

Land to the east of Station Lane, Lapworth
Report submitted in support of representations on the
Warwick District Local Plan Preferred Options consultation

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Planning Policy	1
3. The Site and Surroundings	1
4. Flood Risk	2
5. Transport, Access and Sustainability	2
6. Ecology, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	3
7. Landscape and open space provision	3
8. Infrastructure, Ownership and Delivery	4
9. Summary	4

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Savills has been instructed by Steele Raymond LLP of behalf of the landowners to prepare representations on the emerging Warwick District Local Plan in relation to land east of Station Lane, Lapwoth.
- 1.2 This report provides a review of the site and its surroundings, setting out constraints and opportunities, and highlighting the potential of the site to contribute to meeting the housing needs of the area.

2 Planning policy

- 2.1 The Warwick District Local Plan (1996 – 2011) was adopted in 2007, with the majority of policies 'saved' in September 2010. The site currently lies outside the Village Envelope for Lapwoth and Kingswood as set out in the saved policies of the adopted Local Plan. The area lies within the Warwickshire Green Belt, which washes over the site and the adjoining settlements.
- 2.2 A new Local Plan is currently being prepared to replace the adopted plan. Key Issues consultation took place in May 2011 and Warwick District Council is currently consulting on Preferred Options for the new Local Plan (New Local Plan Preferred Options, May 2012).
- 2.3 The Preferred Options consultation proposes a level of growth for the District of 600 homes per annum between 2011 and 2029. This includes a total of 830 new homes within villages. Lapwoth is identified as one of the larger villages in the District, and is proposed to accommodate 100 new dwellings over the plan period. The village would be removed from the Green Belt and a revised Green Belt boundary would be drawn to allow for development.

3 The Site and Surroundings

- 3.1 The site lies on the edge of the village of Lapwoth, approximately 8km southeast of Solihull and 16km northwest of Warwick, within the administrative area of Warwick District Council. A site location plan is provided at **Figure 1**.
- 3.2 Lapwoth has a population of approximately 2,000 people, with a range of facilities including pre-school and primary school, GP surgery, village hall, shops, pubs and restaurants. The settlement benefits from a railway station on the Chiltern Line from London to Birmingham, offering regular services to Birmingham, Solihull, Warwick and Leamington Spa. The site itself is very close to these amenities, making it an ideal location for development.
- 3.3 Located in the northern section of the village, the site has an area of approximately 10ha. Fronting onto Station Lane with a row of approximately 6 established Oak trees to the west, it is partly bounded to the north by residential development and existing hedgerows, to the east by the Grand Union Canal and to the south by existing hedgerows. The Oak trees to the west are covered by Tree Protection Orders.

Land to the East of Station Lane, Lapwoth

- 3.4 The site is relatively level, free from physical and environmental constraints other than part of it being in the flood plan (see below), and has the potential to accommodate a well contained and clearly defined housing development without compromising the key purpose, functions and role of the Green Belt. The surrounding pattern of development is such that the proposal would consolidate development within a part of the village that is already bounded by residential development on 3 sides.
- 3.5 In any new housing development existing trees and vegetation would be retained where possible, and the existing woodlands bounding the Grand Union Canal to the east would be augmented with a landscape buffer to visually contain future housing development and provide a strong outer boundary.

4 Flood Risk

- 4.1 The Grand Union Canal borders the east of the site and an adjoining stream runs north-south along the eastern edge of the site. Land either side of these watercourses is at risk of flooding. **Figure 2** shows the extent of this flood risk. Development would avoid areas of flood risk and a suitable surface water drainage strategy would be implemented to ensure there is no increase in flood risk on or off-site.

