

Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan

Strategic Land Availability Assessment

Report of Findings (March 2013)

Appendix 1e: South East Bristol

Green Belt



# Land in the Green Belt at South East Bristol

## Policy Background

- The Draft RSS for the South West required an urban extension of 6,000 homes to the SE of Bristol within an area of search that included the environs of Whitchurch/A37, Stockwood Vale and Hicks Gate/A4. The EiP Panel's Report endorsed this level of development, but the SoS's Proposed Modifications increased the requirement to 9,500 homes (comprising 8,000 within BANES and 1,500 within Bristol).
- Policy BCS5 of the Bristol Core Strategy (adopted June 2011) identifies land in in the Green Belt at South East Bristol at Hicks gate as a contingency for the development of new homes. The contingency will come into play if monitoring shows that planned provision will not be delivered at the levels expected, or if land is required to accommodate higher levels of provision. The capacity of the contingency area is unlikely to exceed 800 homes, if existing uses are retained (BCS 4.5.15).

## Overview of Land Availability and Achievability

- Throughout the preparation of the SW RSS and BANES Core Strategy a number of areas have been promoted by landowners and developers within the former RSS area of search.
- At Whitchurch/A37 key promoters include Taylor Wimpey, Bovis, Robert Hitchins Ltd and Horse World. Barton Willmore (on behalf of Taylor Wimpey/Bovis) submitted a concept master plan for a Whitchurch Development Area in response to the Draft Core Strategy. The master plan considers that the area is capable of delivering a mixed use urban extension of about 3,500 homes.
- At Hicks Gate/A4 Crest Strategic Projects and Key properties are promoting an area of nearly 100ha for development on land that straddles the Bristol/BANES boundary. On behalf of both parties RPS submitted a concept masterplan for the area in response to the Draft Core Strategy.
- The concept plan offers a development of 94.3ha to include 27.0 ha of housing (1500 homes), 11.6 ha of employment land, a 2.0ha primary school site, two local centres of 1.0 ha, land for leisure development of 1.5ha, land for a park and ride extension of 1.5ha, additional formal open space of 6.0ha, allotments of 2.2ha, informal open space of 29.5ha and existing uses within the development area taking up 11.0ha.
- Broadly speaking, the employment land is identified within Bristol and the housing land within BANES. If development was to take place in this area the extent and location of any employment land would require further consideration by all parties.

- Given that Bristol CC identify that land at Hicks Gate (within Bristol) has the potential for 800 homes there is some further analysis required to determine the optimum apportionment of uses across the area – should it be required for development.
- Stockwood Vale Golf Club has also put forward its landholdings for consideration. Being disassociated from the urban fringe and the other identified areas, this land has not been assessed re suitability in the SLAA.

## Overview of Suitability

- Much of the land around Whitchurch and at Hicks Gate is suitable for development.
- Stockwood Golf Club is not suitable for development.
- There are a number of environmental constraints the mean that careful master planning is needed in order to mitigate the impact of development.
- In the Whitchurch area, the absence of any planned investment in the highways network currently limits the developable supply of land for housing.

## Sub-Divisions

- In order manage the assessment of this large area it has been divided into parcels
  - Land to the south of Whitchurch and to the west of the A37 (SEB 1a and 1b)
  - Land to the east of the A37 and Sleep Lane (SEB 1c and 1d)
  - Land between Whitchurch and Stockwood SEB 1e)

## Housing Potential

- The Whitchurch Development Concept Options Report (Arup, Feb 2013) and Barton Wilmore indicate that this area could accommodate an urban extension focused around the provision of about 3,500 homes. The deliverable potential in respect of what can be achieved without significant highways investment is about 600.

## Land Availability

- The accompanying plan shows a large development area being proposed by Taylor Wimpey (via Barton Willmore). A very high percentage of the land within this area is available for development and some of this is currently being actively promoted by other parties. The yellow shaded areas show individual land parcels of ownership and control identified during the SLAA process.

