



Landscape Statement  
**Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire**  
December 2019

12246\_R01a\_RP\_RH





<u>Revision</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Author / Checked</u>
12246_R01_RP_RH	10.12.2019	RP/RH
12246_R01a_RP_RH	16.12.2019	RP/RH

## Contents

## Plans

---

Section 1: Introduction and Context	1	Plan 1: Site Location (12246/P06)
Section 2: Southern Site	3	Plan 2: Southern Site (12246/P02b)
Section 3: Northern Site	7	Plan : Northern Site (12246/P05)

*This report, all plans, illustrations, and other associated material remains the property of Tyler Grange Group Limited until paid for in full. Copyright and intellectual property rights remain with Tyler Grange Group Limited.*

*The contents of this report are valid at the time of writing. Tyler Grange shall not be liable for any use of this report other than for the purposes for which it was produced. Owing to the dynamic nature of ecological, landscape, and arboricultural resources, if more than twelve months have elapsed since the date of this report, further advice must be taken before you rely on the contents of this report. Notwithstanding any provision of the Tyler Grange Group Limited Terms & Conditions, Tyler Grange Group Limited shall not be liable for any losses (howsoever incurred) arising as a result of reliance by the client or any third party on this report more than 12 months after the date of this report.*



# 1 Introduction and Context

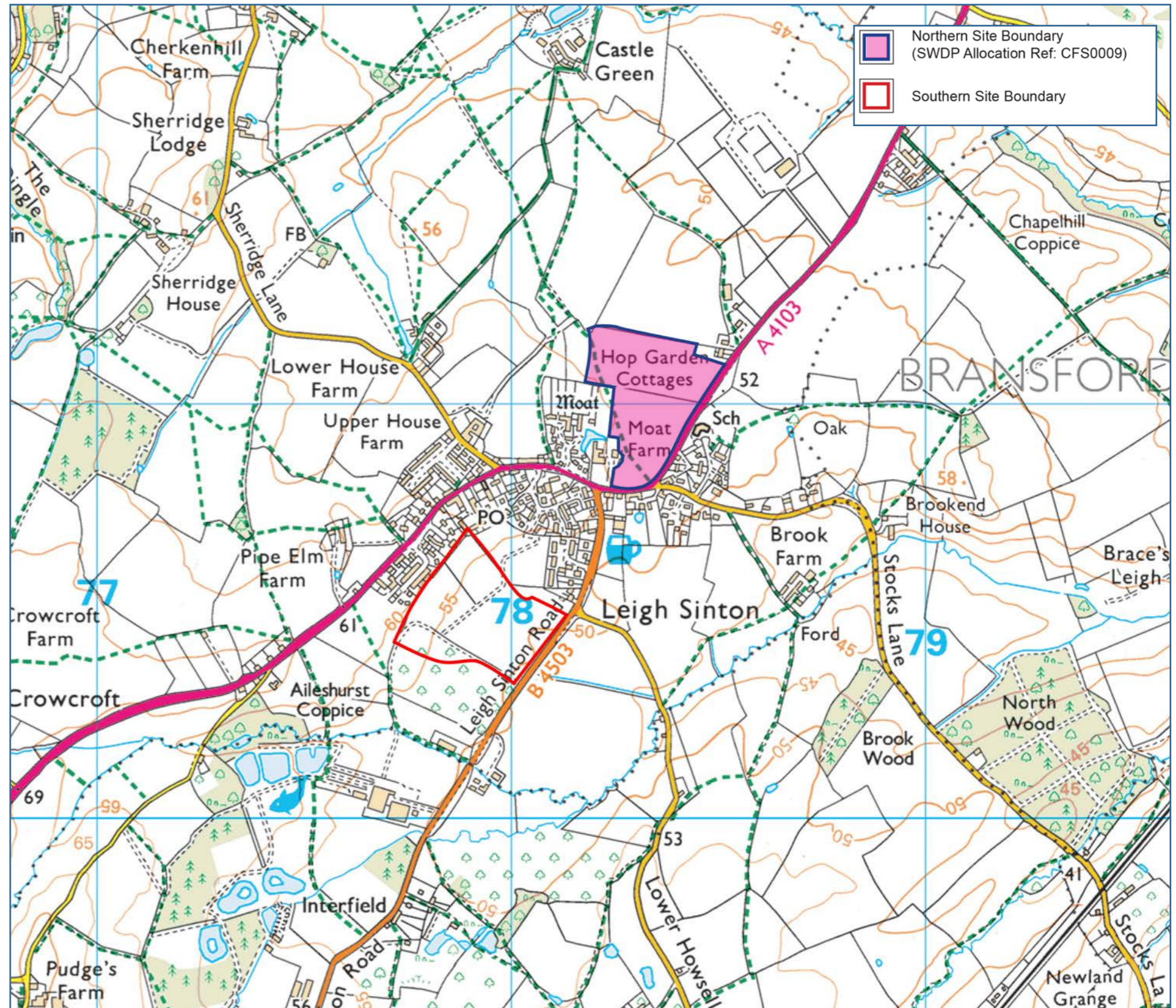
## Background

- 1.1 This Landscape Statement has been prepared for Lone Star Land to provide a consultation response to the South Worcestershire Development Plan Preferred Options 2019.
- 1.2 This statement provides a high level overview of the landscape and visual context of two sites which are located on the edge of the settlement of Leigh Sinton in Worcestershire, and their suitability to accommodate residential development and community facilities to address the needs of the settlement of Leigh Sinton.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this Landscape Statement the sites have been referred to separately, with the first site referred to as the 'Northern Site' and the second referred to as the 'Southern Site', as illustrated on **Plan 1: Site Location**.
- 1.4 The 'Northern Site' is identified within the South Worcestershire Development Plan Preferred Options as a potential housing allocation (reference SWDP CFS0009). Located on the northern edge of the village, the site is located off the A4103 to the west of Leigh and Bransford Primary School.
- 1.5 The southern site is located to the southern edge of the settlement, sitting between Leigh Sinton Road and the existing settlement edge on the site of the Leigh Sinton Christmas tree plantation.
- 1.6 This report will provide a high level review of each site, and their suitability to accommodate residential development, with an assessment of the landscape planning policy, published landscape character, site specific character and the visual situation of the each site.
- 1.7 The report does not constitute an LVIA or LVA.

## Executive Summary

- 1.8 The following provides an overview of the key findings of the Landscape Statement and the context of the southern site:
