

LOCALPLAN

helpingshapethedistrict



Warwick District Council June 2013

Sites for Gypsies and Travellers

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Housing Act 2004 to meet the accommodation needs of the population within their area. This includes the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community and that of Travelling Show People.
- 1.2 To meet this need Warwick District Council is committed to allocating sustainable and affordable sites to meet the permanent residential needs of this District's Gypsy and Traveller Community and Travelling Show People through the Local Plan process.



2. Background

- 2.1 No specific accommodation needs for these groups had been identified in this district prior to the publication of the "Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment for the South Housing Market Area of the West Midlands" in 2008. This identified a requirement for 11 permanent and 15 transit pitches for the Gypsy and Traveller community. Whilst the assessment also included Travelling Show People, it did not identify a specific need within the district for this group.

- 2.2 Officers began work on identifying a site initially for transit use on land within its ownership, as it was considered that this would be the easiest to deliver in the short term. However, this proved not to be the case as the Council-owned land was inappropriately located and largely comprises of urban parks and green spaces, which are not suitable for the use of Gypsies and Travellers for either a transit or permanent site.
- 2.3 In the meantime, the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) review took place and the distribution of pitches across the region was reassessed. This resulted in an assessed requirement for 23 permanent pitches in the district.
- 2.4 To ensure that its future evidence base was robust and reliable, the Council commissioned a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Warwick District in 2012, undertaken by Salford University, a leading provider in this field. The report was published in November 2012 and shows a need for 31 permanent pitches to be provided over the life of the Local Plan (15 years), 25 within the first five years and a further 6-8 transit pitches over the Plan period.
- 2.5 Warwick District Council has been working in collaboration with Warwickshire County Council to identify potential sites to meet this need within the Local Plan. Enquiries have been made of local land agents, landowners who have submitted sites to be considered for other types of housing, public bodies, statutory undertakers and Warwickshire County Council to identify any potentially available land that meets the criteria set out for site suitability.
- 2.6 Additionally, 'areas of search' have been selected by officers within which it is believed that there could be potential for a Gypsy and Traveller site, outside the Green Belt, close to the road network and within easy reach of local facilities (schools and doctors etc). The result of the Council's research is contained within this document to allow for public consultation and comment.



3. Who are Gypsies and Travellers?

3.1 The 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' document, published alongside the NPPF, defines Gypsies and Travellers as 'Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds of their own or their families or dependants educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Show People or circus people travelling together as such'.

3.2 Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are defined as minority ethnic groups under the Race Relations Act (1976). There are a number of Gypsy and Traveller communities, each with different histories and traditions:

- Gypsies are Romany ethnic groups who have lived in Britain for around 600 years. Their ancestors originate from northern India.
- Irish Travellers are a nomadic group with a distinctive way of life who have been part of Irish and British society since ancient times.
- New Travellers are people of settled background who adopted a travelling lifestyle more recently, although some are now in their third or fourth generation of travelling. They have adopted this way of life for a variety of reasons, such as homelessness, unemployment or environmental issues.



3.3 The Council has produced an information leaflet that gives more details about the Gypsy and Traveller way of life. This can be viewed online or pick up a copy at one of the exhibition venues.

3.4 Travelling Show People are a separate community defined as 'Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their families or dependants more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above'.

3.5 The Council is also expected to define the need of this community and provide suitable sites, however the recent GTAA has shown that the provision we already have in this district meets current and future needs so no new pitches are required within the life of the Local Plan.

4. What are the Issues?

- 4.1 Gypsies and Travellers without an authorised pitch for their caravans are homeless. A shortage of authorised sites underlies the unauthorised development of sites by Gypsies and Travellers without planning permission, and unauthorised encampments on roadsides, car parks or other pieces of land. Such unauthorised sites provide uncertain and often very poor living conditions for Gypsies and Travellers, disruption and anxiety for settled neighbours, and costs to local authorities in management and enforcement. They worsen community tensions and make community cohesion and social inclusion harder to achieve.
- 4.2 Gypsies and Travellers experience the worst health and education status of any disadvantaged group in England as a result. Life expectancy is, for example, 12 years less for women and 10 years less for men than among the settled community. In 2007, 7% of children of Gypsy/Romany origin and 8.4% of Traveller children of Irish Heritage achieved 5 or more A* to C grades in GCSE or equivalent exams including English and Mathematics in England compared to a national average of 45.4%. 18% of Gypsy & Traveller mothers have experienced the death of a child compared to less than 1% of the settled community. Research further shows a consistent link between such measures of disadvantage and the shortage of good quality Gypsy and Traveller sites. It is against this background that all local authorities are directed to find suitable, deliverable and sustainable sites within their areas to meet their needs.



5. Policy Background

- 5.1 Housing Act: The Housing Act, 2004, placed a duty upon local authorities to produce assessments of current and future accommodation need for Gypsies and Travellers on a strategic, regional basis.
- 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The 2012 NPPF states that the framework “should be read in conjunction with the Government’s planning policy for traveller sites”. This policy document is ‘Planning Policy for Travellers Sites’, March 2012. The guidance sets out the government’s aims in respect of traveller sites:
- that local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning
 - to ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies
 - to meet need through the identification of land for sites
 - to encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale
 - that plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development
 - to promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites
 - that plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective
 - for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies
 - to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply
 - to reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions
 - to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure
 - for local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment
- 5.3 The advice includes a requirement to identify a five year supply of sites and update this annually through monitoring of delivery. Beyond this date, areas of search can be identified for the remainder.
- 5.4 Under the ‘duty to co-operate’ outlined in the 2011 Localism Act, there is a requirement to consider the production of joint development plans on a cross-authority basis, especially where a local planning authority has severe planning constraints across its area (as in Warwick District where the green belt places considerable constraint on any development unless in special circumstances).

6. Evidence Base

6.1 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, 2012

The Council needed a robust, independent evidence base on which to draw, so commissioned a new GTAA for Warwick District, to include the needs of Travelling Show People. The resulting document was published in November 2012 which demonstrated a need for a total of 31 permanent pitches over a 15 year period, 25 of which are required within the first 5 years of the Local Plan and a 12 pitch transit site to be delivered over the Plan period. A five plot site already exists in Warwick District for Travelling Show People and there has been no additional need identified through the GTAA. This site therefore satisfies demand through the Local Plan period and no additional plots are required.

7. Local Plan Requirements

7.1 Warwick District Local Plan 1996 – 2011:

Previous surveys had indicated that there was no need and therefore requirement for sites to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers in the District during this time period. There was therefore no policy included within the Local Plan to address this.

7.2 Emerging New Warwick District Local Plan:

In March 2012, the government issued guidance in its document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites'. The requirements of this document have been incorporated into the emerging Local Plan.

7.3 The Preferred Options of the Local Plan suggested the following draft policy which contains the criteria by which sites would be assessed for suitability:

"The Council will bring forward site(s) under a Gypsy and Traveller Sites Allocation Development Plan Document, using the following policy criteria:

- Convenient access to a GP surgery, school, and public transport;
- Avoiding areas with a high risk of flooding;
- Safe access to the road network and provision for parking, turning and servicing on site;
- Avoiding areas where there is the potential for noise and other disturbance;
- Provision of utilities (running water, toilet facilities, waste disposal, etc);
- Avoiding areas where there could be adverse impact on important features of the natural and historic environment; and,
- Sites which can be integrated into the landscape without harming the character of the area.

Site development will accord with national guidance on site design and facility provision."



- 7.4 To fully accord with the provisions of 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', additional criteria need to be incorporated so that the policy:
- promotes peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community
 - avoids placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services
 - reflects the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability.

8. Identification of Potential Sites

8.1 In order to deliver sites as quickly as possible, the Council firstly examined its own land holdings and assessed whether there is any land within its ownership that would meet the criteria within its own “Local Plan: Preferred Options” document and those contained in ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’. The majority of these sites proved to be totally unsuitable being urban parks and open spaces surrounded by existing residential development. One site consisted entirely of designated Common Land and was therefore considered unsuitable since an Act of Parliament would be required to alter that status. A further site was hindered by restrictive covenants which denied the Council rights to change the use of the land. The potential to use Council owned land was therefore exhausted.



8.2 Additionally, the Council has been working with Warwickshire County Council to assess the suitability of land within its ownership, located within Warwick District. Sites which have been found to be potentially suitable and meeting the criteria mentioned above and detailed below, have been included in this document for public consultation.

8.3 The Council has also attempted to liaise and work with adjacent councils (both with a view to producing a joint GTAA and in identification of suitable sites) to ascertain whether, due to the restrictive nature of the land designations within Warwick District (80% Green Belt), there is potential to work jointly to provide sites. The Council has not been successful in engaging other local authorities to pursue this approach and so has continued to try and identify land within its own boundaries to serve its own need.

8.4 In order to identify and assess possible sites within private ownership, a 'call for sites' was launched in January 2013 which concluded in February. In spite of publicity and individual letters to agents and developers previously wanting to promote housing sites through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process, only two sites were submitted for consideration. These are included in this document for public consultation.