## Landscape and Visual Aspects

### Land to the south of Whitchurch and to the west of the A37 (SEB 1a and 1b)

#### **Summary**

- *The overall landscape and visual impact of development in SEB 1a would be moderate with reasonable potential for the mitigation of effects given a strong planning lead. However, the loss of the open rural setting of Whitchurch village and the setting of the Lyons Court Farm would be difficult to mitigate effectively. The setting of the part of the village is an important master planning issue.*
- *The overall landscape and visual impacts in area SEB 1b would be high without the possibility of effective mitigation.*

### **Existing Conditions**

- This area forms part of the Dundry Plateau landscape character area. It is viewed from and forms part of the setting to the Dundry Hills and especially the Maes Knoll hill fort.
- The small to medium sized pasture fields immediately south Whitchurch village (SEB 1a) are bounded by hedgerows. The land slopes down gently to the north. The parish boundary is marked by a hedgerow with trees in part. The long-disused line of the Bristol and North Somerset Railway cuts through the area SW to NE marked by scrub with a copse at the northern end. In the north of the area are the Grade II\* listed Lyons Court Farm and Church Farm. The area is contained to the north west by the urban edge of Bristol, and by Whitchurch village to the north east. The A37 runs along the eastern boundary of the area.
- To the south and south west is open countryside, dominated by Maes Knoll and the end of the Dundry ridge to the south west.
- Area SEB 1b is similar to SEB 1a, and adjoins it to the south. As SEB 1b extends further south it relates less well to the city and in some views appear to encroach on the Chew Valley Character Area. SEB 1b is clearly seen as part of the landscape setting for Maes Knoll when seen from the hill fort and the site itself.
- SEB 1a and 1b are viewed from Maes Knoll, from the A37 and Norton Lane, from internal footpaths, and from the northern urban edge. Views from the urban edge are limited to views from houses along the boundary. There are many footpaths through the site and it is difficult to know how well used they are, although the proximity to the urban edge suggest that there is likely to be a high level of use.
- Views from Maes Knoll are extensive and important given the historical importance of the fort and its popularity for walkers. Currently there is a clearly defined edge to the city to the north, north west and north east with a distinctive rural setting to the hill laid out below and extending into the distance to the east and south. The northern part of area SEB 1 is visually contained by the encroaching city. Views from the A37 and Norton Lane are generally limited by hedgerows and landform.

### **Landscape and visual impacts**

#### SEB 1a

- Development in this area would result in the loss of the distinct form of the historic village settlement of Whitchurch and its immediate landscape setting and would result in the loss of the countryside setting of the Grade II\* Lyons Court Farm. Both would become subsumed into the more recently developed extensions of Whitchurch. Sensitive development in this area may not impact significantly on the setting to Maes Knoll. The southernmost part of this area is more

remote from the city edge and depending on the form and location of the development could have a high landscape impact in part.

- Viewed from Maes Knoll development would result in the loss of the distinctively separate appearance of the historic Whitchurch village, a reduction in the current open landscape context to Maes Knoll and loss of the rural setting to the Grade II\* Lyons Court Farm. From the A37 there would be little visual impact except for the southern part where development would be clearly visible. From Norton Lane and internal footpaths the visual impact would inevitably be high.

#### SEB 1b

- Development would encroach into the landscape setting of Maes Knoll and the southern part would be on a skyline affecting the character of the Chew Valley. Any development in this area would have a major impact on the character of Maes Knoll.
- From Maes Knoll development would encroach visually up to the base of the hill and the open landscape setting would be lost completely. There would be a significant possibility that development in the southern part of the area would appear on the existing rural skyline seen from the Chew Valley

### **Scope for mitigation**

#### SEB 1a

- Retention of the old railway line and copse of trees is important as is retention of the main hedgerow with trees which in part follows the parish boundary. Boundaries facing onto countryside would need to be maintained as hedgerows with additional buffer planting to protect the setting to Maes Knoll. It would not be possible to mitigate for the loss of the rural setting of Whitchurch village.

#### SEB 1b

- It would not be possible to mitigate effectively for any of the impacts of development.

### **Land to the east of the A37 and Sleep Lane (SEB 1c and 1d)**

#### ***Summary***

- *For SEB 1c the overall landscape and visual impact of development would be moderate with the potential for effective mitigation given a strong planning lead. For SEB 1d the overall landscape and visual impact of development here would be high with no possibility of effective mitigation.*

### **Existing Conditions**

- SEB 1c and SEB 1b both lie within the Dundry Plateau Character Area. Although at a much lower level than Dundry Hills this area is still plateau land forming a broad ridge north of the Chew Valley with several narrow tributary valleys cutting into it. Land use is mainly pasture and silage grass fields bounded by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees and some tree belts. There are scattered properties close to Whitchurch village and individual and small groups of properties along the lanes and the A37 passing through the area. Most of these date to the 1950s and '60s. Two lanes and the A37 form fan-like ribs through the area joining at Whitchurch. This is an enclosed area except to the north of the northern-most lane where there are extensive views northwards over to the Cotswolds, Wick, Hanham and Keynsham. To the south and south east in Area 4e there is an important skyline marking the border between the Dundry Plateau and Chew Valley Character Areas.
- There are views to the area from Maes Knoll, from Hanham Hills to the north, from the lanes and the A37 and from the various properties and the edge of Whitchurch. The views from Maes Knoll are medium to distant views currently over rural plateau landscape stretching away to the north and east. Those from Hanham Hills are distant views to the skyline. Views from the various roads and properties are limited by vegetation and landform.

