

Lichfield District Rural Planning Project



LITTLE ASTON

- A. WHAT YOU SAID
- B. WHAT C.A.B.E. SAID
- C. OTHER EVIDENCE
RELEVANT TO
PLANNING FOR THE
FUTURE OF LITTLE
ASTON
- D. TOWARDS A VISION
FOR THE FUTURE



Lichfield District Council
September 2011

NB – To be read in conjunction with the Introduction and Conclusion Reports. November 2011

A. What you said:

1. The following paragraphs summarise the main outcomes from the rural planning project in terms of the views gathered, principally from residents of the village, between July 2010 and February 2011. The original analyses on which this summary is based are included as **Appendix 2**. Views and ideas arising from the February 2011 workshop event are illustrated on the accompanying Composite Plan of Workshop Ideas.

• Character and environment

2. Many of those who responded to questionnaires or took part in events thought or accepted that Little Aston was not really a village in the traditional sense, because of its physical form and location alongside a larger urban area. Nevertheless there was a view that there was a strong community 'ethic'. Most people thought of themselves as belonging to Little Aston and that its 'identity' was different from the adjacent areas.

3. During the workshops in February 2011 groups defined the boundaries or edges of Little Aston, as principally being formed by open farmland to the north and north-west, by golf courses in the west and north, and by the different urban character it showed when compared to the adjacent areas within

Sutton Coldfield and Streetly. At this event it was noted that the 'heart' of the original village lay in the area near to St. Peter's Church (and Forge Lane), but also that today Little Aston contains several individual 'districts'. These were shown on a workshop plan as areas of "commonality", these being parts of Little Aston that have common characteristics within them, such as the character of their streets, density or tree cover, whilst the individual 'districts' may differ significantly from each other in character. These areas are shown on the Composite Plan of Workshop Ideas.



St. Peter's Church

4. People attached great importance to the 'leafy streets' characteristic of much of the area and felt that it was important to maintain the current type

and 'density' of tree cover. Some noted that it was important to protect trees as this would maintain the character of Little Aston. The closeness to Sutton Park was also noted as contributing to the environment of part of Little Aston. Descriptions of the things people liked about Little Aston from questionnaire responses used terms such as: quiet; friendly community spirit; spacious; secluded; tidy; rural; a conservation area; not over developed.

5. Others noted that although Little Aston was a community, because of its form there was no focal point that could act as the heart of the settlement. The question of whether Little Aston needed a 'heart' somewhere was discussed in workshops and others commented through questionnaires. Some saw the need for a central place with somewhere to meet, for formal sport and recreation. Overall however in terms of the range of views gathered, there was no consensus on whether Little Aston lacked a 'heart' or whether there was a need to create a place to fulfil the function.

6. Some people thought that Little Aston needed a clearer 'identity' as a separate place or community and that the existing features that give it identity therefore need to be protected. Again however, overall there was no

great consensus on whether a clearer 'identity' is needed.

7. Within Little Aston parts of the settlement lie within gated areas. Many of these were created much earlier in time than is common within the West Midlands and most are areas of very low density development in an environment with a substantial tree canopy. The 'gated communities' appeared to be an issue amongst some people who responded to the consultation. Some thought that they had some harmful impacts in terms of limiting the potential for pedestrian or cycle access within Little Aston and a social impact in separating communities and restricting community cohesion.



Roman Road

8. People who contributed to the rural masterplanning project all seemed to value the environment of Little Aston. The protection of its current

environmental quality was consequently important to them. Part of protection included to keeping open some views out of Little Aston to the north, including from the area by St. Peter's Church and the area north of Little Aston Lane that looks into open countryside. There was a suggestion of wildflower and tree planting in these areas to improve the environment further. People wanted to see environmental control exercised over the area to prevent future erosion of its quality and were concerned that 'over-development' could also impact upon the quality of the settlement.

• **Transport and traffic management**

9. Many people who contributed to the questionnaire or workshops had issues over road traffic and public transport. The speed of traffic was a particular issue.

10. There was a consensus that speeding traffic affected a number of roads within Little Aston and this appeared to be the most important traffic issue to many people. Many thought that the speed of traffic was too high particularly on Little Aston Lane, Aldridge Road, Walsall Road and Rosemary Hill Road. 'Rat running' was thought to contribute to the problem and increase the amount of traffic within the area.

11. Several suggestions were made indicating lengths of road where the speed limit should be reduced. These included Mill Lane/Aldridge Road – from 40 mph to 30 mph, making all of Blake Street 30 mph, and making the A454 route through Little Aston all 30 mph. In addition a suggestion of traffic calming Aldridge Road and Little Aston Lane was made, although not by using 'speed humps'. Some people thought that part of the problem was poor enforcement of the existing speed limits in the area.

12. Some people expressed a concern that the footpath network was relatively poor, both in terms of its maintenance and also that there were lengths where the width of footpaths were inadequate.



Forge Lane outside school hours

13. The issue of walking access to Little Aston Primary School had a number of facets. Parking on Forge₃

Lane to drop off and collect children was seen as an issue of safety because of the number of cars and the narrowness of the land and footpaths. Reference was made to the narrowness of footpaths having prevented the establishment of a 'walking bus' for schoolchildren. Suggestions were made that a footpath connection could be made between Forge Lane and Little Aston Lane through the recreation ground, and that this would be a convenient route for some. Mention was made that a footpath could have been created between Blake Street and Forge Lane, but the opportunity to create this was missed when the golf course was developed.

14. There was a desire to improve the potential for walking and cycling in the area and some saw the presence of gated areas as inhibiting this. Many people however, disagreed with this view. Several suggestions were made for new recreational footpath links or opportunities. As well as the Forge Lane – Little Aston Lane link, suggestions were made that this area north of the village would be good for circular routes and the land to the west of Little Aston hospital was considered to be an opportunity to establish footpaths across or within it (the same area, however, was also suggested as a potential housing location – see below). Suggestions made at the

workshops are shown on the Composite Plan of Workshop Ideas.

15. One of the top priorities that emerged from the 'stakeholder' workshops held in November 2010 was to improve the 'disjointed and insufficient' public transport facilities. One of the issues arising from this was the lack of a regular bus connection from Little Aston to Blake Street station. The quality and frequency of buses to Lichfield has also been raised as an issue. However questionnaire results suggest that at present most people did not use public transport, citing cost, infrequency, the walking distances to reach services and the lack of information about services as reasons they didn't use bus services. Those who did use public transport tended to use the train service from Blake Street into Sutton Coldfield and Birmingham.



Clarence Road

16. In terms of specific suggestions a request was made for a bus stop on the north side of Aldridge Road outside Little Aston Hospital. As a possible longer term suggestion the reopening of passenger services along the 'Sutton Park Line' was also suggested to allow connections with Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, Aldridge and Wolverhampton, with a possible station within Little Aston.

17. The maintenance and improvement of the existing local shops was seen as important to the life of Little Aston. The improvement of parking facilities at Burnett Road was mentioned as something that could help to sustain the shopping centre there.

• Community activities and facilities

18. The consultation showed that many people recognised that Little Aston has a range of community facilities, but there were issues for some in improving them. People attending events or answering the questionnaire variously identified existing facilities to include two shopping areas, the village school, church, Parish hall, recreation area and football/hockey at Chester Road. There was some concern however that the dentist identified within the Lichfield District Rural Sustainability4

Study was purely private and that the settlement currently has no doctors surgery. This potentially suggested that the level of local sustainability of Little Aston was not as strong or diverse as indicated within the Study.



Community Hall Little Aston Lane

19. Most people responding to a questionnaire thought that there is a good range of activities and facilities for local people, but that the range of facilities needs to be improved. It needs to be noted however that this was from a small sample of the community and responses from the February workshop event suggested that many thought the facilities did not need improving and there was no need for example for more sports pitches.

20. There was a view amongst some who attended the February 2011 workshop, that part of establishing a 'heart' to the community should be the

creation of a new community hall as a place to meet and that this could be alongside a suggested "community recreation zone" north of Little Aston Lane, as shown in the Composite Plan of Workshop Ideas. Some thought that the existing Parish Hall was "past its sell-by date" and in need of some improvement while others noted that the Community Association meets at the church or the Parish Hall but sometimes it was difficult to book the Hall. However this is another topic on which no dominant view has emerged from the rural masterplanning project within Little Aston, since a number of people did not agree in their responses that there was any need for somewhere additional to meet and most responses did not agree that there was a need for more sports pitches. Most people who responded at the February event were also opposed to the idea of more local facilities, such as a pub or more shops.

- **Development and housing**

21. Views on future development, in particular for housing, were related to the way people regarded the settlement and their existing environment. The main view expressed in the project was a need to keep the established character of Little Aston as a place where people "aspire

to live" and this included keeping open views where they exist.

22. In terms of questionnaire responses a small majority felt there was a good choice of housing to meet local needs, although the small size of the sample again needs to be acknowledged. Some said that Little Aston is an expensive area and has no starter homes and this view is supported by survey information. However some noted that they did not want to see the development of apartments and what was needed was bungalows and mixed developments. A view expressed by one respondent was that Little Aston does not need any 'starter homes' because this type of accommodation is provided in nearby communities.

23. Some people suggested there was a local need for 'downsizing' accommodation and there was also the suggestion that any smaller bungalows in the area should be retained rather than being replaced with larger dwellings. There was little reference to social housing within the consultation and some specific opposition to the idea of new social housing.