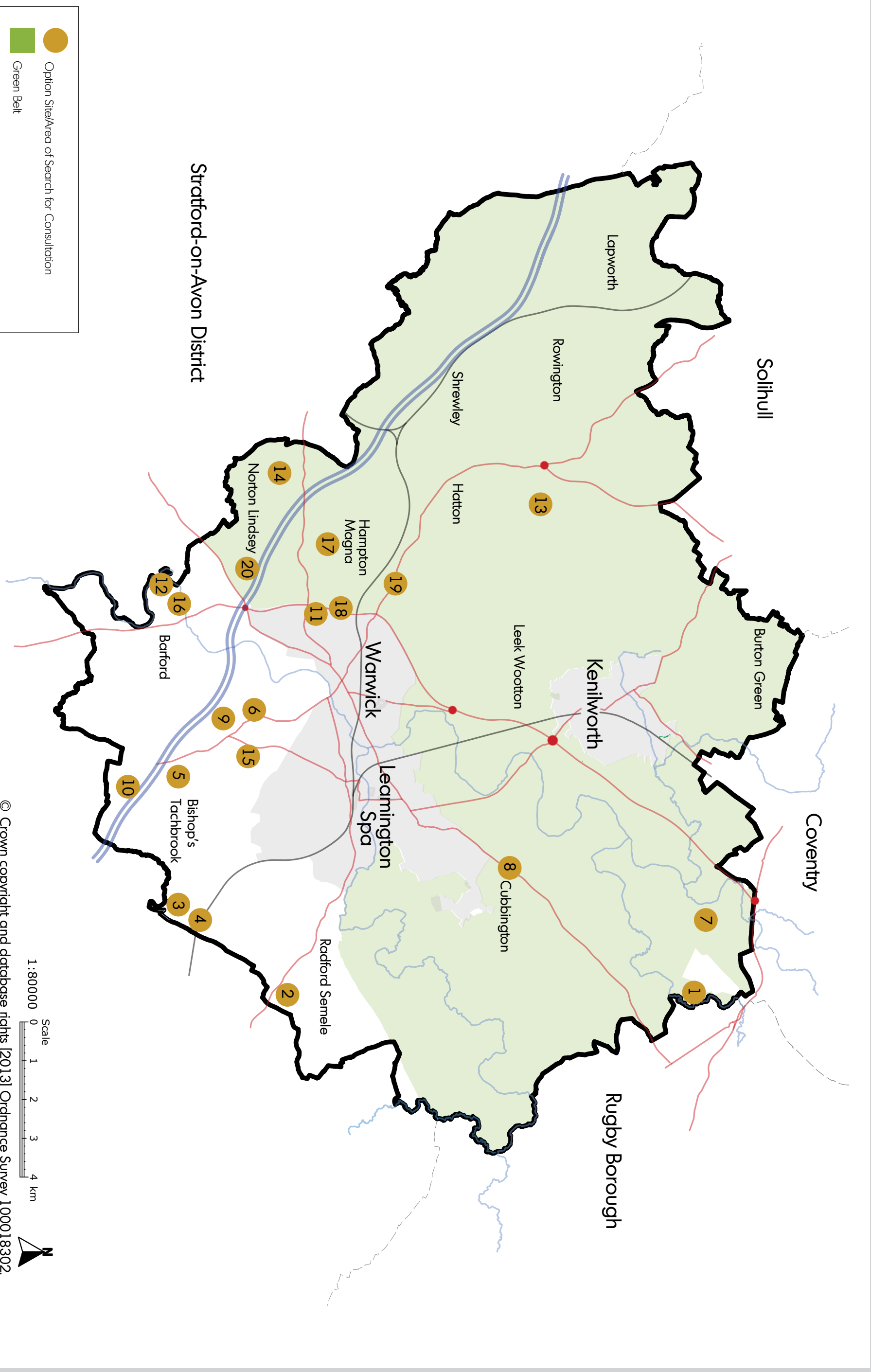
8.5 Additionally, the Council has considered where the most sustainable sites for this purpose would be, given the criteria listed and landowners within these areas have been approached with a view to promoting some of their land for this use. To date, few of these landowners have contacted the Council positively, therefore some of the sites suggested here are not currently available unless the Council uses its powers of compulsory purchase. The Council is willing to consider taking this course of action if pitch numbers cannot be met and landowners remain reticent in the promotion of suitable and sustainable sites.



9. Sites for consideration and comment

9.1 The following sites for comment include those which have been identified in co-operation with Warwickshire County Council on land belonging to that Council, land submitted as part of the 'call for sites' and land identified as being in the most sustainable locations in private ownership, but not currently promoted by owners. Part of the process for identifying the final choice of sites is asking for public comment on the options. Your input is therefore very important in order to allocate the most appropriate sites through the Local Plan process.

9.2 Please note that some of the plans show large tracts of land. Not all of this land and not all of the sites are required. These plans simply indicate an 'area of search'.



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10. Table of Sites

10.1 Options for Sites and Areas of Search.

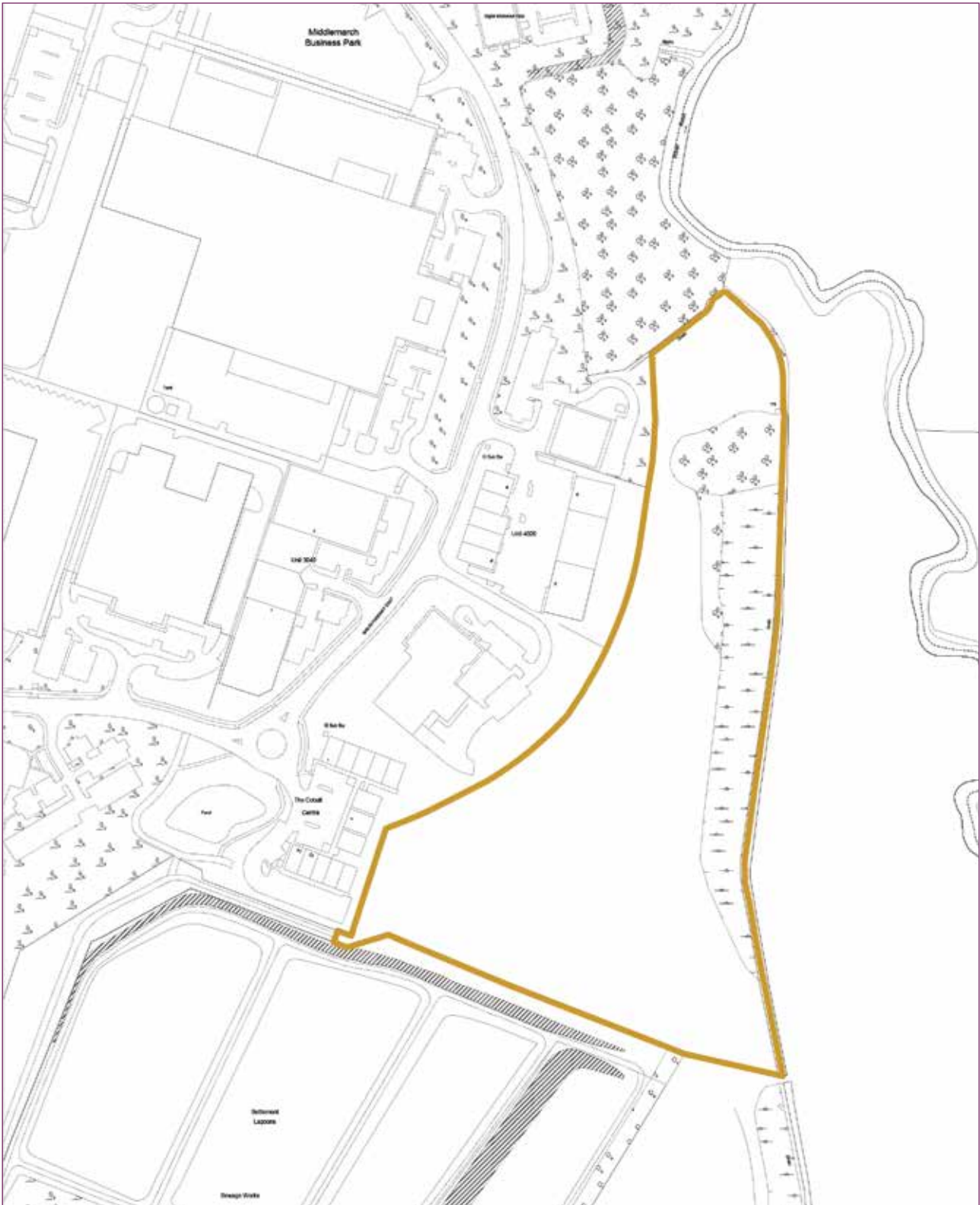
Site	Site map reference	Potential no. of pitches
Land adjacent The Colbalt Centre, Siskin Drive	GT01	10
Land abutting the Fosse Way at its junction with the B425	GT02	15
Land at Barnwell Farm, Harbury Lane	GT03	15
Land at Harbury Lane, Fosse Way	GT04	15
Land at Tachbrook Hill Farm, Banbury Road	GT05	15
Land at Park Farm, Spinney Farm	GT06	15
Land at Stoneleigh Road	GT07	15
Depot to the West Side of Cubbington Hill Farm	GT08	6
Land to the north east of M40 and south of Oakley Wood Road	GT09	15
Land at Tollgate House and Guide Dogs National Breeding Centre	GT10	8
Land at Budbrooke Lodge, Racecourse and Hampton Road	GT11	12
Land at north and west of Westham Lane (area of search)	GT12	15
Kites Nest Lane, Beausale	GT13	8
Warwick Road, Norton Lindsey	GT14	2
Land to east of Europa Way	GT15	4
Land to north of Westham Lane and west of Wellesbourne Road, Barford (small site)	GT16	7
Land on Southbound carriageway of A46 (former Little Chef)	GT17	6
Land on Northbound carriageway of A46 (former Little Chef)	GT18	8
Land adjacent Shell Petrol Filling Station, Birmingham Road, Budbrooke, Warwick	GT19	5
Land at J15 M40/A46	GT20	10

10.2 The following maps give the broad location of the majority of these sites, but more specific boundaries where these are constrained by other uses or restrictions on land use e.g. flooding.

