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Brentwood Borough Council Local Development Plan

Preferred Options Consultation

Representations on behalf of Anderson Group

In respect of

Land south of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

October 2013



Anderson Group

Land south of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore
October 2013

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Quality Assurance

Subject: Representations to the Brentwood Borough Council Preferred Options Local Development Plan consultation

Client name: Anderson Group

Type of report: Written Representations

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Signed

Date

2 October 2013

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Signed

Date



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared on behalf of Anderson Group in response to Brentwood Borough Council's Preferred Options Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation.
- 1.2 Bidwells is promoting the site south of Redrose Lane and to the east of Nine Ashes Road in Blackmore, SHLAA reference G070, on behalf of Anderson Group. For clarity the site is identified on Image 1 below:



Image 1 – Satellite photograph of the site with the boundary edged in red

- 1.3 Anderson Group **objects** to the Preferred Options LDP on the following grounds:
- The amount of housing growth is unjustified in the absence of credible evidence
 - The distribution of growth is unjustified because the evidence underpinning the preferred growth option is unsound
 - The spatial strategy is not fully justified in light of the alternatives, it is undeliverable, and it is not compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework
 - Blackmore is a Larger Village in the settlement hierarchy but would only be apportioned a negligible amount of growth commensurate with the Smaller Villages simply because it

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does not have as much brownfield land as the other Larger Villages in accordance with the preferred spatial strategy. This approach is unsustainable and unjustified

- 1.4 Bidwells recommends that the Council revisits its evidence base to objectively assess the level of requisite growth, and then plan accordingly at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.5 In order to assist the Council identify alternative sites that are compliant with sustainable development principles contained in the Framework, Bidwells has prepared evidence in relation to the land south of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore, to demonstrate the suitability of both the site and the village as a location for sustainably planned future housing growth.

2 **Response to the Amount and Distribution of Residential Development**

- 2.1 Bidwells **objects** to the amount of housing growth under Policy S2 because the Council's proposal to use constraints as justification for a reduction in the housing figure is unjustified in the absence of credible evidence.
- 2.2 Bidwells also **objects** to the distribution of housing growth under Policy S2 because the evidence underpinning the preferred growth option is unsound.

Amount of Housing Growth

- 2.3 Preferred Policy S2 covers amount of residential development for the plan period. It provides for 3,500 net dwellings to be provided at an annual rate of 200 dwellings per annum. In the first instance Bidwells queries the evidence used to conclude the appropriateness of this figure because there is no available evidence. The Council seeks to justify its approach to the amount of housing growth based upon a number of studies including an *Objectively Assessed Needs Assessment* prepared by PBA. The consultation refers to this document as "forthcoming" but at the time of writing these representations this Assessment has still not been published. In the absence of this evidence a fair assessment of the Council's approach to the amount of growth cannot be made.
- 2.4 In the apparent absence of the evidence, a reasonable starting point for the assessment of amount is the LDP newsletter, published in June 2013. It refers to an "independent assessment of housing need". In the circumstances we assume this is the PBA assessment referred to above. This assessment would bring the LDP in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (the "Framework") requirement at paragraph 47 for local planning authorities to "*use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for...housing.*" The newsletter explains that the independent assessment identifies a figure ranging up to 362 dwellings per year, which would total 5,430 dwellings over the plan period. The LDP refines this figure by suggesting that the objectively assessed need is between 4,960 and 5,600 dwellings.
- 2.5 The Council seeks to argue that the provision of the lower target of 3,500 dwellings is justified because facilitating growth at the objectively assessed need level would "*significantly worsen traffic congestion problems, require sites to be developed in landscape sensitive locations, be difficult to service through necessary infrastructure and have a generally urbanising effect through widespread loss of the Green Belt*" (LDP paragraph 2.32).
- 2.6 This approach to a reduction in numbers is unsound because it does not accord with the requirements of the Framework to boost significantly the supply of housing (paragraph 47). It is

contrary to the consistent approach taken by the Planning Inspectorate at Local Plan Examinations during the last 12 months. It is also contrary to the approach advocated in the most up-to-date guidance published by central Government on the use of evidence base.

- 2.7 Newly published National Planning Practice Guidance¹ is explicit that local planning authorities cannot apply constraints to the assessment of development needs. It states:

The assessment of development needs is an objective assessment of need based on facts and unbiased evidence. Plan makers should not apply constraints to the overall assessment of need, such as limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic under performance, infrastructure or environmental constraints [Bidwells emphasis]. However, these considerations will need to be addressed when bringing evidence bases together to identify specific policies within development plans.

- 2.8 The justification for the preferred level of growth as set out in paragraph 2.32 of the LDP is plainly contrary to Government guidance. We acknowledge that Green Belt is a significant environmental constraint but this should not be applied to justify a reduction to the objective assessment of need. These grounds alone are sufficient for the LDP to be found unsound should the Council seek to present this at Examination.

Distribution of Housing Growth

- 2.9 Policy S2 also covers the distribution of residential development for the plan period. 94% of the Borough's growth over the plan period 2015 to 2030 would be directed to the Brentwood and Shenfield Urban Area and a new strategic allocation at West Horndon. Of this percentage 43% would go directly to Green Belt release in West Horndon. A maximum of 7% would be directed to the other villages, which equates to approximately 215 dwellings.
- 2.10 The Preferred Options supporting evidence contains a "Supporting Document: Draft Site Assessment" in which a number of details are considered. We query the omission of a large number of sites which were assessed as suitable, available and deliverable by the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and did not present insurmountable constraints in the Draft Site Assessment. In the case of Anderson Group's interest in the land south of Redrose

¹ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/assessment-of-housing-and-economic-development-needs/what-is-the-purpose-of-the-assessment-of-housing-and-economic-development-needs-guidance/>

Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore, the Council's reasons for discounting it are unknown and the draft site assessment merely states "Discount site, does not meet Draft Plan Spatial Strategy". We are therefore left to assume that the site is discounted purely on the basis of its designation as Green Belt.

- 2.11 For comparative purposes we have assessed the evidence underpinning the approach to release Green Belt Land at West Horndon. Bidwells does not object to the release of Green Belt land at West Horndon, but the preferred strategy for large scale Green Belt release at West Horndon appears to conflict with the Council's concerns over the urbanising effects of Green Belt release without proper evidence which examines the impact of such significant growth on the local landscape, the Green Belt, highways, or upon existing residents. Nor is there any evidence which offers credible reasons why Green Belt locations in the Borough's other villages should be discounted.
- 2.12 The Council's distribution strategy is not based on credible or robust enough evidence, and the evidence it has prepared is inconsistent and contradictory. The approach is therefore wholly unsound.
- 2.13 In summary the Council should revisit its evidence base using that as a starting point for the consideration of the amount and distribution of housing growth.