24. Overall therefore there was no strong view expressed of a need for new housing and support for the idea of protecting the existing character of,

Little Aston. This may have been the reason that there was little to emerge from the February workshop in terms of potential housing options for the future. Some references were made that no more 'inappropriate style' building was needed (recent development at Hardwick Road/Burnett Road was given as an example), and one mention was made of resisting 'garden developments'. There was also a desire to avoid new 'housing estates'.



Little support for new housing

25. Only one suggested location was put forward as a potential future housing location. This was on the land at Aldridge Road to the west of Little Aston Hospital, which was suggested as a possible future location for 'quality' downsizing accommodation (see Composite Plan of Workshop Ideas for location) for people to move to as their family size reduced. As noted previously however, there was

no consensus view on the need for any local 'downsizing' accommodation.

- **Other Issues**

26. There was frequent mention of a need for access to high speed broadband within Little Aston and this seemed to be a particular local issue. This was seen to have an impact on the ability of local businesses to keep pace with other areas as well as affecting people's domestic use of the Internet.

27. Unusually amongst villages, the issue of postal address and postcode was raised several times. This was related to local identity, even though local authorities do not control postcodes. Clearly people value living in Little Aston, but some feel that having a Walsall (WS) postcode erodes the settlement identity. One suggestion was made that Lichfield should have its own postcode and one suggested that the postal address for the area should be "Little Aston, Staffordshire".

- **What you want for the future**

28. In terms of the future, the protection of the existing character of Little Aston is a significant thread running through people's participation in the consultations. There was little ambition expressed for any expansion

of Little Aston for new housing and some concern that development within the settlement could have an adverse impact, such as in reducing the density of tree cover.

29. Ambitions for the future therefore centred on improving the environmental quality and facilities. There appeared to be consensus on the need for further traffic management, in particular to reduce speeds, and for improvements to help walking and cycling. Public transport improvements were also supported.

30. There was less agreement however on the need for new facilities. Whilst some people thought that a new community hall and recreation area was needed and that this would help to create a stronger 'heart' and focus to Little Aston, others considered that these were not needed. It is not clear from this project whether there is a representative 'community' view on these issues.

B. What CABE said

31. The independent event enabler sponsored by CABE reported his views on all six villages covered by the 'rural masterplanning' project to the District Council in April 2011. The content of his report relating specifically to Little Aston is set out below.

"LITTLE ASTON

Much of Little Aston is essentially an outer suburb of the Birmingham conurbation defined by enclaves of high value residential property, a golf club and private hospital. As the history over time diagrams demonstrate there is a long history of infilling and intensification over time since the last major greenfield development in the 1970's.

At its Eastern edge parts of Little Aston are close to Blake Street station (across the boundary in Birmingham) and there may be some limited scope here for 'rounding' the outer edge of the conurbation with limited additional housing within walking distance of this station. In the longer term if the 'Sutton Park line' (Walmley to Walsall) were reopened there might also potentially be a station adding

commuter rail access close to the south-western corner of Little Aston around Streetly village.

At the workshop (which had a relatively low attendance compared to substantial numbers viewing the exhibition) there was some enthusiasm for improving links on foot/ by bike within the locality and particularly to community facilities and the school at Forge Lane.

There was enthusiasm for reinforcing the role of Little Aston Village centre (which crosses the boundary with Birmingham) as a focus for the local community and there was some discussion on how local businesses might be encouraged to stay or locate here.

From a rural masterplan fund viewpoint the local planning issues at Little Aston were untypical and it is not really a 'rural settlement' in functional terms."



Entrance to Little Aston Park



Burnett Road

C. Other Evidence Relevant to planning for the future of Little Aston

• Character and Environment

32. Little Aston is not a freestanding settlement, but is a significant community located on the edge of a larger urban area. Whilst this is not unique within Lichfield District, since Fazeley/Mile Oak is similarly located, Little Aston is a settlement that has unusual characteristics that tend to set it apart both from other villages within Lichfield District and from the neighbouring settlements of Sutton Coldfield and Streetly with which it merges.

33. The particularly significant characteristic that encompasses a large part of Little Aston is that much of it has extremely low development densities, derived from the gradual development of high quality individual dwellings in large grounds within what was originally a parkland estate setting. This has allowed a dense tree canopy to emerge and be maintained, such that it has become a distinctive urban landscape feature.

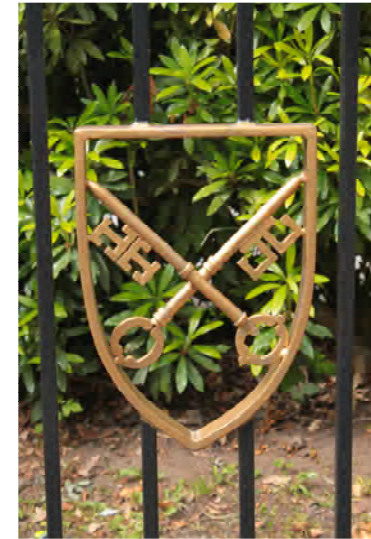
34. Much of Little Aston is covered by a Conservation Area designation that recognises these qualities. It was designated in 1999. Little Aston

developed from Little Aston Park, which formed the recreational grounds of Little Aston Hall estate. The old village of Little Aston lies adjacent to the northern boundary and part of the old village was added to the Conservation Area in 2009 when the District Council prepared a Conservation Area Appraisal for Little Aston. This area has a more traditional vernacular style and generally smaller properties and plots.

35. The Conservation Area is, as a result of its origins, very extensive, amounting to well over 130 hectares.

36. Little Aston was designated a Conservation Area due to its high quality environment, remnant parkland estate and good examples of incremental individual development during the 20th Century. Of immense importance was the quality of landscape, a heathland mix of landscaped and secondary woodland, with individually designed houses interspersed through the area. The many examples of outstanding trees, including Scots pine, Corsican pine, sweet and horse chestnut, silver birch, oak and sycamore, the great expanses of rhododendron, the impressive vistas along tree and rhododendron lined lanes were justification for the preservation and enhancement of Little Aston, as were the excellent examples of high quality

1920s, 1930s, 1950s and 1960s housing, ranging from the modern movement to mock Tudor and vernacular revival.



Gate at St. Peter's Church

37. There are over 60 Tree Preservation Orders within Little Aston, mainly within the Conservation Area. The potential loss of trees is a threat to the wooded character of the area and this can arise from a number of causes, including old age, lack of replacement planting and development. The age distribution of trees within the area is heavily skewed towards mature or over-mature trees with fewer young or semi mature trees.

38. Preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area is one of the most significant factors in considering the future of Little Aston. There has been a significant level of infill development over the past 20 or more years and the area continues to be under pressure from back land development, infill development and amalgamation of plots. Pressure to build additional housing on the existing large plots of land allocated to each dwelling should not be expected to disappear and there may be additional potential within the area. However, as expressly noted within the Little Aston Conservation Area Appraisal, each proposal should be carefully considered on its own merits and future developments must seek to preserve the pattern and appearance of dwellings and to enhance the character and quality of the conservation area and continue the tradition of good examples of varying architectural styles.

39. As well as containing important individual trees and groups of trees, there are a limited number of open green spaces within the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal has noted these and the need to retain them. One of the most significant is the view across to St. Peter's Church across rising ground from Aldridge Road.

40. Lichfield District Council has recently adopted a Conservation Area Management Plan for the Little Aston Conservation Area. This will have a number of significant implications for the area, particularly that it adds additional planning controls over development within the Area, to include matters that would normally be outside planning control. These include control covering 85 identified properties within the Conservation Area, over such proposals as enlargement of roof alterations to dwellings, constructing porches or buildings and structures within the grounds of dwellings and exterior painting. A complete list of the properties involved and the additional controls over them is included within the Conservation Area Management Plan.

41. Other important features of the Management Plan are that it identifies properties to be included within the register of buildings of special local interest, it will keep the need for the preparation of enhancement schemes under review, will seek to protect important views and look to find ways of achieving a more cohesive and integrated approach to street furniture.

42. In terms of implications for future development the Management Plan adds weight to the protection of views from inappropriate forms of

development, the need to respect the character and grain of existing development including the large plots. It notes that, "development should only be allowed where it will fit in with the existing historic form of development; where it does not impinge on the setting of historic buildings; and where it does not result in the loss of important green open space."



The Forge, Forge Lane

43. Although the Conservation Area is of great significance within Little Aston, it is significant that the residents through the workshop identified a number of areas that had what they described as "areas of commonality". Some of these areas lie outside the Conservation Area. They tend to have a higher density of development, but some degree of uniformity within them so that they have distinctive characteristics of their own whilst still recognisably being part of Little Aston. The areas identified,

through the workshop are shown on the Composite Plan of Workshop Ideas, although there may be others not specifically identified at that event.

44. In all, this means that Little Aston has a varied and complex, not uniform, urban form. It is large in size considering that it has little over 1,000 households. Because of its unusual history of development it has no recognisable central place to form a village 'centre', but has facilities located in a number of places with two distinct and widely separated shopping and service areas and a third area of the old village containing the primary school and a recreation area. The church is separate from all of these. These characteristics give rise to the issue raised locally and discussed through the consultation of whether there is a need for the consolidation of new facilities in one place to create a 'heart' and strengthen the sense of local community. However the characteristics are also important in considering the question of whether Little Aston is an appropriate place to locate significant new development and if so where should it be and at what the scale.

