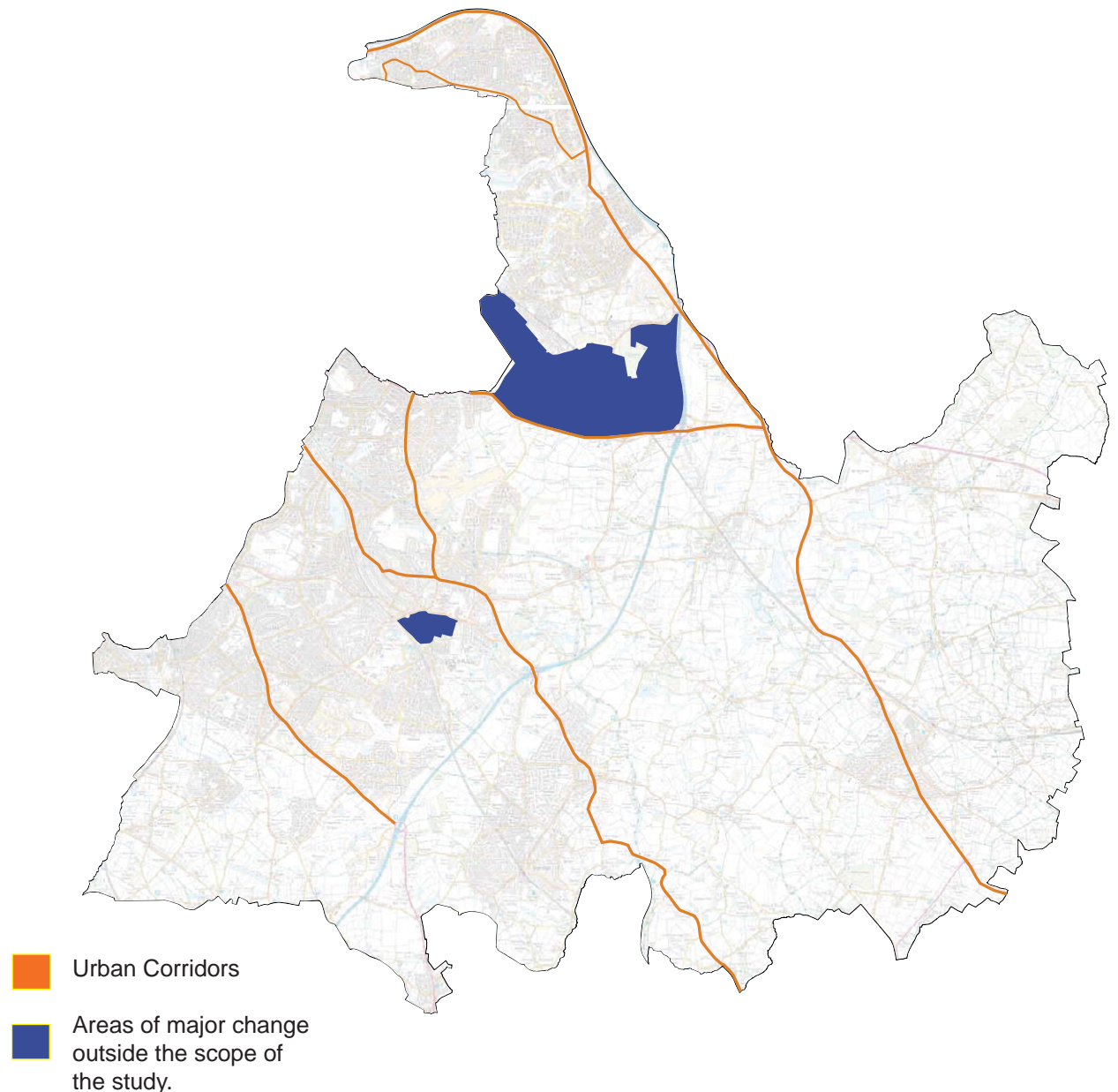


Figure 3.6.1: Urban Corridors in Solihull

Primary Typologies

Urban Corridors

The main major urban corridors in the Borough are:

- A34 Stratford Road
- A41 Warwick Road
- A45 Coventry Road
- A452 Chester Road

Other significant urban corridors include the B4114 Chester Road, B4025 Streetsbrook Road, B4102 Blossomfield Road and B425 Lode Lane.

Scale and Grain

The scale and grain of development along the course of the major urban corridors changes considerably as they pass through different neighbourhoods and communities. The A34 Stratford Road for example between Birmingham City Centre and the M42 changes from small scale domestic buildings in the north through more retail and commercial buildings in Shirley Town Centre to large scale 'Big Box' retail and industrial development in the south.

The A41 Warwick Road comprises a much finer grain of predominately domestic development from the boundary with Birmingham in the north to Solihull town centre in the south. As the A41 becomes the Solihull Bypass it begins to lack frontage development and becomes increasingly screened by vegetation to the junction with the M42.

The A45 as it enters the Borough in the west is framed by large scale commercial buildings as it passes through Sheldon with some domestic frontage to the east. As it continues east it is framed by the campus type development of Birmingham Airport, the NEC and by open countryside to the south. The A452 Chester Road and Collector Road, as it becomes in the north, are void of any frontage development

and are largely screened by vegetation. Of the other significant urban corridors they all comprise of predominately frontage development, which is largely domestic in scale with some campus and big box development.

Land Use

Typically land uses vary considerably between and along the length of the major urban corridors. Land uses include residential, retail, commercial, office, leisure centres and petrol filling-stations. Car show rooms and Big Box retail units are a particular feature of the A34 in the south of the Borough.

Network Characteristics

Major urban corridors are by their very nature a strategic part of the wider movement network connecting key nodal points and the Motorway within and beyond the Borough boundary. The routes are dissected by multiple minor routes along their course serving more local destinations.

Primary Typologies

Urban Corridors

Example: A34 Stratford Road

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Land Uses	Key Characteristics
<p>The total road width varies from 20m (single carriageways) to 86m (dual carriageway and or slip roads to serve properties).</p> <p>Commercial Set backs: 0m- 255m (super market)</p> <p>Plots widths: 6m-201m</p> <p>Residential Setbacks: 0.63-32m</p> <p>Plots widths: 5m-40m</p>	<p>51% is commercial use (includes places of worship)</p> <p>28% is residential</p> <p>21% Parkland.</p>	<p>The road is engineered to accommodate heavy traffic volumes with some dual carriage way sections. The Route is intersected by other major corridors. There are a number of very large signalled junctions and roundabouts.</p> <p>There are long sections of commercial activity (including Shirley TC) and other commercial uses along its length. A variety of property types reflect the diversity of uses.</p>



Figure 3.6.2: Example A34 Stratford Road (scale 1:2000)

Primary Typologies

Urban Corridors

Example: Lode Lane

Building Setbacks from the Road	Typical Land Uses	Key Characteristics
<p>Road Widths: The total road width varies from 15m (single carriageways) to 62m (dual carriageway and or slip roads to serve properties.</p> <p>Commercial Set backs: 2.5m- 123m</p> <p>Plots widths: 26m-296m</p> <p>Residential Setbacks: 3-14m</p> <p>Plots widths: 6m-14m</p>	<p>27% is commercial use (includes care homes)</p> <p>64% is residential</p> <p>9% Parkland.</p>	<p>The road is designed for high traffic volumes and has a number of signalled junctions and roundabouts which generally facilitate a vehicular dominated environment.</p> <p>There is a mix of development along the route with variety in building styles and heights. A common characteristic for both residential and commercial uses is a long set back from the street.</p>



Figure 3.6.3: Example Lode Lane (scale 1:2000)

Primary Typologies

3.7 Residential Streets

The vast majority of the built up parts of the Borough is made up of residential streets. These are found across north Solihull, the central urban core and the rural area. Residential streets are defined where the majority of frontage development is for residential use. At the local level however this may include some small retail parades, businesses and other community uses which are not of sufficient critical mass as to be recognised under another typology.

Residential streets come in a wide variety of forms across the Borough from large-scale planned estates to linear ribbon development and from smaller development expansions to backland schemes. The nature of residential streets is commonly informed by the period in which they were developed.

In the following section of this report the residential street typology is sub-divided into a series of secondary typologies demonstrating the extent of residential variation.



Figure 3.7.1: Residential Development in Solihull

Residential Typologies

Scale and Grain

Residential streets by their very definition generally exhibit a domestic scale. Standard width streets are lined by predominately two storey dwelling houses set within defined plots. The size of houses and plots and therefore the resulting grain of development however varies considerably depending on the type of properties i.e. terraced, semi-detached or detached. There is a high proportion of semi-detached and detached properties in the Borough, particularly within the central urban core. The majority of properties are set back from the street behind a front garden or driveway which often contributes to a 'green' character.

There are also a number of flats and apartments in the Borough, albeit these represent only a small proportion of the current stock. The scale and grain of flats and apartments can vary considerably. Some adopt very large building footprints and are low rise while others have a smaller footprint but extend up to 15 storeys in height.

Land Use

Land use is predominately residential. However, these areas also frequently include small scale retail and business uses, health care, schools and community uses. Open spaces in the form of parks, playing fields and nature sites also form a part of many residential areas and provide visual breaks in what is predominately a 'hard' environment.

Network Characteristics

Residential areas are often comprised of a complex network of streets, cycleways and footpaths. This is largely as a result of bringing together generations of incremental growth and expansion. Where areas have been planned on a larger scale they have tended to adopt the prevalent trends in housing layout of the time. In North Solihull for example the layout is based on the Radburn style which sought to separate vehicular and pedestrian movement. In Monkspath development is laid out in predominately cul-de-sac formation typical of volume house-builders during the 1980's and 1990's.

Analysis

The analysis of residential streets is set out in the following section. The residential street typology is sub-divided into a series of secondary typologies demonstrating the extent of residential variation.

Residential Typologies



Pre-Twentieth Century

Housing in the Borough dates from the C15th onwards. Much of the surviving earlier stock is found within the rural area and Solihull Town Centre. It wasn't until the latter years of the nineteenth century that the Borough experienced major residential growth for Birmingham based industrialists and artisans. Within this period came the development of small villas around rural villages and large houses along the main roads.

Solihull did not experience the development of mass terraced housing during the Victorian period which dominates other towns and cities. Residential development remained fairly small-scale until well into the C20th. The result is a small but significantly important stock of historic residential properties concentrated around the rural villages and dispersed through the urban area along strategic corridors.



Interwar

Major growth in residential development in Solihull began to take place in 1920's and continued through the interwar years. Incremental housing estates emerged effectively 'infilling' the gap between south-east Birmingham and Solihull and rapidly expanding the central urban area. Housing also developed in this period around some of the larger rural settlements of Hampton-in-Arden, Meriden, Ballsall Common, Knowle and Dorridge.

The housing stock that developed during the interwar years is typical of the layout and style of housing across the country at this period. Housing is predominately 2 storey with a high proportion of semi-detached properties laid out along wide linear streets with generous front and rear gardens delineated by low walls and hedgerows. Standard domestic architectural details such as bay windows are prevalent.



Post-war

The immediate post-war period between 1950 to 1960 saw further expansion of the urban areas in large estates around Elmdon, Shirley and Kingshurst. Houses are generally laid out to wide streets with grass verges and tree planting. Street lengths tend to be shorter than those in the interwar period and gardens are generally smaller resulting in a slightly tighter urban grain and a medium density of development.

Houses tend to be two storey in height and of brick construction with some rendered sections. Development on the whole tends to have less architectural detail than the interwar properties with on-plot car parking typically provided alongside a smaller front garden. Boundaries are typically delineated with a low wall or hedge.



Sixties

During the 1960's major residential expansion took place in what is now the north of the Borough at Chelmsley Wood. This area did not form part of the administrative area of Solihull until 1974. Permission was granted for Birmingham to develop an estate for 50,000 people in the area as part of the cities' slum clearance programme. The estate which now forms part of the North Solihull Regeneration Zone and which is excluded from this study accounts for the vast majority of 1960's residential properties in Solihull.

Residential development during this period is typically laid out to 'Radburn' principles which segregated pedestrian routes from vehicle routes through estates and created a series of cul-de-sacs accessed from a central loop road. This marks a fairly radical shift in the layout of housing from previous generations and was implemented on a grand scale. Terraced housing and flats up to four storeys in height are common. Development is uniformly set back from the pavement edge and front gardens are typically laid to lawn.



Seventies

This was a period of relatively limited residential growth across the Borough with the largest extensions taking place in Knowle and Shirley. Housing estates were typically characterised by cul-de-sacs and short curved streets with access by car integral to the layout design. Access by vehicles often takes precedence over access for pedestrians and some estates provide central parking courts

Streets are relatively wide with properties set back from the pavement edge. Development is usually of a medium density and often comprising a high proportion of detached houses. There is a prevalent use of buff brick, render and vertical timber cladding associated with the 'chalet' style of houses popular at this time.

House types and styles within a street tend to be uniform in character. Front gardens are typically open lawn with some low hedging to delineate boundaries.



Eighties

The urban area of Solihull experienced two major phases of residential expansion during this period at Hillfield and Monkspath. The rural areas of Knowle and Dorridge also saw substantial growth at this time.

The layout of development from this period is often contained by a main vehicular route around the perimeter of the estate. Long cul-de-sacs lead off this main route which in turn lead into a series of shorter cul-de-sacs. Developments of this nature are notoriously difficult to navigate and pedestrian permeability through the estates is severely constrained.

Streets are typically wide and houses follow the alignment of the road with varying set backs. Parking is usually on-plot at the front of the property and the provision of garages is high. Front gardens are not usually demarked. Houses are typically brick with a pitched roof. There are examples of where elements of the interwar housing and interwar architectural style have been copied and replicated.



Nineties

The 1990's saw generally limited levels of residential growth. Small extensions to existing housing areas took place most notably in Marston Green and Balsall Common. Housing areas have few direct links into the wider road network. Streets within the estates are short, curved and often terminate in a cul-de-sac. The number of through-routes for both vehicles and pedestrians is limited which reduces permeability through the development.

Plots sizes and set backs are varied and do not always follow the alignment of the road. On plot parking and/or garages are provided creating breaks in the building line. The level of private amenity space is relatively low and overall housing density is higher.

House types are generally 2 storey of brick construction with some render elements and mock Tudor detailing (Also characteristic of interwar and 1950's housing). Roadside verges, small incidental areas of open space and low hedge planting are common.



Twenty-first century

The majority of residential growth during this period can be attributed to the building of a new settlement of over 1600 homes at Dickens Heath. Despite over 10 years in the planning, construction of the settlement started in 1997 and has continued throughout the first decade of the C21st. Elsewhere in the Borough development is comprised mainly of smaller infill sites.

Dickens Heath has been laid out to a settlement-wide masterplan and there is a clear network of streets and spaces with variety in street typologies from broad avenues to small lanes. Other smaller scale housing developments tend to favour cul-de-sac layouts although increasing use of shared surfaces and mews type layouts are common.

Plot sizes vary although gardens are generally quite small. On plot parking and garages are common. In central areas of Dickens Heath densities are very high and flats are prevalent. Parking courts, underground car parks and mews parking is common here.

Residential Typologies

3.8 Pre-Twentieth Century

Development in the Borough which pre-dates the start of the C20th accounts for a relatively small proportion of the current building stock. This can be attributed to the slow growth of the Borough's settlements prior to mass housing expansion (both public and private) in the interwar and post-war periods. However, there are historic residential buildings, which can be identified representing the distinct characteristics of their period from the C15th onwards.

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Surviving residential buildings from the C15th through to the C18th tend to be scattered across the Borough with notable examples in settlements in the rural area such as Knowle and Hampton in Arden. The oldest of these buildings are typically timber framed and associated with agriculture and rural lifestyles predominant at the time. Development plots tend to be irregular in formation and reflect the incremental growth of the villages.

The latter part of the C19th and early C20th saw the emergence of larger brick built dwellinghouses. These properties built for the middle classes and wealthy industrialists in areas such as Olton. Such buildings tend to be grand in scale aligned along linear routes and originally occupied quite substantial plots

often near railway stations. Some of these plots have since been subdivided and built upon. There are some examples of smaller Victorian terraced houses with thin narrow plots aligned along short straight streets although these are relatively scarce.

STREETS

The rural villages tend to have an irregular pattern of streets and tend to be closely knit reflecting a typically rural village character with buildings directly fronting onto pavements. By contrast the later Victorian development tends to occupy wide straight and often tree lined streets.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Those residential buildings that date from the C15th to C17th utilise local traditional materials and tend to be timber framed. Brick infill panels have often replaced the original wattle and dorb or lath and plaster and are either left unfinished or colour washed white. Roofing materials vary; a large proportion are now tile although there are a few surviving examples of thatch. The height of buildings from this period is typically low, most being single storey with attic. Window openings tend to be small and gabled dormers a regular feature.

Residential buildings of the C18th or late C17th are typically built in local red brick, sometimes with stone dressing, generally have a tiled

roof, sash windows and door surrounds. Such houses tend to be two storey (sometimes with attic) with three storeys being the exception rather than the rule. A very few C18th or C19th houses are faced with sandstone rubble. Some grander houses of this period are faced with Ashlar stone, for example Meriden Hall, others with stucco over brick, for example, Malvern Hall.

A majority of C19th and early C20th residential buildings are brick with tiled or slated roofs, sash windows and embellished brickwork. The use of stucco or colour washed render is rare but some examples can be found. Berkswell Hall for example is faced with stucco over local brick and 2-10 Wilsons Road in Knowle is faced with stucco. The houses from this period are generally two storey or two storey with attic. The influence of the vernacular revival is strong in design and especially detailing such as applied timber decoration and roughcast render.

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PRE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Solihull Manor House built 1495 timber framed Grade II* listed.



Chimneys



Smaller terraced housing in a rural setting - note the careful rhythm of the windows.



Use of dormer windows to create upper floor in roof space.

First floor accommodation is in the eaves of the roof.

Traditional Victorian Terrace.

Grand scale of Victorian/ Edwardian villas - 3 storey and large plots.



Residential Typologies

3.9 Interwar

Perhaps the most distinctive typology is the interwar period of housing development. Both those properties built for social renting and for market have a uniformity which creates a distinct character, within 'estates'.

Private housing built for market sale

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Plot sizes of interwar houses are generous, and are deeper and wider than that of most housing in the Borough, the density of development is therefore low. There is a greater feeling of space in these areas. Streets are typically characterised by one building form for example semi-detached properties. This provides uniformity and is a distinctive characteristic of the streetscene.