  - Development will not be an incongruous feature within the landscape and will be seen in the setting of existing residential development;
  - The site has a contained and secluded character which limits potential views from the wider landscape;

Plan 1: Site Location (12246/P06)



Tyler Grange  
© Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2019. Licence number 0100031673

---

## 1 Introduction and Context

- Overall views of the development of the site will be limited and localised;
  - The site is not experienced as an open site, or one which serves to provide a sense of separation between the northern edge of Malvern and the southern edge of Leigh Sinton and as such does not contribute to the Strategic Gap designation;
  - The development of the site would provide opportunities to increase characteristic native hedgerow and Oak tree planting and enhancements to boundary planting; and
  - Development of the site will be a logical extension to the existing settlement edge and development will be retained within the existing settlement pattern and extents.
- 1.9 The following provides an overview of the key findings of the Landscape Statement and the context of the northern site:
- The site has open rural qualities, sitting on the edge of the settlement;
  - Although sitting on the edge of the existing settlement, the sites open qualities and characteristics are in keeping with the rural land to the north;
  - Development would extend the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton outside of the existing settlement boundaries and into the wider more rural landscape to the north;
  - The rural qualities of the site will be impacted by residential development, and the open nature of the site will be impacted by development when viewed from the south from the A4103; and
  - Existing internal tree and hedge planting provide characteristic features within the landscape which should be retained, with opportunities for enhancement.
- 1.10 This Landscape Statement and review of the northern and southern sites has found that on balance the southern site has the most potential to accommodate residential development, and provides a more suitable location to accommodate residential development for Leigh Sinton.
- 1.11 The contained nature of the southern site and the presence of existing residential development on adjacent land provides a logical location for additional residential development. The existing land use and boundary planting provides an enclosed character with existing evergreen tree planting limiting views from the wider landscape.
- 1.12 It is recognised that the site falls within the Strategic Gap Designation, and this report has found that residential development on the site will not cause adverse effects on this designation. The site is not open, will not lead to coalescence of Leigh Sinton and Malvern and the proposed development will be retained within the settlement extents.
- 1.13 In comparison, the northern site is open in character and more exposed with rural characteristics to the north. The site is open in its nature when viewed from the A4103 and its development would see an extension to the settlement edge outside of the settlement boundaries to the north of Leigh Sinton.
- 1.14 The preceding sections provide a more detailed review of both sites and their landscape and visual context.