Biodiversity

45. An Ecological Study of Lichfield District (2009 by Staffordshire

Ecological Services) includes a phase 1 habitat survey of two areas, to the north and to the south west of Little Aston respectively, to consider whether they support areas of valuable habitat likely to be important to protected species or species identified in the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan. The Study drew from existing records in the Staffordshire ecological records database and from field surveys.

46. The surveys include those largely undeveloped areas where potential development sites are most likely to be drawn from if new development was considered appropriate in the area.

47. The Study shows that there are no existing designated biodiversity sites in either area. Both areas contain significant proportions of arable land and both contain large areas of 'amenity grassland', which is in fact mainly the two Little Aston golf courses. There is some open water in both areas, which is likely to be of some significance to wildlife and which it is recommended should be retained. In the north there are two areas of species poor semi-improved grassland, which could possibly be enhanced to create linking habitat. One of these areas is the field that lies to the north of St. Peter's church. In the south-west area, areas of semi-

natural broadleaved woodland are present, which should be retained.

48. The habitats in both areas are likely to support both protected species and species identified in the Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, but the biodiversity interest is unlikely to be sufficient to prevent development in these areas if it were otherwise considered appropriate. The Study recommends the retention of the open water, semi-improved grassland and woodland habitats in the event of development.

Flood Risk

49. A Surface Water Management Plan was prepared for southern Staffordshire in 2010 and forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework. The Plan identified 7 historic flooding events in the Little Aston Area, although these were dispersed and include 2 events near Shenstone Wood End, two on Aldridge Rd. and two in the south of Little Aston, close to Sutton Park. These events were mainly sewer or highway flooding, although there is one brook course north of Blake Street and east of Aston Wood golf course where there has been surface water flooding on more than one occasion. None of these events appear to be linked but the Management Plan₁₀

recommends further analysis identifying the location of potential future surface water flooding. Site-specific analysis would be necessary to consider potential development sites. Little Aston was identified as one of seven settlements within Lichfield District that were classified as having a high overall risk of surface water flooding and should be subject to further review.

- **Transport**

50. Because of its' location on the northern edge of the West Midlands conurbation there are a number of both 'A' and 'B' roads that pass through Little Aston which have functions of distributing through traffic as well as serving the local area. These include the A454, which includes Walsall Road and Aldridge Road, the A452 Chester Road and the B4138, which is Rosemary Hill Road. There were no great congestion issues on these routes raised through the rural masterplanning consultation, residents main concerns being about the speed of traffic. At present there are no proposals on any of these routes in Staffordshire highways improvement programmes.

51. Staffordshire County Council is currently progressing a Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy for the period 2011 to 2026. Whilst this

will have some emphasis on the infrastructure necessary to promote movement by more sustainable transport measures, and to accommodate growth, it also recognises that the needs of local neighbourhoods is one of the transport challenges that needs to be met.



Traffic and signs

This includes maintaining the current condition and safety of the highway network, improving accessibility and the quality of life in local communities and providing adequate public transport access to local services and facilities.

52. The Integrated Transport Strategy does not include any specific proposals in the Little Aston area, either for traffic management or for improved public transport. However it identifies potential types of projects such as 20 mph zones, a speed limit review, community transport, bus service information and pedestrian safety priorities, as approaches that could be tapped into to achieve local ambitions. There are increasingly scarce resources for transport management and such initiatives will need to be largely funded by County council capital and revenue funds, (including Councillor's revenue funds) and influenced by community consultation. It will be important for communities to be aware of County Council funding mechanisms and the opportunity to influence them if there are particular local issues, such as traffic speeds within Little Aston, that they wish to see addressed.

Train Services

53. Little Aston is one of two rural settlements within Lichfield district that has direct access to a rail station, albeit that Blake Street station lies within Birmingham. The station is within walking distance for some, but owing to the size of Little Aston, for many it is more likely to involve parking at the station. The station itself has 155 car spaces¹¹

and cycle parking facilities for 12 cycles. There are bus services within Little Aston, although visitors to events noted there were no direct services to Blake Street. For the benefit of Little Aston residents the possibility of the current through bus service stopping at the station or the provision of diverted or new services being set up could warrant further investigation.

54. Good access to a station, which here serves both Birmingham and Lichfield, is potentially a favourable factor in terms of locations for additional housing and this point was noted in the CABE report, which suggested the possibility of some 'rounding' of development within walking distance of the station. This suggestion is considered below within the section on development and housing.

55. Within the February 2011 workshops a suggestion was made of opening a rail station on the Sutton Park line. This would represent a replacement of the station that was closed many years ago and subsequently redeveloped for housing. In May 2011 Network Rail published its Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for the West Midlands, which considers rail improvements in detail up to 2020 and in more general terms up to 2030. The RUS has considered a wide range

of potential improvements to the network in the West Midlands through a process of technical work and stakeholder involvement. It has included amongst its preferred options a new station for Aldridge and a service from Aldridge to Birmingham, to help serve the area. The proposal would be implemented through an extension of electrified services from Walsall. This would replace a previous CENTRO proposal to provide the station and use the Sutton Park line to serve Birmingham. The RUS also notes there are constraints to greater freight use on the Sutton Park line, but these are being addressed as part of re-signalling and renewal schemes in the area. Thus the rail strategy for the area excludes the possibility of passenger services on the Sutton Park line, but does open the option of use of a new service from Aldridge via Walsall, which may be of some benefit to the Little Aston area.

Accessibility

56. A Transport Accessibility Study for Lichfield District prepared in 2008 considered accessibility of settlements to employment, education, healthcare and shopping (supermarkets). It examined accessibility at the village level and for individual areas within villages. The study showed that parts of Little Aston has relatively good access to employment, to further

education and to supermarkets by public transport, but access was poorer to other facilities, such as secondary education and GP surgeries. It also indicated that although part of Little Aston had good walking journey times to a primary school, walking times from the southern part of the settlement to the primary school at Forge Lane would be up to 40 minutes. Congestion along Forge Lane at school opening and closing times was an issue amongst some who attended the events and the walking journey time provides an interesting context to the issue.



Local shops

57. The Study also produced composite 'scores' for public transport or walking accessibility for each ward in the District to all facilities (overall accessibility) and to individual facilities. Since the study results were based upon dividing ward score rankings into quartiles, which gave a₁₂

measure of relative accessibility of wards within the District. In terms of both overall accessibility and accessibility to individual facilities, Little Aston Ward consistently fell within the bottom quartile of the Lichfield District Wards. This is the only ward amongst all of those containing the six settlements included in the rural masterplanning study, which always fell within the bottom quartile for the District.

58. These results suggest that in terms of accessibility, taking account of the whole range of services and facilities considered in the study, Little Aston could be considered to have some issues in relation to its suitability for significant development. This is surprising considering the proximity of Sutton Coldfield and the availability of a rail station at Blake Street, but may say something about the level of facilities available within Little Aston itself and the large geographical extent of the settlement. It should be noted that the Rural Settlement Sustainability Study 2008, which identified Little Aston as one of the 6 settlements within Lichfield District with the highest 'score' in relation to access to facilities and services found it ranked at number 6 of the District's settlements.

• **Community Facilities and Activities**

Local centres

59. Whilst there are a number of local shops in two separate local centres within Little Aston they are situated at two extremities of the settlement. There is no central shopping location equally accessible to all as a result of the form and size of the settlement. Both the centres at Burnett Road and Little Aston Lane offer convenience and some specialist shops and services, although Burnett Road is significantly the larger.



Shops at Little Aston Lane local centre

Both centres appear to be relatively healthy and have a valuable local function. Little Aston residents noted their value and their desire that they should be retained and supported during the rural planning project. Although maintaining and supporting local centres is a difficult area of planning policy to implement, they are

centres that have a valuable local function and their future should be supported by planning policy, to the extent that it is able.

Recreation

60. In terms of outdoor or indoor sport or general outdoor recreation Little Aston cannot be considered in isolation from the adjacent area because parts of the settlement lie close to Sutton Park, which is one of the largest semi-natural greenspaces in the Midlands. Wyndley Leisure Centre is also relatively easily accessible from Little Aston, providing a public swimming pool. However it is relevant to consider what local recreation facilities are available within the community.

61. A Playing Pitch Assessment (2007) and an Open Space Assessment (2008/9) have both been prepared as evidence for the Local Development Framework. These provide information to enable recreation provision to be considered for Little Aston.

62. Part of the background to the playing pitch assessment is a trend for less use of adult football pitches, but increased participation by younger age groups. The Study considered future trends and took account of various programmes to increase₁₃

participation in sport and used these to forecast the need for playing pitches at 2021.

63. The Playing Pitch Assessment considered the settlement as part of a 'Rural South' area of Lichfield District, (encompassing Little Aston, Shenstone, Stonnall, Fazeley and Bourne Vale wards) and also at the Ward level. Because of the wide area covered by 'Rural South' these 'sub-area' figures are not greatly helpful in considering individual settlements.

64. Overall the study found a current surplus of adult football pitches in Lichfield Rural South area of some 8.4 pitches, but shortfalls in junior football, mini-soccer and cricket. The ward level analysis indicates a current surplus of 4 adult football pitches for Little Aston and no shortfalls in junior football, mini-soccer, cricket or rugby. The current analysis at ward level is based upon matching supply and demand following an audit of pitches and a survey of clubs. The results of the Study suggest that this is an area of relatively low demand, but in addition it identifies Little Aston Ward as a Ward that is likely to see a fall in population in future years, which would suppress future demand.

