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# Warrington Local Plan Review Preferred Development Option

Representations on Behalf of Miller Homes

September 2017

## **Representation to the Warrington Local Plan Review Preferred Development Option**

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Appendix 1 – Land off Hollins Lane, Winwick Development Framework

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This representation has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Miller Homes (“the Client”) and is submitted in response to the Preferred Development Option of the Warrington Local Plan Review (“the Local Plan Review”).
- 1.2 The Local Plan Review will define the housing and employment requirements in Warrington, and supply, for the Plan period 2017-2037. The Preferred Development Option consultation provides an opportunity to comment on Warrington Borough Council’s (“the Council”) preferred development strategy to meet its identified development needs.
- 1.3 The Preferred Development Options is informed by a suite of supporting evidence base documents which include:
- Updated Housing Needs Evidence – Through the Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Addendums;
  - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);
  - Urban Capacity Assessment;
  - Green Belt Assessment;
  - Settlement/Area Profiles; and
  - Strategic Sites Masterplanning documentation.
- 1.4 In preparing this representation, Barton Willmore has undertaken a thorough review of the aforementioned evidence base documents. This review, having regard to national policy requirements and guidance, has informed the content of this representation with a particular focus on the soundness of the Council’s proposed development strategy.
- 1.5 This representation considers the following matters:
- A summary of National Planning Policy (Section 3);
  - Development of Needs and Associated Land Requirements of the Local Plan (Section 4);
  - Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan (Section 5);
  - Spatial Options (Section 6);
  - Strategic Sites (Section 7); and

- Outlying Settlements (Section 8).

- 1.6 Our Client has land interests at Hollins Lane, Winwick and which they are actively promoting to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing through the Local Plan Review.
- 1.7 Sections 9 and 10 of this representation provide detailed commentary demonstrating the sustainability, suitability and deliverability of these two sites to be released from the Green Belt, and allocated for housing.
- 1.8 This representation is supplemented by a site specific Development Framework document which has been prepared, assessing site context, and potential to accommodate residential development informed by a considered masterplanned approach.

## 2. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1 Adopted in March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") sets out the Government's policies for planning.
- 2.2 Annex 1 of the NPPF confirms the weight of this document, and how the policies contained within are to be applied through the plan-making and decision-taking process.
- 2.3 For the examination of Local Plans, Paragraph 182 sets out that to be considered suitable for adoption, Local Plans must be found "sound" – namely that the Plan is:
- **Positively prepared:** The Plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
  - **Justified:** The Plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
  - **Effective:** The Plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
  - **Consistent with national policy:** The Plan should enable the development of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.
- 2.4 The achievement of sustainable development is defined by Paragraph 6 of the NPPF as the "purpose of the planning system." Paragraph 7 adds that sustainable development comprises three dimensions; economic, social and environmental, the achievement of which give rise to the need for planning to perform a number of roles:
- **Economic role:** Contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

- **Social role:** supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing; and
- **Environmental role:** contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

2.5 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF confirms that these roles are mutually dependent and accordingly to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought simultaneously through the planning system.

2.6 Paragraph 14 sets out that the "Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development" is at the heart of the NPPF, and should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making, the presumption means:

- Local Planning Authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
- Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change unless:
  - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework, taken as a whole; or
  - Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted (as listed in Footnote 9 to Paragraph 14).

2.7 Paragraph 17 defines the 12 core land-use planning principles which should underpin both decision-taking and plan-making. These refer to key themes such as being plan and locally led, creative, proactively support economic development, secure high quality design, account for different roles and character of areas, support the transition to a low carbon economy, conserve and enhance the natural environment, encourage effective use of land, promote mixed use development, conserve heritage assets, actively manage patterns of development to promote non-car modes of

transport, and taken account and support strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing.

- 2.8 Section 1 of the NPPF seeks to build a strong and competitive economy. This seeks to ensure that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth rather than act as an impediment. Policies should avoid being over cumbersome and recognise and address potential barriers to investment such as the lack of infrastructure, services or housing.
- 2.9 Section 3 of the NPPF seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. This seeks to ensure that plans support sustainable growth and expansion of the rural economy, support sustainable rural tourism and leisure, and promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities including shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- 2.10 Section 6 of the NPPF sets out the need to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to boost significantly the supply of housing. This will be achieved by:
- Ensuring that Local Plan meet the full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies of the NPPF;
  - Identifying and updating annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a five year supply with a 5% buffer to ensure market choice and competition or 20% buffer where there is a record of persistent under delivery;
  - Identifying a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 and where possible years 11-15;
  - For market and affordable housing, illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery through the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for full range of housing describing how they will maintain a five-year supply; and
  - Establishing a local approach to housing density in reflection of local circumstances.
- 2.11 Paragraph 50 outlines the expectation for local planning authorities to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widening opportunities for home ownership, and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.



- 2.12 Section 9 defines the approach taken towards the Green Belt. Paragraph 80 confirms the five purposes of the Green Belt. This Section confirms that it is for the Local Plans process to alter Green Belt boundaries and should only be altered in Exceptional Circumstances. The approach to defining new boundaries is set out in Paragraphs 84-85, with authorities required to consider the sustainable pattern of development, the necessity of keeping land permanently open, and defining boundaries which are recognisable and enduring.
- 2.13 Guidance specific to Local Plans is provided in Paragraphs 150 – 182. This confirms the need for Local Plans to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, establish key strategic priorities, plan positively, and be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities.
- 2.14 Specifically the NPPF requires through Paragraph 158 Local Planning Authorities to ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. The assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses should be integrated, taking into relevant market and economic signals.
- 2.15 In terms of housing, Paragraph 159 requires local planning authorities to have a clear understanding of the housing needs of their areas. This includes the need to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment which identifies the scale and mix of housing to meet household and population projections, address the need for all types of housing including affordable housing, and caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this need.
- 2.16 We have had regard to each of these policy requirements in the preparation of this representation.

### **3. DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND ASSOCIATED LAND REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL PLAN**

#### **Housing Need**

- 3.1 The Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and subsequent updates produced for the Council by GL Hearn provide an assessment of the likely future housing needs of Warrington Borough over the Plan period 2017 to 2037.
- 3.2 The SHMA concludes that the Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) of Warrington is 955 dwellings per year. This would respond to the demographic needs of the Plan area, provide for sufficient housing to support the delivery of the future economic baseline projection for the authority, and ensure the full delivery of the assessed affordable housing needs of the Plan area.
- 3.3 Whilst it is noted that the Council proposes to adopt a housing requirement which is higher than the assessed level of housing need, our Client has some concerns about that conclusions made within the SHMA in relation to market signals and economic projections which in their view serve to under-play the actual OAHN of the Borough.

#### Economic Projections

- 3.4 The SHMA examines the implications of four economic scenarios for the housing requirement for Warrington. This includes:
- Oxford Economic Baseline Projection – 955 dwellings per annum;
  - Past Employment Trends – 1,332 dwellings per annum;
  - Devolution Deal – 1,113 dwellings per annum; and
  - Northern Powerhouse – 835 dwellings per annum.
- 3.5 All projections are noted to require a level of housing which is in excess of the assessed demographic needs of the Borough (738 dwellings per year). The SHMA considers that there is a need for the adoption of an economic-led housing requirement given the fact that the adoption of a demographic led requirement would constrain the supply of labour resulting in a failure in the achievement of projected economic growth and/or

a substantial increase in inward commuting. This recommendation is considered sound and is supported by our Client.

- 3.6 The SHMA recommends that an objectively assessed needs figure of 955 dwellings per year is taken forward by the Council reflecting the Oxford Economics Baseline Projection on the basis that it takes into account past trends and performance together with wider economic facts influencing future sector performance. Our Client questions this rationale.
- 3.7 The Oxford Economics Baseline projection would support on average the creation of 964 jobs per year over the Plan period. This would signify a substantial reduction in the level of jobs created within the Borough compared to previous trends which over the last 25 years has averaged approximately 1,600 jobs per annum.
- 3.8 Figure 32 of the January 2016 version of the SMHA illustrates that the level of job creation within the Borough has remained largely buoyant over the past 25 years. This is despite this period experiencing several economic cycles and contrasts significantly with the static level of jobs experienced in the neighbouring authorities of Halton and St Helens.
- 3.9 In our Client's view the trend period which is used to extrapolate the baseline economic projection does not sufficiently capture this wider and broader trend of job creation within Warrington. As a result, we consider that the baseline projection advanced by the SHMA underplays the actual economic outlook and potential of the Borough.
- 3.10 The implications of the adoption of a housing requirement which reflects this scenario could to act as a brake to job creation, and result in an increase in unsustainable patterns of inward commuting. Its adoption as a 'cap' would therefore be unsound.

#### Market Signals

- 3.11 As summarised in Section 3 of this representation, Paragraph 158 and 159 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to taken full account of relevant market and economic signals, and ensure that the scale, mix and range of housing provided caters for housing demand.

- 3.12 Section 4 of the 2017 Update to the SHMA examines Market Signals within Warrington and the Mid Mersey HMA and contrasts these findings to the wider North West and England. The Section examine indicators such as Land Values, House Price and Sales Trends, House Price Change, Private Rent, Affordability, Overcrowding, and Rates of Development.
- 3.13 PPG Paragraph 020 Reference ID: 2a-020-20140306 outlines that a worsening trend in any indicator will require an upward adjustment to planned housing numbers compared to ones based solely on household projections. To assess these, PPG outlines that appropriate comparisons of indicators should be made, this includes a comparison with long terms trends within the housing market area, similar demographic and economic areas; and nationally.
- 3.14 The SHMA concludes that there is insufficient justification to apply any uplift to the assessed demographic needs of the authority in response to evidence of a constrained housing market as illustrated by Market Signals. Having reviewed the evidence set out within the SHMA our Client would dispute this conclusion and would instead consider that there are no less than four market signals which would illustrate the presence of a constrained market in Warrington.
- 3.15 The First signal relates to Median House Prices and Lower Quartile House Prices. Table 17 of the SHMA clearly illustrates that Warrington experiences prices which are above neighbouring Halton and St Helens, with prices 14-19% higher within Warrington than North West England.
- 3.16 Second is private rents. Data provided within Table 20 of the SHMA shows that rents within Warrington are higher than that experienced within Halton, St Helens and the North West. Price growth in rents within Warrington has also been shown to outstrip neighbouring authorities and the North West over the period 2011 and 2016. Figure 6 of the SHMA shows rental trends within Warrington, and the North West and compares this to the Consumer Price Index. The graph shows that whilst the index has steadied recently for the Consumer Price Index and North West since May 2015, the trend has worsened in Warrington.
- 3.17 Third relates to affordability. Whilst noted to be below the national average, median and Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio for Warrington are higher than both Halton and St Helens, with median quartile ratios 1.62x higher in Warrington than in Halton, and

lower quartile ratios 1.51x higher in Warrington than in Halton. Data also shows that over the past 15 years changes to the affordability ratio within Warrington has outstripped that experienced both in Halton and St Helens. More recently, within the last five years, the trend within Warrington has again outstripped that experienced within Halton, St Helens, and nationally.