3 **Response to the Spatial Strategy**

- 3.1 Bidwells **objects** to the spatial strategy proposed under Policy S1 because it is not fully justified in light of the alternatives, and is undeliverable. Allied to this, the reasons provided for dismissing the alternative options are unjustified.
- 3.2 Bidwells also **objects** to the preferred approach on the basis that it is not compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole. Nor is the approach to development in the Larger Villages sustainable, contrary to the Framework. The spatial strategy is therefore unsound.

The Preferred Approach

- 3.3 Policy S1 pre-empts the amount and distribution of housing set out in Policy S2. It envisages no material change to existing Green Belt boundaries other than at West Horndon. It states that limited development, including infilling where appropriate, will take place in other villages at a level commensurate with services and facilities available and which maintains local amenity and distinctiveness. All development sites will be identified having regard to whether they meet defined sustainability, deliverability, and site specific criteria.

Deliverability Concerns

- 3.4 A key element to any spatial strategy is its deliverability. The Framework at paragraph 150 states that *Local Plans are key to delivering [Bidwells emphasis] sustainable development*. Strategic policies in Local Plans should be able to deliver the homes needed in the area (paragraph 156).
- 3.5 The LDP identifies that villages excluded from the Green Belt would accommodate 200 new dwellings. Whilst there is no explicit explanation as to what "villages excluded from the Green Belt" actually means (because the Green Belt surrounds all of the villages in the Borough), Bidwells' interpretation of this text is that the Council anticipates that the entirety of this number would come forward on brownfield sites within existing village development boundaries. The Council has calculated that homes already built, committed sites, and SHLAA sites could accommodate this number.
- 3.6 Bidwells has reviewed the capacity of brownfield sites which were deemed suitable in the SHLAA. The village settlements which excluded from the Green Belt have been included in our assessment. We have defined them in accordance with the existing definition as set out in the adopted Local Plan. Bidwells calculation of brownfield site capacities are identified in table 1 below:

Settlement	SHLAA Brownfield capacity
Blackmore	1
Doddinghurst	11
Herongate	6
Ingrave	4
Kelvedon Hatch	12
Mountnessing	4
South Weald	0
Hook End	0
Great Warley	0
Wyatts Green	1
Stondon Massey	0
TOTAL	39 units
Remaining housing requirement for the Villages Excluded from the Green Belt	161 units

Table 1 – Brownfield capacity in the villages excluded from the Green Belt.

- 3.7 Table 1 clearly demonstrates that there is not enough capacity on the rural and village brownfield sites in the combined SHLAA and preferred housing locations (LDP Appendix 2) to accommodate the requisite number of houses envisaged for the villages excluded from the Green Belt in the spatial strategy.
- 3.8 If taken at face value, and even if all 39 of the above units were to be allocated in the LDP, there is no evidence to clarify that they are deliverable or suitable having regard to site specific constraints which have not been identified through the SHLAA. For example many of the sites proposed for allocation in Appendix 2 of the LDP are identified via the Council's "Urban Capacity Study", which was undertaken over ten years ago (2002) without landowner involvement and furthermore it is not available for public scrutiny. Appendix 2 also identifies a number of the landownerships as "not

known". Sites cannot reasonably be considered for allocation if the landownerships are not known or, at the very least, not understood. Bidwells therefore seriously questions the approach to allocate land where evidence relating to site capacity is old and unavailable, and the availability and therefore deliverability of land for housing is not understood. These factors lead to the conclusion that the LDP and its preferred housing allocations are completely unrealistic. It must therefore be considered unsound, and therefore revised.

3.9 A further consideration is that in the event that the Council needs to upwardly revise the amount of housing to better reflect its own assessment of objectively assessed need in order to be Framework compliant, the land supply deficit for the plan period would be made even worse unless consideration is given to the development of sustainable sites which offer a realistic prospect of delivering much needed housing within the plan period.

3.10 Based upon the above it is considered that the spatial strategy, insofar as the provision of housing on existing developed sites in the villages and the Green Belt is concerned, is not deliverable because it does not identify enough deliverable land. Even then, there is no available evidence to provide clarity on the availability or deliverability of the said number of units on the land which has been identified for allocation. A pragmatic approach would indicate that brownfield capacity in the villages is woefully insufficient in numerical terms and the release of Green Belt land would be necessary to realise its intentions. Bidwells therefore invites the Council to identify more land as a matter of urgency.

Development in the Larger Villages

3.11 Blackmore is identified as a "Larger Village" in the settlement hierarchy because it benefits from a range of local facilities and services, alongside a handful of other villages in the Borough (paragraph 2.15). The LDP will allow a limited level of development in these villages which "maintains local amenity and distinctiveness".

Framework Compliance

3.12 We broadly support the principle of maintaining local distinctiveness and we also acknowledge the great importance of the Green Belt, its permanence, and the role it plays in maintaining the openness and character of the countryside. However the overriding policy aspiration of the Council to protect the Green Belt at all costs, without apparent regard to the possibility for schemes in the Green Belt to mitigate their own impact, appears to dictate the proposed pattern of growth without balancing these with the other key principles of sustainable development advocated in the Framework.

- 3.13 Paragraph 151 of the Framework states that local plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. They should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in the Framework. At paragraph 28 the Framework advises that Local Planning Authorities "*take a positive approach to sustainable new development in rural areas in order to promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages* [Bidwells emphasis] *such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship*". The evidence accompanying these representations shows that Blackmore contains all of these facilities.
- 3.14 It is a fact that new residential development creates footfall. In turn this maintains viability of existing services and facilities. In light of the quantity of suitable brownfield capacity identified for Blackmore in the Council's evidence base, as illustrated in table 1 above, it would appear that the strategy to permit as a matter of principle only 1 new dwelling in a village as sustainable as Blackmore would fail to assist in the maintenance of its continued viability for the lifetime of the plan period. In addition, failure to realistically plan for a review of Green Belt boundaries in only the most appropriate locations would fail to properly ensure that the Green Belt boundaries are capable of enduring beyond the plan period, contrary to paragraph 83 of the Framework. The LDP is the opportune time to plan for selective Green Belt review where it is consistent with policies of the Framework.

