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'Call for Sites'

Warrington Borough Council Local Plan Review

Call for Sites Registration Form

October 2016

Please note this 'Call for Sites' is for five or more dwellings or economic development on sites of 0.25 ha (or 500sqm of floor space) and above, Gypsy, Traveller and Show People and Minerals and Waste sites.

The identification of sites does not imply that the Council considers that the site is suitable for development, either now or in the future. It cannot be taken as representing either an intention to allocate these sites, or as a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

Potential sites that have been identified will be further tested through the Plan-making process, including through the Spatial Distribution and Site Assessment Process, Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment, several stages of public participation and independent examination.

Please also note that all the responses and information received as part of the 'Call for Sites' will be published and made available for public viewing as part of the open and transparent Plan making process.

NOTE: Please read the accompanying guidance note [here](#) before completing this form and complete a **separate** form for each site that you are submitting to the Council.

Please return your completed form and any accompanying supporting material to Planning Policy, Warrington Borough Council no later than 5.00pm on Monday 05th December 2016.

By e-mail: ldf@warrington.gov.uk

By post: Planning Policy, Warrington Borough Council, New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, WA1 2NH

Should you require further advice and guidance on completing this form, please contact the Planning Policy Team by telephone on 01925 442841 or by e-mail to ldf@warrington.gov.uk

(1) Your Details

Please provide your contact details and those of your agent (if applicable). Where provided, we will use your Agent's details as our primary contact.

	Your details	Your Agent's details
Name		
Position		
Organisation		
Address		
	Town	
	Postcode	
Telephone		
Email address		

(2) Site Details

Please provide the details of the site you are suggesting. If you are suggesting more than one site, please use a **separate** form.

Name of site /other names it's known by		
Address		
	Town	
	Postcode	
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference	Easting :	Northing :
Site area (hectares)		
Net developable area (hectares)		
What is your interest in the site? (please tick one)	Owner	Lessee
	Prospective Purchaser	Neighbour
	Other	Please state:

Please Note: It is essential that you provide a map showing the site's location and detailed boundaries for each submission.

(3a) Proposed future use(s)

Please indicate the preferred use that you would like the site to be considered for. Please also indicate any other uses you would consider acceptable. If you wish the site to be considered for a mix of uses, please tick all uses that apply.

	Residential	Gypsy & Travellers	Employment	Retail	Leisure	Other*	
Preferred future use							
Alternative future use(s)							
Potential Capacity	houses:	Number of Pitches:	SqM	SqM	SqM	SqM	
	or flats:						
Employment Use Class (E.g. B1)							
* If "Other", please indicate which use(s):							
Potential Density							
	Has any design, viability, master planning work or other studies been undertaken for any proposed use?			Yes	No		

(3b) Proposed future use(s) - Minerals and Waste

Details:

(4) Site Ownership

Please record the site ownership details. If there are more than three owners, please record the fourth owner, etc. on a separate sheet. Please indicate the extent of individual landholding(s) on the site map.

If you do not know who owns the site, please state so below.

	Owner 1	Owner 2	Owner 3
Name			
Address			
	Town		
	Postcode		

Or: I do not know who owns the site

Has the owner (or each owner) indicated support for proposed redevelopment?

Please also record these details for the 4th and subsequent owners (where necessary).

Yes			
No			
Don't know			

Are there any Restrictive Covenants & Ransom Strips affecting the site?

--

(5) Market Interest

Please choose the most appropriate category below to indicate what level of market interest there is in the site:

		Any comments
Site is owned by a developer		
Site under option to a developer		
Enquiries received		
Site is being marketed		
None		
Not known		

--

(6) Site Condition

Please record the current use(s) of the site (or for vacant sites, the previous use, if known) and the neighbouring land uses.

Current use(s)		
Neighbouring Uses		
If vacant	Previous use(s)	
	Date last used	

What proportion of the site is made up of buildings, and what proportion is (open) land?

Proportion covered by buildings	%	Proportion not covered by buildings	%
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If there are buildings on the site, please answer the following questions:

How many buildings are there on the site?		buildings
What proportion of the buildings are currently in use?	% in use:	%
	% derelict:	%
	% vacant:	%
Are any existing buildings on the site proposed to be converted?		

For the **parts of the site not covered by buildings**, please answer these questions:

What proportion of the land is currently in active use?		%
What proportion is greenfield (not previously developed)?		% (A)*
What proportion is previously developed and cleared?		% (B)*
What proportion is previously developed but not cleared? (e.g. demolition spoil, etc.)		% (C)*

* A plus B plus C should add to 100%.

Please provide any additional comments on a separate sheet if necessary.

(7) Constraints to Development

Please tell us about any known constraints that will affect development for the proposed use, details of what action is required, how long it will take and what progress has been made.

Please use a separate sheet where necessary to provide details. If using separate sheets, it would be helpful to make reference there to the particular constraint, e.g (7)(e) – Drainage.

	Yes, No or Don't know	Nature and severity of constraint *	Action needed, timescales and progress	Confirmed by technical study or by service provider?	
				Yes	No
a) Land contamination					
b) Land stability					
c) Mains water supply					
d) Mains sewerage					
e) Drainage, flood risk					
f) Tree Preservation Orders					
g) Electricity supply					
h) Gas supply					
i) Telecommunications					
j) Highways					
k) Ownership, leases etc.					
l) Ransom strips, covenants					
m) Other (Please provide details)					

(8) Site Availability

Please indicate when the site may be available

Excluding planning policy constraints, when do you believe this site could be available for development?

Immediately (Note: to be "immediately available", a site must be cleared, unless being considered for conversions.)

If not immediately, please state when it could be available:

If the site is not available immediately, please explain why – e.g. the main constraint(s) or delaying factor(s) and actions necessary to remove these:

(9) Any Other Information

Please tell us anything else of relevance regarding this site if not already covered above that will ensure that it contributes positively to the achievement of sustainable development. Please use a separate sheet/s if necessary.

**Planning Policy– Warrington Borough Council,
New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, WA1 2NH**

ldf@warrington.gov.uk

01925 442841

This form is available in other formats or languages on request.



HOW

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

Development Statement

**Local Plan 'Call for Sites' Consultation
Land at Heathcroft Stud, Croft**

**On behalf of Bellway Homes Limited
December 2016**

HOW Planning LLP, 40 Peter Street Manchester, M2 5GP

Contact Partner: Jon Suckley Telephone: 0161 835 1333

Planning and Environmental Advisers

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 HOW Planning LLP has been instructed by Bellway Homes Limited (“Bellway Homes”) to prepare and submit representations in response to Warrington Borough Councils (WBC) Call for Sites consultation as part of its Local Plan Review.
- 1.2 This Development Statement has been prepared in relation to Bellway Homes’ specific land interests at the land at Heathcroft Stud in Croft (“the site”). A Location Plan which identifies the site’s boundaries can be found at **Appendix 1**. This Statement demonstrates that the removal of the site from the Green Belt and its allocation for housing within the Warrington Local Plan Review would make a valuable contribution towards the Borough’s housing land supply and would deliver significant material benefits whilst still protecting the purpose and functions of the Green Belt. The site provides a sustainable and logical extension to the existing settlement of Croft and is a logical location to deliver sustainable residential development with access to a range of existing services and facilities.
- 1.3 This Statement reviews the evidence base underpinning the Local Plan Review and also assesses the site in terms of its contribution to the Green Belt. Specifically, this document seeks to clearly articulate the unique opportunity that exists at the site by providing:
- An analysis of the site and its surroundings;
 - The case for the release of the site from the Green Belt including a review of planning policy. In particular the Statement demonstrates that the site does not perform the purposes and functions of the Green Belt as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
 - Analysis of the sustainability of the site, including a review of key technical considerations;
 - A demonstration that the site is deliverable, available and achievable;
 - A Masterplan and vision that articulates and illustrates the opportunity presented by the site;
 - Our proposed alteration to the Green Belt; and
 - A summary of the key benefits of the site.
- 1.4 In summary, the site presents a strategic and sustainable location that offers an opportunity for sensitive land release from the Green Belt and allocation for housing development as part of the

Warrington Local Plan Review. Bellway Homes welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Council and key stakeholders as the review progresses, in order to ensure that the maximum benefits are derived from the site for WBC and the local community.



2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 This Chapter discusses the site's location, characteristics and sustainability credentials. It provides a brief description of the site's current status and physical attributes.

A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

2.2 The site is located in the administrative area of WBC, within the settlement of Croft which is approximately 9km north of Warrington Town Centre.

2.3 The settlement of Croft includes a range of services; churches, primary schools, pubs, playing field, youth centre, horse riding facility, golf club, bowling green and a hairdresser.

2.4 There are two primary schools within the vicinity of the site, including St Lewis Roman Catholic Primary school 1km to the north of the site and Croft Primary School, 400 metres to the north of the site. Furthermore Croft Early Years and Croft Village Preschool is within walking distance of the site. The closest secondary school is at Birchwood Community High School, 5.5km south of the site.

2.5 Bus stops are located approximately 175 metres north east of the site along Mustard Lane, which provide hourly services to Leigh and Warrington and other services to Glazebury. The bus journey to Warrington takes about 26 minutes and provides access to a range of services and facilities. The nearest train stations are Padgate, which is 5.1km to the south and Birchwood is 5.7km also to the south of the site with services to Manchester, Warrington and Liverpool.

2.6 Access to the strategic highway network is available via Lord Street, Heath Lane and Stone Pit Lane, which connect to the A579 and provide a direct link to junction 22 of the M6 and onward travel to the north and south of England.

LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS

2.7 The site extends to approximately 3.3 hectares and comprises a well-contained, undeveloped parcel of land adjoining the eastern edge of the settlement of Croft.

2.8 The site comprises pastureland, which is flat in topography and rectangular in shape. The boundaries of the site are made up of trees and hedgerows, some hedgerows and trees also bisect the site. Heathcroft Stud Equestrian Centre is located in the south of the site and currently operates as a commercial livery and stud farm that regularly hosts show jumping events. Regular and frequent HGV movements are generated by the existing use of the site, which will be removed from the network with the proposed residential development of the site. Furthermore the active

use of the site generates visitors, staff, horse boxes and delivery vehicles which will also be removed.

- 2.9 The northern site boundary comprises the boundary of Croft Primary School as well as further undeveloped land to the north, the eastern and southern boundaries also comprise undeveloped land. A brook adjoins the eastern boundary of the site and a public right of way route adjoins the southern boundary of the site. The western boundary comprises the rear of residential properties on Deacons Close.
- 2.10 Beyond the western and southern boundaries of the site is the main residential area of Croft. This is typically characterised by two storey semi-detached and detached properties with rear and front gardens.
- 2.11 The Environment Agency Flood Map indicates the site lies within Flood Zones 1 which means there is less than a 0.1% (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year.
- 2.12 The site does not contain any designated heritage assets such as scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or conservation areas. A grade II listed building, known as Christ's Church is located 0.5km to the east of the site (reference: 1329750). Eaves Brown Farmhouse is grade II listed (reference: 1139385) and is located roughly 0.7km to the south of the site and both St Lewis Presbytery (reference: 1329751) and Church of St Lewis (reference: 1139383) are located to north of the site, approximately 0.7km away. Any future development of the site will not affect the setting of any of these listed buildings.

SUMMARY

- 2.13 In summary, the site is situated in a sustainable location surrounded by established housing to the west and south of the site. The site is situated in an accessible location and is well connected to the strategic road network, being accessible by a range of non-car modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

3 THE CASE FOR GREEN BELT RELEASE

3.1 There is a compelling case for removing the site from the Green Belt. The justification for the release of the site from the Green Belt is underpinned by the evidence base which supports the Local Plan Review. The overarching tests of the NPPF and the exceptional circumstances contained within the Councils evidence base support an alteration to the Borough's Green Belt. This Chapter provides an analysis of the key findings of the evidence base.

LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY

3.2 WBC adopted its Local Plan Core Strategy on 21 July 2014. The document sets out the overarching strategic policies for guiding the location and level of development in the Borough up to 2027. It sets an overall housing target of 10,500 net new homes between 2006 and 2027 which equates to an annual housing target of 500 dwellings between 2006 and 2027¹.

3.3 Upon adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy, a High Court Challenge was made against the adoption of parts of the Core Strategy. The challenge was heard on 3 and 4 February 2015 with a judgement given on 19th February 2015. Mr Justice Stewart ruled that parts of the Core Strategy relating to the housing target of 10,500 new homes between 2006 and 2007 as well as reference to 1,100 homes at the Omega Strategy Proposal should be overturned.²

3.4 The Council has now formally commenced a review of the Local Plan Core Strategy in order to set a new and up to date housing requirement for the number of new homes that will need to be delivered in Borough over the Plan period between 2014 and 2037.

3.5 The Local Plan Core Strategy Review is underpinned by an evidence base which forms the basis for understanding the future needs of the Borough, including various analyses of the Borough's housing land supply.

EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS

Housing Needs in WBC

3.6 In terms of housing need in Warrington, this is addressed in the Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Addendum for Warrington (October 2016). This document builds on the evidence base set out in Council's original SHMA, which was published in January 2016. The January 2016 SHMA identified a housing need of 839 dwellings per annum 2014-2027³, which is considerably higher than the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy target of 500 dwellings per year

¹ Local Plan Core Strategy – Adopted July 2014, Appendix 2: Summary of Housing Land Availability Position, page 165

² High Court Decision: Satnam Millennium Limited and Warrington Borough Council Order (Case No: CO/4055/2014), Appendix Warrington Borough Council Local Core Plan Strategy Extracts Underlined Wording to be quashed, page 2

³ Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016, Conclusions on Overall Housing Need, page 186

2006-2027. The Mid-Mersey SHMA Addendum for Warrington (October 2016) considers the housing need implications arising from an alternative job growth for Warrington to that set out in the SHMA and provides a revised housing need of 984 dwellings per annum for the period 2014-2037.⁴

- 3.7 Based on the figure of 984 dwellings per annum for the period 2014-2037, the estimated housing need in the Borough is approximately 22,632 dwellings. This figure represents the Objectively Assessed Need (“OAN”) in the Borough.
- 3.8 Conversations with the planning policy team confirms that the Council accept the annual housing target of 984 dwellings and are aware the estimated housing need between 2014 and 2037 is in the region of 20,000 plus dwellings.

Housing Supply in WBC

- 3.9 The Urban Capacity Assessment published in October 2016 confirms capacity for development in the urban area and green field sites outside of the Green Belt in the Borough of approximately 15,000 new homes. This is based upon findings from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) published in January 2016 and updated in March 2016, as well as findings from masterplanning land supply work undertaken by Warrington & Co on behalf of WBC⁵. The SHLAA is based upon an assessment of the Borough’s housing land supply for the 15 year period 2015-2030⁶.
- 3.10 The updated SHLAA identified a housing land supply figure of 10,806 dwellings and calculated an allowance of 960 dwellings on windfall sites. The land supply work undertaken by Warrington & Co produced a figure of an additional 3,460 dwellings. Totalling these figures together, the Urban Capacity Study identifies an urban capacity of 15,226⁷.
- 3.11 Whilst the Council has an identified an urban capacity of 15,226 dwellings, this is not sufficient to meet the Councils housing need of 22,632 dwellings as required by the SHMA. Furthermore a review of some of the SHLAA sites brings into question the deliverability of those which have been deemed ‘suitable’. Due to environmental matters and land assembly issues we consider that some sites in the Council’s urban capacity figure are not deliverable and as such will not come forward for development. This includes issues surrounding contamination, ownership disputes, hazardous installations, access or ecological issues. As such it is likely that

⁴ Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 – Addendum for Warrington, Additional Employment Need, page 4

⁵ Urban Capacity Statement – October 2016, Urban Capacity Statement, page 1

⁶ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Final Report – January 2016, Detailed Assessment Outputs, page 17

⁷ Urban Capacity Statement – October 2016, Table 1 Urban Capacity Assessment 2016, page 3

Warrington's urban capacity is overstated as a result of potential deliverability issues⁸, which further reinforces the need for Green Belt release and in particular this sites immediate release from the Green Belt.