- 3.18 The fourth and final market signal is the rate of development. Table 24 of the SHMA shows that since 2002, completions in Warrington has outstripped the housing requirement by almost 80%. The completions has served to counter the under-delivery experienced within Halton and St Helens yielding a 5% over supply across the housing market area. The significant rate of development experienced within Warrington illustrates the demand for new housing in the area, with net completions consistently above the annual requirement for 380 dwellings.
- 3.19 The market signals reported within the SHMA have been made in the context of significant levels of oversupply within Warrington, illustrating that even this level of housing delivery has been insufficient to address demand. Against this local context it is clear that there is a need for an uplift to the housing requirement in contrast to the demographic needs of the Borough.

### **Arriving at the Housing Requirement**

- 3.20 Paragraphs 4.5 to 4.6 of the Preferred Development Options provide the Council's rationale for the proposed housing requirement. In summary, the Council proposes to adopt a housing requirement which reflects the Devolution Bid advanced by the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. The move reflects a "policy on" decision by the Council and is supported in principle by our Client.
- 3.21 The adoption of a housing requirement of 1,113 dwellings would in our Client's view provide a sufficient level of housing to:
- Support household population growth including accounting for any suppression within projections for household formation;
  - Deliver in full the affordable housing needs of the Borough;
  - Respond to market signals which show evidence of market suppression; and
  - Deliver sufficient levels of housing to support delivery of LEP economic aspirations for the area.

- 3.22 The adoption of 1,113 dwellings per year as a 'ceiling' to development would however not support a continued rate of job creation experienced within the Borough since 1991.
- 3.23 Noting the limited difference between the Devolution bid and trend based requirements, our Client suggests that the Council makes expressly clear that any requirement for 1,113 dwellings is a minimum requirement, with identified levels of supply comfortably exceeding this. In our Client's view, this would ensure that the Plan is better equipped to support the continuation of employment growth trends within the Borough without adverse impacts for the local economy, or encourage unsustainable levels of inward commuting.

## 4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

4.1 Table 5 of the Preferred Development Options identifies six strategic objectives for the Plan. These comprise the following:

- To enable the transition of Warrington from a New Town to a New City through the ongoing regeneration of inner Warrington, delivery of strategic and local infrastructure, strengthening of existing neighbourhoods and the creation of new sustainable neighbourhoods;
- Facilitate the sensitive release of Green Belt land to meet Warrington's long term housing and employment needs;
- Strengthen and expand the role of Warrington Town Centre as a regional employment, retail, leisure, cultural and transport hub;
- Provide infrastructure to support Warrington's growth, reduce congestion and promote sustainable transport options, whilst reducing the need to travel;
- Secure high-quality design which reinforces the character and local distinctiveness of Warrington's urban area, its countryside, and its unique pattern of green spaces; and
- Minimise the impact of development on the environment through the prudent use of resources and ensuring development is energy efficient, safe and resilient to climate change and makes a positive contribution to improving Warrington's air quality.

4.2 Our Client is broadly supportive of these objectives as listed above. However, it is unclear whether these Objectives have been defined in response to the targets of the Plan, or whether these Objectives have informed them. It is our Client's position that the Objectives of the Plan should inform its approach. Due to the presentation of Objectives following a review of Plan requirements, it would appear that the Preferred Development Option is self-serving and may not adequately address the actual needs of the Borough.

4.3 Our Client also believes that the strategic objectives of the Plan are incomplete. Significant attention is placed towards the urban area and its sustainable development. However, very little regard is given to the outlying settlements and rural locations of the Borough, despite the guidance in the NPPF. Our Client considers that the Local

Plan needs to be sufficiently equipped to respond to these issues, and to secure the vitality and viability of these outlying settlements and rural areas.



## 5. SPATIAL OPTIONS

### Urban Capacity and Need for Release of Green Belt

- 5.1 Our Client welcomes the early acknowledgement within the Preferred Development Option of the need to review and release land from the Green Belt in order to meet the Borough's identified housing requirements.
- 5.2 This approach has been informed by appraisal of non-Green Belt capacity in Warrington through the Council's 2017 SHLAA and 2017 update to its Urban Capacity Assessment. This Assessment identified an urban capacity for 15,429 dwellings, creating a residual need for at least 6,831 dwellings to be delivered on Green Belt land.
- 5.3 The urban capacity in Warrington Borough is identified as comprising the following:
- City Centre – 3,526 dwellings;
  - The Wider Urban Area – 4,869 dwellings;
  - Waterfront – 4,032 dwellings;
  - Garden City Suburb – 950 dwellings;
  - Outlying settlements – 239 dwellings;
  - Other sites – 73 dwellings; and
  - Small sites allowance – 1,740 dwellings.
- 5.4 Having reviewed the Urban Capacity Assessment, our Client is concerned that the Council has overestimated the contribution of non-Green Belt sites, as outlined further below. Accordingly, and subject to the publication of more detailed evidence, our Client considers there to be exceptional circumstances for the release of further Green Belt land to meet the housing requirements of the Borough.
- 5.5 Our Client's main concerns in relation to the Urban Capacity Assessment are as follows:
- The deliverability of development identified for the City Centre and the Waterfront;
  - The treatment of sites with extant planning permission;
  - The inclusion of "other" sites; and

- The justification for and inclusion of the small sites allowance.

### Strategic Sites

5.6 In terms of examining the deliverability of the City Centre and Waterfront, detailed consideration of this is undertaken in Section 7 of this representation. In summary however, it is considered that:

- The Council has over-estimated early delivery in these strategic areas taking into account;
  - The absence of current planning applications in this area;
  - The presence of existing uses;
  - The need to demolish and remediate land;
  - Landownership/assembly issues; and
  - Infrastructure requirements.
- Decisions yet to have be made regarding the delivery of key pieces of infrastructure and actual land-uses, both of which could significantly influence/impact on the overall capacity on these sites; and
- The “patchwork” of landownerships and existing uses may prevent or delay the delivery of these areas during the Plan period.

5.7 No deductions to the housing trajectory or delivery of the City Centre strategic area are proposed by our Client, acknowledging the potential that this area has to come forward over the Plan period. However, given the scope for uncertainty (owing to the above concerns), it is important that the Council does not over-rely on this source in meeting its housing needs, allowing sufficient flexibility to accommodate unexpected changes and unplanned under/non-delivery.

5.8 In relation to the Waterfront strategic area, our Client is not convinced that the delivery of housing is possible within the short-term. Whilst our Client has overriding concerns over the deliverability of this area in general, it is considered that at present, based on available evidence, there is justification to reduce delivery in this area by 719 dwellings accounting for the time needed to deliver the proposed western link road.

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### Extant Planning Permissions

- 5.9 The capacity of the wider Warrington urban area is assessed through the 2017 SHLAA. On review of the SHLAA, it is noted that no deduction has been applied by the Council to allow for the non-implementation of existing planning permissions. It would be unrealistic for the Council to assume that all sites which benefit from planning permission will be built out. A deduction should be made to the supply based on local evidence. At this point in time there is no evidence of a local rate; as such, an assumed proportion of 10% is considered reasonable by our Client. This would reduce the overall contribution made to the supply by sites with extant planning permission to 2,331 dwellings (a deduction of 259 dwellings) using Table 3.7 of the 2017 SHLAA as a basis for this calculation.

### "Other" Sites

- 5.10 An allowance for 73 dwellings from "other" sites is included within the urban capacity supply. No details are provided within the consultation document or supporting evidence as to this source of supply. Its inclusion is not therefore justified, and as such should not form part of the housing land supply. Accordingly, 73 dwellings should be deducted from the Council's urban capacity.

### Small Sites Allowance

- 5.11 A small sites allowance of 1,740 dwellings is included within the Local Plan Review. This is based on evidence compiled over the last 10 years. Our Client questions the Council's assumption that this rate will continue over the duration of the Plan period, and consider that this small sites allowance should be reduced.
- 5.12 Reviewing the Council's evidence (as set out in Table 2.4 of the 2017 SHLAA) it is apparent that of the 10 year period examined, 7 years experienced a rate of delivery at or below the average proposed to be taken forward by the Council. The remaining 3 years experienced a much higher rate of delivery with 207 dwellings delivered on small sites in 2007/08, 117 dwellings in 2013/14 and 117 dwellings in 2016/17. The completion rates experienced within these 3 years represent a 95% to 245% increase on rates experienced outside of these years, and undoubtedly serve to skew the average rate. Removing these years from the trend projection would reduce the small

sites allowance to 60 dwellings per year, in turn reducing the small site allowance for the 20 year Plan period down to 1,200 dwellings. Based on existing evidence, our Client believes that a small sites allowance of 60 dwellings per year is much more reflective of the typical rate of delivery for Warrington.

- 5.13 Beyond this, our Client has concerns over the inclusion of small site delivery within the first three years of the Plan period. The nature of these sites and the potential for them to duplicate extent planning permissions means there may well be some duplication within the Council's land supply. To avoid this, the Council should not rely on any small site delivery for the first three years of the Plan period taking into account the general 3-year timeframe for planning permissions. Applying this to the observations made in Paragraph 6.9 of this representation would mean that the small sites allowance is reduced to 1,020 dwellings for the Plan period.

#### Summary

- 5.14 Based on the above, our Client considers the non-Green Belt capacity of Warrington Borough to be closer to 13,658 dwellings, resulting in a need for at least 9,042 dwellings to be delivered on land currently designated as Green Belt.

### **Spatial Options for Allocations**

#### Borough-Wide

- 5.15 The Preferred Development Option identifies three high level spatial options by which to meet the Borough's development needs during the Plan period:
- Option 1 – Green Belt release only in proximity to the main Warrington urban area;
  - Option 2 – Majority of Green Belt release adjacent to the main urban area with incremental growth in outlying settlements; and
  - Option 3 – Settlement Extension in one or more settlements with the remainder of growth adjacent to the main urban area.
- 5.16 Our Client is supportive of the Council's decision not to adopt Option 1 or 3.