**Site Context**

- 2.1 The site is located on the southern edge of Leigh Sinton. Located on the Leigh Sinton Christmas Tree Farm land the site sits within the existing settlement extents as illustrated on **Plan 2**.

**Site Specific Character**

- 2.2 The site is well related to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton, and is contained in its character by the established Christmas Tree Farm and its associated planting and land use (as illustrated on **Photo 1 and 2**).
- 2.3 The site slopes to the south east towards Leigh Sinton Road with the highest part of the site located adjacent to the existing residential development located off the A4103.
- 2.4 The northern boundary of the site is formed by the recently completed CALA residential development (application reference 14/01140/REM and as illustrated on **Photo 3**) and to the north west by residential estate located off the A4103. The eastern boundary is formed by established mature hedgerow and tree planting which flanks Leigh Sinton Road. This is an established boundary hedgerow, and although gaps are present at field gates much of this boundary creates an enclosed and contained character for the site.
- 2.5 The southern boundary, cuts through the Christmas Tree Farm and immediately adjacent to this the existing Christmas tree plantation creates a sense of enclosure and contained character, with evergreen tree planting forming a strong buffer along the southern part of the site.
- 2.6 The site is well related to the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton along the north western and northern boundaries and shares characteristics with the settlement edge, with the existing residential properties directly overlooking the site and seen sitting along the skyline (as illustrated on **Photo 3**). Residential development is a common feature within the landscape.
- 2.7 There are no public rights of way present within the site boundaries and there are a number of publicly accessible footpaths to the south of the site in the wider landscape.

**Published Landscape Character**

- 2.8 The site falls within the 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' Landscape Character Type as described by the Worcestershire

Landscape Character Assessment. Key characteristics of relevance to the site include:

- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees;
  - Hedgerow boundaries to fields;
  - Small scale landscape with hedgerow trees filtering views;
  - Oak is the predominant features of the landscape;
- 2.9 The Landscape guidelines state that there is a requirement to:
- “maintain the tree cover character of hedgerow oaks, and enhance he age structure of the hedgerow oak population;
  - “Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations”;
  - Encourage the planting of new woodlands.....favouring oak as the major species.

- 2.10 The site shares some of these characteristics with the presence of native hedgerow to site boundaries, but the presence of the Christmas tree plantation is not a characteristic feature as identified within the published landscape character assessment and opportunities exist to enhance and increase characteristic landscape features within the development of the site with opportunities to increase Oak and hedgerow planting through the site.

**Visual Situation**

- 2.11 Although a full visual survey has not been carried out, from an initial site visit it is evident that the site is well enclosed by the presence of existing evergreen tree planting, established hedgerow and tree planting at boundaries and the presence of the existing Christmas tree plantation which provides a strong physical and visual buffer and assists in filtering views of the site (as illustrated on **Photo 1**).
- 2.12 Views from Leigh Sinton Road to the east of the site are filtered by the presence of an established hedgerow and tree planting which serves to limit views of the site (as illustrated on **Photo 2**).
- 2.13 Direct views of the site will be possible from the existing residential properties to the north of the site (as illustrated on **Photo 3**), and the new CALA development.
- 2.14 Overall though, views in the wider landscape are limited due to

the presence of the established boundary planting, the existing Christmas tree plantation to the south and the presence of built form to the north of the site.

- 2.15 From the west, views of the site will be seen in the context of the emerging residential development located off the A4103, whose built form will filter views of the site when complete (as illustrated on **Photo 4**).
- 2.16 It is likely that views of the site will be possible from the wider network of footpaths along the high points of the Malvern Hills to the south of the site, but these views from the Malverns are panoramic and the presence of additional built form seen within these views would not be uncharacteristic. Additional residential development seen within the context of the existing settlement edge and surrounded by the existing retained planting of the Christmas tree plantation to the south will further filter views and soften the built form.
- 2.17 Any changes to views will be localised and limited, due to the presence of established planting and built form.

