



South Warwickshire Local Plan: Report on the outcomes of the Spatial Growth Strategy Workshops

Report published: September 2022

During June and July 2022, workshops were run with a range of stakeholders to help refine the spatial growth strategy for the South Warwickshire Local Plan. These workshops represent one piece of evidence which plays an important role in shaping the strategy, alongside evidence from other sources.

At the workshops, delegates were provided with a large map of South Warwickshire, and building blocks to represent 35,000 homes and 330 hectares of employment land. At the time the workshops were run (before the publication of the HEDNA) this represented the best estimate of the quantum of development to be delivered during the plan period. Delegates worked in groups to decide on the most appropriate distribution of homes and employment land across the South Warwickshire area. The smallest units delegates could place were 50 homes, or 30 hectares of employment land.

The exercise was run twice; once with Green Belt policy “on” – i.e. with no development permitted in the Green Belt; and once with Green Belt policy “off” – where delegates could include Green Belt land if they wished.

The workshops were run with the following groups:

South Warwickshire Plan Advisory Group – Consisting of elected Members from Stratford and Warwick Councils

Elected Members – Invitations were sent to all Members from both Councils. Two sessions were run, with a total of 4 groups across both sessions.

Officer Steering Group – A group of key officers from Stratford District Council, Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council, representing a range of departments including Planning Policy and Development Management, Housing, Economic Development, Green Spaces, Infrastructure, Highways, and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Stakeholders – Invitations were sent to a wide range of organisations previously consulted on the SWLP, including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local interest groups, and Town and Parish Councils. A total of 8 groups across 3 workshop events.

Land interests – Invitations were sent to “Call for Sites” submitters (a mixture of individuals, organisations and agents), as well other stakeholders from the consultation database with a land focus – including land promoters, developers and planning agencies. A total of 6 groups across 2 workshop events.

Senior Management (officers) and Cabinet (Members) from each Council.

As a separate process, members of the SWLP officer team have run similar exercises exploring specific spatial growth options in more detail. As the focus of these was different, the outcomes are not included here.

In total the exercise has been run 48 times. This paper provides a commentary on the key themes and outcomes. It is intended that this will help shape the spatial growth strategy options taken forward to the Issues and Options consultation.

Green Belt

The West Midlands Green Belt covers 34% of the South Warwickshire area, in the North West. It stretches from the South Warwickshire boundary, adjacent to the urban areas of Redditch and Coventry, as far as the northern edges of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick and Leamington Spa. The southern edges of these three towns, and of Whitnash, are not in Green Belt. A number of settlements are wholly surrounded by Green Belt, including Kenilworth, Studley, Henley-in-Arden and Alcester.

All of the railway stations in South Warwickshire are either in Green Belt, in a settlement inset within the Green Belt, or in a settlement adjacent to the Green Belt.

Housing – Green Belt “on”

i.e. no development permitted in the Green Belt

The conurbation of Warwick, Leamington Spa and Whitnash was fairly consistently chosen for growth, with 20 of the 24 groups placing housing here. This ranged from modest growth of 100 dwellings to significant extensions of 8,000, with an average of 2,500¹. With the Green Belt policy “on”, this growth was all directed to the South and East of the conurbation.

All but one group placed housing in Stratford-upon-Avon, ranging from 1,000 to 6,000 homes, and an average of 3,300. The position of the Green Belt means this growth is to the East, South and South-West of the town.

The existing new settlement locations of Long Marston Airfield (LMA) and Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath (GLH) were both frequently chosen for additional growth beyond the current allocations. LMA was selected by 20 groups with an average of 2,800 dwellings; GLH was selected by 22 groups with an average of 3,400 dwellings.

The other settlements most regularly chosen for growth were Shipston-on-Stour (all 24 groups), Southam (24 groups), Bidford-on-Avon (23 groups), Wellesbourne (23 groups) and Kineton (20 groups). The averages for these settlements ranged between 900 and 2,500 dwellings.

A number of groups chose to place growth in new settlements. Growth of at least 5,000 dwellings was seen in the following locations away from existing larger settlements: Depper’s Bridge (5 groups), Fenny Compton (3 groups), Knightcote (2 groups), and once at each of Avon Dasset, Exhall, Harbury, and the M40 Warwick Services. The largest new settlement placed was 15,000 dwellings, but sizes between 5,000 and 10,000 dwellings were more common.

Growth of at least 1,000 dwellings was also frequently placed, sometimes as a smaller new settlement, and often as significant extensions to existing villages. Some of the smaller settlements frequently seeing growth of this scale include Radford Semele (9 groups), Bishop’s Tachbrook (8 groups), Barford (6 groups), and Long Itchington (6 groups).