- 5.17 Option 1 would fail to provide for a sustainable pattern of development, with rural areas solely reliant only on brownfield sites to accommodate new development. The Council's Urban Capacity Assessment illustrates that there is minimal land available to deliver new housing within the outlying settlements over the Plan period, with land available to accommodate just 239 dwellings. This would be insufficient to support the delivery of rural housing needs and maintain rural services and facilities.
- 5.18 A concentration of growth towards urban areas would also place increased pressure on the housing market to deliver within a relatively small geographical area. New development should be distributed in a sustainable manner across the Borough to enhance the likelihood of achieving full delivery through market choice.
- 5.19 Option 3 would again fail to provide for a sustainable pattern of development. Whilst the expansion of one settlement would help deliver the needs of that settlement and potentially adjacent settlements, it is unlikely to fulfil the needs of those settlements which are located on the opposite side of the Borough.
- 5.20 Option 2 has been taken forward by the Council. Whilst this is preferred to Options 1 or 3, our Client is concerned that the distribution of development provided by this option would be insufficient to address the real rural housing needs of the outlying and rural parts of the Borough.
- 5.21 As such our Client considers that a fourth Option should be progressed by the Council.
- 5.22 The fourth option would a greater proportion of development needs being met within the outlying settlements, recognising that these settlements themselves have a housing need, and that there is a need to support rural services and facilities. The growth delivered would not be incremental but would instead recognise the potential of new development to help support and expand existing services. Under this option the majority of growth would still be focussed towards the urban area in recognition of this area as the economic driver of the Borough, the strategic objective of becoming a New City, and to provide for a sustainable pattern of development. However, this fourth option would reduce deliverability pressures on the urban area, and in turn enhance the overall deliverability of the Council's development strategy.

Warrington Urban Area

- 5.23 We note that there are six options through which to accommodate the growth needs of the urban area over the Plan period. Option 2 seeks to concentrate the majority of this need within the Garden City Suburb Extension, supplemented by an additional release to the south-west of Warrington. This is the Council's preferred approach.
- 5.24 For reasons expanded upon in Section 7 of this representation, our Client disagrees with the Council's approach. Whilst they have no objection to the Garden City Suburb in principle, and acknowledge that it will inevitably deliver some new housing during the Plan period, our Client does nevertheless consider that the housing trajectory of the Garden City Suburb during the Plan period has been over-estimated by the Council. This gives rise to the distinct and very real possibility of the Borough-wide housing requirement failing to be achieved in full.
- 5.25 To minimise this risk, our Client considers that the future development needs of the Borough should be more dispersed, with a increased proportion of new housing targeted towards and delivered within the outlying settlements of Warrington.
- 5.26 This approach would have two key benefits:
- Increased market choice and limiting close competition, enhancing overall delivery rates; and
  - Better address the diverse housing needs of the Plan area.

## **6. STRATEGIC SITES**

### **Introduction**

6.1 Four strategic areas of growth have been identified for development within the Preferred Development Option. These are:

- The City Centre (total capacity – 3,526 dwellings);
- Waterfront (total capacity – 4,032 dwellings);
- Garden City Suburb (total capacity – 7,274 dwellings); and
- South West Extension (total capacity – 1,831 dwellings).

6.2 Whilst our Client does not object to the suitability of any of these areas for housing, they do have concerns over the deliverability of the proposed levels of growth, in full, over the Plan period.

6.3 Such is the scale of development identified for each strategic area, our Client considers that there is a considerable risk of this being under-delivered. Our Client's concerns relating to each strategic area of growth are set out below.

### **City Centre**

6.4 The City Centre strategic area covers a large part of the town centre and its surrounding area, with the Council seeking to redevelop this land for housing, commercial and retail uses. Its identification as an area for development over the Plan period is responsive to the regeneration, economic, and New City objectives of the Plan. The housing trajectory for this area illustrates the Council's expectations for the delivery of new housing during the Plan period. For ease of reference a copy of this is provided below (see Table 1).

Table 1: City Centre Housing Trajectory

	0 5 years	6 10 years	11 15 years	16 20 years	Total
No of dwellings	980	1,629	569	348	3,526
Implied annual rate	196	326	114	70	176

6.5 Our Client does not deny that given the scale and opportunities potentially available within the City Centre area of growth, there will inevitably be a certain level of housing growth delivered during the course of the Plan period. However, our Client believes that the level and timescales outlined by the Council above are unrealistic.

6.6 Our Client's view is informed having regard to the following:

- Not all the land identified for development is currently available for development, with ongoing businesses and uses operating;
- The area is likely to be subject to a complex range of landownerships and interests. Landowners may not agree with the identified uses for their land as identified by the Council's masterplanning exercise;
- The previously developed nature of the area means that there will be added cost and time in readying sites for redevelopment/reuse;
- Parcels may not be suitable for the proposed land uses due to incompatible neighbouring uses; and
- At the time of writing there were no pending planning applications within the area which might be considered to be capable of contributing to the delivery of this area in the short term.

6.7 Whilst the Council could assist with funding, infrastructure delivery or negotiate policy position in order to encourage delivery on stalled sites, or utilise its CPO powers on sites which are not available, this action will largely be reactionary and will take time to implement, thus delaying delivery.

6.8 For these reasons our Client does not consider that development in this area of growth will be forthcoming in the earlier part of the Plan period, with delivery spread much more evenly across the Plan period. The risks associated with this strategic area of



growth demonstrates the need for flexibility within the Council's supply to account for changes experienced over the Plan period. For the reasons outlined above, our Client consider that this area of growth (and delivery rates) should be treated with significant caution by the Council.

### **Waterfront**

- 6.9 The Waterfront Strategic area of growth extends westward from the Town Centre, broadly following the course of the River Mersey. Overall, the Council expect housing delivery in this strategic location to amount to 4,032 dwellings during the Plan period. As with the City Centre strategic area of growth, its inclusion within the Preferred Development Option as a strategic location for development is consistent with the objectives of the Council to regenerate parts of the Warrington Urban Area.
- 6.10 The housing trajectory for this area illustrates the Council's expectations for the delivery of new housing during the Plan period. For ease of reference a copy of this is provided below (see Table 2).

Table 2: Waterfront Housing Trajectory

	0 5 years	6 10 years	11 15 years	16 20 years	Total
No of dwellings	728	795	1,790	719	4,032
Implied annual rate	146	159	358	144	202

- 6.11 An apparent barrier to the delivery of development in this area is the proposed Western Link Road. This is acknowledged by the Council within Paragraph 5.26 of the Preferred Development Option, with paragraph 5.27 adding that the layout and timescales of the waterfront development will be dependent on the Western Link, and may be required to be altered within the submission version of the Local Plan to ensure consistency with the Western Link programme. The Waterfront is therefore inherently reliant on the Western Link.

- 6.12 The Western Link is a new relief road which will connect Sankey Way (the A57) in the north, with Chester Road (the A56) in the south providing a new western by-pass of Warrington Town Centre. The Western Link is a significant piece of new infrastructure. Its delivery will be technically challenging requiring a significant amount of engineering projects including the need for new crossings of the Manchester Ship Canal, the West Coast Mainline, and the Warrington to Liverpool Railway line. The project has the potential to result in adverse environmental effects with most routes traversing through both Morley Common and Sankey Valley Park, necessitating careful design and mitigation.
- 6.13 The latest information on progress for the Western Link is provided on the Council's website. In July 2017 the Council conducted a consultation on six route options for the Western Link. Accompanying documentation to this consultation outlines that the preferred route will be selected by the Council in Autumn 2017. Further to this, the deadline for the submission of a business case for Department for Transport funding is at the end of December 2017. Subject to confirmation of funding, the detailed design and planning application would be worked up in 2018/19, with construction work commencing in the early 2020's.
- 6.14 Reflecting on the above it is clear that there is a significant level of uncertainty connected to the routing, funding and delivery of the Western Link Road. Certainty over its delivery is not likely to be provided until April 2018 at the earliest, and even then its delivery will be far from secure.
- 6.15 Very little information is provided by the Council within the Preferred Development Option about the potential for development to come forward ahead of the delivery of the Western Link Road. Should no housing be deliverable within this area without the Western Link, then the trajectory is clearly incorrect when set against the timescales for the Link Road.
- 6.16 Even if some housing may be developable ahead of the Link Road, our Client remains unconvinced that the trajectory as drafted provides a reasonable reflection of housing delivery rates in the Waterfront area over the Plan period. This is for the following reasons:

- At the time of writing there are no pending planning applications within the Waterfront area of growth which will provide for housing within the first five years of the Plan;
- Parts of the existing land making up the Waterfront area of growth are subject to existing uses which will first be required to cease before they will become available for reuse. At this stage, there is little indication this will occur within the short term;
- Parts of the area are subject to or were subject to land uses which are likely to have contaminated the land and will therefore require extensive, costly and time consuming land remediation works to enable its development for housing;
- Large parts of the area are currently inaccessible and un-serviced. There will be need for large scale up front infrastructure works in order to make the area suitable and sustainable for housing delivery; and
- The housing trajectory assumes a high rate of delivery which will require a consistent rate of completions over the course of the Plan period. This will require the entirety of the area to come forward as envisaged by the Council.

6.17 In our Client's view that delivery in this area is likely to be substantially lower within the earlier part of the Plan period than is currently expected by the Council. Based on current information, our Client considered it prudent to remove any reliance by the Plan on delivery within this area over the next five years, with the housing trajectory subsequently pushed back five years. The result would reduce the contribution made by this area over the Plan period by 719 dwellings.

### **Garden City Suburb**

6.18 The Garden City Suburb area of growth relates to a large area of Green Belt and non-Green Belt land which extends from the south east of the Warrington Urban Area to the M6 and M56. The area is identified as a strategic mixed use allocation, and provides for, by some distance, the largest single contribution towards the future housing needs of the Borough. The area is considered by the Council to be central to its achievement transitioning from a town to a City and will include a large area of strategic employment land following on from the success of the OMEGA development.

- 6.19 Taking into account the above, our Client does not object to the conclusion made by the Council that this area provides a suitable location in which to deliver a large number of new housing and strategic employment land.
- 6.20 The area relates well to the existing urban area, and is of the scale necessary to provide the opportunity to deliver the amount of employment land needed to facilitate the continuing economic success and competitiveness of Warrington. The area is found to fulfil a weak role within the Green Belt and forms part of the original New Town Plans for Warrington which are yet to be fully realised.
- 6.21 Our Client's principal concern relate to the deliverability of this area, in full, over the Plan period. The trajectory for this area is outlined below.

