

**Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan
Heritage and Character Assessment
October 2017**



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1.0 Introduction

This is an assessment of the character and history of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Area, in Solihull Metropolitan Borough, West Midlands. Urban Vision Enterprise CIC has prepared this report on behalf of Locality, working closely with Neighbourhood Forum.

This report aims to provide a platform to inform the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan, helping to define the policies of the plan, to shape future development.

This report is based on field study work and a desktop study, using evidence from a variety of sources. This assessment forms part of the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan. The Neighbourhood Forum intends to use this document to facilitate a dialogue with stakeholders and the community.

This assessment highlights what is distinctive about the character of this semi-rural area including the buildings, townscape, boundary treatments, landscape, and development patterns within the designated neighbourhood area.

This report has been produced to inform the neighbourhood plan and aims to deliver the following:

- improved understanding and appreciation of the historic landscape.
- a character analysis of the built and natural environment as a basis for the policies of the neighbourhood plan.
- a body of information, including statutory allocations and designations within the neighbourhood area.

2.0 Methodology and Approach

This report has been prepared using established methods for assessing and understanding the built and natural heritage and character of place.

The Heritage and Character Assessment forms part of the evidence base to the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan and will be used to inform the policies of the plan. In the preparation of this report the following strategic documents and guides have been used:

- Solihull Local Plan, Shaping a Sustainable Future, December 2013
- Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future, Draft Local Plan, November 2016

The report uses information from a variety of sources, in addition to those listed above. The complete list of these sources can be found at the end of this report (List of Evidence and Sources).

This report helps the Neighbourhood Forum to take into account the historic character of the three village centres and surrounding area. It explores the patterns, connections and relationships between buildings and streets, identifying key character features and making recommendations to support the formulation of planning policies.

What is Heritage Characterisation?

“Historic characterisation is the term given to area-based ways of identifying and interpreting the historic dimension of present day townscape and landscape. It looks beyond individual heritage assets to the understanding of the overall character of a whole neighbourhood or area that is central to securing good quality, well designed and sustainable places.”

“Characterisation does not provide a single solution, but an opportunity for planners, developers and communities to work together and plan using a single shared evidence base. Selection of an appropriate method and scale of historic characterisation is necessary to deliver desired outcomes, and its products and reports need to be used thoughtfully through an iterative process of interrogation and interpretation.”

(Understanding Place: Character and Context in Local Planning, English Heritage, 2011, Revised June 2012)

3.0 Local Context



3.1 Location and Neighbourhood Area

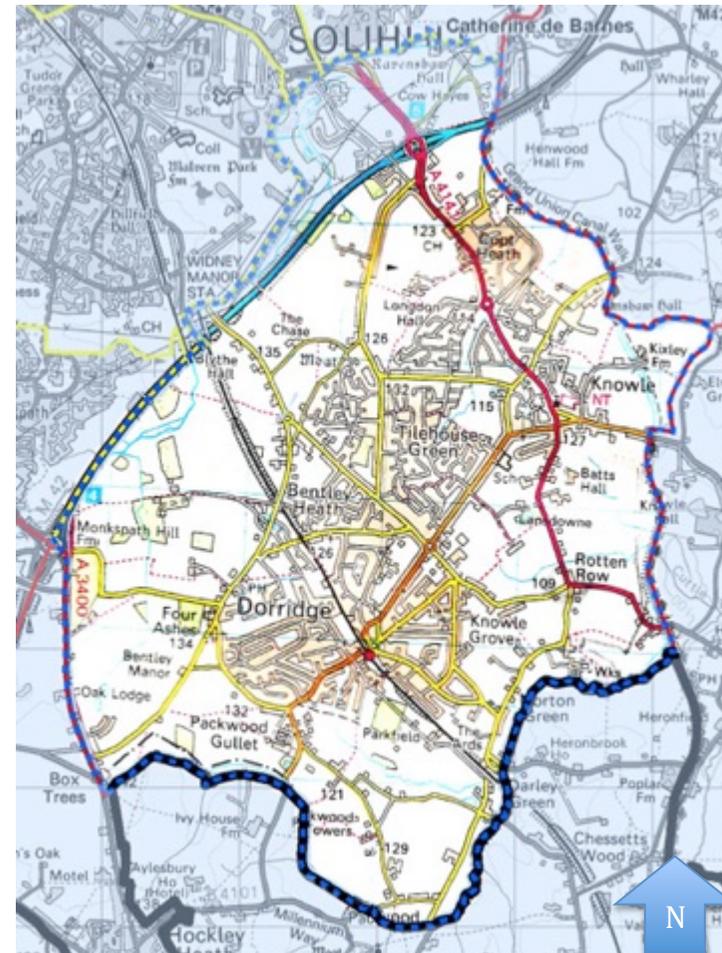
The Neighbourhood Area is located in Solihull Metropolitan Borough. This semi-rural area is situated on the outskirts of Solihull Borough, approximately 15 miles south-east of Birmingham and is located south of Solihull Town Centre, which is the closest large town.

The neighbourhood area consists of the main settlements of Dorridge, Knowle and Bentley Heath joined by rural development, open countryside and green belt.

The village of Knowle is centred around a Conservation Area, which lies within the village centre. The village of Dorridge has 2 smaller Conservation Areas: Station Approach and Granville Road. The third village, Bentley Heath, has a linear form, along Widney Lane.

The neighbourhood area includes three Conservation Areas and many statutory and locally listed buildings and important local features such as, Knowle Library; Dorridge Station; The Red Lion PH; and The Guild House.

Map of Neighbourhood Area:



(Neighbourhood Plan Area Application, Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum September 2017)

3.2 Planning Context

This section of the report sets the national and local planning context.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 identifies the importance of Neighbourhood Plans and their role in developing policies to inform future development. These must be informed by evidence that defines the characteristics of place. The following paragraphs illustrate this further:

“Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments: (including) • establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; • respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials...” (NPPF para 58)

“Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain

development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.” (NPPF para 60)

“Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving that character and quality of an area and the way it functions.” (NPPF para 64)

“Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and for areas where there are major expansion options assessments of landscape sensitivity.” (NPPF para 170)

(National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012)

Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance was reviewed and published on-line by the Government in 2014 and is regularly updated. Paragraph: 007, Reference ID: 26-007-20140306 states that:

“development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development”.

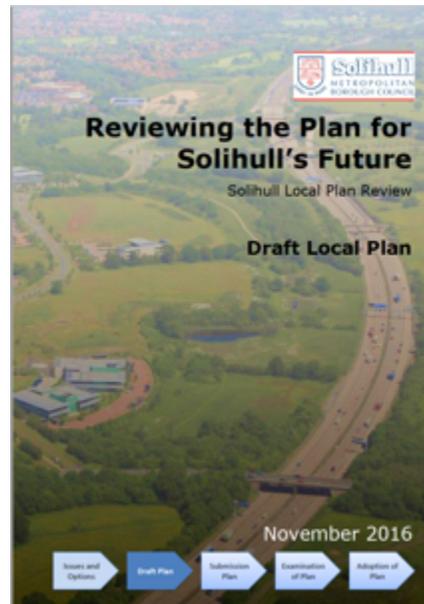
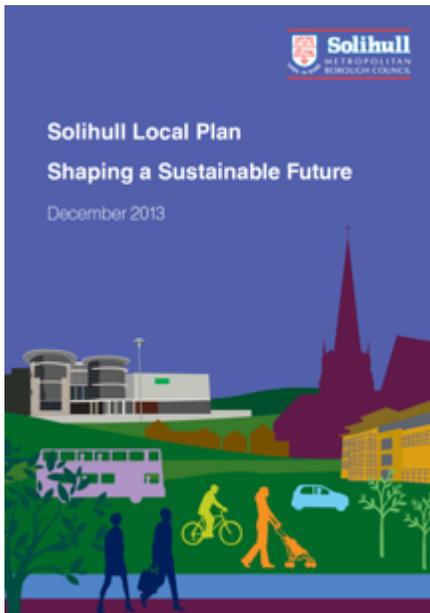
And that:

“successful integration of new development with their surrounding context is an important design objective”.

Local Planning Policy

The Solihull Local Plan, Shaping a Sustainable Future, was adopted in December 2013.

The emerging Local Plan Document, Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future, Draft Local Plan, November 2016, is likely to be adopted in late 2017.



Adopted Solihull Local Plan: Shaping a Sustainable Future (December 2013)

The current Solihull Local Plan was adopted in 2013, but was subsequently subject to a legal challenge based on its overall housing requirement.

To ensure that a proper planning framework is in place to respond to the changed circumstances, Solihull MBC is undertaking a review of the Local Plan. This is considered further below.

Policies within the current Local Plan that related to character and heritage include:

- P5 – Provision of Land for Housing;
- P6 – Provision of Sites for Gypsies and Travellers;
- P14 – Amenity;
- P15 – Securing Design Quality;
- P16 – Conservation of Heritage Assets and Local Distinctiveness; and
- P17 – Countryside and Green Belt.

Policy P5 (Provision of Land for Housing) seeks to allocate land for the delivery of new homes during the plan period (2006-2028). Policy P5 states that “new housing will be supported on unidentified sites in accessible locations where they contribute towards meeting identified borough-wide housing needs and towards enhancing local character and distinctiveness”.

Policy P6 (Provision of Sites for Gypsies and Travellers) seeks to provide 38 additional permanent residential pitches for gypsies and travellers to 2027. Criteria used to allocate suitable sites includes:

- The size and scale of the site and the number of caravans stationed is appropriate to the size and density of the local settled community;
- Any unacceptable adverse visual impact can be adequately minimised;
- Any unacceptable adverse impact on landscape or local nature conservation designations, ecology, biodiversity or the historic environment can be mitigated; and
- There is no acceptable adverse impact on privacy and residential amenity for both site residents and neighbouring land uses.

Policy 14 (Amenity) considers the amenity of existing and potential occupiers of homes, businesses, and other uses in the context of new development proposals, and the Council will:

- Permit development only if it respects the amenity of existing and proposed occupiers and would be a good neighbour;
- Consider the visual and other amenities of potential occupiers and users of new developments close to overhead powerlines and substations. Developers will be

expected to locate and design new developments so as to minimise the visual and other amenity impacts;

- Safeguard important trees, hedgerows and woodlands, encourage new and replacement tree and hedgerow planting and identify areas that may be suitable for the creation of new woodlands. Priority will be given to locations that enhance or restore the green infrastructure network and to the planting of species characteristic of the Arden Warwickshire landscape; and
- Protect those parts of the countryside in the Borough that retain a dark sky from the impacts of light pollution. Development involving external lighting outside established settlements will be permitted only where significant lighting already exists, or the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impact of the lighting on the countryside. Any lighting scheme should be the minimum required for the purposes of the development and should avoid light spillage and harmful effects on biodiversity.

Policy P15 (Securing Design Quality) seeks to promote quality of place through embedding good design within local policy. Policy P15 states “all development proposals will be expected to achieve good quality, inclusive and sustainable design”. The following key principles will be expected to be met:

- Conserves and enhances local character, distinctiveness and streetscape quality and ensures that the scale,

massing, density, layout, materials and landscape of the development respect the surrounding natural, built and historic environment;

- Ensures that new development achieves the highest possible standard of environmental performance through sustainable design and construction and the location and layout of the development in accordance with the guidance provided in Policy P9 – Climate Change;
- Secures the sustainable long-term use of new development through flexible, robust and future-proofed design, e.g. high-speed digital connectivity;
- Makes appropriate space for water within the development, using sustainable drainage (SuDS) principles, to minimise and adapt to the risk of flooding. Further guidance is provided in Policy P11 – Water Management;
- Conserves and enhances biodiversity, landscape quality and considers the impact on and opportunities for green infrastructure at the earliest opportunity in the design process. Further guidance is provided in Policy P10 – Natural Environment;
- Integrates the natural environment within the development through the provision of gardens, quality open space and/or access to, enhancement or extension of the green infrastructure network. Further guidance is provided in Policy P20 – Provision for Open Space, Children’s Play, Sport, Recreation and Leisure; and

- Creates attractive, safe, active, legible and uncluttered streets and public spaces which are accessible, easily maintained and encourage walking and cycling and reduce crime and the fear of crime.

Proposals for new development will be expected to “contribute to or create a sense of place”, through:

- Reflecting heritage assets and their setting in the design process;
- Integrating landscape into the development;
- Promoting diversity through a mix of uses within the site; and
- The incorporation of public art.

New residential developments will be expected to reflect the following, though the Council will take into account the economics of a particular proposal and how the viability of a scheme is affected by particular costs associated with them:

- Building for Life 12 (or its equivalent); and
- Lifetime Homes.

Proposals will also need to reflect guidance set out in the New Housing in Context SPG.

Applicants will also be expected to reflect urban design principles from the following (or their equivalent):

- Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2;
- By Design;

- Manual for Streets 1 and 2;
- Car Parking: What Works Where; and
- Secured by Design.

Applicants are encouraged to engage with the local planning authority early in the design process, and should demonstrate that they have developed their proposals in accordance with the ‘Assessment-Involvement-Evaluation-Design’ process outlined in national guidance around Design and Access Statements. In addition, where major developments are proposed, it should be demonstrated how the local community has been consulted and engaged in the design process, and significant developments should be subject to the design review process.

Policy P16 (Conservation of Heritage Assets and Local Distinctiveness) is designed to reflect the recognition of “the importance of the historic environment to the Borough’s local character and distinctiveness, its cultural, social, environmental and economic benefits and the effect this has on civic pride”, and development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how the following characteristics have been conserved:

- The historic core of Solihull Town Centre and its adjacent parks;
- The historical development and variety of architectural styles within the Mature Suburbs and the larger established rural settlements, including Knowle;
- The Arden landscape, historic villages, hamlets, farmsteads, country and lesser houses and the distinct

medieval core of historic rural settlements including Knowle;

- Parks, gardens and landscape including common, woodland, heathland, and distinctive fieldscapes as defined in the Warwickshire Historic Landscape Characterisation; and
- The canal and railway network, including disused railway lines and working stations including Dorridge, together with associated structures.

Development proposals will be “expected to preserve or enhance heritage assets as appropriate to their significance, conserve local character and distinctiveness and create or sustain a sense of place”. Heritage assets include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Conservation Areas; and
- Non-designated assets such as assets positively identified within Solihull’s Historic Environment Record, or those identified on the Local List.

