

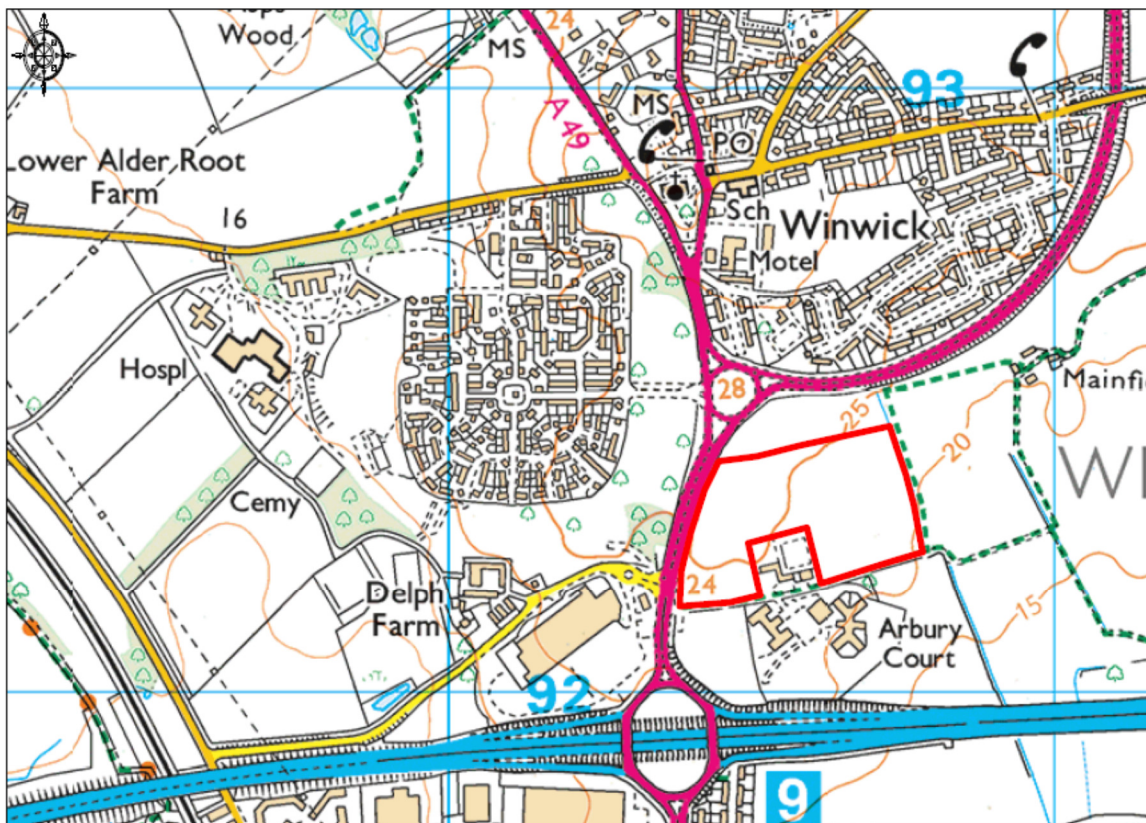
BERRYS

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SUBMISSION TO THE
WARRINGTON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
LAND NORTH OF ARBURY COURT/ EAST OF NEWTON ROAD,
TOWNSFIELD LANE, WINWICK WA2 8TR

on behalf of

Mr D. Beattie



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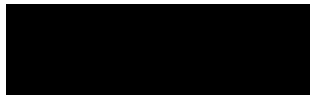
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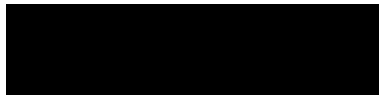
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This 7.6 hectare site is submitted to Warrington Borough Council as a candidate for allocation in the emerging Local Plan on behalf of the landowners, Carole Walsh and David Beattie.
- 1.2. The site is promoted as suitable for both immediate development and over the longer term. It is strategically located on the A49, close to junction 9 of the M62, with good accessibility by both car and public transport. The site can help the Council meet its development needs for a range of uses, including residential, office, leisure, health and other services.
- 1.3. This representation addresses the strategic case for releasing the site from the Green Belt (sections 2 & 3); the characteristics of the site and its sustainability appraisal (sections 4 & 5); and the development concept and next steps (sections 6 & 7).