Table 3: Garden City Housing Trajectory

	0 5 years	6 10 years	11 15 years	16 20 years	Total
No of dwellings	406	2,610	2,144	2,144	7,274
Implied annual rate	81	522	429	429	364

- 6.22 It is acknowledged that given the presence of non-green belt land within the Garden City Suburb, and pending applications for a collective capacity of 950 dwellings, that the delivery of new housing within the first five years of the Plan period is realistic.
- 6.23 Beyond the first five years of the Plan, the trajectory for this area increases substantially to peak at an approximate average of 522 dwellings per year for years 6 to 10, with the rate continuing at 429 dwellings per year for the remainder of the Plan period.
- 6.24 This is a significant rate of housing delivery, and represents a rate which is above that of the quashed Core Strategy housing requirement defined for the Borough (which was to provide for 500 dwellings per year). Given the scale of delivery expected, the failure of this to be maintained throughout the Plan period would quickly lead to a significant under-supply..

- 6.25 To deliver 500 dwellings plus per year would require around 12 developer outlets to be working across the area at any one time. This is achievable given the scale of this area and the desirability of the location. However, the achievability of this high rate of delivery being consistently achieved will be largely dependent on the capacity of the market, availability of finance/credit, and resourcing. These are matters which are largely beyond the control or influence of the Council.
- 6.26 Accordingly, the most effective means by which to protect the Plan would be to reduce its reliance on the delivery of a single area in a single geographic location. This would provide for additional market choice, delivering new housing in those locations which experience housing need and demand, and thus boosting overall supply. The application of this approach would significantly enhance the overall deliverability of the Plan, and provide a strategy which has a greater degree of flexibility to change.

#### **South West Warrington**

- 6.27 The concerns of our Client in relation to this area of growth relate to the connection between the delivery of this area and the planned Western Link Road. Paragraph 5.41 of the Preferred Development Option outlines that the Western Link is considered by the Council to influence the overall capacity of the area to safely and sufficiently accommodate residential development. At this stage, it is unclear whether these constraints/potential constraints have been factored into the assessed capacity of the area, and what impact, if any, they will have on the outlined trajectory for it.
- 6.28 To justify the capacity and deliverability of this area for housing, the Council should provide a clearer steer on the relationship between the Western Link Road, and development within this area, in the submission version of the Local Plan.

## 7. OUTLYING SETTLEMENTS

### Growth within Outlying Settlements

- 7.1 The Council has identified seven outlying settlements in the Plan area. These comprise Lymm, Culcheth, Burtonwood, Winwick, Croft, Glazebury, and Hollins Green.
- 7.2 Our Client welcomes the Council's inclusion of Winwick in this list. The presence of Winwick with this list of settlements signals the Council's acknowledgment that Winwick is a settlement which is capable, suitable and in need of additional residential development during the Plan period. Our Client believes this is a sound conclusion and strongly supports the identification of Winwick as an outlying settlement.
- 7.3 The existing vibrancy and vitality of a settlement needs to be protected over the Plan period. New housing is acknowledged by the Government to be supportive to this strategy as recognised in Paragraphs 55 and 70 of the NPPF and Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 50-001-20160519 of PPG. The Local Plan Review should therefore promote sustainable housing growth in Winwick to be consistent with this national approach to development in rural areas.
- 7.4 In response, the Council has outlined the need for 1,190 new dwellings to be delivered in the outlying settlements, requiring Green Belt release. For ease of reference, the proposed distribution of this housing between the outlying settlements is set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Indicative Green Belt Capacity amongst Outlying Settlements

Settlement	Indicative Green Belt Capacity
Lymm	500
Culcheth	300
Burtonwood	150
Winwick	90
Croft	60
Glazebury	50
Hollins Green	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,190</b>

- 7.5 Our Client welcomes the acknowledgement by the Council of the need to release land from the Green Belt around these outlying settlements. The Council's Urban Capacity Assessment has demonstrated capacity for only 217 dwellings within all outlying settlements during the Plan period. This represents just under 1% of the future development requirement for the Borough. In the case of Winwick, the non-Green Belt capacity amounts to just 21 dwellings. Clearly this level of development would fail to support the rural housing needs, nor maintain rural vitality and vibrancy.
- 7.6 It is acknowledged that the Council has not at this time sought to identify specific sites for release from the Green Belt around its outlying settlements, with this process to take place following the conclusion of this current consultation. In response, our Client has submitted details of Land off Hollins Lane, Winwick for consideration in Section 9 of this representation.
- 7.7 In view of the settlement size and role, our Client is broadly supportive of the proposed distribution of housing across the outlying settlements, with Winwick receiving the fourth largest proportion of new housing.
- 7.8 However, our Client does consider that the amount of housing to be delivered in Winwick should be greater than 90 dwellings, reflecting its location close to the Warrington urban area and excellent linkages. The Council's justification for this growth level is that the delivery of this will support a pattern of development providing for "incremental" growth at each outlying settlement. This approach is based on the findings of the assessment undertaken as part of the Council's Settlement Profiles which form part of the evidence base to the Preferred Development Option.
- 7.9 The Council's Settlement Profiles document provides a thorough assessment of the existing range of services, current, and future capacity in each outlying settlement. The implications of accommodating further growth in accordance with several defined scenarios is then briefly examined to justify the most appropriate approach for outlying settlements as a whole. On the basis, the Council considers that the "incremental" growth scenario can be most sustainably accommodated.
- 7.10 It is unclear how the growth options for each outlying settlement have been calculated/defined. Examined options vary per settlement in number and diversity, and appear to be based on a submitted site basis rather than examining what the needs of each settlement actually are.

- 7.11 The value of the Settlement Profiles document as an appraisal of considered growth options is limited by the absence of any appraisal of what the future housing need is for specific types of housing in each outlying settlement, even as a proportion of the future demographic needs of the Borough. There is a failure to consider the health of facilities and services, beyond primary, secondary, and health care capacity, to examine whether any services, shops or facilities are at risk from closure and whether any further funding would be beneficial.
- 7.12 In our Client's view, the assessment of future village needs of the Borough is flawed. The adopted approach to outlying settlement growth provides for a self-serving output which in turn provides for a limited response to the housing needs of these areas.
- 7.13 In the case of Winwick, only a single growth scenario is assessed (incremental). As a result, it is unclear whether the approach to development is the most appropriate given the needs, opportunities, capacity and constraints of the settlement. For this reason the approach to growth in Winwick cannot be consistent with national planning policy and as such is considered by our Client to be unsound. Paragraph 182 of the NPPF is clear that Local Plans are to be justified; based on the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives.
- 7.14 Furthermore, the failure to appraise alternative options for Winwick as a settlement would in our Client's view be inconsistent with the legal requirements of the Plan to appraise the implications on measures of sustainability the adoption of reasonable alternatives to growth in Winwick. The Council will need to undertake this assessment prior to the Submission of its Local Plan in order to have met its legal requirements.
- 7.15 In our view there is a clear justification for the proposed housing growth in Winwick to be increased. This is required, not only in response to housing needs, but also to support continued service vitality and vibrancy, provide for a sustainable pattern of development, and to ensure the deliverability of the Plan requirements through the diversification of the supply to promote market choice.



## 8. LAND OFF HOLLINS LANE, WINWICK

### Introduction

- 8.1 As the Council will be aware, our Client holds land interests at Hollins Lane, Winwick, and is actively promoting this Site as a housing allocation through the emerging Local Plan. The extent of the Site subject to this promotion is shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Land off Hollins Lane, Winwick



- 8.2 The Site was previously submitted to the Council's 'Call for Sites' exercise in November 2016. The submission outlined briefly our Client's view that the Site represents a sustainable location for development, and is considered available, suitable and deliverable for housing within the short term.
- 8.3 The Site is located to the north-west of Winwick, occupying a single field located to the north of Hollins Lane and west of Newton Road. The Site extends to 6.59 hectares and is bordered to the south by existing residential development, and to the north

and east by an existing tree belt. Beyond this tree belt to the east (and partially to the north) lies the further built up area of Winwick, with the village centre lying around 500m to the east of the Site. To the west of the Site is open countryside, with more distant views limited by changes in topography, intermittent vegetation and existing structures.

- 8.4 An existing public footpath runs within the western boundary of the Site providing a pedestrian connection between Hollins Road and Newton Road. The 329 bus service operates along Hollins Lane, providing a half-hourly service to Warrington and St Helen. There are two stops for services westbound and one stop for services eastbound along the Site frontage. Further bus provision (no. 360 Warrington to Wigan and no. 22 Warrington to Newton-Le-Willows Bus Services) is available within a short walking distance of the Site on Newton Road.

#### **Suitability for Release from the Green Belt**

- 8.5 The Council's Green Belt Assessment was undertaken by Arup in October 2016, with subsequent updates published in July 2017. The Green Belt Assessment has appraised the Land at Hollins Lane, Winwick for its role in meeting the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined by Paragraph 80 of the NPPF. This was assessed through Parcel reference WI3, and which concluded that the Site fulfil a strong contribution to the Green. Our Client disagrees with this assessment, and instead considers that the Site represents the leading candidate Green Belt land to be released for housing around Winwick.
- 8.6 Our Client has concerns with the approach and methodology applied within the Green Belt Assessment which it considered could have influenced its overall findings:
- The Parcels assessed have been inconsistently defined, with some utilising roads as boundaries whilst others relates to field boundaries;
  - The Assessment itself was not undertaken by those who defined its methodology, instead several Officers were briefed and undertook the assessment individually. Whilst this allowed for local knowledge within the Assessment, it has also provided the opportunity for a level of divergence with the intended approach of the Assessment;

- The Assessment fails to consider parcels relating to settlements in neighbouring authorities in the same way it does settlements within Warrington. This has the overall effect of some parcels towards the edge of the Borough identified as making a lesser contribution to the Green Belt, despite being located on the edge of major settlements outside Warrington (for example Cadishead/Partington/Irlam);
- The Assessment fails to fully consider existing urban influences on a site and how this influences the character of each assessed parcel, especially when determining openness and the restriction of urban sprawl;
- The Assessment fails to consider the potential for a development to create a new prominent and permanent edge to the settlement;
- The consideration of openness is not clearer explained. 30% built form on-site is assessed significantly different to 10% despite the fact that there could be little difference between the two and its impact on the perception of openness depending on the scale of the wider parcel; and
- It is unclear how the overall conclusions of the Assessment have been reached. The Assessment outlines a standardised weighting which is applied based on the significance of the impact observed for each Green Belt purpose. In our view a more bespoke assessment is required, with the assessment weighted towards the purposes of the Green Belt which the parcel more closely relates to.