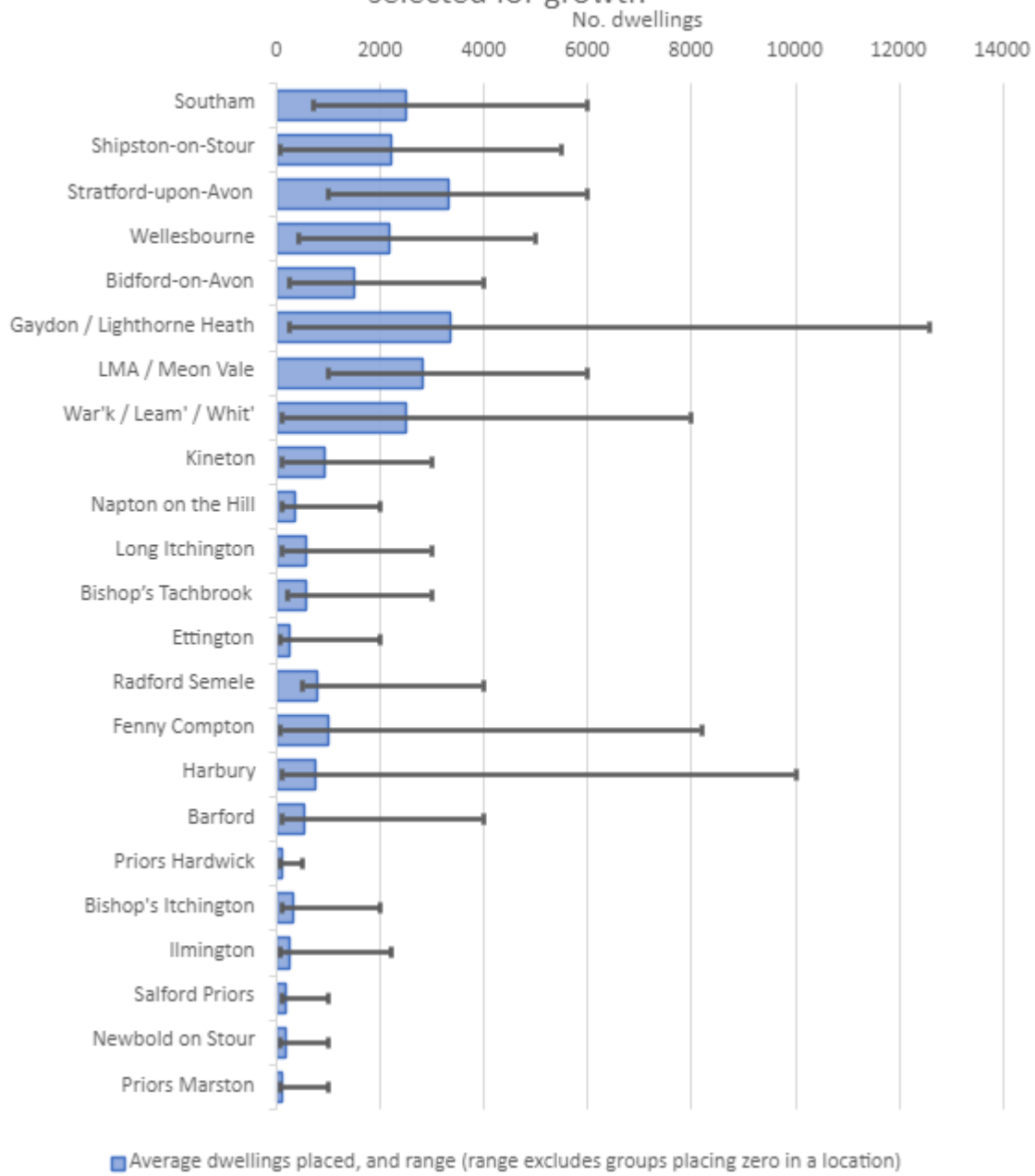
Groups were divided on how much they dispersed growth in smaller placements. 4 groups made no placements of less than 500 dwellings, while one group dispersed 21% of their dwellings in small placements. In total across all groups, 5% of dwellings were dispersed in placements of less than 500 dwellings.

¹ All averages presented here are the mean, rounded to the nearest 100 dwellings. Groups placing zero dwellings at a particular location are included in the calculation of averages.

Housing – Green Belt “on” – locations selected by at least 10 groups (out of 24)

Location	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of any size (out of 24)	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of at least 1,000 dwellings	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of at least 5,000 dwellings	Average (mean) dwellings placed	Smallest amount placed (excluding groups placing zero dwellings in a location)	Largest amount placed
Southam	24	23	1	2,500	700	6,000
Shipston-on-Stour	24	19	3	2,200	50	5,500
Stratford-upon-Avon	23	23	6	3,300	1,000	6,000
Wellesbourne	23	18	2	2,200	400	5,000
Bidford-on-Avon	23	15	0	1,500	250	4,000
Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath	22	19	4	3,400	250	12,600
Long Marston Airfield / Meon Vale	20	20	4	2,800	1,000	6,000
Warwick / Leamington Spa / Whitnash conurbation	20	16	4	2,500	100	8,000
Kineton	20	12	0	900	100	3,000
Napton on the Hill	15	4	0	400	100	2,000
Long Itchington	14	6	0	600	100	3,000
Bishop's Tachbrook	14	8	0	600	200	3,000
Ettington	14	2	0	200	50	2,000
Radford Semele	13	9	0	800	500	4,000
Fenny Compton	11	4	3	1,000	50	8,200
Harbury	11	3	1	800	100	10,000
Barford	11	6	0	500	100	4,000
Priors Hardwick	11	0	0	100	50	500
Bishop's Itchington	10	3	0	300	100	2,000
Ilmington	10	2	0	200	50	2,200
Salford Priors	10	1	0	200	100	1,000
Newbold on Stour	10	1	0	200	50	1,000
Priors Marston	10	1	0	100	50	1,000

Housing - Green Belt "on" - locations most frequently selected for growth



Housing – Green Belt “off”

i.e. groups could place development in the Green Belt if they chose to

All the groups taking part in this exercise revised their spatial growth strategy to take advantage of Green Belt locations. Across all groups, 33% of dwellings were placed in Green Belt locations. The degree to which groups made use of the Green Belt varied considerably, with groups placing between 6% and 53% of dwellings in Green Belt locations.

Growth placed at the Warwick, Leamington Spa and Whitnash conurbation was slightly more frequent than with the Green Belt on – all 24 groups now placed growth somewhere at this conurbation; but the average of 2,800 dwellings is only slightly greater than the average of 2,500 seen with Green Belt on. Some of the growth was repositioned to areas within the Green Belt. Whitnash had seen an average of 1,300 dwellings with the Green Belt on; this reduced to an average of 700 with Green Belt off. Much of this growth was redistributed to Cubbington, North Leamington, and the Hampton Magna / Warwick Parkway area².

Growth at Stratford-upon-Avon reduced slightly, with an average of 3,000 dwellings compared to 3,300 with the Green Belt on.

The existing new settlements at Long Marston Airfield and Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath continued to receive additional growth, from approximately the same number of groups (21 of the 24 groups each) and slightly lower average sizes than with Green Belt on (LMA with 2,500 dwellings down from 2,800; GLH with 3,100 dwellings down from 3,400).

Of the other settlements most frequently chosen for growth with Green Belt on, some saw only a slight reduction with Green Belt off. Shipston-on-Stour, Southam and Wellesbourne were selected by 20 or 21 groups each, with averages between 1,300 and 1,700 dwellings.

This reduction was more pronounced in Bidford-on-Avon and Kineton, which were each selected for growth by 19 groups, with averages between 600 and 700 dwellings.

The biggest new entry was Henley-in-Arden – selected for growth by all but one of the groups, with growth in the range of 200 to 4,000 dwellings, and an average of 1,500. A less marked new entry was Kenilworth, selected by 17 groups with an average of 1,100 dwellings. Also now featuring for growth were Studley (13 groups, average of 600 dwellings) and Alcester (12 groups, average of 500 dwellings). A number of smaller Green Belt settlements with rail stations were selected a number of times – Wilmcote (14 groups), Kingswood (Lapworth) (12 groups), Hatton Station (10 groups) and Wood End (10 groups).

Growth of 5,000 dwellings or more in new settlement locations was seen in Depper's Bridge (4 groups), Fenny Compton (3 groups), and once each at Claverdon, Harbury, Hatton Station, Knightcote and Wood End.