**Landscape Policy**

- 2.18 The site is identified as being within the Significant Gap Designation (Policy DS17) as identified within the adopted South Worcestershire Development Plan and as illustrated on Figure 1 below:

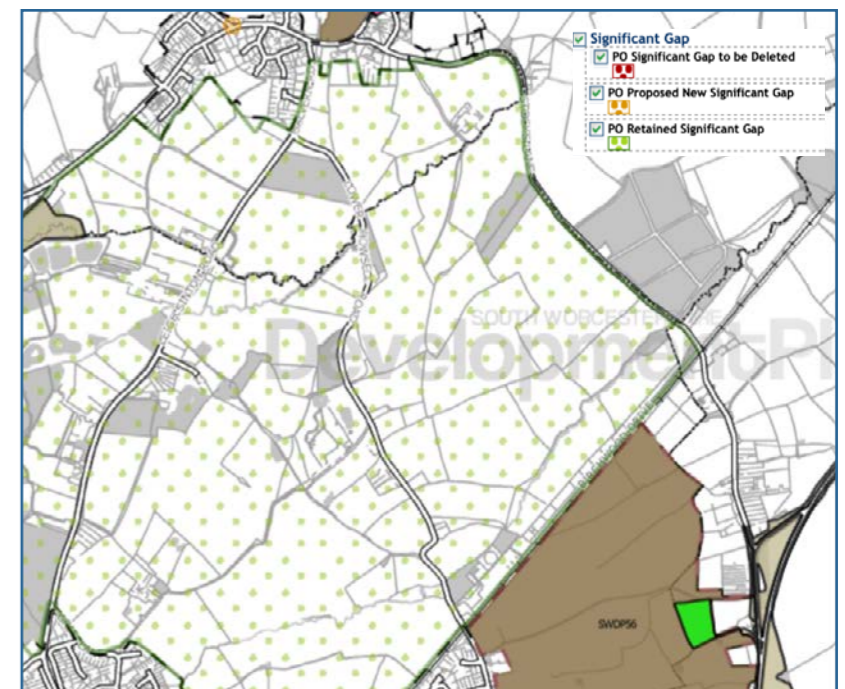


Figure 1: SWDP Significant Gap

- 2.19 The Significant Gap designation states that “planning permission will not be granted for development unless it is appropriate to a rural area and has no demonstrably adverse effect on the existing open and essentially undeveloped character of the land. Acceptable development may include the re-use of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, home-based businesses, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings”
- 2.20 It goes on to state that “The Policy aims to provide additional protection to some of the most vulnerable gaps or fringe/buffer areas between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas at Malvern which are subject to development pressures and it is considered important in landscape terms to maintain a clear separation between settlements and urban areas in order to avoid coalescence. It states that “development within the strategic gaps could reduce the visual separation of settlements in a variety of ways. For example development could introduce urban features into a predominantly rural landscape, it could be visually prominent, it could require the removal of trees, woodland or other topographical features that perform an important screening function or it could reduce the feeling of openness or the undeveloped character of the gaps.
- 2.21 The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) Preferred Options has produced a Significant Gaps Appraisal, which assesses the merits of the current SWDP Significant Gap and whether there is the potential for areas to be amended or removed from the designation.
- 2.22 The review of the planning merits identified high level questions relating the the Significant Gap designation. These are: “What purpose are they serving” and “Are the necessary”.
- 2.23 The review states that the Significant Gap has the primary purpose and function to “keep land open (Nb. not necessarily free of development) in order to prevent neighbouring development from coalescing and to provide an appropriate setting for settlements”.
- 2.24 It states that “The underlying overarching presumption is that it is good planning practice to keep settlements separate if at all possible in order to retain their individual identity and identifies the following which should be considered in the Significant Gap review:
- The importance of the (open) gap. Is it obvious that, without it development is likely to lead to coalescence;

- Is the extent of the current Significant Gap necessary? Could physical openness and visual openness be maintained/ achieved with a reduced gap?;
- Would the land remain largely open if there was no Significant Gap policy designation?;
- Scale:..... generally speaking, the smaller the current Significant Gap, the greater the likely impact of built development on its openness;
- Public accessibility: It is easier to justify a Significant Gap if it straddles a main road, railway etc, as visual perception is an important factor ie the more enclosed the affected land is, the less the justification for a significant Gap; and
- Development pressure: Over and above planned development, is the Significant Gap in an area likely to be the subject of speculative planning applications.”

