

PLANNING PROMOTIONAL DOCUMENT
LAND EAST OF A49 NEWTON ROAD, WINWICK





Winwick Park

Winwick Link Road

Newton Road

Newton Road

Townfield Lane

Arbury Court

B&O

Newton Road

1. Introduction

Promoters

This 7.5 hectare site is promoted to Warrington Borough Council on behalf of the landowners, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. This document updates the previous submission R18/140.

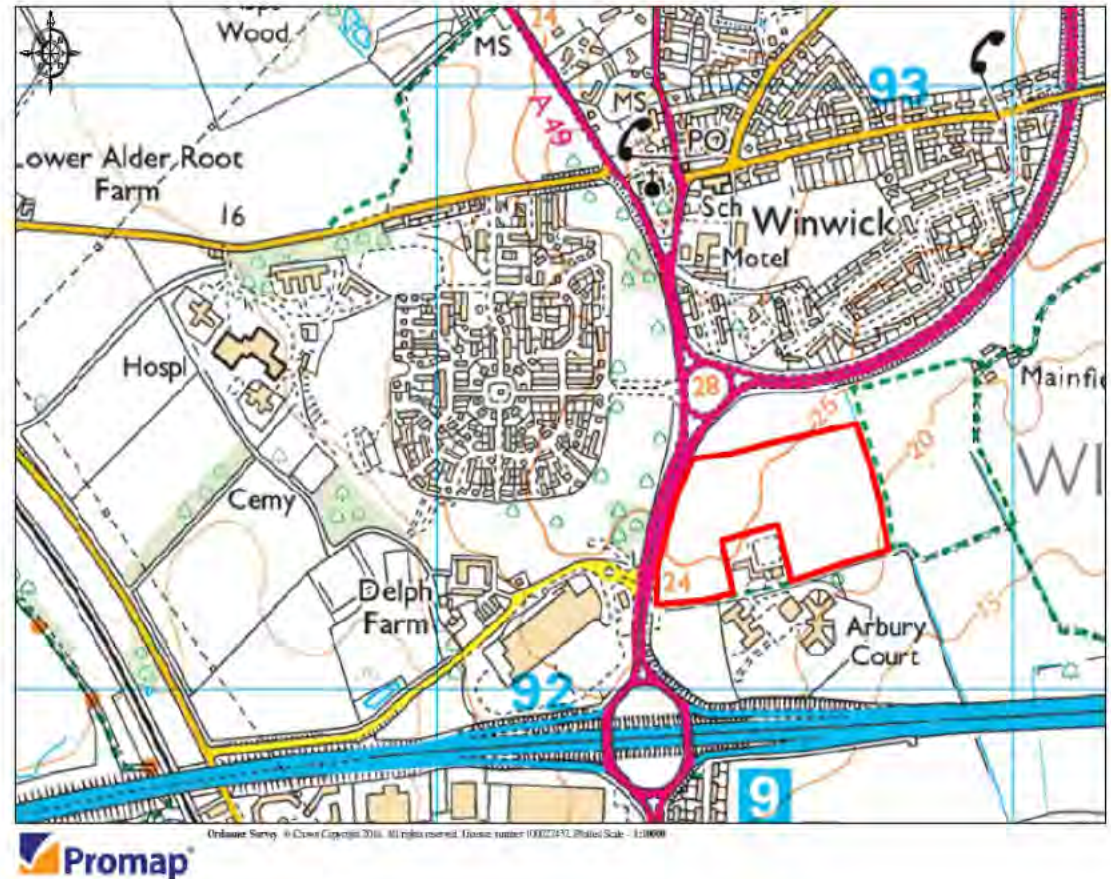
The site can help the Council meet its development needs for a range of uses, including employment land, office, leisure, health care, residential care and other services.