All proposals affecting the historic environment will be expected to have considered and utilised evidence from the Historic Environment Record to inform the design process. This should be evidenced within the Design and Access Statement, or – for proposals of significance – in a Heritage Statement.

Where proposals seek to modify heritage assets to help address the effects of climate change, they should be sympathetic to the asset and its setting, conserving its special interest and significance.

Policy P17 (Countryside and Green Belt) seeks to safeguard the “best and most versatile” agricultural land in the Borough, and encourages the continued use of remaining land for farming. Development of best and most versatile land will only be permitted where:

- There is an overriding need for the development proposed;
- There is insufficient lower grade land available; or
- Available lower grade land has an environmental significance outweighing the agricultural considerations.

Rural diversification will normally be supported providing the location is appropriate, its scale is appropriate to its location, and does not harm the Green Belt, or conservation or enhancement policies.

The Council will only permit inappropriate development in very special circumstances, and in addition to national policy relating to Green Belt, the following provisions will also apply:

- Development involving the replacement, extension or alteration of buildings within the Green Belt will not be permitted if it will harm the need to retain smaller more affordable housing or the purposes of including land within the Green Belt;

- Limited infilling will not be considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt settlements, providing this would not have an adverse effect on the character of the settlements. Limited infilling shall be interpreted as the filling of a small gap within an otherwise built-up frontage with not more than two dwellings;
- The reasonable expansion of established businesses into the Green Belt will be allowed where the proposal would make a significant contribution to the local economy or employment, providing that appropriate mitigation can be secured;
- Where the reuse of buildings or land is proposed, the new use, and any associated use of land surrounding the building, should not conflict with, nor have a materially greater impact on, the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and the form, bulk and general design of the buildings shall be in keeping with their surroundings; and
- Where waste management operations involving inappropriate development are proposed in the Green Belt, the contribution of new capacity towards the treatment gap identified in the Borough may amount to very special circumstances, providing the development accords with the waste management policy of the Local Plan.

Emerging Solihull Local Plan: Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future (November 2016) Strategic Sites

The emerging Local Plan Document, Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future, Draft Local Plan, November 2016, is likely to be adopted in late 2018. Within the emerging local plan it identifies two potential housing sites:

- proposed housing allocation 8, Hampton Road, Knowle' which includes 2 plots and
- proposed housing allocation 9, South of Knowle, Knowle'.

Indicatively the local planning authority have indicated that site 8, measuring at 13ha, could deliver 300 homes. This would equate to a density of approximately 23 if you considered the whole area for housing development, however given other provisions on site the housing density could reflect numbers more akin to 30-35 dwellings per hectare.

Site 9, measuring at 46ha, could deliver 750 new homes. This would equate to a density of approximately 16 dwellings per hectare. Again the LPA have indicated that this could be higher due to other land uses in the site.

These sites are both within the neighbourhood area. Should these sites come forward for development in the future, the aim should be to create distinctive places, with their own character.

These may be informed by the policies of the neighbourhood plan and indeed reflect the character features identified in the following section and the current character areas discussed previously.

Furthermore these two areas could deliver community benefit as well as delivering housing. There is the potential for the neighbourhood plan to identify infrastructure and community facility needs, which may be considered in future developments.

Granville Road Conservation Area

The Granville Road Conservation Area is the most recently designated out of the three in the neighbourhood area.

The Conservation Area was designated in 2002 and does not include any statutory listed buildings or locally listed items.

Predominantly it consists of large three storey Victorian semi-detached properties, with a consistent materials palette of tile, brick, stone and wood used for architectural detailing.

The street is regular and formal in appearance with the boundaries to the properties either hedges or brick walls. Large established trees line the street on both sides, providing a green character and complement the scale of the built form.



Map of Granville Road Conservation Area



(September 2017, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council)

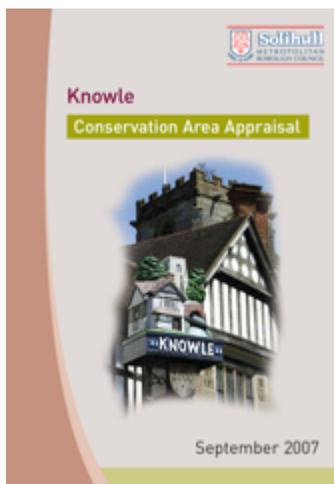
A larger version of this map can be found in appendix C of this report.

Knowle Conservation Area Character Appraisal

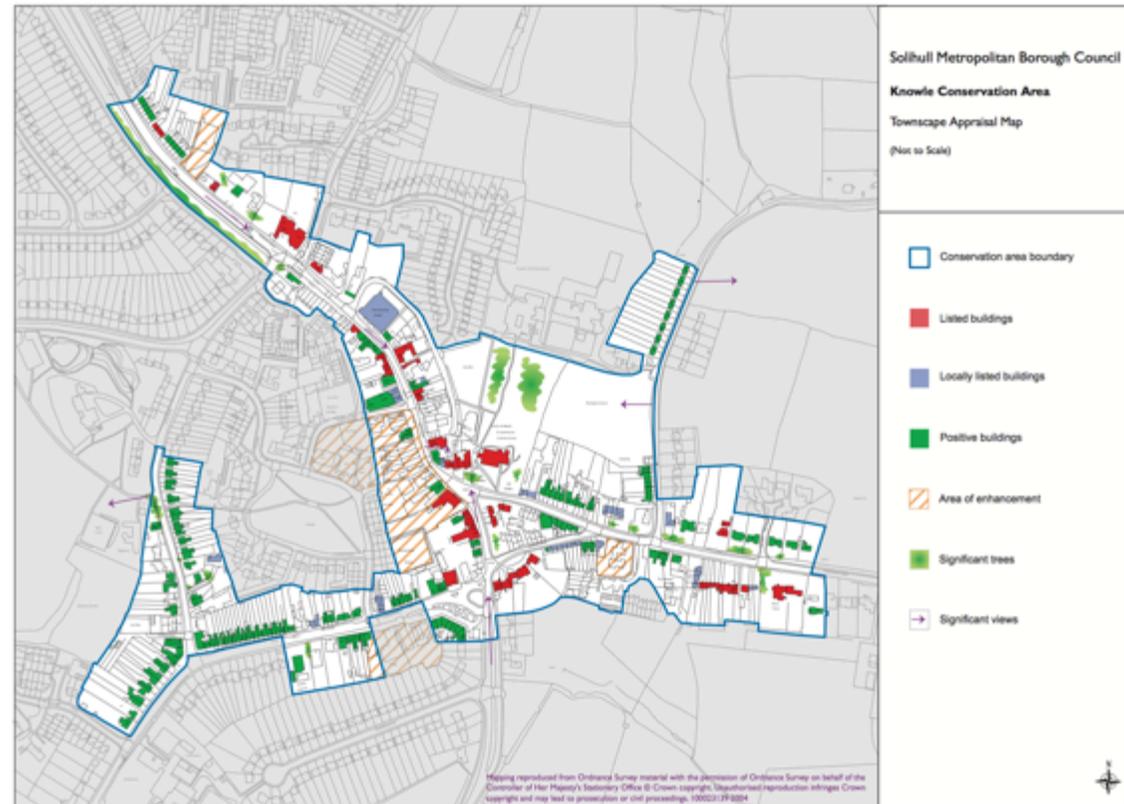
The Knowle Conservation Area was first designated in March 1968 and includes 53 statutory listed buildings and 34 locally listed items. The Conservation Area also includes an Article 4 Direction, which removes permitted development rights to preserve the character of an area.

The Knowle Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2007), produced by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, provides a detailed overview of the conservation area and its key characteristics.

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies landmarks, site layouts and boundary treatments. It also identifies a broad materials pallet of timber, brick and tile and some key building styles and typologies. These could be used to inform design policies of the neighbourhood plan.



Map of Knowle Conservation Area



(pg 48, Knowle Conservation Area Appraisal, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council September 2007)

A larger version of this map can be found in appendix C of this report.

Station Approach Conservation Area

The Station Approach Conservation Area was designated in March 1992, and does not include any statutory listed buildings. However it does include items included on in the Local List.

The adjacent map illustrates the extent of the Conservation Area that preserves the heart of Dorridge Village, which includes the railway station, a catalyst for the growth and development of the village from former agricultural land.

Today the conservation area includes a mixture of uses associated with a village centre. These include the Forest Hotel, still occupied as a public house in a prominent corner location, food outlets, small business and shops with residential on first floor.



Map of Station Approach Conservation Area



(September 2017, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council) A larger version of this map can be found in appendix C of this report.

4.0 Historical Development



4.1 Bentley Heath

Bentley Heath was originally an area of open grass heathland surrounded by the Forest of Arden. Similar to Dorridge it was an area used for grazing animals and formed part of the agricultural landscape.

Due to its open nature Bentley Heath was used as a through route and is recorded as early as the 12th century between Copt Heath and Henley. This has influenced its built form reflected today as a predominately linear settlement along Mill Lane.

Following the development of the railway line, which cut through the Widney Manor estate, the Bentley Heath settlement became divided into two parts.

The development of land between Mill Lane and Widney Road, between the 1930' and 1950's, gave rise to the settlement seen today.

Bentley Heath: OS One Inch, 1885-1900 Outline



(24th September 2017, <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=14&lat=52.3725&lon=1.7498&layers=1&right=BingHyb>)

4.2 Dorridge

It is understood that Dorridge was initially recorded in 1400 as a settlement known as 'Derrech'. It is believed that the name derived from a meaning for a clearing in woodlands frequented by animals.

The original settlement was surrounded by farmland and the Tithe Map 1839 illustrates that it consisted a large fields, small plots and buildings scattered within the countryside.

Dorridge village grew predominantly following the opening of the London to Birmingham Railway, which opened in 1852 and included the station which is still used today.

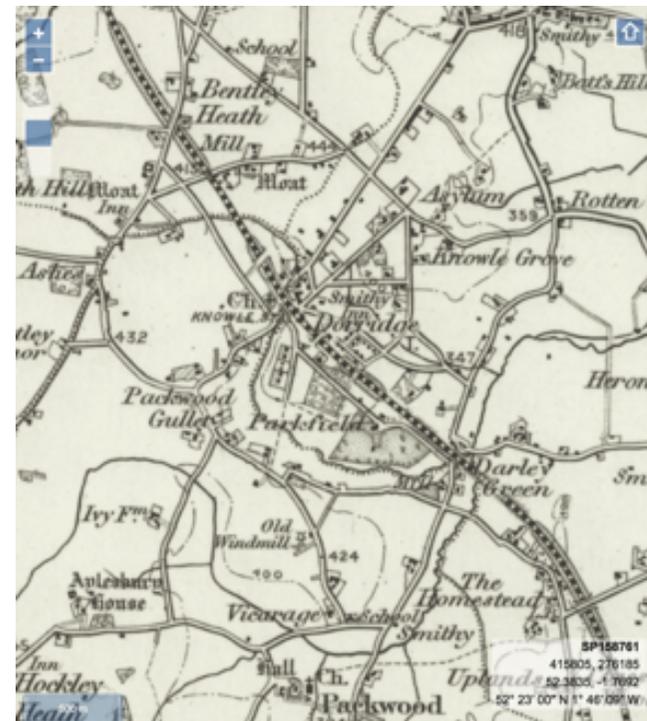
"In 1878, the station buildings proper were erected. In the same year, St. Philip's Church was built by E. J. Payne. Enlargement of the church by J. A. Chatwin in 1896/7 is an indication that the population had already started to increase."

(19th September 2017, <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Libraries/Local-family-history/localhistory/dorridgehistory>)

The village has expanded significantly since the railway, developing a village centre, which now forms part of the Station Approach conservation area. Dorridge has at its heart a number of local services and facilities predominantly set in a formal square and parking courtyard along Station Road.

The most recent development, which included public realm works, was the construction of a Sainsbury's supermarket in the heart of the village.

Dorridge: OS One Inch, 1885-1900 Outline



(24th September 2017, <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=14&lat=52.3725&lon=1.7498&layers=1&right=BingHyb>)

4.3 Knowle

The name Knowle derives from the Saxon word 'Cnolle' which means a small hill.

"it appears in documents as 'Gnolle' 'Knolle', 'Knole' and 'Knoll' before the present spelling became standard from about the mid-19th century.

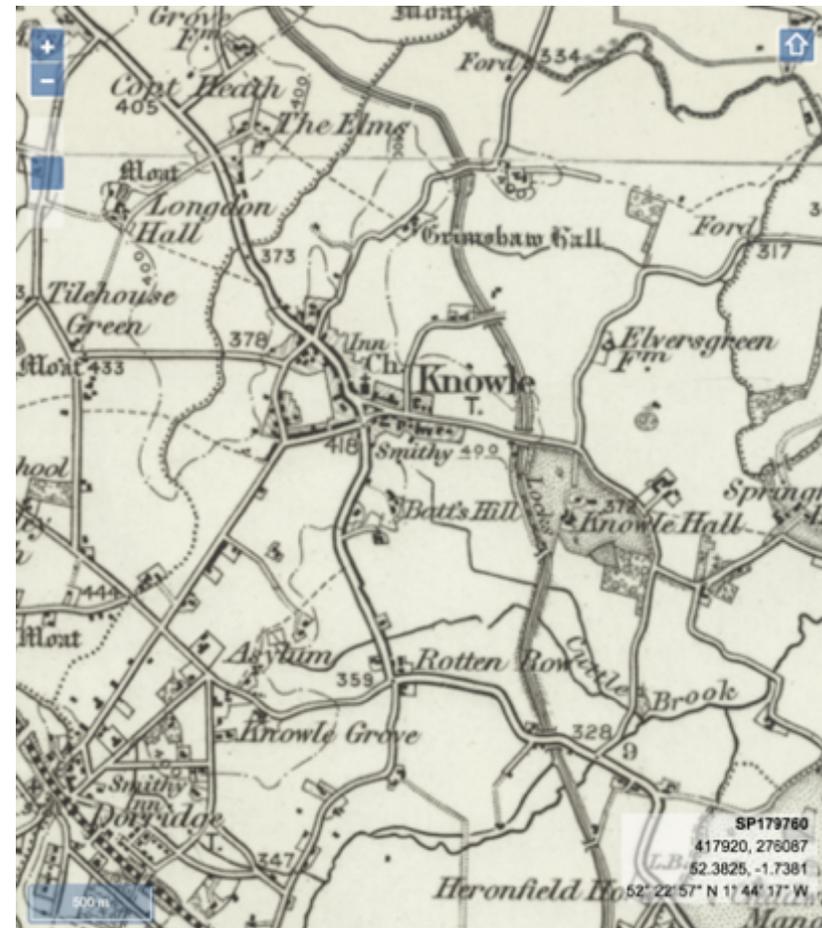
At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Knowle was a hamlet within the parish of Hampton-in-Arden and is not separately recorded. It became a separate parish in 1859."