### **Landscape and visual impacts**

#### SEB 1c and 1d

- Development in both areas would result in the loss of the rural character over an extensive area of countryside, particularly to the south of Queen Charlton Lane.

#### SEB 1c

- Although at some distance from Maes Knoll the view would be radically altered given the large extent of the development and the proportion of the attractive rural view which would become urban. This is a negative effect on this view. Views from Hanham are distant and development would be read in a similar way to that at Stockwood. Rural views from the lanes which cross the area would be lost and would become urban in character. Existing properties would lose their rural outlook.

#### SEB 1d

- This area is on the skyline and development would impinge visually into the Chew Valley. It would be beneficial to maintain some of the open plateau as countryside around Bristol to both contain it visually and to provide an important sense of space around the city. Development would have a high impact on this important setting.

### **Scope for mitigation**

#### SEB 1c



- Careful use of planting, location of new open space and retention of strategic hedgerows both internally, along the A37 and all countryside boundaries could be effective in setting such a large development acceptably into the landscape. The southern part projects into open countryside and therefore particularly sensitive development would be required which would generally exclude bulky residential and commercial units.

#### SEB1d

- Given the distance out into the countryside, the skyline nature of the landform and the need to retain open plateau setting to the City, it is not possible to effectively mitigate development.

### **Land between Whitchurch and Stockwood (SEB 1e)**

#### ***Summary***

- *The overall landscape and visual impact of development would be moderate to high with only limited potential for mitigation.*

#### **Existing Conditions**

- This area lies within the Dundry Plateau Character Area and comprises a few pasture fields in poor condition, some scrubby areas used as open space, playing fields and grazing. Hedgerows are mostly in poor condition with dead elm particularly on the west of the Stockwood Road which bisects the area. It is surrounded by development except by a relatively short distance on the eastern side. The area forms a green link which extends into Bristol between Hengrove and Stockwood and provides an important visual and landscape separation between Stockwood and the old village of Whitchurch. For Whitchurch in particular this landscape setting is important to reinforce a sense of place and identity.
- There are local views into the site from surrounding properties, from Stockwood Lane and from the numerous paths and open access areas within. There is also an important view from Maes Knoll where the open area supports the identity of Whitchurch village as a distinct settlement.

#### **Landscape and visual impact**

- Although the landscape elements are not of high quality in themselves the key value of this area is as an open green partition between Stockwood and the old village of Whitchurch. This helps to maintain the identity and integrity of Whitchurch and as a green link between open countryside and a tongue of green which extends into Bristol. Development would merge the two settlements to the detriment of the distinct village of Whitchurch and would close this green link. There would also be loss of recreational land.
- The visual effects of development are similar to the effects on landscape character. From Maes Knoll there would no longer be separation between Whitchurch and Stockwood and the two settlements would read as one. From properties and from recreational areas and Stockwood Lane

the visual impact would be high even taking into account the partially degraded nature of some of the open area at present. However the area is almost surrounded by development and there is a visual argument for infill here in preference to further intrusion into the countryside.

### **Scope for mitigation**

- The size of the area would make it difficult to provide mitigation which would maintain the visual separation and sense of place whilst still allow an economical scale of development. However the provision of high quality open space and a good path network here could be designed to allow the settlements to be “read” as separate communities with their own identity

## **Historic Environment**

### **South of Whitchurch**

#### **Existing Conditions**

- To the south of this extensive area lie Maes Knoll Iron Age hill fort and the Wansdyke Post-Roman linear earthwork (Scheduled Ancient Monuments).The area therefore forms part of the setting to these assets.
- Queen Charlton Conservation Area lies to the east of the area.
- The area contains three Listed Buildings – 15th century Lyons Court Farmhouse (Grade II\*), Whitewood Farmhouse and a Milestone on Queen Charlton Lane (both Grade II).
- Within Whitchurch there are a further seven Listed Buildings including the medieval St Nicholas Church (Grade II\*), which sits on the area boundary.
- There is evidence of Roman occupation at Lyons Court Farm and Newlands, along with medieval ridge and furrow at Hursley Hill.
- Around the medieval settlement of Whitchurch are a series of radiating enclosed fields of medieval or earlier date.
- The former line of the North Somerset Railway runs north-south through the area.