Figure 1: Strategic location



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2 STRATEGIC CASE

Providing enough land

2.1. A significant amount of land is required to meet Warrington Borough Council's identified needs for development. The Council has identified a need to release land from the Green Belt to deliver:

- Around 261 hectares of employment land
- Enough land to accommodate around 5,000 homes
- Retail development, including food outlets
- Leisure, incl. private gyms
- Health care (forecast to see a growth of 800 jobs by 2037¹)
- Residential care, including dementia care and nursing homes
- Park and ride as part of proposals to reduce congestion in Warrington
- Land that will be 'safeguarded' to meet development needs beyond 2037

2.2. This site can make a valuable contribution to a number of the above land requirements.

The right location

2.3. This is one of a limited number of sites in Warrington Borough Council's area within 500 metres of a motorway junction. Developable land in close proximity to motorway junctions is in relatively short supply and offers competitive advantages that the Council cannot afford to ignore. Strategically, it has more value to the Council for its high accessibility than it does for maintaining the 'openness' of the Green Belt.

2.4. The site is highly accessible by car, via the A49 and M62, being situated in close proximity to Junction 9 of the M62. It is also highly accessible by bus, with a number of regular half-hourly services between Warrington and Wigan stopping at the B&Q Warehouse opposite the site (Arriva bus nos. 329 & 360 and Network Warrington bus nos. 22 bus to Newton le-Willows and No. 19 bus to Leigh).

¹ Oxford economics forecast is for a growth of 800 jobs in Warrington Borough Council's health sector to 2037, see paragraph 9.44 of the Economic Development Needs Study

Reducing commuting

- 2.5. The two largest net daily commuting flows into Warrington are from Wigan (4,539 net movements) and St. Helens (4,288 net movements) (source: 2011 census, reported on page 112 of the Economic Development Needs Study October 2016). This strongly suggests a market need for residential development to the north of Warrington, which would contribute to sustainable development by reducing commuting flows.

Fig 2: Bus stop <100 metres and motorway <200 metres from the site



Market attractiveness

- 2.6. The site is highly attractive to the market, with a number of developers including Taylor Wimpey expressing interest in the site. There are no significant site constraints. The Council can therefore be certain that it will come forward to produce high quality development with environmental enhancements.

Summary

- 2.7. In summary, this site has:
- Excellent accessibility;
 - No constraints;
 - Willing landowners;
 - Developer interest;
 - Strategic value for reducing commuting.