(16th September 2017

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Libraries/Local-family-history/localhistory/knowlehistory>)

Knowle was an agricultural village and following the Turnpike Act in 1725 the Birmingham to Warwick road was improved, which then introduced another development making Knowle a staging post on the route between London and Birmingham. As a result this became one of the catalysts for growth. Coupled with the common land in the Manor of Hampton-in Arden being enclosed in 1824. This provided further definition to the village settlement and given its links to London and Birmingham the services and facilities began to expand.

Knowle: OS One Inch, 1885-1900 Outline



(24th September 2017, <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=14&lat=52.3725&lon=-1.7498&layers=1&right=BingHyb>)

5.0 Character Assessment



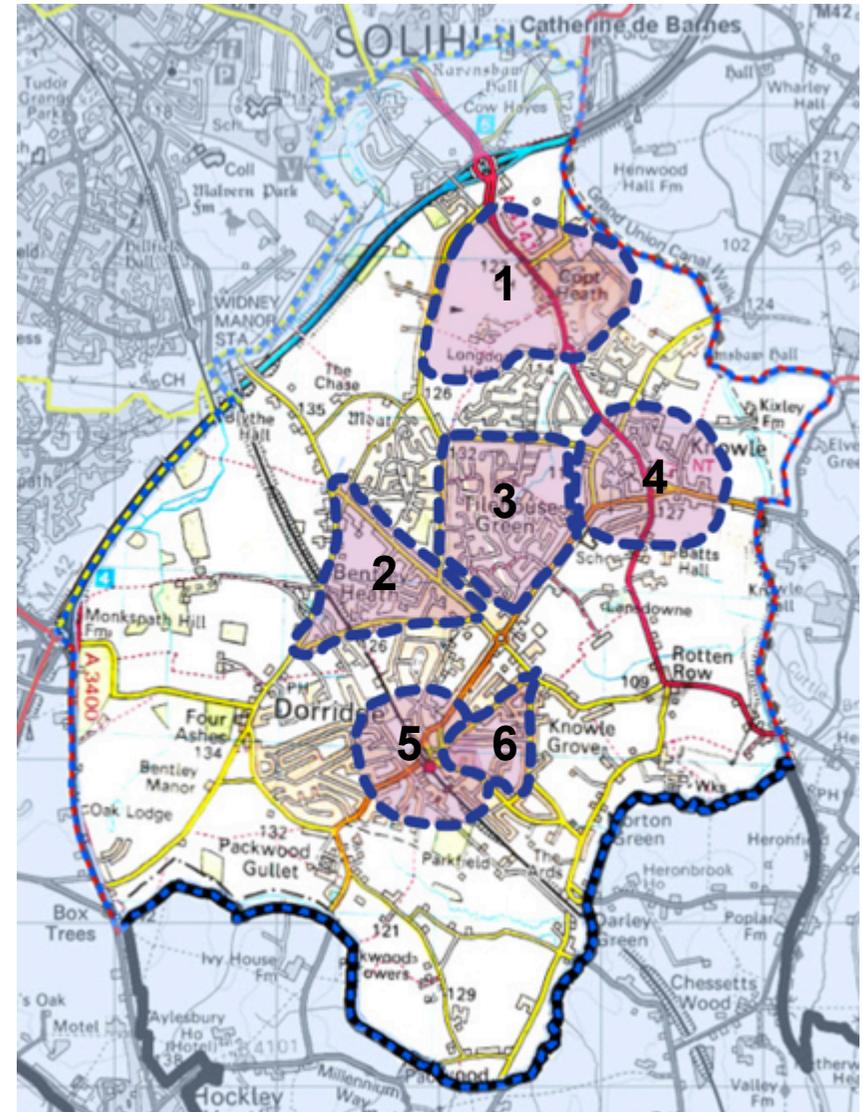
5.1 Character Areas

Informed by the considerations of British Standard 'BS 7913:2013, Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings' and through a character assessment undertaken six character areas were identified in the neighbourhood area and are illustrated on the adjacent plan. These include a mixture of areas from established village centres through to distinct residential neighbourhoods.

This section goes on to explore each character area in more detail and identify common features throughout.

- 1: Gateway Area;
- 2: Bentley Heath;
- 3: Tilehouse Green and Purnells Way Residential;
- 4: Knowle;
- 5: Dorridge; and
- 6: The Golden Triangle.

Map of Character Areas



Gateway Area

A transitional area, that acts as the gateway to Solihull, Birmingham and the motorway network. This character area defined by wide roads, grass verges, mature trees and development set back from the road provides a transition from the neighbouring urban conurbation and the semi-rural areas of Knowle; Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

Design Considerations

- Nodes and Centres: Including some of the largest road interchanges in the neighbourhood area these are set in green spaces, consisting of grassed areas with mature planting and trees. A natural landscape is a key characteristic of these nodes;
- Properties are set back from the road;
- There is a slight undulation in the topography which is well integrated into the built form;
- Private front and rear gardens;
- Tranquillity reduced with proximity to the motorway;
- Transition area between urban conurbation and Knowle village.

Context and Setting

- Good quality public realm with well maintained streets and spaces;
- Street furniture including signage and lighting is predominantly set on green posts which add to the non-urban character;
- Rising Topography to Knowle Village;
- Limited long views into the area along vehicular routes, however street views are framed by mature trees and vegetation.

New Development and Interventions

- Recent developments continue design characteristics, set back from the road, including private garden space;
- Clear cycle routes and linkages to a wider network.

Bentley Heath

Bentley Heath Local Centre: Forming one of the three key village settlements of the neighbourhood area, Bentley Heath has a distinct character and varies in scale and purpose.

Bentley Heath is a local centre serving the immediate community. It is smaller in scale and offers a smaller range of services and facilities.

Design Considerations

- Bentley Heath extends to the railway line and beyond the crossing is a more recent housing development;
- Linear form set along three main roads Mill Lane, Four Ashes Road and Widney Road. Most services and facilities are located along these routes. Development between these is residential, this gives a hierarchy of 'local centre' to the main roads which provide a variety of local services and facilities;
- Four Ashes Road is the physical boundary between the semi-rural setting and the open countryside;
- Urban and Rural Transition: Located on the periphery of the green belt and open countryside. The key character here is the transition between the built form and the open countryside. Some developments are more sensitive to this transition than others, retaining hedgerows and mature planting, or considering the spacing between buildings, reflecting a lower density of development and looser urban grain.

Context and Setting

- Green corridor from Four Ashes Road, running centrally through residential development linking to footpaths from Manor Road and Mill Lane, this provides a 'green lung';
- Predominantly semi-detached and detached residential properties within good size plots. Balanced scale of dwelling to garden space.

New Development and Interventions

- Predominantly brick and tile materials pallet;
- Mostly 2 storey development, all of a similar scale and massing.



Sketch of Bentley Heath local centre, providing a mix of uses

Tilehouse Green and Purnells Way Residential

Within this area there is a variety of residential buildings from bespoke site-specific designs through to more regular larger scale residential developments.

Design Considerations

- **Nodes and Centres:** In addition to the three main village settlements at key road interchanges in this character area there are defined nodes, typically these incorporate landmark buildings or buildings that address the junction;
- **Street Layout and Hierarchy:** There is a variety of residential development, predominantly consisting of larger houses on the main routes and on the minor roads more formal housing layouts with a combination of detached and semi-detached housing and smaller blocks of terraced units.

Context and Setting

- **Scale and Massing:** As a residential area the scale and massing of buildings vary across the character area, although predominantly each building is proportionate to its plot size.

- **Connectivity and Space:** The character area is highly permeable with a variety of safe well-designed pedestrian routes, including natural surveillance, legible streets. There is limited integration of cycle routes, which are more prevalent in other character areas.
- **Natural Landscaping:** Natural boundary treatments and mature planted gardens are a distinct characteristic of the area. In more formal designed estates within the area mature trees and grassed areas provide green spaces and separation between developments.



Example of prevalent natural boundary treatments.

New Development and Interventions

- Robust Building Types: In more recent years there have been developments, which have included re-using existing large bespoke houses or replacing one for one structures to create smaller apartments. These developments help to address housing needs while considering the setting and context of the area, with limited evidence from the street of their multiple dwelling use;
- Natural boundary treatments;
- Maintain the 'building line' of boundary treatments; providing a consistent form along the street.

Knowle

Defined and recognised as a village settlement with a designated Conservation Area this is an area that serves the immediate and wider community owing to its size and the scale of services and facilities it is able to offer.

Design Considerations

- Urban and Rural Transition: Located on the periphery of the green belt and open countryside. The key character here is the transition between the built form and the open countryside. Largely developments are sensitive to this transition, however more recent peripheral developments have not maximised the opportunity to make better use of the views, setting and character of the adjacent open countryside;
- Mixed use developments in village centre;
- In the village centre where development is not directly at the 'edge of pavement' boundary treatments consist predominantly of brick and stone capped walls, some have been repaired and reinstated with recent developments;
- Knowle includes a Conservation Area;
- Car parking is currently provided in a number of smaller car parks either side of the high street. Issues highlighted about the quantity and environmental quality of parking serving Knowle village centre;
- Good access to a variety of green spaces, including formal parks, sports facilities and open countryside.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

Context and Setting

- Hierarchy and spacing of roads, helps to provide legible streets, this is not always reflected in more recent housing developments;
- Natural Landscape: mature trees and grassed areas provide green spaces and separation between developments;
- Kenilworth Road is predominantly residential with a distinct rural character leading away from the village centre. Larger properties set in large established mature gardens. A looser grain of development leading to the

open countryside, providing a softer transition between the village and countryside. Properties are all set back from the road;

- Mixed type of housing available;
- Clear street pattern and legible buildings with landmark structures;
- In Knowle Village residential development predominantly consists of semi-detached and terraced accommodation, there are some apartments also on the High Street;
- Set around High Street at the heart, with a clear sense of character and village centre.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

New Development and Interventions

- Materials pallet is predominantly brick, render, tile, timber with prevalent design features including decorative panelling in half timber buildings, human scale buildings.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

Dorridge

A village settlement that has grown around the construction of the railway and building of the station. This village centre potentially serves a wider area due to the scale and number of facilities and good transport links.

Design Considerations

- Rhythm of terraced shops with consistent form at first and second floors. Limited incremental change at ground floor provides a consistent form defining the street;
- Mixed use development with commercial on ground floor and residential above;
- Building frontages at 'edge of pavement' in the village centre and then as the development moves to the edge of the village properties are set back from the road;
- Centralised around Dorridge Station includes two Conservation Areas.



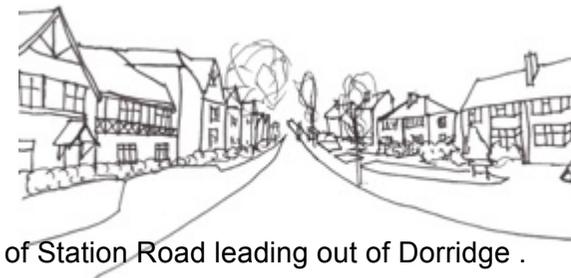
(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

Context and Setting

- Key building characteristics, include repeated gables onto the street, and oriel or bay windows;
- Defined public realm predominantly hard landscaping surfaces with mature trees integrated into the streetscene.
- Render, timber, brick and tile materials pallet.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)



Sketch of Station Road leading out of Dorridge .

New Development and Interventions

- Mixture of on street parking and designated car parks provide movement on the street and encourage a variety of time spent in the village;
- Clear materials pallet for public realm works, most recent example introduced with the Sainsbury's development pictured below;
- Off street car parking in residential areas keeps the street open and the sense of space/order regular.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

The Golden Triangle

This character area takes its name from a period of growth and aspiration in the 1960's where local estate agents named it 'the golden triangle' reflecting its desirability and status. This is an entirely residential area including a variety of buildings from bespoke architect designed, through to more regular larger scale residential dwellings.

Design Considerations

- Natural Landscaping: Natural boundary treatments and mature planted gardens are a distinct characteristic of the area. In more formal designed estates within the area mature trees and grassed areas provide green spaces and separation between developments;
- Properties are set back from the road;
- Large mature trees form part of the streetscene providing definition and rhythm in the street.

Context and Setting

- Front gardens include large mature trees;
- Broad materials pallet of brick, tile, render and wood;
- Bespoke design properties add interest and variety to the street.

New Development and Interventions

- Large properties are set in suitably sized plots with front and rear gardens;
- Off street parking, no vehicles parked on the road.

Housing Density

Lower housing density is a key characteristic of the neighbourhood area, particularly as it reflects its semi-rural nature (whilst being in close proximity to a major urban area). Centred around three villages, the Neighbourhood Forum has recorded 14 housing developments which span a period from Victorian developments through to the most recent in 2017. With the exception of area 13 St Johns Close and area 14 Fennis Close, the average density stands at about 17 dwellings per hectare.

The emerging local plan policy P5 'provision of land for housing' makes clear that the density of new housing will seek to use the land efficiently whilst maintaining the local character and distinctiveness. Applying this emerging policy and through the evidence base gathered the proposed strategic site 8, Hampton Road would not reflect the density, the larger site 9 South of Knowle could include a lower density however it is unclear what land is actually developable for housing and what is actually allocated for other land uses such as the school.

This is a major factor to consider in any future design briefs or masterplans, ensuring development reflects the locality whilst being viable and positively contributing to the local housing need.