65. Considering the future at the sub-area level, including population changes and predicted participation in

sport, the study predicted that for Lichfield Rural South the shortfalls in junior football, mini-soccer and cricket pitches would all increase by 2021. It is not clear however whether the shortfall figures for the 'Rural South' fairly represent the situation for Little Aston, since there are already significant shortfalls for Fazeley Ward, which is where most of the deficiencies in junior football and mini-soccer will arise.

66. The study recommended that for Lichfield District policies should ensure the safeguarding of existing pitches, securing community use agreements of schools facilities and re-designating some adult pitches for other sports, such as junior football and mini-soccer. It was noted that there was no formal community use agreement for Little Aston Primary School.

67. There was a suggestion in the February workshop of the possibility of developing a 'community recreation area' north of Little Aston Lane. It would require further investigation of local demand to determine whether such an area should encompass playing pitches, (at junior or adult levels) should the idea be progressed.

68. For outdoor play Little Aston has a recreation ground of around 2.9 hectares, which is relatively newly equipped for children's play. The

District Council's Open Space Sport and Recreation Assessment of 2009, included both quality and accessibility assessments of play spaces and found that the Little Aston recreation area scored very highly in terms of the quality of the facilities, but relatively poorly in terms of its accessibility. This again relates to the size and shape of the settlement. Whilst Little Aston meets standards set for the quantity of equipped play space and its quality, the issue of accessibility would be difficult to overcome unless a second equipped play space was to be created in a different location. Unfortunately there is no obvious single location or site where this could be achieved.

69. The Open Space Assessment also noted that whilst there is a large equipped play space for Little Aston, there is no separate amenity greenspace.

- **Housing Growth**

Recent growth:

70. Most of Little Aston developed gradually from the early twentieth century mainly through incremental individual development with many examples of high quality 1920s, 1930s, 1950s and 1960s housing within the former extent of Little¹⁴

Aston Park. The map showing the evolution of Little Aston (see **Appendix 3**) shows the large extent of 'mixed age' development, which represents the area of individual dwellings, within which there has been later low density infill and some redevelopment. There have been two or three examples of larger scale developments, particularly in the 1970's, but since then most development has been through infill and at a small scale.

71. A Table showing the remaining development potential within the current village boundary identified by the District Council's 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, is included as **Appendix 4**, together with a Plan of potential sites identified by the SHLAA. It shows only 8 dwelling completions between 2006 and 2010 but remaining planning permissions at April 2010 of 34 dwellings, mostly in plots of 1 or 2 dwellings, some of which have now been completed. There is virtually no further capacity currently identified within the existing limits to the settlement defined by the adopted Local Plan, with total development potential identified of only 45 dwellings for the period 2006 to 2026.

72. **Housing need:** Although there is evidence that identifies a District-wide housing need as (see Introduction and

Background report), there are no local housing need surveys specific to Little Aston and therefore the technical evidence to support any specific level or types of housing requirements in the immediate area is absent. There are however aspects of the evidence reports on housing already commissioned by the District Council that are relevant to the area.



Housing on Little Aston Lane

73. The Rural Housing Needs Survey of 2008 included Little Aston within the 'rural south' part of the District, which encompasses Little Aston, Shenstone, Stonnall, Canwell Wall and Weeford. Within this area of over 15,000 houses, it identified an owner occupation of 91.1%, significantly higher than most parts of Lichfield District, with a very low proportion of dwellings being for social rent. For Little Aston the 2001 Census showed 95.5% owner occupation with only 1.2% social renting. Most existing

housing is of larger detached properties and both house prices and incomes are higher in the 'rural south' than in other parts of Lichfield District.

74. In response to a survey 10.3% of residents who responded considered their current home to be unsuitable for their needs. This however represented only 23 households of 217 replies to the survey and so the results must be viewed with some caution. Size, particularly properties being too large, was the main reason given for unsuitability, with 34% of those who thought their home unsuitable for their needs saying it was too large compared to 17% who said it was too small. Comparing property size with household size also indicated that under-occupation is much more significant than over-occupation in Lichfield 'Rural South'.

75. Just over a quarter of the households who responded to the survey had moved to their current home within the last 5 years, and 81% of these had moved into the area from elsewhere, mainly from Lichfield, Sutton Coldfield and Walsall.

76. More households expressed an intention to move within the next 2 years than actually moved in the past 2 years, 15.8% compared to 10.2% and only around 25% of those intending to move expected to stay₁₅

within the 'rural south' part of the District.

77. Most people who intended to move expected to own their own home, with most having a preference for four bedroomed or three bedroomed detached housing. None of those intended movers were looking for a one bedroomed property.

78. Whilst 7.7% of households contained at least one member planning to move out to establish a new independent household within the next two years none of them expected to stay within the 'rural south' part of Lichfield District. The overall housing demand from both existing and newly forming households is primarily for two, three and four bedroomed detached properties.

79. Whilst it is difficult to quantify, the survey does provide some support for the view expressed through the workshops that there was a need for properties to downsize to, albeit that these might still be in three bedroomed detached houses. In addition there seems to be little specific demand arising for social housing from within the area since most people are in or were expecting to be in, owner occupied dwellings. If there is a social housing need arising from within the Little Aston area it

would be expected to be for a small number of dwellings.

Development opportunities:

80. Without expansion beyond the current settlement boundary the development potential so far identified in Little Aston is limited to some 45 dwellings (see **Appendix 4**), marginally the lowest level of potential identified amongst the six settlements being considered by the rural planning project.

81. The District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010 (SHLAA), identifies a number of opportunities for the further housing development of the village that are outside the settlement boundary. These sites have been brought forward by the 'development industry' and if implemented could result in a significant expansion of Little Aston. These could be considered as providing a choice of 'options' brought forward by a number of separate interests and do not imply any necessity to consider such a scale of development. All of the sites, including the site identified in the workshop, lie adjacent to the boundary of the settlement rather than being physically separated from it, but all have in common that they currently lie in the Green Belt.

82. The approach taken by the February 2011 workshop session was to consider potential outside the settlement boundary and whilst there was no particular desire for more development from those who attended, one group identified a site that it considered could accommodate development to address the issue it identified, this being a need for people to 'downsize' into smaller but high quality accommodation. This area is shown on the Composite Plan of Workshop Ideas. It lies to the west of Little Aston hospital along Aldridge Road. The land has an area of some 9.1 hectares and is one of the sites included within the District Council's 2010 SHLAA document, where it is shown as having a capacity of 164 dwellings, although it could be developed at a different density from that assumed by the SHLAA. The workshop groups did not identify any other potential locations that were thought to be possible development sites.

83. The Aldridge Road site represents one of the potential options for expansion of the settlement identified in the SHLAA, the remaining sites in various locations to the north and west of Little Aston ranging in size from 5 dwellings to over 300 dwellings. All of the sites, including the site identified in the workshop, lie adjacent to the boundary of the settlement rather than

than being physically separated from it, but all have in common that they currently lie in the Green Belt.

84. The CABA report suggested that there may be, “some limited scope here (Little Aston) for ‘rounding’ the outer edge of the conurbation with limited additional housing within walking distance of this station” (Blake Street). The 2010 SHLAA document identifies two potential sites north of Blake Street put forward by landowners. These sites individually have housing capacities of approximately 20 dwellings and 50 dwellings, although they are physically separated from one another. Both would represent development to the rear of the frontage housing on the north side of Blake Street. A ‘rounding off’ of the green belt in this location, as suggested in the CABA report, would benefit from a different configuration than simply the development of these two sites independently. Although the sites would fulfill the criterion of being within walking distance of the station, the sites also lie within the green belt.

85. The release of any of these potential additional housing development options at Little Aston would therefore need a significant decision to be made to amend green belt boundaries in this location.

86. Other than options for the extension of Little Aston into the green belt, the remaining options for Little Aston would be to permit or allow for further infill development within the Local Development Framework, or to assume for the purposes of planning that there would be little by way of additional development.



Visually important space looking towards the church

87. Little Aston has a long history of infill development and this has contributed a significant number of new dwellings since the approval of the West Midlands Green Belt. Since the adoption of the Lichfield District Local Plan in 1996 much of the area where the densities are lowest and the tree ‘canopy’ most significant has been covered by a housing density policy, requiring infill or redevelopment to be in half acre plots. During this period there has continued to be infill development that conforms to this

policy. The present situation within this area is that there is little further additional capacity that is likely to result from infill development if the ½ acre policy continues to be applied. The number of applications for this type of development has significantly slowed, with the current emphasis being on the replacement of dwellings, in particular bungalows with houses. Should the policy be lifted then there may be significant infill capacity remaining, although this is difficult to quantify without further study, which is beyond the scope of this report.

88. Outside the ½ acre policy area within the reminder of the settlement boundary, development densities are higher and therefore there is also likely to be little scope for infill development.

- **Shenstone Parish Plan**

89. Shenstone Parish Council prepared a Parish Plan in 2006, using survey information gathered from questionnaire responses and ‘road shows’. The Plan covers all three Wards of Shenstone, Stonnall and Little Aston. The Parish council notes, “Uppermost in the minds of Councillors is the need to retain the character and charm of the existing villages whilst recognising they are, and will be, subject to the wider development proposals from central government, the regional Assembly¹⁷

and the second and third tier local development framework documents". Whilst the governance framework has changed recently, the wider 'pressures' still remain.