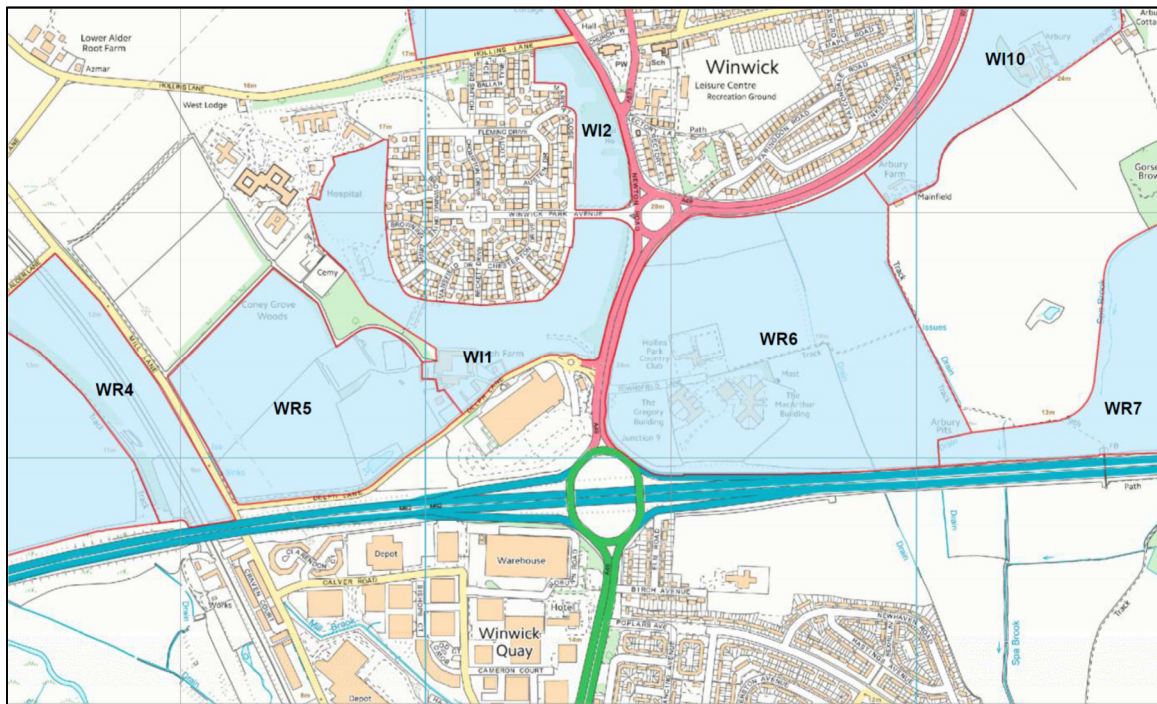
3 GREEN BELT REVIEW

- 3.1. The Warrington Local Plan Review covers a 20 year period. However in relation to the Green Belt a longer term perspective is necessary, because the National Planning Policy Framework requires any review of Green Belt boundaries to have, “*regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period*” (NPPF paragraph 84).
- 3.2. Consequently this once-in-a-generation Green Belt review needs to consider the release of enough Green Belt land to cater for two plan periods, as neighbouring local planning authorities have done, in order to be consistent with the Framework. In addition to releasing land for immediate development, the Plan should release land that is ‘safeguarded’ for the future development needs of the borough.

Inaccuracies in the Green Belt Assessment

- 3.3. This site is included as part of parcel WR6 in the Green Belt Assessment. There are a number of inaccuracies in the Arup report in relation to this site that should be corrected, lest they undermine the validity of the assessment at the future Local Plan examination. The inaccuracies relate to Purpose 3 and the Overall Assessment, as detailed in the table below.

Figure 3: Green Belt Assessment



Purposes of the Green Belt	Arup comments on parcel WR6 (page H19)	Our comments
1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>“Weak contribution: The M62 forms a durable boundary between the parcel and the built up area. This is a permanent boundary that is durable enough to prevent sprawl into the parcel in the long term. The parcel is only connected to the urban area along this southern boundary. Overall the parcel makes a weak contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl.”</p>	no comments
2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>“Weak contribution: The parcel forms a less essential gap between Newton-le-Willows and the Warrington urban area whereby development of the parcel would slightly reduce the gap between the towns however would not result in them merging. Overall, the parcel makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.”</p>	no comments
3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>“Strong contribution: The boundary between the parcel and the settlement is the M62 to the south and the Winwick Link Road (A49) to the north with Winwick, both of which are durable boundaries and would prevent encroachment. The boundaries between the parcel and the countryside consist of the Winwick Link Road (A49) to the west which is durable and could prevent encroachment.</p> <p>To the east is a track and field boundaries which are not durable and would not prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel were developed. The existing land use consists of open countryside in agricultural use as well as a private hospital to the south of the parcel. The parcel is only connected to the countryside along two boundaries.</p> <p>The parcel is flat, with approximately 20% built form and some areas of vegetation concentrated around the hospital however the remainder of the parcel has long line views. The parcel supports a moderate degree of openness. Overall, the parcel makes a strong contribution to protecting the countryside from encroachment due to the existing encroachment and the non-durable eastern boundary with the countryside.”</p>	<p>Arup’s statement that the parcel is connected to the countryside along two boundaries is rather misleading; in reality, it has urban form on three sides.</p> <p>The parcel only has long-line views of the countryside in one direction, namely eastwards.</p> <p>We consider that the contribution should be amended to ‘moderate’. This would not change the overall assessment of ‘moderate contribution’.</p>

4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	“ No contribution: Warrington is a historic town however the parcel is not within 250m of the relevant Conservation Areas. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.”	no comments
5: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	“ Moderate contribution: 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.”	This site could encourage regeneration by making best use of the strategic node of a motorway junction. Keeping it ‘open countryside’ does <i>not</i> help urban regeneration.
Overall Assessment	“The parcel makes a strong contribution to one purpose, a moderate contribution to one, a weak contribution to two, and no contribution to one. In line with the methodology, professional judgement has been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a moderate overall contribution as although the boundaries between the parcel and the countryside are not all durable, the boundaries between the parcel and the settlements consisting of the M62 and the A49 are durable enough to prevent development from encroaching into the parcel and therefore not threatening the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. The parcel makes a moderate contribution in assisting in urban regeneration.”	We consider that this should be amended to a moderate contribution to two purposes, a weak contribution to two, and no contribution to one. The overall contribution is weak to moderate .

3.4. The Green Belt Assessment for parcel WR6 concludes that the parcel as a whole moderately fulfils the purposes of the Green Belt. As such, sites within the parcel should go forward for more detailed assessment as part of the Local Plan Review process.

3.5. A more detailed assessment of smaller sites within the parcel indicates less contribution to the Green Belt, and on balance greater strategic value as land to be allocated or safeguarded for development.