11. Potential for Land Purchase

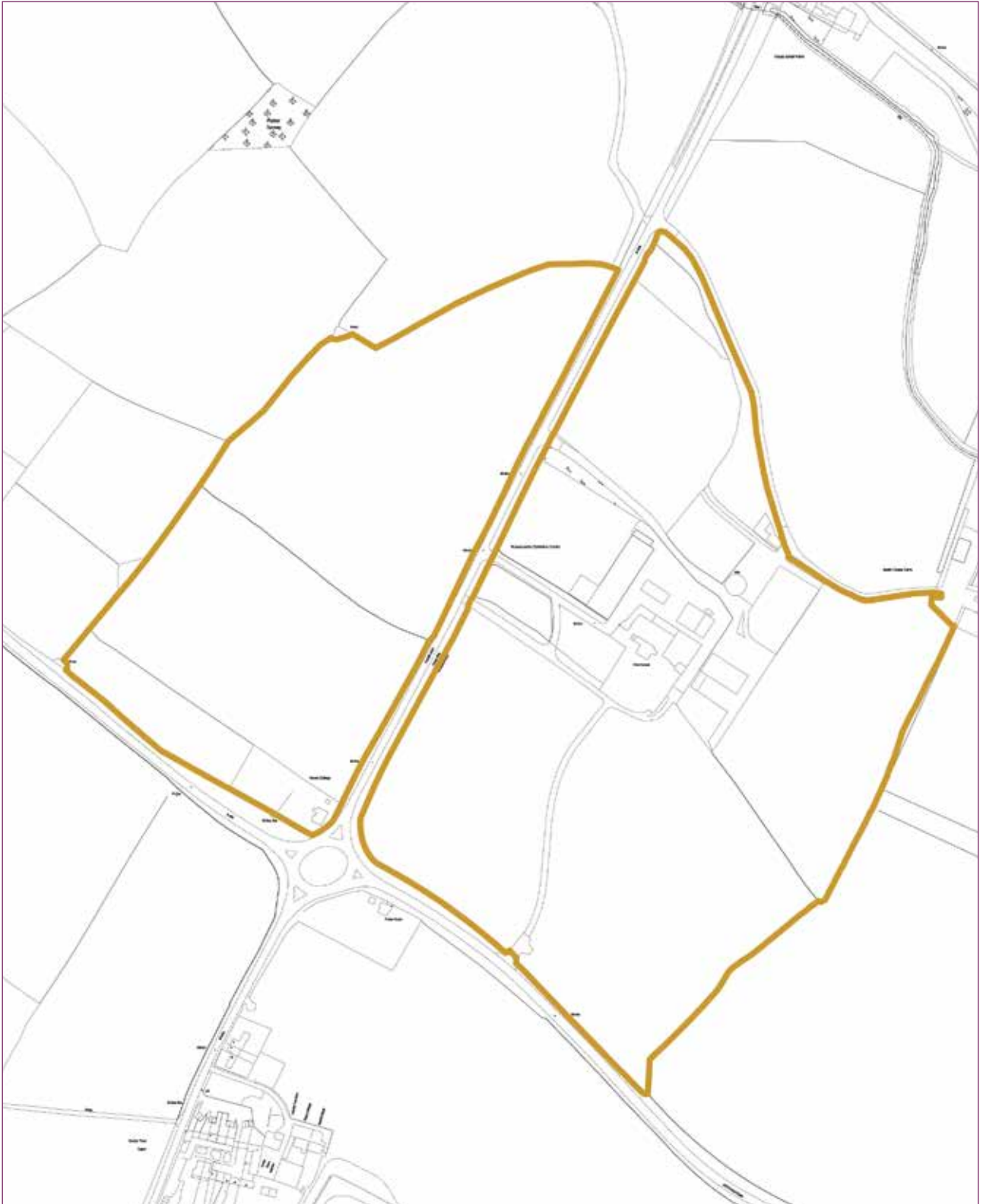
11.1 In view of the lack of sites promoted by private landowners for this use, the Council is considering a way forward to resolve the issue of lack of suitable, sustainable and deliverable land. The Council is prepared to consider use of its powers of compulsory purchase should this prove to be the only way to resolve the problem.

GT01 Land adjacent to the Colbalt Centre, Siskin Drive



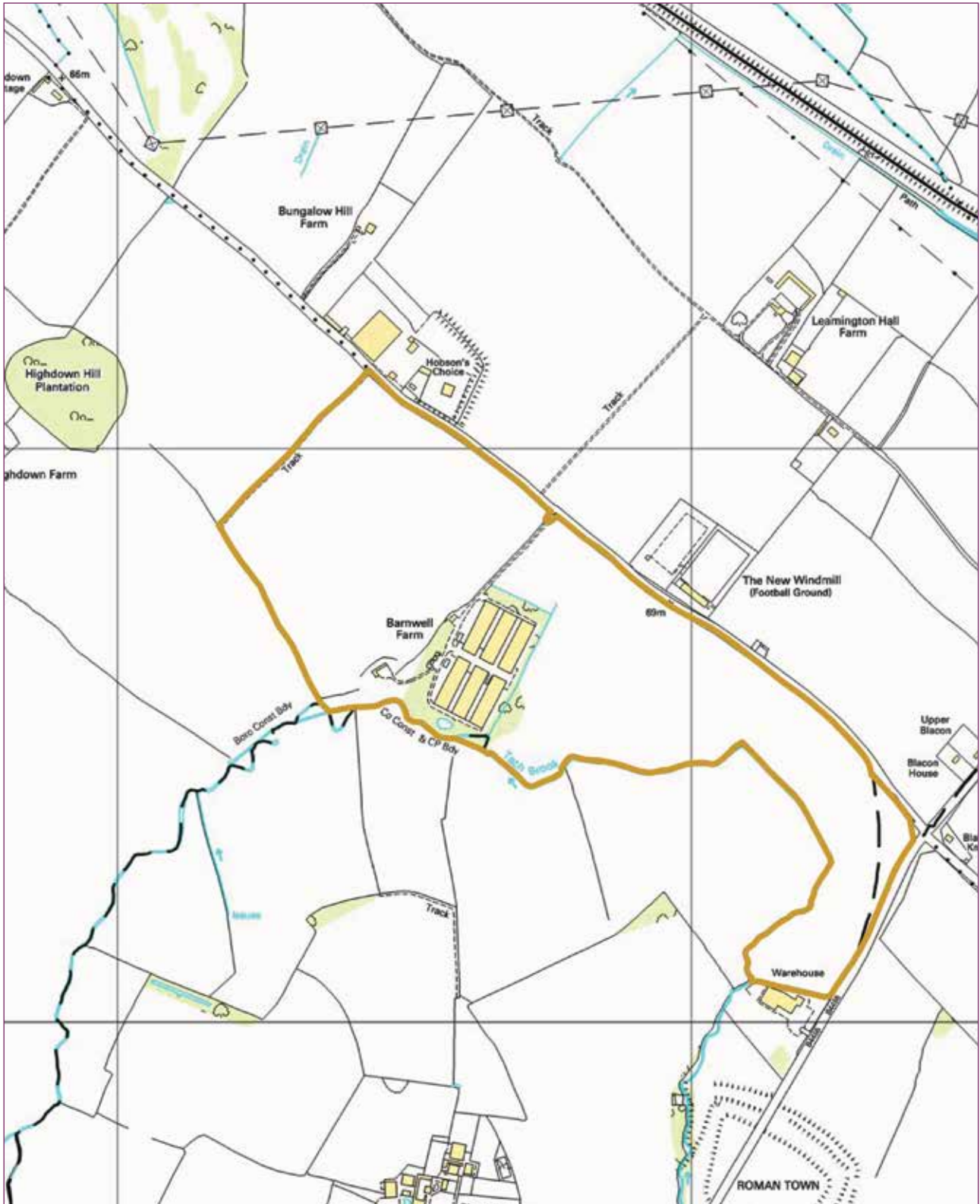
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GT02 Land abutting the Fosse Way at its junction with the B425



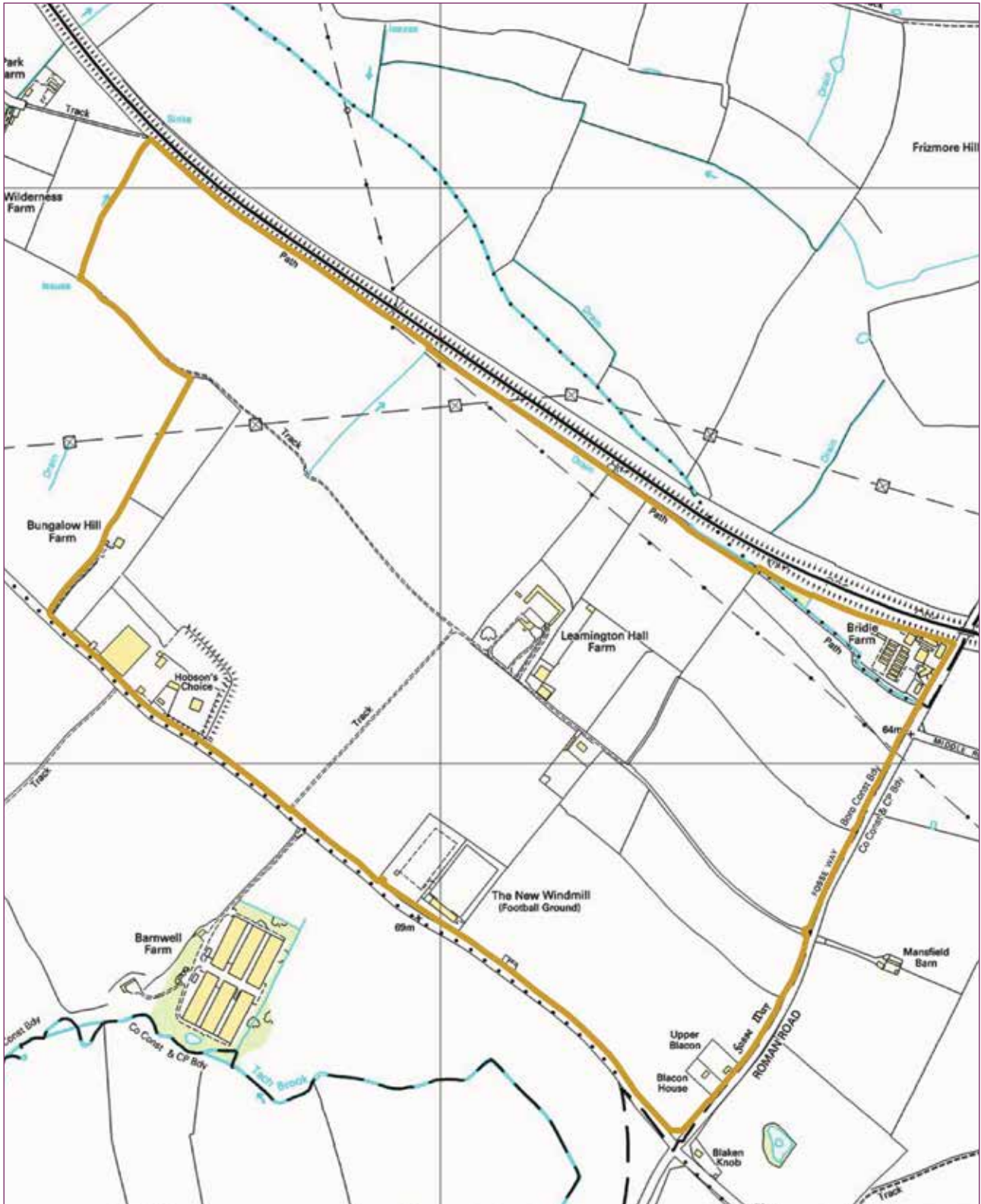
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GT03 Land at Barnwell Farm



