



Proof of Evidence

Vol 3 - Greenbelt

Produced by Margaret Steen
Rule 6 Party
Peel Hall - APP/ M0655/W/17/3178530

Green Belt

1 The Rule 6 Party dispute the claim by both Warrington Borough Council and the Appellant that Peel Hall does not form part of the Green Belt. The Rule 6 party considers part of the site to be within the Green Belt.

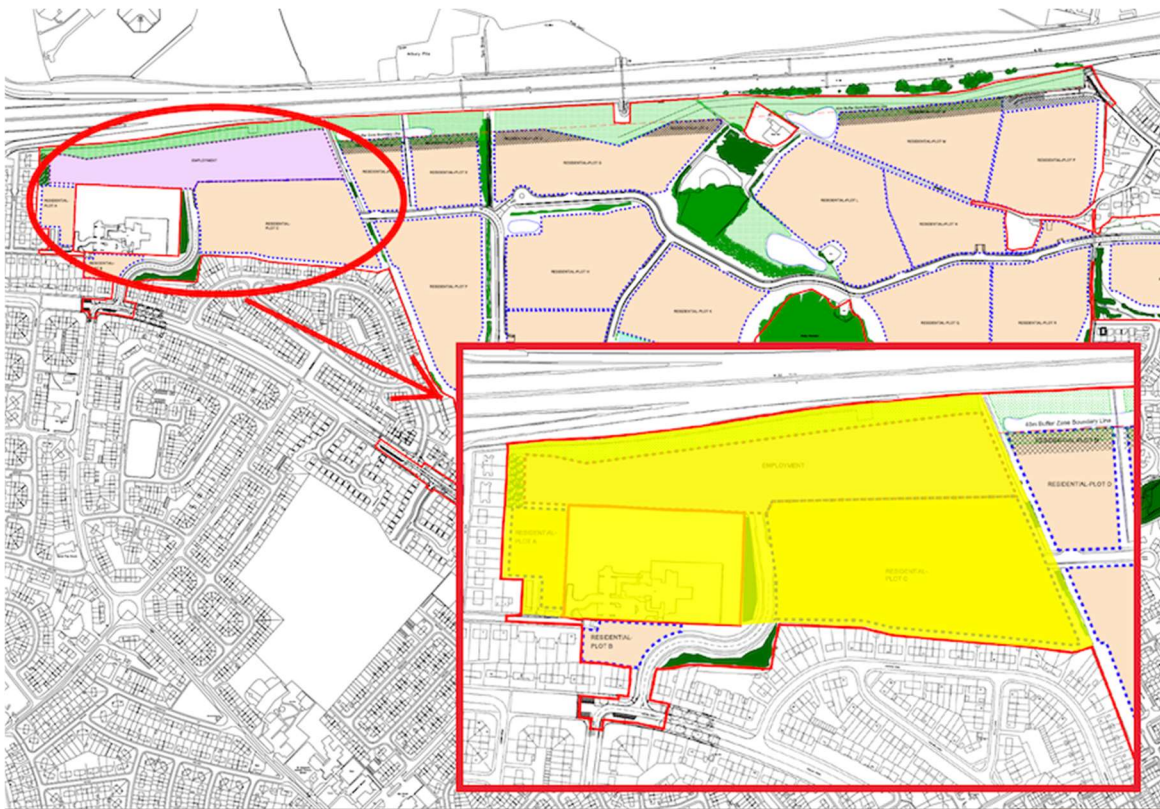
2 Warrington Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted on 23rd January 2006.

3 In October 2007, as a result of a legal challenge by Satnam Millennium Ltd, the High Court ruled Warrington UDP Proposals Map should be quashed insofar as it shows the site known as Peel Hall Farm as included in the North Cheshire Green Belt.

4 Satnam - Peel Hall boundary 2007



5 Satnam - Peel Hall Boundary 2020 – including Winwick Farm



6 Mr Justice Sullivan said, “ it follows that the UDP proposals map must be quashed insofar as it includes the **claimant’s part of the Peel Hall site** (shown in black on the plan annexe to this judgement) within the Green Belt judgment) within the Green Belt. That result may appear somewhat anomalous **in respect of the remainder of the site**, but it flows from the legislative scheme because the owners of that part of the site did not challenge the adoption of the UDP.