4 SITE APPRAISAL

Site overview

- 4.1. The site is bounded on its southern side by a mental health hospital and a nursing home. To its south-west is a vacant site that is used for parking, auctions and car boot sales. To its west is the A49 Newton Road. There is agricultural land to the north and east of the site.
- 4.2. Inset into the site is a country club and former bowling greens, which are now semi-derelict. Planting around the country club site provides screening between the two sites. The site is relatively flat, with a mature tree belt lining the A49 on the western side of the site.

Figure 4: Aerial photograph



Site access

- 4.3. The site has excellent access via an existing access point on the A49, in close proximity to junction 9 of the M62 motorway. The existing access allows traffic travelling in a southern direction to turn into Townsfield Lane, as shown in figure 5. Due to the barrier across the A49, traffic travelling north must turn around at the roundabouts either side of the site access, as other users of Townsfield Lane currently do without any difficulty.

Figure 5: Site access off A49



Fig 6. Adjoining A49 looking north, with bus stop



Fig 7: looking west along Townsfield Lane towards B&Q



Fig 8: looking west from site; Arbury Court on the left



Fig 9: looking north with brownfield site on the right



SHLAA appraisal

- 4.4. This site (SHLAA reference 2589) was submitted to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in 2014 but due to its position in the Green Belt, it has not yet been categorised. To assist the Council, a summary of the site is provided below.

SHLAA headings	Assessment
Planning Permission History:	N/A
Green Belt:	Yes
GF / PDL:	GF
Flood Zone:	1
Contaminated Land Issues:	No
Ground Conditions Issues:	No
Site Access Issues:	No
Surrounding Land Issues:	No
Infrastructure Issues:	No
Hazardous Installations Issues:	No
Amenity Issues:	No
Ownership / Tenancy Issues:	No
Concluding Comments:	Subject to the outcome of the Green Belt Review, the site is deliverable within 5 years. There are no site constraints and the site has good accessibility by road and by public transport (bus).
Active Use:	Agricultural
Site Developable Now:	Yes
Promotion by Owner: s	Yes
Developer Interest:	Yes (Taylor Wimpey)
Known Demand for Housing:	Yes
Similar Sites Developed Nearby in last 5 years:	No
Suitable:	Yes
Available:	Yes
Available in the future:	N/A
Achievable:	Yes
Concluding Recommendation:	Suitable, available and achievable

Biodiversity

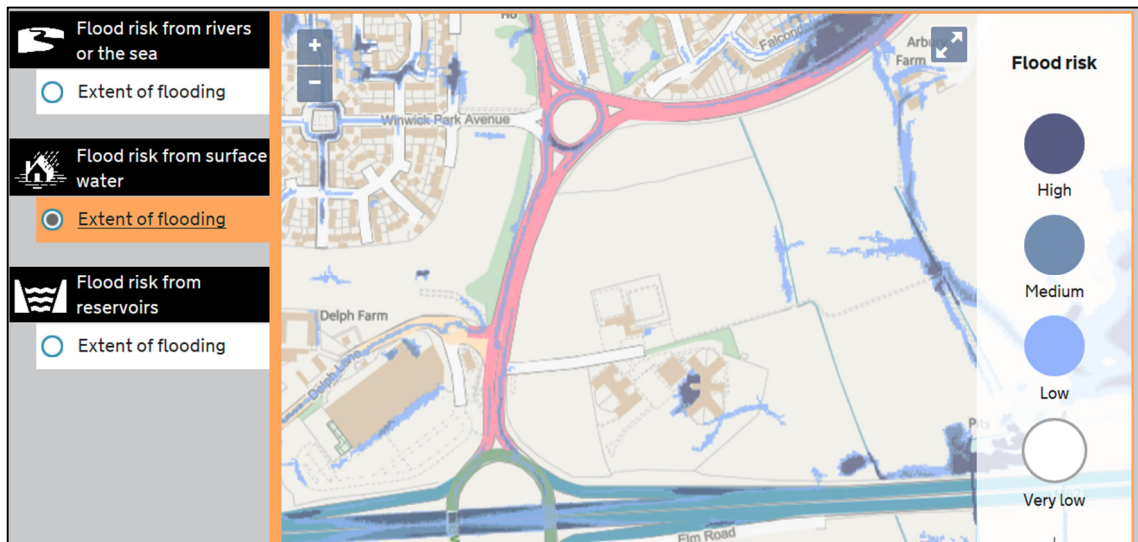
- 4.5. There are no SSSIs within 2km, and no records of protected species licences on the north side of the M62 within 1km of the site. The nearest Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is Haughton Green Pool, over 1km east of the site. There is therefore no reason to expect any protected species to be affected by development. In any event, a full ecological assessment would be undertaken at the appropriate stage in bringing a planning application forward.
- 4.6. The site is in agricultural use, regularly ploughed and cropped and therefore likely to have

relatively low biodiversity. Development would provide ecological enhancements through new planting with suitable native species, providing new habitats and increasing biodiversity.