8.7 In relation to the Assessment undertaken for Hollins Lane, Winwick our Client agrees with the conclusions made for the following purposes:

- **Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas:** No Contribution – this is on the basis that the parcels is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose; and
- **Preserve the setting and special character of historic:** No Contribution – the parcel is not adjacent to a historic town. The parcel does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.

- 8.8 Our Client questions the conclusions made for *preventing coalescence between two towns; safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and assisting in urban regeneration.*
- 8.9 In relation to coalescence, whilst the Site is acknowledged to sit between Winwick and Newton-Le-Willows, existing topography and intervening vegetation mean that there is the absence of any visual connection between the Site and Newton-Le-Willows. The Site is not visible from Newton Road and as such its development would not lead to the perception of Winwick expanding towards Newton-Le-Willows. The Site should not therefore be considered to form part of an important settlement gap and its release would relieve pressure to development more sensitive sites around Winwick which do contribute towards this Green Belt purpose. It is not considered that the Site makes "No Contribution" to this Green Belt purpose.
- 8.10 In relation to encroachment, it is accepted that the Site is currently open from development and forms a functioning part of the open countryside, and as such its development for housing would lead to the loss of the countryside. However, this is the case for any Green Belt site. Further, the release of this Site for development would provide for a logical rounding off of the settlement in this location. Its development would not advance the built-up area of Winwick any further north or west than the existing extent of the settlement to the east. Only a single boundary of the Site current lacks definition, and there is the opportunity through the design process to create a new defensible edge to the settlement utilising the route of the existing footpath as a means to define this. Accordingly, our Client considers that the Site fulfils a "Moderate Contribution" when assessed against this Green Belt purpose.
- 8.11 Finally, in relation to urban regeneration, our Client objects to the finding of a "Moderate Contribution". The Council has undertaken an assessment of its considered urban capacity through the Plan preparation process and concluded that there is an insufficient supply of available, deliverable, and achievable non-Green Belt land within the Borough on which to meet its identified housing requirement. As such, the exceptional circumstances required by national planning policy to review and release land from the Green Belt are demonstrated. As a result, our Client considers that the Site makes "No Contribution" to this Green Belt purpose.
- 8.12 Taking into account the above, our Client considers that the conclusions of the Green Belt Assessment should be amended to conclude that the Site makes no more than a

Moderate Contribution to the Green Belt, and therefore forms one of the most appropriate locations for Green Belt releases immediately adjoining the settlement boundary.

- 8.13 The Green Belt Assessment is only the first stage of the site selection process. The next stage of the process will consider how a sustainable pattern of development can be achieved at each settlement.
- 8.14 In view of this, our Client does not believe that the Council should simply screen out those sites found to fulfil a role within the Green Belt. Alternatively, the Council should assess all sites in order to consider their appropriateness in accommodating the scale of the development required without resulting in harmful impacts on its surroundings.
- 8.15 Potential locations for release from the Green Belt at Winwick are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Potential Green Belt Sites in Winwick



- 8.16 The A49 dual carriageway closely follows the settlement edge of Winwick along its eastern boundary. As such, there are no opportunities for Green Belt release in this part of the settlement given the evident and important role land beyond this plays as part of the Green Belt.
- 8.17 Land to the south of Winwick would be inappropriate for their proximity to the M62 motorway, proximity to retail/employment/healthcare land uses, and clear strategic role these sites fulfil in maintaining the existing settlement gap between Winwick and the Warrington urban area. The release of this land for housing would therefore be contrary to national Green Belt policy, and the principles of sustainable development.
- 8.18 Land to the north of Winwick fulfils a clear function in assisting in safeguarding the settlement from encroachment. The release of any land from this area would see the settlement form of Winwick extend more northerly than any part of the existing built-up area. Owing to the large field pattern and flat nature of the land in this location, the development of circa 90 dwellings could not be accommodated in this area without the provision of a new, prolonged settlement boundary. This would weaken significantly the definable edge of Winwick leading to pressure for future releases in this location.
- 8.19 Land to the west of Winwick (south of Hollins road) features several large open areas of fields. Whilst land is contained by existing road infrastructure the character and nature of this land is distinctly rural, views extending far beyond this to the west and north. The land is also detached somewhat from residential parts of the settlement, and would not reflect well the existing pattern of development. The development of this land would represent a significant encroachment into the countryside with the settlement edge extending greatly beyond the existing defined settlement limit.
- 8.20 For the reasons above, our Client considers that their Site off Hollins Lane represents the most suitable location for release from the Green Belt taking into account the Site's Green Belt function/contribution, its relationship with existing and surrounding built form, the scale of development required in Winwick, and its proximity to existing services and facilities.

### **Deliverability**

- 8.21 A Development Framework promoting the allocation of this Site for housing is submitted to the Council alongside this representation. The Development Framework provides an overview of the assessed constraints and opportunities of the Site, confirming its suitability in principle for housing. The Development Framework confirms that the Site is not at significant risk to flooding from rivers or sea, or surface water, and is subject to limited constraint in terms of ecology, heritage and landscape.
- 8.22 This appraisal has been used to devise an initial vision for the development of the Site which has in turn informed the design principles which will be used to set out how the Site would be developed for housing. This includes a parameters plan which shows broadly which parts of the Site would be developed for housing, where new public open space would be provided, the approximate location for the vehicular access, and how the western boundary of the Site would be treated.
- 8.23 Work will continue through the Local Plan preparation process to provide the Council with the required evidence to demonstrate the suitability and deliverability of this Site for housing.





## 9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Our Client welcomes the opportunity to submit comments to the Preferred Development Option of the Local Plan Review.
- 9.2 Our Client supports the decision of the Council to adopt a housing requirement which is in excess of the assessed housing needs of the Borough, and which would support the delivery of economic aspirations. However, the housing requirement should be treated as a minimum given that its application as a ceiling to development may 'cap' job creation at a level which is below that experienced over the past 25 years. This is required to ensure that the Local Plan Review supports the achievement of sustainable development and supports continued economic growth. Its adoption would ensure that the housing requirement is **effective** and **consistent with national planning policy**.
- 9.3 Our Client welcomes the acknowledgement by the Council of the need to release land from the Green Belt to meet its housing requirement. However, having reviewed the supporting evidence demonstrating the non-Green Belt capacity for development through the Plan period, we consider that there is a need for the release of land sufficient to accommodate over 9,000 dwellings in order to ensure the full delivery of the housing requirement. The Council should seek to identify a sufficient Green Belt supply in response to this residual need to ensure that the Local Plan Review is **effective**.
- 9.4 An urban centric approach is adopted by the Council to meeting its housing needs. This is to be concentrated as four strategic areas of growth within or closely related to the Warrington urban area. Our Client holds significant concerns that this approach will fail to sufficiently respond and deal with the rural housing needs of the Borough, and will not deliver a sustainable pattern of development. The concentration of growth in this way also places unnecessary risk of the under-delivery of the housing requirement over the Plan period.
- 9.5 More specifically, our Client has significant concerns with regards to the deliverability of the four strategic areas of growth identified:
- The City Centre strategic area covers a large part of the existing town centre and is subject to a variety of different land uses, landownerships, and constraints.

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Securing the suitable and timely delivery of this area over the duration of the Plan period provides for an enormous challenge to the Council;

- The Waterfront strategic area's delivery is highly reliant on the construction of a new link road to the west of the town. The link road design, funding, and planning is not yet secured, and current timescales do not envisage completion prior to the early 2020's. This does not appear to chime with the Council's trajectory for the area which expects delivery in the early part of the Plan period. Beyond this, housing delivery in this area will face further challenges such as the constraints facing it:
- The Council place a significant reliance on delivery at the Garden City Suburb to meet its housing requirement, with a need to achieve an annual rate of delivery in excess of 360 dwellings throughout the Plan period. This reliance places significant risk of failed delivery should delivery stall or completions drop over the duration of the Plan period; and
- The South West Warrington strategic area is also influenced by the western link road. It is unclear at this stage whether the assumed capacity for this area takes into account the potential prospect of the need to accommodate the routing of this road through this area.

9.6 The implications of the above casts doubt over the deliverability of a large part of the allocations made within the Local Plan Review, and thus raises doubt over its **effectiveness**. There is need of further more detailed evidence to justify the assumptions made by the Council connected to the delivery of housing in these areas, and the need for further allocations within the Borough to boost supply in the shorter term and provide for greater flexibility should the Council prove to be incorrect.

9.7 Beyond the urban area, 1,407 dwellings (1,190 in the Green Belt) are outlined to be delivered in the Borough's seven outlying settlements. Very little justification beyond that of service capacity is provide to support the quantum of growth directed by the Council to these settlements at this stage. Supporting evidence appears to test various options for growth on an ad hoc basis with very little commentary provided which outline why each option has been assessed and what this would respond to. The approach of the Local Plan Review to addressing the rural needs of the authority is therefore inconsistent with **national planning policy**, is not **justified** and will not

be **effective**. To address this there is an urgent need for further evidence examining the need and opportunity to deliver this within the rural areas.

- 9.8 In response to the issues identified in these representations, our Client has submitted Land off Hollins Lane, Winwick for consideration for release from the Green Belt and allocated as housing. This is considered developable for housing and is available within the short term.
- 9.9 Land off Hollins Lane, Winwick is considered to hold a capacity for 120 dwellings. It is well related to the settlement, in close proximity of existing services and facilities, and is served by a number of regular bus services promoting sustainable travel.
- 9.10 Our Client has demonstrated that the Site makes no more than a "Moderate Contribution" to the Green Belt. The Site represents the most suitable location at which to secure the future housing needs of Winwick, and its release would provide for a logical expansion of the existing settlement.



# LAND NORTH OF HOLLINS LANE, WINWICK

DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK



SEPTEMBER 2017

**BARTON  
WILLMORE**

**millerhomes**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONTENTS

This Development Framework has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Miller Homes. It demonstrates how land north of Hollins Lane, Winwick, Warrington (the Site) represents a sustainable location for a new residential development to meet the future housing needs of Warrington Borough.

Warrington Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will set out planning policies and preferred sites to guide future development in the Borough. The Council acknowledges that greenfield land will be required to meet future development needs including those areas which are currently designated as Green Belt.

The Site is located to the west of Winwick and is currently designated as Green Belt. At this time, Winwick is significantly constrained by the wider Green Belt. However, given the need to release Green Belt land across the Borough, we consider that the Site, by virtue of its limited contribution towards the Green Belt, can be developed without harming the overall integrity of the Green Belt to the west of Winwick.