Block sizes are typically large allowing for long gardens, and on plot parking /driveways. Some plots are over 70m in length. The overall depth of blocks are therefore often in excess of 100m.

STREETS

Roads are relatively wide and often have grass verges and street trees creating 'leafy' and attractive character streets. Roads vary in length, but are relatively long, creating a sense of openness.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Housing is typically 2 storey and semi detached housing or large detached houses with on plot parking. Front garden boundaries are typically low brick walls often with clipped hedges.

The wider proportions of the front elevation are emphasised by the large bay window which is characteristic of market housing of this period. The classic design of front doors of this period is a landscape panel at top of the door a high set door handle with three vertical panels below.

The roof line of interwar housing is often hipped sometimes with a smaller projecting gable feature. Chimneys add interest and rhythm to the roofscape

Whilst there is a very distinctive character to this period of housing and an overarching uniformity to the streetscene development is not identical. Variations to porch detailing, / of front gardens and in more recent year's dormer style extensions provides variety and interest to the street.

INTER - WAR



Large detached property with a sloping garage roof to eaves. The steeply pitched roof is characterised by its step apex and 3 chimneys. The porch has been altered to accommodate a glazed entrance.



Large detached property has been extended at the first floor. A 'mono' pitch roof houses the garage and porch extension.

Semi - detached property with steeply pitched and hipped roof and central chimney. The wider proportions of the house is emphasised by a large bay window and the horizontal rendered panel between the ground and first floor. The front door is original and exhibits the classic landscape panel at the top, high set door handle and 3 vertical panels below.



Garage and first floor extension with non original glazed porch detail

Semi-detached property with steeply pitched hipped roof and central chimney. The large bay window is emphasised by the horizontal tiled panel between the ground and first floor. A ground floor and first floor side extension alters the proportions of the house. The original arched porch has been glazed.

Residential Typologies

Housing originally built for council tenants

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Like the market housing built at this time, plot sizes of interwar houses are relatively generous, compared with much of the housing in the borough. The density of development is low and leads to a greater feeling of space.

Blocks sizes are relatively large typically between 90 - 100m allowing for plots often in excess of over 40m. Some deeper blocks in the borough contain allotments to the rear of garden boundaries.

STREETS

Roads are relatively wide and often have grass verges and street trees creating 'leafy' and attractive character streets. These streets often open up to 'greens' which are well over looked by housing development, thus providing a well surveyed area for informal recreation and an attractive setting and feature in the townscape.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Housing which was originally built as social housing is also predominantly semi detached, and 2 storeys. The design is however more simplistic and tends to appear relatively square in form in comparison to the private market housing.

Flat roof canopy porches were typically flat roof canopy and front doors had a single landscape panel at the top of the door, a high set door handle with one large vertical panel below. Parking was provided on-street.

ROOFSCAPE

Houses have hipped roofs and chimneys add interest and rhythm to the roofscape.

Whilst the form of this housing has a distinct character, alterations to porches, front doors and extensions to properties in recent years provides variety in the streetscene. Where properties have larger front gardens, many have been landscaped to allow for on-plot parking.

INTER - WAR



Semi - detached houses have a 'cottage' scale and the use of materials is consistent throughout estates. Houses in general have steeply pitched roofs with chimneys. Whilst the original flat roof canopy porches have been retained windows and front doors have been replaced with more

Houses have a more simplistic design than private market housing. The windows and front doors are not original however the sizes of the openings generally are.

This slightly larger pair of semi detached properties still retains a 'cottage' scale and the use of materials is consistent with others built at this time. The bulk of the steeply pitched roofs has been broken up with the introduction of a small gable feature which emphasises the main entrance into the house. Windows and front doors have been replaced and extension/alterations to

This large detached properties is built from the same materials as other properties built in the estate at this time. A large gable feature breaks up the bulk of the steeply pitched roof. Windows have been replaced and a bay window has been introduced. A brick porch has been added.

Residential Typologies

3.10 Postwar

Extensive house building took place during this decade across the Borough. The estates have a distinctive character and typically provided urban extensions to existing developments.

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Houses tend to be built to a higher density than those built in the interwar period. Plot sizes are typically narrower and have much smaller gardens than houses built in the previous period.

Block sizes are still however relatively large and between 60-90m deep allowing for on-plot parking/driveways and a decent size rear garden.

STREETS

Streets are typically shorter and have a tighter grain than the interwar period. On-plot parking provides a sense of openness in the streetscene and the occurrence of grass verges and occasional street trees, enhances the quality of the public realm.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Housing is typically 2 storeys however it is not unusual to find developments of bungalows within the streetscene. Parking is provided on-plot and low walls often demark front garden boundaries.

Housing built in this period has limited architectural detailing. Dwellings are built of a brown/beige brick with small sections of vertical banding typically tiles. This treatment emphasises the relatively square bays which contain large picture windows.

ROOFSCAPE

The roofs tend to have a lower pitch and houses built towards the end of the 1950s do not have chimneys. This could be a result of the 1956 Clean Air Act that was passed which called for reduction in carbon emissions in urban areas.

Whilst there is a very distinctive character to this period of housing and an overarching uniformity to the streetscene, more recent alterations to porches, loft extensions and the personalisation of front gardens has created a degree of variety in the streetscene.

POST WAR



Semi-detached property, with a square bay and oblong picture window.

Semi-detached property, with a square bay and oblong picture window. The roof has a central chimney and a lower pitch than interwar housing. The original arched porch has been glazed.

Semi-detached property, with large oblong picture windows. Sloping garage roof to eaves.

Semi-detached property, with gabled garage roof. The original porch has been glazed.



Semi-detached property, with a square bay and oblong picture window. The roof has a lower pitch than interwar housing and has a projecting gable feature. The property has been extended with a shallow hipped roof to provide a larger porch and garage for the property.

Semi-detached property, with large oblong picture windows. Garages project from the main building line and have flat roofs. Properties have been personalised with shutters and 'corner' style porches.

Semi-detached property, with large oblong picture windows and feature circular window. Mono pitched roof to porch and garage at the ground floor emphasis the horizontal axis of this house type.

Residential Typologies

3.11 1960's Housing

Much of the house building at this time took place in the north of the Borough and is characteristic of the 'radburn' layout. The 'radburn' concept is a master planning approach which sought to separate pedestrian and vehicular movement. The fronts of properties are therefore often accessed via footpaths whilst vehicle access is provided to the rear of the property.

Housing development at this time also represents a growth in volume house builders such as Taylor Woodrow and Wimpey and therefore there is often a 'blue print' to the house types.

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Houses tend to be built to a higher density in this period. In the north of the borough, plot sizes are typically narrower and terraced housing with relatively small back gardens dominate. Some examples of apartment blocks can also be found in this area of the Borough.

Where development has taken place in the form of extensions to settlements elsewhere in the Borough plot sizes are generally larger and

semi detached and detached properties are more common.

Block sizes are typically 60m deep. Plots lengths vary according to house type; Terraced housing has the smallest plot length of 20-30m whilst detached houses have plots lengths up to 35m. This often reflects the location of development and the market the development is intended for.

STREETS

Streets are characterised by a grid of cul-de-sacs to access parking areas to the rear of properties and garage courts are common place. Pedestrian footpaths provide access to front doors over small areas of open space which provide an element of landscaping and character to the street. Front garden boundaries are often not defined, therefore the distinction between public and private space can be difficult to ascertain.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Housing is typically 2 storeys however it is not unusual to find flats of up to 15 storeys within the streetscene.

Housing styles of this period vary and often reflect the volume house builders design preference. There are however some common characteristics of residential units built at this time. The architectural style is relatively minimal with flat wall surfaces and large oblong 'picture' windows.

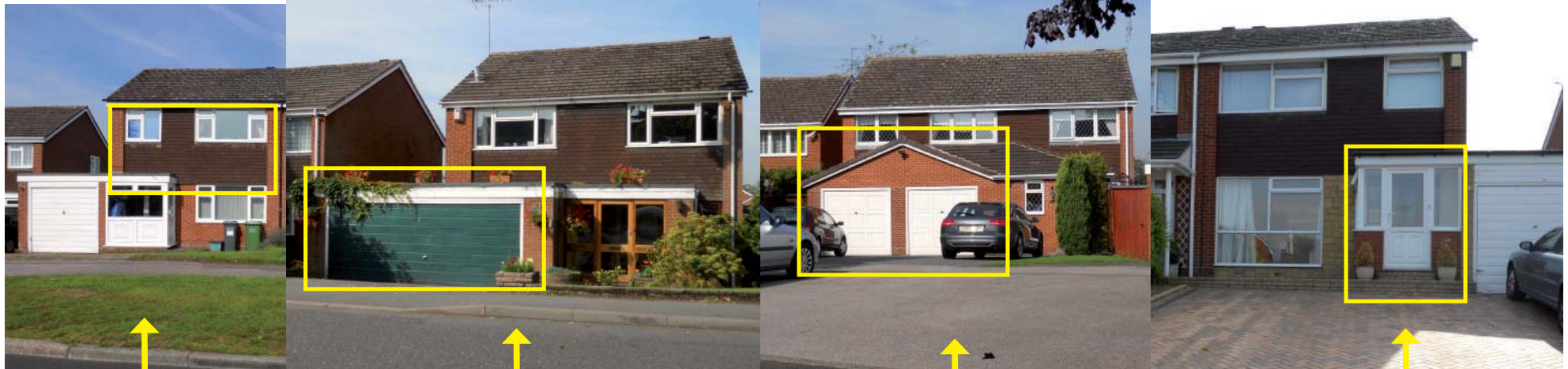
Housing built in this period are of a brown/beige brick with sections of vertical tile cladding or white painted weather boarded panels between the ground and first floor windows.

ROOFSCAPE

The roofs tend to have a lower pitch and some are flat. Chimneys are not characteristic of this period. Roof tiles are brown or grey concrete.

Whilst there is a very distinctive character to this period of housing and an overarching uniformity to the streetscene development is not identical. Recent alterations to porches, window detailing, and the personalisation of front gardens provides a degree of variation in the streetscene.

1960's

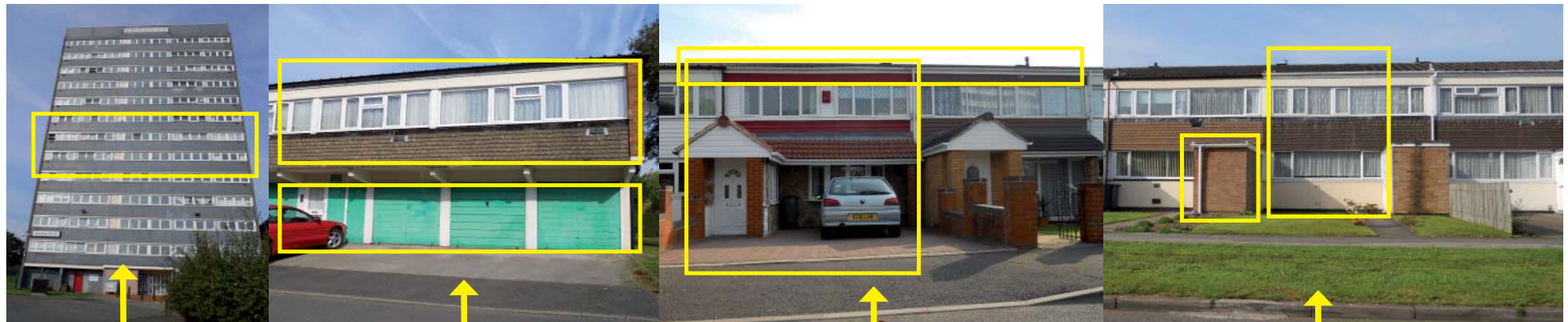


Semi-detached property. Flat oblong 'picture' windows with horizontal banding in concrete tile hanging.

Detached property with large projecting garage and porch.

The roof line of the garage and porch have been altered.

Porch has been modernised and now addresses the road.



Tower blocks provide landmark features within estates. Oblong 'picture' windows and horizontal banding are characteristic.

Rows of garages with flats above are common place and provide parking facilities for neighbouring properties.

Terraced housing with on plot parking. Properties have relatively flat roofs and no chimneys.

Terraced housing with large oblong picture windows. Projecting porches with front doors facing away from the road. Properties have relatively flat roofs and no chimneys.

Residential Typologies

3.12 1970's Housing

House building in the Borough was relatively limited during this decade. Where development has taken place it typifies the architectural style of the time. Following specified guidelines in terms of building and space standards the result is a uniformed building type and this is reflected in the streetscene.

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Houses are frequently semi detached or detached. Rows of terrace housing can be found in compact areas typically where the housing was originally built for Council tenants.

Houses built for sale on the open market are relatively wide and typically have garages attached to the side of the main house. The front gardens provide for on-plot parking and an element of landscaping which is characteristically a section of lawn. This creates a sense of openness, uniformity and 'greenness' to the streetscene.

Terraced housing is much narrower than the other houses built at this time. Terraces are relatively short and often contain no more than 5 units. Some parking is provided on-plot

however garage courts which serve the terraces can often be found within its' perimeter block.

Block sizes are typically 60m deep. Plot lengths vary according to house type; Terrace housing has the smallest plot length of 22-28m whilst detached houses have plots lengths to 36m. This often reflects the location of development and the market the development is intended for.

STREETS

The street layout is dominated by cul de sacs. These are relatively straight and road junctions are characterised by grass verges. Throughout the streetscape areas of incidental open space can be found, these are typically mown grass with some tree planting. These spaces tend to add a sense of openness to the estate rather than provide areas of functional open space.

Housing within a street typically has a regular set back from the road which provides a continuous sense of enclosure throughout the street.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Houses are typically 2 storey and relatively uniform in height. Rows of bungalows also feature within estates and are uniform in height

and form.

Housing built at the early half of this decade very much reflects 1960's design particularly, council housing. Terraced houses and bungalows are typically a red/brown brick often with tiled horizontal sections between the top of the ground floor window and eaves.

Houses built for market sale often lack variety and reflect a rigid approach to building design guidance and the volume house builders 'off the peg' design preference. Houses are typically buff brick and, sections of white painted weather boarded panels are often used to enhance detailed elements of the building such as a gabled roof line.

Garages typically project from the main building line of the house and are often a prominent feature of the design.

ROOFSCAPE

Roofs are low pitch often with concrete brown tiles and both shallow hipped and gables rooflines are common. Chimneys do not appear on houses built in this period.

1970s



'Chalet style' detached houses are a signature house type of the 1970's. White horizontal weatherboarding panels add architectural detailing and the large oblong picture windows emphasise the horizontal axis of the dwelling. Garages are set forward of the main building line.

Shallow pitch roof with a dormer window. The large double garage is a prominent feature to this house type.

Shallow pitch roof with a 'pent' roofed dormer window. The garage is set in line with the rest of the house and the conservatory style porch with a 'cat slide' roof extends the roof line at the ground floor.

Shallow pitch gable roof with white weatherboarding panels at the first floor. The large double garage and porch is set forward of the main building line. The first floor has been extended over the garage.



Shallow pitch gabled bungalow. Timber boarding emphasises the gable feature. Bow windows add interest to the frontage. The large car port provides a prominent feature to the house type.

Bungalow with shallow mono roof pitch. Large oblong picture windows and the projecting garage and car port provide horizontal emphasis.

Shallow pitched roof. White timber cladding emphasises the first floor on the right hand side. The garage projects forward from the main building line.

Shallow pitched roof. White timber cladding emphasises the first floor. The garage and flat roofed canopy porch project forward from the main building line and emphasise the horizontal axis.

Shallow pitch gabled roof with a narrow vertical section of brown timber cladding. The large double garage and porch is set forward of the main building line and emphasises the horizontal axis.

Residential Typologies

3.13 1980's Housing

Two large housing estates were built in the centre of Solihull during this period.

Developers during the 1980's often opted for a relatively 'flat' design which was quick and cheap to build. Estates were therefore typically built from a series of off the peg designs making small changes to these from site to site.

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Houses are typically detached often with comparable front and rear gardens dimensions. The relatively large front gardens provide for ample on plot parking and the landscaping of drive ways.

Plots are typically 30m in length, with block sizes 60m deep. This coupled with the dominance of winding cul-de-sacs provides an environment more suited to the car. This is also reflected in the level of provision of parking; it is not uncommon for properties to have integrated garages and room to park two cars on-plot.

STREETS

The street network is characterised by a series of winding cul-de-sacs which lead off a distributor road. Houses follow the alignment of the road and whilst street widths are relatively standard the somewhat large setbacks provides a sense of openness to the streetscene. The level of enclosure to the street however alters as the setbacks of properties vary in order to follow the alignment of the street.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Houses are traditionally 2 storeys and relatively uniform in height.

Housing styles of this period often lack variety and reflect the volume house builders 'off the peg' design preference. Housing built in this period are typically red or buff brick with Some elements of render or timber cladding. 'Cat slide' roofs at the ground floor to house porches and garages are a common feature and emphasise the wider section of the house.

ROOFSCAPE

Roofs lines are typically hipped with some occurrence of gabled features. Chimneys are uncommon but where they are used, more variation to the skyline is achieved.

1980s



The pitched roof extends over the garage and provides a porch to the main entrance to the house. The porch roof is often supported by a column/pillar which is a distinct feature of housing built at this time. The basic proportions of the houses types are similar, there is however some variation in the use of materials.

These properties have the characteristic hipped roof porch and the wider section of the house is emphasised by the gabled feature.



Small detached properties have pitched roofs which house the porch and garage. Small gable features above first floor windows add variety to the streetscene. Roof lines are hipped and do not have chimneys.

Window proportions reflect those of other houses built at this time. The use of pillars reinforces the entrance to the houses and creates an elevated status to this property.

The gable feature emphasises the narrow section of the dwelling. The main roof line is pitched and there are no chimneys.

The double garage provides a feature to the end of the cul-de-sac.

Residential Typologies

3.14 1990's Housing

The design of housing estates built in this period tend to move away from the prescriptive approach of the post war decades.

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Houses tend to be built to a relatively high density compared with the previous periods of building in the Borough. This is reflected in the size of the plots. Detached properties are typically 10m wide some however are up to nearly 15m wide where they provide for double garages. Terraced housing is more often just 5m wide.

Block sizes are typically around 50m deep. Plots lengths vary according to house type; Terrace housing has the smallest plot length of 20m whilst detached houses have plots lengths up to 30m. This often reflects the location of development and the market the development is intended for.