5 Transport, access and sustainability

- 5.1 The site is close to a variety of services and facilities likely to be used on a regular basis by new residents, which would be accessible by walking or cycling. The following services and facilities are available within 1km of the site:
- Lapwoth Pre-School
 - Lapwoth Church of England Primary School
 - Post Office & convenience store
 - Lapwoth Surgery
 - Bus services to Solihull and Leamington Spa
 - Several pubs and restaurants
 - Other local retail establishments (hair salon, convenience store, car showroom etc)
- 5.2 Higher order services including high street banks, supermarkets and leisure centre are available in Solihull, approximately 8km to the north west of the site and accessible by train from Lapwoth railway station located 300m south-west of the site. Other nearby settlements such as Knowle, Henley-in-Arden, and Kenilworth also provide a range of higher order services.
- 5.3 The nearest bus stop is on Old Warwick Road (B4439), approximately 700m to the south of the site. It provides access to the higher order centres within the local area.
- 5.4 The site fronts onto Station Lane, from which vehicular access to the proposed development could be provided via a number of options, including direct access

from Station Lane, via the existing Kingswood Close to the north or by an improvement to the existing access to Kingswood Farm off Station Lane. There is also the opportunity to access the site via adjoining land to the north or south. Potential access points will be investigated further as the scheme progresses.

- 5.5 Pedestrian and cycle access points can link to the Grand Union Canal to the east as well as at various points along Station Lane.
- 5.6 The site's accessibility and location are good, affording appropriate linkages to the local footpath network – especially the Grand Union Canal, and linking the site to nearby amenities.
- 5.7 In transport sustainability terms, the site scores highly with good opportunities for use of existing and improved future public transport. In wider sustainability terms, the site is close to local facilities, and also well linked with higher grade town centre services, other local service centers, and significant employment locations.

6 Ecology, archaeology and cultural heritage

- 6.1 The site is not subject to any nature conservation or archaeological designations. There are no designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the site – however a baseline ecological study will be completed in due course.
- 6.2 Approximately 1km to the east beyond the Grand Union Canal and significant woodland lies Baddesley Clinton, a National Trust owned, Grade I listed property which also had Registered Park and Gardens and Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) designations. Around 1.6km to the west can be found Packwood House, a Grade I listed building owned by the National trust. Intervening topography and vegetation will ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the setting of either of these listed features.

7 Landscape and open space provision

- 7.1 The site is well contained visually and a suitably landscaped development will have no adverse landscape or visual impacts.
- 7.2 There is a good network of green open spaces in the area. Landscape buffering along the eastern edge of the site adjoining the Grand Union canal would provide a natural habitat for local flora and fauna. Informal open space and children's play areas would also be provided as part of the proposed scheme.
- 7.3 A particular benefit of the site is the proximity to the existing network of footpaths and bridleways running alongside the Grand Union Canal bordering the east of the site. Open space provision along the eastern edge of the site would enhance informal recreation opportunities in this area.

8 Infrastructure, Ownership and Delivery

- 8.1 The site can be developed without the need for extensive infrastructure works associated with larger urban extensions.
- 8.2 From our initial appraisal, the potential development of this site does not raise any technical or servicing issues.
- 8.3 The site is in the ownership of a willing landowner, and can be made available for development at an early phase of the Local Plan. The site is available, deliverable and appropriate for housing development.
- 8.4 **Figures 2 and 3** illustrate the opportunities and constraints, which have informed the indicative land use plan at **Figure 4**.

9 Summary

- 9.1 We consider that the land to the east of Station Lane is suitably and sustainably located to meet identified local housing needs by providing a mix of dwelling types, styles and tenures including family homes at a location that is well related to existing services, facilities and public transport. The benefits of the site can be summarised as follows:
- Single ownership site, available now
 - Certainty of delivery
 - A self contained, easily and quickly developed site
 - Limited infrastructure requirements and short lead-in to development
 - Local facilities within easy reach
 - Well located in relation to Solihull and Leamington Spa, offering significant employment, retail, community facilities, services and public transport.
 - Highly accessible to Birmingham and other main centres.
 - Free from environmental constraints
 - Development of the scale proposed will not compromise the role and function of the Green Belt
- 9.2 This site therefore represents a sustainable, well located and deliverable opportunity for high quality development to meet identified housing needs. The site should therefore be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for up to 100 houses phased to come forward at an early stage in the local plan timeframe.
- 9.3 The owners and a development partner will be promoting the site through the local plan process by indicating how it can be developed in a sustainable and well designed manner. We look forward to further discussions with the local authority, consultees and the local community in order to progress the proposals and hope that this report will assist the Council in the progress of the local plan.

