



## Understanding the area: Supporting technical work

To help understand the implications of the development a wide range of technical and environmental work is being undertaken. This information is being used to help design the scheme, ensure that impacts are properly addressed and produce a high-quality masterplan with wider community benefits.

### Landscape and trees

As part of the outline planning application we are undertaking a Landscape and Visual Assessment of the proposed development. This will assess the potential effects on:

- Landscape elements within the site that could be directly affected (the trees, hedgerows and arable fields)
- Landscape character as defined in the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment; and
- The views of people living in nearby communities (such as Cookley and Broadwaters), travelling though the landscape on local footpaths and cycle routes and travelling along the local highway network including the A449 Wolverhampton Road and A451 Stourbridge Road.

The scheme aims to retain and enhance existing vegetation where possible with new trees and hedgerows also proposed. The Masterplan will provide the creation of links to the wider green infrastructure network and suitable pedestrian and emergency accesses through the adjacent woodland into the core site. Landscape buffers will be provided around the external edges of the site to provide green corridors where tree planting will help to filter views of the proposed built development.

A tree survey of the site has been undertaken to ensure that important trees are identified, determine appropriate locations to create the accesses through the woodland, and to ensure that root protection areas of nearby trees can be protected from development.

A buffer is proposed to Axborough Wood to ensure protection of the Ancient Woodland.

### Ecology

A preliminary ecological survey of the site has been undertaken along with specific species surveys relating to bats, badgers, dormice, reptiles, great crested newts and breeding birds. Much of the existing hedgerow on site will be retained and new habitat including grassland, woodland and scrub will be created. These new habitats will aim to provide enhanced foraging and nesting resources and movement corridors across the site for these species and species groups.

The species surveys have found the surrounding woodland and hedgerows are used by various bat species, including the lesser horseshoe bat known to roost on the adjacent hospital site which contains a number of purpose-built bat houses. Small numbers of grass snake and common lizard have been found alongside breeding birds such as dunnock, song thrush and yellowhammer.

The proposals will also retain habitat for badgers and dormice known to be present in the local area.

We are seeking to ensure that there is a net gain of biodiversity on the site. Around 40% of the site is Green Infrastructure and there will be considerable new habitat creation to increase the biodiversity value of the site.