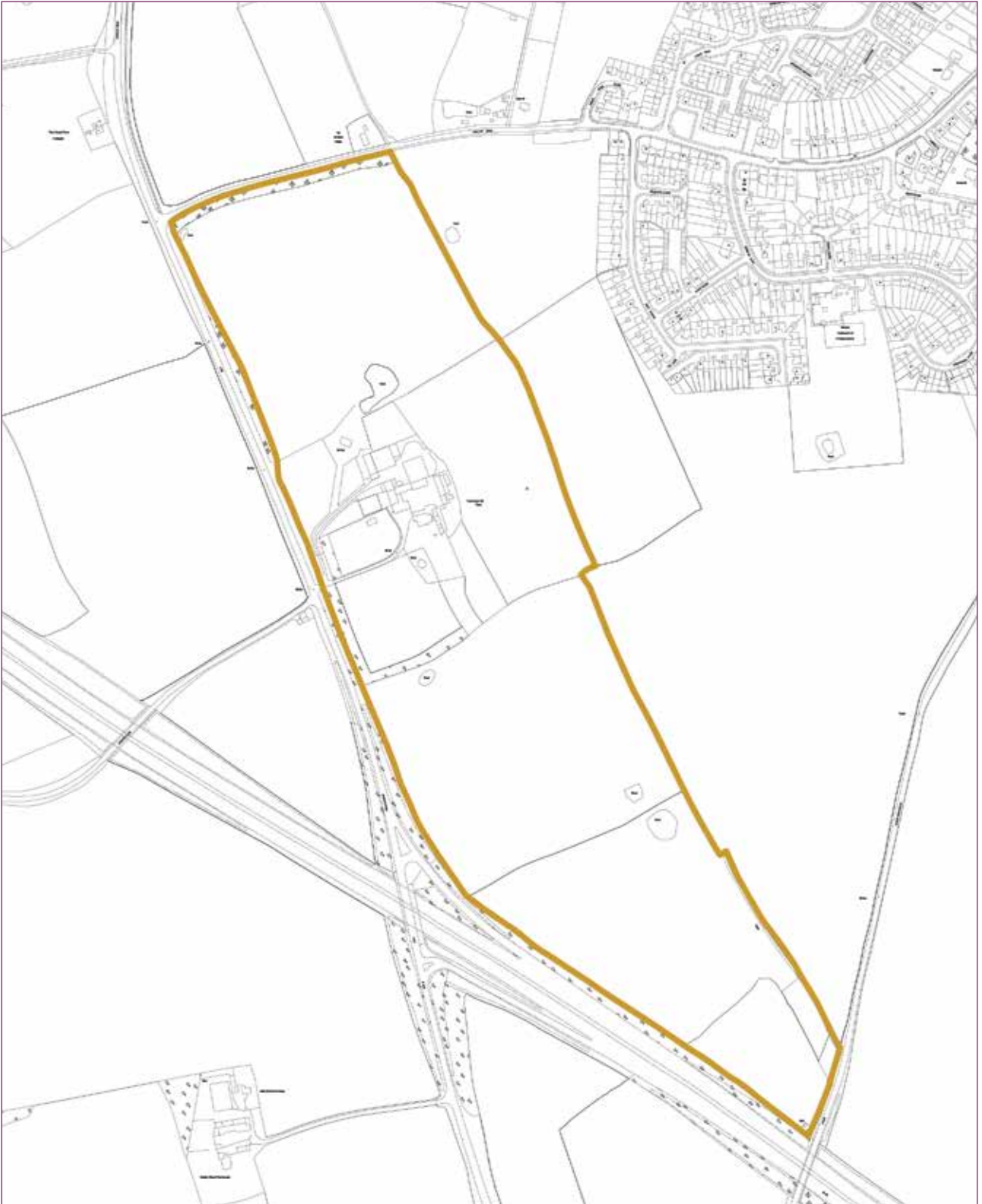
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GT04 Land at Harbury Lane, Fosse Way



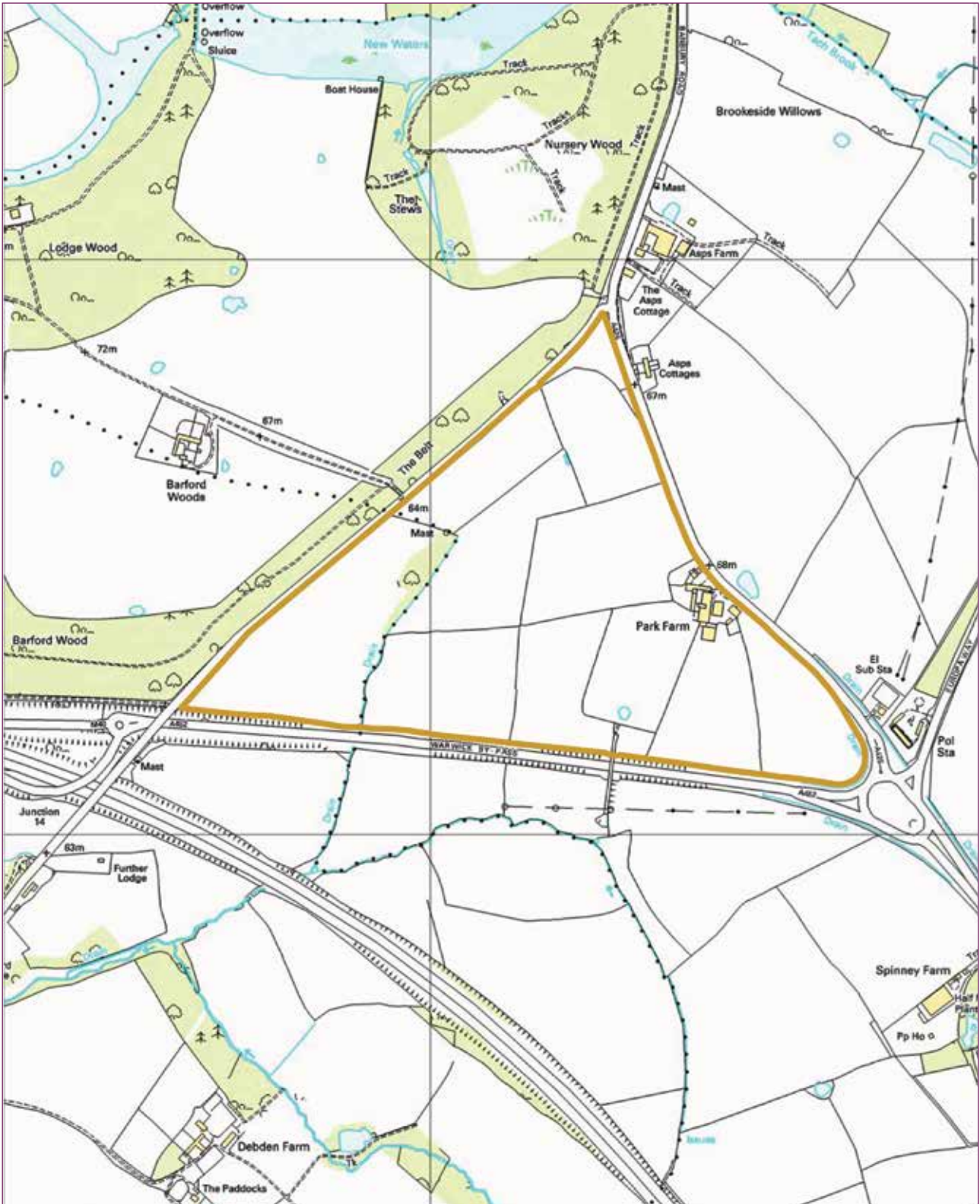
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GT05 Land at Tachbrook Hill Farm



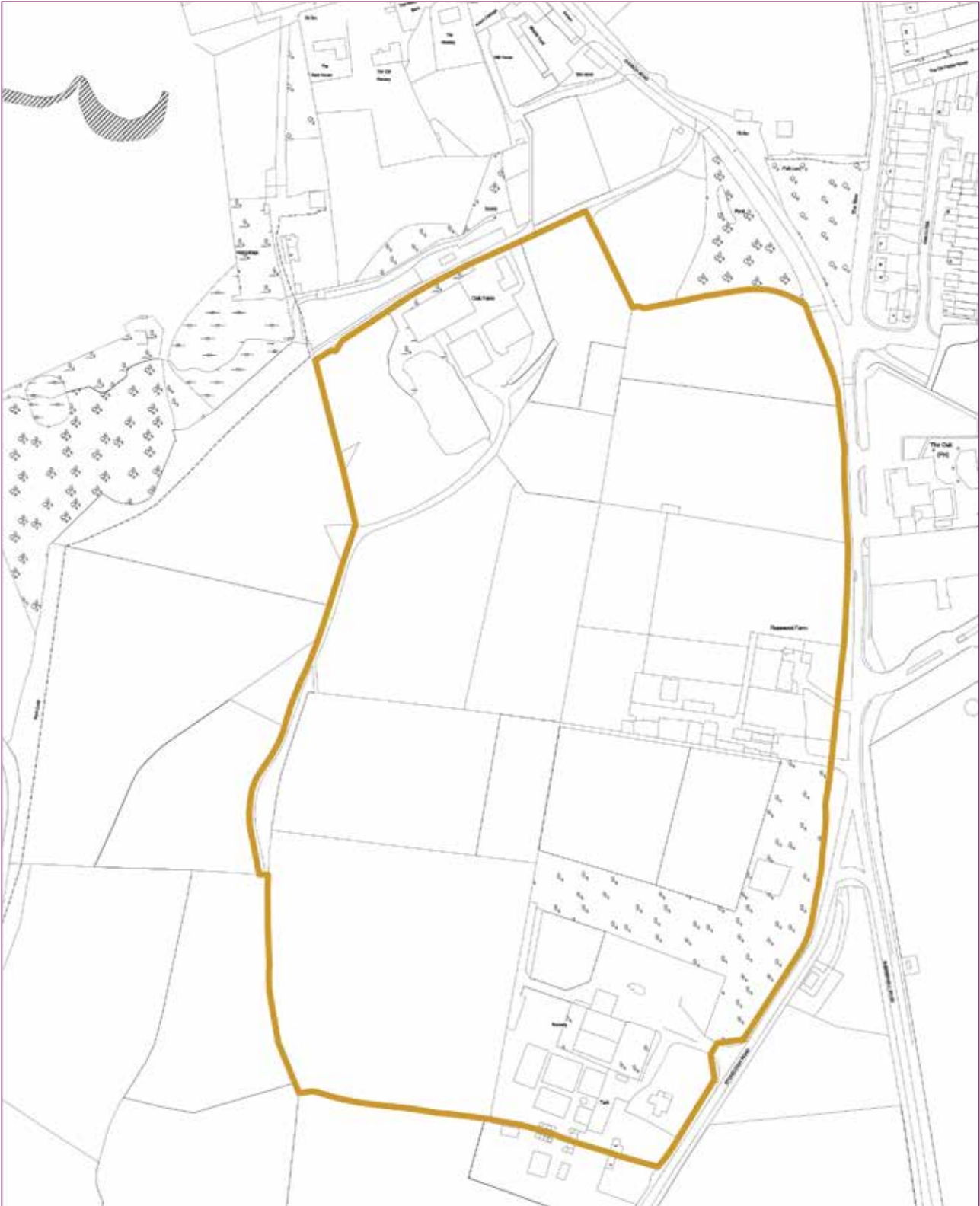
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GT06 Land at Park Farm, Spinney Farm