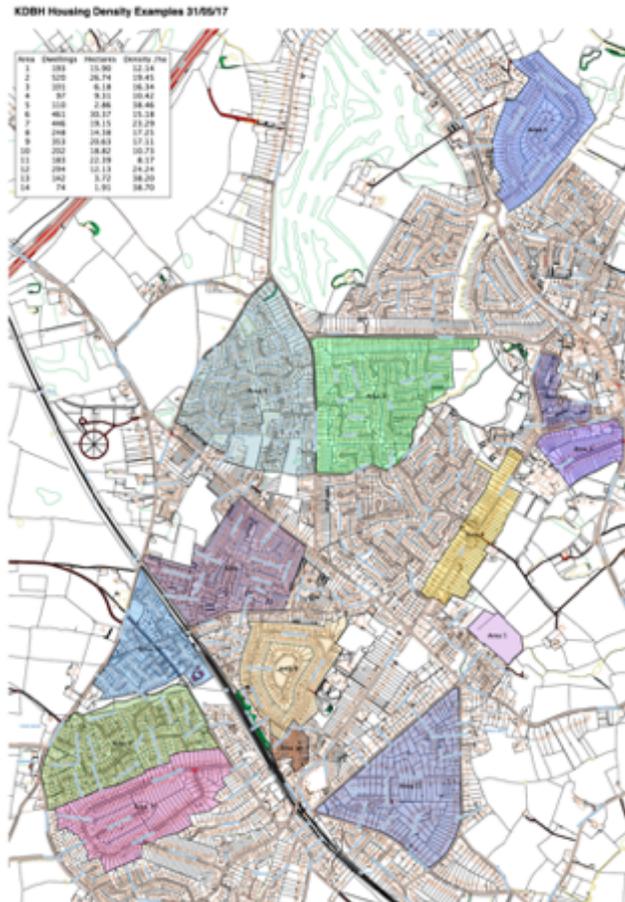
The following maps and table illustrate these areas in more detail and detailed maps can be found of each density area in appendix D of this report.

Table of Housing Density

Area	Dwellings	Hectares	Density /ha
1	193	15.90	12.14
2	520	26.74	19.45
3	101	6.18	16.34
4	97	9.31	10.42
5	110	2.86	38.46
6	461	30.37	15.18
7	446	19.15	23.29
8	248	14.38	17.25
9	353	20.63	17.11
10	202	18.82	10.73
11	183	22.39	8.17
12	294	12.13	24.24
13	142	3.72	38.20
14	74	1.91	38.70

(Housing Density Mapping, Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum, 2017)

Map of Housing Density in Neighbourhood Area:



(Housing Density Mapping, Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum, 2017)

Detailed Housing Density Breakdown

Housing Density for 14 Areas based on OS Map and BLPU Address Points (2001 - 2015)								
27/10/17 10:25								
No. on map	Streets	Town	Typical Age of Property	No. of Properties	Non Dwelling Units	Dwelling Units (DUs)	Gross Area in hectares	Density – DUs / hectare
1	Wychwood Avenue/Broadfern Road/Holland Avenue	Knowle	1950	193	0	193	15.90	12.14
2	Longdon Road/Tilehouse Green Lane/Purnells Way	Knowle	1950/70	524	4	520	26.74	19.45
3	Milverton Road/Warwick Road/Station Road (from bus stop to Arden School)	Knowle	1930	116	15	101	6.18	16.34
4	Station Road (from Arden School to roundabout)	Knowle	Victorian to 1950	100	3	97	9.31	10.42
5	Middlefield Development	Knowle	2017	110	0	110	2.86	38.46
6	Tilehouse Green Lane/Browns Lane/Widney Road	Tilehouse Green	1980	465	4	461	30.37	15.18
7	Slater Road/Packwood Close/Hurst Green Road/Mill Lane	Bentley Heath	1950/60	451	5	446	19.15	23.29
8	Poplar Road/Hanbury Road/Edstone Close	Dorridge	1950/60	249	1	248	14.38	17.25
9	Glendon Way/Pembridge Road/Chadworth Avenue/Manor Road (to Conker Lane)	Dorridge	1990	355	2	353	20.63	17.11
10	Rodborough Road/Besbury Close/Woodchester Road	Dorridge	1950	202	0	202	18.82	10.73
11	Avenue Road/Knowle Wood Road/Dorridge Road	Dorridge	1930/50/70	183	0	183	22.39	8.17
12	Mill Lane/Buckminster/ Manton/Four Ashes	Dorridge	1930/50/70	295	1	294	12.13	24.24
13	St Johns/Lodge Rd/Station Rd	Knowle	Victorian/1950/60	146	4	142	3.72	38.20
14	Fennis Close/Copstone Drive/Station Road	Dorridge	1960/70	76	2	74	1.91	38.70

(Housing Density Mapping, Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum, 2017)

The table above, produced by the neighbourhood forum relates to the areas shown on the adjacent plan and gives a more detailed analysis of the age of the development, the housing density and its location within the neighbourhood area.

5.2 Character Features

Street Furniture and Public Realm

The street furniture within the neighbourhood area is typically consistent in form. The majority of highways lighting is on green painted lampposts with few standard plain metal ones to be found. Similarly there are two main forms of road name signage, these are illustrated in the photographs and potentially the cast iron signage may be suitable for Local Listing.



Cast iron signage



Modern road signage

Traffic Management

The flow of vehicular traffic throughout the neighbourhood area is controlled predominantly through roundabouts and junctions. There are no traffic light junctions within the neighbourhood area. Recent developments have sought to better integrate traffic routes into the public realm through things like shared surface or material detailing.

Local Green Spaces

The neighbourhood area has a number of green spaces that contribute to the setting and character of residential areas and provide useful community facilities. As part of the neighbourhood plan process, an audit of local green spaces has been undertaken. These could be designated through the neighbourhood plan, using the criteria contained in the NPPF.



(Photo's: T.Aykroyd)

Green Linkages and Open Countryside/ Rural Setting

The entire neighbourhood area stands independently from the larger urban areas. Surrounded by local nature reserves, open countryside and green belt this is an important part of the wider semi-rural character. In all parts of the neighbourhood area the natural landscape is accessible, either through its proximity and views across open land or by access through the extensive network of footpaths and the canal.

Within the main built form there are a number of locations where green spaces link directly to the open countryside, or new developments have sought to maximise on the location adjacent to the rural setting.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

Mature Hedgerows and Trees

The natural landscaping throughout the neighbourhood area is a key characteristic. Residential streets are tree lined with a variety of mature species, housing developments incorporate established trees once set in the natural landscape and hedgerows provide definition and a softer natural characteristic.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

The Grand Union Canal and Knowle Locks

The Grand Union Canal was originally constructed to link London to Birmingham and opened in 1805. This forms part of the national network of waterways and is a key route in to Birmingham, a city famous for its waterway network.

The Grand Union Canal forms part of the eastern boundary of the neighbourhood area and is a significant asset. At Knowle there is a section known as 'Knowle Locks' which originally included a flight of 6 locks:

“but one lock was removed and the remaining five were modernised into wide locks during the 1930 Grand Union Canal Improvement.”
(19th September 2017, <http://www.grandunioncanal.co.uk/Grand-Union-Canal-D.html>)



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

Sense of Enclosure on Major Roads

Throughout the neighbourhood area on the major routes there is a clearly defined sense of enclosure, which provides a sense of hierarchy. Predominantly properties are fronted by a garden that is then clearly defined from the highway by either brick walls or established hedgerows. These are consistent in the building line along the street that contributes to the sense of enclosure, rhythm of the street and visual appearance.

The highways consist of pavements adjacent to the carriageway on either side, lined by mature trees and in some areas including small green verges incorporated on wider pavements areas.



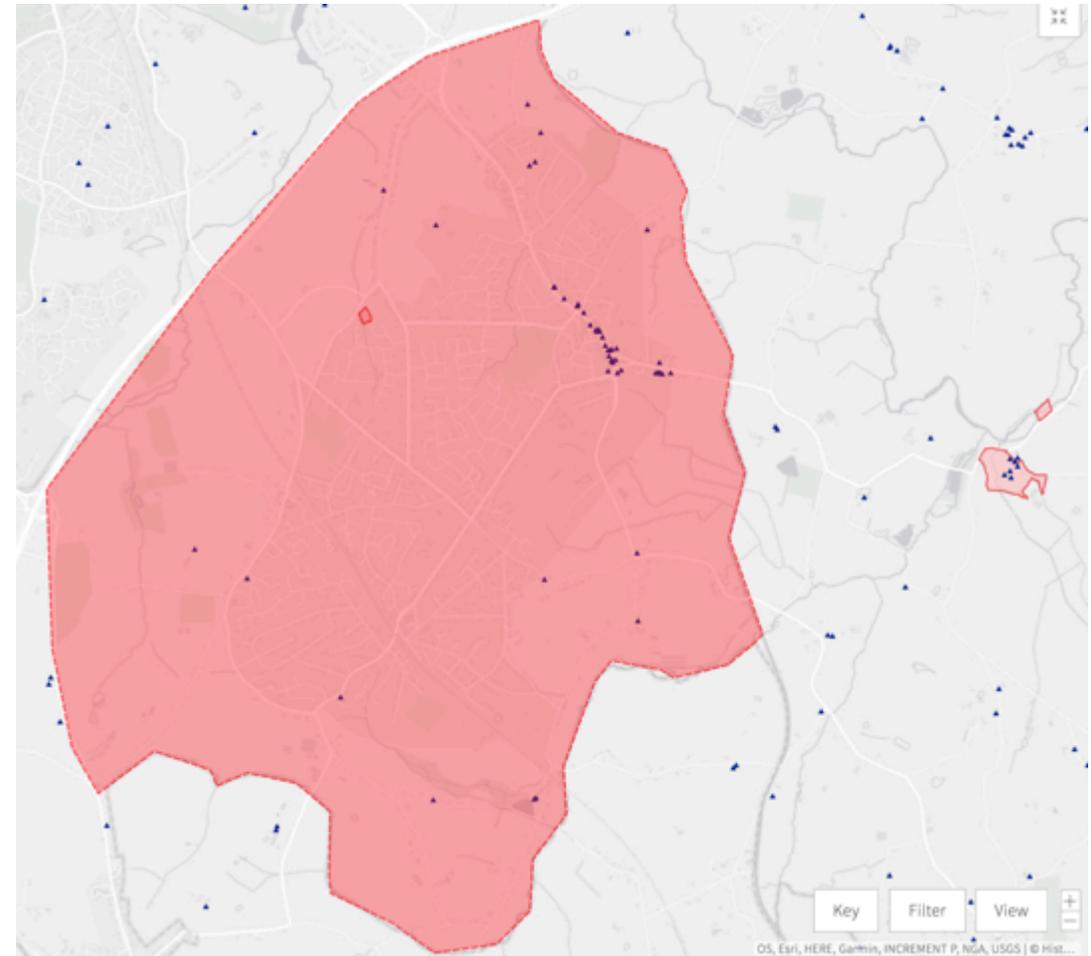
The Ards - Dorridge

An area of farmland surrounding Dorridge known as 'The Ards' was first drawn by the ordnance survey in approximately 1886 when maps were being updated to include new roads and crucially for the neighbourhood area the railway line.

Heritage Assets

There are 50 statutory listed buildings in the neighbourhood area. These are predominantly concentrated within the three conservation areas and include a diverse range of buildings and structures. A comprehensive list of these can be found in appendix A. The plan below illustrates the search area of the Statutory Listing and the proximity of other statutory listed items. The largest concentration is within Knowle.

Map of Heritage Assets



(27th October 2017, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True>)

Movement and Connectivity

The north-west of the area is crossed by the M42 motorway, with junction 5 of the M42 in the northern part of the area as shown in blue on the connectivity plan. There are two 'A' roads through the area, the A4141 which runs from the Solihull, across the M42 and into the village of Knowle in the northern part of the area. The A3400, forms part of the neighbourhood area boundary to the south-east.

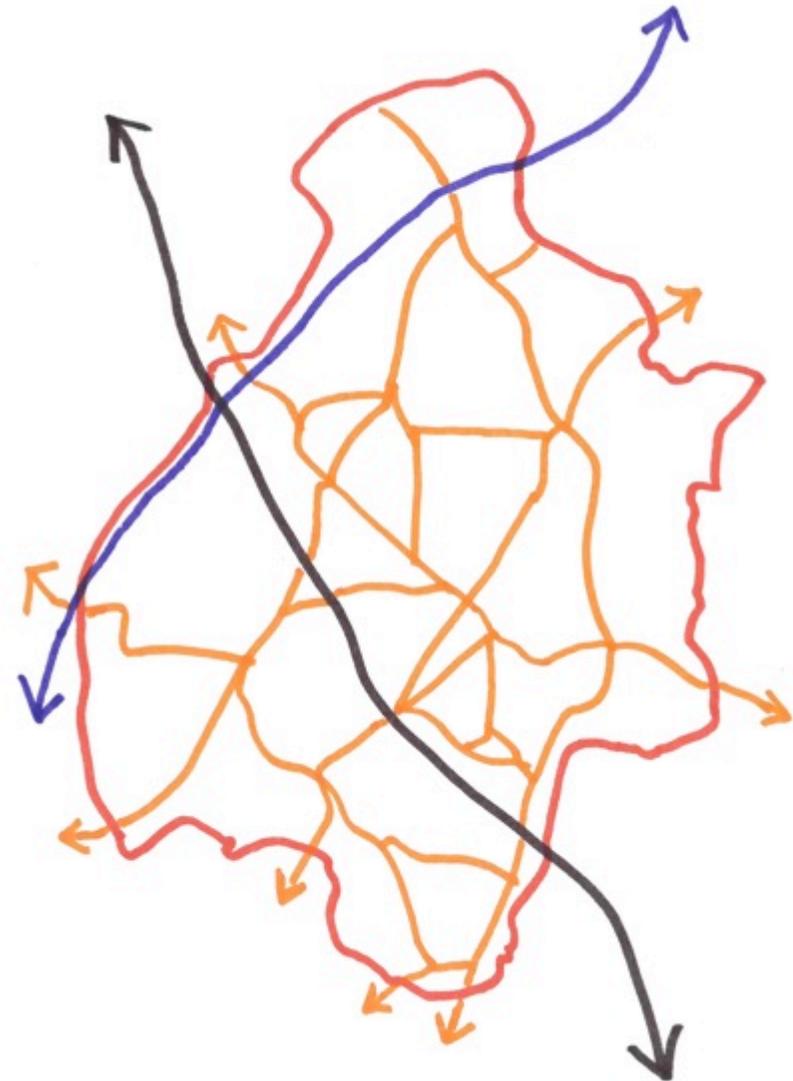
The rest of the area is characterised by 'B' roads, minor roads, and residential streets, typical of a rural landscape. The main connections are reflected in orange on the adjacent plan.

There is also one railway line that runs north-south through the neighbourhood area linking Birmingham to London. The railway line includes a operational station in the village of Dorridge.