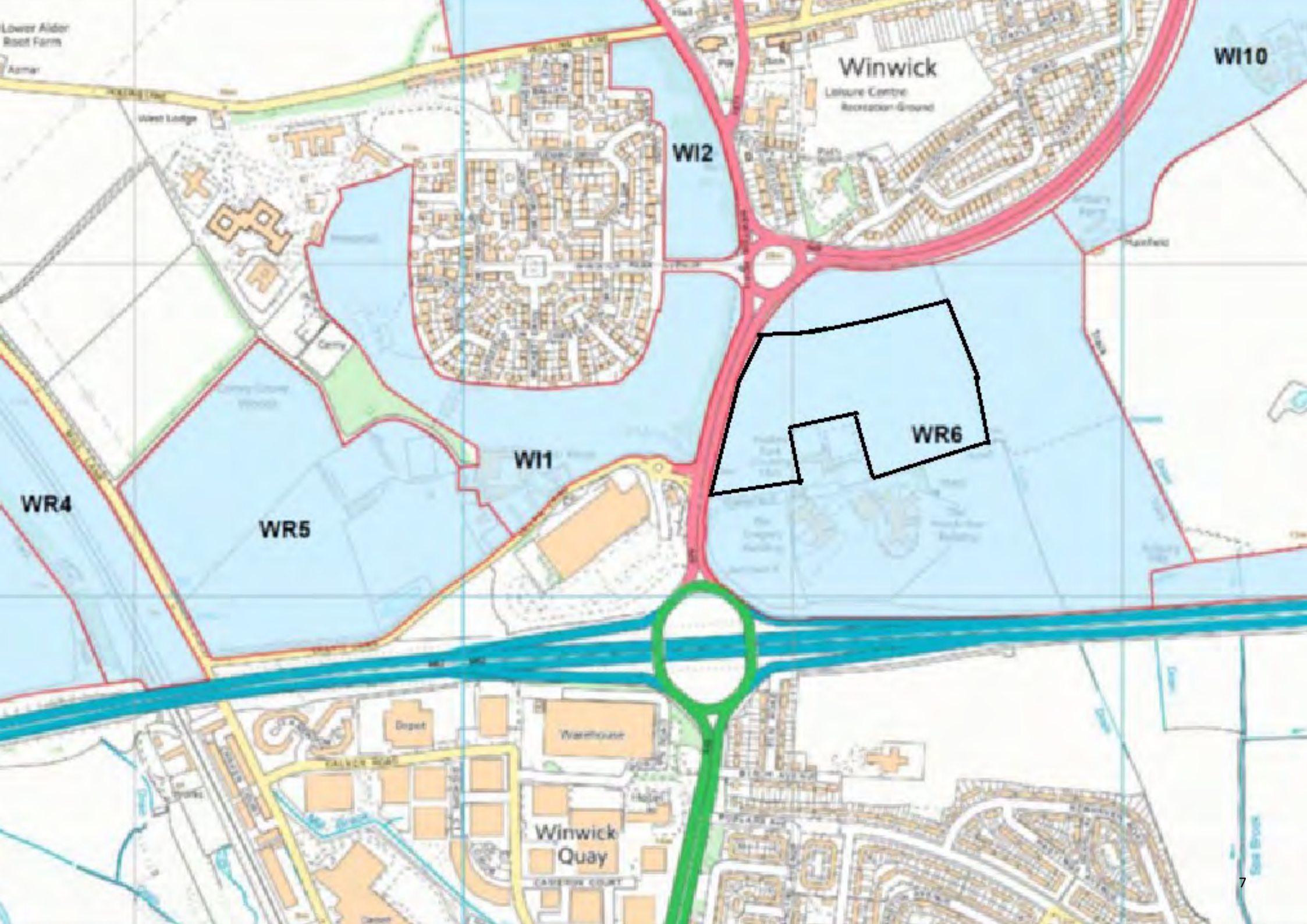
Location & character

The site is strategically located on the A49 Newton Road, close to junction 9 of the M62, with good accessibility by both car and public transport.

The site lies north of the Winwick Quay industrial area. To its west is the B&Q warehouse store. To the south lies a mental health hospital and a nursing home. Inset into the site is an untidy area of hardstanding and buildings housing a Country Club and Motorbike Training Centre, screened by leylandii. The site is predominantly flat agricultural land with by mature trees and hedges on its external boundaries.

The site forms a natural extension of Winwick Quay for employment and other uses.





Lower Alder
Boat Farm

Asmer

Green Lodge

Winwick
Leisure Centre
Recreation Ground

WI10

WI2

Manfield

WR4

WR5

WI1

WR6

Depot

Warehouse

Winwick
Quay

CATHERINE COURT

2. Green Belt Review

The Green Belt Assessment

This site is part of parcel WR6 in the Arup *Green Belt Assessment* (2016), which concluded that the parcel has an overall ‘moderate’ contribution towards the purposes of the Green Belt.

The Arup Study considered that, *“The site forms a less essential gap between Newton-le-Willows and the Warrington urban area whereby development of the site would slightly reduce the gap between the towns however would not result in them merging. Overall, the site makes a weak contribution to preventing towns from merging.”*

The Council’s *Green Belt Extra Assessments* (July 2017) confirmed the above assessment, concluding that, *“The site makes a moderate contribution in assisting in urban regeneration.”*

Development needs

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 National Planning Policy Framework.