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GT07 Land at Stoneleigh Road



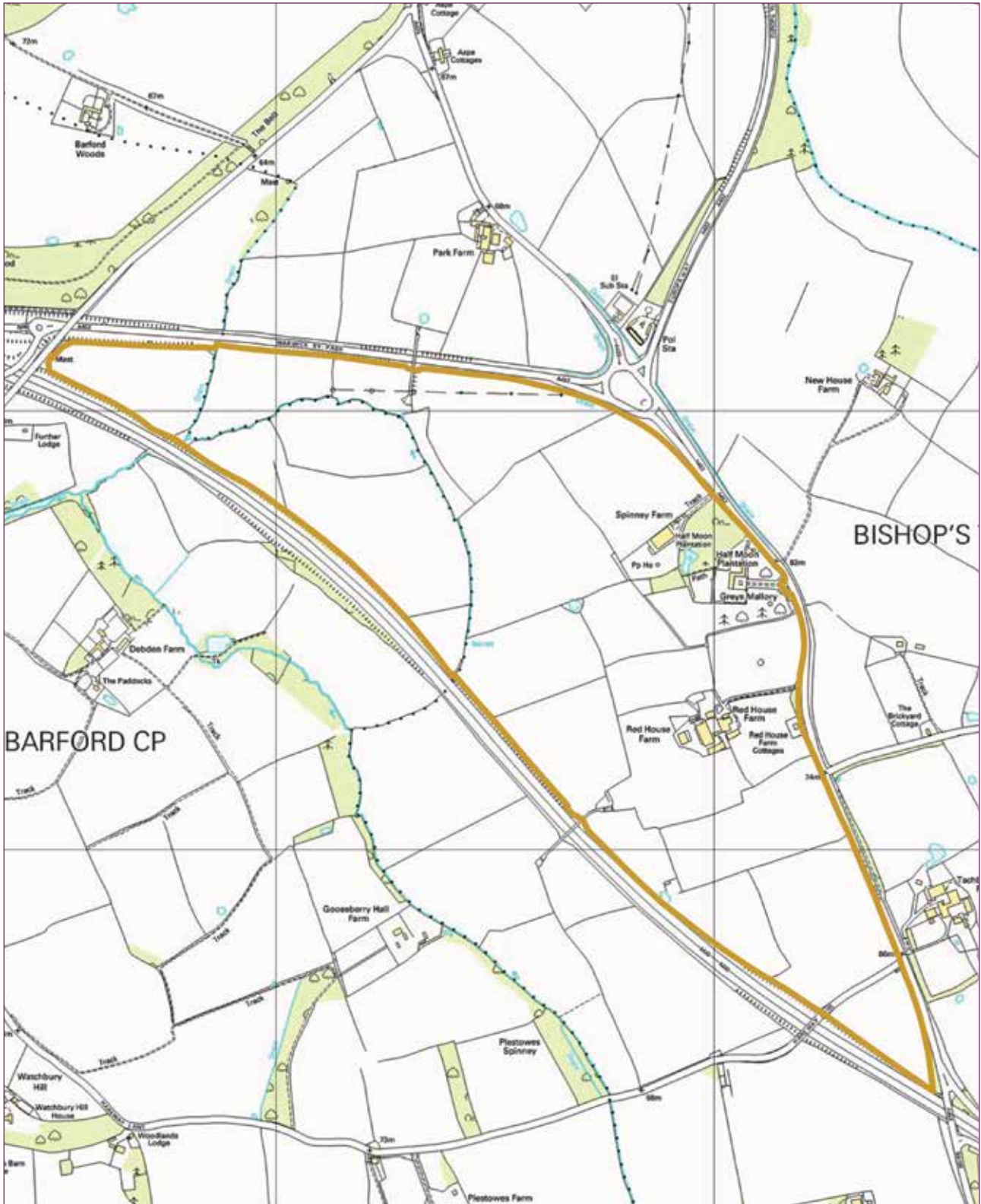
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GT08 Depot to the west side of Cubbington Hill Farm



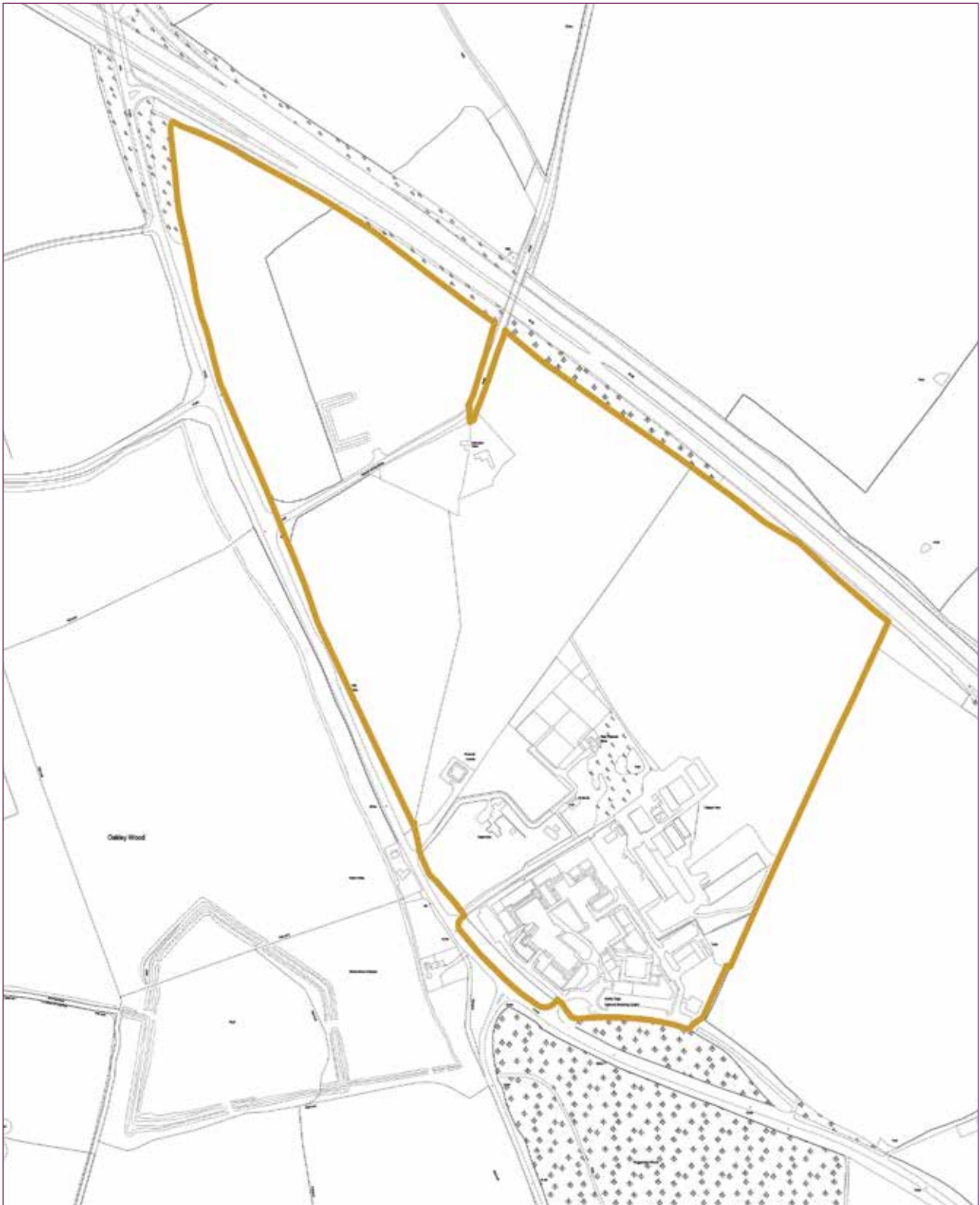
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GT09 Land to the north east of M40