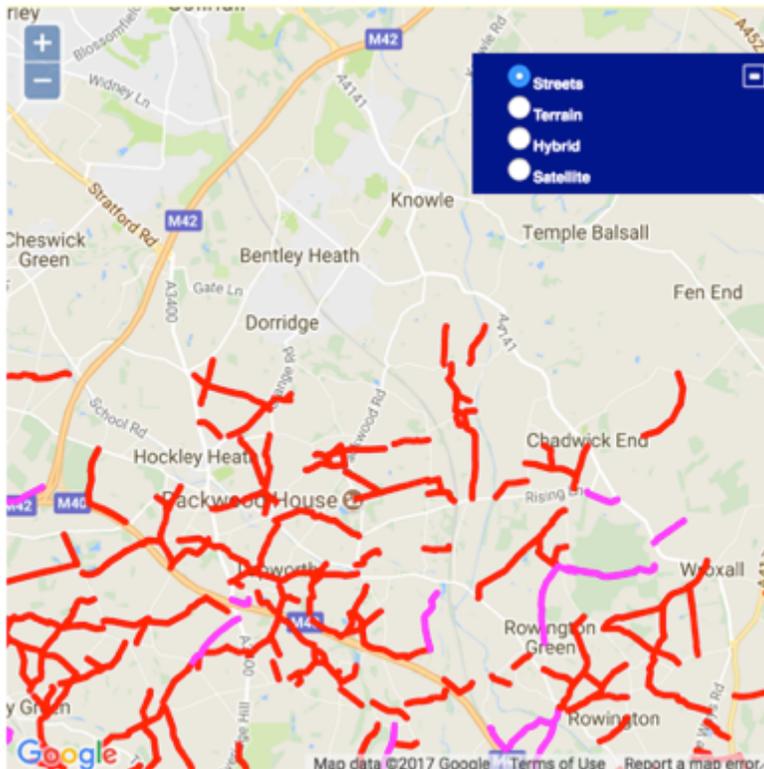
Key:

-  M42
-  Main Vehicle Routes
-  Neighbourhood Area
-  Railway Line

Map of the movement and connectivity in the Neighbourhood Area:



Footpaths



This plan does not include all PRoW or footpaths in the area, there are many other footpaths and pedestrian routes which join the entire neighbourhood area, adding to the rural character and connectivity of the neighbourhood area.

Key:

- solid red line:** footpath;
- solid fuchsia line:** bridleway;
- solid green line:** restricted byway;
- solid blue line:** byway open to all traffic.

This web page is from www.rowmaps.com, a project to show rights of way on maps. The underlying map on this web page is provided by [Google Maps](https://www.google.com/maps). By default, you get a *Streets* map.

The council of Warwickshire releases under license data containing details of the rights of way that are in Warwickshire. The date of this data is 26th October 2016.

An authority's Definitive Map is the authoritative source of their rights of way. The details of the public rights of way network contained in an authority's data are for information only, and are an interpretation of the Definitive Map, not the Definitive Map itself, and should not be relied on for determining the position or alignment of any public right of way. For legal purposes, an authority's data does not replace their Definitive Map. And changes may have been made to the Definitive Map that are not included in their data. The authority's data contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2013. Attempting to view this data with more detail than 1:10000 may produce an inaccurate rendering of the route of a public right.

5.3 Natural Character

Landscape Designations

There are a number of statutory and non-statutory landscape designations are within the neighbourhood area. The statutory designations include

- Brook Meadow Darley Green SSSI
- River Blyth SSSI

There are also two of Local Natures Reserves within the neighbourhood area and these are:

- Jobs Close
- Dorridge Wood

There is also a wildlife site designated approximately 15 years ago known as Wychwood Avenue.



(Photo: T.Aykroyd)

In addition to these the emerging neighbourhood plan identifies through a Local Green Space Audit an number of potential sites for Local Green Space designation, this include a diverse variety of spaces that positively contribute to the character and setting of the area.



The Landscape Value is designated by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as Medium and covers a significant part of the neighbourhood area, enhancing the rural character.

5.4 Landscape Character

Guidance for Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was developed by the Countryside Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland.

Its aim was to evaluate Landscape areas using a set of criteria to define the special qualities prevalent in local landscape zones. The special qualities of local areas were drawn out using the following criteria listed below:

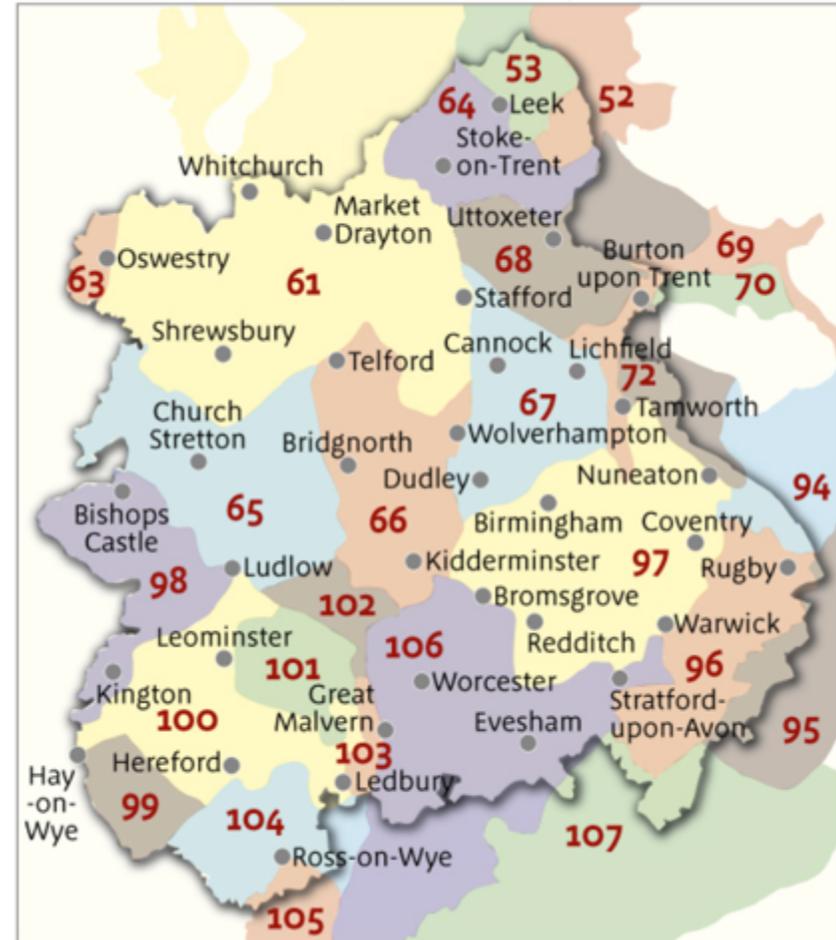
- Distinctiveness
- Perceptual character
- Landscape and scenic quality
- Natural Character
- Cultural Character
- Function

This criteria is used to provide a fairly broad scale landscape designations across the UK and Scotland to assist with planning decisions and policies when dealing with new development within local planning authority areas.

The West Midlands Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) sets out the character and value of the whole region. It also acts as a basis for assessing the rarity and special typical features of a particular landscape that may require special consideration or protection.

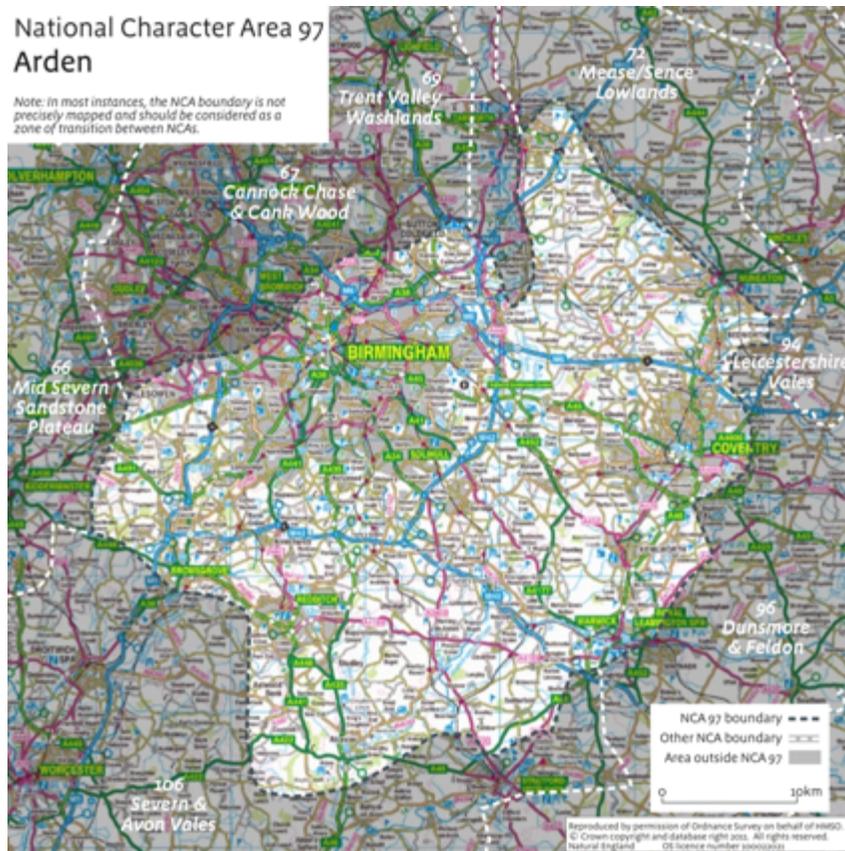
At a regional level the LCA applies 26 character areas. The neighbourhood area is in area 97 – Arden.

West Midlands Landscape Character Map:



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-west-midlands>

Landscape Character Area 97, Arden



(Pg 3, National Character Area Profile: 97 Arden, Natural England, 2014)

Particular features of Area 97, prominent in the neighbourhood area include:

- “ *Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.*
- *Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.*
- *Narrow, meandering clay river valleys with long river meadows; the River Blythe SSSI lying between the cities of Coventry and Birmingham is a good example of this.*
- *Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands.*
- *Diverse field patterns, ranging from well hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi regular fields on former deer park estates, such as, Packington Hall and Stoneleigh Park.*
- *Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely populated where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation while some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.*
- *North-eastern industrial area based around former*

Warwickshire coalfield, with distinctive colliery settlements. North-western area dominated by urban development and associated urban edge landscapes such as managed greenspace, for example allotments, gardens, parks, golf courses (rough areas) and public open spaces; playing fields, churchyards, cemeteries and institutional grounds (schools, hospitals).

- *Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that sit within the landscape of this NCA.”*

(Pg 5, National Character Area Profile: 97 Arden, Natural England, 2014)

5.5 Landscape Change

The NCA identifies 7 areas of recent landscape change or trends. These included:

- Trees and Woodland
- Boundary Features
- Agriculture
- Semi-natural Habitat
- Historic Features
- Rivers

From these key elements identified the following are applicable to the neighbourhood area and highlight the potential issues and pressures facing the natural landscape:

“Trees and woodlands:

- *The character of the resource has been maintained, or is strengthening slowly but there has been a general lack of woodland management in many places.*
- *Across rural parts of this NCA and into neighbouring NCAs, there is an ambitious, programme to purchase land and create an extensive forest landscape, the “Forest of Dennis”. This project has created over 400 ha of new woodland and aims to eventually create a further 4 to 8,000 ha.*

Boundary features:

- *There has been loss and deterioration of hedges and hedgerow trees, the former particularly as a result of field amalgamation. Many hedgerows have fallen into disrepair through poor and or lack of management. The number of hedgerow trees has declined and there has been a failure to nurture new generations. However, recent stewardship schemes have led to some positive management of hedgerows and improvement in hedgerow quality.*

Agriculture:

- *In 2009, over 30 per cent of farms were lowland grazing livestock holdings; Farms classified as ‘other’ (which include smallholdings) 27 per cent; cereal farms 20 per cent; mixed farms (7 per cent). Trends between 2000 and 2009 show a decrease in the total number of holdings from 1,898 to 1,577 (a 17 per cent decrease). Trends also show a significant decrease in dairy farms (down from 112 to 56, a decrease of 50 per cent), and mixed farming (down from 124 to 81, a decrease of 35 per cent). Lowland grazing livestock has increased slightly (9 per cent).*

Settlement and development:

- *There is development pressure throughout the area. The majority of the NCA falls within the southern half of the*

West Midlands Green Belt, which extends around Coventry and Redditch and south to Stratford. Growth proposals seem to be focussed around the east of Birmingham and north Solihull. Coventry is an area previously designated as a growth point and there has been consideration of sustainable urban extensions into the green belt.

Semi-natural habitat:

- *Semi-natural habitats are limited in this NCA with less than 1 percent designated for nature conservation. There is little evidence to show that there are agri-environment agreements for heathland management and restoration. The most extensive annual agri-environment agreements in 2003 were for lowland pastures on neutral/acid soils (487 ha) and regeneration of grassland/semi-natural vegetation (236 ha). Given the size of the area, this suggests the resource remains weakened.*

(Pg 25-26, National Character Area Profile: 97 Arden, Natural England, 2014)

Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment

The Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, produced by Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council in December 2016 set out in greater detail the specific landscape characteristics of the neighbourhood area and describes the setting as an area that covers approximately 5.8km² and:

“Includes the urban fringes of Knowle and Dorridge and rural areas to the south and east of the settlement. The LCA is contained by the Grand Union Canal which skirts along the east boundary of the area, Dorridge urban edge and Box Trees Road to the south-west of the area.

The land gently slopes down from west to east eventually falling towards the River Blythe in LCA 4. Purnell Brook, Cuttle Brook and Canal Feeder and their associated springs drain the area. These watercourses are well wooded and provide a distinctive characteristic within the landscape, specially to the south of the LCA, which is perceived as being more enclosed and intimate.

Small blocks of woodland are scattered across the area, a number of these are ancient woodlands, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves. The woodlands are a valuable asset and combined with the winding lanes, mature hedgerow trees and ditches/watercourses running across the elds they provide a rich

complexity and strong structure to the landscape, which is a key characteristic of the area.

This area, being in close proximity to Knowle and Dorridge, shows signs of urban influence especially within the northern extent of the LCA on the approaches to the settlement of Knowle. A large proportion of the character area remains unspoilt and is distinctively rural in character with pastoral fields despite the close proximity of the urban edge. Although much of the historic environment has been developed over the years, remnants of the past are evident in the names of places. Grimshaw Hall provides a historical connection and is of great heritage value to the landscape character of the area.

The area provides a gateway to the countryside from the southern and eastern fringes of Dorridge. Public footpaths and bridleways are present and assist in connecting the settlements to the major roads and the Grand Union Canal Walk to the east.”