Figure 1: Location Plan



Figure 2: Constraints Plan

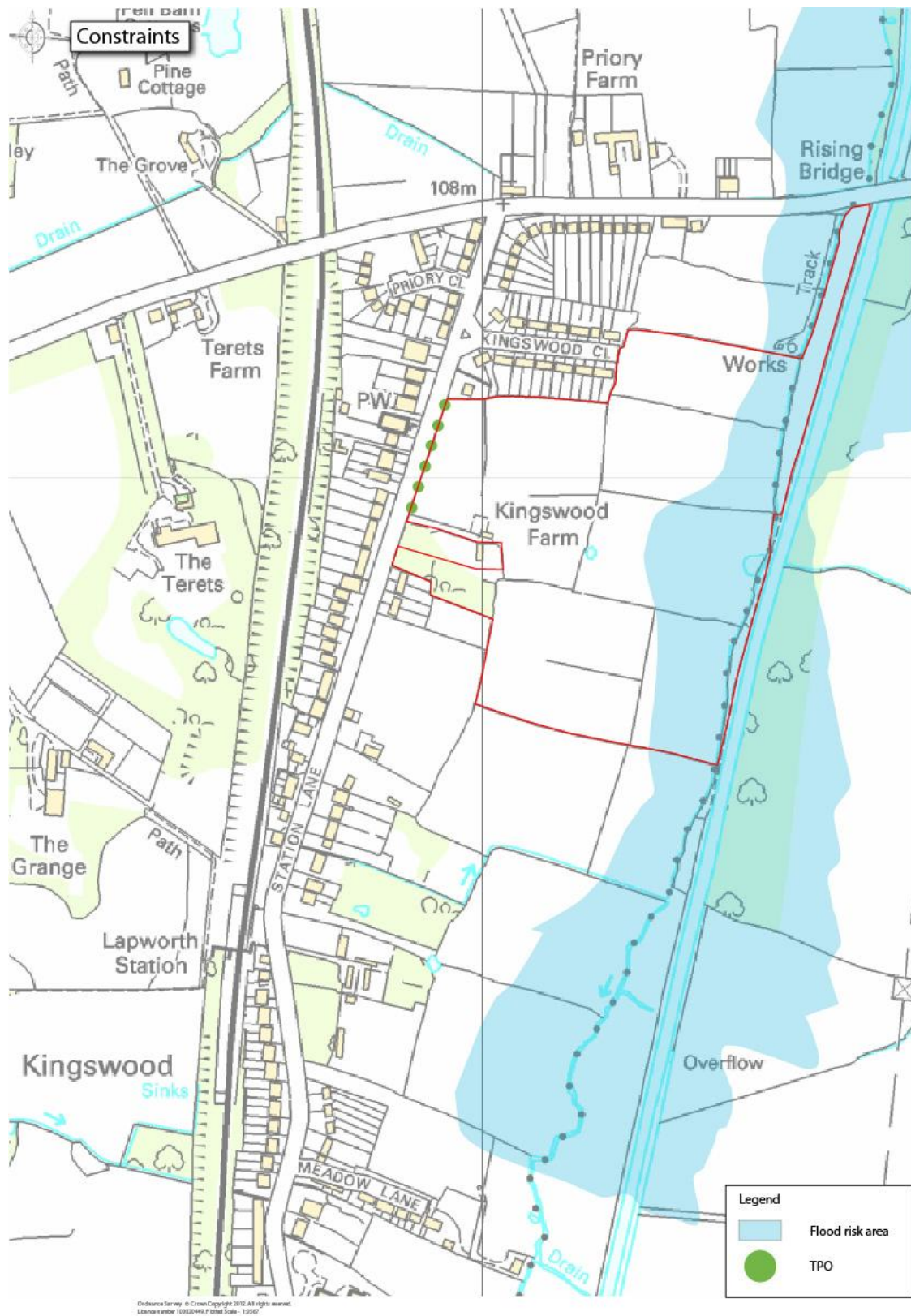