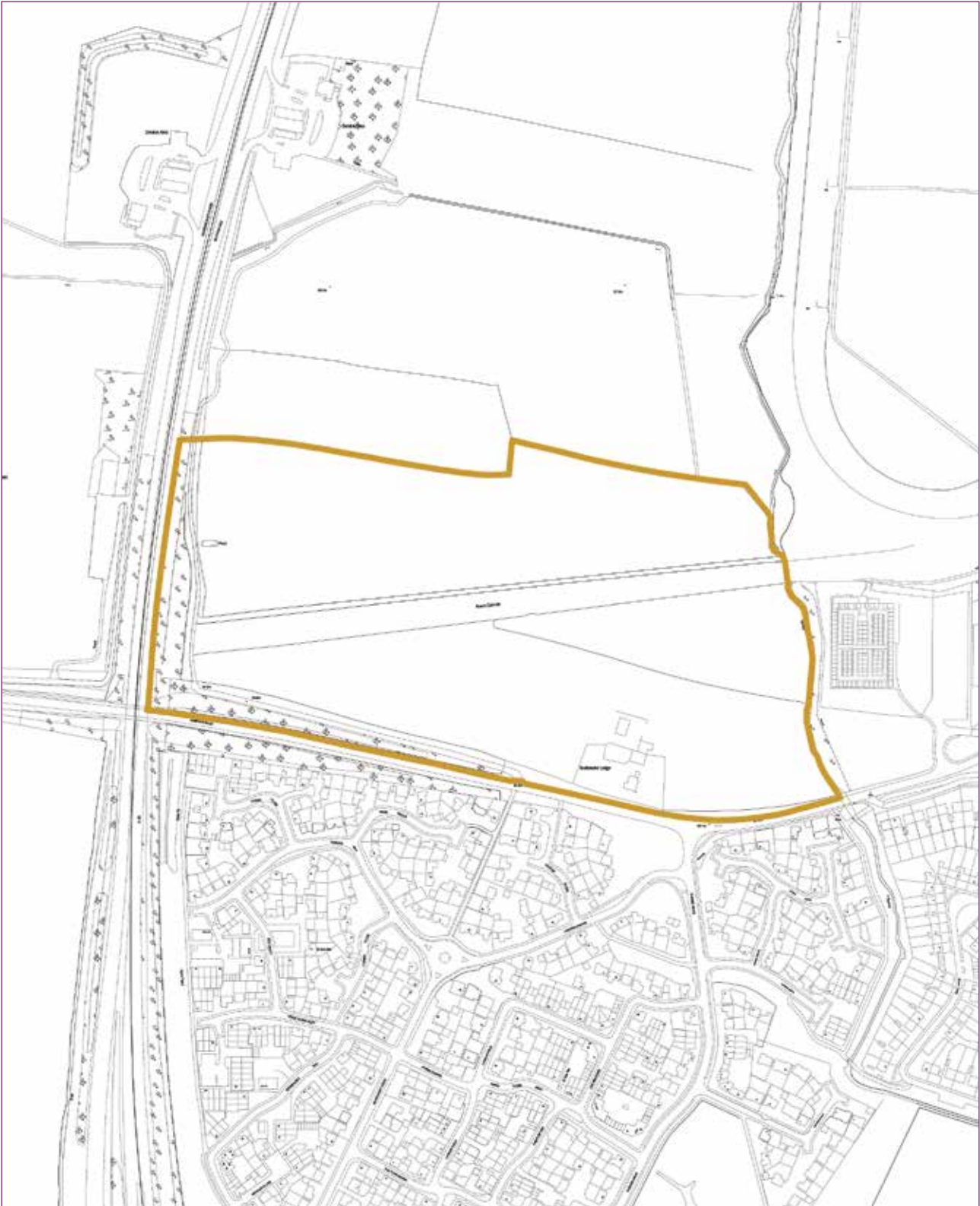
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GT10 Land at Tollgate House and Guide Dogs National Breeding Centre



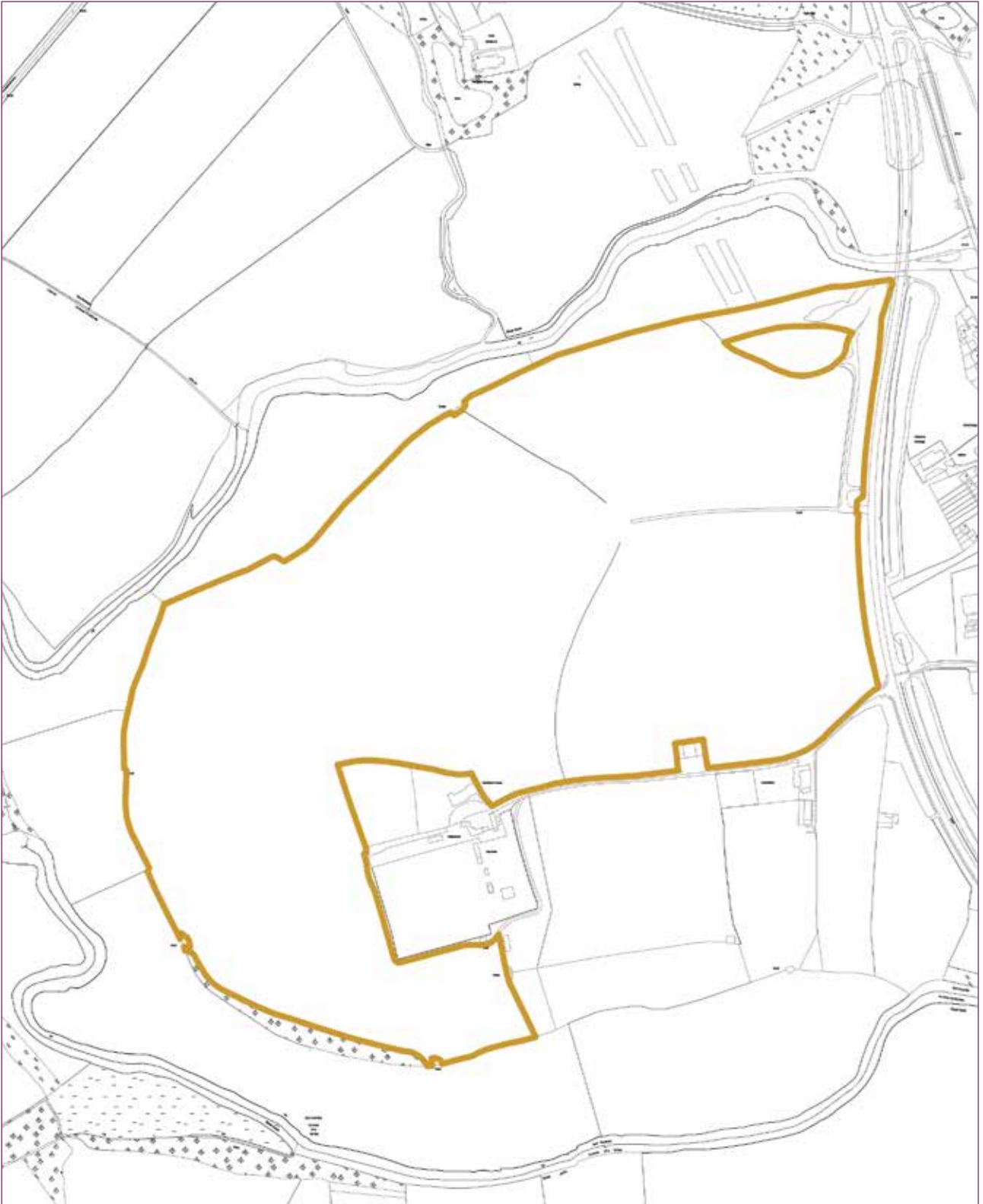
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GT11 Land at Budbrooke Lodge, Racecourse and Hampton Road



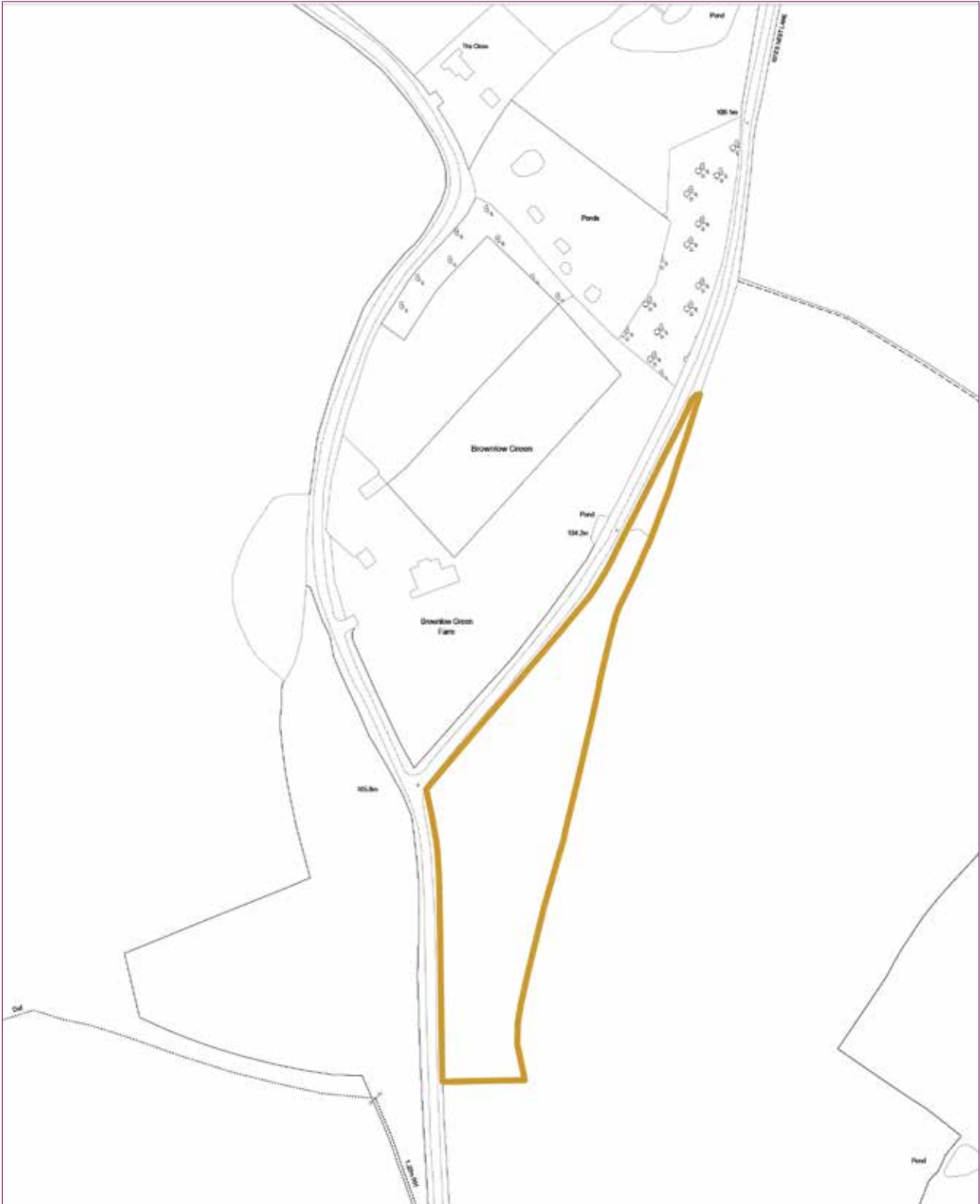
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GT12 Land north and west of Westham Lane (area of search)