STREETS

The layout of streets is characterised by numerous winding cul-de-sacs which are often accessed off one central spine road which often can also be a cul-de-sac. Parking is typically on-plot, with integral garages. There are a number of parking courts these however more often than not serve the terraces housing which tend to have much small front gardens and therefore on plot parking is not feasible.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Housing styles of this period have great variation and reflects a departure from the more homogeneous estates built in the previous decades. There are however still 'off the peg' designs often these design depict elements of historic architectural styles. Such design typically reflects the volume house builders design preference or their reading of the market demand. The attempt to create character in estates built in the 1990's by varying the design of houses within a street is also carried through to the use of materials. Continuity in the design of the streetscene is therefore often lost.

ROOFSCAPE

Housing developments are typically 2 – 2.5 storeys in height and rooflines vary according to the architectural style of the dwelling. The occurrence of chimneys is few and far between. Apartment buildings often exhibit architectural styles which are reminiscent of historic building.

The relatively high density and the young age of estates means that many of the houses still appear as they were intended, when built. Personalisation of front gardens has occurred but the variety of different house types dominates the streetscene.

1990's



Short row of narrow plot terrace housing, which illustrates varying architectural styles and approaches to parking provision within a street scene. The roof line varies and there are no chimneys.

Garage detailing changes throughout estates.

Row of terraced houses, these properties however stand forward and appear at first glance as a pair of semi detached properties this is reinforced by the introduction of a carport with accommodation in the roof. The roof line varies and there are no chimneys.

Apartment block, has 'regency' proportions which is offset by the more modern porch retailing. The development opens directly onto the street.



Houses in the same street with the same architectural proportions however the properties have a different material finish which creates variety in the street scene. 'cat slide' roofs to garages are characteristic of this housing style.

Large detached property in the same street as those shown to the left. Brick features and banding create interest to the facade. The different houses types and use of materials creates variety in the street scene.

A short row of terraced houses, architectural detailing of porch detail varies. End properties provide 'bookends' to the terrace.

Residential Typologies

3.15 2000 Housing

Recent residential development reflects the government housing density policy at the time. This was to build at a minimum of 30 dwelling per hectare. There was also a drive to maximise densities in order to ensure viability of community facilities such as bus services. The aim was to create sustainable communities.

The importance of understanding the site context of new developments has also become part of the forefront of planning process. A plethora of documents promoting and enhancing local identity have been published in order to prevent the occurrence of volume house building of estates which can be found in many parts of the country.

PLOTS/BLOCKS

Residential areas are built at a high density, reflecting the increases in the price of land and the need to maximise the economic viability of schemes, whilst also achieving the government's minimum housing density targets.

Plot widths vary depending on the house types which often changes within the street scene.

Block sizes are typically around 40m deep

however some are as small as 35m. Blocks over 50m deep are few and far between and often provide for large detached houses which are aimed at the top end of the market or where parking courts form part of the block. Plot lengths vary according to house type; 'mews' housing has the smallest plot length of 16m whilst detached houses have plots lengths up to 30m. This often reflects the location of development and the market the development is intended for.

STREETS

The street layout is characterised by a series of cul-de-sacs and mews type streets. This development approach maximises the land area for development.

DWELLING TYPOLOGY

Recent housing styles vary and often reflect the volume house builders design preference. Some developments are more contemporary in their architectural design, this may reflect the context of the site and/or the willingness of the developer to adopt an interpretive approach to the design. In estates such as Dickens Heath a Design Brief was produced which specified character areas and building design preferences within different parts of the development as part

of the master plan.

Building materials during the last decade are extremely varied and include, brick, stone, render, timber, cladding and powder coated aluminium. The use of materials typically reflects the intended vision for the development. More traditional developments tend to have a palette of materials restricted to brick and render. Contemporary building tends to have taken place on infill site. These take a more minimalist design approach with more geometric proportions and the greater use of modern methods of construction. The use of timber cladding and powder coated aluminium window and door frames is perhaps the signature of residential modern architecture of the 'noughties'

ROOFSCAPE

Roofscape are varied and often reflect the site context and therefore the precedent may have already been set.

Twenty-first Century



Large detached housing

Semi detached houses designed to appear as one large house. Porch and window detailing are retained to provide continuity in the design.

Housing design is reminiscent of London town houses.

2.5 Storey town houses are a common feature. This design of housing is typical of houses built in recent years.

Flats above garages and through-routes to parking courts/garages are common.



Code level 3 contemporary house design. Large powder coated framed windows, with timber cladding panels to add interest to the relatively flat facades. Solar panels on low pitched roof.

Two large detached houses next to each other with very different design approaches.

Modern housing design that copies the interwar style of building.

Three storey bay windows add articulation and increases levels of natural light within the building.

Section 4: Neighbourhood Characteristics

4.1 Introduction

The previous sections of this study provide an overview of the key characteristics of the Borough and identifies typologies of the built form. It is evident that the Borough has a diverse and evolving character which should be both conserved and promoted in order to foster its identity.

The following section therefore builds on the analysis contained in the preceding sections and considers the local characteristics of key neighbourhoods in the Borough. The neighbourhoods boundaries have been drawn to reflect other studies carried out by the Council in order that a comparative can be drawn and a profile of each of the neighbourhoods can be established.

Within this section the following neighbourhoods are analysed:

Neighbourhoods

4.2 Central Urban Core

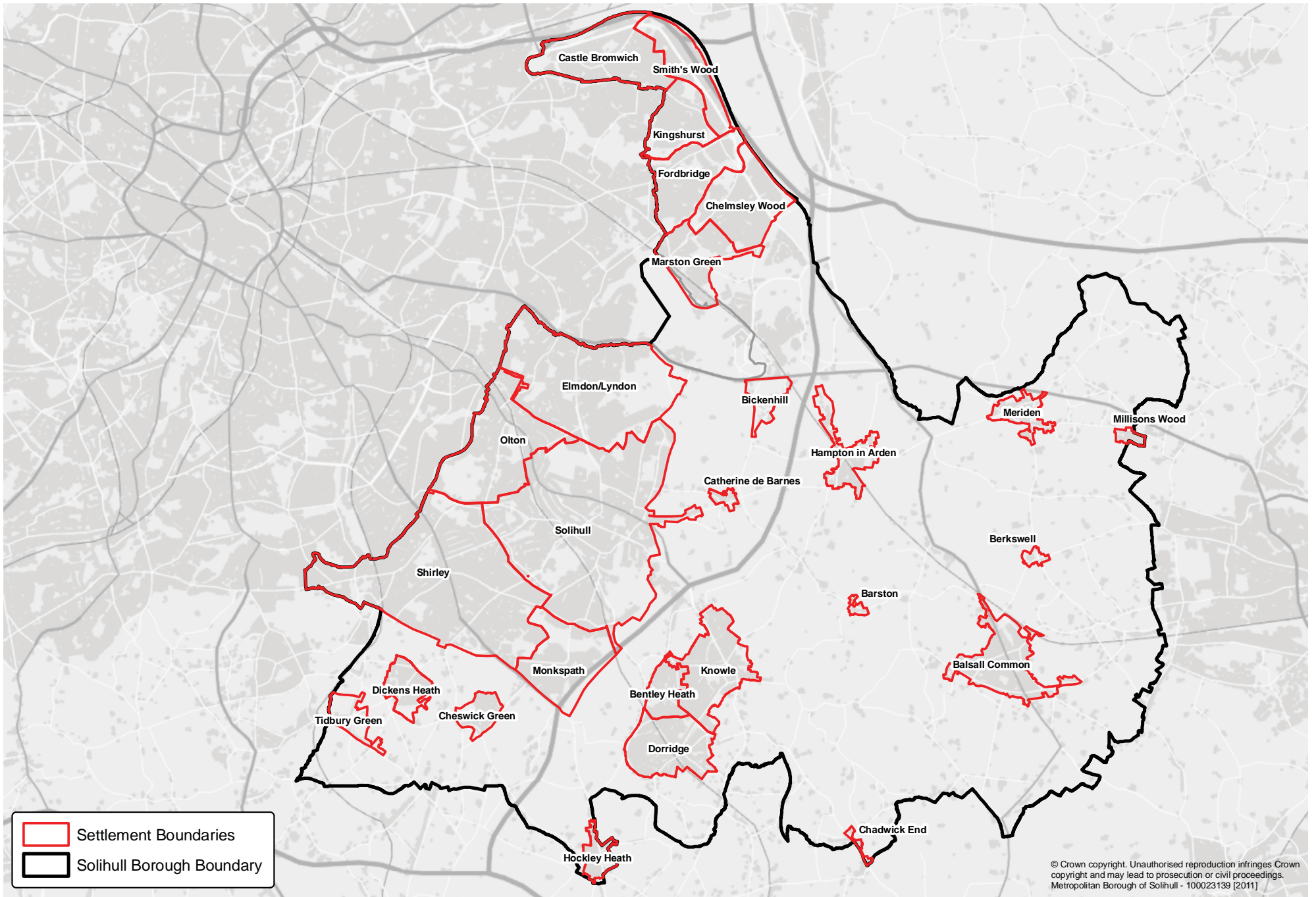
Shirley
Monkspath
Olton
Elmdon/Lyndon
Solihull

4.3 North Solihull

Castle Bromich
Smiths Wood
Kingshurst
Fordbrudge
Chelmsley Wood
Marston Green

4.4 Rural Settlements

Meriden
Hampton in Arden
Catherine de Barnes
Balsall Common
Knowle
Bentley Heath
Dorridge
Hockley Heath
Cheswick Green
Dickens Heath
Tidbury Green



Shirley



Key Characteristics

- Shirley is in the west of the Borough, its northern edge and western edge are drawn by the Borough boundary with Birmingham. Solihull lies to the east, Monkspath to the south east and Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green lie to the south.
- Shirley is a mixed use neighbourhood with access to a range of amenities and with good transport links to Birmingham, Solihull and the M42.
- Shirley is in a built up area with a number of areas of public open space. These areas of open space provide both formal and informal areas for recreational activities for residents and visitors.
- The urban environment has grown significantly since 1930. The residential development therefore reflects many architectural styles and exhibit the typical characteristic of development built during a particular decade.
- The Stratford Road A34 provides an urban corridor running North to South through the centre of Shirley. This is a wide and heavily trafficked route with varying scales of development along it. Large big box development can be found along the southern section of the corridor and is dominated by large individual retail units surrounded by extensive areas of surface parking. Towards the northern section of the corridor Shirley town centre demonstrates more High Street characteristics, here the development has a finer grain and reflects a more pedestrian scale, independent business are common place.
- There is no overriding or typical character however the diversity of the A34 corridor creates a vibrant quality to the heart of Shirley and primary focus for activity in the locality.
- Schools campus' are distributed throughout the residential areas, and provide community hubs.
- Residential areas are characteristic of traditional housing suburbs. Development is medium density with gardens to the front and rear of properties.



Strengths

- Mixed use vibrant neighbourhood, with a wide range of retail and community amenities.
- Good transport links to local services and wider strategic networks.
- Good public transport links to Solihull Town Centre and Birmingham City Centre
- Good access to public open space including Shirley Park and Colebrook Playing Fields.
- There are three Local Nature Reserves in the area, Palmers Rough to the north, Bills Wood to the south and Hillfield Park to the east.



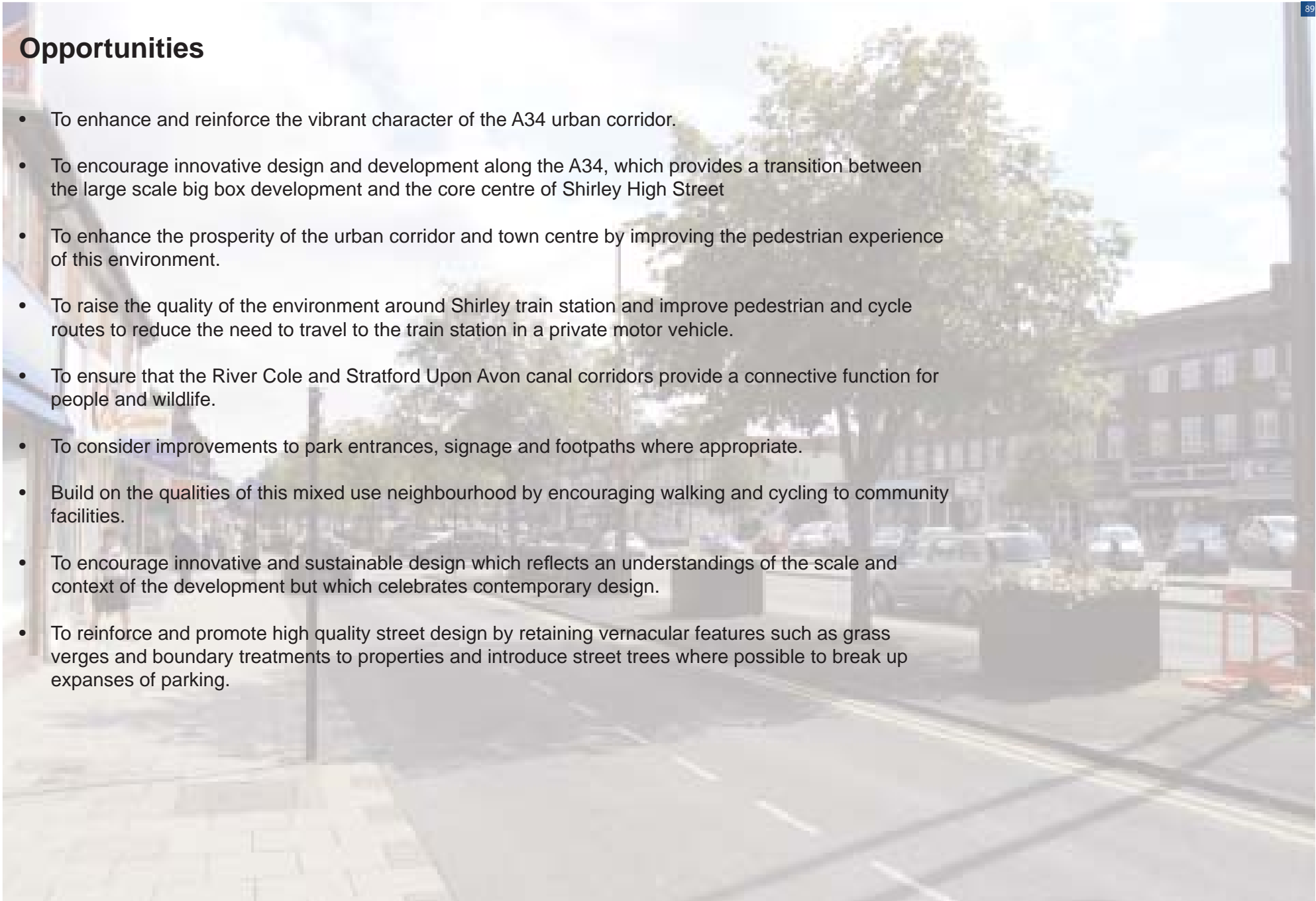
Weaknesses

- The pedestrian experience along the A34 and other popular vehicle routes such as Haslucks Green Road is poor.
- The local identity for the neighbourhood is not obvious.
- The street furniture and paving looks tired in key public areas, such as Shirley High Street, the A34 corridor and Haslucks Green Road.
- To the west of Shirley known as Solihull Lodge and to the East of Shirley there is a deficiency in the amount of accessible green public space.

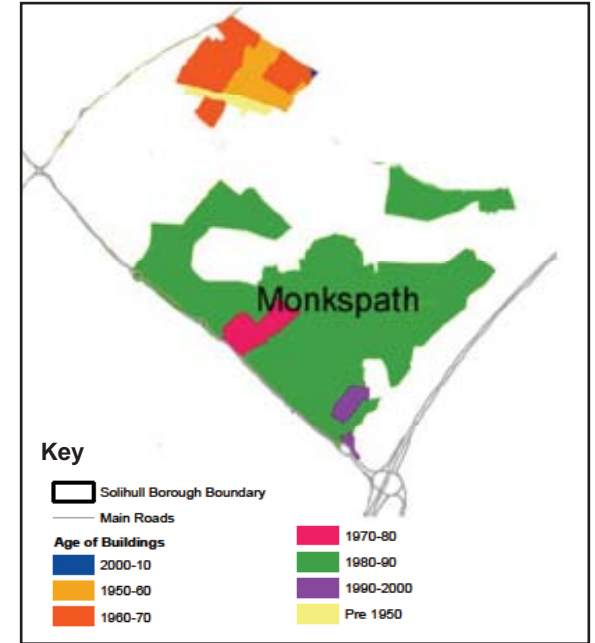


Opportunities

- To enhance and reinforce the vibrant character of the A34 urban corridor.
- To encourage innovative design and development along the A34, which provides a transition between the large scale big box development and the core centre of Shirley High Street
- To enhance the prosperity of the urban corridor and town centre by improving the pedestrian experience of this environment.
- To raise the quality of the environment around Shirley train station and improve pedestrian and cycle routes to reduce the need to travel to the train station in a private motor vehicle.
- To ensure that the River Cole and Stratford Upon Avon canal corridors provide a connective function for people and wildlife.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- Build on the qualities of this mixed use neighbourhood by encouraging walking and cycling to community facilities.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular features such as grass verges and boundary treatments to properties and introduce street trees where possible to break up expanses of parking.



Monkspath



Key

- Solihull Borough Boundary
- Main Roads
- Age of Buildings**
- 2000-10
- 1950-60
- 1960-70
- 1970-80
- 1980-90
- 1990-2000
- Pre 1950

Key

- Borough Boundary
- Neighbourhood Boundary
- Green Belt
- A34 Urban Corridor
- Campus Development
- Open Space
- Big Box Development
- Core Centre
- Residential
- Train Line
- Private Green Space

Key Characteristics

- Monkspath is confined by the M42 and the adjacent green belt to the south east and the A34 to the south west. To the north, landscaped open space provides a buffer between the residential area and the boundary of Solihull.
- Monkspath is predominantly a residential area and has good transport links to Birmingham, Solihull and the M42.
- It has large areas of open space which provide both formal and informal areas for recreational activities for both residents and visitors.
- The peripheral areas of open space provide a back drop to the housing areas and effectively segregates development from the busy road networks which circumnavigate Monkspath.
- Monkspath exhibits typical characteristics of 1980's housing layouts and is dominated by detached and semis detached houses which follow a windy cul de sac street layout.
- The Stratford Road A34 provides an urban corridor running along the southern boundary. This is a wide and heavily trafficked route with varying scales of development along it. Large big box development can be found along the southern section of the corridor where it meets Junction 4 of the M42. Here the A34 is dominated by large individual retail units surrounded by extensive areas of surface parking. Towards the northern section of the corridor residential development can be found which is typically set back from the carriage way behind a landscape buffer.
- Monkspath is characteristically a suburban housing area which sits within a busy highways network.
- There is one school campus' within the residential area.