5 Year Housing Land Supply

- 3.12 As part of the Local Plan Review, Mickledore were commissioned to review alternative forecasts for housing and employment land and also review historical housing completions. It is noted in the Review of Economic Forecasts and Housing Numbers prepared by Mickledore (October 2016) that DCLG record an average number of housing completions in Warrington of 627 units per annum between 2003-2016 although WBC record an average of 840 units per annum over the same period due to different data sources⁹.
- 3.13 However, the Annual Monitoring Report ("AMR") 2015/2016 provides an update on key performance indicators in Warrington during the period 1st April 2015 to the 31st March 2016. The report indicates that 595 net new homes were completed in Warrington, which is considerably less than the 687 completions during 2014/15¹⁰.
- 3.14 Furthermore, the AMR indicates that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year land supply¹¹. This is something which is accepted by planning policy Officers at the Council who confirmed on 24 November 2016 that WBC could not demonstrate a five year housing land supply however they did not confirm exactly what their supply figure was. It is expected that WBC will publish their position in due course and confirm exactly how many years supply they are able to demonstrate.
- 3.15 Based on the Council's housing requirement of 984 dwellings per annum and their housing supply of 3,494 dwellings between 2016 to 2021 as identified in the 2015/16 AMR¹², we have calculated the Councils current housing land supply could be in the region of 2.7 years (based on a 20% Sedgfield buffer).
- 3.16 Furthermore, the AMR states that 162 affordable houses were completed compared to 101 in 2014/15¹³. The January 2016 Mid-Mersey SHMA, however, identifies a requirement for 220

⁸ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Appendix 1 Site Proformas

⁹ Review of Economic Forecasts and Housing Numbers – October 2016, Long term housing completions by different Local Authorities in the area

¹⁰ Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016, Key Messages, page 2

¹¹ Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016, Identified Deliverable Supply of Housing Land, page 11

¹² Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016, Table 5.2: 5 Year "Deliverable" Housing Land Supply (inc. Windfall), page 12

¹³ Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016, Affordable Housing Completions, page 17

affordable homes per annum in Warrington¹⁴. As such the Council also falls short on delivering its affordable housing requirement.

GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

- 3.17 In response the findings of the 2016 SHLAA and SHMA, which indicate that WBC is not currently able to identify sufficient urban capacity land to meet its housing need, WBC published a Green Belt Assessment in October 2016. The document provides an assessment of 203 Green Belt parcels in the Borough against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in the NPPF, in order to enable WBC to consider whether there are 'exceptional circumstances' to justify altering Green Belt boundaries and enable existing Green Belt land to contribute to Warrington's housing land supply.
- 3.18 The site at Heathcroft Stud is identified in the Green Belt Review under site reference CR4. The site is considered to make a 'moderate' contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and states that:
- 3.19 *"The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one, a weak contribution to one, and no contribution to two. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a moderate overall contribution as although it supports a strong-moderate degree of openness and the boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-durable, there are durable boundaries between the parcel and the countryside. Thus any development would be contained and would therefore not threaten the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. The parcel makes a moderate contribution in assisting in urban regeneration."*¹⁵
- 3.20 In relation to purpose 3 'to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment', the assessment states:
- 3.21 *"The boundaries between the parcel and the settlement to the south and west are non-durable consisting of the rear gardens of residential properties with fences/hedges. These boundaries would not be able to prevent encroachment into the parcel. The boundaries between the parcel and the countryside consist of Mustard Lane to the north and Lady Lane to the east which are durable boundaries which could prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The parcel is connected to the countryside along two boundaries. The existing land use consists predominantly of undeveloped countryside with a church and residential development in the north eastern corner of the parcel. The parcel also includes Heathcroft Stud*

¹⁴ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – January 2016, Table 61 Estimated level of Affordable Housing Need per annum – by location, page 112

¹⁵ Green Belt Assessment – Main Report & Appendices – October 2016, Appendix G Parcel Assessment Table, Reference CR4

*stables and Oaklands Farm. The parcel is flat with less than 10% built form however there is an area of dense woodland to the south of the parcel with some tree lining along field boundaries within the parcel. The parcel therefore supports a strong-moderate degree of openness. Overall the parcel makes a strong contribution to safeguarding from encroachment due to its openness and non-durable boundaries with the settlement."*¹⁶.

3.22 In relation to purpose 5 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land', the assessment states:

3.23 *"The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose"*¹⁷.

3.24 Overall, the Council are considering the site for Green Belt release in order to accommodate future housing requirements.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.25 The NPPF provides the overarching planning framework that underpins decision making and the plan making process in the UK. The NPPF supports the Government's housing growth agenda, which seeks that Local Authorities boost their supply of housing, plan positively for objectively assessed needs and adopt a presumption in favour of proposals for sustainable development. Releasing the site from the Green Belt to facilitate new housing development would be consistent with the core objectives of the NPPF because:

- It would meet the three pillars of sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits (NPPF Paragraph 7);
- It would be entirely consistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development - the golden thread for both plan making and decision taking (NPPF Paragraph 14);
- It would offer a sustainable location within Croft, which is accessible by a range of sustainable modes of transport and has access to a range of services and facilities (NPPF Chapter 4 'Promoting Sustainable Transport', Paragraph 29-41);
- It would boost the supply of housing and provide a deliverable housing site that is available, achievable and viable (NPPF Paragraph 47);

¹⁶ Green Belt Assessment – Main Report & Appendices – October 2016, Appendix G Parcel Assessment Table, Reference CR4

¹⁷ Green Belt Assessment – Main Report & Appendices – October 2016, Appendix G Parcel Assessment Table, Reference CR4

- There are exceptional circumstances which justify alteration to the Green Belt in accordance with Chapter 9 of the NPPF (Paragraph 83) and it will consider the consequences for sustainable patterns of development (Paragraph 84); and
- It does not entail the development of more valued and important landscapes in accordance with the NPPF (Paragraph 113).

DEMONSTRATING EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR GREEN BELT RELEASE

3.26 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, it should only be altered in ‘exceptional circumstances’ through the plan making process. The exceptional circumstances which support an alteration to the Green Belt include:

1. Housing Requirement

3.27 The adopted Core Strategy provided a housing target of 500 dwellings per year and WBC have not yet published a revised target for the Local Plan Review. The evidence base for the Local Plan Review indicates that the Council have an OAN of 984 dwellings per annum, which equates to 22,632 dwellings over the Plan Period 2014-2037. Paragraph 1.23 of the SHMA states:

“The Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) is the core output of the SHMA. This is then tested against land supply, constraints and sustainability appraisals among other tests in order to arrive at a housing target within Local Plans which maybe higher or lower than the OAN. The housing target could also be increased above the OAN to reflect unmet needs from other areas. Those subsequent tests (after identification of the OAN) do not however form part of the SHMA process”¹⁸.

3.28 This means that the housing target for the Borough should only be less than the OAN figure of 22,632 as a result of land supply, constraints and sustainability appraisals and that the target may be higher if it takes into account unmet needs from other areas. It is highly likely that the Councils housing requirement will be higher than its OAN of 22,632 dwellings. Even if the housing requirement aligned with the OAN figure, the Council will have to identify Green Belt sites which can deliver at least 7,406 dwellings as it only has a maximum urban capacity of 15,226 dwellings. This reinforces the need for WBC to release additional sites from the Green Belt.

2. Insufficient Land

3.29 WBC cannot currently demonstrate a five-year land supply. The Local Plan Review Scoping and Contents Document states at paragraph 2.19:

¹⁸ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – January 2016, Overview of the Approach to Deriving OAN, page15

“Having explored all potential sources of additional land supply, the Council has therefore concluded it is unable to accommodate all of its development needs within the existing urban area and on green field sites outside of the Green Belt... If Warrington is to meet its development needs.... sufficient Green Belt land will need to be released to deliver approximately 5,000 homes”¹⁹.

- 3.30 It is understood that the figure of 5,000 additional units to be released from the Green Belt, is not based on the housing need of 984 dwellings per annum for the Plan period. It would seem that the figure of 5,000 additional units has been based roughly on the housing need of 839 dwellings per annum from the January 2016 SHMA. Therefore, from the review of the other evidence base documents, specifically the October 2016 SHMA Addendum, it is apparent that 5,000 additional units is not sufficient.
- 3.31 The evidence base for the Local Plan Review indicates that the Council has an Urban Capacity Total of 15,226²⁰. As the Urban Capacity Assessment is based upon assessment of the Borough’s housing land supply for a 15 year period 2015-2030, and the Borough’s housing requirement has been calculated for the period until 2037, the Council will also need to identify sites that can come forward between 2030 and 2037.
- 3.32 If the Council release sufficient Green Belt land to deliver approximately 5,000 homes, the Council will have a land supply of 20,226. Based on the OAN figure of 22,632, this means that Warrington have a housing land supply shortfall of 2,406. This shortfall does not reflect:
- Unmet housing needs from other areas; and
 - The likelihood that some of the sites identified within the SHLAA will not come forward for development due to deliverability. This could include issues relating to a sites contamination, ownership disputes, hazardous installations, access or ecological issues.
- 3.33 If the above points are taken into account, the shortfall of 2,406 dwellings in the land supply appears modest and more housing needs to be identified in the Green Belt.

3. Affordable housing

- 3.34 The need to deliver 220 affordable homes per annum in the Borough was established in the 2016 SHMA²¹. The 2015/2016 AMR indicates that there is a chronic lack of new affordable homes, with

¹⁹ Local Plan Review – Scope and Contents Consultation Document, Land Supply, page 6

²⁰ Urban Capacity Statement – October 2016, Table 1 Urban Capacity Assessment 2016, page 3

²¹ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – January 2016, Table 87 Annual Need from Households Requiring Support, page 184

a shortfall against the requirement of 220 homes of 58 in 2014/15 and 119 in 2014/15²². The delivery of large sites which are viable, deliverable and available, such as the site at Heathcroft Stud, can significantly contribute the identified affordable housing needs of the Borough.

SUMMARY

3.35 This Chapter has assessed the Council's evidence base and is able to conclude that the Council will have to identify considerably more than 5,000 new dwellings in the Green Belt in order to meet an annual housing need of 984 dwellings. Furthermore, the Council is not able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land and currently can only demonstrate around a 2.7 year supply. It is therefore apparent that the Council need to identify more housing to be released from the Green Belt than is stated in the evidence base in order to meet its housing requirements over the Plan Period and to produce a plan that is flexible in accordance with the NPPF. Finally it has been demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt through this Plan making process.

²² Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016, Affordable Housing Completions, page 17

4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The site at Heathcroft Stud represents a sustainable solution to the Borough's housing needs in line with Government guidance and the NPPF. The overarching policy objective of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 6 of the NPPF highlights that the policies in Paragraphs 18-219, when taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice.
- 4.2 The NPPF at Paragraph 7 indicates that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. An assessment of the site against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF is provided below. The site's sustainable location and accessibility is also considered.

LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 4.3 The site is located in the administrative area of Warrington Council, within the settlement of Croft which is approximately 9km north of Warrington Town Centre. Croft includes a range of services; churches, primary schools, pubs, playing field, youth centre/village hall, horse riding facility, golf club, bowling green and a hairdresser. The Horse Shoe Inn pub is located 400 metres to the south of the site and the General Elliott pub is 250 metres to the north west. Elliotts General Store is located on Heath Lane, also 250 metres to the north west of the site, adjacent to the pub. The closest supermarket is a Spar on Warrington Road, 3.2km south east of the site.
- 4.4 The settlement of Culcheth, which is 3km to the north east of the site comprises a number of facilities and services including a Sainsbury's, Co-op, restaurants, pubs, shops, a post office, primary schools and Culcheth High School.
- 4.5 Extensive employment opportunities are available in Warrington to the south of the site which can be accessed via public transport from nearby bus stops and train stations.
- 4.6 Bus stops are located approximately 175 metres north east of the site along Mustard Lane, which provide hourly services to Leigh and Warrington and other services to Glazebury. The bus journey to Warrington takes about 26 minutes and provides access to a range of services and facilities. The nearest train stations are Padgate, which is 5.1km to the south and Birchwood is 5.7km also to the south of the site with services to Manchester, Warrington and Liverpool.
- 4.7 Access to the strategic highway network is available via Lord Street, Heath Lane and Stone Pit Lane, which connect to the A579 and provide a direct link to junction 22 of the M6 and onward travel to the north and south of England.

- 4.8 In accordance with the NPPF, the site is sustainably located and offers residents with opportunities to use sustainable modes of transport to access services, facilities and employment opportunities across Warrington, Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 4.9 There are two primary schools within the vicinity of the site, including St Lewis Roman Catholic Primary school 1km to the north of the site and Croft Primary School, 400 metres to the north of the site. Clearly both of these schools are within walking distance of the site, reducing reliance on private motor vehicles. Furthermore Croft Early Years and Croft Village Preschool is within walking distance of the site. The closest secondary school is Culcheth High School, 4km to the north east and also Birchwood Community High School, 5.5km south of the site.
- 4.10 The nearest pharmacy is 3km to the north east in Culcheth; Tims and Parker Ltd. A Superdrug pharmacy is located 5.5km to the south of the site at Birchwood Shopping Centre where a number of shops and services are available including an Asda store, Argos, Pets at Home, Thomas Cook travel agents, Home Bargains and many more shops and restaurants . Culcheth Health Care is located 3km to the north east of the site and Birchwood Medical Centre is located 5.5km to the south at Birchwood Shopping Centre, both of which are currently accepting new patients. Hob Hey Dental Care in Culcheth is 2.3km to the north east of the site and is currently accepting adult patients on a private basis, children up to the age of 18 on the NHS and students in full time education on the NHS.
- 4.11 There are a number of locations for sport and recreation surrounding the site. Croft Park includes an equipped area of play and playing fields for public use. The Recreation Centre, 4.5km to the south west of Croft in Warrington is part of the University Academy Warrington and they hire out their facilities for young people in the local community including gymnastics, trampolining and taekwondo classes. The Recreation Centre also provide adult fitness classes. Furthermore, Birchwood Leisure and Tennis Club provides an array of activities and services which is located 5.4km south of the site.

ECONOMIC

- 4.12 Development at the site will contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. In particular, the delivery of 90 homes will bring:
- A significant amount of new investment into the local area through the construction process;
 - Circa £140,361 of Council Tax per annum in perpetuity following the scheme's completion;

- Significant additional spending annually in the local economy from the site's new residents. This could support full time and part time jobs locally;
- It is anticipated the proposed development will take around 2-3 years to be constructed (assuming a development rate of 35 units per year);
- The potential to provide apprenticeships and training opportunities with Bellway Homes and its suppliers for residents in the local area. This will help meet with the Council's economic development aspirations;
- Circa £801,133 million through the Government's New Homes Bonus scheme over 6 years, to be spent by Warrington Borough Council at their discretion; and
- Contribution to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy via the provision of much needed additional homes in the Borough.

SOCIAL

- 4.13 A key objective of the social role of sustainable development is to support a strong, vibrant and healthy community. The allocation of the site for housing and the development of 90 dwellings will provide:
- A sustainable development with good access to shops, services and transport links;
 - New residents that could enhance the skills base available to employers in the local area and potentially benefit local business productivity;
 - A range of open market housing comprising various types to meet the needs of Croft;
 - Affordable housing of the range and type to meet the identified need, as required by the Borough's 2016 SHMA, which identified a lack of new affordable homes across the Borough as a whole; and
 - Landscape enhancements and public open space that integrates with the wider Green Belt to the north and east of the site.
- 4.14 Specifically, delivering housing at the site would contribute to WBC's housing land supply. In line with paragraph 47 of the NPPF, the Local Authority should seek to 'boost significantly the supply of housing'. The site provides an opportunity to develop a sustainably located site which will contribute to meeting the Borough's housing land supply, particularly over the next five years. It is evident that the Council are not able to maintain a five year housing land supply at present and

also require additional Green Belt sites to be identified for housing allocation as part of their Local Plan Review.

- 4.15 As demonstrated there are significant social benefits that will be delivered by the application proposals in accordance with the social dimension of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.

ENVIRONMENTAL

- 4.16 Development of the site for housing will not result in significant harm to the natural environment and will help to improve biodiversity as well as using natural resources prudently and addressing climate change through the design of the housing.
- 4.17 An assessment of the key environmental and technical considerations has been undertaken by a team of professional consultants to underpin the derivability of the site moving forward. The key considerations are as follows:

Transport and Access

- 4.18 Deacons Close on the eastern boundary is considered to provide suitable vehicle access to the site from the main street running through Croft. The existing access will be improved to ensure that it will form an adoptable highway access into the site. The main vehicular access can accommodate a formal 5.5 metres wide carriageway and footways on both sides of 2 metres wide. All of this geometry can be accommodated within either the site boundary or within the current limits of adopted highway.
- 4.19 The existing use of the site generates traffic throughout the day and also during the weekend. The site is currently operating as a commercial livery and stud farm that regularly hosts show jumping events. Regular and frequent HGV movements are generated by the existing use of the site and these will be removed from the network with the proposed residential development of the site. This will ensure a substantial benefit for those residents living close by on Deacons Close. Furthermore the current active use of the site generates visitors, staff, horse boxes and delivery vehicles which will also be removed.
- 4.20 A technical note has been prepared on transport by Croft Transport Solutions and is provided at **Appendix 2** of this Statement. In terms of offsite impact the proposals the technical note suggests the development is likely to generate in the region of 50 to 60 vehicular trips in the two busiest hours of the day which are likely to be between 0800 and 0900 hours and 1700 to 1800 hours.
- 4.21 It is not considered that there are any significant highways or access constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for development.