90. The Parish Plan is split into four sections, based upon the District Council's Strategic Plan. In terms of 'A Good Place to Live' and the question of growth, the Plan notes that many local residents would support infill and back land development in preference to any expansion of the existing villages and consequent encroachment into the green belt. From data gathered it identifies pressure for affordable housing, particularly in the rented sector, to prevent young people from being forced out of the area and notes that backland development may be the only viable opportunity to provide some more modest housing which would be affordable to first time buyers. The Plan concludes that the Council will look for opportunities to support affordable housing to try to retain those who wish to remain in the area.

91. In relation to 'A Thriving Economy', the Plan states that the Parish council will continue to support the retention of existing local employment opportunities whilst seeking to mitigate any nuisance that may be caused by having employment parks. Pressure

on existing shops to maintain their viability is also noted. On 'The Environment', the Plan notes that the Parish Council is fully supportive of recycling schemes and of seeking to extend opportunities in partnership with the District Council. In terms of 'A Good Quality of Life', the Plan notes the existing range of opportunities for leisure and cultural activities within the villages, but suggests that the provision of other facilities that will appeal to the younger section of the population should be investigated with them. It also notes the restrictions imposed of leisure and cultural activities by the lack of public transport.

D. Towards a Vision for the Future

Summary and Observations on 'What You Said':

92. The views expressed by Little Aston residents need to be considered with some caution, since although the February workshop event was reasonably well attended (around 85 people), returns from the initial questionnaire about issues within the area and the numbers participating in the workshop discussions were both relatively low. The results achieved also showed that Little Aston was one

of the locations included within the rural planning project where there seemed to be a lack of consensus over several issues.



Shops, Burnett Road

93. Top priorities from the initial surveys and workshop were improvements to public transport, that Little Aston needs a 'heart', such as somewhere to meet and that the settlement needs a clearer identity. Only the last point however achieved solid agreement amongst those visiting the February workshop, whilst there were many who disagreed with the need for public transport improvements. There was also no clear consensus on whether Little Aston needed changes to create a 'heart'.

94. On what people wanted for the future there was clear and strong agreement about the desire for traffic restrictions and improvements to

help movement on foot. On the other hand many people disagreed with the need for more local facilities such as pubs and shops and more people disagreed with the need for more sports pitches than those who agreed.

95. In the workshop session, one group identified the potential for a single housing site to meet a perceived need for high quality 'downsizing' accommodation, whilst the same area was identified as appropriate as public access land. No further potential housing sites were identified.

96. Despite the varying views expressed about issues and the future for Little Aston it was clear that most Little Aston residents share a view that they like living there, because it offers them a high quality living environment, some local facilities and services and good access to facilities within the adjacent urban area. People expressed views on perceived deficiencies on various aspects of living in Little Aston.

97. From the local perspective the future for Little Aston and a vision of what it should be like as a place to live in the future needs to be based around the clear desire to retain the present character of the settlement and the 'community ethic' and the desire for

improving the things that are seen as impinging on the current quality of life.

98. The divergent views expressed on some issues, however, create a difficulty in drawing firm conclusions at present. Whilst there appears to be consensus on the desire for traffic management and slowing speeds, and on improved footpaths and recreational walking opportunities, many of the other potential 'improvements' that could be sought for Little Aston over time appear to have no general agreement. These include seeking new facilities located to create a 'heart' for Little Aston, which potentially could include a new village/community hall and a more comprehensive 'community recreation area'. It also relates to the question of public transport improvements.



Village Hall notice board

99. The concluding sections of this report suggest a set of guiding

principles and a vision for Little Aston that could potentially guide the Local development Framework being prepared by the District Council and future local actions. However the suggestions are put forward as items for further debate, with a view to seeking a wider range of local views.

Conclusions on Housing Development Potential:

100. As a housing location Little Aston needs to be viewed in the context of its position on the edge of Sutton Coldfield, where there is a wide range of facilities and employment opportunities. This 'urban edge' position is also relevant to the consideration of opportunities to access a wider range of housing locally. Even though the range of facilities within Little Aston itself is limited and the facilities are spread within different parts of the settlement, Little Aston should be seen as a settlement that would potentially be a sustainable location for some new development to contribute to meeting identified needs.

101. However the sustainability of the location has to be considered against a range of other factors in assessing whether Little Aston should be identified within the Local Development Framework as a location

that should expand over the next 20 years.

102. As noted in the CABE report Little Aston is not really a village in the traditional sense, but lies at the outer edge of a larger urban area. Little Aston has a particularly significant location in terms of green belt and all of the potential housing sites identified by the workshops or the development industry are in the green belt. Any development for housing on green belt sites adjacent to Little Aston would be in effect an outward expansion of the West Midlands conurbation. This would be directly contrary to a fundamental purpose of the West Midlands green belt, since the main purpose in establishing the green belt was to limit the extent of the conurbation and prevent its spread into open countryside.



Local shops at the edge of Sutton Park

103. National planning policy currently requires “exceptional circumstances” to be identified to justify any changes to green belt boundaries. In terms of all the potential sites therefore there is a question of whether there is any need for a scale of development within the District that would amount to the ‘exceptional circumstances’ needed to justify a change to the current Green Belt boundaries in this location.

104. In the absence of a District housing requirement set by a statutory strategic level of planning, or work that clearly establishes housing needs within the area, it is difficult to identify the specific exceptional circumstances that would justify the significant green belt boundary changes implied by the release of sites that would in effect amount to allowing an outward expansion of the West Midlands conurbation and therefore such a measure cannot be recommended.

105. The only other option for Little Aston in terms of contributing to future housing needs would be the continuation of infill development within the current boundaries. It is clear that one of the fundamental characteristics of Little Aston is its environmental quality, which is recognised by its residents and by the designation of the Conservation Area that covers a significant proportion of the settlement. The only means of

achieving a significant number of additional dwellings within Little Aston would be to remove the policy requiring any housing development within this area to be in ½ acre plots. This policy has been successful in retaining the ‘leafy character’ valued by most residents and its removal could in the longer term significantly erode that character. It is considered therefore that it is essential to retain the policy.

106. The considerations discussed above lead to the conclusion that despite Little Aston being a potentially sustainable location for new housing growth there are no acceptable options that would lead to their being the capacity for a significant number of dwellings to contribute to District or local requirements. It is considered therefore that Little Aston should not be considered further in terms of being a ‘key’ settlement that could accommodate significant future housing growth.

107. The suggested scale of growth for Little Aston over the period of the Local Development Framework from 2010, based upon this assessment of options is summarised in the Table below.

Development Type	Potential Capacity	Current Status
With planning permission 1/4/10	34	Infill sites
Identified sites in village boundary	3	SHLAA deliverable sites
Redevelopment of brownfield sites	0	
Greenfield outside village boundary	0	
Suggested Housing Growth	37	

Guiding Principles:

108. Taking into account the range of community views expressed, and other relevant considerations contained principally in evidence prepared for the Local Development Framework, it is considered that the following Guiding Principles for Little Aston should be the subject of further discussion with the local community and stakeholders.

Environmental:

- *Maintain and enhance the present environmental quality of Little Aston including the sylvan and leafy character of the Conservation Area.*
- *Continue to manage development densities within the Little Aston policy area.*
- *Maintain the architectural quality of the area in any new built development, recognising the wide variety of individual architectural styles and variations in the grain of development that exists across Little Aston*
- *Maintain and renew the wooded character of the area by management of the existing tree cover and securing replanting where possible to reduce the dominance of mature or over-mature trees in favour of more young and semi mature trees.*
- *Improve the environmental quality along main routes through Little Aston by traffic management measures to control in particular the speed of traffic and improving pedestrian and cycling facilities. (potentially including measures such as reduced speed limits and pedestrian crossing points).*
- *Secure an improved quality of access to the countryside where*

deficiencies exist and in co-operation with others seek opportunities to create additional recreational footpath routes.

- *Protect important open spaces and views into and out of Little Aston*

Social:

- *Enhance the range of facilities available to residents, in particular those for children, including access to play facilities*
- *Seek to concentrate improved social and recreational facilities, particularly for open recreation, on land north of Little Aston Lane adjacent to the existing recreation area.*
- *Renew or improve community hall facilities to meet local requirements*
- *Seek opportunities to improve local bus services and facilities, including in particular bus access to Blake Street station and additional bus stops.*

Housing:

- *Ensure the achievement of a high quality of design, in any housing development consistent with village character and grain and, in locations₂₁*

affecting the Conservation Area, ensuring a positive contribution to its quality.

Economic:

- *Maintain the local shopping centres, ensuring that they continue to provide a range of convenience and other retail needs that provide for the everyday needs of local people.*

A Draft Vision for Little Aston:

109. For the purposes of guiding the direction of future policy for the village, in particular through the Local Development Framework, consideration should be given to a Vision statement for the village. The following initial statement is suggested as a basis for further local discussion:

Little Aston will maintain its role as a distinct and stable community offering a high quality local living environment and a range of local services and facilities. The essential qualities of the Conservation Area will be recognised in all potential change. Improvements to the Conservation Area will be made where resources allow, in particular to maintain and renew tree cover and to achieve a more cohesive and integrated physical environment.

The range of shops, services and facilities will be maintained and enhanced and higher priority given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Community recreation, social and play facilities will be renewed to be of a physical form, distribution and quality appropriate to current needs.

New housing development in Little Aston should be limited to the replacement of existing properties within the limits of the settlement and infill development at densities appropriate to the character of the area.