Drainage & flood risk

- 4.7. The site is in flood zone 1, namely with very low risk of flooding from rivers and streams. The surface water flood risk map below shows that surface water risk is also low.

Fig 10. Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Risk Map

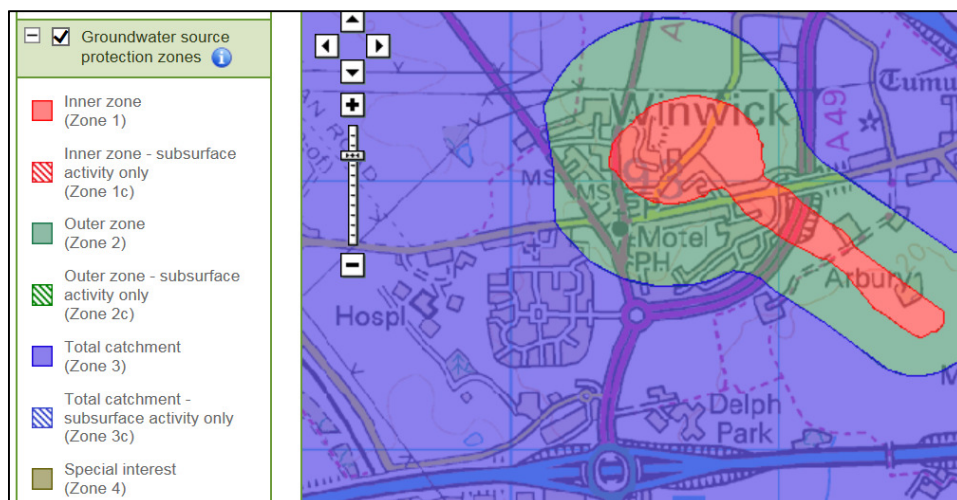


- 4.8. Any future development would be designed to ensure that greenfield run-off rates were maintained, through the use of soakaways and sustainable urban drainage systems.

Impact on drinking water

- 4.9. The site lies in zone 3 of the groundwater protection zone around Winwick's groundwater borehole, as shown in the extract from the Environment Agency's online maps below.

Fig 11. Environment Agency Groundwater Source Protection Zones



Countryside character

- 4.10. The area south of Winwick falls within area 1C of the Undulating Enclosed Farmland landscape character type, assessed by the Council's Landscape Character Assessment 2007. This notes the negative effect of intensive farming on the local landscape character and recommends:

“Although much of the area’s original small-scale field patterns have been lost, a strong framework of medium to large field boundaries is still present and forms a major part of the landscape’s character. In order to retain this character, it is imperative to encourage the retention, enhancement and better management of the remaining hedgerows, together with the re-introduction of new hedgerow trees.” (p281 Landscape Character Assessment 2007).

- 4.11. The study's recommended landscape management is to restore and enhance field patterns by reintroducing hedgerows and to soften and screen new development by the use of native planting, including woodlands. Development on the site can help secure these improvements to the local landscape.

Historic environment

- 4.12. The only listed building in the immediate vicinity of the site is the grade II listed Arbury Farmhouse. The farmhouse sits on the northern side of a farmyard complex of buildings, and is shielded from view by farm buildings on the western and southern sides of the farmyard complex. Development on this site will have no adverse impact on heritage assets.

Fig 12: Listed buildings in the vicinity of the site



5 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 5.1. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report published alongside the Council's consultation suggests a number of sustainability objectives for the Local Plan Review. These are reflected in the Council's draft Site Appraisal Framework, reproduced in the table below. Although this may change, to assist the Council we have assessed the site against their published draft criteria.