The 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 83)

It is essential that Warrington Borough Council take a long-term perspective and provide enough ‘room to grow’ for future generations.

Decisions on Green Belt release

Contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt can only be part of the decision-making process. Equally important are sustainability considerations, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework which states, *“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.”* (NPPF 84)

The site’s contribution to a sustainable pattern of development is therefore a crucial element of the decision in the Local Plan regarding its suitability for removal from the Green Belt.



3. Sustainability

The Council's Sustainability Appraisal

The site scores relatively well against the Council's sustainability criteria, key aspects of which are highlighted below and summarised by colour.

Economy and Regeneration

Development of the site for employment-related land uses will benefit the local economy and provide a natural extension to the successful Winwick Quay employment area to enable local companies to expand. It is directly adjacent to the principle road network and within 100 metres of M56 junction 9.

Health and Wellbeing

Landscaping and new tree planting around the site provides potential for new pedestrian routes and a linear park.

Accessibility

There are bus stops adjacent to the site with a frequent service, with four bus services along the A49 Newton Road namely Arriva bus 329 to St. Helens twice hourly; Arriva bus 360 to Wigan twice hourly; Network Warrington bus no. 19 every hour, and Network Warrington bus no. 22 every hour. There are therefore 6 buses an hour, Monday to Saturday. The site is within 700 meters of the centre of Winwick with its local services and facilities.

Housing

The site is being promoted for employment and mixed uses, but the landowner is open to discussion on any other uses that the Council may consider appropriate, including housing.

Natural Resources

Any development will be designed to ensure an overall enhancement of the natural environment. The site is over 100 meters from an AQMA and is not contaminated. The majority of the site is grade 2 agricultural land. The site does not lie within any groundwater source protection zones and does not overlap with flood zone 2 or 3.

Built and Natural Heritage

There are no listed buildings on or adjacent to the site. There is no potential to improve the landscape with additional hedgerow planting.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The site will not impact on any national designations, with the site over 2km from the nearest SSSI and over 5km from the nearest SAC/SPA. There are no TPOs or local wildlife sites on or adjacent to the site.

Climate change and resource use

The site is predominately greenfield.



4. Suitability

This site is particularly suitable for commercial development due to its proximity to Junction 9 of the M56 and direct access onto the A49. The site benefits from frequent bus services with 4 bus routes passing the site.

This site is very well served by existing infrastructure. It is relatively flat and well screened on its northern and western sides by mature hedgerows. Adjoining uses include a range of commercial and health-related businesses.

This site scores very highly against the criteria in the Council's *Economic Development Needs Assessment*, particularly against the 5 'market led' indicators

EDNA site suitability	Score	Market-led
Road proximity – strategic highway: site adjacent to motorway	10	10
Road proximity – local: site within 1km of the A49	10	10
Prominence: site adjacent to, and visible from, M62	10	10
Public transport: site within 0.5km of a bus route	10	
Planning status: available, subject to planning	1	
Services availability: available with no abnormal costs	7	
Constraints: none	10	
Environmental setting: good quality/ greenfield location	10	10
Flexibility: site shape and ability to sub-divide	10	10
Availability: available to develop within 1-5 years	<u>6</u>	
Total	<u>84</u>	<u>50</u>

Compared to the sites included in the EDNA's realistic supply (table 23, reproduced below), this site scores more highly than any other competing site.

EDNA Table 23 – Employment Sites Scoring (Realistic Supply)

Site Ref	Name	Revised Site, ha	Score max 100	Market-led sub-total
Omega 7C	Plot 7C Omega South	7.65	78	33
Omega 1 4(L)	Omega North – Parcel 4(L)	2.06	76	40
381	Plots & Quadrant, Birchwood Park	11.66	75	37
336	Land off Bewsey Road	0.15	74	26
367	The Quadrant (S), Birchwood Park	1.87	74	32
-	Omega Phases 1 and 2 Remainder	26.27	71	46
357	Phase 1 Remainder – Lingley Mere	2.35	70	36
356	Gemini 8 Retail Park, Westbrook	5.21	66	33
360	Land at Stanley Street	0.05	64	32
15 A(c)	Phase 3 – Lingley Mere	3.62	64	38
Omega Zone 7	Omega South – Zone 7	33.70	63	35
382	Benson Road, Birchwood	0.24	59	20
36c	Gemini 16, Westbrook	2.20	52	29
309	Forrest Way Business Park	7.50	47	22
R18/140	Land at Newton Road, Winwick	7.60	84	50



5. Available and Deliverable

Availability for commercial development

The site is in one ownership, [REDACTED]. Their main business is residential care homes and their intention is to bring forward development on the site as quickly as possible.