#### **Impacts**

- Development of the area could potentially have a very damaging effect on any buried archaeological remains, including the two known Roman settlements and the medieval field systems around Whitchurch. There are serious concerns about the visibility of development and its impact on wider setting of Maes Knoll and the Wansdyke (Scheduled Ancient Monuments),Lyons Court Farm and St Nicholas Church (Grade II\* Listed) and the rural setting of Queen Charlton Conservation Area.

#### **Mitigation**

- Whilst there is the potential to preserve some archaeological sites within open spaces, this requires detailed knowledge of their actual location. It may also be possible to protect the field

systems on the southern side of Whitchurch along with the settings of the medieval church and Lyons Court Farm. Likewise it may be possible to limit any impact on the setting of Queen Charlton Conservation Area to the east. However, it is difficult to see how development could not impact on setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments. From the summit of Maes Knoll there are clear views of the entire appraisal area, including most of the historic landscape features discussed above – a landscape and monuments spanning almost three millennia.

## **North of Whitchurch**

### **Existing Conditions**

- On the southern boundary the Sites and Monuments Record holds two records for Manor Farmhouse and Barns.
- The area is comparatively poor in the numbers of items of historic environment interest which suggests that there has been little fieldwork in the area.
- The former line of the North Somerset Railway forms the western boundary of the appraisal area.

### **Impacts**

- Development of the area could potentially have a very damaging effect on any buried archaeological remains, There are concerns that due regard is given to the village setting of the Listed Buildings in Whitchurch.

### **Mitigation**

- Whilst there is the potential to preserve archaeological sites within open spaces, this requires detailed knowledge of their actual location.

## **Nature Conservation**

### **Existing Conditions**

- Notable species are recorded within the development area, including Skylark and Brown Hare. These are UK BAP species of Principal Importance, and Local BAP species. (Skylark is classified by RSPB as a Red species - the highest conservation priority, with species needing urgent action).
- The area is associated with species-rich hedgerows These are UK BAP habitats of Principal Importance and local BAP habitats.
- The area includes fields classified as semi-improved neutral grassland. These are of potential value but further studies are required.
- The development area includes a small section of Charlton Brook SNCI, and Stockwood Open Space SNCI, which is primarily in the Bristol area.
- The area lies in close proximity to a Strategic Nature Area.

### **Impacts**

- At the very least the development would result in the loss of hedgerow (habitat of principal importance) and grassland habitats, with impacts to recorded Brown Hare and Skylark sites (species of principal importance). The development could also result in the damage and disturbance to the Charlton Brook and Stockwood Open Space SNCI.

#### **Mitigation**

- Where possible all species-rich hedgerows should be protected and retained through open space provision. However, it is unlikely that this approach could achieve full mitigation. Hedgerow translocation and offsite habitat enhancements would therefore be required. The direct loss of habitat used by brown hare and skylark cannot be mitigated. The impacts could be compensated for by habitats improvements and or creation elsewhere, however this approach is largely untested.

## Transport & Highways

### Green Belt

## Housing Potential

- The Hicks Gate Development Concept Options Report (Arup, Feb 2013) identifies that area could develop up to 1,200 on suitable land within BANES.

## Land Availability

- The majority of this area is being promoted by area promoted by Crest Strategic and Key Properties. To the east of the Hicks Gate roundabout other parties have signalled the availability of a few small fields

## Landscape and Visual Aspects

### **North of the A4 (SEB 2a)**

#### **Summary**

- *The landscape and visual impact would be high. Mitigation would be ineffective unless development was very low density in a well treed parkland setting. It would not be possible to mitigate for the loss of the character of the open landform.*

#### **Existing Conditions**

- This is an interesting rural landscape with an attractive, small scale, complex and varied landform which is undulating especially in the eastern half of the site where a stream winds through the landscape. The land rises gently towards the north eastern part of the site. It is divided into a number of small to medium fields bounded by hedgerows with some walling. There are some significant trees principally along the western boundaries of the site, the northern boundary (railway cutting) and along the stream with some young trees and shrubs forming dense scrub along part of the A4 boundary.
- A significant electricity power line runs parallel to the railway line in the northern part of the site. The A4 bounds the site to the south and the A4174 ring road bounds the site to the east. Immediately to the west of the area (within Bristol CC) , are three properties in large well treed grounds – St Brendan’s 6th Form College, Long Fox Manor, and a smaller private house / farm. These form a distinctive, well ‘treed’ landscape break with the urban edge of Bristol and separate the Hicks Gate North site completely from the City such that it relates more strongly to the rural landscape to the east and south.