SA objectives	Criteria	Use	Effects	Notes
Economy and regeneration				
Strengthen the local economy and ensure sustainable economic growth	EC1: Would site development lead to the loss of employment land?	Housing & jobs	++	Mixed uses are proposed, including employment-related development
	EC2: Distance to Principal Road Network by vehicle.		++	Less than 100 metres from Junction 9 of the M62
Improve the education and skills of the population overall	Not applicable	-	n/a	criteria ACC1 and ACC2 are relevant for this SA objective
Reduce poverty, deprivation and social exclusion and secure economic inclusion	EC3: How close is the site to key employment sites?	Housing	++	
Health and Wellbeing				
Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	Not applicable	-	n/a	
Reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime	Not applicable	-	n/a	
Enable groups to contribute to decision making and encourage a sense of community identity and welfare.	HW2: Is the area supported by community facilities? (<i>Village halls, places of worship, community centres</i>)	Housing	+	
Provide, protect or enhance leisure opportunities, recreation facilities, green infrastructure and access to the countryside	HW 3: Access to local natural greenspace (ANGST). <i>1. Natural greenspace at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres from home;</i>	Housing	+	Sankey Valley Park is 1.2km from the site.

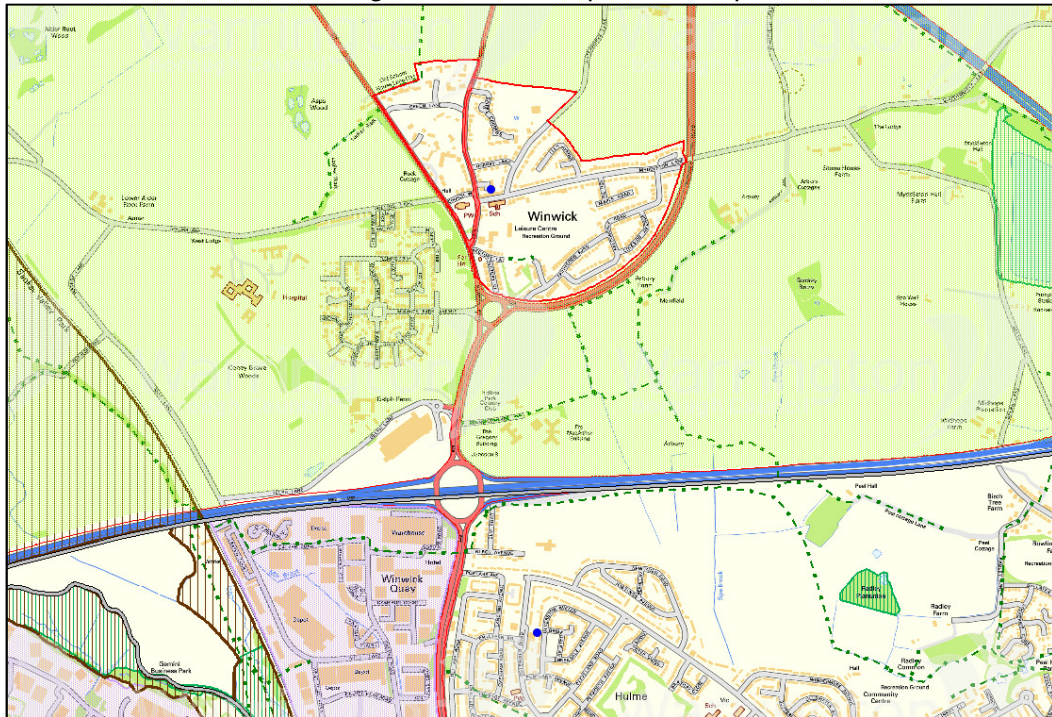
	2. At least one accessible 20 hectare greenspace site within two kilometre of home.			
	HW4: Access to formal play space	Housing	-	
Accessibility				
Reduce the need to travel, especially by car, improve choice and the use of more sustainable modes Protect and enhance accessibility for all the essential services and facilities.	ACC1: How accessible is the site to the nearest primary school on foot?	Housing	+	
	ACC2: How accessible is the site to the nearest Secondary school?	Housing	+	
	ACC3: How well served is the site by a bus service?	Housing & jobs	++	
	ACC4: How accessible is the site to the nearest train station?	Housing & jobs	-	Winwick has no railway station; this score is the same for all sites in the village.
	ACC5: What is the overall distance to a GP service or health centre?	Housing	+	
Housing				
Ensure access to good quality, sustainable, affordable housing	HO1: To what extent will the development help to meet housing needs? <i>Deliverability and scale</i>	Housing	++	The site can be delivered as quickly as the Council wish. The site would make a significant difference to meeting needs.
Natural Resources				
Ensure the sustainable and prudent use and management of natural resources including the promotion of natural resources including the promotion of sustainable drainage & water conservation. Protect, manage and improve local environmental quality including land, air and controlled waters and reduce the risk of flooding.	NR1: What are the potential impacts on air quality?	Housing	-	
	NR2: Could development of the site lead to the remediation of land potentially affected by contamination?	Housing & jobs	+	
	NR3: Would allocation of the site result in the loss of High Quality Agricultural Land?	Housing & jobs	+	
	NR4: Does the site fall within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone, as identified by the EA?	Housing & jobs	-	
	NR5: Is the site (or part of) within an identified flood zone?	Housing & jobs	+	
	RU3: Is there potential for safeguarded or	Housing & jobs	+	