4.22 In addition, ongoing surveys are being undertaken to advise the future development at the site.

Landscape and Visual Assessment

4.23 The site lies within the Landscape Character Type 'Undulating Enclosed Farmland' and within sub-areas 'Croft' and 'Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton'. Furthermore, the site sites within the National Character Area 'Mersey Valley'. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal is enclosed at **Appendix 3** and assess the overall landscape effect of the proposals as negligible upon the Mersey Valley NCA.

4.24 The site is not prominent within the wider landscape and there are a number of landscape features which could assist with the successful integration into the settlement edge character. A sensitively well-designed scheme would not harm the wider rural landscape as it will not be highly visible or result in a significant change to key elements of the landscape characteristics.

4.25 There are no significant landscape or visual constraints that would preclude the development of the site, subject to appropriate massing, design, layout and design measures at the planning application stage.

4.26 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal enclosed at **Appendix 3** has been prepared by FPCR to assist in supporting the release of the site from the Green Belt.

Ecology and Trees

4.27 The site is not located within any designated ecological areas. A site of importance for nature conservation, known as Croft Grassland is located approximately 0.2km to the south of the site however given the existing structure of Heathcroft Stud stables already at the site and the hedgerows along the southern boundary of the site, it is not considered that Croft Grassland will be adversely affected by the proposals.

4.28 The site comprises partureland, which is flat in topography and rectangular in shape. It is bound by minimal vegetation of limited trees and hedgerows, some hedgerows and trees also bisect the site. There are no Tree Preservation Orders that affect the site or nearby surrounding area. A future planning application would be supported by a Phase 1 Ecological Assessment and any relevant protected species surveys. Furthermore, all ecological features would be protected by suitable standoff distances and enhancement measures as necessary.

4.29 Initial assessments have indicated that the existing stables could have bat potential. Furthermore, the hedgerows and trees within and surrounding the site has potential for nesting birds and the brook along the eastern boundary could possibly contain water voles or rats. Further surveys will

be undertaken to establish the extent and level of mitigation recommended to accommodate any future development.

- 4.30 Subject to further surveys and the implementation of best practice mitigation measures, it is not considered that any ecological constraints would prevent the proposed development coming forward.

Ground Conditions

- 4.31 There are no active or historic landfills located on the site, according to the Environment Agency's Landfill Map. According to the Coal Authority's mapping service, there are no records of mining activity or previously worked areas on the site. Croft is located within a Coal Mining Reporting Area which is used to determine whether a coal mining report is required for property transactions and the conveyance process. The site is currently developed in the southern parcel which comprises Heathcroft Stud stables and undeveloped land across the remaining site having historically been used for agricultural purposes. As such, there are limited potential sources of contamination. It is not considered that there are any significant contamination constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for development.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 4.32 The Environment Agency Flood Map indicates the site lies within Flood Zones 1 which means there is less than a 0.1% (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year. Furthermore, a brook is located along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 4.33 Given the size of the site and in line with national requirements, further surveys are currently being undertaken to determine appropriate standoff distances to be implemented in accordance with Environmental Assessment guidance. Subject to further assessment, the site is considered suitable for residential development in flood risk terms and appropriate sustainable drainage measures could be implemented to maintain existing runoff rates and suitably mitigate the flood risk on the site. It is not considered that the site would give rise to any increase in flood risk elsewhere.

Air Quality and Noise

- 4.34 WBC has declared three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) although the site is not located within or in close proximity to these. Furthermore, the Council are currently proposing to designate an AQMA in Warrington Town Centre to encompass the current Sankey Green Island and Parker Street AQMA. These two existing AQMA's will need to be revoked and combined into one larger AQMA. The new AQMA is proposed to be designated by the end of November/early December 2016. The site is not located within the proposed AQMA.

- 4.35 The construction and future occupation of the site will consider the impacts of the proposals on the local air quality in the District however it is not considered that air quality impacts would preclude the development of the site.
- 4.36 The main source of existing noise would be that emanating from the nearby highways network and from the residential properties surrounding the site. Subject to appropriate building envelope design and layout of the development, it is not envisaged the existing noise environment would preclude the proposed development coming forward. Suitable mitigation measures could be implemented during the construction phase to minimise noise impacts on the surrounding sensitive receptors.

SUMMARY

- 4.37 In summary, development of the site for housing would constitute sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF when taken as a whole. Housing development at the site would deliver significant and positive economic, social and environmental benefits which should be afforded significant weight in considering the site for removal from the Green Belt and allocation for housing. Importantly, the development at the site will deliver the type, quality and quantity of new homes that will support the growth of Warrington Borough over the Plan Period and is suitably and sustainably located to access public transport and local facilities.
- 4.38 The delivery of new homes at Heathcroft Stud would make a significant contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough. A full assessment of the site constraints is continuing to be undertaken to determine and illustrate that delivery of housing at the site is achievable and deliverable. A professional team of technical experts has been appointed to underpin the relevant assessments and support the delivery of the site moving forward.
- 4.39 Furthermore, Bellway Homes is committed to making a difference in the local community by working with local educational establishments and job seeking agencies in order to facilitate local apprenticeships and training initiatives, and to ensure that employment generated from a housing development is sourced from and directly benefits the local area.

5 DELIVERABILITY

THE PURPOSES OF THE GREEN BELT

5.1 When tested against the purposes of the Green Belt (as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF) and when considered against the exceptional circumstances that exist, the site at Heathcroft Stud presents a significant opportunity to support a sensitive residential development.

5.2 The site represents a logical and appropriate option for Green Belt release to meet the future housing needs of the Borough. When tested against Paragraph 80 of the NPPF and the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, the site:

1. **Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas** –the site is not directly adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore will not lead to the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. Furthermore, the site is surrounded on its western boundary by existing residential development and therefore forms a logical extension to the existing area. As such the site will not result in unrestricted sprawl and will have no contribution to this purpose;

2. **Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns** – maintaining the functions, separation and context of the wider Green Belt in Warrington, without diminishing the distance between the settlement of Culcheth to the north east of the site and Croft. As such the site will not result in the merger of neighbouring towns and will have a weak contribution to this purpose;

3. **Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside** – as noted in the 2016 Green Belt Assessment, the boundaries between the larger parcel of land which includes the site and the countryside consist of Mustard Lane to the north and Lady Lane to the east which are durable boundaries which could prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if it were developed. The development of the site would create a new strengthened long term Green Belt boundary and would align with the established residential area of Croft. We therefore disagree with the Council's assessment of the site and instead suggest that it makes a weak contribution to this purpose;

4. **Will not impact on the special character of historic towns** – Croft is not a historic town and the parcel does not contain a Conservation Area. The development of the site would also not impact upon the character of any listed buildings. Therefore the site makes no contribution to this purpose; and

5. **Will not discourage urban regeneration-** evidence for the Local Plan Review consultation indicates that the supply of deliverable brownfield sites is becoming exhausted and, consequently, Green Belt release will be required over the life of the Plan Period to meet the Borough's housing

needs. The 2016 Green Belt Assessment states that the Mid Mersey Housing Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development and therefore the site makes a moderate contribution to encouraging the recycling of urban land. It is important to emphasise, however, that this calculation is based on a theoretical exercise and there is no evidence that sites will have a blanket role in assisting urban regeneration across the Borough. In addition, this assessment is based on the Mid Mersey Housing Area, rather than Croft specifically, and also the Mid Mersey 2016 SHMA indicates that housing need is higher than the available housing land supply. Overall, it has been demonstrated in Chapter 3 of this Statement that Warrington's urban capacity is not sufficient to meet the Borough's housing need and that at least 7,406 further units need to be delivered on Green Belt sites, which is higher than the Council's original figure of 5,000 units. Therefore, further Green Belt release is required in addition to the urban sites coming forward. The site will not prevent urban regeneration coming forward and as such has a weak contribution to this purpose.

SUMMARY

5.3 The above has demonstrated HOW's assessment of the site's contribution to the Green Belt against Paragraph 80 of the NPPF and the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt. In summary, our assessment concludes that the site:

1. Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – no contribution;
2. Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns – weak contribution;
3. Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside – weak contribution;
4. Will not impact on the special character of historic towns – no contribution; and
5. Will not discourage urban regeneration – weak contribution.

5.4 Overall the site makes a weak contribution to the Green Belt. HOW disagrees with the Council's view that the site has a moderate contribution to the Green Belt.

DELIVERABILITY

5.5 The NPPF and the Government's growth agenda seek to ensure that sufficient land is available in the most appropriate locations to increase housing supply, support growth and boost home ownership. Importantly, this land should be deliverable, to ensure that Warrington Borough does not fall further behind in its land supply requirements. On this basis, the site is available, suitable and achievable and is ideally positioned to meet housing need in accordance with the NPPF.

5.6 The site is a deliverable and available site that is under the control of an experienced house builder that can demonstrate an excellent track record in delivering new housing across the UK. Bellway Homes is fully committed to bringing forward the site for residential development.

5.7 To be considered deliverable, sites should:

- **Be Available:** A site is considered available where there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems;
- **Be Suitable:** A site is considered suitable for housing development if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation sustainable, mixed communities; and
- **Be Achievable:** A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site within five years. This is a judgement about the economic viability of a site and the capacity of the developer to compete and sell housing over a certain period taking into account market factors, cost factors and delivery factors.

Available

5.8 Bellway Homes has secured legal agreements with the landowners of the site. The site is therefore within the control of a major house builder and can be developed to deliver 90 new homes that could be critical to meeting housing need during the Plan Period. If the site were to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing, Bellway Homes would seek to develop the site immediately, which would contribute considerably to the Borough's 5 year housing land supply and deliver highly anticipated new homes early in the Plan Period. This commitment to delivery is demonstrated by Bellway Homes track record of the efficient delivery of high quality housing schemes across the UK.

Suitable

5.9 The site is suitable for housing development because it:

- Offers a suitable location for development and can be brought forward immediately following any allocation;
- Would form a natural extension to the established Croft residential area;
- Could utilise existing infrastructure surrounding the site and there are no utilities or drainage or infrastructure constraints preventing the site coming forward for development;

- Has no identified environmental constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for residential development;
- Can deliver satisfactory vehicular access from Deacons Close. In addition, existing bus stops are located close to the site on Mustard Lane;
- Is situated within a local highway network that has the capacity to accommodate the development;
- Will deliver new open space for use by residents and the local community; which could link with existing recreation networks and informal open space in the surrounding area; and
- Is sustainably located and is close local services and facilities.

5.10 The site is therefore considered to be suitable in accordance with the requirements as set out in the NPPF.

Achievable

5.11 The delivery of new homes in this location would make a significant contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough. A full assessment of the site constraints has been undertaken which illustrates that delivery of the entire site is achievable and deliverable, and a professional team of technical experts has been appointed to underpin this assessment and support the delivery of the site moving forward. Where any potential constraints are identified, Bellway Homes has considered the necessary mitigation measures and required investment in order to overcome any deliverability barriers.

5.12 Bellway Homes has reviewed the economic viability of the proposals in terms of the land value, attractiveness of the locality, level of potential market demand and projected rate of sales in the Croft and the Warrington Borough. These considerations have been analysed alongside cost factors associated with the site, including site preparation costs and site constraints.

5.13 Bellway Homes can therefore confirm that the site is economically viable and therefore achievable in accordance with the NPPF.

SUMMARY

5.14 This Chapter has assessed the site against the purposes of the Green Belt (as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF) and found that the site makes an overall weak contribution to the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

5.15 Furthermore it has been demonstrated that the site is deliverable, available, suitable and achievable for development and that is under the control of an experienced house builder that can demonstrate an excellent track record in delivering new housing across the UK. Bellway Homes is fully committed to bringing forward the site for residential development.

6 VISION FOR THE SITE

6.1 The site at Heathcroft Stud will deliver an attractive housing development with a distinctive character that offers a choice of high quality new homes to meet the Borough's needs.

6.2 Bellway Homes vision of the site seeks to meet the following goals:

- Delivery of quality new family homes which make best use of the land;
- Achieve a choice of housing with a mix of house types, tenures and sizes to meet identified local needs;
- Respect the character of the site and the setting adjacent to the Green Belt;
- Provide high quality, accessible, green space for the benefit of existing and future residents;
- Facilitate cycle and pedestrian links to community facilities and green spaces;
- Invest in the community with the creation of additional direct and indirect employment both during construction and after the development;
- Enhance the ecological value and biodiversity of the existing vegetation within the site and along the site boundaries;
- Create a safe and desirable place to live with a safe and attractive environment that builds upon the strength of the local community;
- Provide high quality design which will complement and enhance the existing environment and create a good standard of amenity and living environment; and
- Protect existing residential amenity.

6.3 Bellway Homes has developed a masterplan vision for the site which meets the key goals for the site. It demonstrates how the design and form of development will respond sensitively to the characteristics of the site and the wider area. It is intended that these ideas will evolve further in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders at the appropriate time.

SITE CONSIDERATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

6.4 The development vision derives from a careful analysis of the site's characteristics, its context and the opportunities and considerations which arise and have been outlined earlier in this Statement.

- 6.5 The site has an existing access point off Deacons Close on the eastern boundary which is considered to provide suitable vehicle access to the site from the main street running through Croft.
- 6.6 An existing public right of way adjoins the southern boundary of the site, travelling west to east and so there is an opportunity to extend the existing pedestrian and cycle network to the site.
- 6.7 The brook and distinct hedgerows along the eastern boundary have the potential to become a clearly defined defensible Green Belt boundary between Croft and the wider countryside whilst also including the site as part of the residential area of Croft. The same applies to the northern and southern boundary of the site which comprises a clear hedgerow and tree border.
- 6.8 A robust site analysis has been carried out to determine the principle considerations and opportunities that will underpin the development vision. The key considerations and opportunities presented by the site include:
- The need to complement the character of the surrounding area through appropriate development densities, street scenes and housing types;
 - Safeguarding the existing landscape structure and connecting the established vegetation with new on site green corridors with multifunctional use;
 - The need to provide an attractive infill to the residential area of Croft and an appropriate Green Belt boundary to the wider area;
 - Enhance the connectivity between the site and its surroundings in order to promote sustainable local movement networks for both pedestrians and cyclists; and
 - Furthermore, the need to retain the public right of way to the south of the site.
- 6.9 There is the potential to develop a high quality, characterful residential scheme with a coherent landscape structure which conserves the natural assets as well as creating a framework for recreation and extending the existing pedestrian and cycle network.
- 6.10 This masterplan illustrates how the site could be developed to ensure that the objectives illustrated by the key concepts can be met. This is provided at **Appendix 4**.
- 6.11 A high quality residential scheme is proposed which could deliver the following key features:
- Delivery of 90 market housing and affordable housing;

- Provision of a high quality, centralised public open space;
- Enhanced landscaping within the site, especially along the site's boundaries;
- Retention of the existing public right of way to the south of the site;
- New pedestrian/cycle links to connect the proposed green spaces with the wider footpath network within the site and the surrounding area; and
- Retention of views into and out of the site.

6.12 The masterplan demonstrates that the site is capable of delivering a high quality scheme which will complement its setting and deliver a range of attractive benefits.

7 PROPOSED ALTERATION TO THE GREEN BELT

- 7.1 This Development Statement has highlighted that there is a large deficiency of housing land supply in the Borough of Warrington. Although the Local Plan Review Scoping and Contents documents suggests that WBC will need to release sufficient Green Belt land for 5,000 homes, this Development Statement has shown that WBC will need to release enough Green Belt land for more than 7,406 homes.
- 7.2 The site at Heathcroft Stud presents a highly sustainable solution the Borough's housing needs in line with Government guidance and the NPPF. The site will perform a positive economic, social and environmental role in accordance with the overarching pillars of sustainable development, and could deliver the type, quality and quantity of new homes that will support the growth of Warrington over this Plan Period. The site has no ownership, covenant or lease constraints and is wholly available, suitable and deliverable in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- 7.3 In terms of the purposes of the Green Belt, it has been demonstrated that the site represents a logical and appropriate option for Green Belt release to meet the future housing needs of the Borough. When tested against Paragraph 80 of the NPPF and the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, the site
1. Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
 2. Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns
 3. Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside
 4. Will not impact on the special character of historic towns
 5. Will not discourage urban regeneration
- 7.4 As such, this Development Statement proposes the removal of the site at Heathcroft Stud from the Green Belt. The boundaries of the site to be removed is illustrated in **Appendix 5**.