Figure 3: Opportunities Plan

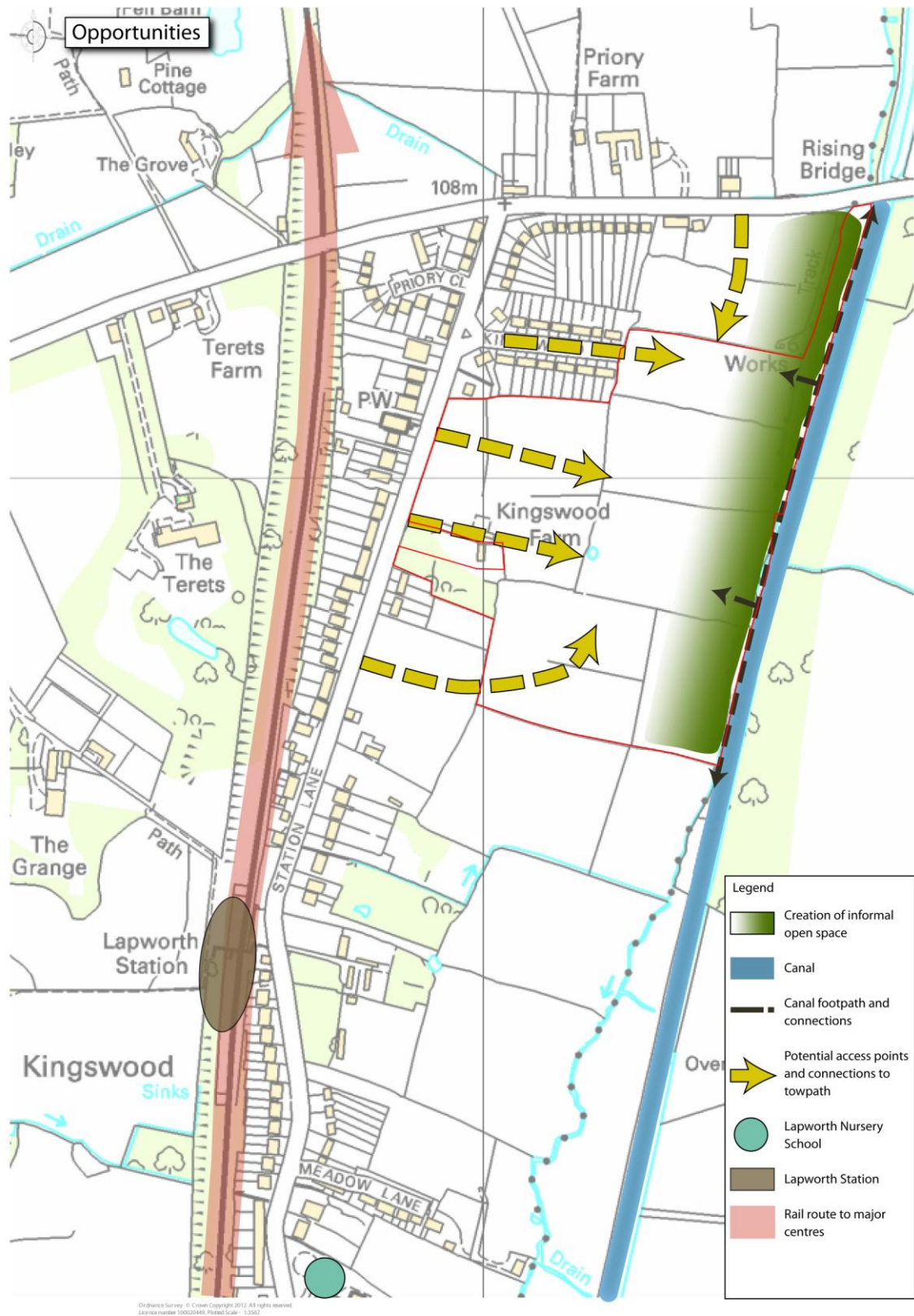


Figure 4: Indicative Land Use Plan