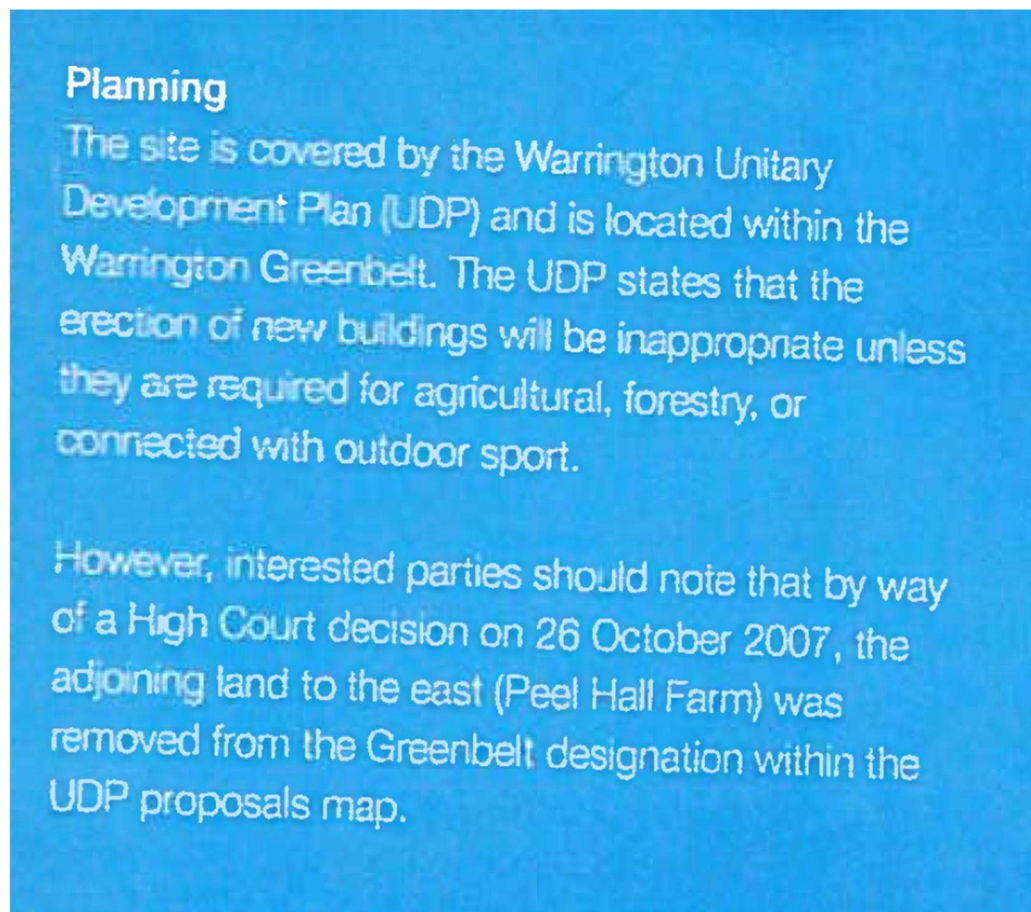
7 Para.58 “MR LOCKHART-MUMMERY: My Lord, for the sake of certainty, I am wondering whether it would be appropriate to attach to the order of the court a plan showing the extent of the land to which your Lordship has made reference in the judgment, that is to say **the claimant's land within the Peel Hall area.**

(Appendix 1- High Court Decision)

8 Warrington Borough Council did not appeal the decision.

WINWICK FARM

9 The adjoining parcel of land to the west of Peel Hall, known as Winwick Farm, was purchased by Satnam Millennium in 2008, and was advertised at that time as follows:



(Appendix 2-UDP MAP & WINWICK FARM SALE)

10 The status of the land at Winwick Farm remained as Greenbelt.

11 Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 Examination

Warrington Borough Councils Public Consultation on the proposed Local Plan Core Strategy produced significant representations, including many suggestions for a review of the Warrington Green Belt. In all cases the Warrington Borough Council Officer's Comments (Council Responses) were consistent.

