

## Appendix 1 – Project Brief & Accompanying Figures

Figure 1.1: Study Areas

## Brief for a Study of Green Belt Surrounding Coventry City

### 1. Background

The preferred option for Phase 2 revision of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2007.

The preferred option includes a sub-regional section (in Chapter 3) on Coventry-Warwickshire (this sub-regional also includes Solihull) This sets out a development strategy for the sub-region which aims to focus development in the Major Urban Areas particularly Coventry; also in a wider north-south corridor running from Nuneaton to Warwick/Leamington Spa, and finally also in Rugby which acts as a gateway to the Region.

The Strategy identifies that housing land should be phased to encourage regeneration in the MUAs by giving priority to:

- sustainable locations first and foremost, and within those locations brownfield land before Greenfield land;
- then if necessary – urban extensions within local authority areas;
- only as a last resort, cross boundary urban extensions in the North-South corridor (later in the plan period), if no more suitable alternative capacity is available.

The Strategy also enables specific local Green Belt boundary adjustment for sustainable extensions to be made through LDFs when and where essential to meet long term needs.

In Chapter 6 'Communities for the Future' Table 1 identifies the Housing Proposals for 2006 to 2026 for each local authority. The growth for Coventry is identified as 33,500 net additional dwellings but this is subject to a specific note (b) which states "Dependent upon the capacity in Coventry and the outcome of further studies, some of the allocations could be made adjacent to Coventry within Nuneaton and Bedworth and Warwick districts".

Policy CF3 states "In certain circumstances, the most sustainable form of housing development may be adjacent to the settlement but across local authority administrative boundaries, co-operation and joint working will be necessary to ensure that sites are released in a way that supports sustainable development.

In the following locations local authorities must jointly consider the most appropriate locations for development before producing or revising LDPs:

(viii) Coventry, Nuneaton and Bedworth and Warwick in relation to Coventry".

In addition to the requirement for joint working on accommodating housing Chapter 7 "Prosperity for All" Table 4 identifies employment land provision for each authority. One of the notes for this table states:

"(d) There is unlikely to be sufficient land within Coventry to meet employment land requirements over the plan period. Joint discussions will be required between Coventry CC, Rugby BC, Nuneaton and Bedworth BC and Warwick DC to ensure continuity of supply. Due to its size and strategic significance Coventry's employment land needs should be taken into full account when proposals for redevelopment of the site of the former Peugeot Assembly Plant are considered".

Policy PA6A Employment Land Provision also makes reference to joint working:

“There are a small number of circumstances where employment land provision might need to be made in an adjoining authority’s area, such circumstances are identified in the table and the relevant authorities will be required to hold cross boundary discussions throughout the preparation of Core Strategies to ensure that such requirements are satisfactorily met”.

Policy PA1 Section D identifies the criteria for development proposed on the edge of the MUAs or on other Greenfield sites.

## 2. Joint Working Approach

Officers of the 4 authorities referred to in the background above (Coventry CC, Nuneaton and Bedworth BC, Rugby BC and Warwick DC) have met to discuss the approach to joint working to satisfy the requirements of the RSS Revision 2 preferred option.

It is clear from the RSS that a joint study (or studies) are required to progress the individual authorities core strategies. All authorities are at different stages with the preparation of the core strategies as follows:

- |                          |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Coventry City Council    | - | about to move to the preparation and publication of a preferred option.                           |
| Nuneaton and Bedworth    | - | hope to consult on issues and options in early 2009.  |
| Rugby Borough Council    | - | have completed consultation on issues and options and are progressing towards a preferred option. |
| Warwick District Council | - | have published and are consulting on options having completed consultation on issues.             |

As the authorities are at different stages and the core strategies are required to set the policy framework for individual authorities, a joint core strategy has been discounted. The approach now suggested is for the individual core strategies for the 3 Warwickshire Districts to indicate safeguarded areas adjacent Coventry City for possible future development to meet the housing and employment targets (and any revised ones following the EIP) set for Coventry which it is not possible to accommodate within the city boundaries. The 4 authorities would then develop a joint DPD to identify individual sites within those safeguarded areas.

Because Coventry City is surrounded by the West Midlands Green Belt the safeguarded areas will require alterations to the Green Belt. The need now is to carry out a joint study to assess the areas of the Green Belt within and outside Coventry city which should be safeguarded for future site allocations. This will require a consistent and robust methodology of assessing different areas of the Green Belt.

In addition to the need to identify safeguarded areas adjacent to Coventry, both Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council and Warwick District Council are considering options which could result in sustainable urban extensions within the existing Green Belt to meet the housing and employment targets in the RSS Phase 2 Preferred Option.

The Study therefore needs to use the same methodology for the fringe areas to assess the areas of Green Belt around the urban settlements in the two districts.

In Warwick District Council the areas of study are defined (see below). However, in Nuneaton and Bedworth, the areas of Green Belt are much tighter to the urban settlements so it has been decided to assess all the Green Belt areas.

### 3. Suggested Methodology for Joint Study

The study needs to take account of any landscape character assessments carried out. This should consider national and local landscape designations, and other local landscape assessments such as Warwickshire County Council's study on landscape sensitivity in fringe areas adjacent Coventry.

The assessment of different areas should then be based on how they contribute to the purposes and functions of the Green Belt as set out in Planning Policy Guidance 2 "Green Belts" 1995 as follows:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- prevent neighbouring towns from merging;
- assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The methodology should also, where possible, be consistent with the methodology and approach with the following studies:

Coventry Green Belt Review – December 2007 carried out by DLS.  
Entec(UK)Ltd studies to review Areas of Restraint and River Valleys in Nuneaton and Bedworth – 2004, 2006/07 and 2007.