Apportionment of Housing Growth in the Larger Villages

- 3.15 Table 2 below identifies the number of units that would come forward on brownfield sites in the Larger Villages under the LDP proposals. This is based upon the SHLAA and sites proposed for allocation in Appendix 2 of the LDP:

Settlement	Number of units	Population (by Parish – 2001 Census)
Blackmore	1	3082
Doddinghurst	11	2740
Herongate / Ingrave	6	2100
Kelvedon Hatch	12	2563
Mountnessing	4	1185

Table 2 – Units to be delivered on brownfield sites in the "Larger Villages"

- 3.16 Table 2 above sets out the number of units the LDP proposes to deliver in the Larger Villages based upon SHLAA capacities and the LDP Appendix 2 sites. Paragraph 2.15 of the LDP is correct to identify these settlements as "Larger Villages" because they generally have relatively similar populations and local services, and can be easily distinguished from the Smaller Villages which are described as "remote" (LDP paragraph 2.16). Indeed Table 2 confirms that the populations of the Larger Villages are similar. The policy text to S1 states that a level of development "will take place in these villages at a level commensurate with services and facilities available". There is clearly a disparity between the amount of brownfield land in these villages and the amount of development policy S1 envisages. The general service offer in Blackmore is no fewer than in the other Larger Villages yet under the LDP proposals it would only be apportioned a negligible amount of growth, commensurate with the Smaller Villages, simply because it does not have as much brownfield land as the other Larger Villages. As these villages are similarly placed in the settlement hierarchy there is no good planning reason why each village should not be apportioned a similar and proportionate level of growth, if the evidence is robust. Failure to do so would fail to contribute towards the maintenance of the viability of Blackmore as a Larger Village for the duration of the plan period and would be unsustainable, contrary to the Framework.
- 3.17 Based upon the above, the evidence base supporting the aims of policy S1 is not robust. A robust evidence base, including a thorough Strategic Green Belt Review, would identify suitable sites in or adjacent to the villages (whether brownfield or otherwise) and would assess the suitability of sites before concluding whether they are policy compliant. This approach would allow for a more sustainable apportionment of the housing numbers in accordance with the Framework. If the Council was to adopt this methodology it would result in sustainable development in accordance with the Framework. Currently it is not.
- 3.18 It is demonstrated that the preferred spatial strategy, insofar as the strategy for the restriction of development in the villages excluded from the Green Belt is concerned, is inconsistent with the policies of the Framework taken as a whole. It is therefore unsound and should be revisited. The availability of brownfield land in the Larger Villages is random and therefore the strategy would, by virtue of the exclusion of Green Belt sites without detailed assessment of their merits, fail to plan spatially for sustainable growth, contrary to the Framework.

Rejection of Alternatives

- 3.19 Notwithstanding our concerns relating to the preferred spatial strategy, the Council's justification for rejecting the alternative options is insufficient. Bidwells would draw particular attention to the rejected alternative option 3, which would have proposed a semi-dispersed pattern of growth to the

Larger Villages, including Blackmore. Whilst there are no details of what this approach would have entailed (because there is no credible evidence to demonstrate the feasibility of growth in the villages, and therefore no justifiable grounds for its rejection), infrastructure constraints are cited as a barrier to this approach, along with limited public transport, and access to services.

- 3.20 In the first instance Bidwells evidence at Appendix 1 demonstrates that access to local services in Blackmore is very good. Secondly, the lack of sewerage capacity at the Doddinghurst and Ingestone Waste Water Treatment Works (WwTW) is not a "show-stopping" reason to warrant the absolute restriction of growth under this alternative strategy. Bidwells submits that a development could be capable of mitigating its own impact through the construction and on-going maintenance of a combined water treatment plant. Such an obligation could be effectively secured through a legal agreement. Thirdly, we consider that the matter of limited public transport availability is a matter of planning balance. The accompanying Sustainability Appraisal for Blackmore at Appendix 1 to these representations demonstrates that there is an availability of public transport in Blackmore providing frequent daily services to main towns and destinations in the County. Contract buses operate from the village to many of the local secondary schools. Even if public transport was severely limited, it is considered that the sustainability benefits of allowing the growth of larger villages, where consistent with the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, would outweigh any harm.
- 3.21 The LDP fails to adequately demonstrate that the preferred options spatial strategy is the best option when considered against reasonable alternatives.

4 Land south of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

- 4.1 The text to the spatial strategy at Policy S1 sets out the overarching vision for the Borough but it also seeks to identify the suitability of development sites having regard to whether they:
- a. Are accessible to public transport, services and facilities
 - b. Will have no significant impact upon the Green Belt, visual amenity, heritage, transport and environmental quality including landscape, wildlife, flood risk, air and water pollution
 - c. Are likely to come forward over the plan period
- 4.2 Notwithstanding Bidwells' substantial objections to the amount and distribution of housing, the spatial strategy, and the approach to the preparation of its evidence base as part of this consultation, the Council should be minded to consider the suitability of sites which are not presently proposed for allocation or in general accordance with the preferred approach. Consideration of such sites would enable the proper and fair consideration of all available evidence which in turn should make the Council's future decisions more robust and justifiable.
- 4.3 In order to assist the Council identify suitable residential development sites, Bidwells has prepared a suite of evidence. This evidence includes:
- **Sustainability Appraisal** of the Land south of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore
 - **Comparative Assessment** of other potential residential development sites in Blackmore which have been identified as suitable in the SHLAA (2011)

Scope of Evidence Provided

- 4.4 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) investigates the consequences of a site being developed against social, economic and environmental objectives. It should inform the identification of appropriate development sites.
- 4.5 The Comparative Assessment of other sites in Blackmore which were submitted through the Call for Sites and identified as suitable in the SHLAA should allow the Council to identify constraints and opportunities which were not otherwise identified in the SHLAA site assessment summary tables as prepared by the Council. It is considered that such an exercise would assist the Council in identifying only the most sustainable locations, in accordance with parts a. to c. of Draft Policy S1 as cited at 4.1 above.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.6 The Preferred Options LDP is subject to a SA but it only assesses the implications of developing those sites which accord with its preferred spatial strategy. Furthermore, the Council's SA does not provide measurable criteria by which the relative sustainability credentials of the selected sites may be assessed. Indeed there is no comparative assessment of the sustainability of the sites which sit outside of the spatial strategy. There is therefore no means by which to benchmark the Council's approach. Without this evidence, the Council's approach cannot be sound.
- 4.7 In order to assist the Council in its deliberations, Bidwells has conducted a SA of the land south of Redrose Lane, and east of Nine Ashes Road Blackmore (SHLAA site G070) using criteria defined in the European Directive in addition to a number of criteria used successfully by other local planning authorities whose Local Plans have already been through the Examination process.