8 SUMMARY

- 8.1 This Development Statement has demonstrated that the Council has not identified enough additional units to be released from the Green Belt in order to meet their annual housing need of 984 dwellings. Furthermore, the Council are not able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land and currently can only demonstrate around a 2.7 year supply. It is therefore apparent that the Council need to identify more housing to be released from the Green Belt than the 5,000 dwellings stated in order to meet housing need over the Plan Period and to produce a plan that is flexible in accordance with the NPPF. This figure is actually closer to 7,500 dwellings which reinforces the need of the Council to release sites from the Green Belt.
- 8.2 Furthermore, paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, it should only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances' through the plan making process. It has been demonstrated that the exceptional circumstances which support the alteration to the Green Belt in Warrington include the housing requirement, insufficient land and affordable housing.
- 8.3 As such, the site at Heathcroft Stud presents an exceptional opportunity to contribute towards meeting the future housing needs in Warrington Borough. This Development Statement demonstrates the case for allocating the site for housing development during the Plan Period and sets out the exceptional circumstances that support an alteration to the Warrington Green Belt. The development of the site could deliver 90 new homes of the type, quantity and quality of open market and affordable housing that will contribute to meeting the future growth needs of the Borough, without undermining the core purposes of the Green Belt.
- 8.4 In summary, this Development Statement has illustrated that the site at Heathcroft Stud would:
- Positively contribute to the increase in identified need for new housing in the Borough over the life of the Plan Period, based on the Council's Local Plan Review Evidence Base and any subsequent uplift in this figure to account for affordability issues;
 - Create a range and mix of housing types that will make a positive contribution to the Borough's housing requirements by providing a mix of types and tenures of dwellings, including new affordable homes;
 - Be available, suitable, achievable and viable for housing development in accordance with national planning policy;
 - Generate growth and provide significant benefits to the local economy including the creation of new jobs, construction spend and investment generated by new residents;

- Deliver an overall development vision for the site that provides a well-designed and sympathetic development in a sustainable location in Croft; and
- Sensitively integrate with its surrounding landscape features, delivering a strengthened Green Belt boundary to the north, east and south of the site.

8.5 The site at Heathcroft Stud can support the Council in planning for its future development needs and achieving long term sustainable development. The site is appropriate for Green Belt release and allocation as a residential development site; as one that is well contained, has physical and defensible boundaries and will not impact on the core purposes of the Green Belt. The site forms a logical extension to the residential area and can demonstrate the exceptional circumstances that exist to justify an alteration to the Green Belt in the Borough. We have undertaken our own assessment of the site's contribution to the Green Belt and can conclude that it makes a weak contribution as it:

1. Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – no contribution;
2. Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns – weak contribution;
3. Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside – weak contribution;
4. Will not impact on the special character of historic towns – no contribution; and
5. Will not discourage urban regeneration – weak contribution.

8.6 It is clear the Council need further Green Belt release to accommodate its housing needs as it is not possible to locate all of its housing in the existing urban areas and greenfield sites outside of the Green Belt. At least 7,500 additional units needs to be located within the Green Belt to produce a plan that is flexible in accordance with the NPPF. This Development Statement establishes and reinforces the need to release sites from the Green Belt. To conclude, the site at Heathcroft Stud can deliver housing within the next 5 years and should be released now.

8.7 Bellway Homes is committed to working collaboratively with the Council and Key Stakeholders to ensure that the Borough's housing need is met in a sensitive and sustainable manner; and seeks support for an alteration to Warrington's Green Belt and the allocation of the site for high quality and new housing.

This report has been prepared by HOW Planning LLP, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. The scope of this report is subject to specific agreement and has been prepared solely for the benefit of our Client and should not be relied upon by any other party. Any third parties that use this information do so at their own risk. HOW Planning LLP accepts no responsibility for information contained within this report that has been independently produced or verified.

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APPENDIX 1: SITE LOCATION PLAN

APPENDIX 2: TRANSPORT TECHNICAL NOTE

**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, HEATHCROFT STUD, CROFT (1677)
TRANSPORT ISSUES NOTE – NOVEMBER 2016**

Location and Accessibility

The site is located within the centre of the village of Croft. The site is bordered to the north by Croft Primary School, to the east and south by agricultural land and to the west by existing residential development.

As we will demonstrate later in this note, the site is located in an accessible location with regular and frequent bus services running in close proximity. There is also strong potential to connect to nearby existing footway and cycle networks.

This note will demonstrate that the site is in a sustainable location with access to local facilities, and should therefore be allocated for residential development in the emerging Local Plan.

Education

Croft Primary School is located within 400 metres of the site less than a 5 minute walk, from the site off Mustard Lane. Access to the school can be achieved directly utilising the existing footways along Deacons Close and Mustard Lane.

Footways exist along both sides of Deacons Close and Mustard Lane, to the north and west of the site.

The nearest secondary school to the site is Culcheth High School around 4 kilometres to the north of the site. Whilst this is outside the usual maximum walk distance to education facilities it is located less than a 10 minute bus journey, using the number 19 service as will be demonstrated later in this note, using the nearby bus stops on Mustard Lane less than a 5 minute walk of the site.

Buses depart from the bus stops close to the site at around 7.28am and 8.08am and would arrive in Culcheth in less than 10 minutes in time for the 8.30am school start time. Similar services run in the afternoon with one leaving Culcheth at 3.56pm and the next one at 4.34pm.

Healthcare

The nearest medical facilities are located in Culcheth to the north of the site. This can be reached by bus using the number 19 service from the nearby bus stops on Mustard Lane.

Warrington Hospital is within a short bus journey of the site using the service number 19 which passes along Mustard Lane close to the site. This travels into Warrington town centre and from there the Hospital is a short walk or further very short bus journey.

Employment

Although major employment opportunities may be limited within the vicinity of the site, with the exception of some small businesses, there are a number of large employment opportunities close by in Culcheth, Leigh and Warrington located within a short bus journey of the site.

For example, buses leave for Warrington at 7.18am and arrive in the town centre at around 7.40am. The last service back in the evening from Warrington leaves the town centre at around 6.40pm. services to and from Leigh leave the village at 6.24am and return after 7.30pm.

Retail

There are local retail facilities within the vicinity of the site. The closest is Elliot's General Store located on Heath Lane less than a 5 minute walk of the site. In addition, the centre of Culcheth is located is less than a 10 minute bus journey of the site.

A range of local amenities are located within the centre of Culcheth such as a Sainsbury's foodstore, a number of conveniences stores, other retail outlets and health facilities (including Culcheth Medical Centre).

Sports and Recreation

The area has a number of locations for sport and recreation. Whilst Croft is limited for these types of uses, nearby Culcheth (within a short bus journey) includes a number of leisure and sports facilities, such as Culcheth Sports Centre, Culcheth Library, opportunities for evening and weekend sports at Culcheth High School and a number of food & drink outlets.

Sustainability Summary

This section clearly demonstrates that the site is within a reasonable walking or bus journey distance of a range of day-to-day amenities.

There is the scope for a range of improvements to sustainable transport connectivity. These could be in the form of potential improvements to footway and cycleway facilities in the area that could be promoted as part of the site or improvements to the nearest bus stops.

Vehicular Access

Vehicular access to the site can be achieved via an extension to Deacons Close. The access will utilise the existing access to the stud but will be improved to ensure that it will form an adoptable highway access into the site.

At this stage the site is likely to be able to accommodate around 90 residential dwellings. As such, it is likely that only one formal vehicular access point would be required.

The main vehicular access can accommodate a formal 5.5 metres wide carriageway and footways on both sides of 2 metres wide. All of this geometry can be accommodated within either the site boundary or within the current limits of adopted highway.

This junction has been shown on Drawing Number 1677-F01 and demonstrates that the proposed vehicular access can be adequately accommodated.

The existing use of the site generates traffic throughout the day and also during the weekend. The site is currently operating as a commercial livery and stud farm that regularly hosts showjumping events. Regular and frequent HGV movements are generated by the existing use of the site and these will be removed from the network with the proposed residential development of the site. This will ensure a substantial benefit for those residents living close by on Deacons Close.

In terms of off site impact the proposals are likely to generate in the region of 50 to 60 vehicular trips in the two busiest hours of the day which are likely to be between 0800 and 0900 hours and 1700 to 1800 hours. There are numerous routes for traffic to be dispersed onto the local highway network.

Vehicles travelling towards Culcheth and Leigh will do so to/from the north and utilise Lord Street and Mustard Lane. Those vehicles travelling towards Warrington are likely to travel south to/from the site along either Smithy Lane, towards Winwick and the town centre, or New Lane, towards the Risley employment area of the town.

There are no capacity constraints to the local highway network which would provide an issue for this additional traffic generation although this would need to be demonstrated in detail within a Transport Assessment that would accompany any formal submission on this site.

Transportation

The nearest bus stops to the site are located along Mustard Lane less than a 5 minute walk of the site.

Table 1, below, summarises the bus services that operate in the vicinity of the site together with their frequencies per hour.

Service	Route	Daytime	Evening	Sat	Sun
19	Leigh – Culcheth - Warrington	2	1	1	1
193	Birchwood - Glazebury	1	0	0	0

Table 1 – Summary of Bus Services Operating Past The Site

The table shows that up to 3 buses per hour travel past to the site during weekdays and Saturdays. These provide direct access to a number of destinations between Culcheth, Leigh and Warrington.

The services also provide access into Warrington town centre where two rail stations are located including Bank Quay station on the West Coast main line and provides services to London, Preston and Glasgow.

As detailed earlier, these services start before 7am and finish after 8pm and therefore provide the opportunity for commuting trips by bus from the site to Warrington and Leigh for example. Both Leigh and Warrington town centres are around a 30 minute bus journey from the site.

Many nearby villages are also accessible by a short bus journey such as Culcheth, Glazebury and Winwick.

These services would provide the opportunity to access numerous destinations in and around the site. As such, the site can be seen as accessible by public transport.

Conclusions

In summary, this note clearly demonstrates that the Heathcroft Stud site in Croft is very well located for new residential development. The site is in close proximity to the amenities and services with the village of Croft and is within a very short bus journey of a wider range of shops, employment opportunities, education provision and other facilities and services within Culcheth, Warrington and Leigh.

The site can be satisfactorily accessed and will generate a modest number of additional vehicular trips onto the local highway network.

This note has therefore demonstrated that the site can be developed sustainably and should therefore be allocated for residential development in the emerging Local Plan.

APPENDIX 3: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL



Bellway Homes Ltd

Heathcroft Stud, Croft, Warrington

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

05 Dec 2016

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been carried out for the proposed development by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR). The purpose of this LVA study is to provide an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of development. The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to potential future residential development on the Site.
- 1.2 FPCR are a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 50 years' experience of architecture, landscape, ecology, urban design, masterplanning and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and are frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Public and Local Plan Inquiries.

Site Location

- 1.3 The site is situated on the western edge of Croft, in the borough of Warrington, Cheshire. Figure 1 shows the location and context of the site.

Proposed Development

- 1.4 The Site is 3.33 hectares in size, and could accommodate a residential development of up to 90 residential dwellings, similar in scale and character to nearby development. The remainder of the Site area would comprise public open space. Vehicular access would be provided from an existing vehicular access point on Deacons Close.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This LVA has been prepared based upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013.

2.2 In summary the GLVIA3 states:

“Landscape and Visual impact assessment (LVIA), is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity.”

2.3 There are two components of LVIA:

- Assessment of landscape effects; assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;
- Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

2.4 The components of this report include: baseline studies; description and details of the landscape proposals and mitigation measures to be adopted as part of the scheme; identification and description of likely effects arising from the proposed development; and an assessment of the significance of these effects.

2.5 In terms of baseline studies the assessment provides an understanding of the landscape in the area to be affected, its constituent elements, character, condition and value. For the visual baseline this includes an understanding of the area in which the development may be visible, the people who may experience views, and the nature of views.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

2.6 GLVIA3 states that *“An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource”*. The baseline landscape is described by reference to existing landscape character assessments and by a description of the site and its context.

2.7 A range of landscape effects can arise through development. These can include:

- Change or loss of elements, features, aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape
- Addition of new elements that influence character and distinctiveness of the landscape
- Combined effects of these changes

2.8 The characteristics of the existing landscape resource are considered in respect of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to the change arising from this development. The value of the existing landscape is also considered.

2.9 Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. In terms of size or scale, the judgement takes account of the extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost or changed, and the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects or key characteristics of the landscape will be altered by removal or addition of new elements.

- 2.10 The overall landscape effect is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of effect on the landscape. Final conclusions on the overall landscape effects are drawn from the assessment components described.
- 2.11 This appraisal describes the nature of the landscape effects. The criteria used in the appraisal are set out in Appendix A.

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 2.12 An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity.
- 2.13 The first stage in the assessment is to map approximate visibility. This can be done by a computer Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), or by manual methods, using map study and field evaluation. A series of viewpoints are included within the assessment that are representative of views towards the site from surrounding visual receptors. Other views of the site are included where it supports the description and understanding of the site's landscape and visual characteristics.
- 2.14 The views also typically represent what can be seen from a variety of distances from the development and different viewing experiences.
- 2.15 It is important to remember that visual receptors are all people. For each affected viewpoint the assessment considers both susceptibility to change in views and the value attached to views. The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:
- residents at home
 - people engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views;
 - visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
 - communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.
- 2.16 Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high.
- 2.17 Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:
- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;
 - People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings.
- 2.18 Each of the visual effects is evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration or reversibility.
- 2.19 In terms of size or scale, the magnitude of visual effects takes account of:
- The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;

- The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line height, colour and texture;
 - The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses.
- 2.20 The geographical extent of the visual effect in each viewpoint is likely to reflect:
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor
 - The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development
 - The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.
- 2.21 As with landscape effects, the duration of the effect could be short to long term or permanent and the same definitions apply. The criteria used in this appraisal are included at Appendix A.

Overall Landscape and Visual Effects

- 2.22 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement involves a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the criteria, to then make the overall judgement.
- 2.23 For this appraisal, the following descriptive thresholds have been used with regard to effects:-
- Major: An effect that will fundamentally change and be in direct contrast to the existing landscape or views;
 - Moderate: An effect that will markedly change the existing landscape or views but may retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
 - Minor: An effect that will entail limited or localised change to the existing landscape/ views or will entail more noticeable localised change but including both adverse and beneficial effects and is likely to retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
 - Negligible: An effect that will be discernible yet of very limited change to the existing landscape or views.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so.

Local Planning Policy

Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy (July 2014)

- 3.2 The following policies are of relevance to landscape and visual matters and the proposed development:

Policy CS 5 Overall Spatial Strategy - Green Belt

"The Council will maintain the general extent of the Green Belt for as far as can be seen ahead and at least until 2032, in recognition of its purposes:

- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

The boundaries of the Green Belt in Warrington, which is contiguous with the Green Belt in Merseyside, Greater Manchester, and North Cheshire, are shown on the Policies Map.

The strategic locations and proposals set out in Policy CS2 - Quantity and Distribution of Development provide for significant growth throughout and beyond the plan period. There is therefore no need to review Strategic Green Belt boundaries during the plan period.

A minor detailed change to the approved Green Belt boundary in the Warrington Unitary Development Plan has been made at Bents Garden Centre, Glazebury.

Development Proposals within the Green Belt will be approved where they accord with relevant national policy."

Policy CC 2 Protecting the Countryside

Development proposals in the countryside which accord with Green Belt policies set out in national planning policy will be supported provided that;

- *the detailed siting and design of the development relates satisfactorily to its rural setting, in terms of its scale, layout and use of materials;*
- *they respect local landscape character, both in terms of immediate impact, or from distant views;*

- *unobtrusive provision can be made for any associated servicing and parking facilities or plant, equipment and storage;*
- *they relate to local enterprise and farm diversification; and*
- *it can be demonstrated that there would be no detrimental impact on agricultural interests.”*

Policy QE 3 Green Infrastructure

“The Council will work with partners to develop and adopt an integrated approach to the provision, care and management of the borough's Green Infrastructure. Joint working and the assessment of applications will be focussed on:

- *protecting existing provision and the functions this performs;*
- *increasing the functionality of existing and planned provision especially where this helps to mitigate the causes of and addresses the impacts of climate change;*
- *improving the quality of existing provision, including local networks and corridors, specifically to increase its attractiveness as a sport, leisure and recreation opportunity and its value as a habitat for biodiversity;*
- *protecting and improving access to and connectivity between existing and planned provision to develop a continuous right of way and greenway network and integrated ecological system; securing new provision in order to cater for anticipated increases in demand arising from development particularly in areas where there are existing deficiencies assessed against standards set by the Council.”*

Policy QE 7 Ensuring a High Quality Place

“The Council will look positively upon proposals that are designed to;

- *be sustainable, durable, adaptable and energy efficient;*
- *create inclusive, accessible and safe environments;*
- *function well in relation to existing patterns of movement and activity;*
- *reinforce local distinctiveness and enhance the character, appearance and function of the street scene, local area and wider townscape;*
- *harmonise with the scale, proportions and materials of adjacent and / or existing buildings;*
- *maintain and respect the landscape character and, where appropriate, distinctiveness of the surrounding countryside;*
- *use the density and mix of development to optimise the potential of the site without damaging the character of the area; and*
- *be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and the inclusion of appropriate public space.*

Developers will be encouraged to engage with neighbourhoods and communities in developing design solutions. Where appropriate, developments should harness the imagination and creative skills of artists and urban designers in the design process to create distinctive urban environments.