- 2.25 The review assesses the Leigh Sinton Significant Gap and states that its purpose is to separate Leigh Sinton from Malvern. It states that there would be a limited reduction to the extent of the designation to retain its purpose, but identifies that the most adequate location for any reduction would be on the southern edge of Leigh Sinton.
- 2.26 It identifies that the Significant Gap is visible from a number of public roads and PRowS and recommends that with the exception of a few discrete land parcels on the southern edge of Leigh Sinton, that the Significant Gap Designation should be retained.
- 2.27 In response to the published SWDP Review, the following provides a site specific review of the Significant Gap designation in relation to the specific questions, and the contribution the site makes to the purpose of the designation. This should be read in conjunction with **Plan 2**.  
The importance of the (open) gap. Is it obvious that, without it development is likely to lead to coalescence
- 2.28 The development of the site would not impact on the perceived separation of the settlement of Leigh Sinton and the northern edge of Malvern. Development of the site will not lead to coalescence of settlements as the site will sit within the settlement extents at the southern edge of Leigh Sinton and will not encroach into the wider landscape to the south.

Could physical openness and visual openness be maintained/ achieved with a reduced gap?

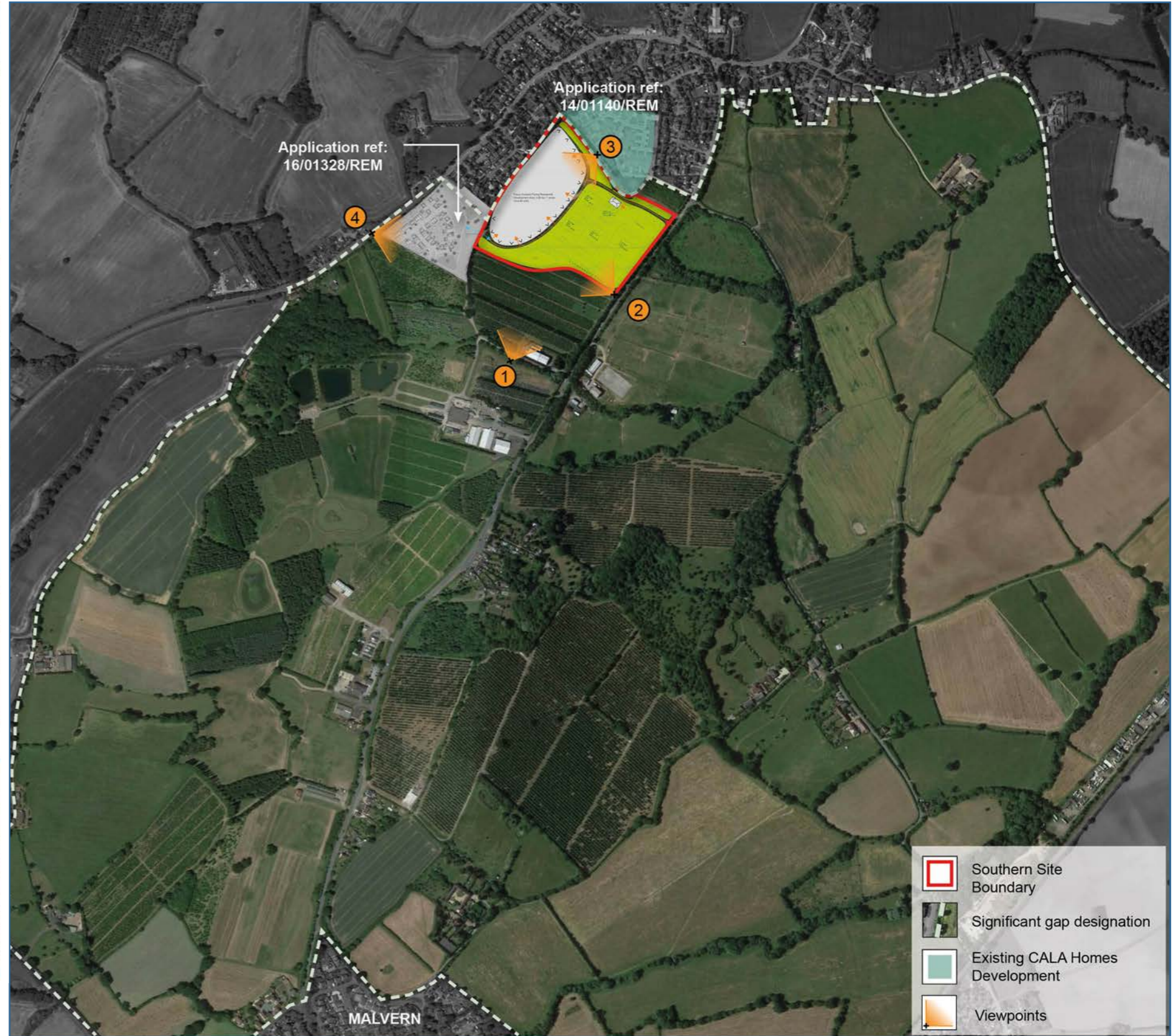
- 2.29 The site is not visually prominent, and the presence of existing tree planting found along the A4103 and to the south at the existing Christmas tree plantation provides a sense of enclosure and containment, reducing the potential feeling of physical and visual openness across the site.  
Would the land remain largely open if there was no Significant Gap policy designation?
- 2.30 The development of the site proposes that the north western part of the site will be residential development with the remaining part of the site to the south and east proposed for recreational and community use. This recreational and community use will remain undeveloped, and the land retained within the Significant Gap.  
The smaller the significant Gap, the greater the likely impact of built development on its openness
- 2.31 The significant gap covers approximately 1.7km from the southern edge of Leigh Sinton, to the northern edge of Malvern. The development of the site will extend 0.3km south into the Significant Gap on the southern most edge of Leigh Sinton, and will sit within the existing settlement edge. It will therefore not be detrimental to the openness of the Significant Gap.  
The more the enclosed the affected land is, the less the justification for a Significant Gap
- 2.32 The presence of mature evergreen and deciduous tree planting provides an enclosed and contained character from the south and east, with existing and proposed residential development at the north and west providing a secluded character.
- 2.33 The development of the site will not introduce development into a rural open landscape, with the presence of the existing urban edge providing a strong influence within the landscape, and the adjacent residential developments to the west and north further providing a settled urban edge character.
- 2.34 Planning application (reference 16/01325/REM for 35 dwellings, which was allowed on appeal) to the west of the site is located within the Strategic Gap as illustrated on **Plan 2** and this development will extend the settlement edge to the south of Leigh Sinton. The development of the site will not extend any further south than this and will remain within the settlement extents.