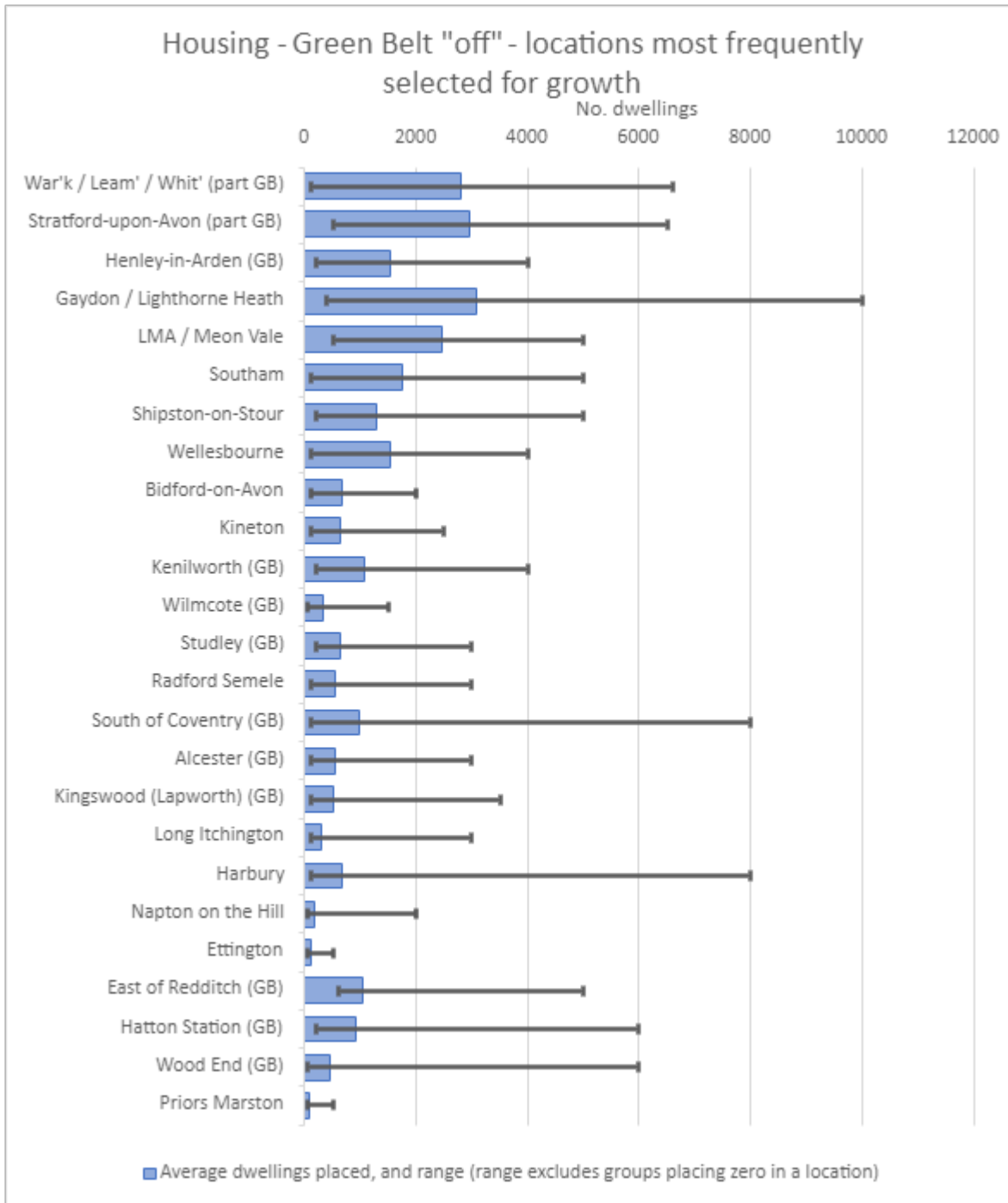
Places adjacent to larger urban areas were selected a number of times for significant growth. South of Coventry was selected 10 times for growth of at least 1,000 dwellings, including once for growth of at least 5,000 dwellings. The area East of Redditch / Mappleborough Green was selected 9 times for growth of at least 1,000 dwellings, including once for growth of at least 5,000.

Overall, 6% of dwellings were dispersed in placements of less than 500 dwellings (compared to 5% with Green Belt on). 4 groups made no smaller placements, while one group dispersed 23% of dwellings into placements smaller than 500.

² Exact figures are not given because directions around the conurbation were not strictly defined.

Housing – Green Belt “off” – locations selected by at least 10 groups (out of 24)

Location	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of any size (out of 24)	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of at least 1,000 dwellings	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of at least 5,000 dwellings	Average (mean) dwellings placed	Smallest amount placed (excluding groups placing zero dwellings in a location)	Largest amount placed
Warwick / Leamington Spa / Whitnash conurbation (part GB)	24	21	5	2,800	100	6,600
Stratford-upon-Avon (part GB)	23	22	4	3,000	500	6,500
Henley-in-Arden (GB)	23	16	0	1,500	200	4,000
Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath	21	20	4	3,100	400	10,000
LMA / Meon Vale	21	19	3	2,500	500	5,000
Southam	21	19	1	1,700	100	5,000
Shipston-on-Stour	21	13	1	1,300	200	5,000
Wellesbourne	20	18	0	1,500	100	4,000
Bidford-on-Avon	19	7	0	700	100	2,000
Kineton	19	8	0	600	100	2,500
Kenilworth (GB)	17	11	0	1,100	200	4,000
Wilmcote (GB)	14	6	0	300	50	1,500
Studley (GB)	13	8	0	600	200	3,000
Radford Semele	13	7	0	600	100	3,000
Areas South of Coventry (GB)	12	10	1	1,000	100	8,000
Alcester (GB)	12	6	0	500	100	3,000
Kingswood (Lapworth) (GB)	12	5	0	500	100	3,500
Long Itchington	12	3	0	300	100	3,000
Harbury	11	5	1	700	100	8,000
Napton on the Hill	11	1	0	200	50	2,000
Ettington	11	0	0	100	50	500
East of Redditch / Mappleborough Green (GB)	10	9	1	1,000	600	5,000
Hatton Station (GB)	10	8	1	900	200	6,000
Wood End (GB)	10	3	1	400	50	6,000
Priors Marston	10	0	0	100	50	500



Employment land – Green Belt “on”

i.e. no development permitted in the Green Belt

The building blocks used to represent employment land were provided in units of 30 hectares. In reality, employment land might well be allocated in smaller parcels than 30 hectares, so using 30 hectare units may have artificially reduced the level of dispersal groups would otherwise have chosen.