The Council will promote design excellence in new housing developments and will use accepted environmental standards such as Building for Life and the Code for Sustainable Homes to evaluate the design quality of all proposals for major residential development within the borough.

Additional guidance to support the implementation of this policy is provided in the Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.”

Warrington Local Plan Review

- 3.3 The council is launching its Local Plan Review to drive forward the growth and development of the borough over the next 20 years. As part of this process, a Green Belt Assessment has been undertaken, forming part of the evidence.

Other Relevant Strategies, Guidelines or Documents

Warrington Green Belt Assessment (October 2016)

- 3.4 The Green Belt Review was published as part of the Local Plan evidence base. It assessed potential development sites against the five purposes of Green Belt as set out in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The overall contribution of sites to Green Belt purposes is split into 3 categories: weak, moderate or strong contribution. This will enable the Council to consider whether there are ‘exceptional circumstances’ (under paragraph 83, NPPF) to justify altering Green Belt boundaries through the Local Plan Process to enable existing Green Belt land to contribute to meeting Warrington’s housing needs.
- 3.5 For the purposes of the assessment, Green Belt land adjoining settlements has been dissected into parcels. Land around Croft is dissected into 8 parcels, of which 4 have been assessed as making a strong contribution to the Green Belt, 2 making a moderate contribution and the remaining 3 are judged as making a weak contribution. The Site is located within parcel ‘CR4’. As with other parcels, parcel CR4 is defined by physical boundaries, which in this case are roads and the existing settlement edge.
- 3.6 The assessment considers how CR4 meets the 5 purposes of Green Belt:
- a) The parcel does not contribute towards urban sprawl.
 - b) The parcel makes a weak contribute towards preventing coalescence.
 - c) It makes a strong contribution to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
 - d) The parcel makes no contribution to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
 - e) It makes a moderate contribution in assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.7 Although the has been assessed as moderate, it is considered that this weighs more heavily towards weak than strong. In justifying the conclusions on CR4, the assessment states:
- “The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one, a weak contribution to one, and no contribution to two. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been*

judged to make a moderate overall contribution as although it supports a strong-moderate degree of openness and the boundaries between the parcel and the settlement are non-durable, there are durable boundaries between the parcel and the countryside. Thus any development would be contained and would therefore not threaten the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. The parcel makes a moderate contribution in assisting in urban regeneration.”

Policy Summary

- 3.8 The Site currently lies within Green Belt, and the Local Plan policy on this aligns with the reasons for including land in Green Belt, as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF. However, the Council have undertaken an assessment of the Green Belt, to altering Green Belt boundaries through the Local Plan Process to enable the Council to consider whether there are exceptional circumstances to justify altering Green Belt boundaries through the Local Plan Process to enable existing Green Belt land to contribute to meeting Warrington’s housing needs.
- 3.9 Policies QE 7 and CC 2 of the adopted Local Plan state that landscape character should be respected and maintained. In terms of an evidence base, it refers to the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment (2007).
- 3.10 The Trans Pennine Trail, which runs east-west immediately south of the Site, is a Strategic Green Link. Policy CS 6 of the adopted Local Plan states that the Council wish to enhance connectivity.

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

National Character

- 4.1 National Character Area (NCA) profiles have prepared by Natural England for the 159 NCA's defined across England. These NCA profiles include a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics. Figure 4 illustrates the NCA's and other defined character areas within the context of the site.
- 4.2 At this very broad landscape scale, the site, lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 60 'Mersey Valley'. This NCA stretches from Urmston (on the edge of the Manchester conurbation) to the Mersey estuary and therefore covers a very extensive landscape tract. The Key Characteristics, as included in the NCA profile, are quoted below:
- *"The landscape is low-lying, focusing on the broad linear valley of the River Mersey; it is estuarine in the west and has extensive areas of reclaimed mossland in the east.*
 - *Underlain by Triassic sandstone, the surface geology is principally drift material: marine and river alluvium in the valley bottom, extensive areas of till, pockets of glacial sands and gravels, with peat in some drainage hollows.*
 - *The Mersey Estuary is a defining element in the landscape, with expansive intertidal mudflats/sand flats and low exposed cliffs.*
 - *The River Mersey flows from east to west, joined by associated tributaries, although the Mersey itself is often obscured from view.*
 - *Trees and woodland are mainly associated with settlements, occasional parkland and isolated woodland blocks; and in recent years new community woodlands have been planted.*
 - *Large-scale, open, predominantly flat, high-quality farmland occurs between developments, with primarily arable farming to the north of the valley and a mixture of arable and dairying to the south.*
 - *The field pattern is regular and large scale, often defined by hedgerows with isolated hedgerow trees; many hedgerows are intermittent and have been replaced by post-and-wire fencing, while field boundaries on the mosses are marked by ditches.*
 - *A range of important wetland habitats remain, including estuarine mudflats/sand flats and fringing salt marshes in the west, remnants of semi-natural mosslands and pockets of basin peats in the east, with the broad river valley in between.*
 - *The predominant building material is red brick though some sandstone construction remains, and some survival of earlier timber frame.*
 - *There are densely populated urban and suburban areas, with major towns particularly at the river crossings, including Runcorn, Widnes and Warrington.*
 - *There is large-scale, highly visible industrial development, with docks, chemical works and oil refineries.*

- *The river valley has a dense communication network with motorways, roads, railways and canals running east–west, and power lines are also prominent.”*

4.3 Statement of Opportunity 2 states, in relation to landscape character;

“Promote the Mersey Valley’s historic environment and landscape character and positively integrate the environmental resource with industry and development, providing greenspace within existing and new development, to further the benefits provided by a healthy natural environment, as a framework for habitat restoration and for public amenity.”

Warrington Landscape Character Assessment (2007)

4.4 The Warrington Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken at a District/ Borough level. It subdivides the landscape into 6 Landscape Character Types (LCTs). Each are subdivided into areas. The Site lies within LCT 1 ‘Undulating Enclosed Farmland’ and lies across areas 1C ‘Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton & Bollin’ and 1D ‘Croft’. The majority of the Site lies in area 1D, with the southwestern extremity lying in area 1C.

4.5 The key characteristics of Area 1D ‘Croft’ are quoted below:

- *“Historic field patterns*
- *Gently undulating landscape containing intimate scale linear strip fields*
- *Gapped and fragmented hedgerows supplemented by post and wire fencing*
- *Numerous hedgerow oaks in groups or isolated*
- *Predominantly pastureland*
- *Association of fields to adjoining properties or gardens or horse paddocks*
- *Red brick and sandstone farms*
- *Limited and often linear views*
- *Settlement pattern of older properties reflected in the field patterns”*

4.6 The Landscape Character Assessment lists the following key elements of landscape sensitivity for ‘Croft’:

- *“Strong rural/historic agricultural character*
- *Small scale liner field patterns*
- *Hedgerows and hedgerow trees*
- *Loss of land due to changes in land use/building”*

4.7 The assessment recommends the following management and landscape objectives for ‘Croft’:

- *“Retain existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees*
- *Support and encourage traditional hedgerow management*
- *Support and encourage new hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting to infill gaps and missing hedge sections*
- *Protect exposed mature trees in pasture from further damage by browsing stock*
- *Protect new hedgerow and tree planting from browsing damage by grazing stock*

- *Encourage the retention of traditional pastoral grazing as opposed to changing to horse grazing paddocks*
 - *Promote the restoration and replanting of local orchards”*
- 4.8 The key characteristics of Area 1C ‘Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton & Bollin’ are listed below:
- *“Sweeping views to the north and east from the areas of Culcheth and Glazebrook*
 - *Sweeping views to the south from the Winwick area*
 - *Medium to often large-scale mainly arable fields*
 - *Lack of hedgerow trees*
 - *Hedgerows between fields often fragmented*
 - *Deciduous wooded backdrops*
 - *Rixton Clay Pits*
 - *Rixton Landfill Site”*
- 4.9 The Landscape Character Assessment lists the following key elements of landscape sensitivity for ‘Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton & Bollin’:
- *“Wide, open vistas*
 - *Simple, low, undulating landscape sensitive to vertical forms, particularly on local high points “*
- 4.10 The assessment recommends the following management and landscape objectives for ‘Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton & Bollin’:
- *“Restore and enhance remaining field patterns by additional hedgerow planting*
 - *Reintroduce hedgerow trees*
 - *Conserve and manage existing woodlands to encourage habitat diversity*
 - *Conserve and manage remaining hedgerows*
 - *Consider additional native woodland planting*
 - *Consider the use of native planting to soften and screen new development*
 - *Investigate an extension of Culcheth Linear Park to the south, following the old railway line towards Glazebrook”*

Landscape Designations

- 4.11 The Site is not designated for reasons of landscape character, such as National Park or AONB. The Site lies within Green Belt, to protect openness and prevent coalescence. The Site and surrounding area lies within Mersey Forest Community Forest. Figure 5 illustrates the location of the landscape designations.

Topography

- 4.12 The following should be read in conjunction with Figure 3.

Context – Landform

- 4.13 The topography of the site's context is generally flat, with gentle gradient, rising gradually towards Lane Head and Lowton in the north, and falling gradually towards Warrington in the south.

Site - Landform

- 4.14 Similar to the wider context, the Site is relatively level, with the ground rising gradually in a northwards direction. The south-eastern corner of the Site lies at around 25m, and the northern boundary of the Site lies at around 28m.

Site and Immediate Context

- 4.15 An assessment of landscape character of the site and its immediate context has been carried out, providing a finer level of assessment than the published studies.
- 4.16 The Site comprises two, small, regular-shaped pastoral fields, divided and bounded by hedgerows, and subdivided by timber post-and-rail fences into horse paddocks and an external horse training area. A further internal horse training area is located into a large, green, metal-clad barn, located close to the southern boundary of the Site.
- 4.17 The Site is located on the eastern edge of Croft, and is accessed via an existing access drive leading from Deacons Close. The Site is currently used as an equestrian centre. A car park lies between Deacons Close and the barn.
- 4.18 Deacons Close, immediately west of the Site, comprises a number of 2 storey dwellings, which appear to have been built within the past decade. Agricultural fields (a mix of arable and pastoral) lies adjacent to the northern, eastern and southern Site boundaries, divided by native hedgerows, containing mature hedgerow trees.

Landscape Value

- 4.19 In terms of "landscape value" it is appropriate to examine the role of the site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in the GLVIA3 (Box 5.1, page 84), and summarised in the methodology. This considers the landscape in terms of a range of factors as set out below. As a starting point, landscape designations have been considered.
- 4.20 Landscape Designations: Excluding Green Belt, the site and its wider landscape context (including its Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) are not subject to any national, local or other landscape designations.
- 4.21 Landscape Quality (Condition): The Site comprises heavily-managed horse paddocks, which are bounded in places by hedgerows, with some mature deciduous trees. Hedgerows are mostly well maintained, while some are more fragmented.
- 4.22 Scenic Quality: Whilst the Site is not unattractive, it possesses little in the way of scenic qualities, and is very similar in character and quality to the wider agricultural landscape found adjacent to the settlement edge.
- 4.23 Rarity and Representativeness: Although representative of the wider agricultural landscape, the Site does not contain any rare elements or features.

- 4.24 **Conservation Interest:** The Site contains no known assets of conservation interest. There are no listed buildings within the vicinity of the Site.
- 4.25 **Recreational Value:** A single public footpath (0097/6/1) lies immediately south of the Site, connecting Deacons Close to Lady Lane, however views into the Site are limited.
- 4.26 **Perceptual Aspects and Associations:** The Site is typical of the settlement edge found around Croft, and has no notable perceptual qualities. The immediate landscape has no notable associations.
- 4.27 In conclusion and having appraised the above factors it is judged that the site and the immediate landscape is of medium landscape value.

Visual Baseline

- 4.28 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site. This has explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints have been selected which support this analysis.
- 4.29 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g. rights of way users. The photographs may demonstrate varying degrees of visibility and include both short and long range views. The photographs were taken on the xxx and seasonal differences have been taken into account when determining the visual effects on these receptors.

Photo Viewpoints

- 4.30 An assessment of the likely visual effects of the proposed development upon surrounding receptors is detailed in the subsequent section. Figure 6 details the location of the Photo Viewpoints and Figures 7-10 illustrates the photo viewpoints.

Summary of Visual Baseline

- 4.31 The baseline analysis results in a number of reasoned conclusions which are summarised below:
- The visual envelope of the site (i.e. areas from where the Site can be seen) extends as far as Lady Lane in the east, Mustard Lane in the north, and Betysfield Road in the south, but only extends to the existing settlement edge in the west.
 - The total number of potential visual receptors is limited. For example, there are only 6 dwellings on Deacons Close with direct views onto the Site, 2 properties on Betysfield Road, and only a handful of dwellings on Mustard Lane.
 - Other than residential receptors, views of the Site can be experienced from the adjacent public right of way (immediately south of the Site), from Mustard Lane and Lady Lane (road users) and from Croft Primary School. Intervening hedgerows and trees significantly help to filter views to the Site from these receptors.
 - Views experienced from east of the Site already see the Site in the context of the existing settlement edge, while the existing barn is also visible on the Site.

5.0 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

Introduction

- 5.1 The development proposals are fully described in the Design and Access Statement and other information accompanying the planning application. The existing landscape resource and the visual receptors and amenity of the site have been considered by the planning and design process and have informed the resultant scheme. This approach has entailed collaboration between landscape, urban design, ecological and other professionals. The landscape components of the scheme are an important integral part of the proposals.

Landscape Design and Green Infrastructure (GI) Objectives

- 5.2 The key objectives of the landscape and GI proposals for the scheme are to:

- Respect and respond to existing landscape character and create a carefully considered settlement edge;
- Retain existing hedgerows and trees, reinforcing where necessary, and mitigating from any loss through new planting on-site;
- Minimise any potential adverse landscape or visual effects through the application of best practice design principles and careful attention to the design and layout of the scheme;
- Adopt an appropriate landscape management and maintenance regime to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the existing and new planting and landscape areas.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) Proposals

- 5.3 The landscape GI and proposals for the scheme are detailed in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application. In summary these proposals include:

- The provision of land dedicated to landscape, GI, public open space, play and habitat related proposals;
- Respond to the borough-wide landscape management objectives for the 'Croft' landscape character area, by retaining trees and hedgerows, and reinforcing these with new planting.

Landscape Management

- 5.4 All of the landscape areas and public open space features will be managed and maintained. This would be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan (LMP), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the landscape proposals.

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 6.1 The following section outlines the likely landscape and visual effects that would arise from proposed development on the site. Schedules detailing these likely landscape and visual effects for the receptors are included in Appendices B and C respectively. Please refer to these in conjunction with the following descriptions.

Landscape Effects

National Level

- 6.2 The Site and its immediate context only partially shares one of the key characteristics on this NCA, that being regular field pattern defined by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees. It differs from the description given by the NCA in that the landscape cannot be described as 'large-scale'.
- 6.3 The Site covers a very small area in comparison to the large tract covered by the NCA, and as such, a development of this size will not result in any noticeable change to the landscape character of the NC on its own.
- 6.4 The Site is already affected by the adjacent settlement edge. The proposed development will result on a loss of farmland, but this will be negligible in the context of the wider NCA.

Borough Level - Croft

- 6.5 The majority of the Site falls within the 'Croft' Landscape Character Area (LCA). The Site shares many of the key characteristics of the 'Croft' LCA. The description of this area included in the LCA emphasises the importance of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The proposed development will retain these, and reinforce them as required.
- 6.6 The proposed development will result in a loss of agricultural land and horse paddocks, which are characteristic of the 'Croft' area. It is judged that the initial effects of the proposed development on this LCA would be minor-moderate adverse. Over time, as planting matures, helping the development to assimilate with its surroundings, it is anticipated that this would reduce to minor adverse.

Borough Level - Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton

- 6.7 The south-western corner of the Site, which comprises the existing barn, parking area, access road and some horse paddocks, is located within the LCA defined by the borough-wide assessment as 'Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton'. The Site shares little in common with the description of this Landscape Character Area.
- 6.8 The extents of the Site that lies within this area is small, in comparison to the much larger landscape character area, and therefore any changes to this area will have little noticeable change to the wider landscape character area.
- 6.9 The part of the Site which lies in this area is dominated by an existing equestrian barn, and also comprises a parking area, and horse paddocks. The existing settlement edge is also dominant. These features would be replaced by new residential development, however this would not be introducing uncharacteristic elements into the receiving landscape.

- 6.10 The proposed development would not result in a loss of any key characteristics stated by the borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment. It is judged that the proposed development would result in negligible adverse effect on the landscape character of this LCA.