Winwick is identified as an Outlying Settlement within the emerging Warrington Local Plan, one of six settlements identified as housing capacity to accommodate future development within the Green Belt. Accordingly, this document demonstrates how the Site can contribute towards a sustainable extension to Winwick, boosting and securing housing delivery in response to local and wider needs. It demonstrates how the Site occupies a sustainable and accessible location, with the potential to help strengthen local pedestrian and cycling routes, delivering improvements in local sustainable accessibility.

This document presents an Concept Masterplan and supporting design principles to demonstrate our Client's emerging design rationale for the Site. This has been informed by an initial assessment process of the Site and its surrounds to demonstrate the ability of the Site to accommodate approximately 120 dwellings, alongside improved pedestrian and cycle links and public open space.

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A49

M6

WINWICK

Hollins Lane

Hollins Park Hospital

A24

M62

# SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

## SITE LOCATION

The Site lies to the west of Winwick, within the administrative area of Warrington. The Site is located approximately 1.5km from Junction 22 of the M6 and c.1km Junction 9 of the M62. Warrington Town Centre is c.5km to the south and is directly accessible via the A49.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site comprises an agricultural field to the north of Hollins Lane and to the east of Newton Road. It extends to an area of c.7.2 hectares and slopes gradually from north-east to south-west.

The Site is framed to the east and south by existing highway infrastructure, dominant landscape features and existing residential development. The eastern boundary is defined by established trees and scrub planting, beyond which lies the A49 (Newton Road) and residential development comprising large properties set within generous plots. The southern boundary is defined by an established hawthorn hedgerow and mature trees. Hollins Lane runs adjacent to the southern boundary, with 19th Century terraced residential properties overlooking the Site. To the rear of these properties is an area of more recently built residential development and Hollins Park Hospital, which extends the settlement south towards the M62.

To the west and north-west of the Site lies open farmland. The western boundary includes a group of established trees and the northern boundary is framed by mature trees and several residential dwellings (Cop Holt Cottages and Newton Road Cottages). An existing Public Right of Way runs adjacent to the western and northern boundary, providing access to nearby residential development and the surrounding open countryside.

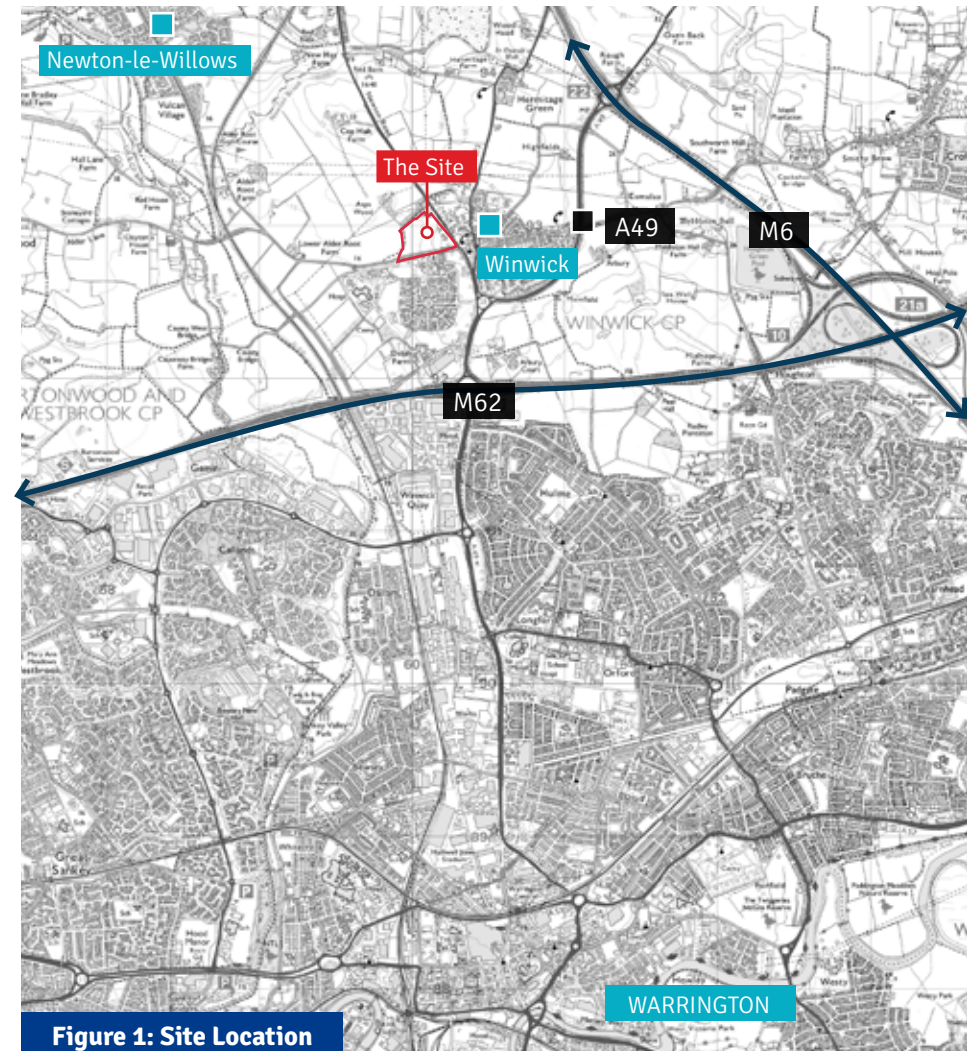


Figure 1: Site Location



— Site Boundary



A49 (Newton Rd)

Newton Rd Cottages

Cop Holt Cottage

WINWICK

Hollins Lane

Winwick Link Rd

Hollins Park Hospital

A24

Elysium Healthcare

M62

WINWICK QUAY

HULME

LONGFORD

Figure 2: Site Aerial

# GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The Warrington Green Belt is contiguous with the Merseyside, Greater Manchester, and North Cheshire Green Belts. Winwick is a free standing, sustainable settlement located to the north of the Warrington Urban Area and North of the M62. The Green Belt at Winwick wraps tightly around the Settlement, closely following the settlement boundary as defined within the Warrington Core Strategy. The settlement, as with all other rural parts of the Borough, is tightly constrained by the Green Belt.

Warrington Borough Council has recently commenced the preparation of a new Local Plan which will define the future development requirements of the plan area and identify the strategy to secure its delivery. The Local Plan is underpinned by updated evidence which suggests a significant uplift in housing need and subsequently an urgency for further development sites. The Council's assessment of its land capacity has shown a shortage of available, deliverable and achievable non-green belt land in contrast to identified requirement, necessitating the need for a review and release of land from the Green Belt for development.

In October 2016 the Council published a Green Belt Assessment which assessed identified land parcels for their contribution to the Green Belt with reference to the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined under

Paragraph 80 of the NPPF. This review has since been updated in response to Call for Sites submissions through the July 2017 update. The Site is assessed through the former under Site reference W13, adopting the same site boundary as that promoted through this Development Framework.

The Council's Green Belt Assessment concludes that the Site makes a Strong Contribution to the Green Belt. This is on the basis that the Site is adjudged to support a strong degree of openness and not all boundaries between the parcel and the countryside are durable. As a result the Site is considered to fulfil a strong role in preventing encroachment into the countryside and is therefore concluded to have a strong contribution to the fundamental aim of the Green Belt under Paragraph 79 of the NPPF.

We disagree with the conclusions of the Green Belt Assessment. This is because the Assessment fails to take into account the opportunity provided through the development of the Site to provide for a new durable but natural boundary to the settlement edge to the north and west of the Site, which reflects that of the wider settlement, and which would provide for a logical and well related rounding off of the settlement. The scale of the Site means that it is better suited to accommodating the level of growth sought by the Council at Winwick through its Preferred Development Option

Consultation Document without needing to create protracted artificial boundaries to the settlement.

Examining the Council's conclusions on each of the five Green Belt purposes, it is agreed that:

- The Site fulfils no contribution to check the sprawl of urban areas; and
- The Site fulfils no contribution to the setting of historic towns.

We disagree that Site plays a weak role in preventing the coalescence of two towns, and consider it to play no role. Although the Site is acknowledged to sit within the existing gap between Winwick and Newton-le-Willows, due to local topography and intervening vegetation there is an absence of a visual or perceptive connection between the Site and Newton-le-Willows. The Site would not therefore be considered to form as part of an important settlement gap, and its release for development would override the pressure to development more sensitive land to this purpose which is located to the south of Winwick and close to the Warrington Urban Area.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the Site fulfils a role in preventing encroachment into the open countryside – given its open nature – we disagree that this is a strong role taking into account the wider settlement pattern and relative contained nature of the Site. It is

considered that the development of the Site would not lead to further pressures for Green Belt release in this location.

We dispute the assessment that the Site fulfils a moderate contribution to assisting in urban regeneration. This is based on the conclusion made by the Council that there is an insufficient supply of available, deliverable and achievable brownfield land within the Borough to meet its assessed housing needs. The significance of this housing need, together with the constrained nature of the Borough, necessitates the need for Green Belt release. No sites should therefore be found to fulfil this Green Belt purpose.

Whilst the Site clearly makes a contribution to the openness and function of the Green Belt, we consider that function is limited by the factors above. When considered in the context of the Green Belt as a whole, the need for Green Belt release within the Borough, and the need to support a sustainable pattern of development, we consider that the Site provides for the best opportunity to deliver a sustainable, high quality and sensitive expansion to the existing settlement at Winwick. As with any settlement which is tightly constrained by Green Belt, the encroachment of the countryside is an inevitability of the release of undeveloped land for residential development. We consider that the Site provides a logical extension to the settlement

which will allow for a sensible rounding off of Winwick, and will not encourage the further expansion of the settlement in this location in the future. The Site therefore is suitable for release from the Green Belt as a potential housing allocation.