(Pg 26, Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited, December 2016)

Critically this report identifies an area which forms part of the neighbourhood area. The section ‘Knowle and Dorridge Fringe LCA3’ identifies the key characteristics of the natural landscape into two categories:

“Geology, soils and drainage:

- *Slowly permeable clayey soils, seasonally wet with impeded drainage.*
- *Bed rock Triassic Rocks (undifferentiated) of Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone.*

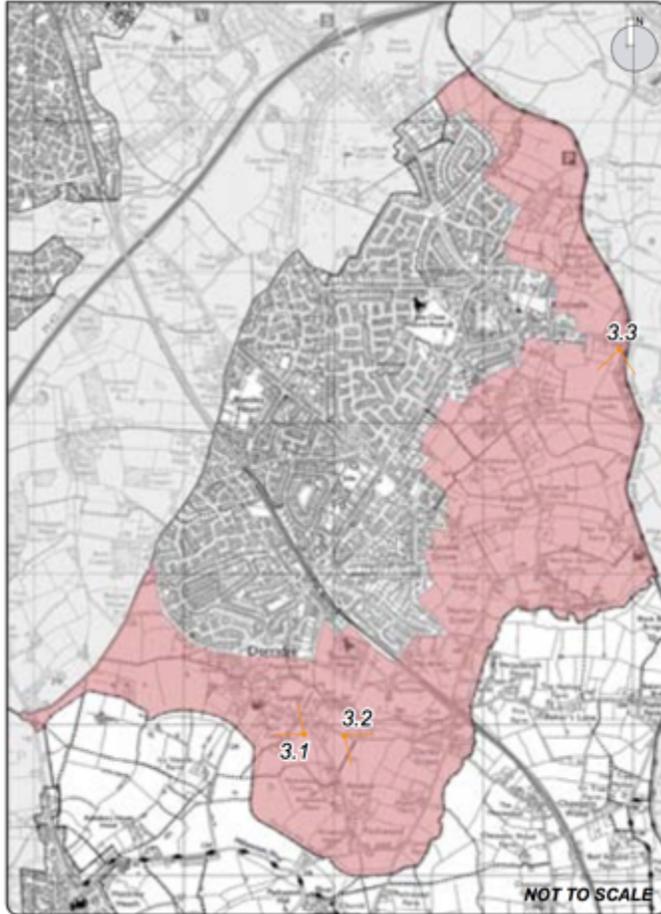
Landform and Drainage Pattern:

- *The land gently slopes from a high point of 130m AOD down to 110m AOD from west to east eventually falling towards the River Blythe in LCA 4.*
- *Purnell Brook, Cuttle Brook and Canal Feeder along with their associated springs form the main drainage pattern within the LCA. These waterways and watercourse are a valuable landscape asset to the area.”*

(Pg 26, Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited, December 2016)

The landscape character assessment makes clear the landscape sensitivity is medium and that the overall landscape value is medium. This results in an overall view that at present the natural landscape with key features identified has a low capacity to accommodate new development. This is a key factor that should be reflected in the policies of the neighbourhood plan.

Map of the Landscape Character Area 3



(Pg 26, Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited, December 2016)

Similarly to the National Landscape Character area profile the Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment also identifies key sensitivities and pressures on the natural environment. Within the neighbourhood area it identifies the following:

- *“Possible increase pressure for access to open countryside from edge of Knowle and Dorridge may impact upon the rural character of the area.*
- *Pressure for development close to the urban edge of Knowle and Dorridge. Further development is likely to result in encroachment into the rural area as evident at the edge of Knowle.*
- *Desire for new housing in this attractive commuter area close to Solihull and the M42 due to the easy access generates pressure along the motorway corridor. Limited capacity of the motorway corridor to accept development without impact upon character.*
- *Pressure for conversion of farm buildings into residences.*
- *Limited footpath network close to urban edge places walkers on narrow and dangerous roads.*
- *Overgrazing of land by horses gives the appearance of over use, degraded landscape and impacts upon biodiversity. Inappropriate fencing also impacts on rural character.*

- *The landscape to the south and around Cuttle Brook contains many scattered buildings and has limited capacity to accept additional built development without detriment to landscape character through coalescence.*
- *Neglect of old barns and vernacular buildings is impacting upon landscape character.”*

(Pg 27, Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited, December 2016)

These could be used as part of the evidence base to support the policies of the neighbourhood plan.

6.0 Next Steps



6.1 Issues to Be Addressed

The report makes recommendations in response to the following issues identified. These issues highlighted by Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum reflect the issues raised through community engagement. These are illustrated in the following SWOT analysis produced by the forum:

Strengths:

- Separation of the villages from Solihull and other settlements
- Village Feel
- Easy access to the open countryside
- Conservation Areas
- Low density housing
- Open space in the built area
- Green Streetscape
- Features such as low boundary walls/hedging
- Good schools
- Independent shops
- Quality of property
- Good transport links

Weaknesses:

- Lack of parking both on and off street
- Infrastructure not keeping pace with new developments
- Poor design of new developments (large and small) in relation to existing
- Lack of design for practical elements such as bin storage, parking, garages
- New developments not taking ground levels into account.
- Boundary treatments, particularly the edge to the open countryside.
- Lack of cycling provision

Opportunities:

- Reinforce the special character of the three villages.
- Deliver improved infrastructure (community, recreation and transportation)
- Deliver better quality schemes
- Schemes to be taken to Design Review.
- Build tenure blind developments.
- Retain hedgerows and boundary treatments and replicate in new development.
- Encourage retail uses
- Allocate development in places best for community.
- Deliver services and infrastructure for young people and the elderly.
- Address the need raised in the AECOM HNA particularly for dementia homes and starter homes.

Threats:

- Proposed scale of new development adversely affecting village character and infrastructure
- Erosion of separation of the villages from other settlements
- Loss of green belt and natural landscape
- Lack of delivery of infrastructure or poor timing
- Overdevelopment of both infill plots and large plots.
- Applying higher densities in new developments (upper figure is 55 DPH)
- Poor design of development

- Balance between land efficiency and green belt. How do we get the balance?
- Inappropriate traffic schemes/junction works eg traffic lights
- Existing rights of way/access to countryside being diverted and closed in by panel fences

Using the SWOT analysis produced by the forum we have categorised the issues, which will in turn inform the recommendations for policy as:

Safeguarding natural habitats and green spaces:

- Preservation of Hedgerows and Mature Trees,
- Concerns about the removal of Hedgerows and Mature Trees,
- Importance of open green space,
- Key views and vistas
- Local Green Spaces and possible new sites for designation

Types and design of residential dwellings:

- Unsympathetic New Build and Extensions,
- Sense of enclosure,
- Significance of boundary treatments

Preserving and enhancing the existing character:

- Sense of enclosure,
- Importance of open green space,
- Key views and vistas,
- Preserve the character of the 'Triangle' larger properties set in large established gardens,
- Local Green Spaces and possible new sites for designation,
- Maintain green buffer so it does not become a suburb, linking the three villages,
- Acknowledge the importance of separation between the three main villages and their offer.

Community services preserving and enhancing the existing character:

- Addressing the need for new and improved sport, recreation and leisure facilities for local people, particularly indoor leisure, sport and recreation
- The availability of facilities for the u 18's
- Providing facilities for sport, recreation and leisure for the elderly

6.2 Recommendations for Policy

Detailed design policies are required to promote good quality design for new developments. This should include:

- Develop design policies to ensure new development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area, by complementing the urban design and townscape characteristics of the area. For example, this includes providing enclosure and definition of streets and spaces, complementing existing townscape character.
- To promote good quality building design, comprising site-specific, bespoke design. Policy may make clear that this is about complementing townscape characteristics, but not about imitation. Indeed, the policy should encourage creative design solutions, reflecting that the character is based on changes over time.
- To ensure that any boundary treatments to all new development reflect those within the neighbourhood area, as identified as these are a key aspect of the character and distinctiveness of the area. Care will be required to avoid being over-prescriptive.
- To develop policies to protect the open countryside setting and the separation of the three defined villages to enhance and preserve their character and ensure they do not get absorbed into the urban sprawl.
- Protecting the character and appearance of the area by ensuring infill development is proportionate to the size and character of the plot. Particular sensitivity to reflecting the scale and massing of buildings in the immediate surroundings.
- To ensure that any new development on the edge of the built settlements includes a sensitive transition between the built environment and the open countryside or green belt to avoid the appearance of overdevelopment and maintain the rural character.
- Design policies could use the Design Council's *Building for Life 12* as a basis for their content. It is not good practice to state in policy that development should comply with external standards or guidance (such standards are prone to change and will not have gone through independent examination or referendum). But external standards may be used to influence policies of the neighbourhood plan. *Building for Life 12* may be downloaded from the Design Council's web site.
- The neighbourhood plan may make Local Green Space designations, based on the criteria contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. A Policy may then protect Local Green Spaces and ensure that their community value is maintained.
- A policy may be included to enable new community facilities and/or to protect existing community facilities, including registered community assets, such as the availability of facilities for under 18s and provision of sports and recreation facilities for the elderly.

- Develop policies to protect and enhance key natural environment characteristics with particular reference to the canal and the mature hedgerows and large mature trees, which define the natural landscape character.
- Develop a policy to enable use classes applicable to maintaining a village centre in the square at Dorridge to ensure that incremental change over time to residential in this particular location would be resisted.
- Include development briefs for strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan to ensure that they are developed sensitively and reflect key characteristics of the area. This includes road hierarchy and spacing, ensuring that developments are legible, maximise on opportunities to reinforce and create new linkage to the open countryside promoting healthy lifestyles and addressing topography and on street parking creatively to ensure spaces are usable and well designed (natural surveillance), also tenure blind developments.

7.0 List of Evidence and Sources

- Understanding Place: Character and Context in Local Planning, English Heritage, 2011, Revised June 2012
- Map of Rights of Way <http://www.rowmaps.com/>
- National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012
- National Character Area Profile: 97 Arden, Natural England, 2014
- Reviewing the Plan for Solihull's Future, Draft Local Plan, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, November 2016
- Solihull Local Plan, Shaping a Sustainable Future, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, December 2013
- Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, December 2016
- Solihull Borough Landscape Character Assessment, Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited, December 2016
- *Housing Density Mapping, Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum, 2017*
- <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=13&lat=52.3844&lon=-1.7520&layers=11&right=BingHyb>
- <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=14&lat=52.3725&lon=-1.7498&layers=1&right=BingHyb>
- <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Libraries/Local-family-history/localhistory/dorridgehistory>
- http://www.aboutb93.net/History/history_bh1.htm
- <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Libraries/Local-family-history/localhistory/knowlehistory>
- <http://www.grandunioncanal.co.uk/Grand-Union-Canal-D.html>
- Knowle Conservation Area Appraisal, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council September 2007
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True>

Appendix A: Schedule of Heritage Assets

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True>

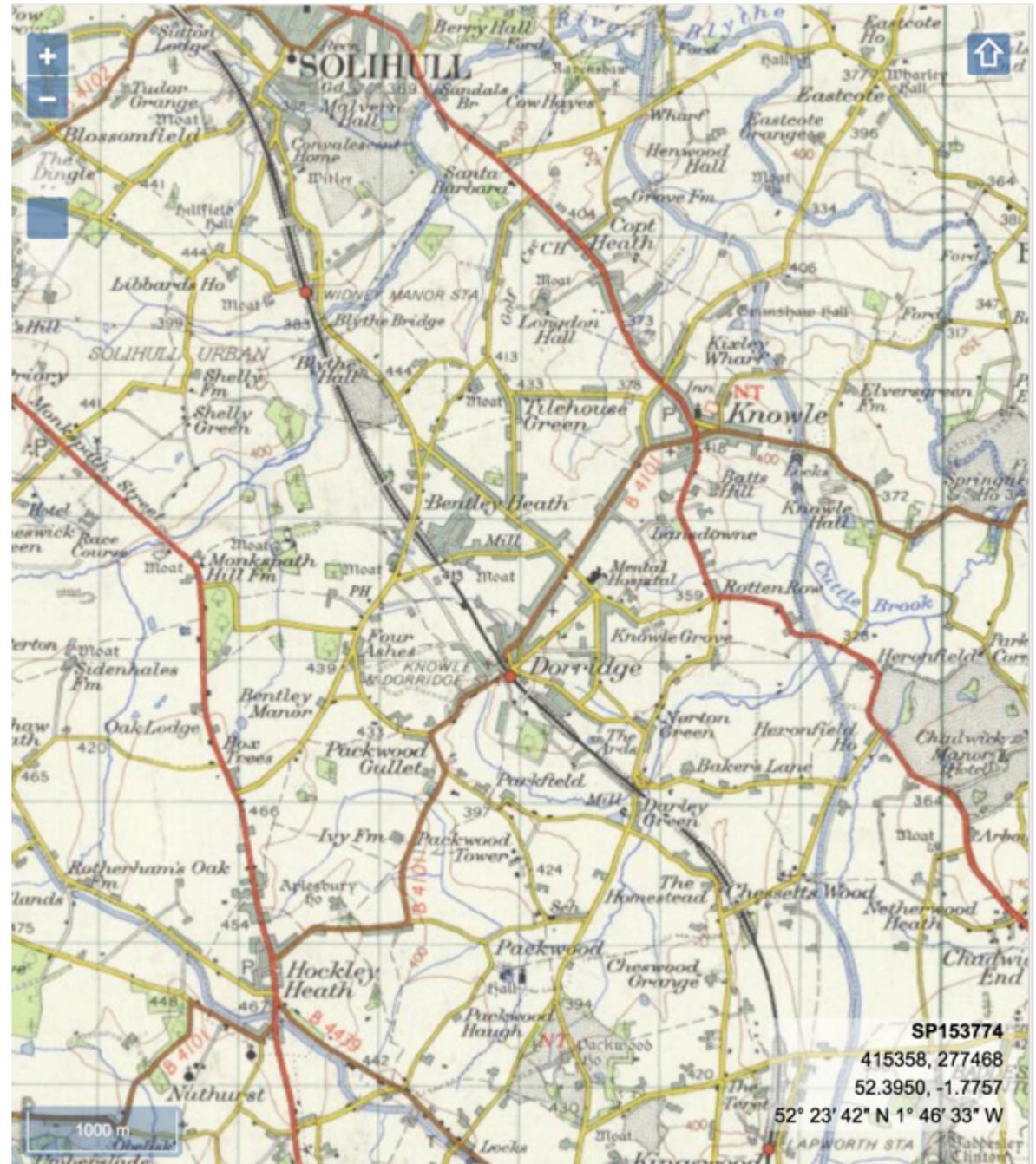
<p>GROVE FARMHOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076722</p>	<p>CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, SAINT LAWRENCE AND SAINT ANNE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:I List Entry Number:1203309</p>	<p>1681, 1683 AND 1683A, WARWICK ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076703</p>	<p>80, KENILWORTH ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342888</p>	<p>86-90, KENILWORTH ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342849</p>
<p>STOWE HOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203594</p>	<p>1678 AND 1680, WARWICK ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076706</p>	<p>ELM TREE FARMHOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203451</p>	<p>ARTILLERY COTTAGE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203454</p>	<p>GOLDEN END</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076723</p>
<p>NORTON GREEN FARMHOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1281748</p>	<p>YEW TREE COTTAGE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076700</p>	<p>2-10, WILSONS ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203627</p>	<p>THE OLDE HOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203385</p>	<p>BARN ON NORTH EAST SIDE OF GROVE ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076712</p>
<p>THE RED LION PUBLIC HOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1281626</p>	<p>THE MANOR HOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076725</p>	<p>BARN OPPOSITE NUMBERS 92 AND 94 GRANGE ROAD, DORRIDGE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342885</p>	<p>DARLEY MILL HOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1376646</p>	<p>1619, WARWICK ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076701</p>
<p>MILVERTON HOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342879</p>	<p>1587, WARWICK ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342876</p>	<p>THE WILSONS ARMS PUBLIC HOUSE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203457</p>	<p>GRANGE COTTAGE</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203297</p>	<p>1682 AND 1684, WARWICK ROAD</p> <p>Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076707</p>