Other Recommendations for Little Aston:

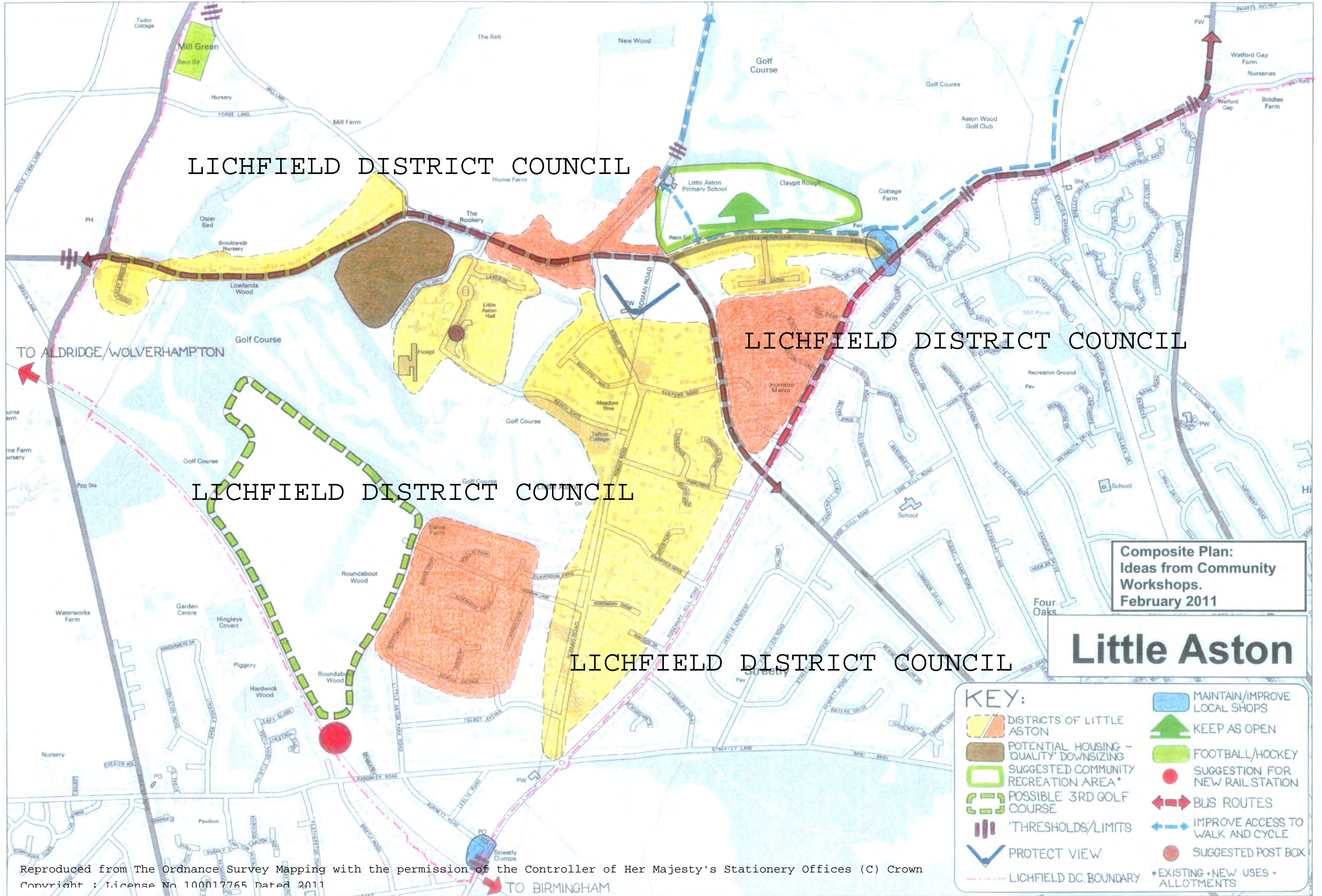
110. The open land fronting St. Peter's Church and identified as important to the Conservation Area within both the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Conservation Area Management Plan, should be removed from the SHLAA, since it is unsuitable for development in the long term.

111. In order to consider the potential for traffic management within the settlement consultation needs to take place with the County Council as transportation authority and with bus operators.

Next Steps:

112. This village report is intended to be of use by the community itself as well as by Lichfield District Council as local planning authority. All community involvement exercises normally achieve access to only a limited number of members of any community. Whilst for Little Aston there have been a number of events where participation has been achieved and this report is based upon the views expressed, it is recognised that these contributions were fairly limited in terms of the number of people directly contributing and therefore further consultation is desirable.

113. Next steps in the process should therefore seek more local community input. This should be designed to achieve a feedback of the results of the process so far to a wider community. Secondly it should seek to achieve further consultation, particularly on the Guiding Principles and Draft Vision that have been suggested above, but also on the views expressed in relation to housing.



LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Composite Plan:
Ideas from Community
Workshops.
February 2011

Little Aston

- KEY:**
- DISTRICTS OF LITTLE ASTON
 - POTENTIAL HOUSING - QUALITY DOWNSIZING
 - SUGGESTED COMMUNITY RECREATION AREA*
 - POSSIBLE 3RD GOLF COURSE
 - THRESHOLDS/LIMITS
 - PROTECT VIEW
 - LICHFIELD DC. BOUNDARY
 - MAINTAIN/IMPROVE LOCAL SHOPS
 - KEEP AS OPEN
 - FOOTBALL/HOCKEY
 - SUGGESTION FOR NEW RAIL STATION
 - BUS ROUTES
 - IMPROVE ACCESS TO WALK AND CYCLE
 - SUGGESTED POST BOX
 - EXISTING + NEW USES + ALLOTMENTS

LITTLE ASTON

APPENDIX:

- 1. 2001 Census Social Profile for Little Aston**
- 2. Local Views given during 'Rural Masterplanning' Project**
- 3. Plan Showing of 'Evolution' of Little Aston**
- 4. Identified Housing Potential 2010 and Plan from 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

Lichfield District Rural Planning Project

Lichfield District Council

September 2011

2001 Census - Social Profile for Villages in Staffordshire Little Aston

Population	Count	Percent	Index
Resident Population	2486		
Males	1204	48.4%	99
Females	1282	51.6%	100
People living in Households	2424	97.5%	99
People Living in Communal Establishment	62	2.5%	138

Age Profile	Count	Percent	Index
0-4	97	3.9%	66
5-14	347	14.0%	108
15	33	1.3%	105
16-19	81	3.3%	66
20-29	160	6.4%	51
30-44	404	16.3%	72
45-59	659	26.5%	140
60-74	482	19.4%	147
75-84	153	6.2%	110
85+	71	2.9%	147

Households	Count	Percent	Index
Total Household Spaces	998		
Occupied Household Spaces	938	94.0%	98
Vacant Household Spaces	51	5.1%	161
Second Residences	9	0.9%	142
Average household size	2.58		110
All Single Person Households	177	18.9%	63
All lone pensioner households	101	10.8%	66
All pensioner households	267	28.5%	120
Single Parent Households with dependent children	16	1.7%	27
Single Parent Households with non-dependent children	15	1.6%	53
All households with dependent children	271	28.9%	98
Households with no employed adult and dependent children	19	2.0%	42
All households with 1 or more persons with Limiting Long-term Illness	232	24.7%	74

Health and Caring	Count	Percent	Index
People not in good health	132	5.3%	59
People with a Limiting Long-term Illness	341	13.7%	77
People of working age with Limiting Long-term Illness	109	4.4%	54
People who provide unpaid care	251	10.1%	102
People who provide more than 50 hours of unpaid care	26	1.0%	51

Amenity	Count	Percent	Index
Overcrowded households	8	0.9%	12
No central heating	13	1.4%	16
No WC and bath/shower	3	0.3%	66

Ethnic Group	Count	Percent	Index
White	2206	88.7%	98
Mixed	12	0.5%	37
Indian	216	8.7%	415
Pakistani	14	0.6%	39
Bagladeshi	0	0.0%	0
Other Asian	6	0.2%	50
Black	10	0.4%	17
Chinese	9	0.4%	81
Other Ethnic Groups	16	0.6%	147

Religion	Count	Percent	Index
Christian	1941	78.1%	109
Buddhist	4	0.2%	57
Hindu	77	3.1%	278
Jewish	3	0.1%	23
Muslim	18	0.7%	23
Sikh	127	5.1%	767
Other Religion	0	0.0%	0
No Religion	191	7.7%	53
Religion not Stated	121	4.9%	63

Dwelling Type	Count	Percent	Index
Detached	750	75.2%	321
Semi-detached	96	9.6%	29
Terraced	10	1.0%	4
Purpose built flat	128	12.8%	88
Flat in converted / shared house	7	0.7%	15
Flat in commercial building	7	0.7%	59
Caravan/Mobile home/Temporary	0	0.0%	0

Tenure	Count	Percent	Index
Owner Occupied	893	95.2%	140
Shared Ownership	0	0.0%	0
Local Authority rented	3	0.3%	2
Housing Association / Registered Social Landlord	10	1.1%	18
Privately rented	26	2.8%	32
Other rented	5	0.5%	17

Car Ownership	Count	Percent	Index
Households with no car	35	3.7%	14
Households with 1 car	223	23.8%	54
Households with 2 cars	477	50.9%	216
Households with 3 or more cars	205	21.9%	370
Total number of cars in the area	1896		
Average no of cars per household	2.02		183

As a result of rounding some figures may not always equal the total for this area.