On the whole, groups tended to co-locate employment land with significant housing growth. There was often a recognition that the two land uses are co-dependent. This means that the spatial growth strategies used often closely reflect those for housing, with a particular focus on new settlements, or places seeing a significant increase in housing numbers.

The Warwick, Leamington Spa and Whitnash conurbation was selected for employment growth by 11 of the 23 groups³. Three of these placed at least 90 ha, with a maximum of 120 ha placed. The direction most commonly selected was to the south, towards the Grey's Mallory roundabout and M40 junctions 13 and 14.

In Stratford-upon-Avon, 12 groups placed employment land, including 2 groups placing at least 90 ha, to a maximum of 150 ha.

The existing new settlements were routinely selected for further employment growth. Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath was chosen by 19 of the 23 groups with an average of 60 ha placed⁴. Long Marston Airfield was chosen by 16 groups, with an average of 40 ha placed.

Wellesbourne was regularly chosen for employment growth, chosen by 17 groups and an average of 40 ha. Southam and Shipston-on-Stour were each chosen by 10 groups with averages of 20 ha each.

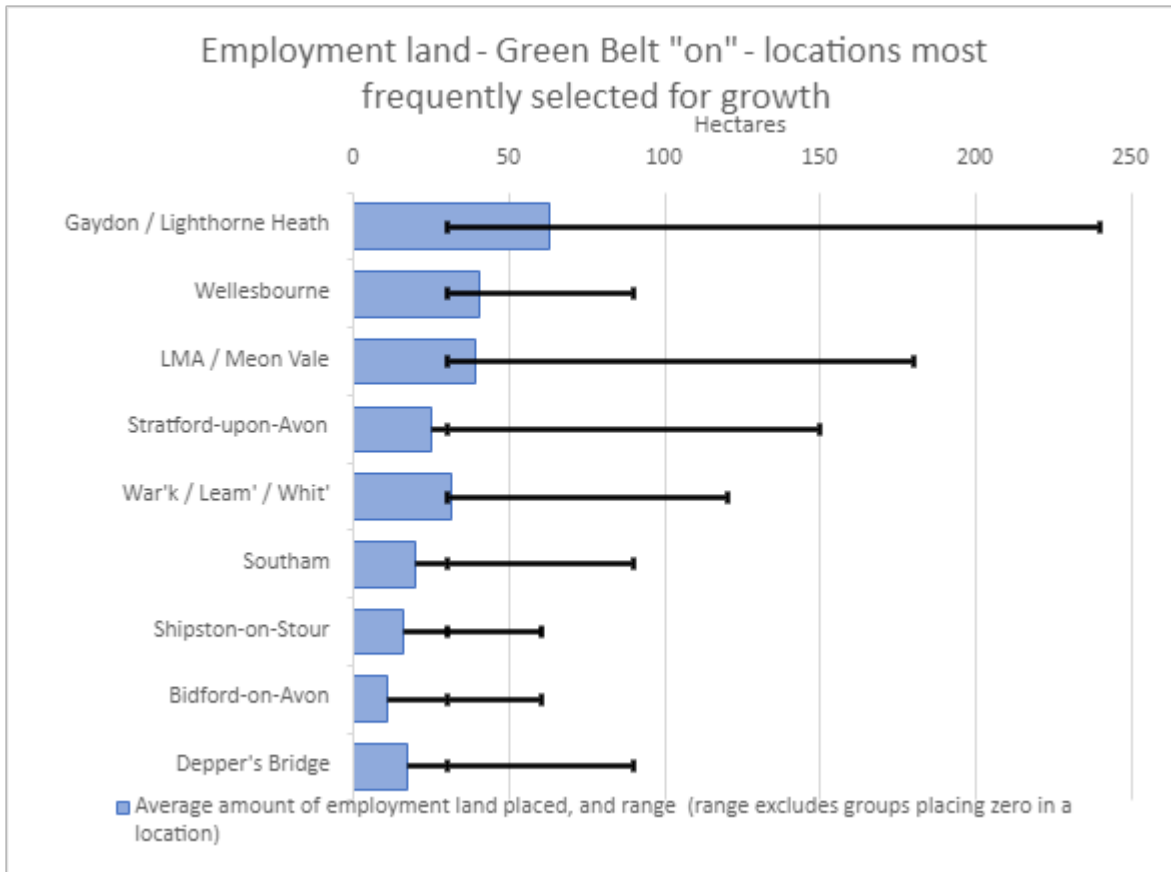
Dispersal of employment land to other settlements was less common than with housing.

Employment land – Green Belt “on” – locations selected by at least 5 groups (out of 23)

Location	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of any size (out of 23)	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of at least 90 hectares	Average (mean) hectares placed	Smallest amount placed (excluding groups placing zero hectares in a location)	Largest amount placed
Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath	19	6	60	30	240
Wellesbourne	17	2	40	30	90
Long Marston Airfield / Meon Vale	16	3	40	30	180
Stratford-upon-Avon	12	2	20	30	150
Warwick / Leamington Spa / Whitnash conurbation	11	3	30	30	120
Southam	10	1	20	30	90
Shipston-on-Stour	10	0	20	30	60
Bidford-on-Avon	7	0	10	30	60
Depper's Bridge	6	2	20	30	90

³ While 24 groups took part in the workshops, the methodology used was revised at an early stage meaning that one group did not place employment land.

⁴ The average amounts of employment land presented here are the mean, rounded to the nearest 10 ha. Groups placing no employment land in a particular location are included in the calculation of these averages. This is why the average placed is frequently less than the 30 ha units delegates could place.



Employment land – Green Belt “off”

i.e. groups could place development in the Green Belt if they chose to

20 of the 23 groups chose to place some employment land in the Green Belt, ranging from 30 to 180 ha. In total across all groups, 29% of employment land was placed in the Green Belt.

The main urban areas were selected slightly more frequently with Green Belt off. The Warwick, Leamington Spa and Whitnash conurbation was selected by 12 groups (compared to 11 with Green Belt on), with the south towards Grey’s Mallory and the M40 remaining the most popular direction.

Stratford-upon-Avon was chosen by 15 groups (compared to 12 with Green Belt on).