PURPOSE	CRITERIA AND DEFINITIONS	ASSESSMENT	CONCLUSIONS
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Would development of the Site lead to / constitute ribbon development?	No. The Site forms a distinct parcel which is well related to the existing settlement. The Site offers a logical rounding off of the settlement to the north west of Winwick.	The Site does not adjoin a large built-up area and provides for a logical option to extend the settlement edge of Winwick. The Site does not therefore serve to prevent unrestricted urban sprawl.
	Would development result in an isolated development Site not connected to existing boundaries?	No. The Site adjoins the existing urban extent of Winwick.	
	Is the Site well connected to the built-up area? Does it have 2 or more boundaries with the existing built-up area?	Yes. The Site is bounded on two sides by existing developed parts of Winwick.	
	Would development of the Site effectively 'round off' the settlement pattern?	Yes. The Site would round off this part of Winwick reflecting the broad extent of the existing settlement to the north and west.	
	Do natural and physical features (major road, river etc.) provide a good existing barrier between the existing development and undeveloped land, which if breached may set a precedent for unrestricted sprawl?	The Site is defined on two sides by existing urban form/ road infrastructure. The third and final boundary is formed by an existing hedgerow which has the opportunity to be strengthened through the design process.	
2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Do natural features and infrastructure provide a good physical barrier or boundary to the Site that would ensure development was contained?	The Site is defined on two sides by existing urban form/ road infrastructure. The third and final boundary is formed by an existing hedgerow which has the opportunity to be strengthened through the design process.	Development of the Site would not result in the merging of settlements.
	Would development of the Site lead to physical connection of two or more settlements?	No the nearest settlement is Newton-Le-Willows which is located approximately 1.5km to the North West. There is no visual or perceptible connectivity between the two settlements given the extent of remaining open agricultural land, and intervening vegetation.	
	Would the development of the Site help preserve the physical separation of settlements across the district?	Yes, the Site benefits from greater levels of enclosure from its surrounding features than potential alternatives adjacent to Winwick. The indicative capacity of 90 dwellings as set out in the Local Plan could be incorporated within the logical boundaries of the Site without need for the creation of artificial boundaries to the settlement. The Parcel also would promote the coalescence of Winwick with the Warrington Urban Area as demonstrated by alternatives to the south of the settlement.	

**Table 1 : Green Belt Assessment Table**

PURPOSE	CRITERIA AND DEFINITIONS	ASSESSMENT	CONCLUSIONS
3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Is there a strong, defensible boundary between the existing urban area and the Site – wall, river, main road etc (as opposed to garden boundaries)?	Two existing roads provide the existing boundaries of the Site, and whilst it is acknowledged that these provide strong boundaries to the settlement as existing, an equally strong boundary could be created to the north/west of the Site allowing the sensitive rounding off of the existing settlement pattern.	The Site is acknowledged to fulfil a moderate role in this function, however can be developed to ensure that remaining agricultural land is safeguarded from development.
	Does the site provide access to the countryside – footpaths, bridleways across the land, or it is designated park / green space?	A public right of way runs within the western boundary of the Site. Notwithstanding the presence of this footpath, the majority of the Site is in agricultural use and as such is not accessible to the public.	
	Does the site include national or local nature conservation designation areas?	No. There are no designated ecological sites or sites of nature conservation within or adjacent to the Site.	
	Does the site include areas of woodland, trees, hedgerow that are protected (protected ancient woodland) or significant unprotected tree / hedge cover?	There are no trees within the Site. Trees and hedgerow are concentrated towards the boundaries of the Site. The Site can be developed retaining the majority of these features save for access.	
	Does the Site include any best and most versatile grade 1,2,3a (where known) agricultural land?	Unknown. Large parts of the Borough however are either Grade 2, 3a or 3b.	
	Does the Site contain buildings?	No.	
4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Winwick is not recognised as a settlement of historical importance and as such the Green Belt is not considered to serve this purpose in this location. The Site is near the Parish Church of Winwick but due to thick existing vegetation there is very limited to no visual connectivity between the Site and the Church and the Site is not considered to form part of its setting.	Development of the Site would have no effect on the setting and special character of a historic town.	
5. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling or urban / derelict land	N/A	No. The Site is promoted as a suitable Site for housing for Green Belt release to meet the future housing needs of Warrington. The Council has identified insufficient brownfield capacity to meet these needs. The release and allocation of this Site would help to address this shortfall against identified needs, and this will not conflict with the Council's regeneration strategy.	Development of the Site would not have any impact on the regeneration of the Borough.

As set out within this Development Framework, the Site is capable of providing a logical extension to the settlement with clearly defined and durable boundaries. The development of this Site would not compromise the integrity of the surrounding landscape. Moreover, as set out above, the development would lessen Greenbelt pressures elsewhere in the Borough in more sensitive locations, thus helping to preserve the openness of the Green Belt as a whole.

The Site is adjacent to the existing urban edge of Winwick, located to the north of Hollins Lane and west of Newton Road. The Site is well related to the existing settlement and would provide for a logical rounding off of Winwick in this location, with northern and western boundaries to the development reflecting the current extent of the built up area of Winwick. It is clear from the Sustainability Assessment set out earlier in this document that the Site is located close to a number of existing facilities within Winwick.

The Site is accessible to a public transport route along Newton Road. Frequent bus services operate to Warrington Town Centre and Newton-Le-Willows where there is a wider range of services and employment opportunities. There are also further rail connections in both to Manchester and Liverpool settlements.

The development of the Site will provide for an attractive and accessible residential area as well as to help safeguard and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of Winwick. The allocation of the Site will also assist the Council in meeting its wider housing needs which have been defined in response to latest evidence of demographic, affordable and economic needs.

#### **OVERALL CONCLUSIONS FROM GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT**

National Planning Policy acknowledges that in order to fulfil housing requirements, a review of the Green Belt may be necessary. As shown within the recent Preferred Development Options Local Plan, the Council is clearly of the view that the circumstances of housing need and supply justify the need to review Green Belt boundaries around Warrington.

Winwick is recognised by the Council as a sustainable settlement, and one which is both capable and in need of further housing growth. Due to the constrained nature of the settlement there will be a need to release land from the Green Belt in response to this context.

Clearly, preference should be given to those sites that no longer meet at least one of the five purposes for its inclusion within the Green Belt as defined at paragraph 80 of the NPPF. As should the requirement to provide for a sustainable pattern of development, and identify sites which respond to the scale of growth sought by the Council at each settlement.

Our assessment shows that the Site fulfils a moderate role within the Green Belt, and is capable through careful design of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The Site will provide for a sustainable development and a scale of growth which is appropriate for the Site and wider settlement. The development will support the delivery of the Council's housing requirement, and will help maintain the vitality and vibrancy of Winwick.

We welcome further discussions with the Council regarding the assessment of this Site.



# NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Site is well related to the built up area of Winwick and is sustainably located in close proximity to Winwick Village Centre. Winwick is identified as an Outlying Settlement within the emerging Warrington Local Plan. Warrington Town Centre is within 5km of the settlement and is accessible to the Site by public transport. The Site therefore occupies a sustainable and suitable location for new development.

Figure 3 opposite demonstrates that a significant proportion of facilities and public transport opportunities are within a convenient walking and cycling distance from the Site.

## FACILITIES

The Site is well located in relation to a range of local services and amenities. These include but are not limited to:

- St Oswald CofE Church;
- Hollins Park Hospital;
- Winwick CofE Primary School;
- Winwick Leisure Centre;
- The Cheshire day nursery;
- The Swan (Public House);
- Premier Inn;
- Bliss Books;
- B&Q;
- St Oswalds House Care Home.

## EMPLOYMENT

Winwick Quay Business Park is located approximately 1km to the south of the Site, just beyond the M62. This area is characterised by light industrial uses and medium size offices. Notable employers include AAH Pharmaceuticals and Royal Mail.

This Business Park lies within the wider area of Hulme (Warrington) which also includes a greater range of employment opportunities including several large retail units and a range of commercial businesses. Beyond Hulme to the south lies Longford and Warrington Town Centre where a more significant range of employment opportunities can be accessed.

## EXISTING ROAD NETWORK

The Site is accessible from Hollins Lane and the A49 (Newton Road). Hollins Lane provides access to the south of the Site, and the A49 to the east of the Site. Accordingly, the Site is well connected by the existing road network with access via the A49 and Winick Link Road to the M6 and M62, connecting Winwick to major cities including Manchester and Liverpool.

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Site benefits from access to public transport in the form of existing bus stops /services directly adjacent to the Site on Hollins Lane and Norton Road. Regular daily connections are available from these bus stops include Bus Services 22, 22E, 24E, 75,

360, 329. In addition, bus stops served by Bus Service 19 also lie within easy walking distance of the Site on Myddleton Lane.

Bus Services 360, 329, 19, 22 are alternating services and generally provide 7 services per hour from the morning until early evening with a similar frequency on a Saturday. Destinations including Warrington Town Centre to the south and Newton-le-Willows to the north. Bus Services 22E and 24E are evening services that operate through Winwick until 11pm between Newton-le-Willows and Warrington.

Onward travel via public transport is available via bus connection to Warrington Station which is located on the national rail network providing links to major towns and cities across the region such as Manchester and Liverpool.

## WALKING AND CYCLING

Ladies' Walk is a Public Right of Way that provides access across the Site from Hollins Lane to Newton Road. The Site also benefits from convenient access to the surrounding countryside to the west.