### Summary

- 2.35 In summary, the development of the site will not be an incongruous feature within the landscape, with adjacent residential developments to the north and west providing settlement edge characteristics. The contained character and nature of the site limits views from the wider landscape.
- 2.36 Residential receptors from dwellings at the north and west of the site will experience a change to their view. Transitional receptors travelling along Leigh Sinton Road will likely experience glimpsed views of the site through field gates. Overall views will be limited and localised.
- 2.37 The site is not experienced as an open site, or one which serves to provide a sense of separation between the northern edge of Malvern or the southern edge of Leigh Sinton and as such does not contribute to the Strategic Gap designation, and development on the site would have detrimental impacts on this designation. As stated within the SWDP Review, development on the southern edge of Leigh Sinton is deemed as the most suitable location for development within the Significant Gap land.
- 2.38 The development of the site would provide opportunities to increase characteristic native hedgerow and Oak tree planting and enhancements to boundary planting with increased opportunities to enhance the existing Green Infrastructure corridors within the wider landscape. Development of the site will be a logical extension to the existing settlement edge and development will be retained within the existing settlement pattern and extents.

Plan 2: Site Location (12246/P02b)



Tyler Grange  
© Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2019. Licence number 0100031673

### 3 Northern Site

#### Site Context

- 3.1 The site is located on the northern edge of Leigh Sinton and is identified as an allocated with within the South Worcestershire Development Plan (CFS0009) as illustrated on **Plan 3**.