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Source: 2001 Census Key Statistics

An Index has been created to compare the above area with England. The scores for England always equals 100, therefore a score of less than 100 indicates fewer people or households in that category for the area compared with England. A score over 100 indicates more people or households in that category for the area compared with England.

Produced by Research Unit, Development Services Department, Staffordshire County Council

Further details available by telephoning 01785 277359 or email mark.sproston@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 2: Local Views given during 'Rural Masterplanning' Project

Little Aston: Other thoughts from Workshops 2011:

(Individual transcriptions from post-it notes made by workshop visitors)

Location: Little Aston		
Category/Type of comment	Comment made	*Additional comment made by others
General comments about Little Aston		
	With a WS9 postcode we do not get information about Little Aston development posted to us.	
	Involve the residents when reviewing the Conservation Area	
	I feel it's important to the character of Lichfield District that the outlook of outlying villages doesn't change appearance to enhance the richness of the District	
	Lack of congruity in postcodes – we live in Mill Lane Little Aston (street sign), but our postal address is Walsall with a WS9 postcode	
	We lose the identity of living in Little Aston village because our postal address only shows Aldridge, Walsall. We would like this to change so that Little Aston Staffordshire is our address	
	We pay high rates to Lichfield – but do not receive a very efficient emergency services – we waited 2 hours for the police to arrive from Stafford!	
	Although we live in Little Aston our postcode brings up Aldridge, Walsall. All very confusing for deliveries etc. We live in Lichfield rating area – why has Lichfield a 'WS' postcode – surely a city should have its own postcode!	
Environment		
	I feel it is really important to protect the 'green' areas and trees within the area, it is important to the character of the village.	
	Wild flowers, or any flowers would be nice in the recreation field and more trees planted in the field near the Walsall Road end	

	Greenery needs to be protected	
Development views - general		
Traffic and traffic management		
	Parked traffic at school time needs addressing urgently	
	Traffic calming measures and 30 mph speed limit to be imposed in Mill Lane	
	Reduce speed limit on Aldridge Road from 40 mph to 30 mph. Curve of road is dangerous with houses on convex curve	
	Reduce the speed limit on Blake Street to 30 mph for its whole length	
	Road surface is very poor and needs re-doing on a very regular basis and is very noisy. Walsall Road Four Oaks surface is much better quality and quieter.	
	Reduction of speed on all main roads.	
	Speed restrictions within the Little Aston area. – 30 mph along Little Aston Lane but frequently 60 mph or more being done	
	Appalling road surfaces	
	Reduce speed limit of A454 from 40 mph to 30 mph and enforce	
	Traffic calming (not sleeping policemen) along Aldridge Road/Little Aston Road.	
Public transport		
	Bus stop required on road towards Mere Green/Sutton outside entrance to BUPA/Spite hospital (number 6 route) for use by patients and Little Aston residents	
	Public transport is too expensive – cheaper to use my car!	
Getting about the village - walking/cycling		
	A path to connect Little Aston Lane to Forge Lane is possible through the recreation ground	
	Footpaths too narrow along Aldridge Rd (A454). Large lorries and buses make walking dangerous. + bus stop	

	placed on narrowest point of footpath, traffic too fast. Vans park on footpath and block walking	
	Pedestrian access to recreation ground from Little Aston Lane (needed)	
Village facilities		
	Appreciate pillar box from post office for Little Aston apartments – (ref. is to Little Aston Hall)	
	We currently have no doctors in Little Aston	
	A Little Aston Community Hall development. The existing Parish Hall is past its 'sell by date'	
	Questions re:- somewhere to meet, and provide a formal sport and recreation (ground?) - 2 questions in fact!!	
	Definitely need an up to date Community Centre	
	Would like broadband for Internet	
Housing		
	We would not wish to see a 'housing estate' in the area – loss of green space and village 'feel'. It will just become a suburb of Sutton/Birmingham	
	Behind 62 Blake Street there is land which has potential. It is near Blake Street station and near good transport links.	
	When LDC granted planning permission for housing on the cricket ground in Lichfield a very large problem occurred over schools and doctors	
	No further back garden developments.	
	No further inappropriate style building (as appears in Hardwick Road at corner of Burnett Road – (what were the planners thinking?))	
	Avoid building on green belt (as proposed in the SHLAA) Note: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment)	
	No social housing – I have been there. It does not work.	
	There is no need for social housing	
	Land behind 63 – 62 Blake Street, is it in consideration for planning: good transport – station nearby. Could incorporate shops	
		Note: * Column refers to comments written on or attached to an original post-it comment

Priorities and Issues Results from 2011 Events: Little Aston

Your top priorities	Agree	Disagree
You said you want improvements in public transport, as it is currently insufficient.	8	10
You felt Little Aston needs a 'heart' e.g. somewhere to meet, and provide formal sport and recreation.	12	8
You said Little Aston needs a clearer identity, and existing features which provide its current identity, must be protected.	28	0
Community activities and facilities		
You told us that there is a good range of activities and events for local people within the community.	12	1
You said there are a varied range of established businesses which employ local people.	9	2
You don't think the range of facilities offered currently is good enough, but there are good play facilities for children.	4	14
You said you want more sports pitches (including cricket) and a recreation ground.	3	14
Transport		
You said only a small number of people use public transport, mostly the train into Sutton and Birmingham for work, school and shopping.	17	4
Most of you said you don't use public transport because it is too expensive and infrequent.	4	12
You said that speeding traffic is a problem and needs to be addressed.	36	1
You said there was a desire to encourage walking throughout the village, especially a 'walking bus' to school, and opening up more links.	16	0
You said transport links are restricted by gated communities.	2	17
Housing		

You said Little Aston is an area where people aspire to live and this character needs to be maintained.	36	0
You want there to be smaller properties to allow people to downsize without moving away.	10	10
Environment & Communication		
Some of you said you experienced slow broadband speeds and patchy mobile phone reception.	25	1
You said Little Aston was not really a 'village' but is still a distinct community and needs to be treated as such.	28	1
You said that gated communities are insular and shut people out. They don't enhance the wider community.	3	23
You said a major problem is the village lacks a 'heart' or focus.	14	11
What you want in the future		
You said you would like to see traffic restrictions and enforcement to reduce speeding vehicles.	33	0
You said you would like to see more local facilities (e.g. pub and small shops).	7	19
Some of you want to see public transport improvements, especially bus access to Lichfield, Sutton and Birmingham.	16	5
You said you want footpath and road improvements to encourage pedestrian transport (including Walking Bus to the school).	25	3
Some of you said you wanted to see new sports pitches and recreation areas within the village.	3	16

Note on Workshops Plans.

Introduction:

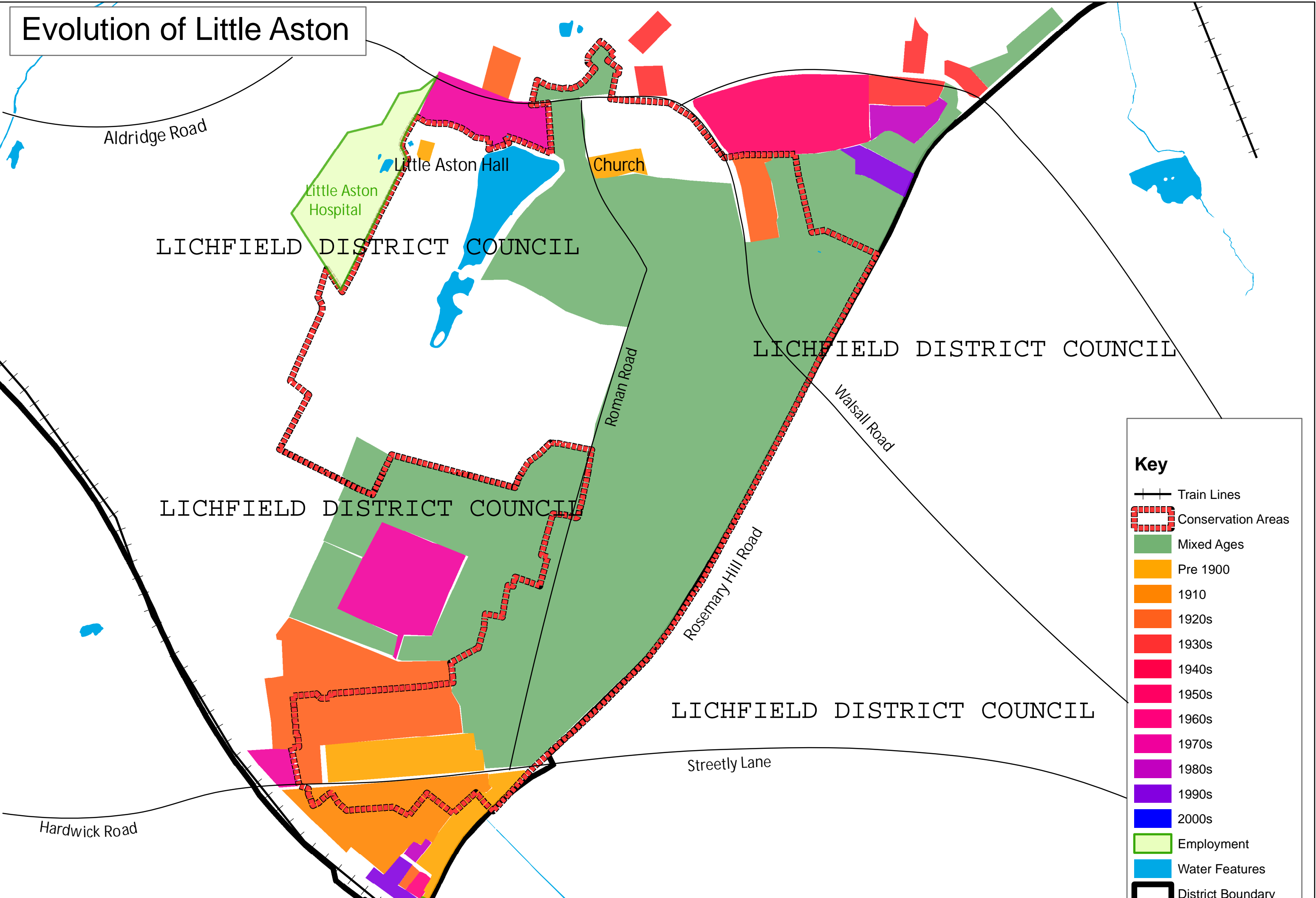
The Little Aston event was held on the 16th February 2011. Following the presentation by CABA those attending formed three separate workshop groups that considered village issues and annotated separate plans with their thoughts and ideas. The following Table identifies the matters discussed by the groups and included on plans or notes attached to them. They have been put into categories that reflect the main issues considered to affect the village and views on future development. In some cases the distinctions made are blurred, since discussions tended to cross the topics. The table tries to identify where a matter picked up by one group is related to one identified by another group (shown as ←----→). It is intended that this will eventually be able to be read alongside a plan of the village illustrating the group's discussions.