	identified mineral reserves to be sterilised?			
Built and natural heritage				
Protect and enhance places and buildings of historic cultural and archaeological value.	BNH1: Proximity to designated heritage assets <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Conservation Area</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Nationally listed buildings</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Scheduled Ancient Monuments</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Registered Park or Garden.</i>	Housing & jobs	+	
	BNH2: Effects upon the significance and setting of heritage assets / the historic environment.		+	
Protect and improve the quality and character of places, landscapes, townscapes and wider countryside whilst maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.	BNH4: Capacity of the landscape to accommodate development, while respecting its character.	Housing & jobs	+	The landscape can accommodate development with mitigation to improve the landscape character, such as addition of native species hedgerows & trees.
Ensure high quality & sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm that is appropriate to the locality.	Not applicable	n/a	n/a	Development will be designed to a high design quality.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity				
Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.	BG1: Could allocation of the site have a potential impact on a European Site SSSI, SPA or SAC?	Housing & jobs	+	
	BG2: Could allocation of the site have a potential adverse impact on designated Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserve, RIGs, Potential Wildlife Sites or any other site of wildlife or geodiversity value such as Ancient Woodland (including where BAP species have been recorded)?	Housing & jobs	+	
	BG3: What is the potential impact on TPOs?	Housing & jobs	+	

Climate Change and resource use				
Limit, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Increase energy efficiency and production of renewable energy.	Not applicable	n/a	n/a	
Minimise waste and maximise reuse, recovery and recycling.	RU1: Would allocation of the site result in the use of previously developed land?	Housing & jobs	-	
	RU2: Is there good access to a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)?	Housing	+	

5.2. The site scores very positively (++) against 5 criteria; positively (+) against 16 criteria, negatively (-) against 5 criteria and very negatively (- -) against 0 criteria. It therefore scores relatively highly against the Council's draft site appraisal framework overall.

Fig 13. Local Plan policies map



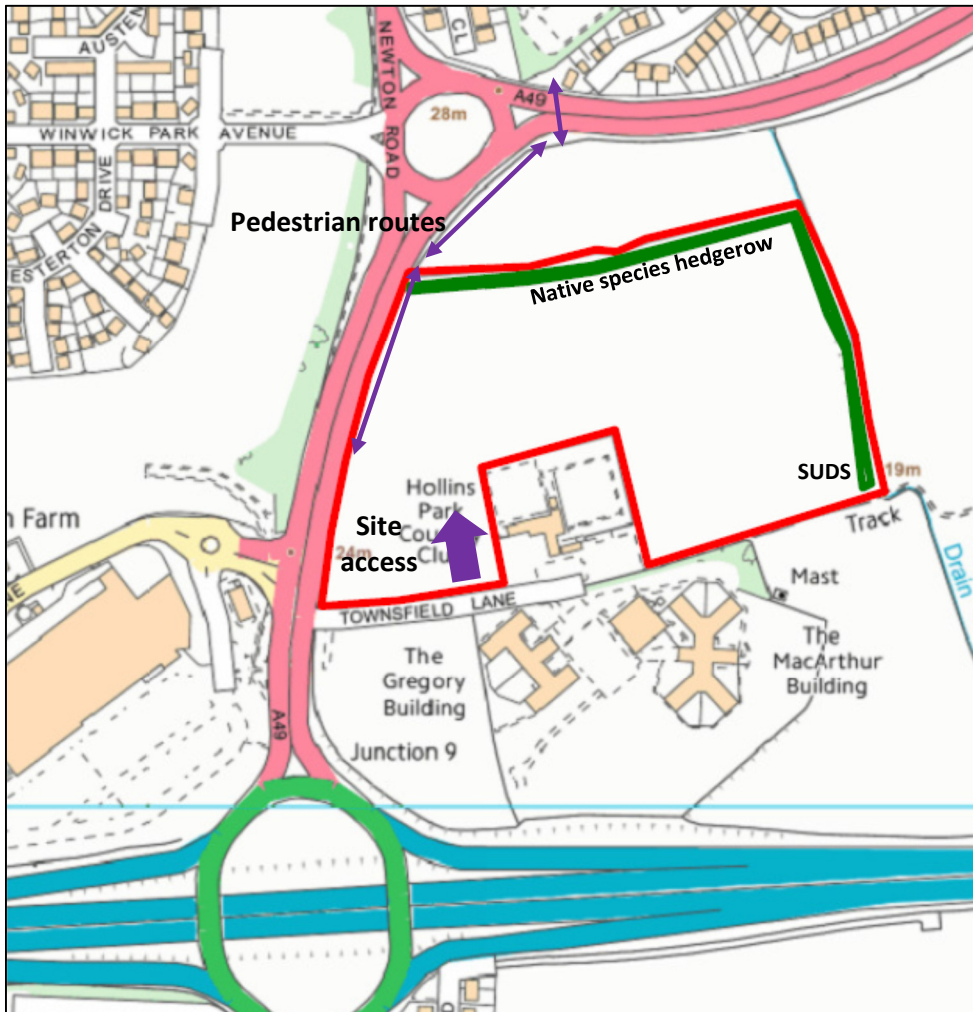
6 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