Methodology

- 4.8 Bidwells' methodology has included an assessment of measurable criteria based upon the SA objectives in full accordance with national and European guidance. It does not identify absolute constraints, such as whether the site sits outside of an up-to-date adopted spatial strategy, because the preferred options LDP is still at an early stage of its preparation and cannot be afforded significant weight.

Outcome

- 4.9 Appendix 1 to this report shows the appraisal results for the site. It should enable the Council to identify the sustainability merits of the site in an impartial and objective manner. It should also demonstrate that where constraints are identified, these may be addressed through careful design, landscape and visual impact assessment, and on-site mitigation.
- 4.10 The findings of Appendix 1 demonstrate that the site would be entirely consistent with parts a. and b. of the requirements of Preferred Options Policy S1 insofar as the identification of suitable sites is concerned.
- 4.11 It should also be noted, for the purpose of identifying deliverability in accordance with part c. of Policy S1, the site is within a single ownership and is unencumbered in all respects. Anderson Group is a reputable business based locally in Chelmsford and has a track record of delivering construction projects on time. Anderson Group was founded 25 years ago and has a turnover in excess of £50 million a year. If an LDP allocation was to be achieved and subsequent residential

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planning permission granted, the delivery of development on the site would be ensured. A proposal would therefore accord with part c. of Preferred Policy Draft 1.

Comparative Assessment with Competing Blackmore Sites

4.12 The SHLAA (2011) considers the suitability of specific sites for housing development within the Borough based upon the following factors:

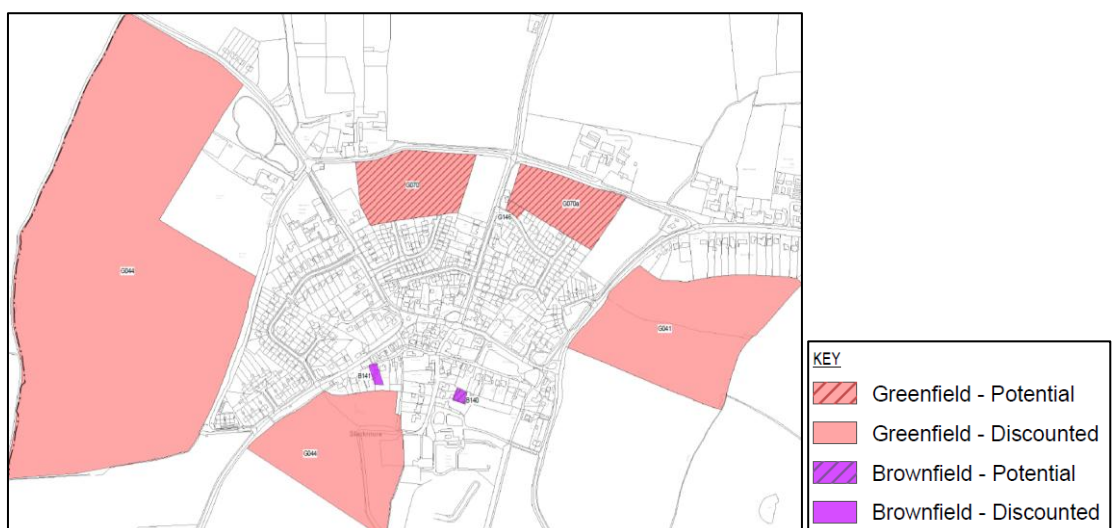
- Location (all things considered)
- Integration with existing services and communities (including physical integration and landscape impact)
- Contribution towards the creation of a sustainable mixed community

4.13 8 sites in Blackmore were submitted through the Call for Sites and were assessed through the SHLAA process using these assessment criteria, but 4 of these sites were deemed to be unsuitable. 3 of the unsuitable sites are greenfield land and the reasons for their exclusion relate to undue landscape impact and encroachment, and flood risk.

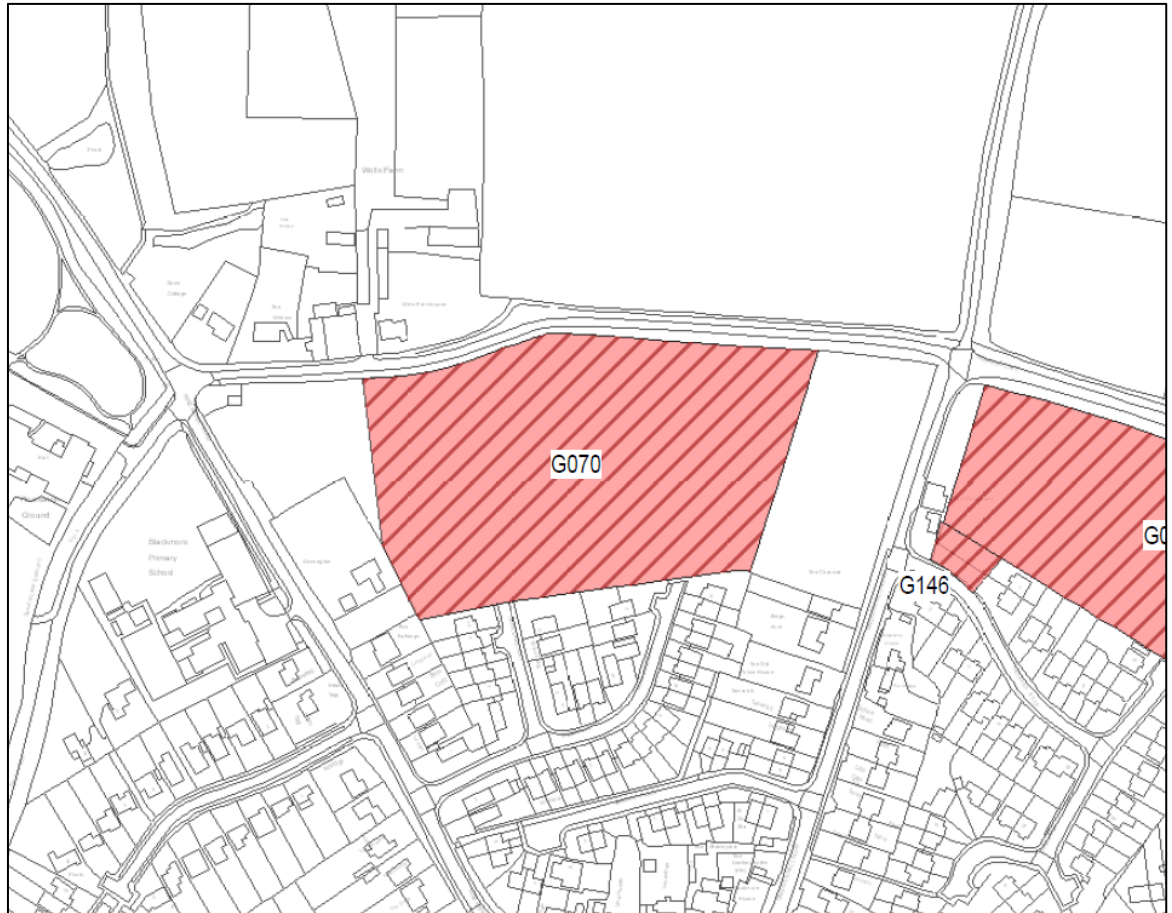
4.14 The 4 remaining sites in Blackmore which were deemed suitable as part of this process are:

- G070 – Greenfield site – land to the south of Redrose Lane, and to the east of Nine Ashes Road
- G070a – Greenfield site – land to the south of Redrose Lane to the east of Fingrith Hall Lane
- G146 – Brownfield Site – Adjacent to 1 & 3 Orchard Piece
- B140 – Brownfield site – R/O Little Jerico, Church Street

4.15 These are shown on the Blackmore extract from the SHLAA map below. The unsuitable sites are also shown on the map and can be identified using the key:



1. Land south of Redrose Lane and to the east of Nine Ashes Road (G070)



4.16 Area – 3.3ha (2.3ha as submitted in the SHLAA). For the avoidance of doubt, this is the site being promoted by Bidwells on behalf of Anderson Group.

4.17 The boundary of the site as submitted through this consultation differs slightly to the one shown on the SHLAA plan above. Please refer to the red line boundary as indicated on Image 1 at paragraph 1.2 above for an accurate depiction of the extent of the site. It can be seen on Image 1 the current submission includes the parcel of land adjacent to Fingrith Hall Lane to the east, and the parcel of land opposite Blackmore primary school to the west. The site boundary on Image 1 is indicative to show what could be available for development in the interest of flexibility. All of the site is within a single ownership and is unencumbered in all respects.

Green Belt and Landscape Impact

- 4.18 The site is contained between Redrose Lane to the north, Nine Ashes Road to the west, Woollard Way to the south, and Fingrith Hall Lane to the east. Existing built development is immediately adjacent to the south, west, and north-west of the site. The entire perimeter of the site can be defined by readily recognisable physical features. Beyond, to the north of the site, is open countryside. Nine Ashes Road is a prominent entrance to Blackmore because it introduces the village on approach from the north.
- 4.19 Long range views into the site are most noticeable when viewed from the north. This perimeter is shielded by a hedgerow but is relatively exposed particularly to the farmland beyond to the north. This impact is even more apparent because it is framed by existing residential development at Woollard Way. This existing development creates an urban backdrop with an apparent hard urban interface, which harms the visual appearance of this part of the countryside.
- 4.20 These features present an excellent opportunity for a scheme to provide strategic landscape buffering to significantly enhance the landscape character of the locality and thereby increase Green Belt perception.

Proximity to village amenities

- 4.21 The Sustainability Appraisal demonstrates that the site is within easy walking distance of all the services, facilities, and amenities on offer in Blackmore village.
- 4.22 The site is within very close proximity to Blackmore Primary School which is located on the opposite site of Nine Ashes Road directly adjacent to the west. This close proximity presents opportunities for a development on the site to mitigate its own impact on the local highway network in a way that increases pedestrian safety near to the school. This could be achieved through, or a combination of, Section 106 obligations or Community Infrastructure Levy contributions if applicable at the time an application is made.

Access

- 4.23 There are no access constraints on the site. Opportunities exist for unencumbered vehicle access to be gained directly from two existing points at Woollard Way to the south. Vehicle access could be gained from alternative locations if desired.
- 4.24 Each of the site boundaries have points which are shared with adopted highways. This presents opportunities for pedestrian access to be gained from all sides, thereby increasing penetration and

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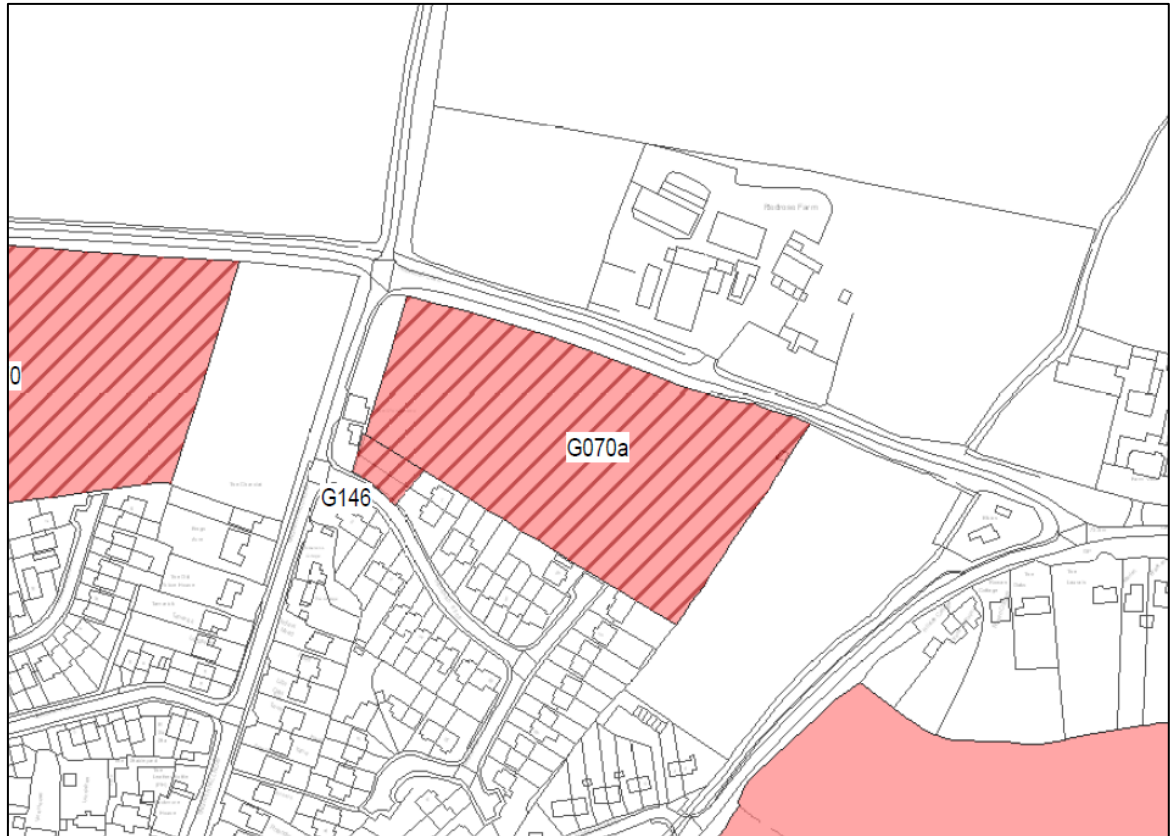
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connectivity to the site. This is a particular advantage in the context of the Primary School, Millennium Park and Village Hall to the west and north-west respectively, which appear somewhat detached from the main bulk of the village at present.