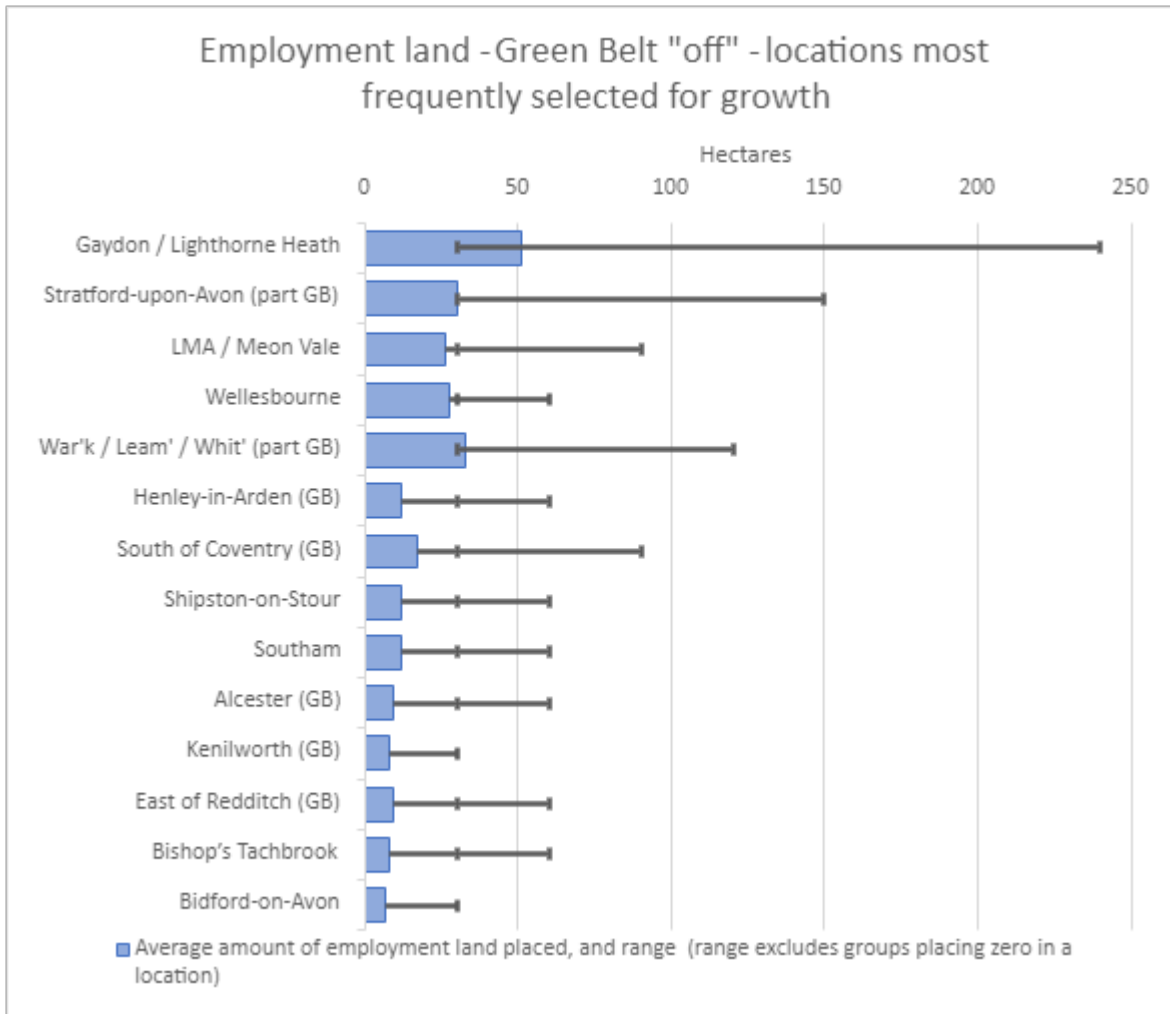
The existing new settlements remained frequent choices for additional employment growth beyond what is already allocated. GLH was chosen 16 times with an average of 50 ha; LMA was chosen 15 times with an average of 30 ha.

Compared to Green Belt “on”, there was a slight drop in selection of Wellesbourne (13 groups), Southam (7 groups) and Shipston-on-Stour (7 groups).

There was no single Green Belt location picking up large quantities of employment land. The most frequently chosen locations were Henley-in-Arden (8 groups), areas South of Coventry (7 groups), Alcester (6 groups) and Kenilworth (6 groups).

Employment land – Green Belt “off” – locations selected by at least 5 groups (out of 23)