Strengths

- It is a popular, residential housing area with wide well kept leafy roads.
- Modest detached housing with on plot parking and gardens to both the front and rear.
- Much of the northern part of the site is within walking distance of Solihull Town Centre.
- Monkspath benefits from having convenient links to the strategic highways network and Widney Manor Train Station which provides a regular service to Birmingham city centre.
- There are a number Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites in the area. Access to public open space is also good.



Weaknesses

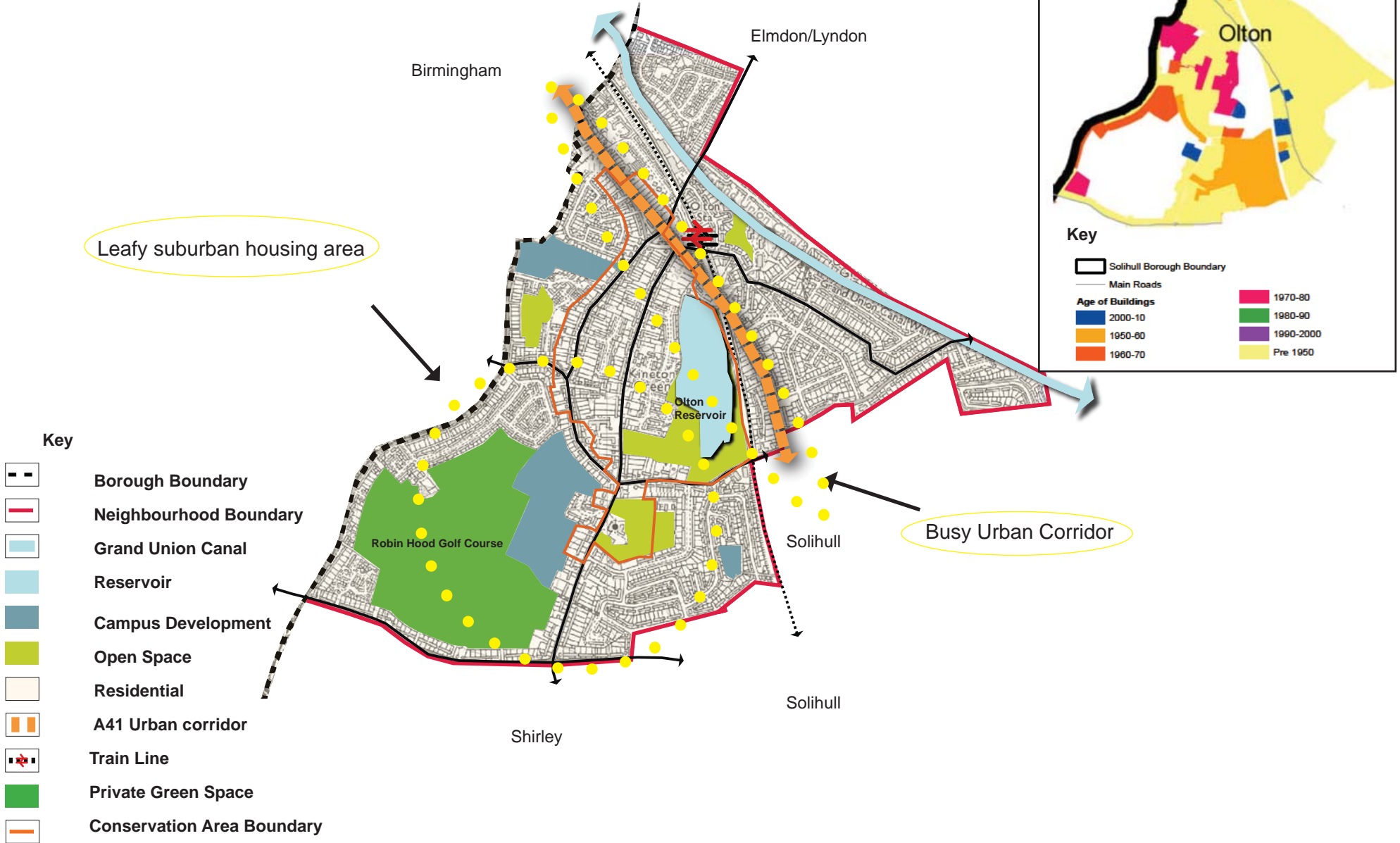
- There is a limited range of local services and amenities in the immediate locality.
- The local identity for the neighbourhood is not obvious.
- The cul-de-sac layout of the development does not promote walking despite its close proximity to Solihull town centre and Shirley town centre.



Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycling connections with neighbouring facilities in order to build on the mixed use capacity of surrounding neighbourhood areas such as Solihull town centre, Shirley town centre and Widney Manor Train Station.
- To encourage innovative design and sustainable development along the A34 which provides a transition between the large scale big box development and the residential areas which are set back from the carriage way in order to improve both the quality, sense of enclosure and continuity of the street scene .
- Development which provides a transition between the large scale big box development and the residential areas which are set back from the carriage way is encouraged in order to improve both the quality and continuity in the street scene .
- To enhance the prosperity of the urban corridor by improving the pedestrian experience of this environment.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable housing design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To improve footpath and cycle links to public open space.
- To create a 'gateway' into the Borough, which utilises green infrastructure assets as appropriate.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design which safeguards the areas 'open' and 'leafy' character.

Olton



Key Characteristics

- Olton lies on the western boundary of the Borough with Birmingham. Elmdon and Lyndon are to the north, Solihull to the south east and Shirley is to the South.
- Olton is characterised by relatively wide streets and tree lined avenues are not uncommon.
- Olton is dominated by detached and semi detached interwar housing, however there is a concentration of Victorian and Edwardian town houses along St Bernards Road and Kineton Green Road which add an historic character to this area of the Borough.
- Whilst Olton Reservoir, Robinhood Golf course and Langley Hall Park are largely hidden behind the building line their substantial size and their abundance of mature vegetation enhances the leafy character of this area of the Borough.
- Olton's train station provides services to Birmingham City Centre and the A41 provides a strategic line to the suburbs of Birmingham and Solihull.
- The A41 is a busy urban corridor. Whilst for the most part Olton is residential, there are a number of small retail units along the northern section towards the boundary with Birmingham.
- The canal provides an attractive corridor for walking and leisure pursuits.



Strengths

- It is a mature, popular residential housing area with wide well kept 'leafy' roads.
- Housing is built at a medium density and typically comprises large detached and semi detached houses with on plot parking with gardens to the front and rear.
- A number of schools serve the area, and provide a community hub.
- The Grand Union Canal provides an attractive place to walk and enjoy leisure pursuits.



Weaknesses

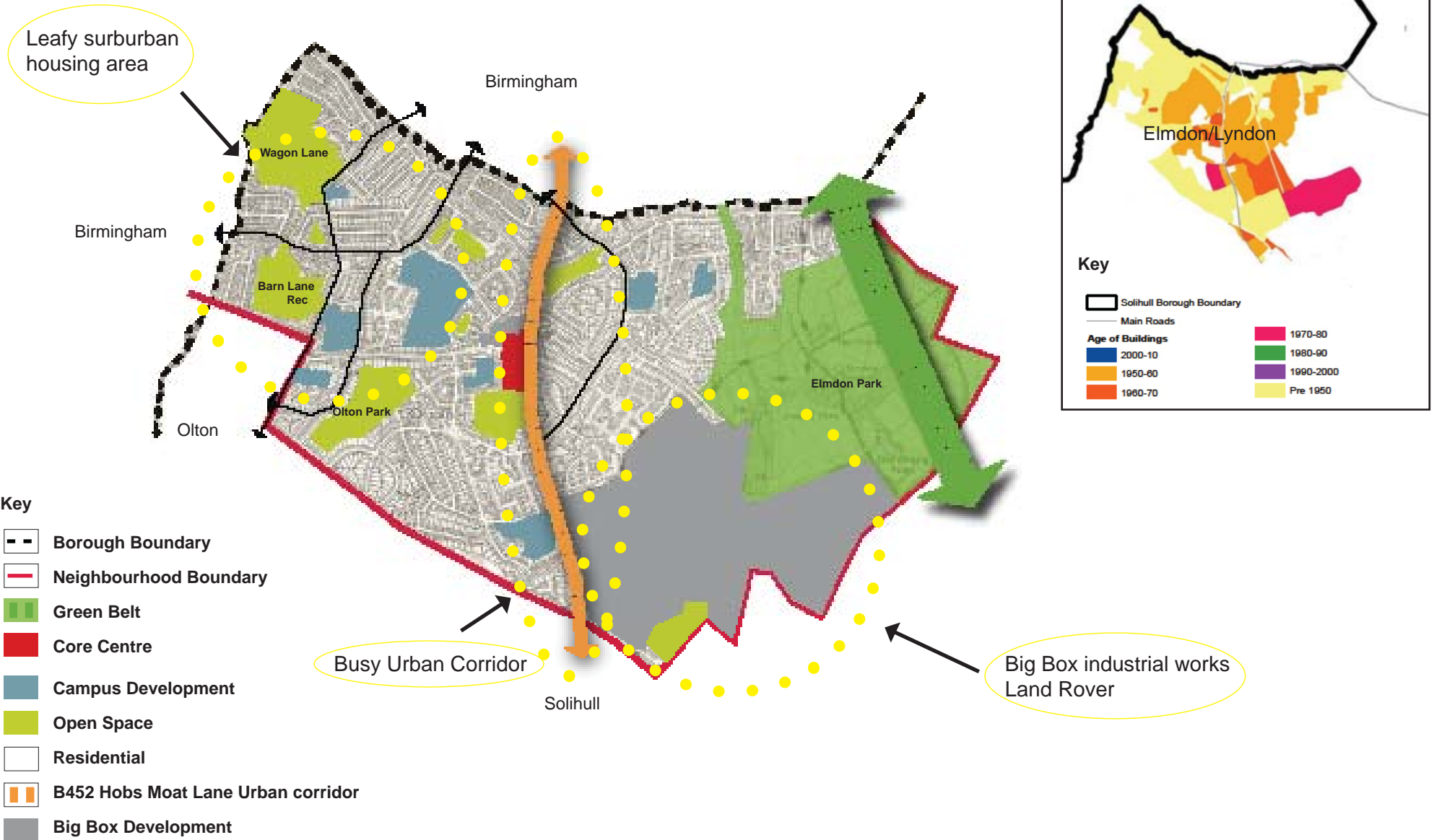
- There is a limited range of local services and amenities in the immediate locality.
- There is no obvious centre to Olton.
- The quality of the pedestrian environment along the A41 is poor.



Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycling connections with neighbouring facilities in order to build on the mixed use capacity of surrounding neighbourhood areas such as Solihull town centre, Shirley town centre and Olton train station.
- To raise the quality of the environment around Olton train station and improve pedestrian and cycle routes to reduce the need to travel to the train station in a private motor vehicle.
- To maximise access to recreational areas such as the Grand Union Canal and the parks.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To raise the quality of the pedestrian environment along the A41 to improve the quality of the public realm and provide a 'gateway' into Solihull from Birmingham.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable residential design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To provide small scale mixed use development which compliments the scale of the area.
- To ensure that the Grand Union canal corridor provide a connective function for people and wildlife.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design which safeguards the areas 'open' and 'leafy' character.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular features such as low brick walls and clipped hedge front garden boundary treatments to properties, and introduce street trees where possible to break up expanses of parking.

Elmdon/Lyndon



Key Characteristics

- Elmdon and Lyndon lie on the western boundary of the Borough with Birmingham. Olton and Solihull are to the south and the suburbs of Birmingham and the airport are to the north.
- Elmdon and Lyndon has a varied character. The B452 is a busy urban corridor which runs north to south through the centre of the neighbourhood. The eastern half of the neighbourhood is dominated by the Jaguar Land Rover Plant and Elmdon Park. The western half is characterised by medium density interwar and 1950's housing. There are a number of schools and areas of public open space which provide popular areas for informal recreation.
- Elmdon Park is the largest municipal park in the Borough.
- The residential areas are dominated by detached and semi detached interwar housing or houses built in the 1950's. Housing is typically 2 storey with gardens to the front and rear.
- The B425 is a busy urban corridor and the uses along it vary. The southern section is dominated by the Jaguar Land Rover Plant and the central section provides a range of amenities such as a church, Solihull ice rink and a popular 1960's parade of retail units.



Strengths

- It is a mixed use neighbourhood with a good provision of local amenities.
- Housing is typically detached and semi detached built at a medium density with gardens to the front and rear.
- Elmdon Park provides an attractive and important community asset. There are three other large parks in the area Olton Park, Wagon Lane and Barn Lane Rec. There are also a further four Local Nature Reserves in this neighbourhood.
- The Jaguar Land Rover plant is a major employer for the Borough.



Weaknesses

- The B452 is a busy vehicular route and therefore does not offer an attractive pedestrian environment.
- The central parade of shops and the public realm to the front of these units appears dated.
- There is no train station to serve the neighbourhood.

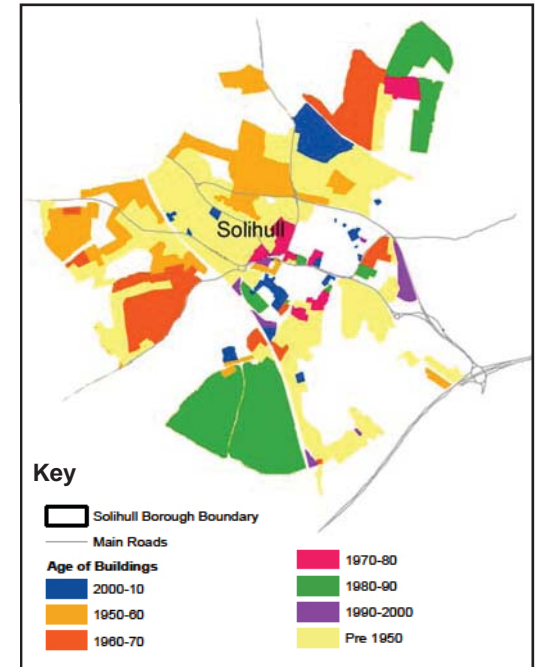
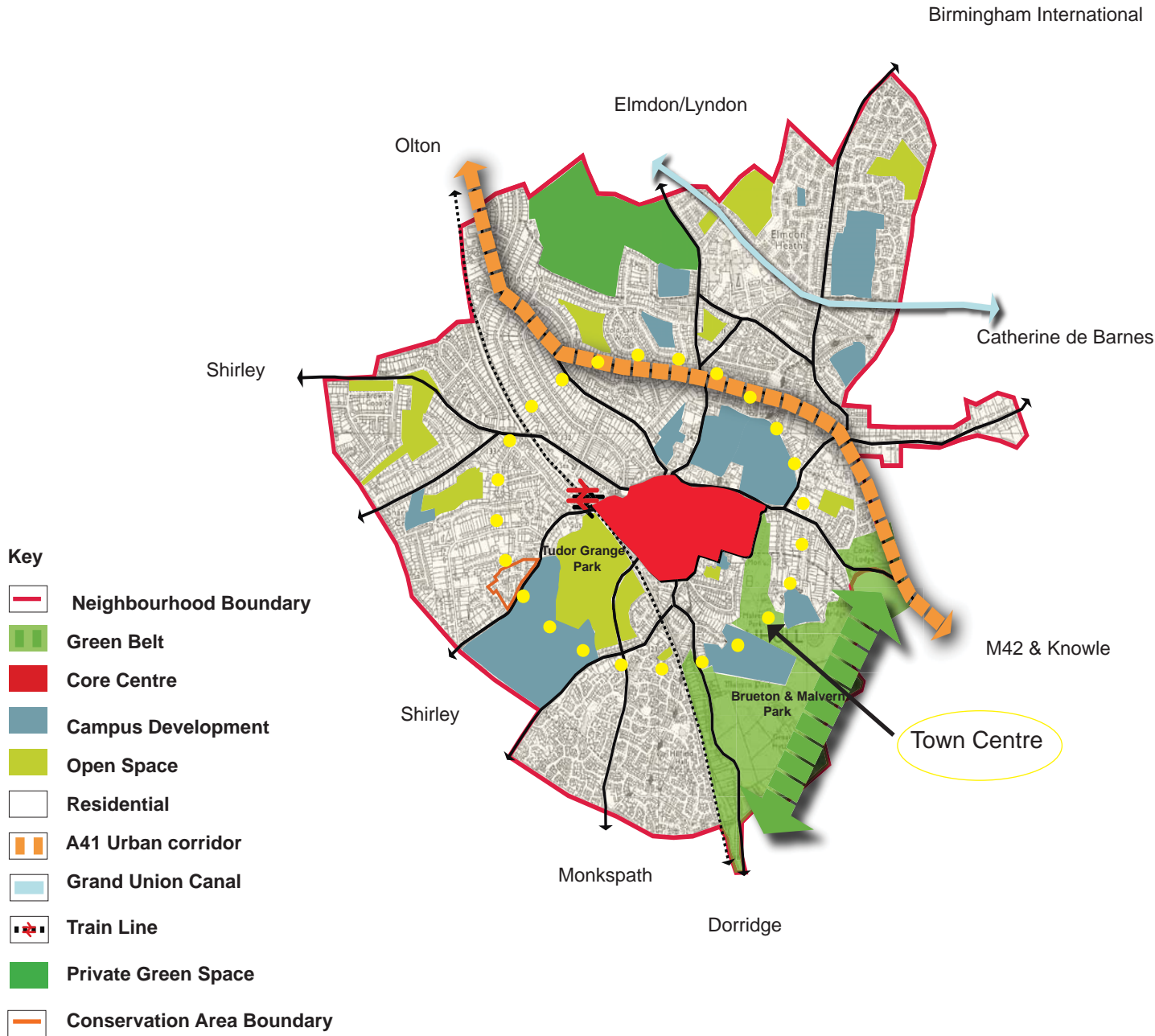


Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycling connections with neighbouring facilities such as Birmingham Airport and train station, Olton train station and Solihull train station and town centre.
- To raise the quality of the public realm outside the main shopping parade to raise the profile of this area of the Borough.
- To encourage the 'greening' of streets to improve the quality of the public realm.
- To maximise access to recreational areas such as Elmdon Park.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable residential design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design and introduce street trees where possible to break up expanses of parking and improve the sense of 'greenness' in the area.