- The site is viewed from the Hanham Hills to the north which is criss-crossed by well used public rights of way (PROWs); from Hicks Gate Ridge (Stockwood Lane Golf Course Road) to the south; from the A4 immediately to the south and from paths within the site.
- From the Hanham Hills the site is very prominent in the extensive southerly views. It has no visual relationship with Bristol except for a small area at the western end of the site where the power line prevents development. The site area forms part of the important separation between Bristol and Keynsham and this countryside wedge is seen very clearly from this viewpoint.
- From Hicks Gate ridge the site is prominent in the middle distance and currently forms part of a rural attractive wide sweeping valley landscape set out below the ridge and marred only by the ring road.
- From the A4 where there are significant rush hour periods with very slow moving or stationary traffic with clear views into the site, currently the landscape is rural and the view is dominated by the interesting and attractive undulating landform. There is no visual link with the Bristol conurbation from Hicks Gate ridge or the A4.

#### **Landscape and visual impact**

- Development would involve loss of the rural character and loss of the distinctive and attractive small scale undulating landform. Development would be isolated from the edge of Bristol due to the intervening college and Long Fox Manor flats in their spacious, well 'treed' grounds and would also break up the rural separation between Bristol and Keynsham.
- From all areas the effect of development is the loss of attractive rural views and, especially when seen both from the higher land to the north and from the Hicks Gate ridge affecting the whole of the much more extensive rural view, thus reducing the separation effect of the green belt between Bristol and Keynsham. The site is sufficiently far from the developed edge of Bristol as to bear no visual relation to it.

#### **Mitigation**

- Development would result in the loss of the attractive open landform which could not be effectively mitigated. Likewise it would not be possible to effectively mitigate the impact on wider views, of which this area is a component part, unless development was very low density and landscape planting was very extensive.

#### **South of the A4 (area SEB 2b-d)**

##### ***Summary***

- *SEB 2b: The landscape and visual impacts would be low to moderate. Mitigation would potentially be very effective.*

- *SEB 2c and 2d: The landscape and visual impacts would be high. Effective mitigation would be difficult because of the prominence of the area and because of the landform.*

### **Existing Conditions**

- The site comprises low lying rural land at the bottom of the Hicks Gate ridge and the curving slopes of the ridge itself. Land use is principally permanent pasture with small to medium fields and many good hedgerows. Hicks Gate Farm is just off the A4 at the eastern end of the site and a garden centre lies adjacent to the A4 within the Bristol area. There are a number of tree belts, small copses, areas of scrub, and hedgerow trees especially towards the western end of the site within the Bristol area. There is an intermittent but effective tree line along the A4 boundary. Stockwood Lane runs along part of the south western boundary of the site.
- The site is viewed in part from Hicks Gate Ridge; from Stockwood Lane; from the A4 and from Hanham Hills, Mount Pleasant and Conham Park all to the north.
- From Hicks Gate ridge the site is largely out of view but from Hanham Hills etc to the south there are clear views over the area. The eastern end of the site reads as open countryside with Hicks Gate Farm well connected to the countryside to the east and the south. Further to the west the higher ground is visible outside the area and the lower slopes and flatter land behind the garden centre within the Bristol area are well screened by trees both along the A4 and within the site and by the nature of the landform itself.
- From the A4 there are frequent glimpses into the area through the intermittent tree screen. Because part of the site is at a lower level than the road, when combined with the roadside tree screen it is not prominent in the view and is well contained visually by the backdrop of the ridge. Towards the eastern end the site is much more prominent in views from the road.
- From Stockwood Lane good hedges on the lane side screen the site which is largely set down in a valley. Glimpses are to a verdant rural landscape with good hedgerows and clumps of trees possibly surrounding ponds in places.

### **Landscape and visual impacts**

- Development would involve the loss of the rural character and probably also the verdant hedgerows and tree clumps. Due to the site extending up to the current built edge of Bristol albeit the Park and Ride site, there is a limited connection with the city.
- The eastern end and the Hick's Gate Ridge are the visually most prominent part of the site and the most visually integrated with the rural countryside around it. The rest of the site is remarkably well contained visually and provided that the A4 tree screen was maintained in one form or another, development could be accommodated without too much visual impact.