- The Council is not satisfied that exceptional circumstances to justify a review of the Green Belt exist.
- It can be delivered within the 2006 established green belt boundaries. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, the alteration of the Green Belt to accommodate more housing would undermine the permanence of the Green Belt and community confidence in the planning system.
- The suggested site is within the established Green Belt and is not a sustainable location. No exceptional reasons to justify a review of the Green Belt have been given, and the Local Plan provides for the borough's employment development elsewhere. (**Appendix 3- Consultation Responses**)

12 In March 2013, during the Local Plan Core Strategy Examination In Public, the issue of a review of Warrington Green Belt was discussed in detail and the Council's comments included the following in the hearing statement produced for the Inquiry:

- 31. The Council's stance on the issue of Green Belt review is unequivocally no. The position has been made clear from the outset. No convincing reasons have been put forward by the proponents of Green Belt review to persuade the Council to change its stance.

- 32. The primary objective of the Plan in this regard is to maintain the intended permanence of the Green Belt boundaries first established in January 2006. The Council is not satisfied that exceptional circumstances to justify a strategic review of the Green Belt exist. The alteration of recently established Green Belt boundaries to accommodate development would undermine the permanence of the Green Belt and community confidence in the planning system.

Extracts from Local Plan Core Strategy Hearing Statement

49. The Council's evidence (Issue 1.8 and Issue 2.2) demonstrates that, at the planned levels of development for housing and employment growth, the Green Belt boundary is capable of enduring beyond the plan period and has identified broad locations where longer term needs will continue to be met.

There is no need to review the Green Belt to ensure its continuing permanence.

Extracts from Local Plan Core Strategy Hearing Statement – Appendix 4

Conclusions

50. There is no sound reason for a review of the Green Belt. It is entirely appropriate for the Plan to respect the permanence of the tightly drawn Green Belt boundaries in the Borough, established in 2006, as an overriding restraint on the outward expansion of the town and other settlements.
51. The objectors fail to recognise that the Green Belt serves positive purposes, and is consistent with a positively prepared plan. By no means the least of these purposes is the positive support the Green Belt lends to urban regeneration. Most if not all of the sites now promoted by objectors for release from the Green Belt were considered to serve at least one Green Belt purpose by the UDP Inspector, and circumstances have not changed since then.
52. The abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies does not equate to the abolition of the need for strategic planning. A Green Belt Review cannot be considered or justified on the basis of circumstances in a single plan area. The appropriate context for determining the need for Review is and always has been much broader, and in future will be guided by cross-boundary considerations under the Duty to Cooperate.
53. There is no indication in any relevant strategic forum that a Green Belt Review in Warrington is needed or would be supported by neighbouring Councils.
54. No objector has addressed the Strategic need for Review other than by simple reference to the impending abolition of NW RSS. No case has been made to justify a radical departure from the established strategic spatial development framework.

(Appendix 4 LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY – HEARING STATEMENT 2013)

- 13** The subsequent Report on the Examination into Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy, by Planning Inspector Mike Fox, dated 12th May 2014, contains the following references to the examination of Warrington green belt.

At (46)

Policy CS4 affirms the Council's commitment to the long term protection of the Green Belt, which washes over much of the Borough and is contiguous with the Green Belt in Merseyside, Greater Manchester and North Cheshire. This strategy is in accordance with the Framework, which states (paragraph 79) that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence, and that once established, Green belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances (paragraph 83).