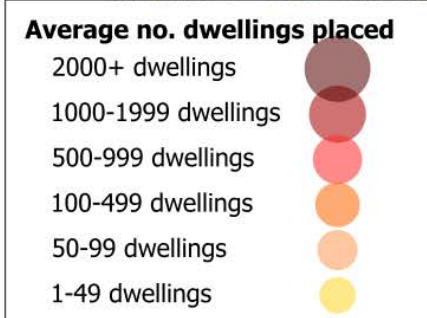
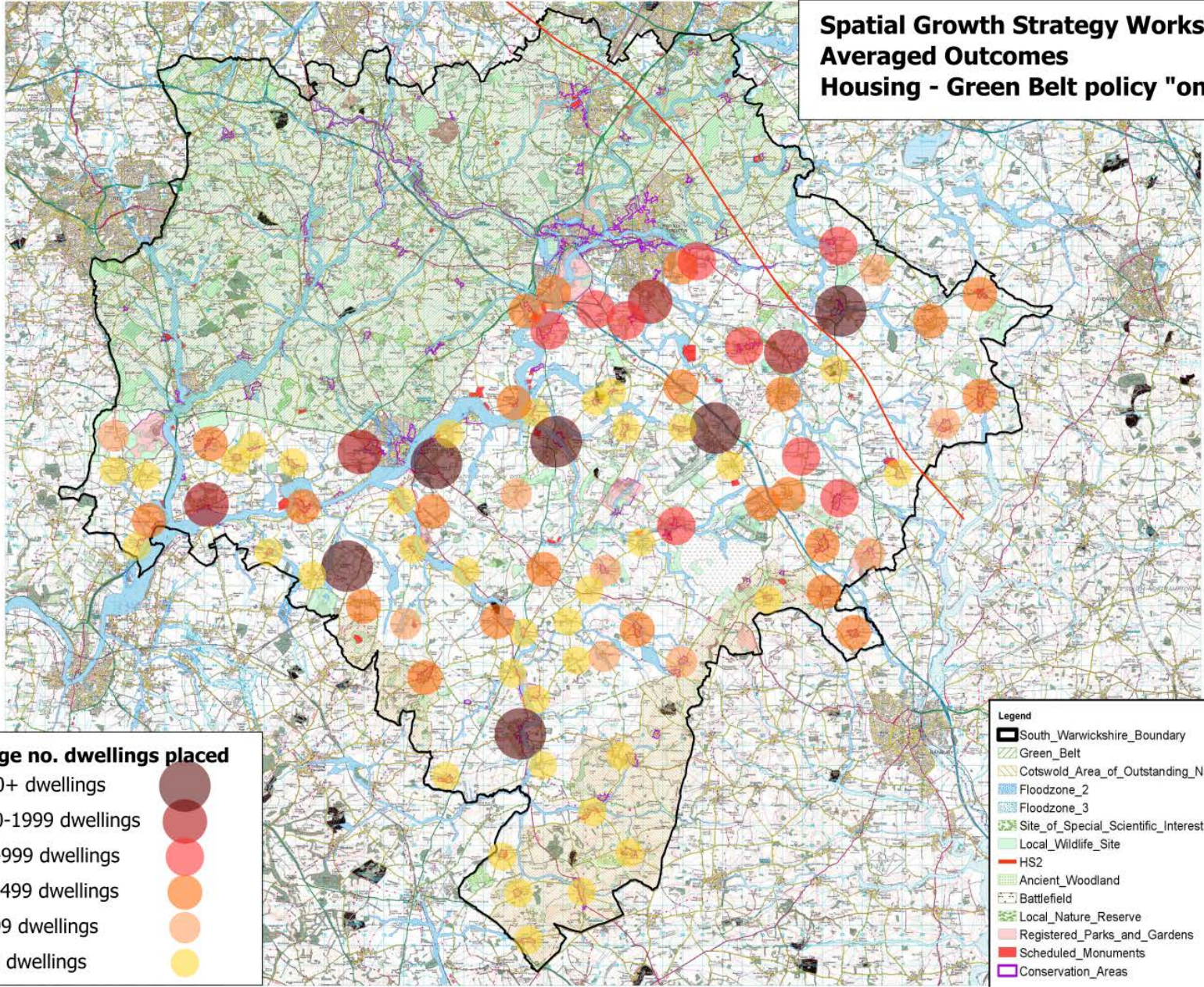
Location	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of any size (out of 23)	No. of groups selecting this location for growth of at least 90 hectares	Average (mean) hectares placed	Smallest amount placed (excluding groups placing zero hectares in a location)	Largest amount placed
Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath	16	4	50	30	240
Stratford-upon-Avon (part GB)	15	1	30	30	150
Long Marston Airfield / Meon Vale	15	2	30	30	90
Wellesbourne	13	0	30	30	60
Warwick / Leamington Spa / Whitnash conurbation (part GB)	12	3	30	30	120
Henley-in-Arden (GB)	8	0	10	30	60
Areas South of Coventry (GB)	7	1	20	30	90
Shipston-on-Stour	7	0	10	30	60
Southam	7	0	10	30	60
Alcester (GB)	6	0	10	30	60
Kenilworth (GB)	6	0	10	30	30
East of Redditch / Mappleborough Green (GB)	5	0	10	30	60
Bishop’s Tachbrook	5	0	10	30	60
Bidford-on-Avon	5	0	10	30	30



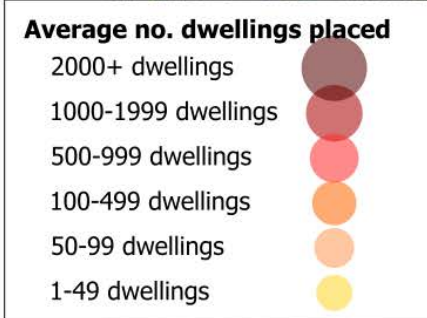
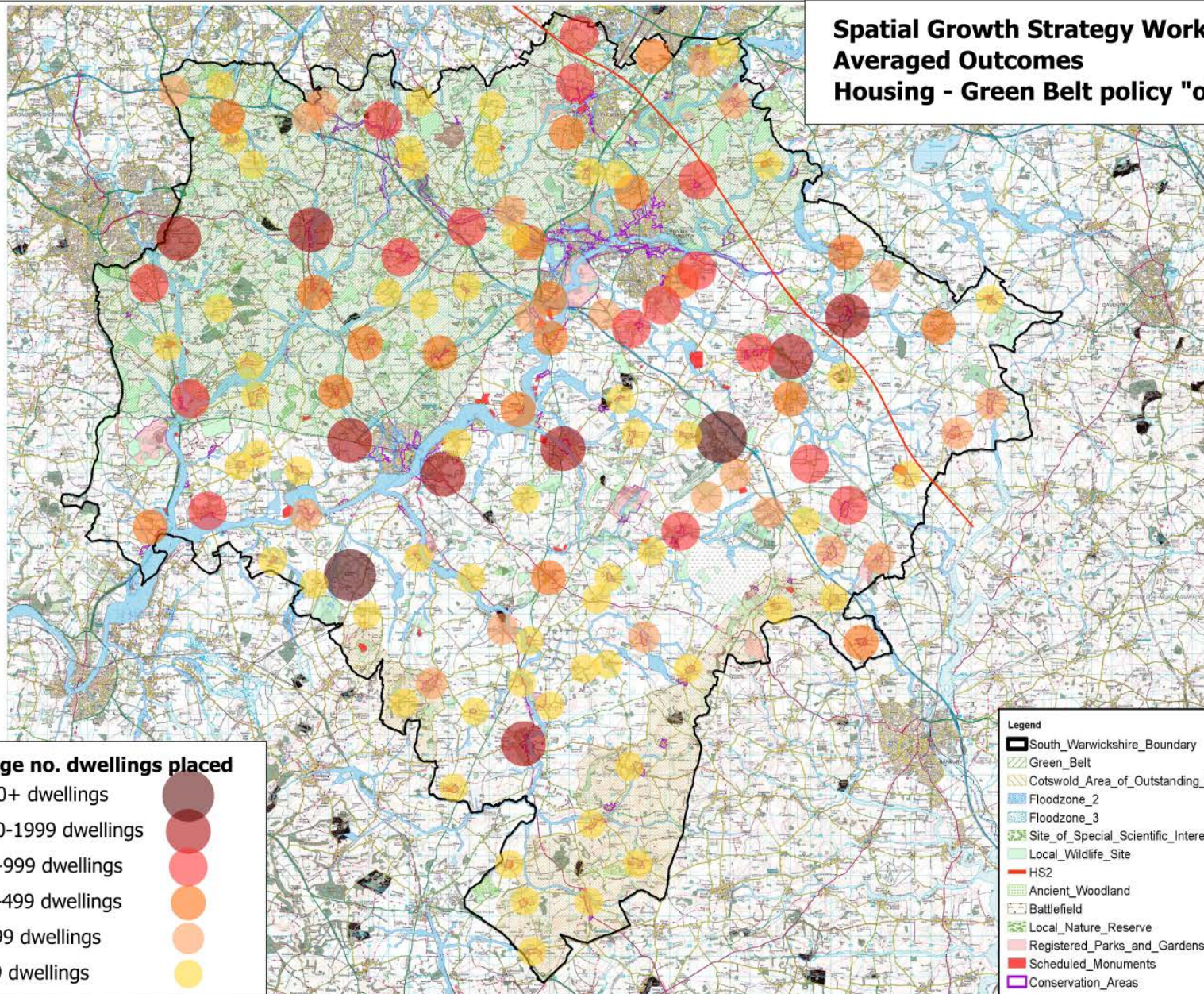
Summary of key findings