1. St Oswald CofE Church



2. Hollins Park Hospital



3. Wiwick CofE Primary School



4. Wiwick Leisure Centre

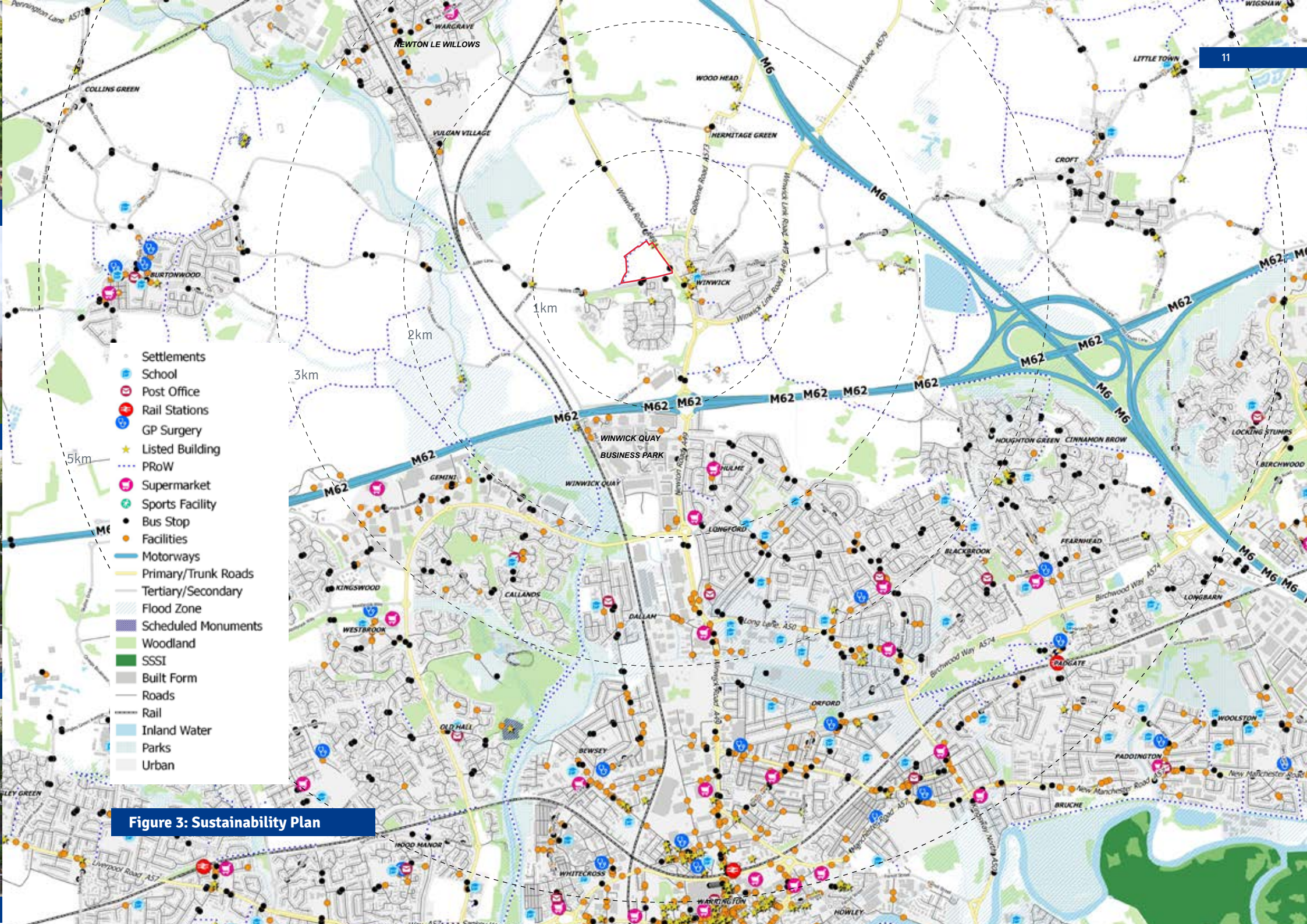


Figure 3: Sustainability Plan

**TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER**

Winwick exhibits a varied residential character which is reflective of the manner in which settlement growth has occurred over a series of historic phases.

The historical settlement area of Winwick is largely located to the east of the Site and typically comprises of large early 1800s agricultural worker’s cottages and farmhouses (image 1 & 2).

The main village high street (Goulbourne Road) is characterised by a series of cottages and community facilities (image 3). New housing development has expanded north of Goulbourne Road along Spire Gardens, comprising large detached and semi-detached properties characterised by red brick and rendered facades with grey roof tiles (image 4).

Further east of the Site is a series of Victorian red brick terrace houses on Myddleton Lane (image 5) and beyond is an area of 1950s and 1960s Post-War semi-detached red brick housing (image 6).

South-east of the Site is an area of 1970s bungalow housing served of Faringdon Road (image 7, 8 & 9). These properties are characterised by brown/red brick, weatherboard cladding, grey roof tiles and the occasional built in attic rooms.

South and overlooking the Site on Hollins Lane are a series of victorian red brick terrace houses with ground floor bay windows. The front gardens feature old victorian lamp posts (image 10).

Further south of the Site is a modern medium density residential estate. This replaced the former Winwick Hospital mental asylum which was closed in 1997. The housing estate has a distinctive layout which was influenced by the layout of the former hospital buildings, many of which were demolished to make way for the new housing estate. The Estate is characterised by a mix of house types including large 4-5 bedroom detached and semi-detached houses designed in a contemporary georgian architectural style (image 11, 12) and 3-4 bedroom semi-detached and detached red brick houses (image 13). At the centre of this development is a formal landscaped square surrounded by hedgerows (image 14). The former hospital recreational grounds have been retained as a large public park surrounding the housing development (image 15).

North east of the Site, at the edge of Goulbourne Road, are a series of new bespoke designed private detached houses set within generous plots (image 16).



**Figure 4: Photograph Location Map**





# OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

In order to guide the emerging design vision and Concept Masterplan for the Site, an initial site assessment has been undertaken to identify a series of opportunities and considerations.

## CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure the new street network and development plots respond to the existing Site topography whilst minimising ground remodelling.
- Retain and integrate existing landscape features adjacent to the Site boundaries including existing trees and hedgerows along the Site boundary.
- Consider a range of house types across the Site to reflect the local character housing in the area.
- Consider traffic management across the Site through the design of a legible street hierarchy.
- Retain and integrate existing PRow in the design.
- Consider the provision of public open spaces on Site to aid orientation and movement across the Site.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Integrate landscape features of value into the landscape framework capable of supporting and enhancing the biodiversity through the provision of rich planting.
- Enhance the amenity, ecological and arboricultural value of the existing trees within the Site.
- Provide new vehicle access into Site from Hollins Lane.
- Retain and enhance the PRow along the west and north edge of the Site boundary.
- Provide high-quality housing set within an attractive landscape setting to soften the proposed built form.
- Enhance the appearance of the urban edge through the inclusion of new planting within and at the edge of the proposed development.
- Provide direct pedestrian and cycle connections to existing bus stops located on Hollins Lane and Newton Road (A49).
- Increase scope for more sustainable transport opportunities, including walking and cycling.
- Provide a SuDS that works with the existing topography and change in levels on Site.
- Provision of parkland surrounding the Site.

**KEY**

- Site Boundary
- ↗ Existing Vehicle Access
- ↘ Potential Vehicle Access
- ↙ Existing Pedestrian Access
- - - PRow
- 40mph Speed Limit Road
- Trees
- Hedgerow
- ✪ Existing Pond (outwith Site)
- ✪ Potential Drainage Pond
- Existing Drainage Ditch
- Contours
- Bus Stops
- ✪ Listed Buildings



**Figure 5: Site Assessment Plan**

# DESIGN VISION AND EMERGING PROPOSALS

## DESIGN VISION

The vision for the Site is to:

- Create an attractive and high quality residential neighbourhood which responds positively to its landscape and urban contexts and respects the character of Winwick.
- To create an integrated and accessible new movement network which strengthens existing connections, offers choice and promotes sustainable modes of travel.
- To create a walkable neighbourhood which is legible and easy to move around in, providing strong linkages to access local amenities, existing residential areas and new green infrastructure.
- To provide the right ingredients for a balanced and sociable residential community comprising around 120 dwellings of varying types, sizes and densities.
- To create imaginatively designed homes with gardens which have easy access to a range of amenities including children's play and landscaped green space.
- To create a place which enhances the natural environment and character of the Site, providing a comprehensive and fully inter-connected network of green infrastructure.

## DEVELOPMENT QUANTUM

Taking into account the location of the Site and the density of existing and committed residential development, an average density of 30 dwellings per net hectare has initially been applied. This preliminary assessment will be reviewed as discussions with the Council progress.

The proposed density allows for the creation of a sustainable and balanced residential development, comprising a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures.

Based on an average net density of 30 dwellings per net hectare, the proposed development quantum is anticipated to be in the region of 120no. dwellings.

The opportunities and considerations previously presented have informed key design principles that have been integrated into the design of a Concept Masterplan.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The opportunities and considerations previously presented have informed key design principles that have been integrated into the design of a Concept Masterplan.

1. **Development blocks** will be positioned in response to the Site topography.
2. **Existing landscape features** will be retained and incorporated into a green infrastructure network. This will create a setting and identity for the new development, whilst providing increased biodiversity, recreation opportunities and landscape visual mitigation.
3. **A range of house types** will be provided across the Site.
4. **New streets** will be designed to prioritise pedestrians whilst creating a clear road layout for vehicles.
5. **Pedestrian and cycle connections** that connect with the surrounding area and public transport network will be provided throughout the development and within areas of public open space.
6. **Provision of a new circular park around the development, reflective of the parkland to the south** to aid orientation, link and enhance PRow and provide an attractive, functional and accessible place for leisure and recreation.

7. **Provision of incidental green spaces** to address Site topography and strengthen the legibility of pedestrian access points into the Site.
8. **Vehicular access** to the Site will be delivered from Hollins Lane.
9. **Sustainable drainage features** including swales and attenuation ponds will be located in response to Site topography and existing drainage patterns.
10. **Consideration of western boundary treatment** and softening of settlement edge.



**KEY**

- Site Boundary
- Indicative Development Plots
- Landscape
- Potential Drainage Pond
- Potential Primary Vehicle Routes
- Potential Pedestrian / Cycle Route
- PRoW
- Pedestrian Access
- Potential Vehicle Access
- Existing Bus Stops
- ✳ Listed Buildings

**Figure 6: Concept Masterplan**

# BENEFITS AND CONCLUSION

## BENEFITS

The Site represents an available, suitable and sustainable Site, having regard to the following benefits:

- The development of the Site will provide a mix of high quality housing for the local area and wider Borough.
- The provision of new housing will help drive forward Warrington Borough Council's objective to supporting population growth across the Borough.
- The Site is considered to make no more than a moderate contribution to the Green Belt.
- The Site has the potential to deliver a valuable contribution towards supporting the local economy.
- The Site provides an opportunity to enhance and improve existing public rights of way.
- The Site occupies a sustainable location for new housing, within easy access to public transport opportunities on both Hollins Lane and Newton Road.
- The Site has the potential to secure safe vehicular access along Hollins Lane, without having an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.
- There is the opportunity to create integrated pedestrian and cycle linkages as part of the Site's development, linking to existing bus stops adjacent to the Site, encouraging alternative modes of transport to the private car and will contribute towards a low-carbon community.
- The Site has the potential to provide a new Park which will provide an attractive setting for residents and the wider community whilst aiding orientation and providing opportunities for leisure and recreation.
- Any development will be set within a strong landscape framework which will assist in absorbing the proposed development into the surrounding landscape character.
- The Concept Masterplan for the Site has taken full account of local landscape and nature conservation interest.
- Any development will retain and enhance existing land features and this will be strengthened through the implementation of new soft landscaping at the edges of and within the Site.





#### **CONCLUSION**

This Development Framework has undertaken an assessment of the Site, its context and its development potential. In doing so, it has been demonstrated that there are sound planning and design reasons for the Site to be allocated for future housing growth.

In conclusion, the Site represents a logical extension to existing resident development in Winwick, is available, and offers a suitable location to help meet Warrington Borough's short and longer term housing needs.

#### **Next Steps**

The Site is considered deliverable and could start to deliver within the next five years and Miller Homes are committed to progressing the emerging Concept Masterplan towards a high quality residential development that responds to the local housing need, whilst taking into account and reflecting the character of the surrounding settlement.

We look forward to working with Warrington Borough Council to progress the proposals for the Site, and welcome any feedback and/or the opportunity to meet and discuss.

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