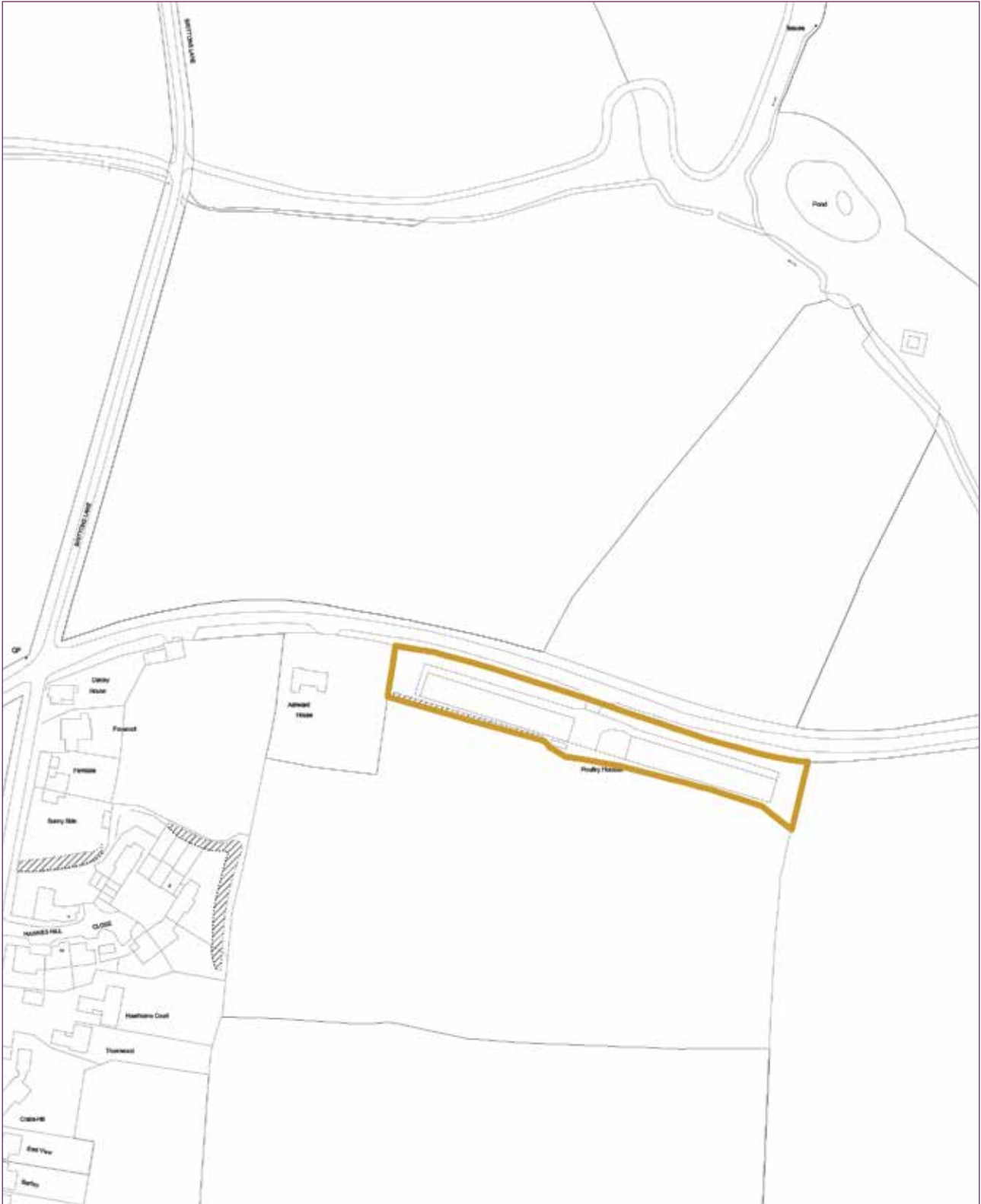
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GT13 Kites Nest Lane, Beausale



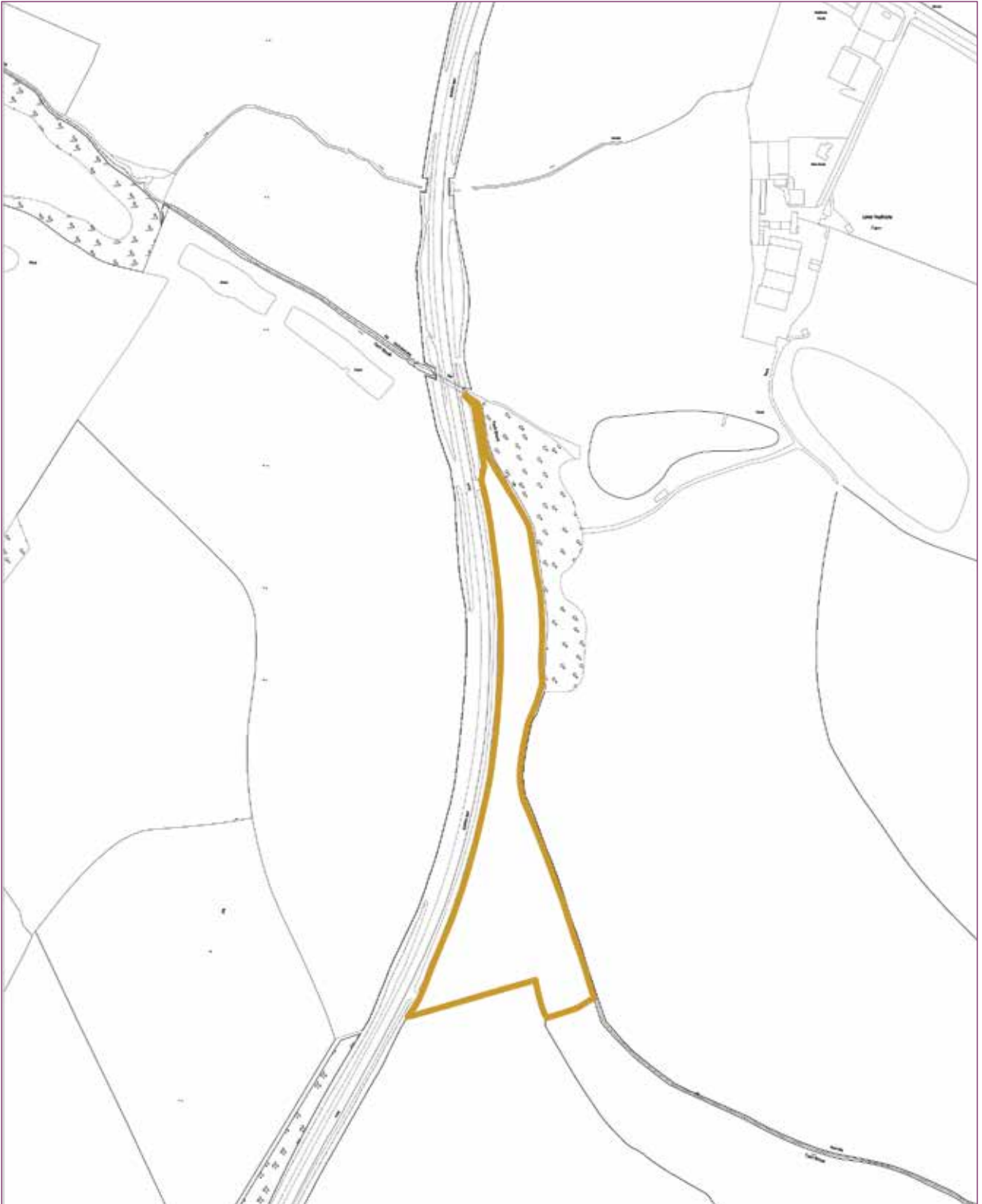
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GT14 Warwick Road, Norton Lindsey



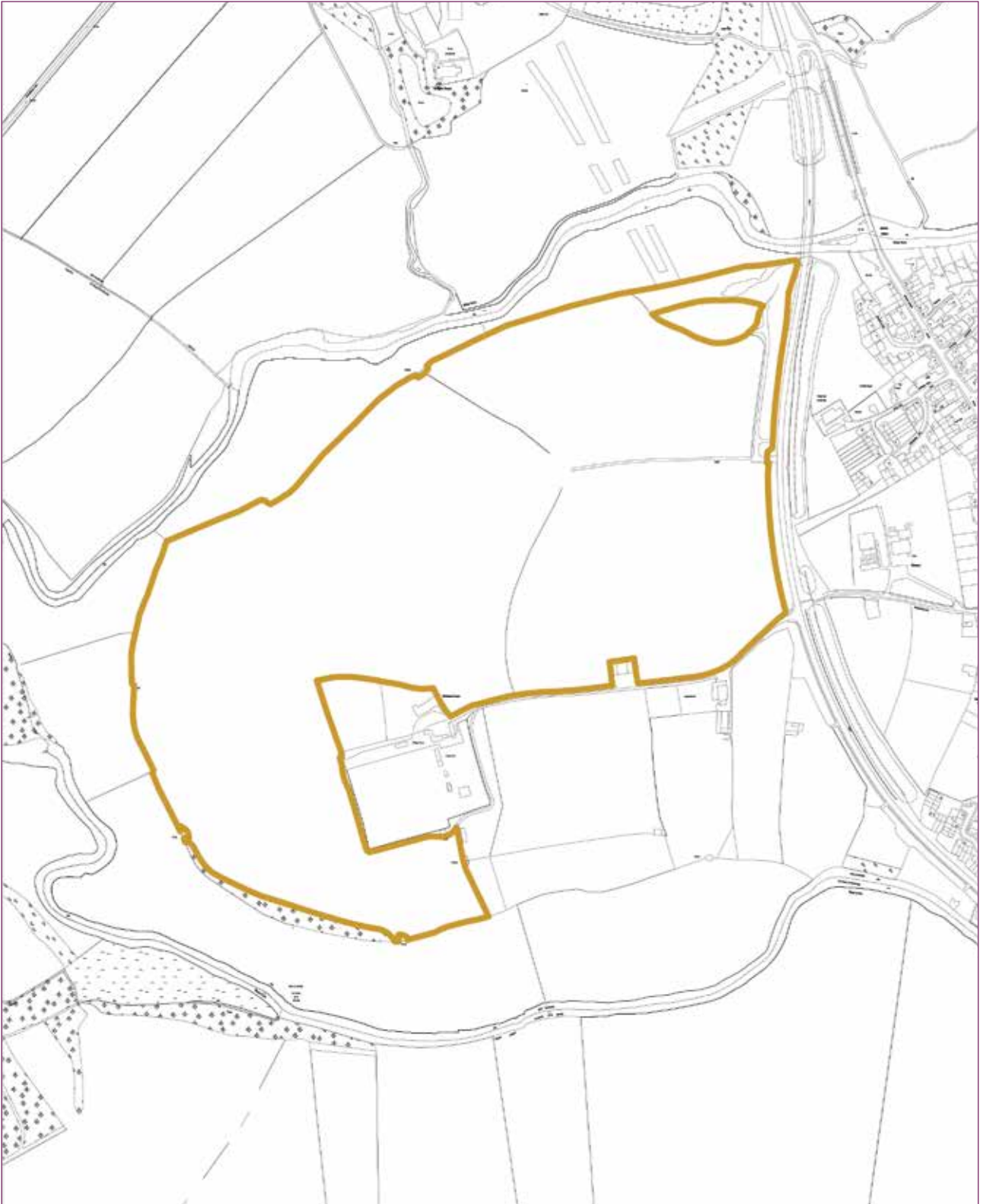
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GT15 Land east of Europa Way