At (47)

There are no proposals to review the Green Belt during the plan period, which I consider to be sound for reasons that I explore more fully further on in my report

(Appendix 5 - Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 - Inspectors Report)

Green Belt

6.20 The integrity of the Green Belt, which was established within the borough for the first time in 2006, is to be preserved across the entirety of the plan period and beyond. National policy makes clear that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are therefore their openness and their permanence

Appendix 5 –Warrington Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy 6.20)

15 Policy CS 5

Policy CS 5

Overall Spatial Strategy - Green Belt

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

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

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

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

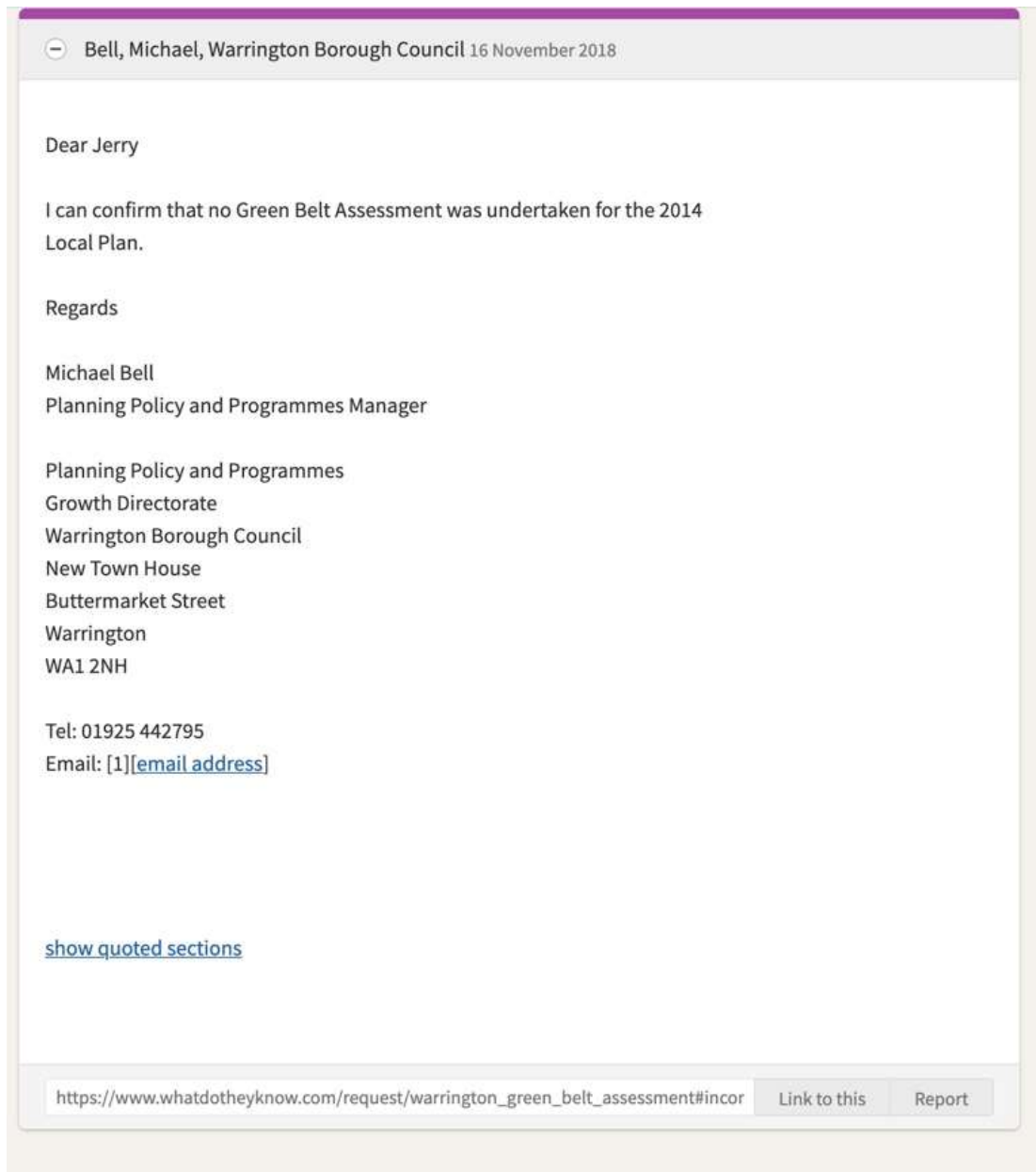
A minor detailed change to the approved Green Belt boundary in the Warrington Unitary Development Plan has been made at Bents Garden Centre, Glazebury.