10 Solihull



Key Characteristics

- Solihull lies at the heart of the Borough and provides a mixed use hub of activity.
- There are good transport links to the M42 and the train station provides frequent services to Birmingham and Leamington Spa.
- The town centre provides a range of high quality retail stores, leisure facilities and business accommodation.
- There is a wide choice of educational facilities and good access to open space. The parks provide a good range of community facilities for all ages.
- The A41 provides an outer 'ring road' and the B425 provides an 'inner ring road' to the north of the town centre. These are busy wide roads which provide a barrier to pedestrian movement north and south of solihull.
- Development along the B425 Warwick Road and Homer Road have a large foot print, and 'campus style' development such as Solihull Hospital, offices buildings, hotels and schools are found here.
- Solihull High Street and St Alphege Church are locally distinctive and the oldest parts of the town centre are of medieval origin.
- Residential development has gradually expanded the boundary of the neighbourhood. Whilst relatively low density interwar housing is characteristic of Solihull, 1980's housing area of Hillfield was another period of extensive housing development. Here development is predominately detached however plots are substantially smaller. Housing across Solihull reflect typically architectural styles characteristic of their time of construction.
- Small infill development have taken place in Solihull town centre Touchwood shopping centre is an example of contemporary design appropriate to its context.



Strengths

- The Church of St Alphege provides a locally distinctive landmark in the town.
- The historic core/concentration of listed buildings to the south east end of the High Street.
- Popular and thriving town centre which provides a range of amenities and services. There are a number of school and further education facilities and good access to Tudor Grange and Brueton & Malvern parks and leisure facilities.
- Popular detached and semi detached housing of varying sizes with off street parking and gardens to the front and rear.
- Streets vary from wide busy strategic routes which radiate from and circumnavigate the town centre to quiet leafy residential streets.
- Solihull train station provides frequent and convenient services to Birmingham and London.



Weaknesses

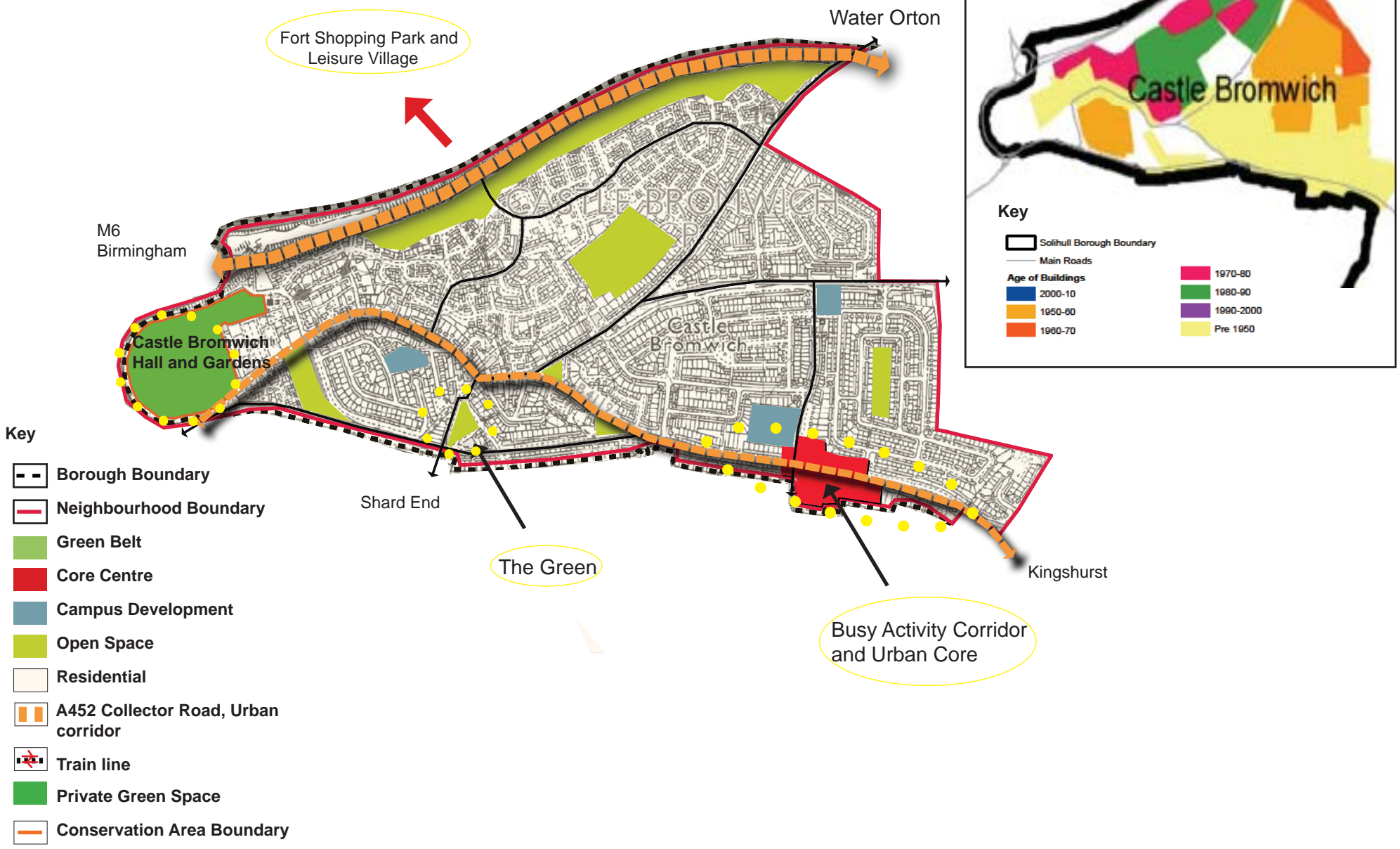
- A41 and B425 corridor provides severance to pedestrian movement from the north into the town centre.
- The town centre is 'inward' looking therefore its close proximity to Brueton Park and Tudor Grange Park and the train station is not always apparent.
- Pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre are poor.
- Homer Road, the A41 and B425 Warwick Road have a poor pedestrian environment.



Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycle connections to the town centre from Solihull train station.
- To integrate links to Brueton Park and Tudor Grange Park into the town centre.
- To reduce severance of the Solihull by-pass, Warwick Road, Lode Lane and Homer Road for pedestrians and improve the pedestrian experience of these routes.
- To build on the mixed use qualities, and encouraging a diverse range of uses within the town centre to maximise the one trip economy.
- To raise the quality of the public realm in the town centre and around the train station.
- Improve the quality of the ring road environment.
- To reinforce the identity of Solihull by improving the quality of the public realm around the Church of St Alphege and The Square.
- To encourage any new development on the periphery boundary of the town centre to integrate with the surrounding residential development to improve the sense of arrival into the town centre.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular boundary treatments to properties and introduce streets trees where possible to break up expanses of parking and improve the sense of 'greenness' in the

Castle Bromwich



Key Characteristics

- Castle Bromwich is an urban neighbourhood in the most northern part of the Borough. The M6 provides the boundary to the north and east and to the suburbs of Birmingham are to the west and south.
- Castle Bromwich was a small settlement until the interwar years when a substantial amount of development took place. Housing of this period is typically two storey and semi detached with on plot parking with good sized rear gardens. Other periods of substantial growth took place in the 1970's and 1980's. The development form of these estates is dominated by cul de sacs.
- The word Castle Bromwich comes from the words 'brum' from the yellow flowery broom which grew here and 'wich' an ancient name for a dwelling or settlements.
- The Chester Road runs through the centre of the settlement along which are a number of 'big box' retail outlets and convenient shops and services. The road is wide and heavily trafficked.
- The village is a popular commuter settlement Birmingham as it also benefits from having convenient links to the midlands strategic highways network.
- There is a village 'green' which provides a focal point and character 'place' in Castle Bromwich.
- Castle Bromwich Hall and Garden is in the western tip of the neighbourhood. Castle Bromwich Hall is a Grade I listed Jacobean Mansion built between 1557 and 1585 and the gardens are the only surviving example of an eighteenth century English formal garden. Both are designated heritage assets and the garden is a popular tourist attraction.



Strengths

- There is convenient access to the strategic road networks and Birmingham city centre.
- The Fort Shopping and leisure complex is within close proximity.
- The village green provides a locally distinctive character to the neighbourhood.
- There are local convenience services such as a school, post office and a parade of shops.
- Castle Bromwich Hall Garden provide a popular tourist attraction.



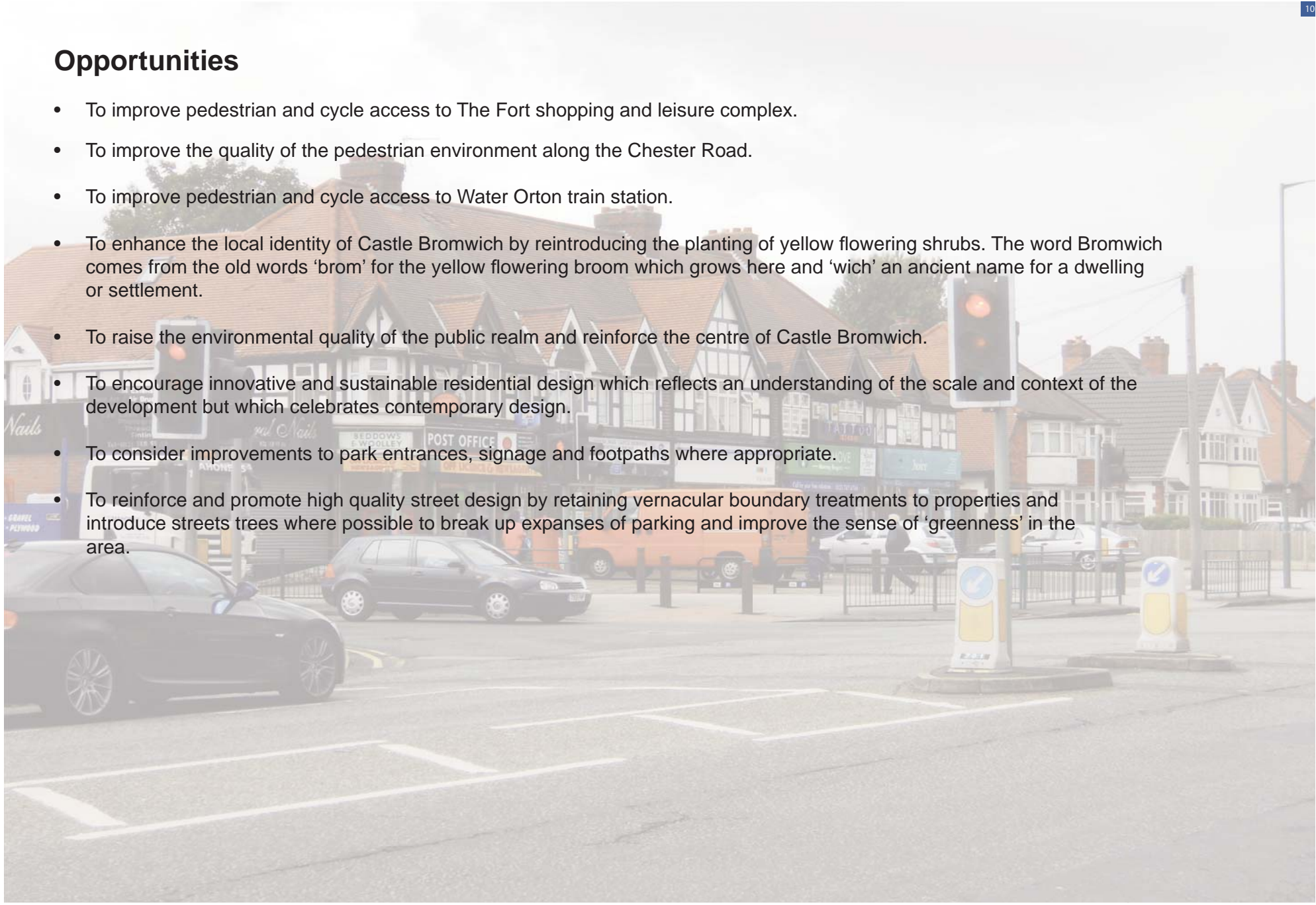
Weaknesses

- The centre of the village is not clearly defined.
- The Chester Road is a wide and busy road through the centre of Castle Bromwich. Pedestrian movement along this road is often difficult due to its nature and form and the quality of the environment of sections of the Chester Road are poor.
- There is no train station.
- The central shopping area appears dated and rundown.

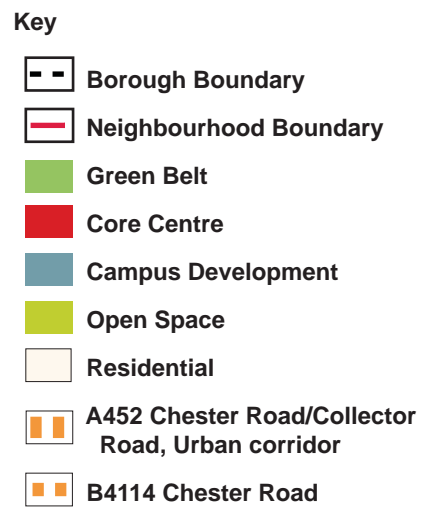
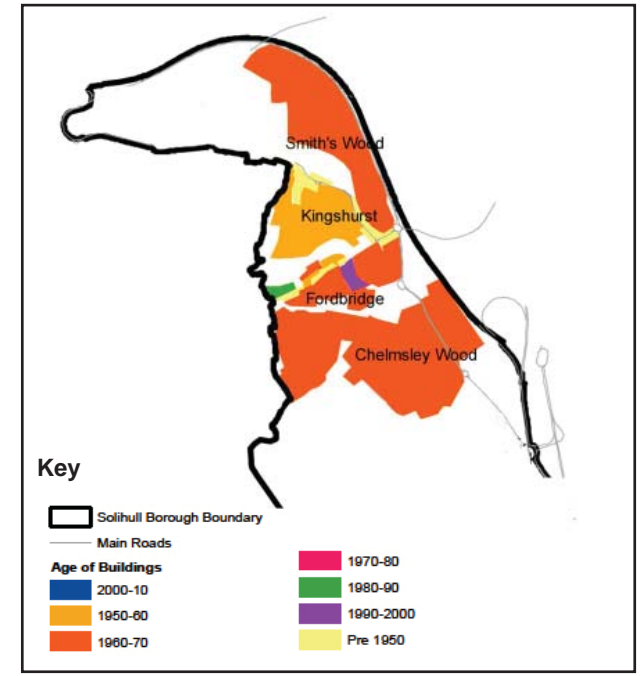
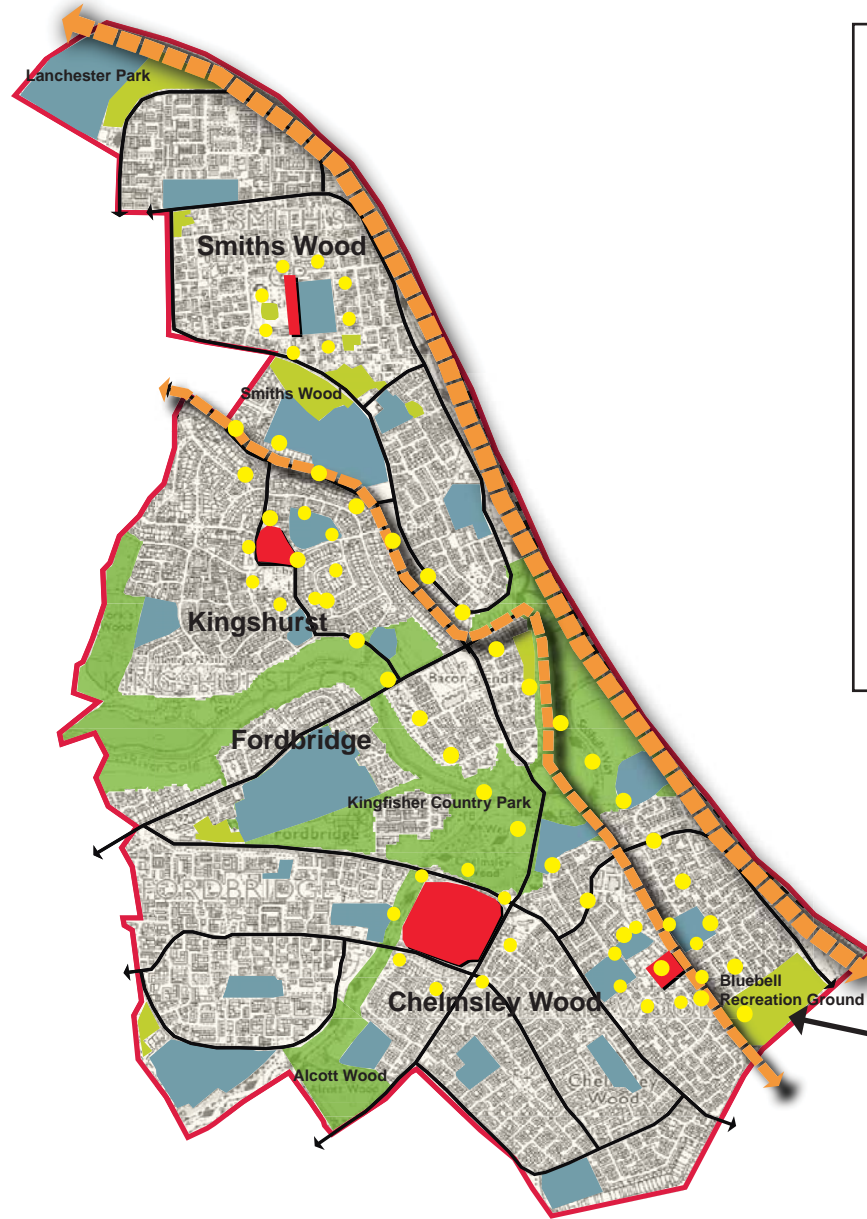


Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycle access to The Fort shopping and leisure complex.
- To improve the quality of the pedestrian environment along the Chester Road.
- To improve pedestrian and cycle access to Water Orton train station.
- To enhance the local identity of Castle Bromwich by reintroducing the planting of yellow flowering shrubs. The word Bromwich comes from the old words 'brom' for the yellow flowering broom which grows here and 'wich' an ancient name for a dwelling or settlement.
- To raise the environmental quality of the public realm and reinforce the centre of Castle Bromwich.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable residential design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular boundary treatments to properties and introduce streets trees where possible to break up expanses of parking and improve the sense of 'greenness' in the area.