Site and Immediate Context

- 6.11 The indicative Framework Plan seeks to retain any landscape features of importance, which are characteristic of the wider landscape. Existing boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees would be retained and incorporated into the proposed scheme. A section on the central, internal hedgerow would be removed for access, but otherwise this feature would also be retained.
- 6.12 The Site is visually 'pleasant', containing horse paddocks, bounded by hedgerows, it is not a valued or important landscape, and it is heavily influenced by built development, both on the Site and adjacent to it.
- 6.13 The presence of existing hedgerows and trees helps to provide some degree of visual enclosure, helping to limit the geographical extent of the impact.
- 6.14 The proposed development will result in a loss of openness, and loss of pastoral farmland, and extend the existing build edge eastwards. The proposed development is anticipated to result in a moderate adverse effect on the Site and its immediate context. It is not expected that this would reduce over time, due to the limited scope for planting in the indicative scheme.

Green Belt

- 6.15 The current Local Plan (2014) includes the Site within Green Belt. As part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review, a review of the Green Belt has been undertaken (see Section 3). The Site is located within parcel CR4 moderate contribution.
- 6.16 This is a logical Site to remove from the Green Belt, as the existing settlement extends further east than the Site – to Lady Lane. Sporadic development extends along Lady Lane and Mustard Lane from Croft, resulting in no clear, distinction between Croft and Little Town.

Visual Effects

Construction

- 6.17 During construction, adverse effects on visual amenity will occur due to construction of roads, houses and attenuation features. This level of effect is judged to be no worse than the effect upon completion.

Operation (following Completion)

- 6.18 The following provides a summary of the visual effects assessment included at Appendix C.
- 6.19 Include also details of the longer-term effects arising as the landscape/ planting matures under the headings below.
- 6.20 The visual envelope of the Site (i.e. areas from which a view of the Site can be experienced) extends only as far as Mustard Lane in the north, Lady Lane in the east, Deacons Close in the west, and Betsyfield Road in the south. This limits the number of receptors with potential views of the Site.

Residents

- 6.21 The views of residents in dwellings with primary views (from ground floor windows) across the Site would be most impacted. The residents of 6 dwellings on Deacons Close (Viewpoint 8 and 9), who currently experience open views across the site, would experience a high magnitude of change, as a result of proposed dwellings replacing horse paddocks and an existing barn. This would result in an initial moderate-major adverse effect, potentially reducing to moderate adverse by Year 10, if planting is proposed along the western Site boundary, helping to filter views.
- 6.22 Residents of circa 5 dwellings on Mustard Lane (in the vicinity of the Primary School) (Viewpoint 10) experience partial views of the Site. The views experienced by residents of dwellings in the vicinity of this viewpoint are affected greater than those in the vicinity of Viewpoint 1, primarily due to proximity to the Site. The majority of the Site can be seen from this location, albeit a shallow view to the Site, seen beyond the roadside hedgerow. The height of proposed dwellings will be similar to that on the existing barn, visible in the right of the view. This will result in built development spreading left across the view. The effect of the proposed development on the visual amenity of residents would be moderate adverse at worst. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, views towards the built development would be filtered, helping to reduce the impact of the dwellings on the visual amenity of residents, reducing the effect to minor adverse.
- 6.23 Residents on Mustard Lane located further from the Site (Viewpoint 1) would only experience a negligible adverse effect, due to distance from the Site, and the screening effect of intervening vegetation.
- 6.24 The residents of the two northern-most dwellings on Betsyfield Road (Viewpoint 6) would experience glimpses towards the proposed development. Dense vegetation on either side of public footpath 0097/6/1 screens the Site from view. Only the apex of the existing barn roof is visible over this intervening vegetation.
- 6.25 It is anticipated that only glimpses to the roofs of the nearest proposed dwellings would be experienced from this location, resulting in a negligible adverse effect on visual amenity.
- 6.26 Residents on Eaves Brow Road would experience no change to views, as existing intervening vegetation screens the Site from view.

Users of Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Other Footpaths etc

- 6.27 The southern extent of the Site, including existing barn, are visible from Viewpoint 3, which can be seen by users of public footpath 0097/6/1 travelling west. Users of the footpath travelling west would see the proposed dwellings – primarily in the southern part of the Site. These would be seen in the context of existing dwellings, and therefore would not be introducing new, uncharacteristic elements into the view. Proposed dwellings will be similar in scale to existing dwellings visible in the view, and would result in an initial minor adverse effect on visual amenity, reducing to negligible adverse when trees are in leaf (providing a degree of screening).
- 6.28 As shown in Photo Viewpoint 7, dense vegetation alongside the footpath provides effective screening to the view experienced by users of public footpath 0097/6/1 travelling east. Even when trees and hedgerows have shed their leaves, only glimpses into the Site can be seen. It is anticipated that the proposed dwellings closest to the southern Site boundary would be glimpsed through this vegetation, resulting in a negligible adverse effect. When vegetation is in leaf, it is anticipated that the proposed dwellings would be almost totally hidden from view.

Road Users

- 6.29 The southern extent of the Site, including existing barn, are visible from Lady Lane (Viewpoint 3). Road users would see glimpsed views towards the proposed dwellings in the periphery of the view – primarily in the southern part of the Site. These would be seen in the context of existing dwellings, and therefore would not be introducing new, uncharacteristic elements into the view. Proposed dwellings will be similar in scale to existing dwellings visible in the view, and would result in a negligible adverse effect on the visual amenity of road users.
- 6.30 Road users of Mustard Lane (Viewpoint 10) would see part of the proposed development in the periphery of the view, when travelling along Mustard Lane. The existing barn on Site and Croft Primary School are visible, so the proposed development would not be introducing uncharacteristic elements into the view, however built development will become more dominant in what is a primarily rural view. This is anticipated to result in a minor adverse effect on the visual amenity of road users. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, views towards the built development would be filtered, helping to reduce the impact of the dwellings on the visual amenity of road users, potentially reducing the effect to negligible adverse.

Other Visual Receptors

- 6.31 Visitors to Christ Church, Lady Lane (Viewpoint 4) would only experience glimpsed views of the proposed dwellings, seen through intervening vegetation, resulting in a negligible adverse effect. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, it is anticipated that the proposed dwellings would be totally screened from view.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Site lies on the eastern edge of Croft, and to the north of Warrington, in the borough of Warrington. It occupies two fields, separated by a hedgerow, and subdivided into horse paddocks by timber post and rail fencing. A large barn for horse training lies on the southern edge of the Site. The Site and its immediate context are not subject to any conservation or landscape designations, but it does form part of the Green Belt.
- 7.2 The Green Belt has been subject to a review, which has concluded that Parcel CR4 (within which the Site is located) makes a moderate contribution to the Green Belt.
- 7.3 Opportunities for views of the Site are limited by the combined screening effects of trees, hedgerows and the settlement edge. The number of potential visual receptors is limited. These are restricted to residents of adjacent dwellings, users of the adjacent footpath, localised road users, as well as staff and students of Croft Primary School.
- 7.4 According to the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment, the Site lies within the Landscape Character Type 'Undulating Enclosed Farmland', and within sub-areas 'Croft' and 'Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton'. The key characteristics of Area 1D 'Croft' include hedgerows (mainly gappy), hedgerow trees (mainly Oaks), pastureland and horse paddocks. This appraisal considers that the landscape sensitivity of the Site and its immediate context is medium.

Summary of Landscape Effects

- 7.5 The overall landscape effect of the proposals has been assessed as negligible upon the large-scale National Character Area 'Mersey Valley', within which the Site sits.
- 7.6 According to the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment (2007), the Site lies within the Landscape Character Type 'Undulating Enclosed Farmland', and lies across areas 1C 'Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton & Bollin' and 1D 'Croft'. The majority of the Site lies in area 1D, with the southwestern extremity lying in area 1C.
- 7.7 The landscape character of the Site is consistent with the description of the 'Croft' area, but shares little in common with the 'Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton & Bollin' area.
- 7.8 The proposed development seeks to retain the landscape elements which are characteristic of the 'Croft' area, including the historic field pattern, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. However, the proposed development will result in the loss of horse paddocks, which are characteristic of the landscape character area.
- 7.9 There will be a low magnitude of change to the borough level landscape character area 'Croft', and a long-term minor adverse effect. During construction, adverse effects on landscape character will occur due to construction of roads, buildings and attenuation features. This level of effect is judged to be no worse than the effect upon completion, which is judged to be minor-moderate adverse.
- 7.10 The part of the Site which lies in the area 'Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton & Bollin' is dominated by an existing equestrian barn, and also comprises a parking area, and horse paddocks. The proposed development would not result in a loss of any key characteristics stated by the borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment. Initial effects on landscape character

area judged to be negligible adverse, as the existing barn will be replaced by other built development, and the existing settlement edge character would be retained.

- 7.11 On completion, the effect of the proposed development upon the landscape character of the Site and its immediate context will be moderate adverse, as open pastoral farmland will be replaced by dwellings, however the established framework of surrounding trees and hedgerows will be retained and reinforced where feasible, limiting the extent of the effects.
- 7.12 10 years after planting, there will be some landscape benefits as a result of proposed planting, open space, and drainage features. This will help reduce the overall effect of the proposed development on the landscape character of the receiving landscape.

Summary of Visual Effects

- 7.13 During construction, adverse effects on visual amenity will occur due to construction of roads, houses and attenuation features. This level of effect is judged to be no worse than the effect upon completion.
- 7.14 The visual envelope of the Site (i.e. areas from which a view of the Site can be experienced) extends only as far as Mustard Lane in the north, Lady Lane in the east, Deacons Close in the west, and Betsyfield Road in the south. This limits the number of receptors with potential views of the Site.
- 7.15 Only residents of dwellings immediately adjacent to the Site (on Deacons Close) would experience noticeable change to views. These residents would experience an initial moderate-major adverse effect on visual amenity. Primary views towards the proposed dwellings will be experienced by residents of 6 dwellings located on the western edge of the Site. A view across existing horse paddocks to an existing barn will be replaced by a view of proposed dwellings, similar in scale to those on Deacons Close. Although this won't be introducing uncharacteristic elements into the view, the proposed development will change the nature of the view experienced, introducing urbanising elements into a rural view. By Year 10, it is anticipated that the effect on the visual amenity of these closest residents would reduce to moderate adverse, as proposed planting helps the dwelling assimilate with their surroundings.
- 7.16 Other residents are located further from the Site, and have the benefit of intervening vegetation providing varying degrees of screening. The nearest residents to the Site on Mustard Lane (in the vicinity of Croft Primary School) will experience a moderate adverse effect on visual amenity, however this is limited to a very small number of residents. Other residents would experience a negligible adverse effect at worst (i.e. the change to the view resulting from the development would be barely noticeable, even through winter vegetation).
- 7.17 Users of the adjacent Public Right of Way will experience varying levels of effects on views, depending on the proximity to the Site and direction of view. Initial effects on visual amenity of footpath users ranges from minor adverse to negligible.
- 7.18 Road users of Mustard Lane, and Lady Lane would experience change to views looking towards the Site, however these would be in the periphery of the view. Initial effects on visual amenity are predicted to be minor adverse at worst (Mustard Lane), reducing over time and with increased distance from the built development.

- 7.19 10 years after completion, effects on the visual amenity of some receptors will reduce slightly, as a result of proposed planting and reinforcement hedge planting, helping the built development assimilate more readily with its surroundings, and filtering views from nearby receptors.

Conclusions

- 7.20 The proposal will create a sustainable residential development for up to 90 dwellings, and open space. The indicative Framework Plan sets out how a future development could look. Best practice guidance has been followed to show how a responsive and sustainable proposal could be delivered.
- 7.21 The emerging masterplan has responded to the published landscape studies and the recommendations included within these. The Warrington Landscape Character Assessment (2007) recommends that existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be retained, with new hedgerow and hedgerow trees to infill gaps. Section 5 of this report explains how the emerging masterplan has responded to these published recommendations.
- 7.22 The site itself currently comprises horse paddocks and an equestrian barn, generally of unremarkable character, and influenced by the adjacent urban area. The key landscape features the hedges and hedgerow trees. The indicative Framework Plan shows how existing trees and hedgerows could be retained and integrated into the layout. It also demonstrates how the landscape management guidelines, as set out in the district level landscape character assessment, could be followed.
- 7.23 Although the site is a visually 'pleasant' landscape, containing some features of landscape interest, the landscape of the site and its immediate context is not a valued or important landscape. The existing settlement edge is visually dominant, however the mature trees within the adjacent fields help to filter views to this edge. The landscape is not designated for reasons of character. The components of landscape value (hedgerows and hedgerow trees) will seek to be retained, where feasible, and integrated into the layout.
- 7.24 This is a both a suitable and logical location for settlement expansion, and has the potential to deliver a sensitively designed development, that helps meet the increasing demand for houses.



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Site Boundary

client
Bellway Homes Ltd
project
Land at Deacons Close,
Croft

drawing title
SITE LOCATION

scale
1:25,000 @ A3
drawing / figure number

drawn
MST

issue date
30 November 2016
rev



Figure 1



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Site Boundary

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Croft

drawing title
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

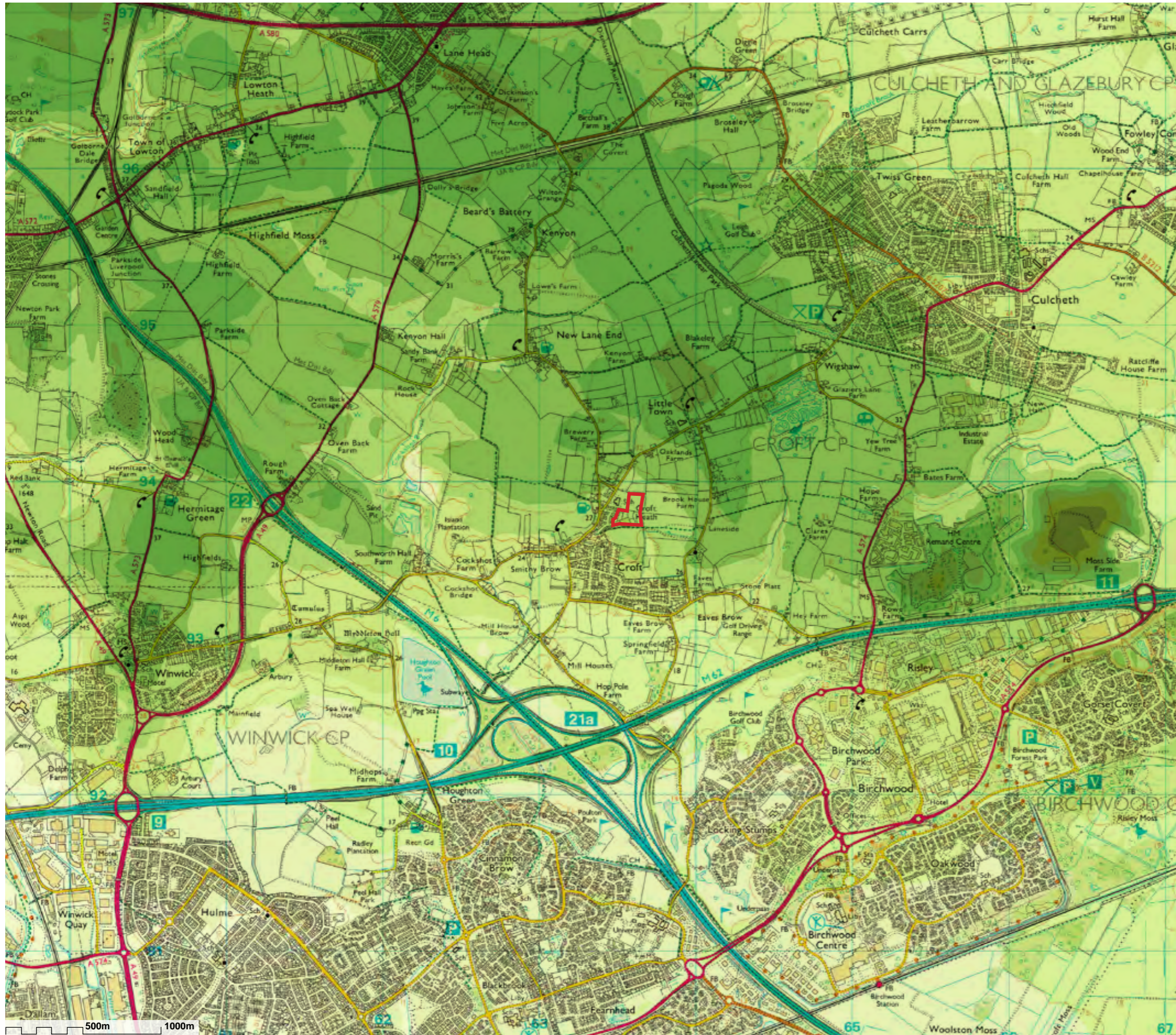


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Figure 2



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project
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Croft