#### Site Specific Character

- 3.2 The allocated site is located on the northern edge of Leigh Sinton and covers 8.64 hectares of land. The site is currently used for arable land and is located to the north and west of the A4103.
- 3.3 The site extends to the north along the A4103 beyond the existing settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. To the south, existing residential development is present off Nash Green (as illustrated on **Photo 2**), and to the east is Leigh and Bransford Primary School. Scattered residential properties are present along the A4103 to the north of the site.
- 3.4 The topography across the site is relatively flat, with the highest point located on the south western corner, adjacent to the existing settlement edge. One public right of way is present, and runs through the site cutting across from the A4103 at the southern boundary, to the north western corner of the site, linking to the wider network of footpaths in the landscape to the north west.
- 3.5 An existing native hedgerow runs across the site from east to west (as illustrated on **Photo 3**), and separates the site into two distinct parcels of land. Two mature trees are present at the central part of the site, and mature tree planting is also found at the boundaries to the north and north west. There are no other internal landscape features present within the site.
- 3.6 The southern and eastern boundaries of the site are flanked by a low, gappy and open hedgerow along with remnant metal estate railings, which follow the A4103 (as illustrated on **Photo 1**). To the north, the site is bound by hedgerow and field boundary trees separating the site from the wider landscape and scattered residential properties and farmsteads located off the A4103.
- 3.7 To the south west, residential properties located at Nash Green and their rear gardens form the boundaries of the site. The north western part of the site is bound by an established native hedgerow and scattered field boundary trees which separate the wider and more rural land to the north west.
- 3.8 Within the northern area the presence of internal landscape

features and hedgerow planting on the northern part of the site provides a much more open and rural character, and this part of the site shares more characteristics with the wider rural land to the north. This openness is evident when travelling out of the village to the north along the A4103.

#### Published Landscape Character

- 3.9 The site falls within the 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' Landscape Character Type as described by the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment. Key characteristics of relevance to the site include:
- Notable pattern of hedgerow trees;
  - Hedgerow boundaries to fields;
  - Small scale landscape with hedgerow trees filtering views;
  - Oak is the predominant features of the landscape;
- 3.10 The Landscape guidelines state that there is a requirement to:
- "maintain the tree cover character of hedgerow oaks, and enhance the age structure of the hedgerow oak population;
  - "Seek opportunities to enhance tree cover along highways and other non-farmed locations";
  - Encourage the planting of new woodlands..... favouring oak as the major species.
- 3.11 The site shares some of these characteristics with the presence of native hedgerow and Oak trees present within the site boundaries.

#### Visual Situation

- 3.12 Although a full visual survey has not been carried out, from an initial site visit it is evident that there are direct uninterrupted views of the site from the A4103 (as illustrated on **Photo 1**), where the low and gappy hedgerow and open metal estate fencing affords open views towards to the north and west across the site. These views provide an open and exposed character when travelling north outside of Leigh Sinton along the A4103.
- 3.13 The presence of a public footpath running through the site will result in direct and uninterrupted views for receptors of any development (as illustrated on **Photo 2**). The low lying topography of the site limits visibility from the wider landscape,

and it is likely that views from the west will be filtered by the presence of existing hedge planting (as illustrated on **Photo 3**), but also likely that views of rooflines may be possible. There will be direct and uninterrupted views from residential properties located to the south of the site at dwellings located at The Nash, as well as from Leigh and Bransford Primary School to the east of the site and from scattered dwellings to the north along the A4103 (as illustrated on **Photo 4**).

- 3.14 It is likely that there may be longer distance views of the site from the higher land to the south of the site from the public footpath network at the Malvern Hills. Any views from the Malvern Hills will be panoramic and seen in the context of the existing development and settlement of Leigh Sinton.