- 6.1. This 7.6 hectare site is easily developable, with no over-riding constraints. As with any site, there are local considerations that will be addressed in the design of a development. The table below sets out how development will respond positively to the following site features:

Site characteristics	Response
Townsfild Lane access	A suitable access point would be approximately 100 metres east of the junction with the A49 Newton Rd.
Adjoining land uses – mental hospital to south	The presence of the hospital requires attention to design and landscape, to ensure a high quality environment.
Adjoining land uses – country club	The country club is currently an eyesore that may be improved by future development. The club already has a tree screen and suitable boundary treatments would improve security for both sites.
Adjoining land uses – auctions & sales to south west	The different accesses off Townsfild Lane should be staggered.
Flat landscape with open views	Re-introduce hedgerows and hedgerow trees as recommended by the Council's Landscape Character Assessment.
Surface water ditchcourse	Utilise the ditch on the eastern boundary as part of a sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS).
Pedestrian links to Winwick village	Utilise the existing footway along the A49 Newton Road & pedestrian crossings to provide pedestrian linkages to the school, post office, village hall and church approx. 500 metres north of the site.

- 6.2. The site is promoted for a number of uses, including residential, offices, leisure and health-related developments. Assuming a 75% net developable area, around 5.7 hectares of the 7.6 hectares site could be developed for around 170 homes. Alternatively, a mix of around 100 homes with around 7,000sqm floorspace for other uses could be delivered on the site.
- 6.3. Environmental enhancements include the planting of new hedges and trees, particularly along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. Soakaways will be used for surface water, with attenuation ponds & ditches if necessary. Landscaped public open space will be provided as part of the development, enhancing the environment for people and wildlife alike.

Fig 17. Development Concept



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7 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

Winwick's role in the Local Plan Review

- 7.1 Winwick has an important part to play in the Local Plan Review, due to its strategic location close to junction 9 of the M62, its position on the A49 and its potential to reduce the amount of in-commuting from Wigan and St. Helens boroughs. In the past Winwick has proven a popular location for residential development, commercial and health-related development. Land in this location is strategically more useful to the borough council for its role in meeting the borough's development needs, than its role in preserving the Green Belt.
- 7.2 This 7.6 hectare site can help the Council meet its development needs for a range of uses, including residential, offices, leisure and health-related developments.

Green Belt Review

- 7.3 The Local Plan can only be found 'sound' if it provides certainty for the long-term Green Belt boundaries. The National Planning Policy Framework requires any review of Green Belt boundaries to have, "*regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period*" (NPPF paragraph 84). Consequently the Local Plan needs to release sufficient land from the Green Belt to meet future development needs both for this plan period and the next.
- 7.4 This site makes a moderate contribution to the Green Belt that is less strategically important to the borough council than its potential economic, social and environmental contributions. Development in this location will have a net positive effect on the sustainability of the borough, justifying its removal from the Green Belt.

Benefits of the Site

- 7.5 Development in this location has a number of benefits, including:
- Positive contribution to the borough's economy;
 - Provision of housing in this popular location reduces the distance travelled by commuters;
 - Sustainable transport options by bus, cycle and on foot;
 - Development will enhance the services and sustainability of Winwick village;
 - Relatively high level of contribution to affordable housing provision;

- Guaranteed deliverability with active interest from housebuilders;
- Environmental benefits include restoring landscape character with new hedgerows and trees.

7.6 For the above reasons, we commend this site to the Borough Council for allocation in the Local Plan Review.

Next Steps

7.7 The landowners welcome on-going engagement with the Council, and will provide any further information requested as the Local Plan Review progresses.



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