*CABA: Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

Group 1	Group 2
General description	
There are several 'Districts' within Little Aston - areas having similar characteristics within them	
Little Aston is not a village although it has a strong community 'ethic', but no focal point	
Bus routes pass through, the no.6 Sutton to Walsall and the Burton to Birmingham bus	
A football/hockey pitch at Chester Rd./Mill Green	
Valuable or defining characteristics	
	Maintain and improve the shops
	Maintain and improve the shops
	Important to maintain the current tree type/density
Issues	
No bus to Blake Street station	
	Need safer routes for children walking to school
Keep open the views northwards from Little Aston La. ←----- -----→	Protect views over the field from the church looking north
Village Hall ←-----→	Village Hall
Need more parking for shops by Burnett Rd.	

Potential for:	
A community recreation 'zone' extending existing recreation area. Could include allotments and a village hall ←----- -----→	Improve access across recreation area with footpath from Little Aston La. to Forge La.
Rights of way across land adjacent to the hospital ←----- -----→	Few routes for walkers and cyclists. General area north of Little Aston La. – golf course and farm land as possible area for better facilities
A railway station - shown in Hardwick Rd/Talbot Ave. area	
Quality 'downsizing' accommodation on land adjacent to hospital	
A 3 rd golf course west of the settlement between rail line and Little Aston	
	Small business uses alongside shopping centre (Little Aston Lane)

Evolution of Little Aston



Key

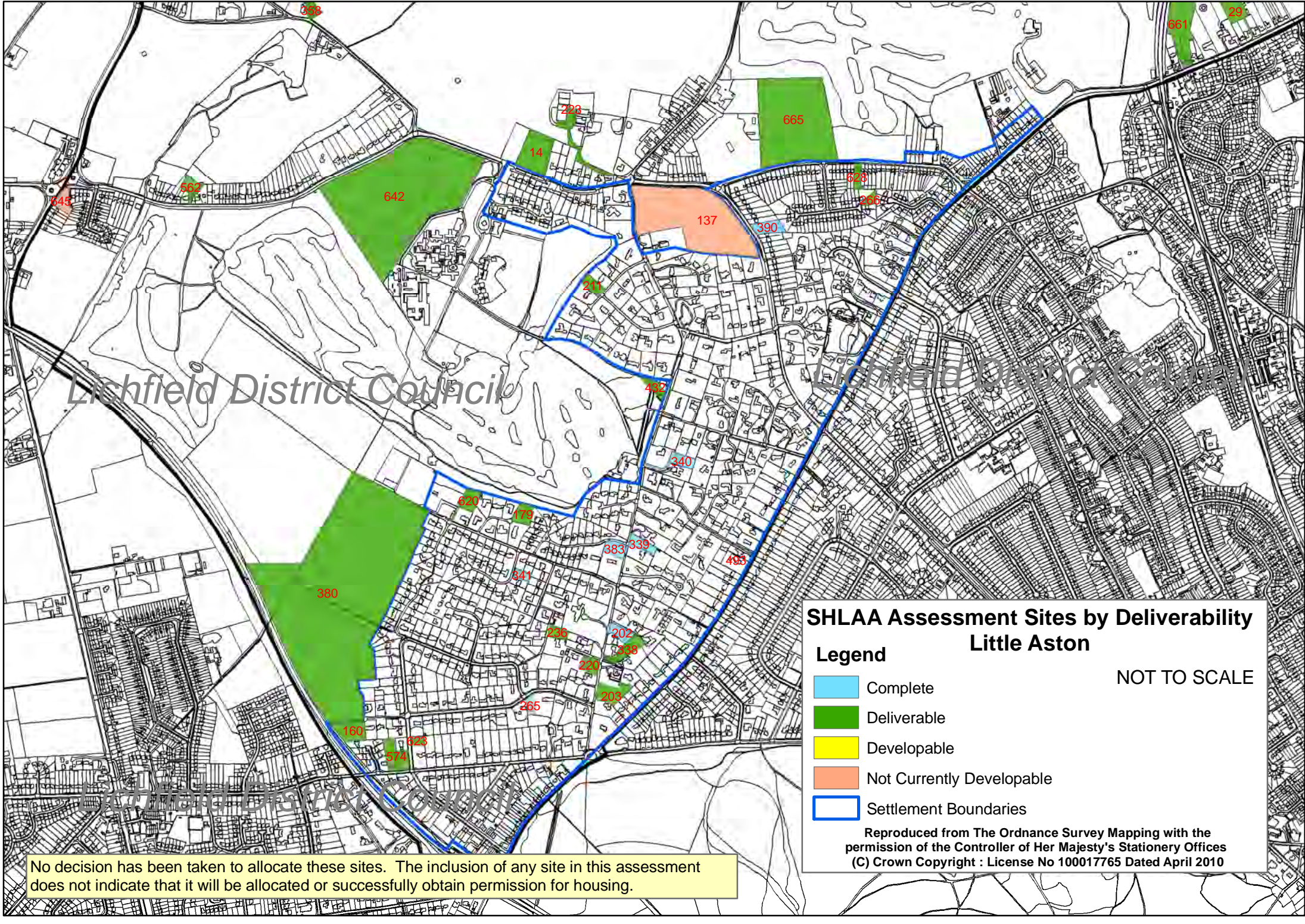
- Train Lines
- Conservation Areas
- Mixed Ages
- Pre 1900
- 1910
- 1920s
- 1930s
- 1940s
- 1950s
- 1960s
- 1970s
- 1980s
- 1990s
- 2000s
- Employment
- Water Features
- District Boundary

Appendix 4

Development Potential within Little Aston 2006 – 2026

Site reference	Location	Status	No. dwellings	No. Affordable
	Completions 2006- Mar 2010			
03/00169/REM	41, Walsall Road	Complete	1	
02/01318	The Croft, Roman Road	Complete	1	
04/00856	28, Newick Road	Complete	1	
00/0870	Longmoor, Little Aston	Complete	1	
07/00272/FUL	Coppice, Roman Road	Complete	1	
03/01334	Beechwood, Roman Road	Complete	1	
05/00841/FUL	162, Aldridge Road	Complete	1	
00/00121	2, Alderhythe Grove	Complete	1	
		Sub Total	8	
	With Planning Permission @1/4/10			
07/01155/FUL 179	The Thorns, 5 Roman Park		2	
09/00638/FUL	19, Squirrel Walk		1	
08/00444/FUL	Roman Road, Roman Way		1	
10/00700/FUL 236	6a, Newick Road		1	
09/01081/FUL	47, Little Aston Lane		2	
09/00169/FUL 220	High Beeches, Roman Road		1	
08/00517/FULM 574	36, Little Aston Park Road		12	
09/00426/FUL	31, Hardwick Road		1	
06/00304/FUL 211	Gablewood, 16, Squirrel Walk		1	
03/01391/FUL & 05/00547/FUL 203	Land adj. to Cornerways		1	
09/00749/OUT 620	Roman Lane, Melbourne House		2	
03/00153/FUL 338	The Garth, Roman Road		1	
10/00108/FUL	23, Newick Ave		1	
09/01013/FUL 623	Little Aston Park Road, Mallory		1	
08/01359/FUL	35, Hardwick Road		1	
08/00521/FUL 160	Land adj. Brockton House		4	
08/01116/FUL	Beech Gate, 3, Little Aston		1	
		Sub Total	34	

	Deliverable and within Village Boundary			
04/00860/FUL 266	The Grove,14		1	
09/01081/FUL 628	47, Little Aston Lane		2	
		Sub Total	3	
	Developable and within Village Boundary			
		Sub Total	0	
	Development Potential 2006 – 2026 within Village Boundary			
	Completed 06/10		8	0
	With planning permission 04/10		34	0
	Deliverable		3	0
	Developable		0	0
		Total	45	0



No decision has been taken to allocate these sites. The inclusion of any site in this assessment does not indicate that it will be allocated or successfully obtain permission for housing.