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

(Appendix 5 –Warrington Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy 6.23)

16 Freedom of Information request to Warrington Borough Council

16th November 2018 - A Freedom of Information request to Warrington Borough Council – received the following response from Michael Bell, Planning and Programmes Manager, Warrington Borough Council.



Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally. Detailed boundaries should not be altered or development allowed merely because the land has become derelict.

Where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the structure plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist, which necessitate such revision.

There is no documentary evidence that Winwick Farm was officially removed from the Green Belt.

Appendix:

1. High Court Decision
2. U.D.P. Addendum
3. Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 Consultation Responses
4. Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 – Hearing Statements
5. Local Plan Core Strategy Hearing Statements 2013
6. Warrington Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy

1. High Court Decision

CO/2093/2007

Neutral Citation Number: [2007] EWHC 2648 (Admin)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION
THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT

Royal Courts of Justice
Strand
London WC2A 2LL

Friday, 26th October 2007

B e f o r e:

MR JUSTICE SULLIVAN

Between:

THE QUEEN ON THE APPLICATION OF SATNAM MILLENNIUM LTD.
Claimant

v

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL.

Defendant

Computer-Aided Transcript of the Stenograph Notes of
WordWave International Limited
A Merrill Communications Company
190 Fleet Street London EC4A 2AG
Tel No: 020 7404 1400 Fax No: 020 7831 8838
(Official Shorthand Writers to the Court)

Mr Christopher Lockhart-Mummery QC and Mr David Blundell (instructed by Messrs Wright Hassall Solicitors) appeared on behalf of the **Claimant**

Mr Stephen Sauvain QC and Mr Colin Crawford (instructed by Warrington Council Solicitors) appeared on behalf of the **Defendant**

J U D G M E N T
(As Approved by the Court)

Crown copyright©

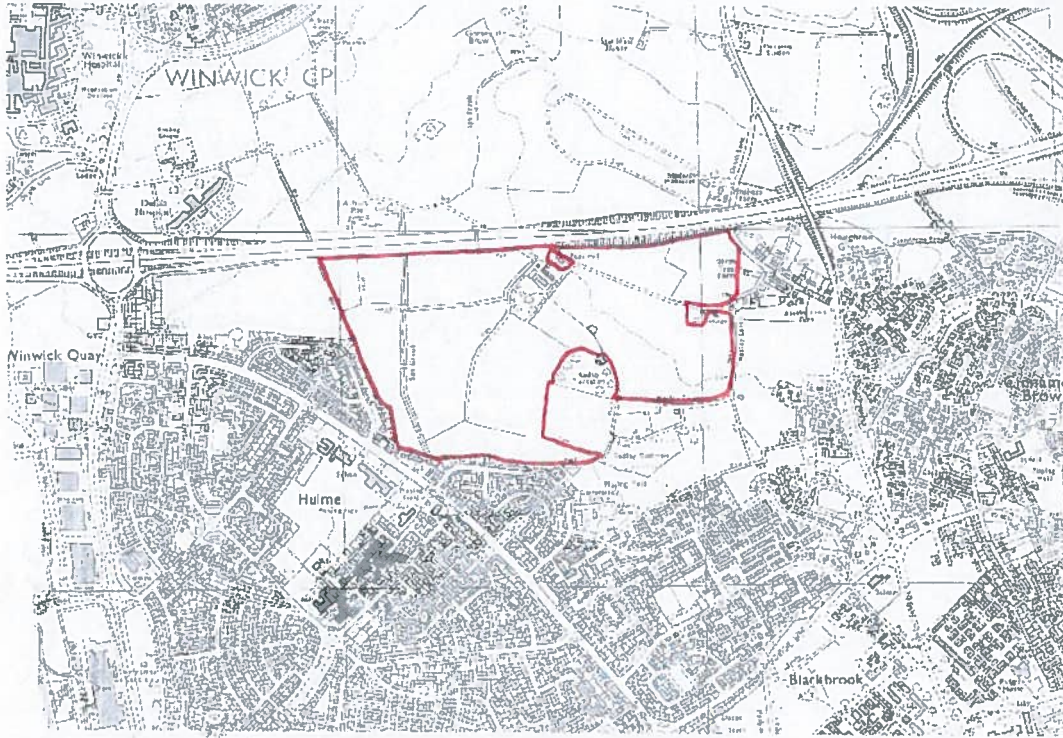
consider that issue. It was not submitted that if I concluded that the Inspector had erred in deciding that there was no need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances (referred to as "very special circumstances" in paragraph 1.350 of his report) it would be appropriate to refuse the claimant relief as a matter of discretion.