11 North Solihull: Smiths Wood, Kingshurst, Fordbridge, Chelmsley Wood



B4114 Busy Urban Corridor

Key Characteristics

- Smiths Wood, Kingshurst, Fordbridge and Chelmsley Wood are in the North Solihull Regeneration Zone. Castle Bromwich is to the north and Birmingham Airport is to the south. The east of North Solihull is defined by the M6 and the west is defined by the Borough boundary with Birmingham.
- The neighbourhoods were built to house the overspill population of Birmingham after the second world war. Whilst Kingshurst was predominately built in the 1950s the remainder of the North Solihull area was built in the 1960's. The urban form is characteristic of the 'Radburn' layout which sought to segregate pedestrian and vehicle movement. Houses are often positioned around small areas of shared amenity spaces and occasional pockets of remnants woodland. Small shopping centres and schools to serve individual neighbourhoods were also provided at this time. Many parts of these areas are now considered in a poor state of repair and are a priority for improvements in North Solihull as part of the regeneration initiative.
- Chelmsley Wood is the largest of the town centre and has recently been modernised with additional facilities such as a new library. The centres of Craig Croft and North Arran Way are soon to be upgraded and redeveloped. There are on going housing renewal programs and school building project taking place.
- Kingfisher County Park and the River Cole run east to west through the centre of North Solihull and provided a distinctive landscape character to the area.
- The B4114 Chester Road is a busy strategic route which runs north to south in the eastern half of north Solihull and effectively splits the area in two.



Strengths

- There is convenient access to the strategic road networks Birmingham Airport, Birmingham Business Park and Birmingham city centre.
- The area has a lot of investment programmes to help raise the quality of the area.
- There is a range of good quality green spaces for formal and informal recreation, including publicly accessible semi-natural woodlands and Local Nature Reserves.
- There are local convenience services within each neighbourhood.



Weaknesses

- Many of the neighbourhoods are isolated from the neighbouring areas due to a lack of through routes.
- The Radburn layout does not encourage pedestrian movement and often creates unsafe routes which are not well over looked.
- Some areas have poor quality housing stock and the public realm is uncared for and misused.
- The B4114 Chester Road is a wide and busy road which segregated pedestrian movement in the area and creates an unattractive environment.
- There is no train station.

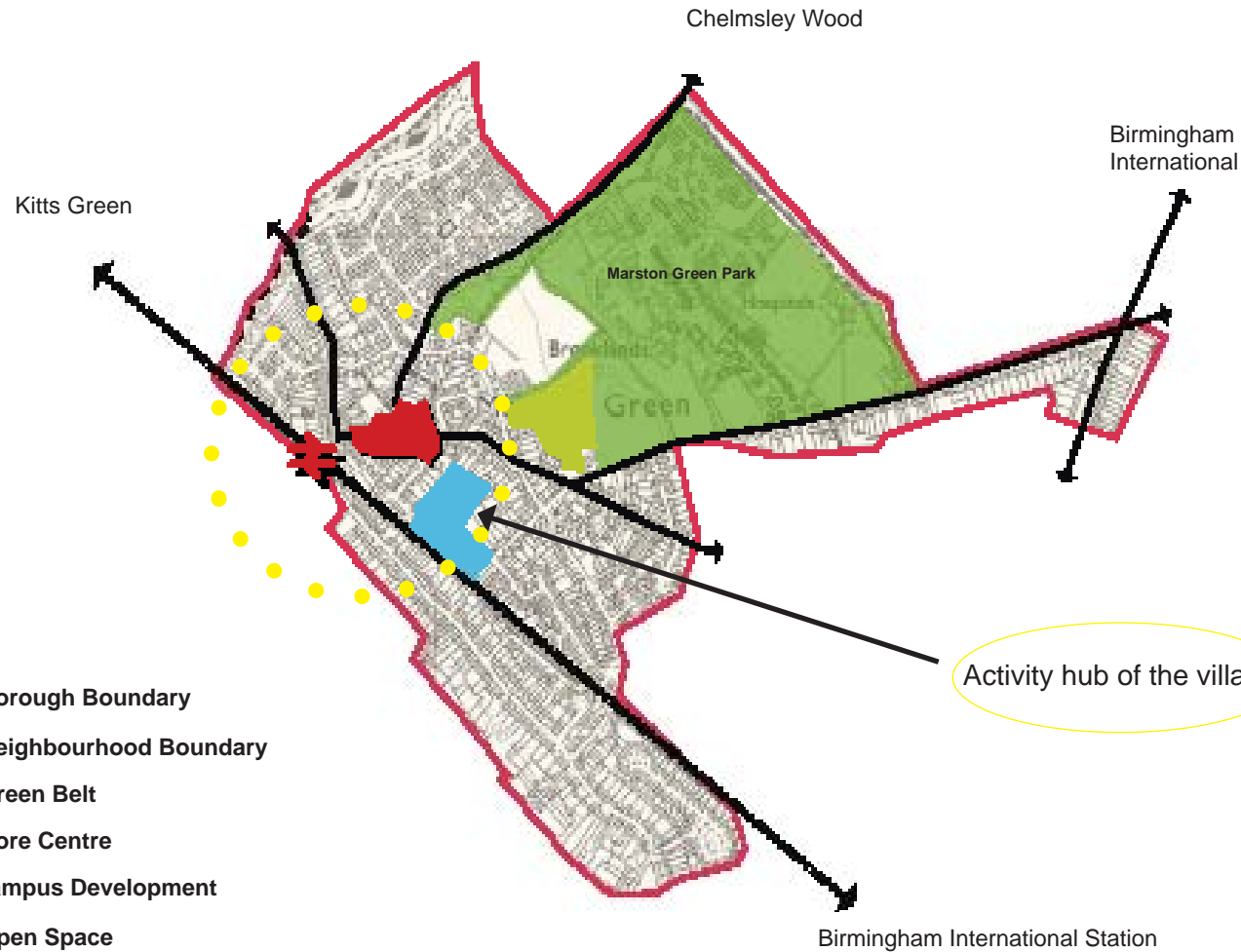


Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycle movement across and along the Chester Road.
- To improve the quality of the pedestrian environment along the Chester Road.
- To improve pedestrian and cycle access to Birmingham International train station and Marston Green train station.
- To reinforce the character of the individual neighbourhoods and village centres.
- To improve access to Kingfisher Country Park.
- To promote redevelopment layouts which improve levels of natural surveillance and improve security and safety for residents in the neighbourhoods.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To promote high quality street design by introducing streets trees where possible to break up expanses of parking and enhance the sense of 'greenness' in the area.

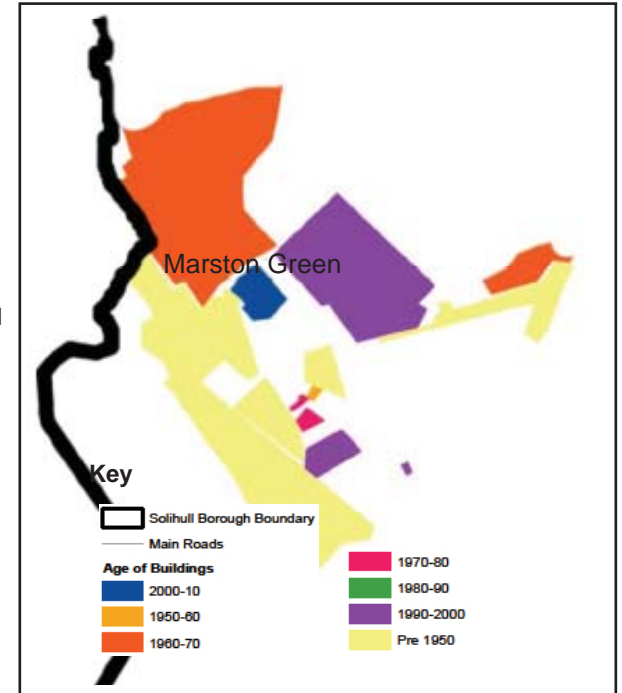


Marston Green



Key

- Borough Boundary
- Neighbourhood Boundary
- Green Belt
- Core Centre
- Campus Development
- Open Space
- Residential
- B452 Urban corridor
- Big Box Development
- Train Line



Key Characteristics

- Marston Green is in the north of the borough. Kitts Green and Birmingham city centre lie to the west, Chelmsley Wood to the north and Birmingham Airport lies to the South and East.
- The village is a popular commuter village for Solihull and Birmingham as it benefits from having convenient links to the midlands strategic highways network and a train station which provides frequent services to Birmingham and Coventry.
- Marston Green was originally known as Merston Village and began as a small village surrounded by agricultural land in the estate of Coleshill. The village grew into a leafy suburb in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. A significant amount of the development took place in the 1930's and is characteristic of suburban areas built at this time, housing is typically two storey, detached or semi detached. Other notable phases of development took place in the 1970's, 1990's and more recently in 2000's reflecting the rise in the popularity of the village.
- A range of facilities and amenities are provided in the village such as a school, a library, public house and parade of shops
- The village is characterised by a number of small 'greens' which provide features in the streetscape.
- Marston Green Park is located in the north of the villages and provides access to wider green infrastructure links such as the Local Nature Reserve, Alcott Wood and Kingfisher Country Park.



Strengths

- There is convenient access to the strategic road networks and Birmingham Airport.
- The train station provides regular services to Birmingham city centre and Coventry.
- The village is a popular 'leafy' residential area.
- There are local convenience services and facilities.
- Maston Green Park provides access to Alcott Wood Local Nature Reserve and Kingfisher Country Park.



Weaknesses

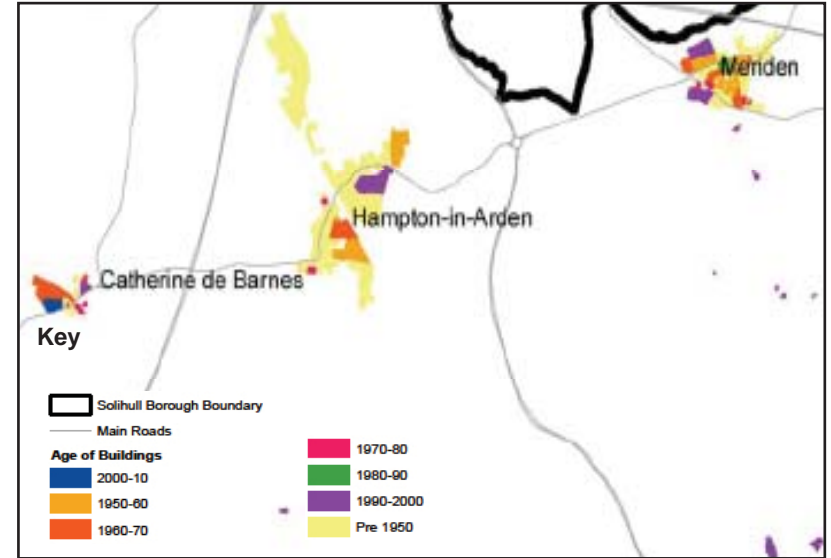
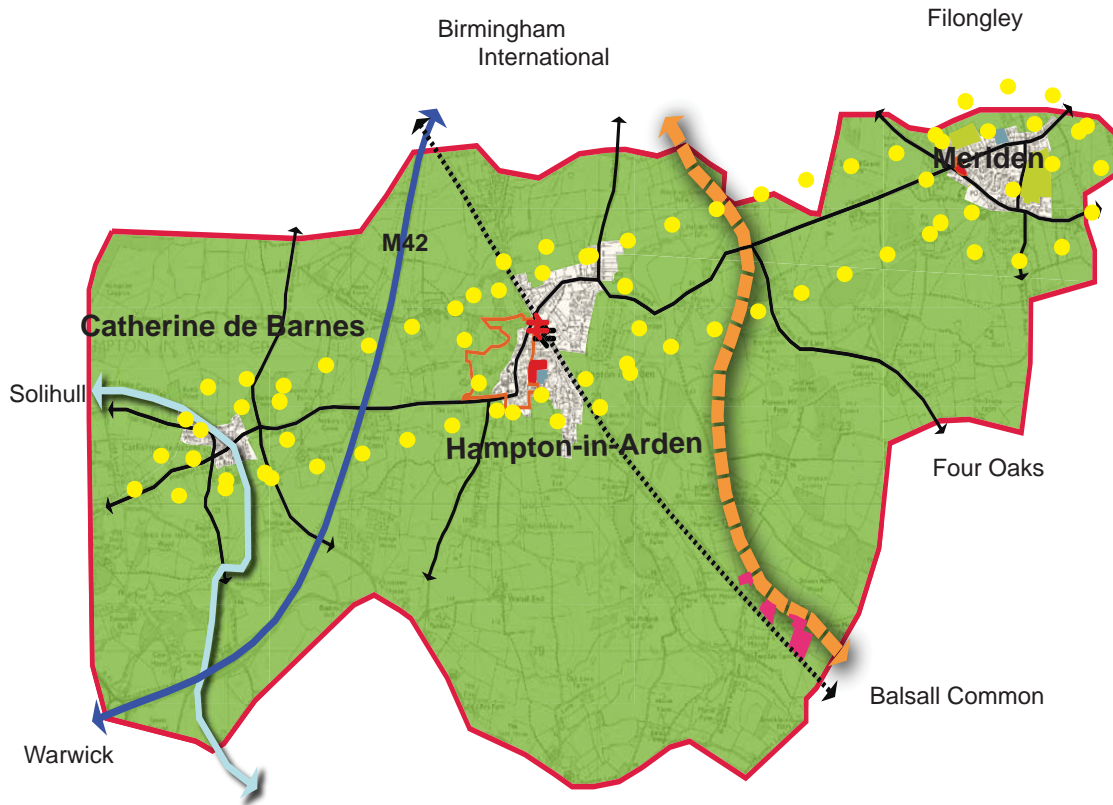
- The centre of village is not clearly defined.
- The dual carriageway along Station Road creates a poor pedestrian environment and segregates the movement of pedestrians across the road to the parade of shops.
- The transport interchange at the train station is tucked away and therefore its location is not obvious.



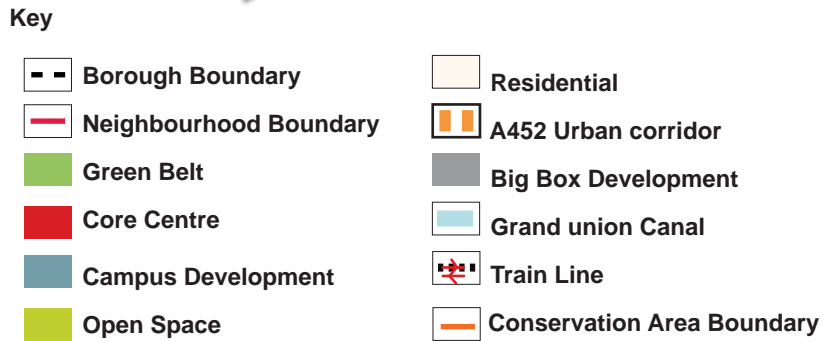
Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycle access to Marston Green train station.
- To improve the quality of the pedestrian environment along Station Road.
- To enhance the quality of the public realm and define the centre of the village along Station Road to reinforces its local identity.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable residential design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular features such as low brick walls and clipped hedge front garden boundary treatments to properties, and introduce street trees where possible to enhance the 'leafy' character of the area.

Catherine de Barnes/Hampton in Arden/Meriden/



B4102 corridor of remote Villages



Key Characteristics

- The villages of Catherine-de-Barnes , Hampton-in-Arden and Meriden lie in the eastern half of the Borough, Solihull lies to the west , Birmingham Airport is in the north and Balsall Common to the south.
- The B4102 (Hampton Lane/Solihull Road/Meriden Road) provides a corridor link between the settlements which are set within substantial areas of green belt countryside which gives these villages a sense of remoteness.
- The oldest buildings are found on the main roads through the villages of Hampton-in-Arden and Meriden, some of which are of medieval origin.
- Hampton in Arden is the largest village and has a number of listed buildings and large detached houses. The parish Church of St Mary and St Bartholomew provides a landmark feature on the western approach into the village. A war memorial on the eastern approach in to the village provides another distinctive landmark. There are a mix of pre 1950's houses throughout the village. House types / ages vary along the main roads through the village which creates variety and interest. More modern housing estates are tucked behind the main roads, and here house types are more uniform and are characteristic of their period of construction.
- The Grand Union Canal runs through the centre of Catherine-de-Barnes, this forms a green corridor through the village. The village is small and compact and the main residential area is to the north of Hampton Lane. This is dominated by pairs of semi detached properties. A large amount of this development took place in the 1960s. House types are therefore characteristic of this period of construction. More industrial and 'big box' development can be found to the South of Hampton Lane.
- Meriden is surrounded by countryside known as the 'Meriden Gap' The focal point of the village is the village green upon which stands the cyclists War Memorial and a medieval cross. The cross is considered to mark the centre of England. Residential development has occurred throughout the last century which has substantially increased the size of the village. The character and form of the village therefore changes with the different periods of construction and reflects the typical architectural styles.



Strengths

- These villages are surrounded by countryside and land that is designated as Green Belt. Access to the countryside and open space is therefore good.
- Hampton-in-Arden and Meriden have a good range of local services.
- There are good local primary schools in Hampton-in-Arden and Meriden.
- The villages are popular residential areas with extensive views to the countryside around the village periphery.
- The Grand Union Canal provides an important visual and amenity asset in Catherine-de-Barnes.