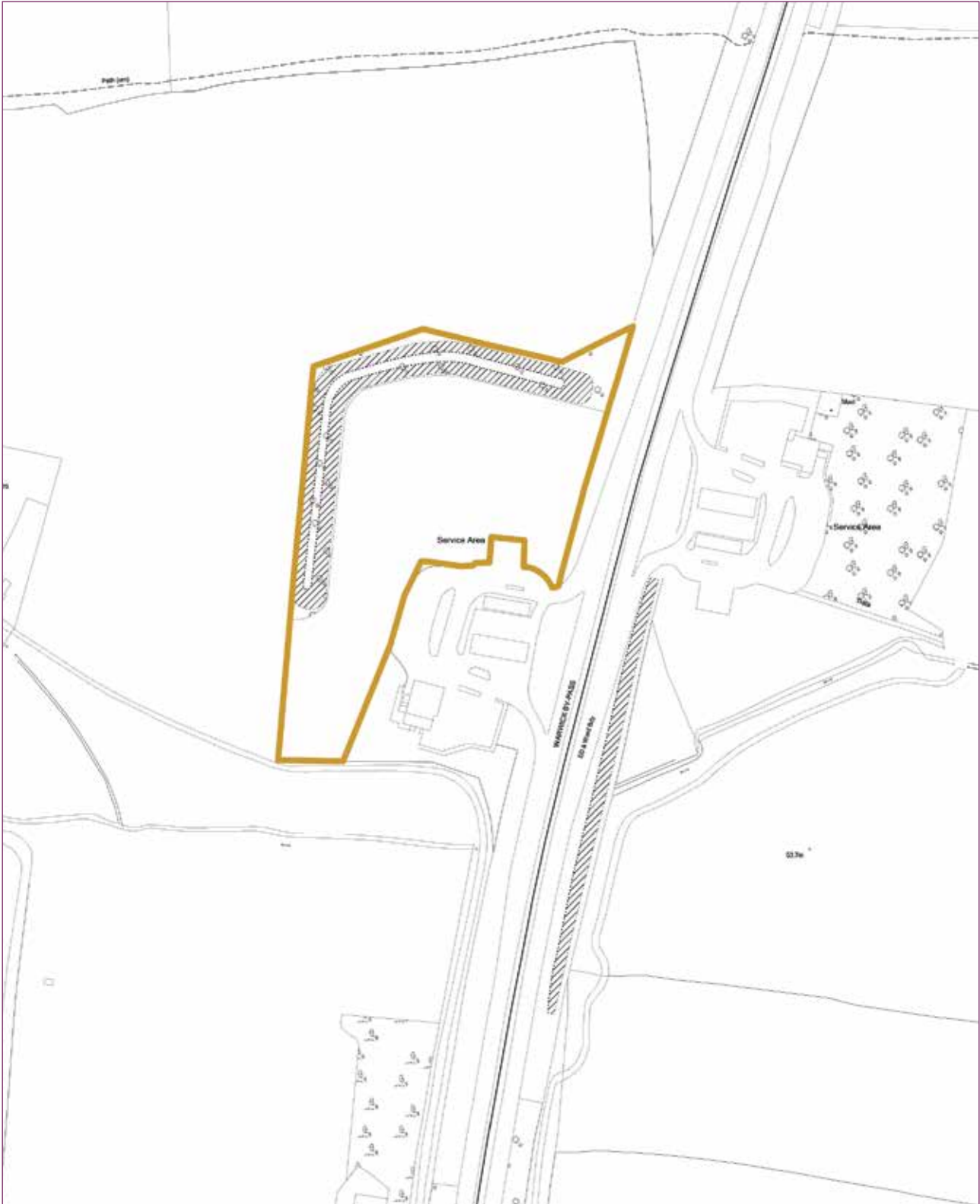
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GT16 Land West of A429 Barford (small site)



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GT17 Service area west of A46 Old Budbrooke Way



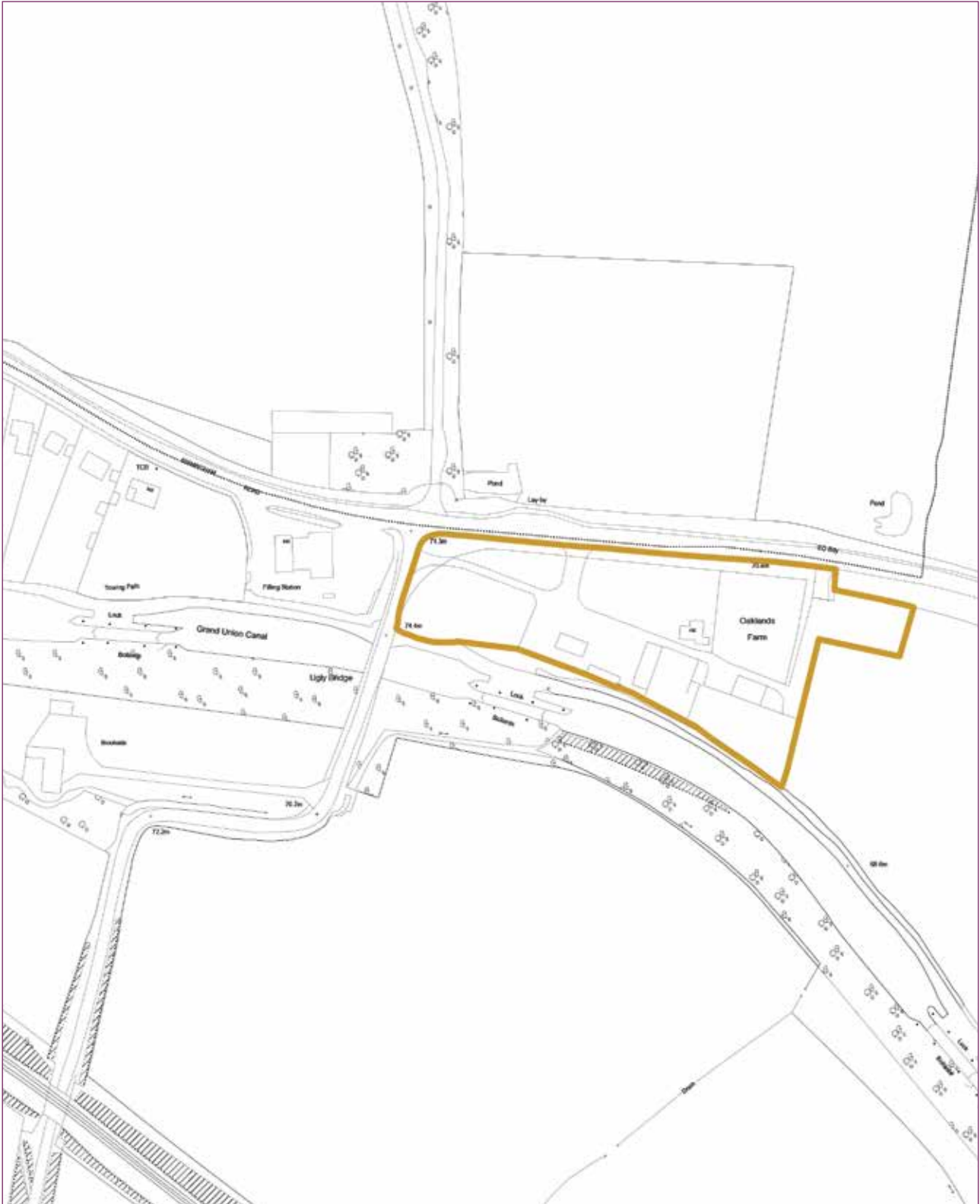
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GT18 Service area east of A46 Old Budbrooke Way



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GT19 Land off Birmingham Road, Budbrooke, Oaklands Farm



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GT20 Land at Junction 15 of M40



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Next steps, comments and feedback

This document forms part of Warwick District Council's consultation on its Preferred Options for a new Local Plan. The consultation period runs from 14 June to 29 July

If you have any comments, you can use the response form available at:

www.warwickdc.gov.uk/newlocalplan

or write to:

**Development Policy Manager, Development Services,
Warwick District Council, Riverside House, Milverton Hill,
Leamington Spa, CV32 5QH**

or email:

newlocalplan@warwickdc.gov.uk

Where possible, information can be made available in other formats, including large print, CD and other languages if required. To obtain one of these alternatives, please contact 01926 410410