54. In these circumstances, I can deal very shortly with Mr Lockhart-Mummery's subsidiary ground of challenge that the Inspector, having set out the correct test in paragraph 1.139 of his report that any Green Belt boundary should "endure for a period that satisfies national guidance..." then selected boundaries at the site which lacked that quality of permanence and did not comply with the guidance in paragraph 2.9 of PPG2. Alternatively, it was submitted that the Inspector's reasoning on this point was inadequate.
55. In my view, the Inspector's reasoning on this issue is clear. He in effect agreed with Mr Estall that, while the proposed boundaries were not as strong and well defined as the M62, they were nevertheless acceptable in terms of the guidance in PPG2, any lack of quality and clarity being overridden by the strategic imperative of including the site in the Green Belt. That was effectively the approach adopted by the Inspector in the last three sentences of paragraph 1.351 of his report. I do not therefore accept the subsidiary ground of challenge but the application succeeds on the principal ground and it follows that the UDP proposals map must be quashed insofar as it includes the claimant's part of the Peel Hall site (shown edged in black on the plan annexed to this judgment) within the Green Belt. That result may appear somewhat anomalous in respect of the remainder of the site, but it flows from the legislative scheme because the owners of that part of the site did not challenge the adoption of the UDP. Whether this decision will have any practical effect, bearing in mind the policy guidance in RPG13 and the Inspector's endorsement of the strategic policies in the UDP, would appear to be an open question but it is not a question for the court to attempt to answer in these proceedings.
56. For these reasons, the application is allowed.
57. MR JUSTICE SULLIVAN: Yes.
58. MR LOCKHART-MUMMERY: My Lord, for the sake of certainty, I am wondering whether it would be appropriate to attach to the order of the court a plan showing the extent of the land to which your Lordship has made reference in the judgment, that is to say the claimant's land within the Peel Hall area.
59. MR JUSTICE SULLIVAN: Yes.
60. MR LOCKHART-MUMMERY: My Lord, may I hand up a plan which the defendant has seen? **(Handed)**
61. MR JUSTICE SULLIVAN: Would that be sensible? I would have thought, Mr Crawford -- I can easily incorporate reference to the plan in the very early stages of my judgment. Where I say this application relates only to the claimant's land, I can just put

2. U.D.P. Addendum

ADDENDUM

In October 2007, as a result of a legal challenge by Satnam Millennium Ltd, the High Court ruled that the UDP Proposals Map should be quashed insofar as it shows the site known as Peel Hall Farm as included in the North Cheshire Green Belt. The status of the site will now be addressed in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.





The site is situated immediately to the south of the M62 motorway on the northern edge of Warrington and is located at the eastern end of Birch Avenue, which is immediately off Winwick Road, the A49, close to Junction 9 of the M62 motorway.

Description

The land comprises a reasonably level and semi-rectangular site laid down to permanent pasture at the present time. The site area is 20.5 acres (8.3 Ha) approx, as highlighted on the aerial photograph for identification purposes only.

Tenure

We are advised that the site is freehold to be subject to a Lease to United Utilities Plc in relation to a Water Pumping Station situated on the extreme northern boundary of the site, alongside the motorway. The lease is presently in negotiation. Full details will be available in the Tender Pack.

Planning

The site is covered by the Warrington Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and is located within the Warrington Greenbelt. The UDP states that the erection of new buildings will be inappropriate unless they are required for agricultural, forestry, or connected with outdoor sport.

However, interested parties should note that by way of a High Court decision on 26 October 2007, the adjoining land to the east (Peel Hall Farm) was removed from the Greenbelt designation within the UDP proposals map.

Further enquiries should be made to the Local Authority Planning Department.