The methodology should also consider secondary criteria such as defensible boundaries. The outcome of the study should be a recommended hierarchy of areas which should be retained or protected in the longer term and those which could form safeguarded areas for future development.

The invited consultants are asked to set out a detailed methodology to meet the suggestions in this brief and which will provide a robust assessment to enable the identification of safeguarded areas in the Core Strategies. The consultant is not being asked to assess the sustainability or suitability of sites for development – this will be the subject of the joint DPD or the individual authority's Core Strategies.

The extent of the areas to be covered by the study is shown on the maps attached as Appendix A to this brief. The maps identify the area of study around the fringe of Coventry (including land within Rugby Borough Council for possible employment sites in relation to Coventry's indicative targets contained in the RSS Phase 2 Preferred Option). Some of that area is shaded, which indicates areas which might be considered as safeguarded areas for Coventry's identified targets or to meet the individual district targets.

### 4. Commissioning Body

All four authorities will provide the commissioning body for the study and representatives of all four authorities will be involved in assessing the expressions of interest received. The consultant will be appointed by Coventry City Council who will handle invoices and payment for the study. The price for the Study should identify the separate costs for:

- (a). All the fringe areas of Coventry (including shaded areas)

(b). The individual areas of study in the two districts.

A Steering Group of representatives from all four authorities will be set up to assist the appointed consultant in the completion and signing off of the study.

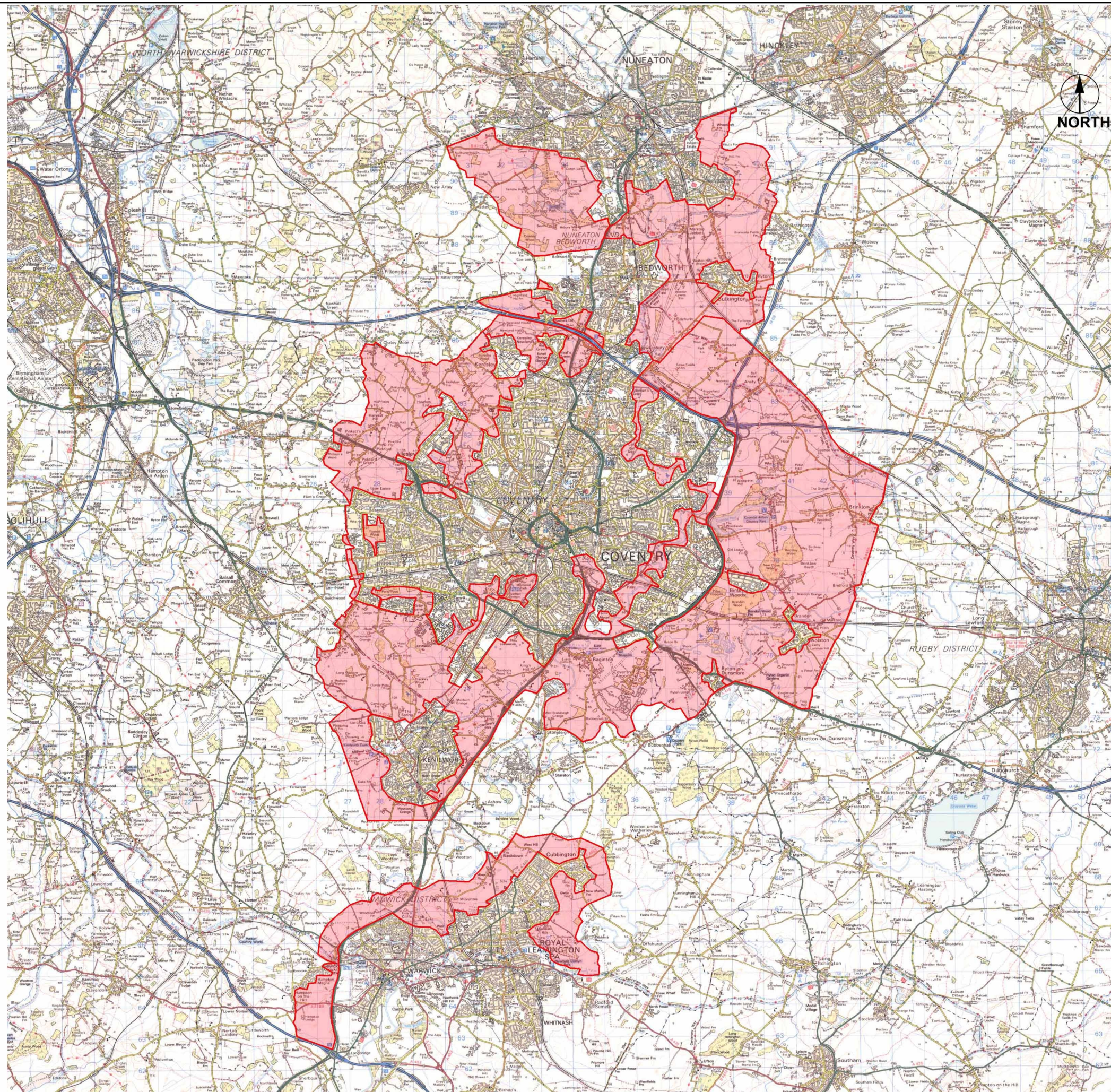
5. Timetable

Completion of Study:	To be covered in Expression of Interest, but needs to be done as quickly as possible – preferably within two months to meet timetable for core strategies.
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6. How will Expressions be Evaluated and Awarded

Robustness of Methodology:	Score 3
Price:	Score 2
Time Taken to Complete Study:	Score 2
Experience and Examples of Doing Similar Studies:	Score 1





Study Area

LEGEND



Study Area

Figure 1.1

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