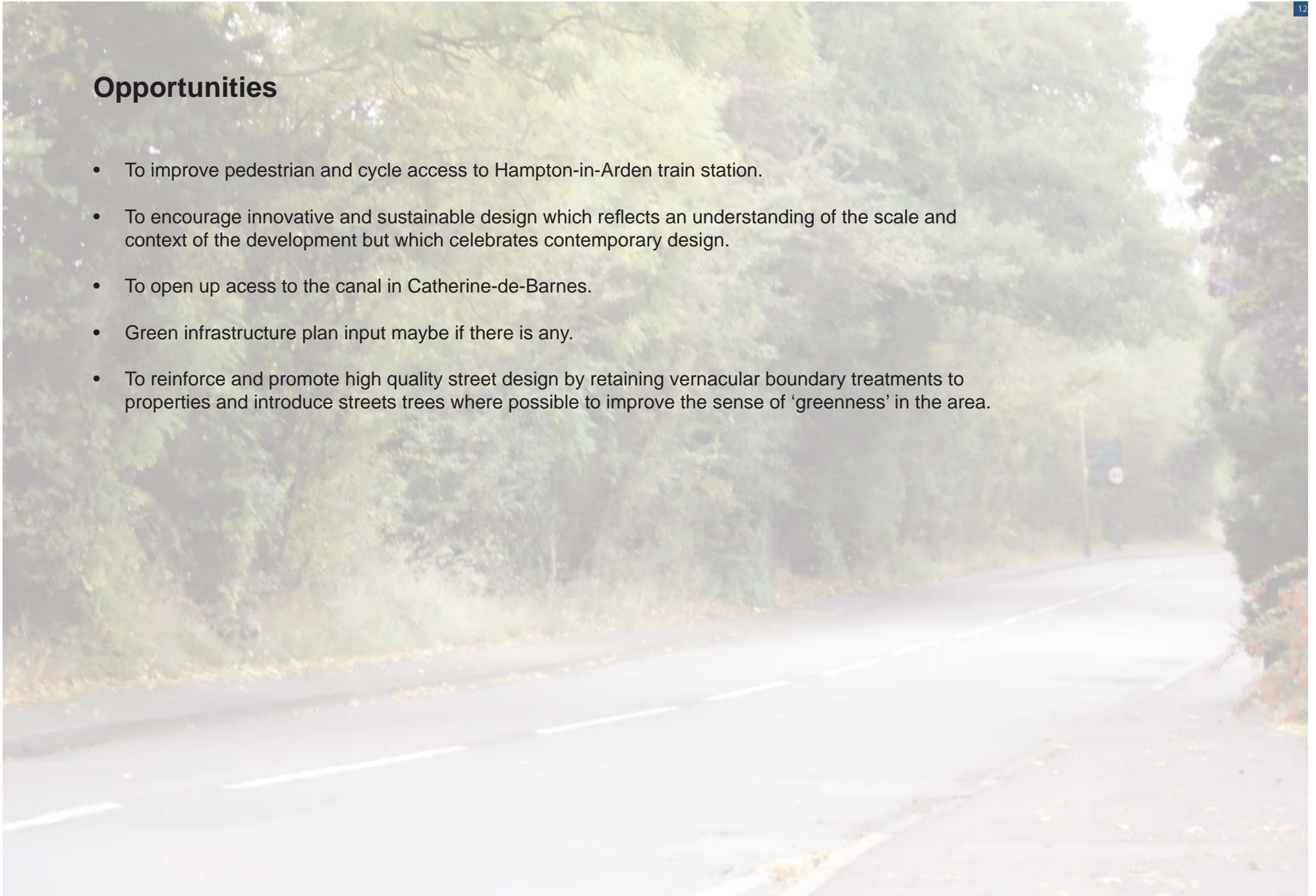
Weaknesses

- Limited connections to strategic public transport networks.
- Limited range of local services and amenities in the immediate locality, particularly in Catherine-de-Barnes.
- There is a limited amount of formal public open space.



Opportunities

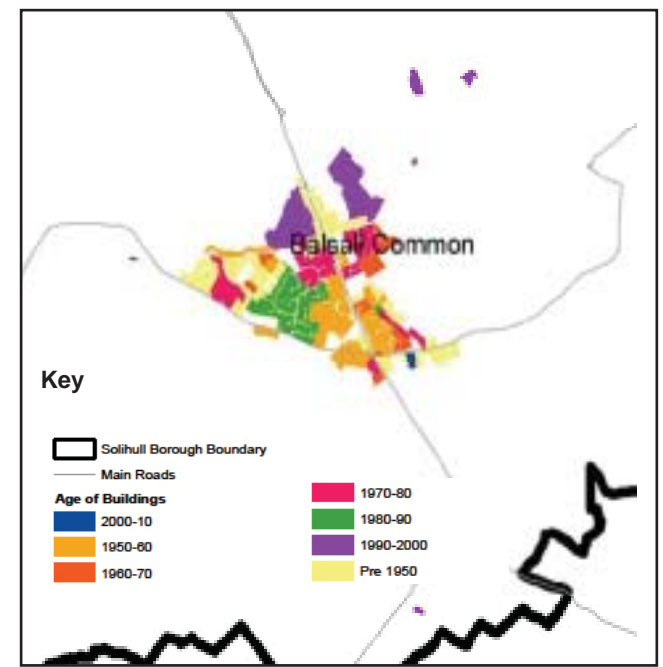
- To improve pedestrian and cycle access to Hampton-in-Arden train station.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To open up access to the canal in Catherine-de-Barnes.
- Green infrastructure plan input maybe if there is any.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular boundary treatments to properties and introduce streets trees where possible to improve the sense of 'greenness' in the area.



Balsall Common



- Key**
- Neighbourhood Boundary
 - Green Belt
 - Core Centre
 - Campus Development
 - Open Space
 - Residential
 - A452 Urban corridor
 - Train line
 - Conservation Area Boundary



A452 busy urban corridor

Key Characteristics

- Balsall Common is found in the south east corner of the Borough. Kenilworth is to the south, Coventry to the east, Dorridge to the west and to the north Meriden, Hampton-in-Arden and Birmingham Airport.
- Balsall Common is a large, relatively modern suburban village. The A452 Kenilworth Road is a primary urban corridor and runs north - south through the village. Station Road intersects this and runs east - west through the village out towards Berkswell Station. A cluster of shops and services are located at the junction of these two roads and this provides the primary hub of activity in the village.
- The village was relatively small until the 1950's. From this period residential estates have developed incrementally off the primary routes. The urban form of these estates are typically characterised by cul-de-sac development and architectural styles reflect their time of construction resulting in standardised developments.
- There are few listed buildings in Balsall Common and these are scattered throughout the village.
- Berkswell Station is on the periphery of the village and provides regular services to Coventry and Birmingham City Centre.
- The A452 is a busy urban corridor which dominates the character of the village.
- The village is nestled in the green belt and benefits from views out to the countryside along its periphery.



Strengths

- There is convenient access to the strategic road networks and Birmingham Airport.
- The village is nestled in the Green Belt with extensive views to the countryside around the village periphery.
- There are local convenience services.
- Lavender Hall is a Local Nature Reserve.



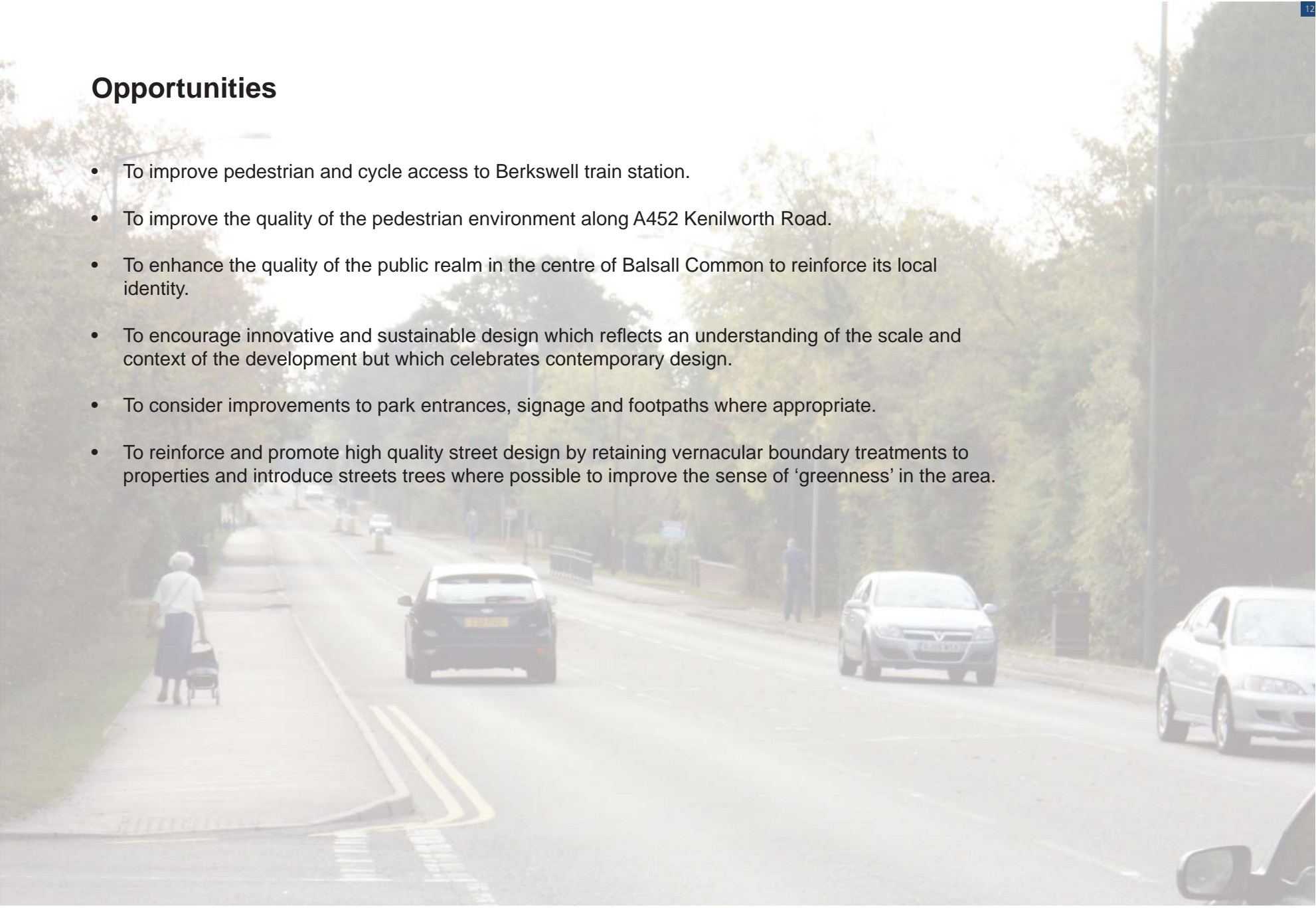
Weaknesses

- The A452 is a busy urban corridor which has a poor pedestrian environment.
- The Centre of village is not clearly defined.
- The station is on the outskirts of Balsall Common in Berkswell.
- There is a limited amount of formal accessible green space in the south of Balsall Common.

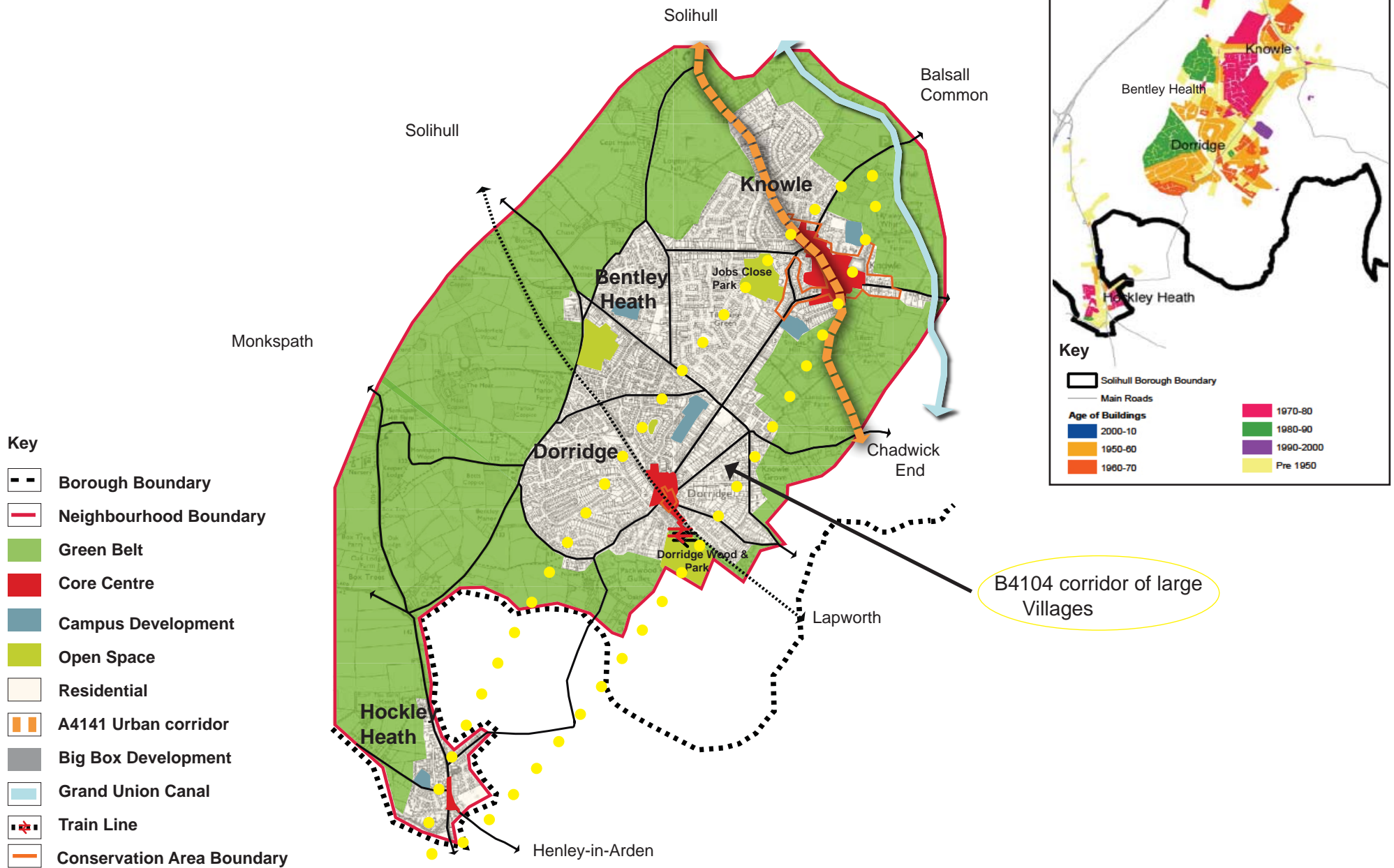


Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycle access to Berkswell train station.
- To improve the quality of the pedestrian environment along A452 Kenilworth Road.
- To enhance the quality of the public realm in the centre of Balsall Common to reinforce its local identity.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular boundary treatments to properties and introduce streets trees where possible to improve the sense of 'greenness' in the area.



Knowle/ Dorridge/Bentley Heath/ Hockley Heath



Key Characteristics

- The villages of Dorridge, Knowle, Bentley Heath and Hockley Heath are in the south of the Borough, and are linked by the B4101 Solihull is to the North and East, Henley-in-Arden to the south and Lapworth and Chadwick End to the east.
- These large villages are popular and are conveniently located for commuting to Solihull Town Centre, Birmingham and Leamington Spa. Each village has good access to the Countryside therefore these settlements provide an alternative location to living in rural or urban Solihull.
- These large villages are surrounded by Green Belt and the Grand Union Canal runs to the east of Knowle.
- The oldest parts of these villages are adjacent to the B4101 and the other main roads that run through the centre of these villages. All have grown significantly between the 1950's and 1990. The patterns of development and architectural style therefore reflect their age of construction. Due to the substantial amount of residential development over time there is no clear settlement boundary between Knowle, Bentley Heath and Dorridge.
- Hockley Heath is perhaps the most remote of the villages and is separated from Dorridge by Green Belt however it also exhibits characteristics of a semi rural village. The main convenience store is located on the A3400 main road through the village. There is a small 'green' at the junction of the B4101 and A3400 which provides a sense of openness in the centre of the village. There are a number of small residential cul-de-sacs which lead off the A3400.
- Dorridge has a well defined village centre however the main central area is modern and in need of updating. There is a range of local services and a train station in the centre of the village. Station Approach is located within the southern end of the Dorridge shopping area and is a designated conservation areas.
- Knowle has a traditional busy village high street along the A4141 which provides a range of local services and convenient shopping. The centre of Knowle is a conservation area due to its special architectural and historic interest which gives the village a distinctive character. The village centre extends more to the rear of southern side of the high street and there are a number of surface car parks and a village green which are in need of environmental improvements.



Strengths

- Dorridge train station has regular services to Birmingham and London.
- The villages are nestled in the Green Belt with good access to the countryside and public open space. There are two Local Nature Reserves in the area, Jobs Close and Dorridge Wood.
- Whilst extensive expansion to these villages has taken place they retain a number of historic buildings and a sense of their original character.
- Dorridge and Knowle are well served by local amenities.
- The villages are popular residential areas.
- Dorridge and Knowle have well defined historic cores.