Summary

- 4.25 The site is sustainably located. It would read as a natural extension to the village without significant Green Belt or landscape encroachment. It offers a number of alternative access options with scope for excellent improvements to connectivity. Its location adjacent to the primary school offers opportunities for financial contributions to have a direct positive impact upon pedestrian safety.

2. Land south of Redrose Lane and east of Fingrith Hall Lane (G070a)



4.26 Site area – circa 1.64ha

4.27 G070a is a greenfield Green Belt site to the north of Blackmore. It is located adjacent to the west of The Woodbines, a Grade II Listed Building whose curtilage extends northward to the junction with Redrose Lane. To the north is Red Rose Farm and to the east is grazing land. Further to the east is some established residential development along Chelmsford Road. Adjacent to the south is mid-20th Century residential development at Orchard Piece.

Green Belt and Landscape Impact

4.28 Development of this site would be contained between the existing residential development at Orchard Piece to the south and Redrose Lane to the north. It is however likely to have a negative Green Belt impact because it would cause potential for coalescence between the main part of Blackmore village to the south and the adjacent, but somewhat detached, part of Blackmore which already extends along Chelmsford Road to the east.

- 4.29 In terms of landscape impact, the position of the open field immediately to the east, together with the elongated residential garden to the property adjacent to the west, could result in a scheme which increases perception of landscape harm and exposure.

Listed Building

- 4.30 The setting of the listed building at The Woodbines adjacent to the west presents a constraint to development in terms of visual impact upon its character and appearance.

Access

- 4.31 There is a known access constraint on this site. The only feasible point of access to the site within the sole control of the landowner would be from Redrose Lane. The main constraints to this are:
- A ransom strip exists between the site and Orchard Piece to the south. Scrutiny of the title plan for the land shows that the ransom strip would prevent any access (vehicle or pedestrian) to the site without third party negotiation. Even if this were to be achieved, the cost implications of doing so would be likely to adversely affect viability and the subsequent ability to provide a meaningful level of affordable housing or off-site contributions.
 - Redrose Lane has no highway verge or pavement. Access from this point would not provide opportunities for safe or integrated forms of access for vehicles or pedestrians into a residential development.
 - The curtilage of the Listed Building immediately to the west restricts any potential for access to be gained along Fingrith Hall Lane.
- 4.32 The location of the listed building and its curtilage would hinder opportunities for pedestrian access to be gained from Fingrith Hall Lane or from Redrose Lane without compromising safety. Even then, Redrose Lane does not benefit from a pavement and is subject to the national speed limit. There is no apparent solution to this issue.

Proximity to village amenities

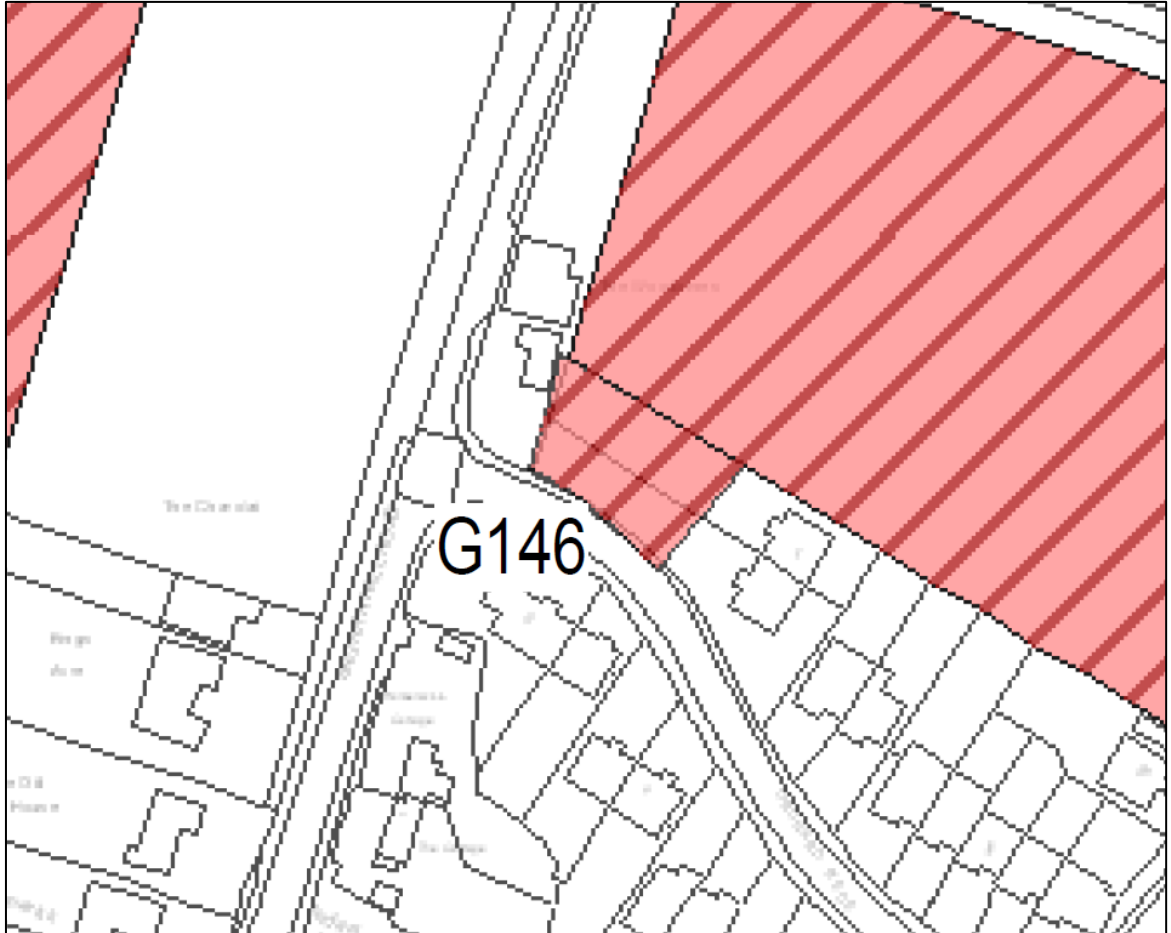
- 4.33 The site is within easy walking distance of the amenities and facilities on offer in the village centre, to the south. However the site is relatively isolated from the primary school and village hall to the west. If an access were to be gained from Redrose Lane (as per the first and second bullet points

in the access section mentioned above), this does not present likely opportunities for pedestrian patronage to these local amenities, contrary to the aims of sustainable development.