1721-1727, HIGH STREET Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342883	FOUR ASHES Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076710	THE GUILD HOUSE Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II* List Entry Number:1281619	1637, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1281678	LILAC COTTAGE Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076711
OUTBUILDING TO NUMBER 1635 Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342877	1624-1628, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342880	1622, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203590	CHESTER HOUSE Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II* List Entry Number:1076702	ROTTON ROW FARMHOUSE Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342881
94, KENILWORTH ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203328	COPT HEATH FARMHOUSE Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076726	DARLEY MILL Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342863	84, KENILWORTH ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203323	1709, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342878
1671, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203466	GRIMSHAW HALL Heritage Category:Listing Grade:I List Entry Number:1076714	82, KENILWORTH ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076724	1608, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076705	74-78, KENILWORTH ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1281734
1711 AND 1713, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1076704	LONGDON HALL Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203335	MILL POOL COTTAGE Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1342850	1699 AND 1701, WARWICK ROAD Heritage Category:Listing Grade:II List Entry Number:1203476	Tilehouse Green moated site Heritage Category:Scheduling Grade:Not Applicable to this List Entry List Entry Number:1017525

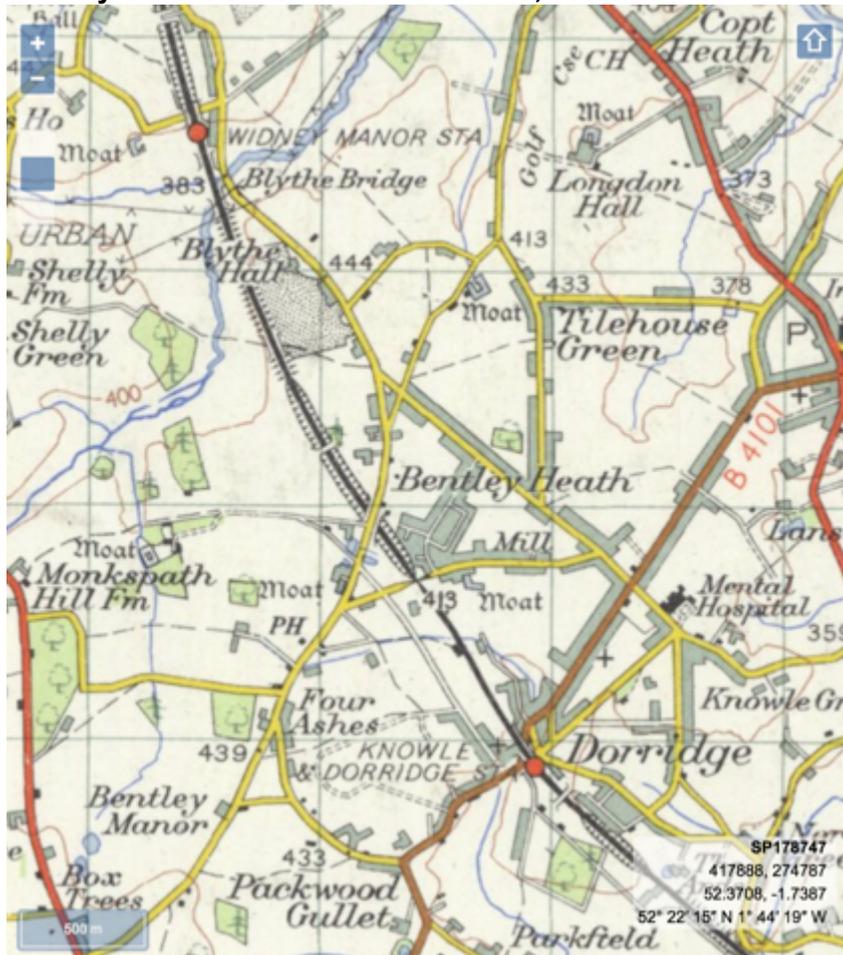
Appendix B: Historical Maps

Neighbourhood Area: OS One Inch 7th Series, 19-55-61

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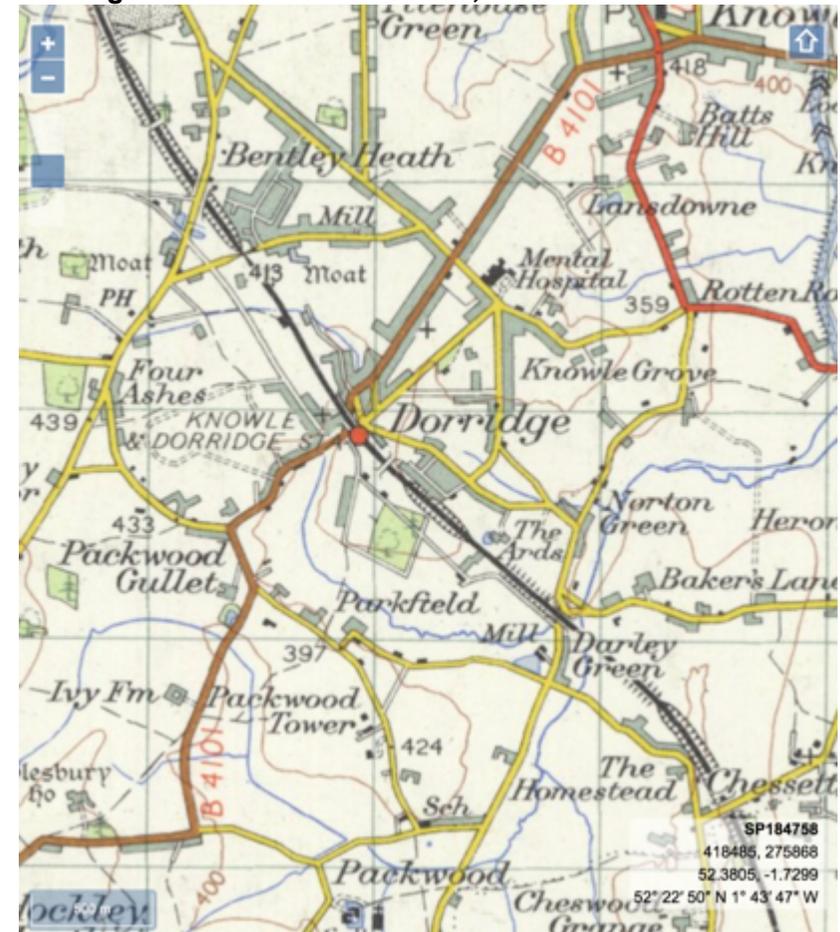


Bentley Heath: OS One Inch 7th Series, 19-55-61



<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=13&lat=52.3844&lon=-1.7520&layers=11&right=BingHyb>

Dorridge: OS One Inch 7th Series, 19-55-61



<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=13&lat=52.3844&lon=-1.7520&layers=11&right=BingHyb>

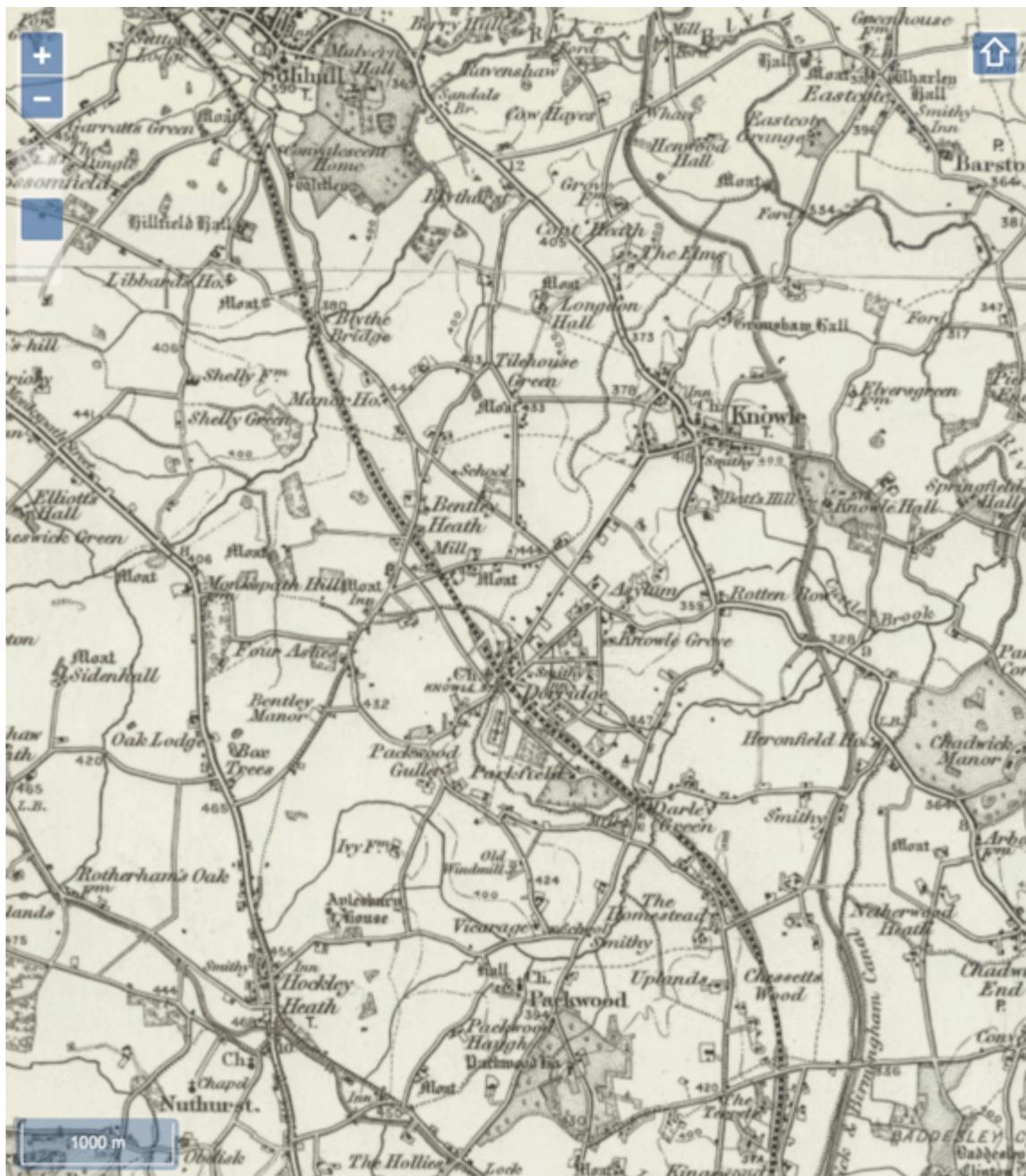
Knowle: OS One Inch 7th Series, 19-55-61



<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=13&lat=52.3844&lon=-1.7520&layers=11&right=BingHyb>

Neighbourhood Area: OS One Inch,
1855-1900- Outline

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=13&lat=52.3844&lon=-1.7520&layers=1&right=BingHyb>