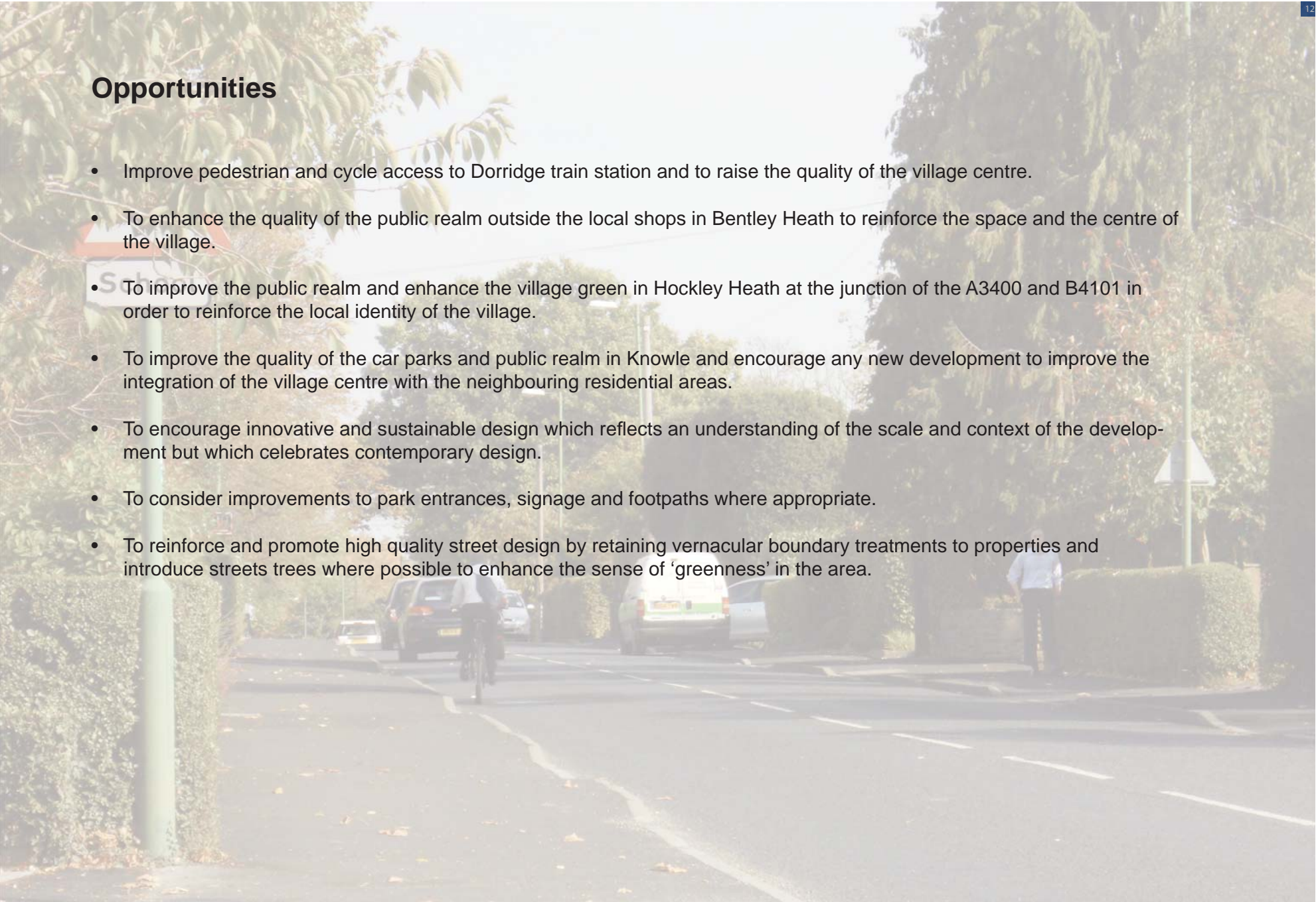
Weaknesses

- Hockley Heath has poor wider transport links to strategic networks
- The centre of Bentley Heath is not clearly defined
- The modern shopping centre (Forest Court) in Dorridge is poor quality.
- The surface car parks provide a poor quality public realm in Knowle.
- The boundaries between the villages of Bentley Heath, Dorridge and Knowle are not clearly defined.
- There is a limited amount of formal accessible green space in both Knowle and Hockley Heath.

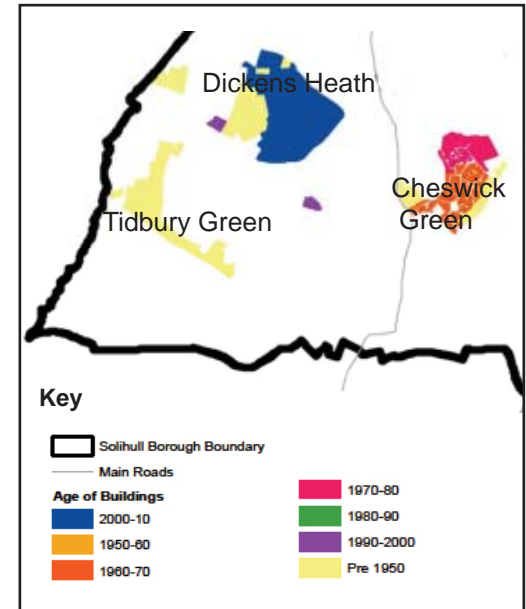
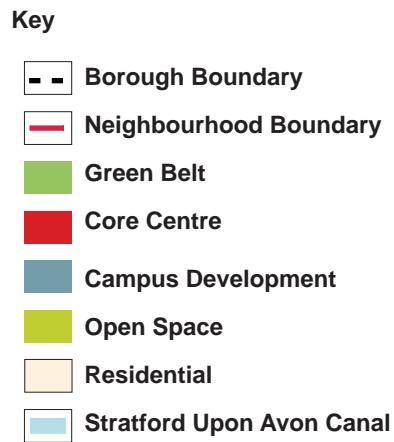
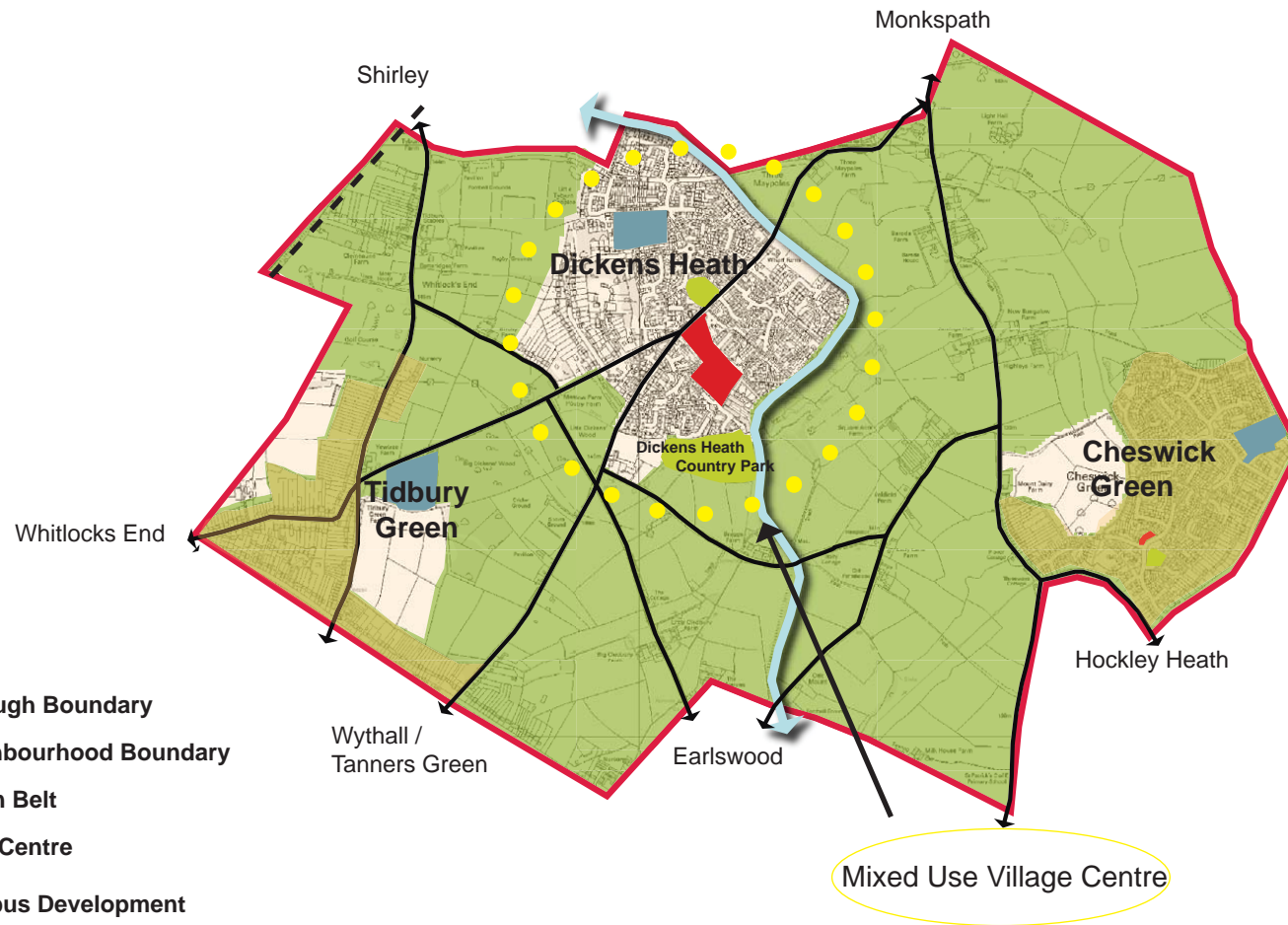


Opportunities

- Improve pedestrian and cycle access to Dorridge train station and to raise the quality of the village centre.
- To enhance the quality of the public realm outside the local shops in Bentley Heath to reinforce the space and the centre of the village.
- To improve the public realm and enhance the village green in Hockley Heath at the junction of the A3400 and B4101 in order to reinforce the local identity of the village.
- To improve the quality of the car parks and public realm in Knowle and encourage any new development to improve the integration of the village centre with the neighbouring residential areas.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular boundary treatments to properties and introduce streets trees where possible to enhance the sense of 'greenness' in the area.



Dickens Heath/Tidbury Green/ Cheswick Green



Key Characteristics

- The villages of Tidbury Green, Cheswick Green and Dickens Heath are all within the South West corner of the Borough. Shirley and Monkspath are to the north and Earlswood and Tanners Green are to the South West with Hockley Heath to the East.
- The villages are relatively close to one another but are separated by the green belt which gives these villages a sense of remoteness. The villages are predominantly residential, all have a school, Dickens Heath has a village centre with some community facilities such as a library and Cheswick has a small parade of shops,
- The age and form of these three villages varies and reflects the architectural styles of the time in which they were built.
- Tidbury Green is predominantly 2 storey inter war housing with on plot parking and gardens to the front and rear. The development pattern is linear and often on just one side of the street. The two main roads which pass through the village are tree lined and provide a mature and leafy character to the village.
- Cheswick Green, has some pre 1950's development but is predominately made up of two larger estates built in the 1960's and 1970's. The layout of residential development is dominated by cul - de - sacs. Grass verges with occasional tree planting is common place. Housing design reflects the architectural style of their period of construction and development follows the contours of the village.
- Dickens Heath is a modern village which was developed predominantly in 2000's. A master plan and design brief was developed which prescribes character areas and spaces. This advocated controlled yet varied architectural styles across the site which reinforce the different character areas. Whilst there is no overriding architectural character to the village the public space and village centre with it's large park provide a distinctive feature of the development and 'village feel'.



Strengths

- Leafy popular housing areas
- Dickens Heath has the potential to be a more vibrant centre.
- The area has good access to the Countryside.
- The villages are nestled in the Green Belt.
- The Stratford - Upon - Avon Canal runs along the eastern boundary of Dickens Heath.
- Dickens Heath Country Park is a Local Nature Reserve there are also a number of Local Wildlife sites in the area.



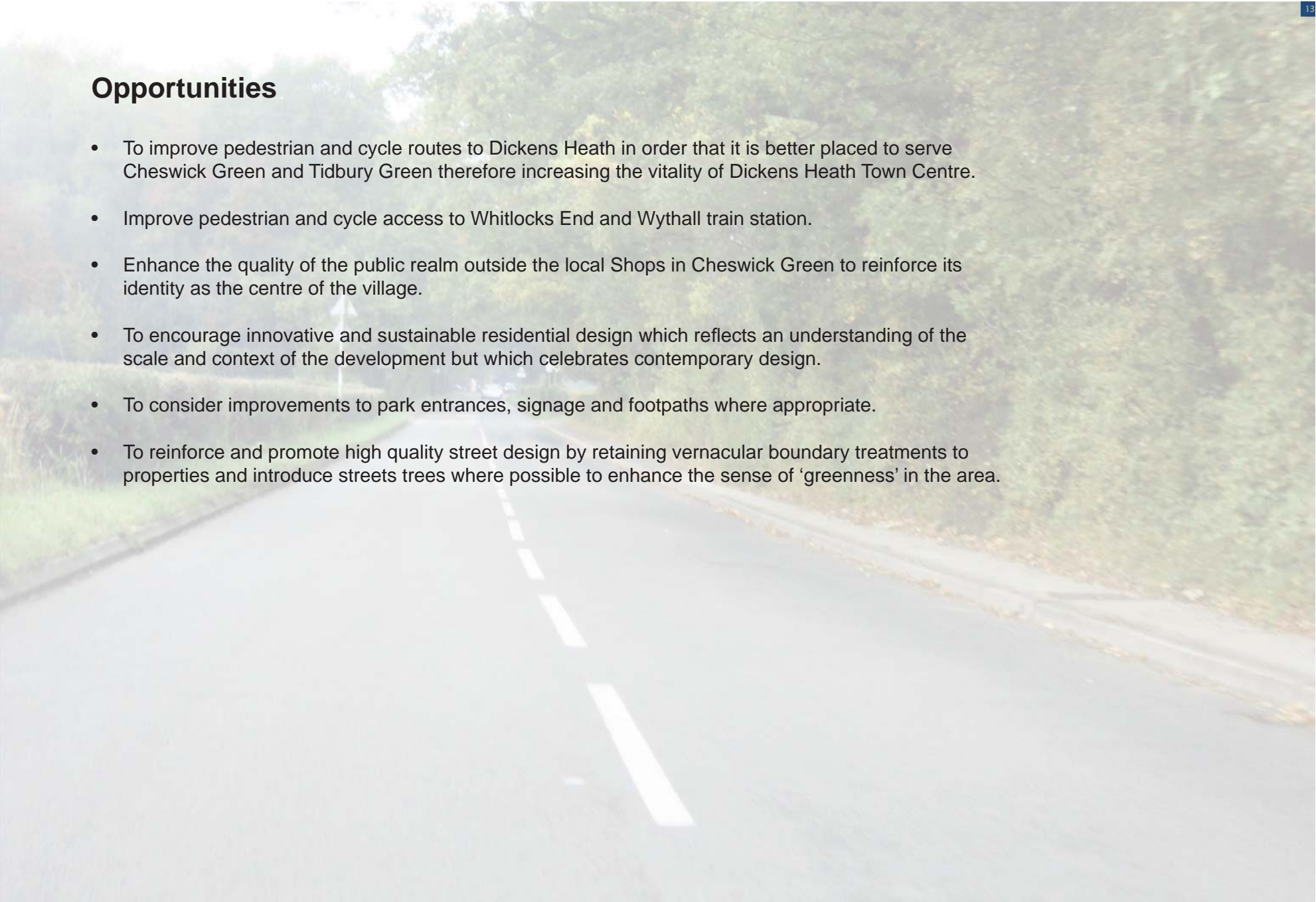
Weaknesses

- Poor wider transport links to strategic networks
- There is no train station within convenient walking distance of these villages.
- Limited range of local services and amenities in the immediate locality.
- Tidbury Green and Cheswick Green do not have an obvious identity or centre.
- There is a limited amount of formal accessible green space in Tidbury Green, Cheswick Green and north Dickens Heath.



Opportunities

- To improve pedestrian and cycle routes to Dickens Heath in order that it is better placed to serve Cheswick Green and Tidbury Green therefore increasing the vitality of Dickens Heath Town Centre.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle access to Whitlocks End and Wythall train station.
- Enhance the quality of the public realm outside the local Shops in Cheswick Green to reinforce its identity as the centre of the village.
- To encourage innovative and sustainable residential design which reflects an understanding of the scale and context of the development but which celebrates contemporary design.
- To consider improvements to park entrances, signage and footpaths where appropriate.
- To reinforce and promote high quality street design by retaining vernacular boundary treatments to properties and introduce streets trees where possible to enhance the sense of 'greenness' in the area.



Section 5: Conclusion

5.1

This study has provided an overview of the Boroughs physical development and key characteristics. The findings from each section of the study provide a different level of analysis of the built form and in doing so helps build up a profile of the character of the Boroughs' neighbourhoods.

5.2 SECTION II BOROUGH WIDE ANALYSIS

This section of the report highlights the extent of the Green Belt across the Borough which accounts for almost two - thirds of its' land area. The Green Belt land falls into the Arden landscape as documented in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines and Warwickshire Historic Landscape Character Study. The Boroughs' countryside is therefore considered significant, and is subject to a countryside management strategy. Whilst the Green Belt is afforded a protection status it has a variety of uses for the Borough such as farming and recreation. In addition to the Green Belt there is a diverse range of green space across the

Borough both within and surrounding the built up areas such as country parks, woodlands and waterways all of which provide an important recreational resource for residents and visitors. The abundance of Countryside, Green Belt land and green space across the Borough not only provide an attractive setting to many of the rural and urban fringe settlements, the green spaces also provide relief in the built up areas. The 'leafy' nature is therefore notable in different guises across the Borough and gives it a distinct character.

The topography of the Borough is relatively consistent with modest variations in levels. Where there is the lowest lying land this is largely free from development. This tends to be where the Boroughs' flood plains can be found and where the geology of the land has a higher clay contents. The geology of the far eastern part of the Borough is characterised by mudstone, siltstone and sandstone.

Up until the arrival of the railways in the 1850's Solihull was largely a rural Borough

with small villas built in and around old villages. However it was the expansion of the railways and the interwar years that the west of the Borough in particular began to grow. Development in north Solihull took place predominately in the 1960's. Both these periods of building dominate the character of the built environment of the Borough outside the designated conservation areas.

Today the Borough has continued to grow and developed into a prosperous and desirable place to live due to its convenient links both within the Borough and to neighbouring areas.

5.2 SECTION III CHARACTER TYPOLOGIES

This section provided an overview of the diverse nature of the built form of the Borough. It considered the different scale and grain of development and how this reflects its land use. Across the Borough it is evident that large scale or 'big box' development is most commonly found along strategic road links. Campus developments which are typically associated with schools are dotted within urban areas their grounds providing relief in the built up housing areas.

Core Centres are identified by their fine grain of development which are predominately found along principal streets and often these have developed from historic centres into larger mixed use centres. Road networks radiate from these centres. The scale of this road network varies and typically reflects the size of the centre enabling them to provide a range of day to day facilities to the larger commercial goods.

The urban corridors dissect the main urban areas in the Borough. Whilst their primary focus is to facilitate high volumes of vehicular movement between key destinations they also provide a hive and diverse mix of activities. Due to the Boroughs advantageous strategic location there is a mix of core centre and big box development along its route. These corridors are within convenient distances from the majority of the Boroughs residential settlements and therefore serve a wide catchment area.

Residential areas dominate the built form which grew substantially in the interwar period and again in the 1960's. The residential areas like many parts of the country are defined by their period of construction. It is however the setting of the residential areas and the range of activity within them which gives them their overriding character and sense of local identity.

5.3 SECTION IV NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

This section provided an overview of how the different physical and built form elements influence the character of the neighbourhoods across the Borough. It is evident that each neighbourhood has a set of built form and natural elements which give it its sense of identity. This section highlighted the assets of the different -areas and identified how and where improvement to these neighbourhoods could be made.



5.4 SECTION V RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study are focused on the delivery of improvements to the different neighbourhoods as highlighted in section III. It is recommended that these issues are identified in Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans to help promote the enhancement of different neighbourhoods through both the planning process and community led initiatives.

Name

Address

Contact Details