Berrys are a property consultancy company with six offices across the UK providing a wide range of services, including 9 chartered planners. If allocated in the Local Plan the site will be immediately marketed for development. Berrys' development agency team are very experienced at bringing land to the market and in structuring suitable land deals with a wide range of developers and end users. We are also able to promote leasehold development, with Berrys' commercial agency team having wide experience of managing commercial buildings on behalf of landowners.

Freehold and leasehold

The site would be marketed as available both for freehold and leasehold development.

Timescales

The site is readily developable with no land ownership problems. It would be brought forward within the first 5 years of the Plan period.

Variety of sites

The Local Plan needs a variety and choice of sites of differing sizes, locations and characteristics. The Council's *Economic Development Needs Assessment* (October 2016) recommended that:

“The Borough should also have a buffer to reflect a choice of sites by size, quality and location and to provide a continuum of supply beyond the end of the 2037 period. This also makes some allowance for the loss of further employment land to non B-Class uses over the period to 2037.” (EDNA paragraph 10.41)

This site will assist Warrington Borough Council in fulfilling the Core planning principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and in particular:

- *“To identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals... taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;*
- *Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.”* (NPPF para 17)

This site is well served by infrastructure and ready to meet development needs.



6. Opportunities and Considerations

Constraints;

The Council's own Site Assessments Proforma, reproduced below, found few constraints.

Constraints	Council's Assessment	Good/bad
Floodzone 2:	No	✓
Floodzone 3:	No	✓
Green Belt:	Yes	✗
TPO Issues:	No	✓
Nature Designations:	None	✓
Conservation Areas:	No	✓
Statutory Listed Buildings:	No	✓
Locally Listed Buildings:	No	✓
Area of Archaeological Assessment:	No	✓
Scheduled Ancient Monuments:	No	✓
Strategic Road Network Access:	A49 Newton Road	✓
Local Highway Access:	A49 Newton Road	✓
Access comments:	Access from Newton Rd	✓
Neighbouring Uses:	Leisure / Care Home	✓
Air Quality Management Areas:	No	✓
Agricultural Land Classification:	2 & 3	✗
Potentially Contaminated Land:	No	✓
Hazardous Installation Zone:	No	✓
Public Rights of Way:	No	✓
Green Belt Parcel (WR6) Result	Moderate	✓