## **Mitigation**

- There are some good hedges and tree clumps in the western part of the site, at least some of these should be retained to form green links through the site. Other mitigation measures are likely to include maintaining and adding to the trees along the A4 and planting a tree belt along the southern boundary up the ridge slope to help prevent any skyline effects of development.

## Historic Environment

### **Existing Conditions**

- Three Grade II Listed Buildings lie on the western boundary of the appraisal area – St Kenya House, St Kenya House Gates and Stockwood Farm.
- Fox's Wood (Registered Historic Park and Garden) lies within the north-east corner of the appraisal area, adjacent to the railway.
- Within the appraisal area there is evidence of a possible Neolithic henge at Durley Hill, as well as numerous Prehistoric, Roman and medieval findspots and post-medieval boundary markers.

### **Impacts**

- Development of the area could potentially have a very damaging effect on any buried archaeological remains, including the known Prehistoric and Roman occupation in the area, in particular the possible henge monument at Durley Hill. There are also concerns about the high quality landscape along the Avon Valley and the impact on the setting of Fox's Wood (Registered Historic Park & Garden), and that due regard is given to the setting of the Listed Buildings at Stockwood.

### **Mitigation**

- Whilst there is the potential to preserve archaeological sites within open spaces, this requires detailed knowledge of their actual location. The settings of the Foxes Wood and the Listed Buildings could be protected within the development by careful planning around these sites.

### **Summary**

- Any proposed mitigation will require knowledge of the exact location, extent, date and significance of past settlements/activity. This will require fieldwork to examine the area such as trial trenching and/or geophysical survey. More detailed desk-based assessment will also be needed to address the wider impact on the historic environment, in particular the impact on the setting of Historic Park & Garden and Listed Buildings.

## Nature Conservation

### **Existing Conditions**



- The northern boundary of this area is immediately adjacent to a site of nature conservation importance (SNCI).
- No records of UK or Local BAP species are recorded for the development area (but little information held).
- The hedgerows within the south west of the area maybe important, but have not been surveyed.
- Working information from BCC indicates no statutory designations within the area of search, but does flag up a local plan designation – a local wildlife network over much of the BCC land. ("Wildlife Network" has local plan policy as follows: NE6 (I) The city's wildlife network will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. (II) Development on wildlife network sites, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted unless:
  - (i) An open corridor is retained which maintains an effective link in the network;
  - (ii) An open buffer zone which gives effective added protection to any adjoining site of nature conservation interest is retained;
  - (iii) Habitats or features of identified importance to wildlife are retained and protected from any significant adverse effect;
  - (iv) The site is shown not to serve or support any substantive wildlife interest, including the necessary function of the wildlife network, as a result of further detailed site assessment;
  - (III) Development which maintains the integrity of the wildlife network and includes measures to enhance the nature conservation value of remaining open land will be permitted).

### **Impacts**

- Potential impacts to species-rich hedgerows – a habitat of principal Importance
- Potential impacts to adjoining SNCIs. Impacts to BCC wildlife network.

### **Mitigation**

- Buffer areas would be required to protect the SNCI sites; retention and enhancements to then wildlife corridor through the site would be required as will protection and retention of key hedgerows.

### **Summary**

- Limited information is available, but there would appear to be no significant issues subject to adequate provision of a wildlife corridor and protection of adjacent SNCIs. Detailed site surveys and impact assessments are required prior to capacity decisions and site design

## Summary of Suitability Assessment

- SEB 2b, to the south of the A4 is considered to be largely suitable for development.
  
- SEB 2a and 2c are also suitable but the high landscape and visual impacts would be higher
  - Development in parts of this area would have an unacceptably high impact on the distinctive undulating landscape and would urbanise some of the rural area which currently serves to separate Bristol and Keynsham.
  - Development would be isolated from the edge of Bristol due to the intervening college and Long Fox Manor flats in their spacious, well 'treed' grounds.
  - No known significant historic environment or nature conservation issues have been identified, although further assessment may indicate otherwise.
  - Appropriate setting would be required to the Historic Garden south of the railway.
  - Power lines along the north part of this area will require an appropriate development buffer.
  - Development of the higher part of the ridge and the part of the area close to the Hicks Gate roundabout junction would result in high landscape and visual impacts.
  
- The higher slopes and Area 2d are not are unsuitable but the impacts would be severe.

## Transport & Highways

## Green Belt