Disposal Terms

The premises are offered for sale freehold to be subject to a lease to United Utilities Plc by formal tender, by 1pm on 27 February 2008.

Interested parties must register their interest and request Tender Packs from the sole agent's Warrington Office.

The contract will provide for clawback to be paid by the purchaser to the vendor at 50 per cent of any additional residential value created, less costs incurred by the purchaser, and will apply for a period of 25 years from the date of transfer of the freehold interest.

In addition the contract for sale will also include an overage clause whereby if the site is sold on to a third party within two years of the date of the transfer from English Partnerships, 75% of the difference between the price at which the site is sold on and the price paid to English Partnerships will be payable to English Partnerships.

Costs

The purchaser will be responsible for a contribution to the vendor's disposal costs amounting to 2 per cent of the purchase price.

VAT

It should be noted that VAT will be charged on the disposal price.

For further information



Dixon Webb
PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

Please contact sole agents:

Neil Morton/Stephen Gleave
E namorton@dixonwebb.com
E sgleave@dixonwebb.com

Dixon Webb
Palmyra Square Chambers
15 Springfield Street
Warrington
WA1 1BJ
T 01925 577577

January 2008

DISCLAIMER

THESE PARTICULARS ARE BELIEVED TO BE CORRECT BUT THEIR ACCURACY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED.

The property is offered subject to the owner's confirmation, to a contract and to not being sold elsewhere in the meantime Messrs DIXON-WEBB for themselves and for the vendors or lessors of the property whose agents they are give notice that:

1 the particulars are set out as general outline only for the guidance of intending purchasers or lessees, and do not constitute, nor constitute part of, an offer or contract;
2 all descriptions, dimensions, references to conditions and necessary permissions for use and occupation, and other details are given without responsibility and any intending purchasers or tenants, should not rely on them as statements or representations of fact but must satisfy themselves by inspection or otherwise as to the correctness of each of them.

3 no person in the employment of Messrs DIXON-WEBB has any authority to make or give any representation or warranty whatever in relation to this property.
Dixon Webb is a trading name of Dixon Webb LLP which is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales under Partnership Number: OC301888 and having a registered office address of Colonial Chambers, Temple Street, Liverpool L2 5RH.



English Partnerships
The regeneration agency

3. Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 Consultation Responses

Type	Number	ID	Representation Summary	Officer Comments - Council Response	Council Proposed Action	Legally Compliant - Do you consider the Core Strategy is Legally Compliant?	Sound - Do you consider the Core Strategy is Sound?	unsound - If you consider the Core Strategy is unsound, is it because it is not:	unsound - The Council presumes that the respondent considers that the Core Strategy is unsound, because it is not:
document		<u>SCS7</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required		Yes		
document		<u>SCS8</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required		Yes		
document		<u>SCS68</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
document		<u>SCS82</u>	There are significant traffic and parking issues in the Birchwood Area that need addressing. Areas should be protected from traveller encampments. Allotment provision is an issue in the area.	The issues raised are acknowledged. Whilst the LPCS does not specifically address these issues, it provides the strategic framework to ensure that they are considered moving forward. The Council's Local Transport Plan is also relevant to traffic issues in the borough. Parking and transport issues will be considered through Policy MP7. The LPCS is not capable of protecting sites from traveller encampments, but it, and the subsequent Local Plan referred to by Policy SN3 will work to provide appropriate permanent and transit accommodation for Travellers, which should ensure that occurrences of unauthorised encampments are minimised. The infrastructure section does consider social infrastructure such as allotments and Policy SN7 will help to protect existing allotments as well as requiring additional provision in line with Council standards.	No Change Considered Necessary				Justified
document		<u>SCS105</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
document		<u>SCS130</u>	A new strategic policy should be added after policy CS9 to identify the strategic area of search at Culcheth North East to meet housing needs and deliver the sustainable growth of the village.	The suggested site is within the established Green Belt. No exceptional circumstances to justify a review of the Green Belt have been stated, and the Local Plan provides for the borough's development needs elsewhere. The primary focus for development in the borough is the town of Warrington and this has always been the case in the history of development planning in the borough. This approach is set out in Policy CS2 and is	No Change Considered Necessary	No	No	Positively Prepared Justified Effective Consistent with National Policy	