drawing title
TOPOGRAPHY PLAN

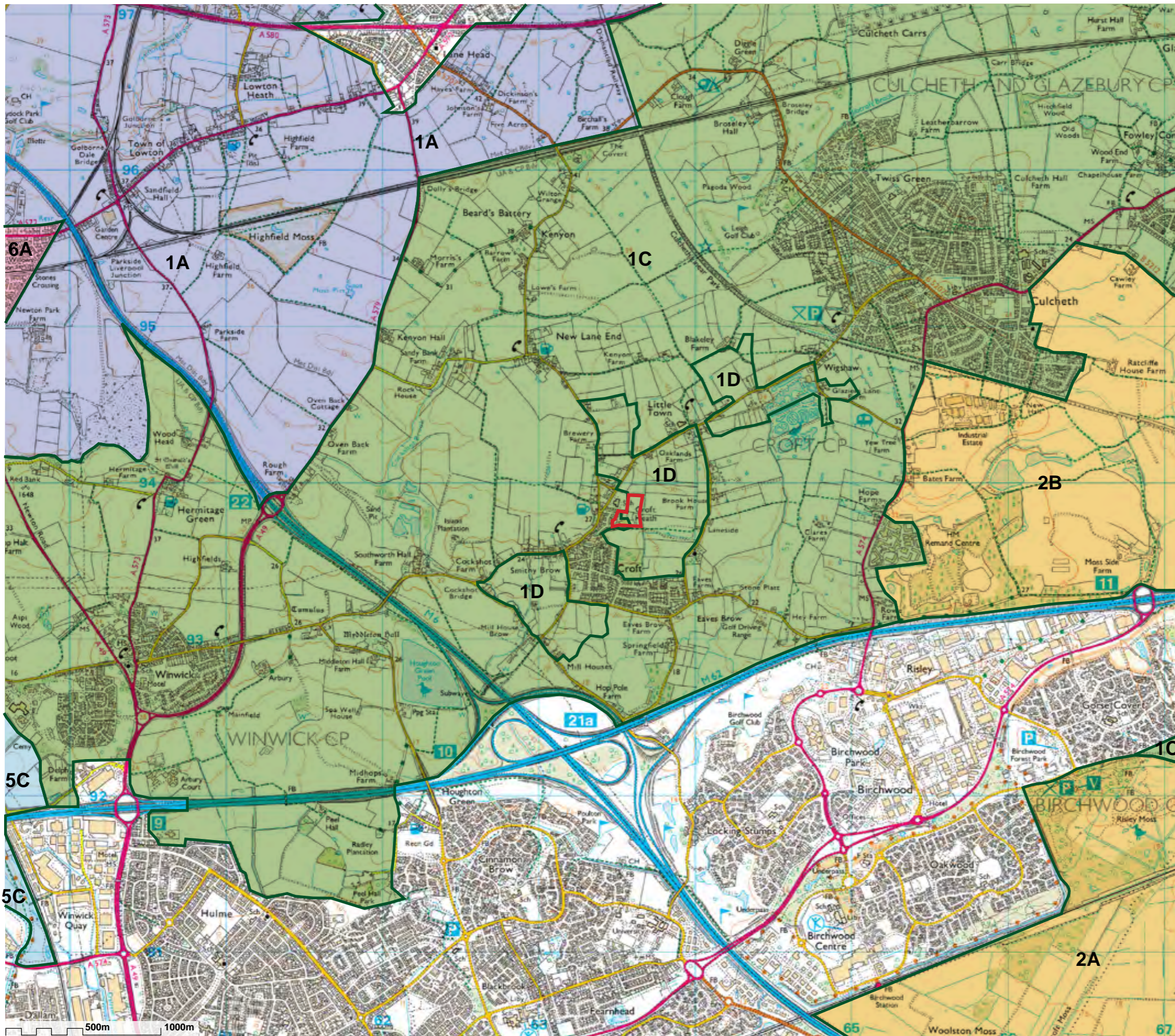
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Figure 3



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-  Site Boundary
- Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment, 2007**
-  Undulating Enclosed Farmland
 - 1C - Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton
 - 1D - Croft
-  Mossland Landscape
 - 2A - Rixton, Woolston and Risley Moss
 - 2B - Holcroft and Glazebrook Moss
-  River Floodplain
 - 5C - Sankey Brook
- Wigan: A Landscape Character Assessment, 2009**
-  Undulating Enclosed Farmland
 - 1A - East Lancashire Road Corridor Lowton Heath to Latley Common
-  Mossland
 - 6A - Highfield Moss

Note: National Character Area (NCA) 60: Mersey Valley covers all mapping extents shown

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

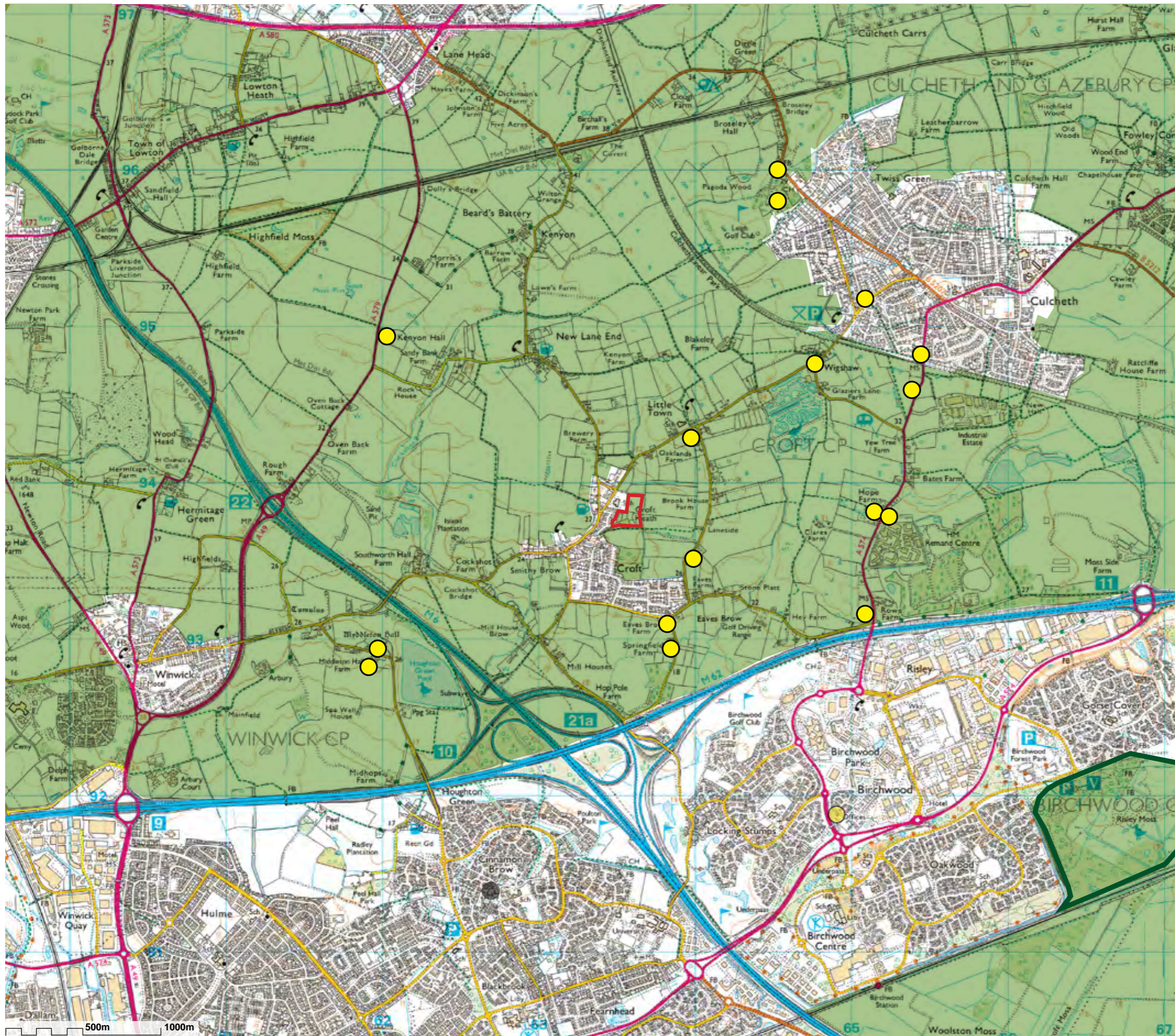
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


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Figure 4



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-  Site Boundary
-  Green Belt
-  Listed Buildings within approximately 2 - 3km of the site
-  Risley Moss Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Highfield Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

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DESIGNATIONS

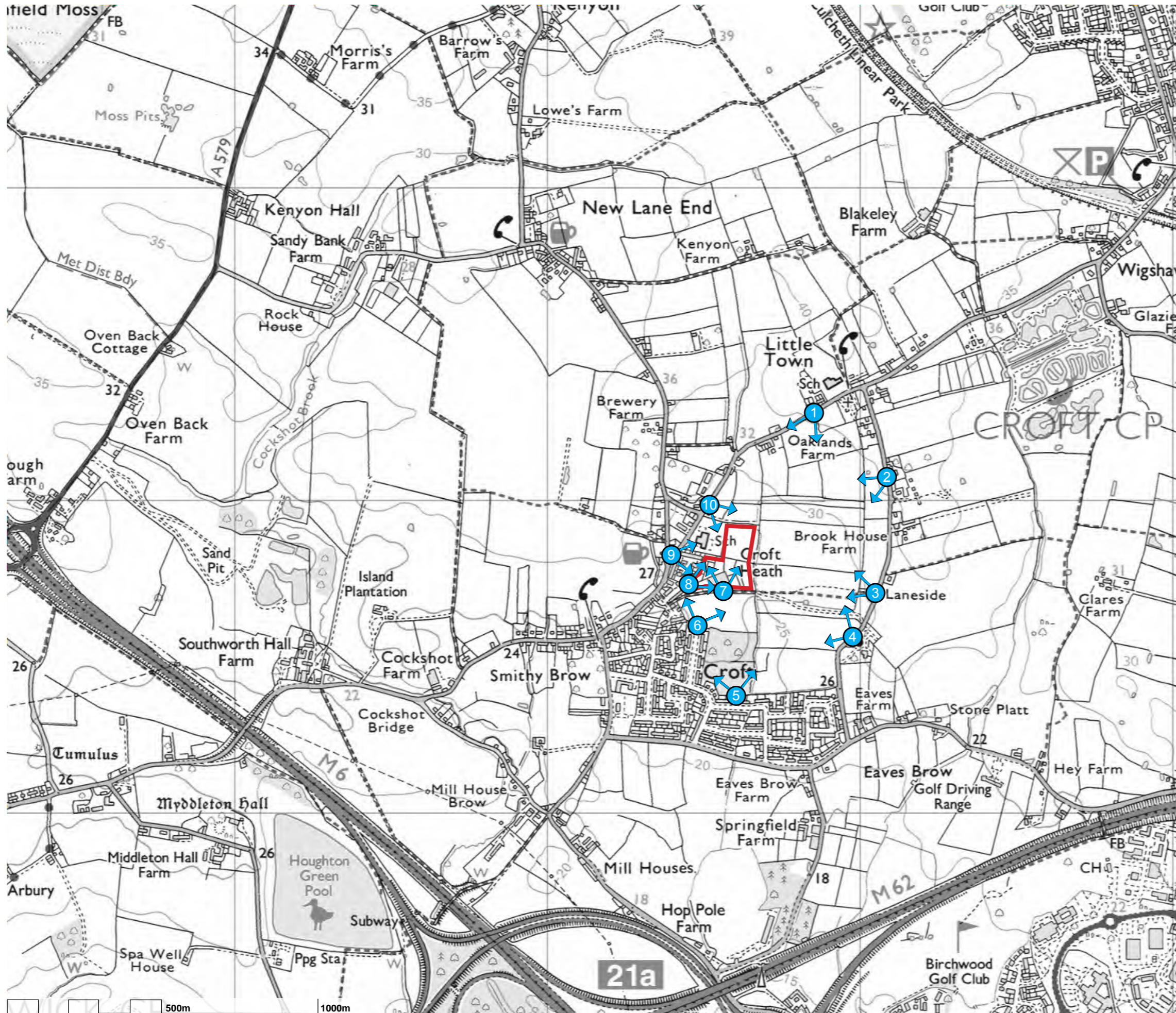
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
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Figure 5



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 Site Boundary
 Photo Viewpoint Locations

500m 1000m

client
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 Land at Deacons Close,
 Croft
 drawing title
PHOTO VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS

scale
 1:12,500 @ A3
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Figure 6
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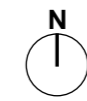




PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1: View south from Mustard Lane

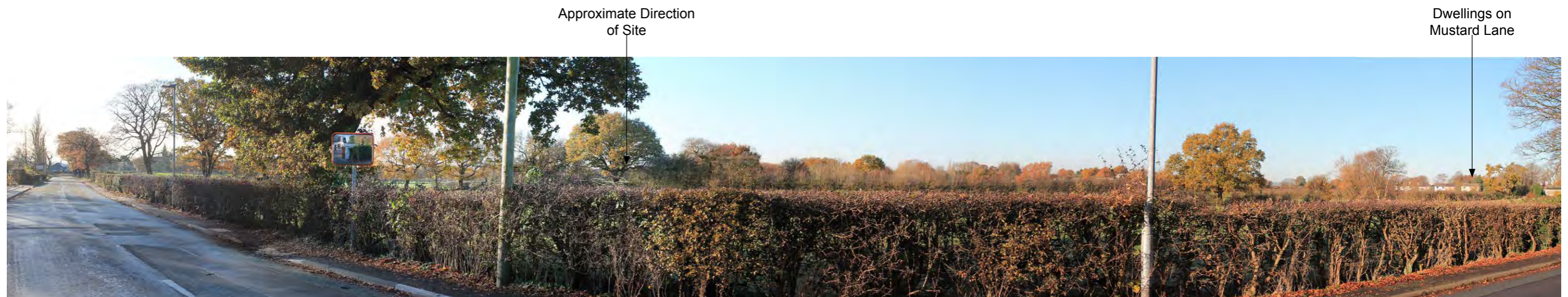


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 2: View west from Lady Lane

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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 1 & 2
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Figure 7

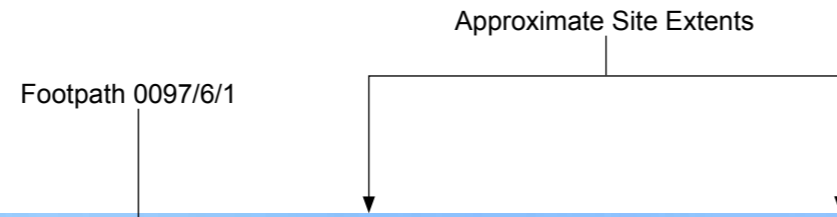


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3: View west from Public Footpath 0097/6/1 adjacent to Lady Lane

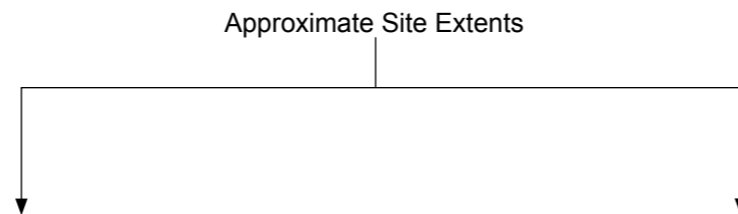



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 4: View northwest from entrance to Christ Church, Croft, on Lady Lane



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Land off Deacon Close,
Croft

PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 3 & 4

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Figure 8



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 5: View north from Eaves Brow Road

Approximate Site Extents

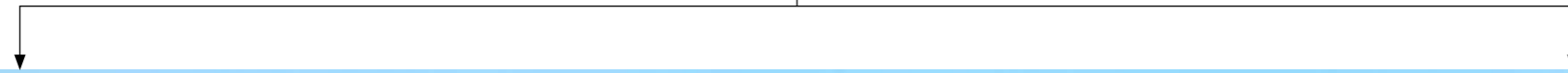


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 6: View north from Betsyfield Drive

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Land off Deacon Close,
Croft
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Figure 9

Equestrian Centre



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 7: View north from Footpath 0097/6/1

Approximate Site Extents

Equestrian Centre



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 8: View east from Deacons Close

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Bellway Homes

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Land off Deacon Close,
Croft

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Figure 10



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 9: View east from Deacons Drive



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 10: View southeast from Mustard Lane

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Croft
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Figure 11

Appendix A

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Methodology and Assessment Criteria

Introduction

The methodology for the landscape and visual appraisal undertaken for the proposed development is detailed in the appraisal report. The following information should be read in conjunction with this methodology.

As advised in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (GLVIA3), the judgements made in respect of both landscape and visual effects are a combination of an assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the landscape or visual effect. The following details the definitions and criteria used in assessing sensitivity and magnitude for landscape and visual receptors.

Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement will be described as High/ Medium or Minor/ Moderate etc. This indicates that the receptor is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

Landscape

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their 'Landscape Sensitivity'. This combines judgements on the value to be attached to the landscape and the susceptibility to change of the landscape from the type of change or development proposed. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.