- All groups revised their strategy when placements were permitted in Green Belt locations. This is a clear indication that placing all the growth outside of the Green Belt was not felt to be the most suitable spatial growth strategy.
- The Green Belt location most consistently taking growth of housing and employment land was Henley-in-Arden. The second most popular Green Belt location was Kenilworth.
- The main towns were regularly selected for further growth – including the Warwick, Leamington Spa and Whitnash conurbation, and Stratford-upon-Avon.
- The existing new settlements of Gaydon / Lighthorne Heath and Long Marston Airfield were frequently selected for significant further growth in both housing and employment land, beyond what is currently allocated.
- Shipston-on-Stour, Southam, Bidford-on-Avon, Wellesbourne and Kineton were all regularly suggested for further growth. When Green Belt alternatives were permitted, Bidford-on-Avon and Kineton were chosen less frequently.
- Many delegates were open to the idea of further new settlements. No single location was identified as being the most suitable, but there was a preference for locations on existing rail lines.
- Dispersal of growth in smaller placements accounted for a relatively small proportion of housing growth.

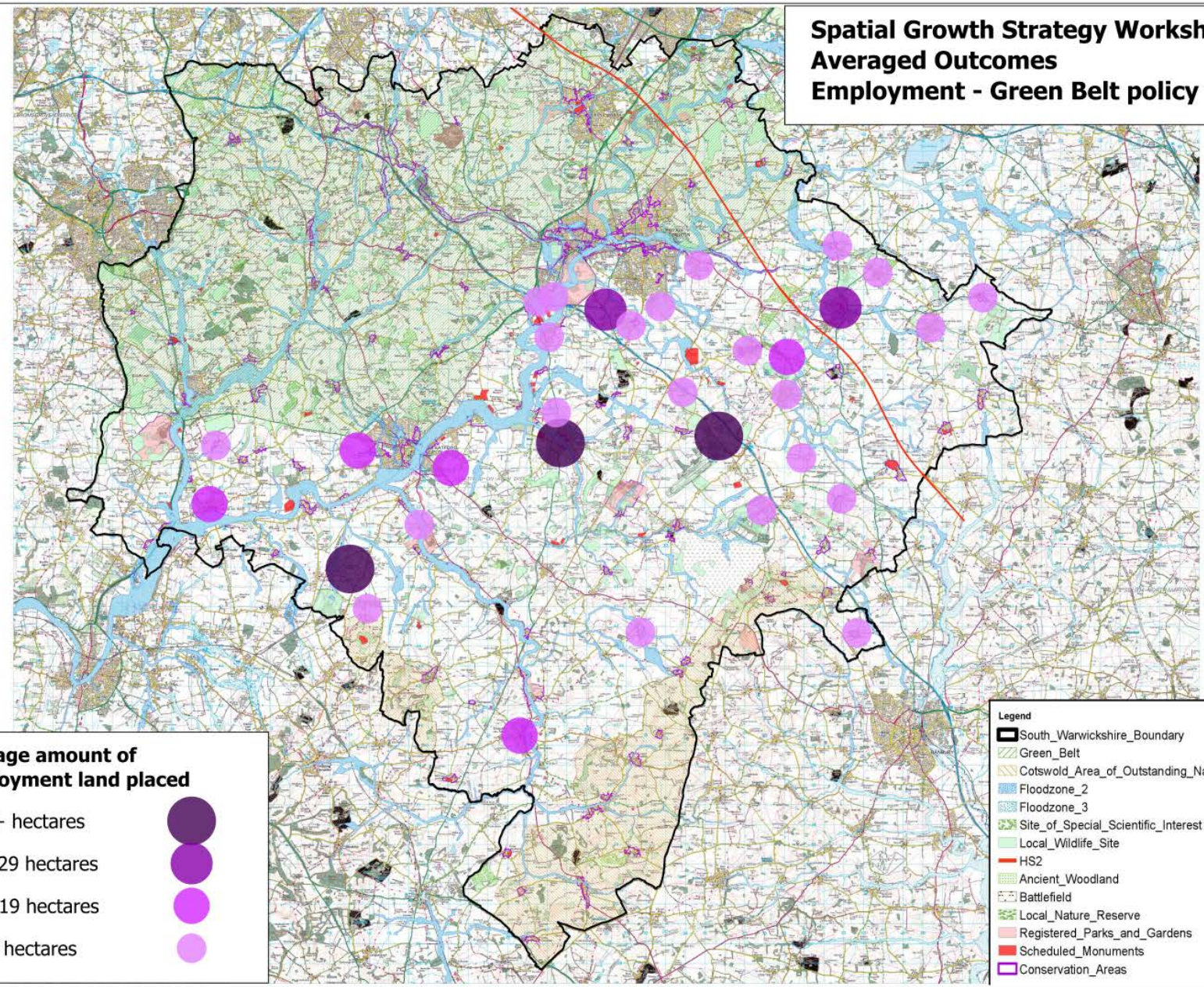
**Spatial Growth Strategy Workshops
Averaged Outcomes
Housing - Green Belt policy "on"**







Spatial Growth Strategy Workshops Averaged Outcomes Housing - Green Belt policy "off"