Summary

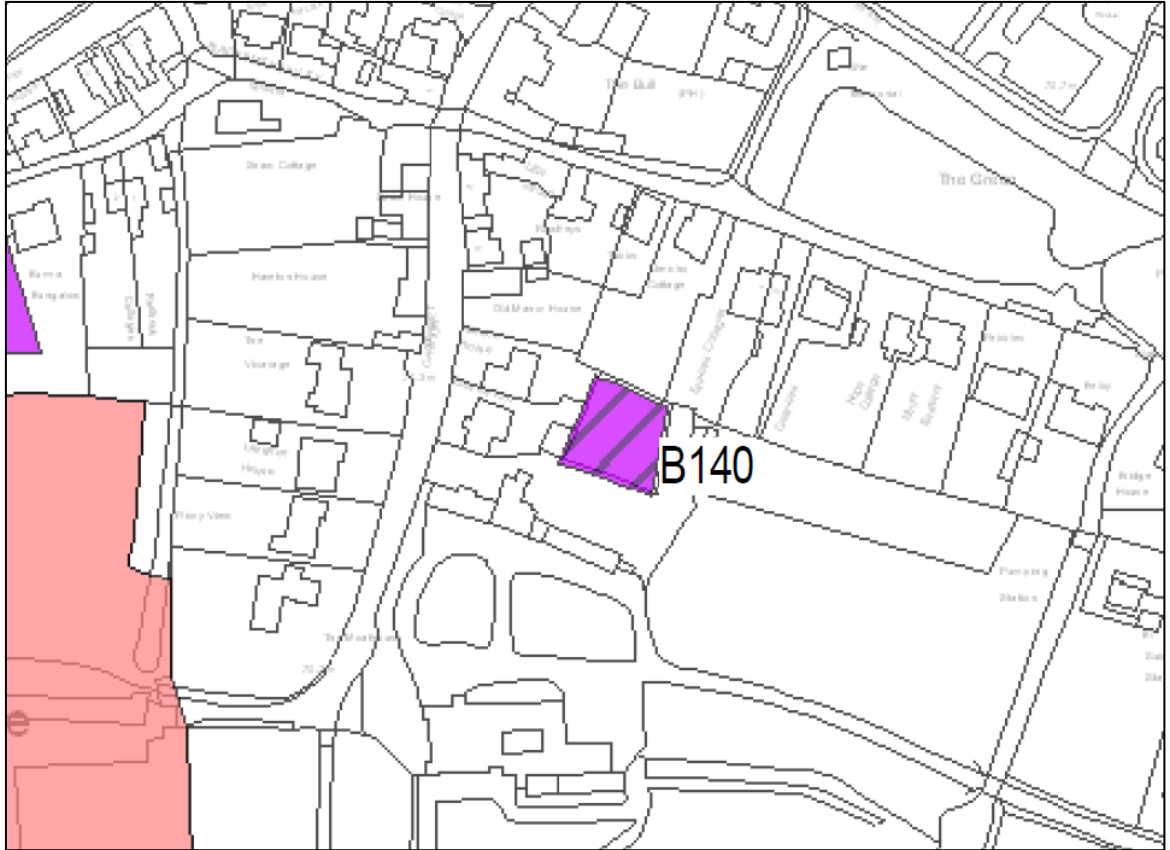
- 4.34 The site is sustainably located in relation to a number of the village services however it would be relatively cut off from the primary school and village hall. The known access constraint suggests that the only feasible (and viable) access point would be from Redrose Lane, which would not be conducive to increased pedestrian usage. The close proximity to the adjacent listed building is a further constraint. The Green Belt impact, in particular the perception of increased landscape exposure due to the open field to the east, together with the listed building curtilage to the west, are significant constraints to deliverability of this site.

3. Land adjacent to 1 & 3 Orchard Piece (G146)



4.35 A site inspection in Spring 2013 revealed that a dwelling is under construction on this site. It is classed in the SHLAA as "greenfield" land due to its previous use as residential garden curtilage. However it is within the settlement boundary for Blackmore and is compliant with adopted Local Plan policy. A comparative assessment for the purpose of these representations is unnecessary.

4. Rear of Little Jerico, Church Street (B140)



4.36 This site is brownfield land within the settlement boundary for Blackmore. It is within the core of the village. With a total size of 0.05 hectares it has an indicative capacity of 1 dwelling. The site is within the development boundary for Blackmore as identified on the proposals map to the adopted Local Plan. A policy compliant scheme could come forward under the adopted Local Plan so comparative assessment is not required.

Summary of Comparative Assessment

- 4.37 Of the 4 sites considered above, 3 are greenfield and 1 is brownfield. The greenfield site on land adjacent to 1 and 3 Orchard Piece is discounted from assessment because it has, or is in the process of being, built out. The brownfield site has an indicative capacity of 1 dwelling.
- 4.38 The suitability of the 2 remaining greenfield sites, G070 and G070a, are attributed equal ratings in the SHLAA site assessment process.
- 4.39 This comparative assessment shows that site G070 presents a number of significant opportunities associated with its proximity to all village services, access opportunities, potential for Green Belt and landscape mitigation, and it is unencumbered.
- 4.40 Site G070a would be affected by a number of constraints which would have a significant impact upon deliverability, viability, and sustainability.
- 4.41 The conclusion of this assessment is that site G070, the Land south of Redrose Lane and to the east of Nine Ashes Road, is the most sustainable of the Blackmore sites in consideration.

5 **Conclusion**

5.1 Bidwells has prepared these representations on behalf of Anderson Group.

5.2 Bidwells objects to the Preferred Options LDP on the basis of the following grounds:

Amount of Residential Development

- Bidwells acknowledges that Green Belt is a significant environmental constraint but this should not be applied to justify a reduction to the objective assessment of housing need in the absence of credible evidence. These grounds alone are sufficient for the LDP to be found unsound should the Council seek to present this at Examination.

Distribution of Residential Development

- The Council's distribution strategy is not based on credible or robust enough evidence, and the evidence it has prepared is inconsistent and contradictory. The approach is therefore wholly unsound. Bidwells recommends that the Council should revisit its evidence base using that as a starting point for the consideration of the amount and distribution of housing growth.