There can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change which can be especially important when considering change within or close to designated landscapes. For example an internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically or by definition have a high susceptibility to all types of change. The type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape.

Landscape Value

Value can apply to a landscape area as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. The following criteria have been used to categorise landscape value. Where there is no clear existing evidence on landscape value, an assessment is made based on the criteria/ factors identified below (based on the guidance in GLVIA3 Box 5.1 Page 84).

- Landscape quality (condition)
- Scenic quality
- Rarity

- Representativeness
- Conservation interest
- Recreation value
- Perceptual aspects
- Associations

Landscape Value	Definition
High	Landscape receptors of high importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Limited potential for substitution.
Medium	Landscape receptors of medium importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Capable of substitution.
Low	Landscape receptors of low importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Potential for landscape improvement and creation.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

This means the ability of the landscape receptor (overall character type/ area or individual element/ feature) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline position and/ or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. The definition and criteria for the assessment of Landscape Susceptibility to Change is as follows:

Landscape Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	A highly distinctive and cohesive landscape receptor, with positive characteristics and features and no or very few detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features intact and in very good condition and/ or rare. Limited capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.
Medium	Distinctive and more commonplace landscape receptor, with some positive characteristics/ features and some detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape

	features in moderate condition. Capacity to accept well planned and designed change/ development of the type proposed.
Low	Landscape receptor of mixed character with a lack of coherence and including detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features that may be in poor or improving condition and few that could not be replaced. Greater capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

The magnitude of landscape effects is the degree of change to the landscape receptor in terms of its size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the separate considerations of Scale or Size of the Degree of Change and Reversibility. The geographical extent and duration of change are described where relevant in the appraisal.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change	Definition
High	Total loss of or major alteration to key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements that would be evident but not necessarily uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be obviously changed.
Low	Limited loss of, or alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements evident and/ or characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be perceptibly changed.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be minimally changed.
None	No loss or alteration to the key characteristics/ features, representing 'no change'.

Reversibility

Reversibility	Definition
Irreversible	The development would be permanent and the site could not be returned to its current/ former use.
Reversible	The development could be deconstructed/ demolished and the site could be returned to broadly its current/ historic use (although that may be subject to qualification depending on the nature of the development).

Visual

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Visual sensitivity assesses each visual receptor in terms of their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.

Visual Susceptibility to Change

The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of; firstly, the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and secondly, the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and visual amenity they experience.

Visual Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	Residents at home with primary views from ground floor/garden and upper floors. Public rights of way and footpaths where attention is focussed on the landscape and on particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and/ or on particular views. Communities where views make an important contribution to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents. Travellers on recognised scenic routes.
Medium	Residents at home with secondary views (primarily from first floor level). Public rights of way and footpaths where attention is not focussed on the landscape and/ or particular views. Travellers on road, rail or other transport with a focus on the landscape.

Low	Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities (e.g. sports pitches). Travellers on road, rail or other transport where views are primarily focussed on the transport route. People at their place of work where views of the landscape are not important to the quality of the working life.

Value of Views

The value attached to a view takes account of any recognition attached to a particular view and/ or any indicators of the value attached to views, for example through guidebooks or defined viewpoints or references in literature or art.

Value of Views	Definition
High	A unique or identified view (eg. shown as such on Ordnance Survey map, guidebook or tourist map) or one noted in literature or art. A view where a heritage asset makes an important contribution to the view.
Medium	A typical and/ or representative view from a particular receptor.
Low	An undistinguished or unremarkable view from a particular receptor.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

Magnitude of Visual Effects evaluates each of the visual effects in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the Scale or Size (including the degree of contrast) of Visual Change. The distance and nature of the view and whether the view will be permanent or transient are also detailed in the Visual Effects Table.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Visual Change	Definition
High	The proposal will result in a large and immediately apparent change in the view, being a dominant and new and/ or incongruous feature in the landscape.
Medium	The proposal will result in an obvious and recognisable change in the view and will be readily noticed by the viewer.
Low	The proposal will constitute a minor component of the wider view or a more

	recognisable component that reflects those apparent in the existing view. Awareness of the proposals will not have a marked effect on the overall nature of the view.
Negligible/ None	Only a very small part of the proposal will be discernible and it will have very little or no effect on the nature of the view.

Level of Effect

The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement involves a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the criteria, to then make the overall judgement.

Whilst GLVIA3 notes at paragraph 5.56 that there are no hard and fast rules about the level of effects, the criteria adopted for this landscape and visual appraisal are defined as follows:

- Major: An effect that will fundamentally change and be in direct contrast to the existing landscape or views;
- Moderate: An effect that will markedly change the existing landscape or views but may retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
- Minor: An effect that will entail limited or localised change to the existing landscape/ views or will entail more noticeable localised change but including both adverse and beneficial effects and is likely to retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
- Negligible: An effect that will be discernible yet of very limited change to the existing landscape or views.

APPENDIX B: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)								
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape		Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect upon Completion	Overall Effect at 10 Years post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?				
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse Beneficial
National Landscape Character								
Natural England, National Character Area Profile 'Mersey Valley' (NCA 60)	Medium	Medium	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 10: Negligible	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site and its immediate context only partially shares one of the key characteristics on this NCA, that being regular field pattern defined by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees. It differs from the description given by the NCA in that the landscape cannot be described as 'large-scale'. The Site covers a very small area in comparison to the large tract covered by the NCA, and as such, a development of this size will not result in any noticeable change to the landscape character of the NC on its own. The Site is already affected by the adjacent settlement edge. The proposed development will result on a loss of farmland, but this will be negligible in the context of the wider NCA. 	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	Negligible Adverse
Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA): Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment 2007								
Undulating Enclosed Farmland: Area 1D 'Croft'	Medium	Medium	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 10: Low	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The description of this area included in the LCA emphasises the importance of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The proposed development will retain these, and reinforce them as required. The proposed development will result in a loss of agricultural land and horse paddocks, which are characteristic of the 'Croft' area. 	Minor-Moderate Adverse	Minor-Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse
Undulating Enclosed Farmland: Area 1C 'Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton'	Medium	Medium	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 10: Negligible	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Site shares little in common with the description of this Landscape Character Area. The extents of the Site that lies within this area is small, in comparison to the much larger landscape character area, and therefore any changes to this area will have little noticeable change to the wider landscape character area. The part of the Site which lies in this area is dominated by an existing equestrian barn, and also comprises a parking area, and horse paddocks. The existing settlement edge is also dominant. These features would be replaced by new residential development, however this would not be introducing uncharacteristic elements into the receiving landscape. The proposed development would not result in a loss of any key characteristics stated by the borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment. 	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse

APPENDIX B: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)								
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape		Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect upon Completion	Overall Effect at 10 Years post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Landscape Character: Site and Immediate Context								
Site and Immediate Context	Medium	Medium	Construction: Completion: Year 10:	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicative Framework Plan seeks to retain any landscape features of importance, which are characteristic of the wider landscape. Existing boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees would be retained and incorporated into the proposed scheme. A section on the central, internal hedgerow would be removed for access, but otherwise this feature would also be retained. The Site is visually 'pleasant', containing horse paddocks, bounded by hedgerows, it is not a valued or important landscape, and it is heavily influenced by built development, both on the Site and adjacent to it. The presence of existing hedgerows and trees helps to provide some degree of visual enclosure, helping to limit the geographical extent of the impact. The proposed development will result in a loss of openness, and loss of pastoral farmland, and extend the existing build edge eastwards. 	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse

APPENDIX C: VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE (VET)											
VP Ref	Receptor Type and Location	Judged Sensitivity of Visual Receptor		Judged Magnitude of Visual Effects				Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect upon Completion	Overall Effect 10 Years post Completion
		Susceptibility to Change	Value	Distance from Site Boundary (or Built Development where stated) (approx. m/km)	Nature of View	Is the View Permanent or Transient?	Size/Scale of Visual Effect (incl. degree of contrast/ integration) (at Stages of Project)		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
		High Medium Low	High Medium Low		Full Partial Glimpse None		High Medium Low Negligible/ None	Adverse or Beneficial	Adverse or Beneficial	Adverse or Beneficial	
1	Residents on Mustard Lane	Medium	Medium	390m	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Negligible/None Completion: Negligible/None Year 10: Negligible/None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing barn on site is not visible from this location, due to the screening effect of intervening vegetation. Although the development would spread further north than the existing barn, towards the viewpoint, it is likely that only rooftops of proposed dwellings would be glimpsed, and seen in the context of existing, close development at Oaklands Farm. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, it is likely that the proposed development would be totally hidden from view. 	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse	None
2	Residents on Lady Lane	Medium-High	Medium	430m	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Negligible/None Completion: Negligible/None Year 10: Negligible/None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the screening effects of existing vegetation, the existing Site and barn are not visible from this location. Once dwellings have been constructed, rooftops may be glimpsed through winter vegetation. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, it is likely that the proposed development would be totally hidden from view. 	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse	None
3	Users of public footpath 0097/6/1 travelling west	Medium-High	Medium	380m	Partial	Transient	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 10: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The southern extent of the Site, including existing barn, are visible from this location. Users of the footpath travelling west would see the proposed dwellings – primarily in the southern part of the Site. These would be seen in the context of existing dwellings, and therefore would not be introducing new, uncharacteristic elements into the view. Proposed dwellings will be similar in scale to existing dwellings visible in the view. 	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible Adverse
3	Road users on Lady Lane	Low-Medium	Medium	380m	Partial	Transient	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 10: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The southern extent of the Site, including existing barn, are visible from this location. Road users would see glimpsed views towards the proposed dwellings in the periphery of the view – primarily in the southern part of the Site. These would be seen in the context of existing dwellings, and therefore would not be introducing new, uncharacteristic elements into the view. Proposed dwellings will be similar in scale to existing dwellings visible in the view. 	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse
4	Visitors to Christ Church, Lady Lane	Low	Medium	360m	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Negligible/None Completion: Negligible/None Year 10: Negligible/None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even when trees have shed their leaves, the existing barn on Site is only just visible through intervening vegetation. Only glimpses of the proposed dwellings would be visible from this location, seen through intervening vegetation. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, it is anticipated that the proposed dwellings would be totally screened from view. 	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse	None

5	Residents on Eaves Brow Road	Medium	Medium	330m	None	Permanent	Construction: Negligible/None Completion: Negligible/None Year 10: Negligible/None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing intervening vegetation prevents views towards the Site. It is anticipated that the proposed built development would be screened from view by this vegetation. 	None	None	None
6	Residents on Betsyfield Road	Medium	Medium	110m	Glimpse/Partial	Permanent	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 10: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dense vegetation on either side of public footpath 0097/6/1 screens the Site from view. Only the apex of the existing barn roof is visible over this intervening vegetation. It is anticipated that only glimpses to the roofs of the nearest proposed dwellings would be experienced from this location. Only views experienced from the northern-most properties on Betsyfield Road would be affected. 	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse
7	Users of public footpath 0097/6/1 travelling east	Medium	Medium	0m	Glimpse	Transient	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 10: Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown in Photo Viewpoint 7, dense vegetation alongside the footpath provides effective screening. Even when trees and hedgerows have shed their leaves, only glimpses into the Site can be seen. It is anticipated that the proposed dwellings closest to the southern Site boundary would be glimpsed through this vegetation. When vegetation is in leaf, it is anticipated that the proposed dwellings would be almost totally hidden from view. 	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse
8 & 9	Residents on Deacons Close	High	Medium	10m	Partial/Full	Permanent	Construction: Medium-High Completion: Medium-High Year 10: Medium-High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents on the eastern extent of Deacons Close already experience views to the existing barn (to varying degrees), although the remainder of the Site is currently free from built development. Primary views towards the proposed dwellings will be experienced by residents of 6 dwellings located on the western edge of the Site. A view across existing horse paddocks to an existing barn will be replaced by a view of proposed dwellings, similar in scale to those on Deacons Close. Although this won't be introducing uncharacteristic elements into the view, the proposed development will change the nature of the view experienced, introducing urbanising elements into a rural view. 	Moderate-Major Adverse	Moderate-Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse
10	Residents on Mustard Lane	Medium	Medium	90m	Partial	Permanent	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 10: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The views experienced by residents of dwellings in the vicinity of this viewpoint are affected greater than those in the vicinity of Viewpoint 1, primarily due to proximity to the Site. The majority of the Site can be seen from this location, albeit a shallow view to the Site, seen beyond the roadside hedgerow. The height of proposed dwellings will be similar to that on the existing barn, visible in the right of the view. This will result in built development spreading left across the view. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, views towards the built development would be filtered, helping to reduce the impact of the dwellings on the visual amenity of residents. 	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse
10	Road users on Mustard Lane	Low	Medium	90m	Partial	Transient	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 10: Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road users would see part of the proposed development in the periphery of the view, when travelling along Mustard Lane. The existing barn on Site and Croft Primary School are visible, so the proposed development would not be introducing uncharacteristic elements into the view, however built development will become more dominant in what is a primarily rural view. When trees and hedgerows are in leaf, views towards the built development would be filtered, helping to reduce the impact of the dwellings on the visual amenity of road users. 	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible Adverse

APPENDIX 4: PROPOSED MASTERPLAN



- Key**
- Site boundary
 - Potential development area
 - Bus stop
 - ↔ Access
 - Careful consideration given to relationship between proposed development and existing settlement
 - ↔ Views In
 - ↔ Views out of site
 - Potential green space
 - Existing Trees and Hedges
 - ⋯ Proposed Footpath
 - ▬ Primary Movement Route
 - ▬ Secondary Movement Route
 - ▬ Existing public right of way

Example Residential Development

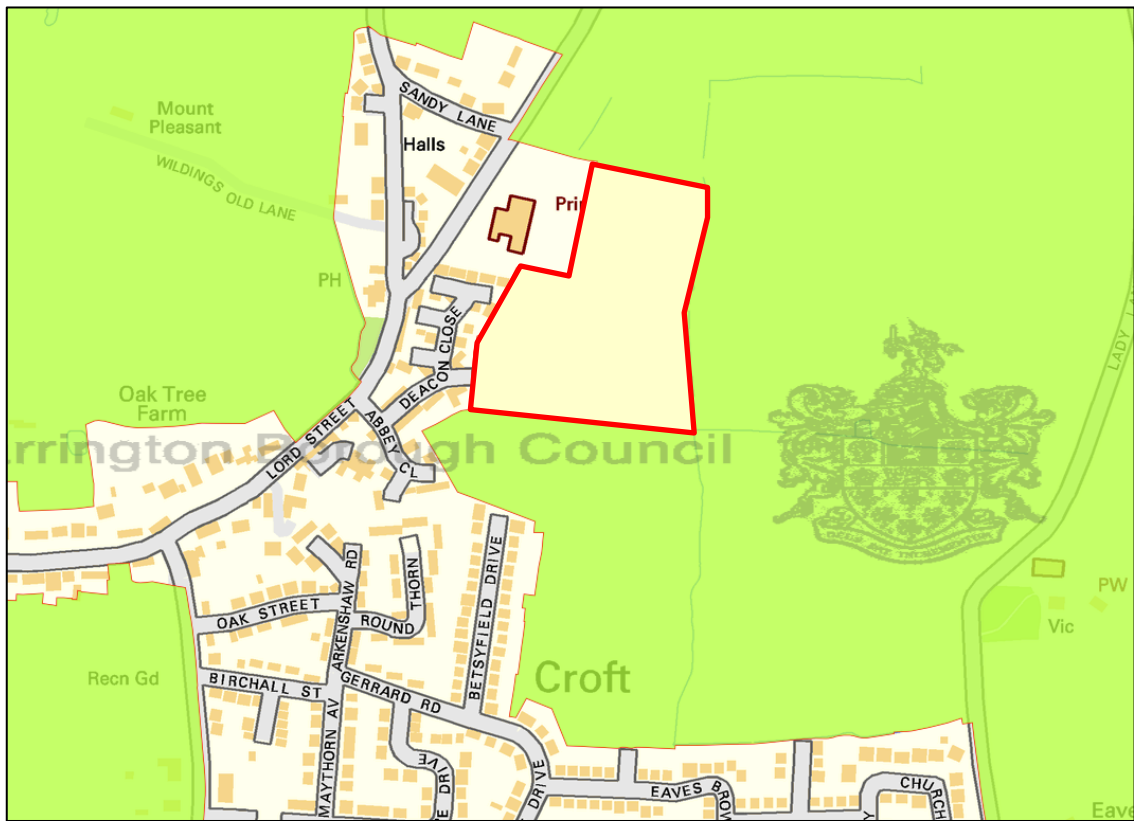


Visualisation 1



Visualisation 2

APPENDIX 5: PROPOSED ALTERATION TO THE GREEN BELT



Proposed alteration to Warrington Green Belt boundary to remove the site at Heathcroft Stud from the Green Belt and allocate for housing.

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