#### Landscape Policy

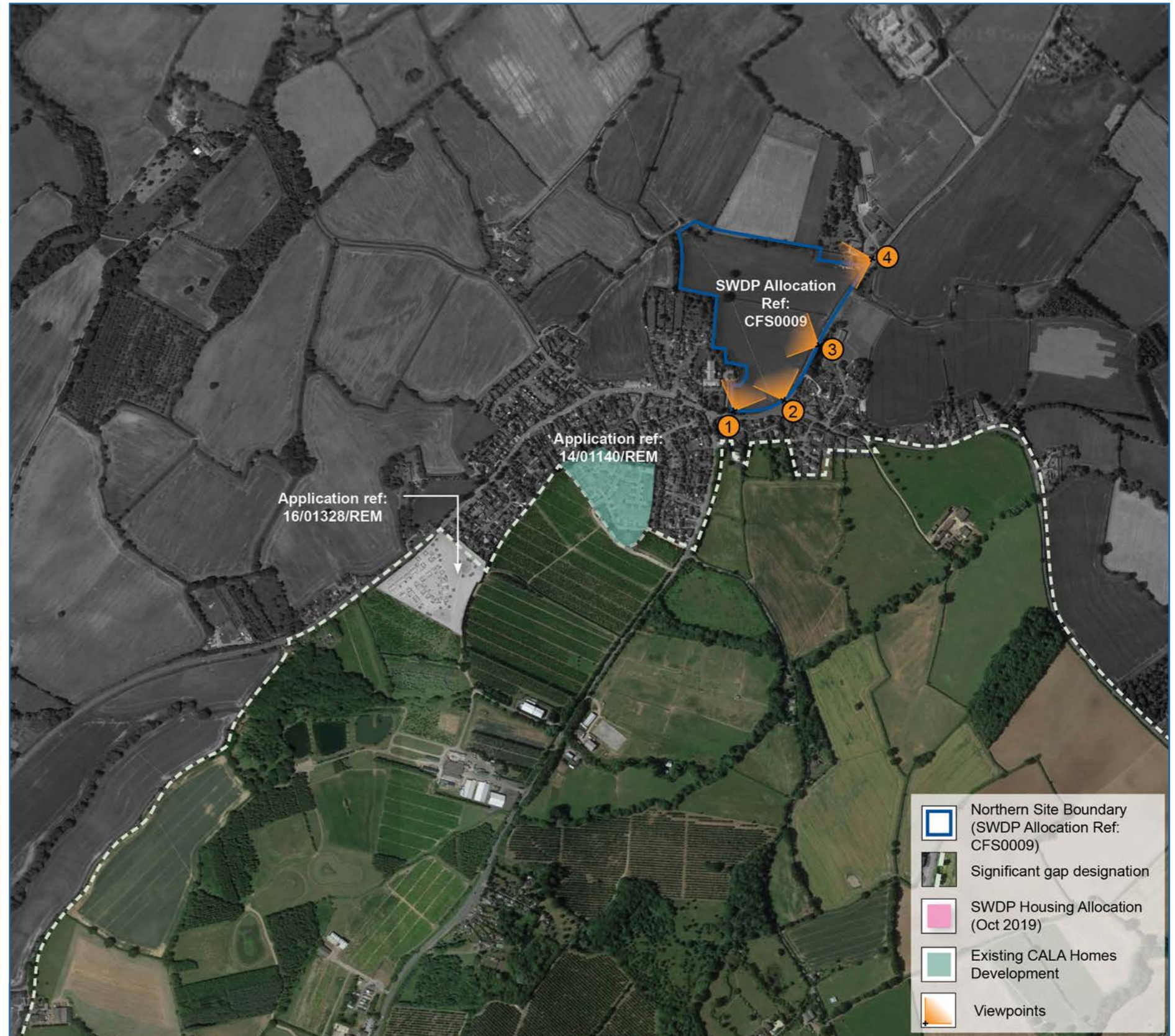
- 3.15 The site is identified within the South Worcestershire Development Plan for development and is identified as having the capacity to accommodate an indicative 52 dwellings as well as community recreational facilities (SWDP allocated site reference CFS0009). The site does not fall within any landscape designations, and is not within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are four listed buildings located to the south of the site, but there is limited intervisibility between these and the site. There is no conservation area within the vicinity of the site.

#### Summary

- 3.16 In conclusion, development on the site would extend the existing settlement edge outside of the existing settlement boundaries to the north of Leigh Sinton.
- 3.17 There will be a potential impact on recreational receptors using the existing PRoW through the site, transitional receptors travelling along the A4103 and residential receptors living to the south of the site and in scattered dwellings to the north. This change to views will impact on the open nature of the site and it's rural qualities as seen when travelling north along the A4103.
- 3.18 There are opportunities to increase tree and hedgerow cover within the site, and to enhance these characteristic landscape features. Enhancements to the existing tree and hedgerow planting to boundaries would increase the landscape structure and assist in filtering views of the site. Although the southern part of the site has settlement edge characteristics, any development would be detrimental to the rural and open qualities of the site.

### 3 Northern Site

Plan 3: Northern Site Context (12246/P05)



Tyler Grange  
© Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2019. Licence number 0100031673