**Spatial Growth Strategy Workshops
Averaged Outcomes
Employment - Green Belt policy "on"**



Average amount of employment land placed

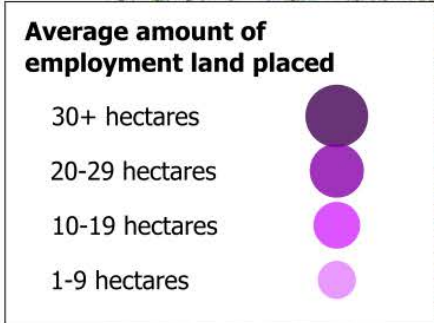
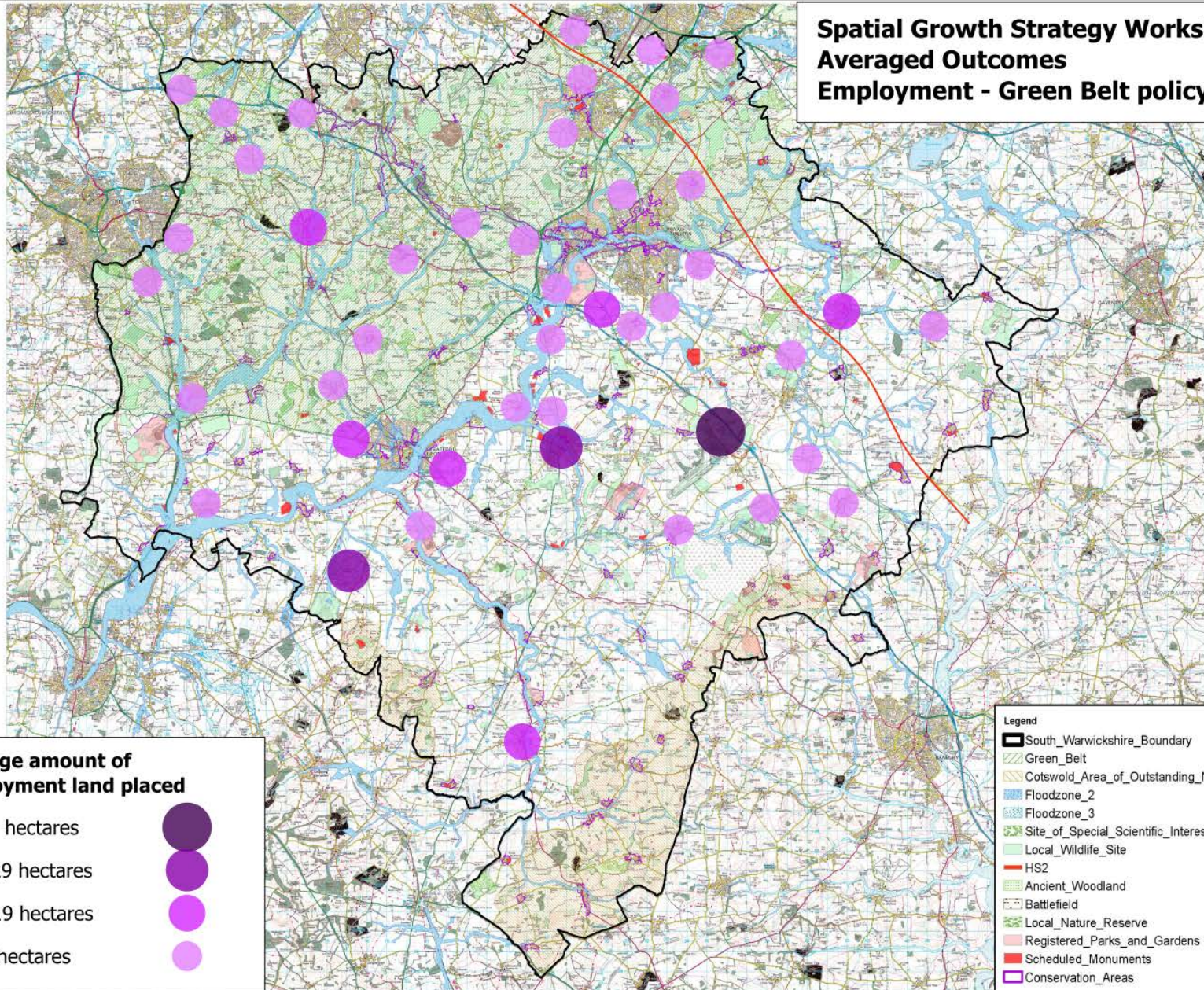
- 30+ hectares 
- 20-29 hectares 
- 10-19 hectares 
- 1-9 hectares 

Legend

-  South_Warwickshire_Boundary
-  Green_Belt
-  Cotswold_Area_of_Outstanding_Natural_Beauty
-  Floodzone_2
-  Floodzone_3
-  Site_of_Special_Scientific_Interest
-  Local_Wildlife_Site
-  HS2
-  Ancient_Woodland
-  Battlefield
-  Local_Nature_Reserve
-  Registered_Parks_and_Gardens
-  Scheduled_Monuments
-  Conservation_Areas



**Spatial Growth Strategy Workshops
Averaged Outcomes
Employment - Green Belt policy "off"**



Youth Stakeholder Sessions

In addition to the stakeholder sessions held with professionals, parish/town councils and landowners, the SWLP Team also conducted sessions with a number of young people through collaboration with the Stratford Youth Theatre Group. Three sessions were held, with ages ranging from 7-16, and with students from across both Districts. The format of the session was similar to that run with the other stakeholder groups, albeit simplified to remove some of the technical discussion. The young people were briefly introduced to the policy planning profession and the South Warwickshire Local Plan, before being asked to take matters into their own hands, and identify where 35,000 homes and 330ha of employment land should go. The students engaged well with the task, and many gave great thought to the challenge ahead and some of the problems the SWLP team face. Some of the particular points raised by the students included the current need to travel frequently by car, and how this is not good for the environment. Many acknowledged how things are often very far away, and they find it difficult to access these when they are unable to drive themselves.

Various spatial growth strategies emerged from the sessions, with one group identifying an approach akin to the Garden City Movement of Ebenezer Howard. This approach was reached following consideration of the distances involved in accessing various infrastructure, and by including a central city, surrounded by a ring of slightly smaller cities, and then some dispersal everyone would have good access to services, whilst also having the choice between living in an urban environment or a rural one. Other strategies focused on rail, with one group keen to pursue the reopening of the disused railway line from Stratford through Kineton before linking up with the Leamington to Banbury line, with a view of creating a station within Kineton. Moreton Morrel was also given key consideration within one of the groups given the presence of the College and the lack of other facilities nearby. This was seen as an area for growth and investment.

Other themes that came out of the sessions was support for significant growth/new settlements across the district, with flats and high density growth often being discussed. Schools and colleges were frequently considered, as were farms, supermarkets and tourist attractions. Overall the groups engaged well with the sessions, and presented some very well thought out questions and ideas that other stakeholder groups had not necessarily addressed.