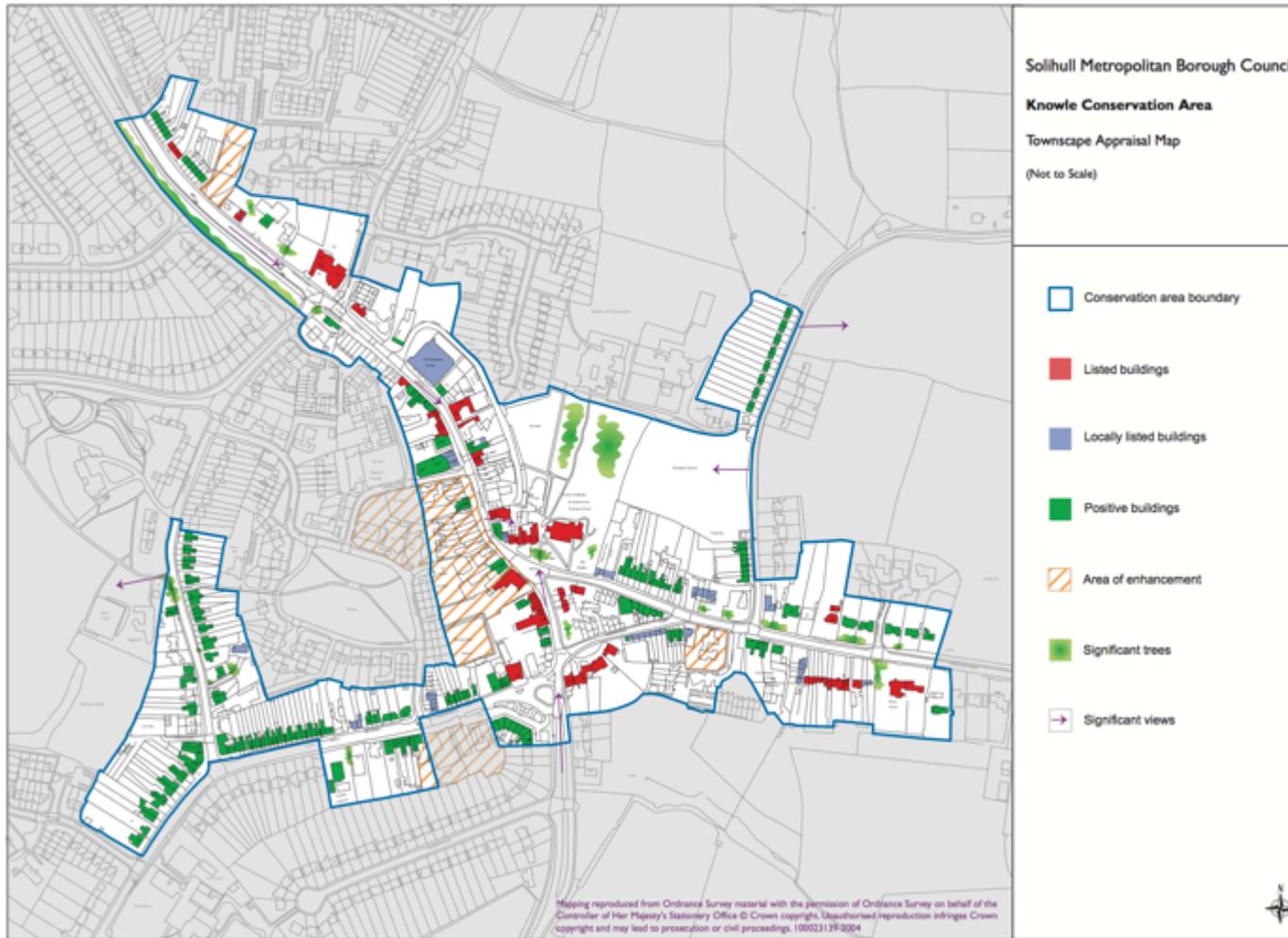


Appendix C: Maps of Conservation Areas

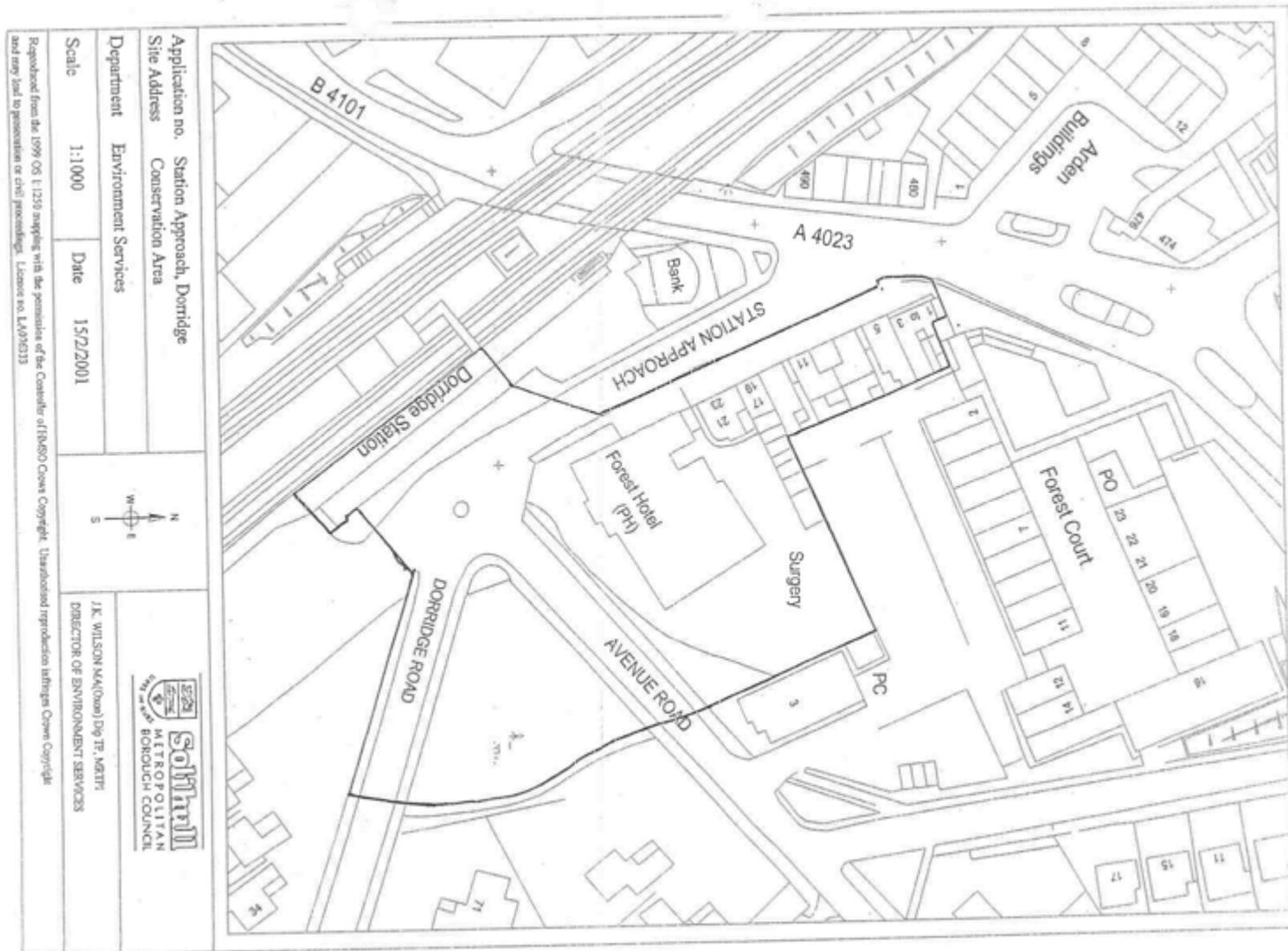
Granville Road Conservation Area Map:



Knowle Conservation Area Map:



Station Approach Conservation Area Map:



Application no.	Station Approach, Dorridge
Site Address	Conservation Area
Department	Environment Services
Scale	1:1000
Date	15/2/2001

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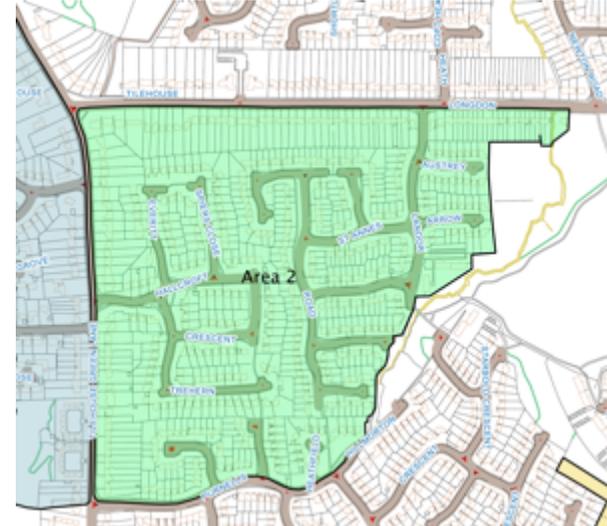
J.K. WILSON M.A.(Oxon) Dip. Tr. Mgmt.
DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT SERVICES

Appendix D: Detailed Maps of Housing Density Maps

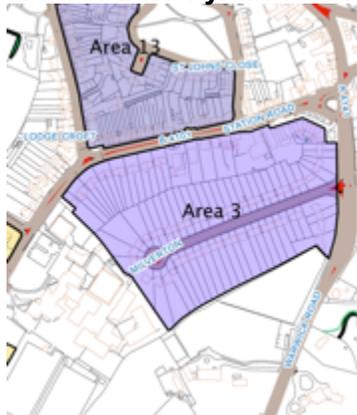
Area 1: Density/ ha 12.14



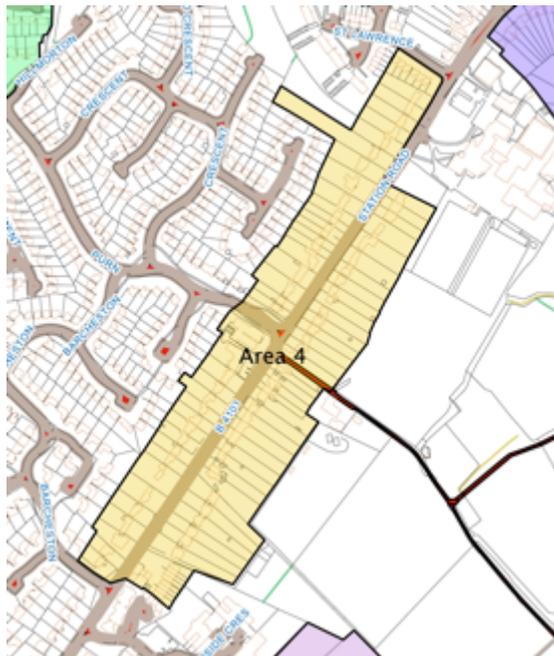
Area 2: Density/ ha 19.45



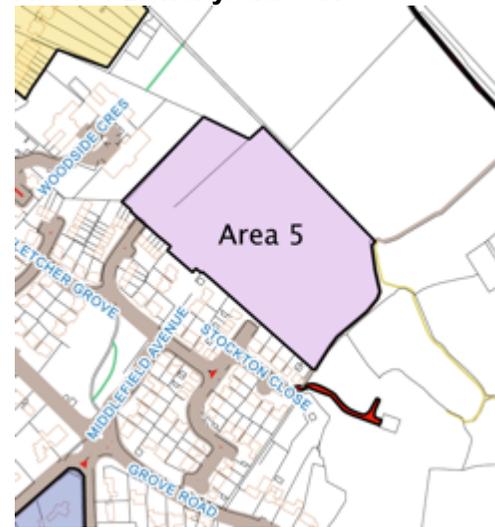
Area 3: Density/ ha 16.34



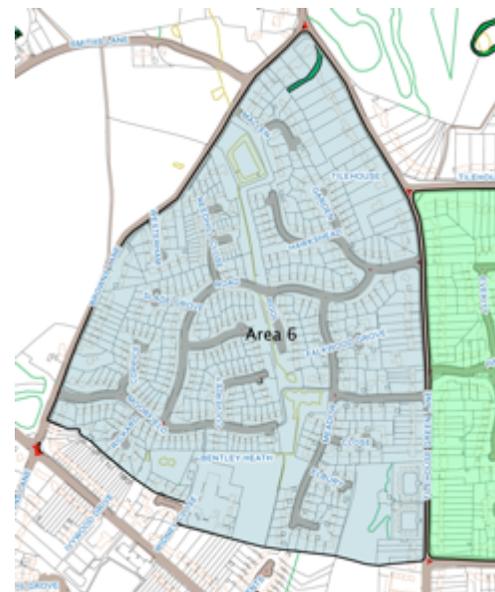
Area 4: Density/ ha 10.42



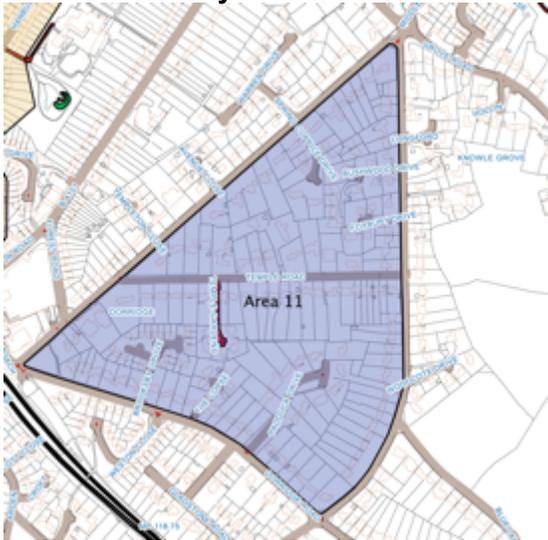
Area 5: Density/ ha 38.46



Area 6: Density/ ha 15.18



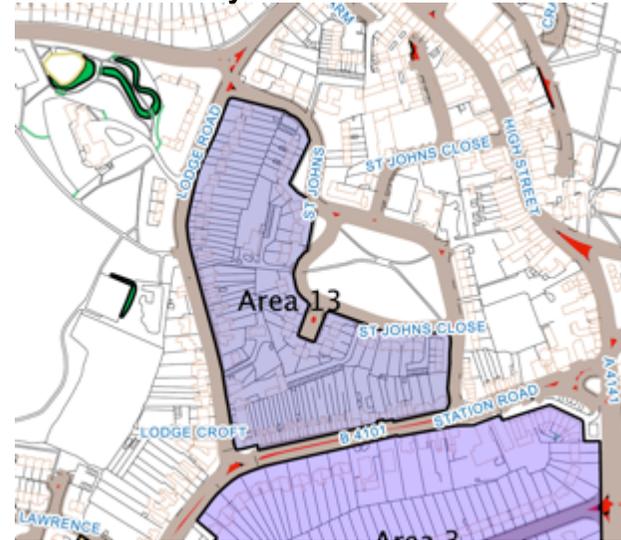
Area 11: Density/ ha 8.17



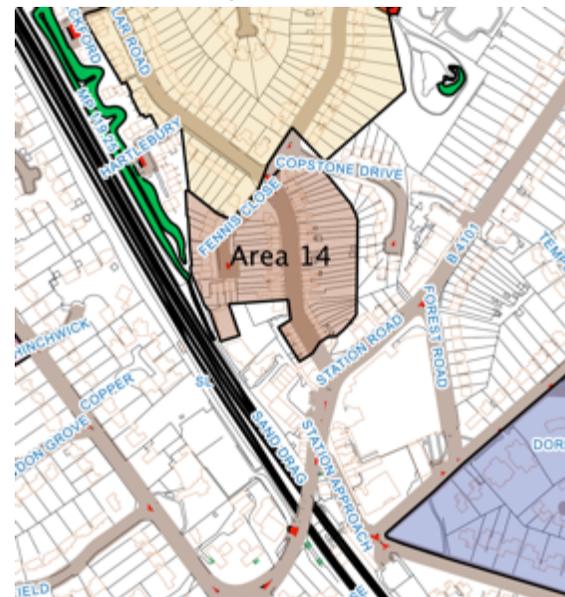
Area 12: Density/ ha 24.24



Area 13: Density/ ha 38.20



Area 14: Density/ ha 38.20





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