Opportunities to enhance the landscape

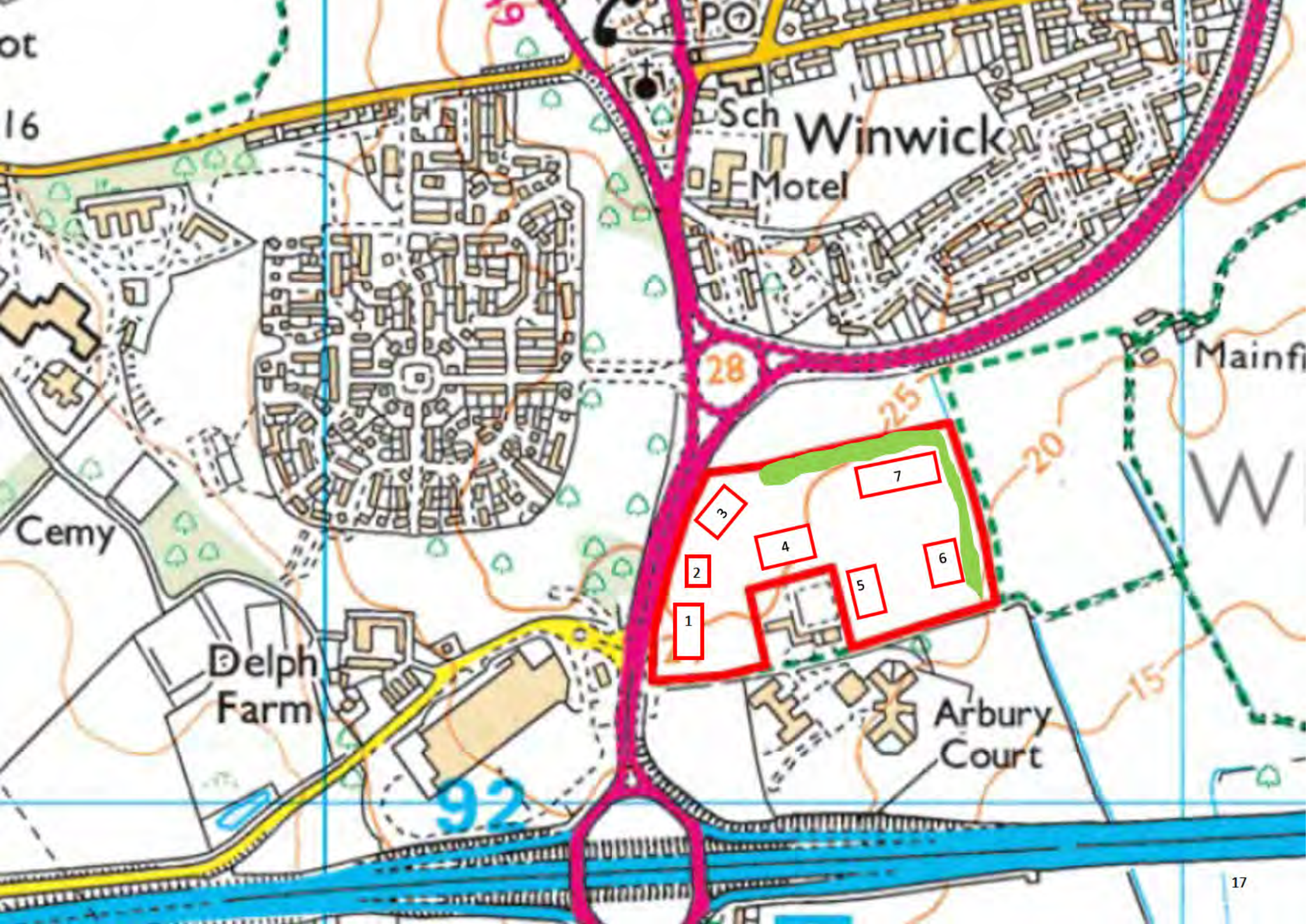
The Council's *Landscape Character Assessment* (2007) identifies the area south of Winwick in the Undulating Enclosed Farmland landscape character type. This notes the negative effect of intensive farming, stating:

"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)

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.

Opportunities to enhance biodiversity

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.



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16

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25

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15

Mainf

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Arbury
Court

7. Development concept

This 7.5 hectare site is easily developable, with no over-riding constraints. The proposed development of the site includes the following:

Site characteristics	Response
Natural extension to Winwick Quay employment area	Continue the success story of Winwick Quay, providing a range of units of differing sizes.
Proximity to M56, A49 & bus services	Achieve high profile visibility by opening up the frontage with a feature building at the entrance to the site.
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 & auctions land	The adjoining dilapidated buildings and vacant sites will benefit from the regeneration opportunities arising from development.
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 for SUDS.
Pedestrian links to Winwick village	Utilise the existing footway along Newton Road to provide pedestrian linkages to the village facilities.

Land uses

The site is promoted for a number of uses, including B1, B2, B8, sui generis, leisure and health-related developments.

The landowner is prepared to be flexible if the Council wish to consider other uses.

Environmental enhancements

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.

Infrastructure

The site is well served by utilities and by transport links. Development will make efficient use of Warrington's existing assets.

Development on this site reduces the amount of employment land required elsewhere, enabling the Council to maximise infrastructure contributions from residential development with higher values in other locations.



8. Conclusions

Strategic Location

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.

This site's strategic location on the junction of the A49 and M62 makes it highly attractive to a range of commercial users. It provides a natural extension of the successful Winwick Quay employment area.

Green Belt & Sustainability

The site only makes a moderate contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, whereas it could make a very significant contribution to Warrington Borough's economic growth in a highly sustainable location.

Suitable, Available & Deliverable

The site is highly attractive to the market and has no significant site constraints. It is in one ownership and can be delivered within 5 years. The Council can therefore be certain that it will come forward to produce high quality development accompanied by environmental enhancements.

Benefits

This 7.5 hectare site helps the Council provide a variety of sites and locations suitable to accommodate the growth of Warrington's economy and services into the future. It can help the Council meet its development needs for a range of uses, including B1, B2, B8, sui generis, leisure and health-related developments in a sustainable location that is already well served by infrastructure. In summary, this site has:

- Excellent accessibility to the strategic road network;
- Frequent public transport with 4 bus routes passing the site;
- Well served by existing infrastructure;
- No significant constraints;
- Willing landowners;
- High attractiveness to the market using EDNA criteria;
- Environmental enhancements will complement the economic benefits of the site.

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