Spatial Strategy

- Even if Bidwells did not object to the amount and distribution of housing required over the plan period, the spatial strategy, insofar as the provision of housing on existing developed sites in the villages and the Green Belt is concerned, is not deliverable because it does not identify enough suitable deliverable land in these areas to meet the identified need. Brownfield capacity in the villages is woefully insufficient in numerical terms alone and the release of Green Belt land would be necessary to realise its intentions. Bidwells recommends that the Council identifies more land as a matter of urgency.
- The spatial strategy, insofar as the proposal to restrict development in the villages excluded from the Green Belt is concerned, is inconsistent with the policies of the Framework when taken as a whole because it would fail to plan for the retention and development of existing local services in the villages.
- Blackmore is identified as a Larger Village in the spatial strategy but would only be apportioned a negligible amount of growth commensurate with the Smaller Villages. This

is even when the general service offer in Blackmore is no smaller than in the other Larger Villages. This is simply because Blackmore does not have as much brownfield land as the other Larger Villages in accordance with the preferred spatial strategy, an approach which is completely unsustainable and unjustified.

- The LDP fails to adequately demonstrate that the preferred spatial strategy is the best option when considered against the reasonable alternatives, in the absence of credible evidence.

Land South of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

- The submitted evidence demonstrates that Blackmore is a sustainable location for residential development within the LDP plan period.
- Comparative assessment of the other potential sites in Blackmore demonstrates that the site is the best in in the village to receive sustainably planned new residential development.

5.3 These representations seek to convince the Council that it should revisit its LDP and associated evidence base at the earliest possible opportunity. The submitted evidence also builds a compelling case for the residential development of the submitted land at Blackmore. It is respectfully requested that the Council considers these representations and takes the appropriate steps to plan accordingly.

Appendix 1

**Sustainability Appraisal – Land south of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road,
Blackmore**

Sustainability Appraisal

SHLAA site G070 - Land south of Redrose Lane and east of Nine Ashes Road, Blackmore

	Appraisal Criteria	Appraisal Results	Notes	SA Rating
ENVIRONMENTAL	Air Quality	No constraints	Nearest AQMA is more than 1km away	Green
	Biodiversity	No constraints	Not within 500 metres of a LWS, SSSI, or any other statutory designated site	Green
	Climate Change Mitigation	Within 200 metres of an existing bus stop on The Green.	There are several bus routes with direct and frequent links to key jobs and services in Brentwood town centre (and Brentwood mainline train station), Grays, Romford and Chelmsford	Green
	Proximity to Heritage Assets	No significant constraints but mitigation may need to be considered	The site is 150 metres away from, but is not visible from, the Blackmore Conservation Area. The Woodbines (Grade II Listed) is within 20 metres of the eastern boundary of the site, on the eastern side of Fingrith Hall Lane. Wells Farmhouse (Grade II Listed) is on the northern side of Redrose Lane, within 20 metres of the site. Horselocks Cottage (Grade II Listed) is within 20 metres of the site to the south east. Some impact.	Yellow
	Flooding	No constraints	The Environment Agency Flood Map shows that the site is within Flood Zone 1	Green
	Landscape	Within the Green Belt. Greenfield land. Medium to high impact	The site is Green Belt but is adjacent to residential land uses to the south and west, and is within Redrose Lane and Fingrith Hall Lane to the north and east. These are defensible boundaries. The site is not within or near to a Special Landscape Area. The site is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary and is bordered on its southern and eastern sides by existing built development. Physical integration without undue loss of landscape character is feasible.	Red
	Contamination	No constraints	Existing horsiculture use presents no contamination constraints.	Green
	Neighbouring land uses	No constraints	Residential land to the south and east. Arable farmland to the north. Grazing land to the east. The site would be compatible with surrounding land uses.	Green
	Highways impact	No constraints	There are a number of unencumbered potential access points for both vehicles and pedestrians.	Green
	Minerals safeguarding	No constraints	The site is not within a Minerals Safeguard Area as identified on the Submission Replacement Essex Minerals Local Plan.	Green
	Water quality and resources	Significant constraints	Within the catchment of Doddinghurst / Ingatestone WwTW which are at capacity. Proximity to sewer would also need to be tested.	Red
SOCIAL	Within Hazard Zone	No	Not within HSE hazard zone.	Green
	Distance to primary school	Less than 100 metres	Blackmore Primary School is adjacent to the site on Nine Ashes Road. It currently has a surplus of 33 places with a forecast surplus of 18 spaces in 2016/17 (ECC Commissioning School Places in Essex 2012-2017)	Green
	Distance to secondary school	More than 1km	Not within walking distance however there are daily school bus services to Shenfield High School, Becket Keys CofE School, Brentwood County High School, Ursuline County High and St Martin's School.	Yellow
	Distance to Open Space	Less than 300 metres	The Green in Blackmore is protected in the adopted Local Plan (designation LT2, LT5).	Green
	Proximity to services	Less than 200 metres	Village post office, neighbourhood store, public house and restaurant/café are all within 200 metres.	Green
	Housing capacity	The site could provide up to 92 dwellings	This is an indicative dwelling capacity of 27 dwellings per hectare based upon the total site area.	N/A
ECONOMIC	Employment land designation?	No	Nearest employment designations are in Brentwood therefore travel to those locations would be required from residents of the site. However a change of use of the site to residential would not result in the loss of existing employment land.	Yellow
	Retail designation?	No	Residential development of the site would not result in the loss of a designated retail area (as identified in the adopted Local Plan). The nearest designated retail areas are in Brentwood and Ingatestone. Residents of the site would be required to travel to these areas however there is a good offer locally in Blackmore, which would reduce the need to travel for convenience goods and would maintain the viability of these local services.	Yellow
	Preferred alternate use?	None	If development were to occur on this site there is no preferred alternate use to residential.	Green
	Site viability	No known significant constraints	Due to capacity constraints at the WwTW investigation would be required as to whether the development of this site could mitigate its own impact. However all other greenfield sites in the village are faced with this constraint.	Yellow
	Agricultural Land Classification	Grade 2/3 ALC	The ALC map classes these grades as "good" quality land. However the majority of the rest of the Borough is of the same classification therefore the release of land in order to achieve sustainability objectives would be inevitable.	Yellow
OTHER COMMENTS	Planning History	No constraints	There is no known planning history on the site (based on assessment of Brentwood Borough Council's planning history search webpage).	Green
CONCLUSION	The site is sustainable in many respects and there are a high number of positive impacts. There are a number of minor and major negative impacts but these may be mitigated by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and appropriate on-site sewerage mitigation.			Green

Key to SA rating:

	Positive / neutral impact
	Minor negative impact
	Major negative impact

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