(10)

Type	Number	ID	Representation Summary	Officer Comments - Council Response	Council Proposed Action	Legally Compliant - Do you consider the Core Strategy is: Legally Compliant?	Sound - Do you consider the Core Strategy is: Sound?	unsound - If you consider the Core Strategy is unsound, is it because it is not:	unsound - The Council presumes that the respondent considers that the Core Strategy is unsound, because it is not:
section	4	<u>SCS53</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
section	4	<u>SCS71</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
section	4	<u>SCS123</u>	The Strategic Vision should be amended to reflect the need for much more housing including more greenfield sites and a review of Green Belt boundaries to release sustainable sites for housing growth.	These amendments would each make the vision incompatible with Approved RSS. The planned housing provision represents a significant increase and is considered to be sound and robust. It can be delivered within the 2008 established green belt boundaries. In the absence of exceptional circumstances, the alteration of the Green Belt to accommodate more housing would undermine the permanence of the Green Belt, and community confidence in the planning system.	No Change Considered Necessary	No	No	Positively Prepared Justified Effective Consistent with National Policy	
section	4	<u>SCS136</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
section	4	<u>SCS154</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required		Yes		
section	4	<u>SCS223</u>	Generally support the vision, but would support original option 1 rather than option 3.	Noted.	Support and / or No Change Required				Justified
section	5	<u>SCS67</u>	The BGS guidance states that Where the largest part of the safeguarding process is to be set out in a subsequent DPD, the broad extent of the mineral resources should be shown on the Key Diagram. (para 5.1.5). This has not been done making the plan UNSOUND	The recognition of the role of a Core Strategy as written in the BGS guidance is very much linked to county level planning (this is clearly visible through the 7 step process of Identifying MSAs, para 1.3.3 of the BGS guidance), and the guidance does not recognise the complex levels of planning which must be addressed by a Unitary Authority. Furthermore, paragraph 1.5.1 clearly identifies the status of the document as Independent advice that is intended to support and facilitate implementation of the Government's overarching planning policy for all minerals...	No Change Considered Necessary	Yes	No	Consistent with National Policy	

✱
CP

Type	Number	ID	Representation Summary	Officer Comments - Council Response	Council Proposed Action	Legally Compliant - Do you consider the Core Strategy is Legally Compliant?	Sound - Do you consider the Core Strategy is Sound?	Unsound - If you consider the Core Strategy is unsound, is it because it is not:	Unsound - The Council presumes that the respondent considers that the Core Strategy is unsound, because it is not:
section		<u>SCS78</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
section		<u>SCS104</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
section		<u>SCS122</u>	Objective W1 should be amended to make provision for at least 1100 new homes per annum and 17,600 homes over a period of 2011-2027. Objective W2 should be amended to make provision for the review of the Green Belt in sustainable locations to make provision for the required level of housing growth.	These amendments would each make the objective incompatible with Approved RSS. The justification for the plan period is set out in the housing background paper. The planned housing provision represents a significant increase and is considered to be sound and robust. It can be delivered within the 2008 established green belt boundaries, the alteration of which to accommodate more housing in the absence of exceptional circumstances would undermine the permanence of the Green Belt and community confidence in the planning system. This level of housing would lead to a significant oversupply in the Mid-Mersey sub-regional housing market, would undermine regeneration within and beyond the borough, would raise issues of deliverability. ✖	No Change Considered Necessary	No	No	Positively Prepared Justified Effective Consistent with National Policy	
section		<u>SCS132</u>	Support	N/A	Support and / or No Change Required	Yes	Yes		
section		<u>SCS162</u>	Objective W2 should be amended to read: "To maintain the permanence of the Green Belt and the character of the countryside in the borough and protect them from inappropriate development.	Proposed amendment would ensure consistency with Policy CS1 and is therefore welcomed.	Suggest Further Main Modification		Yes, with minor changes		Consistent with National Policy
section		<u>SCS163</u>	Objective W4 & Policy CS2 should be strengthened to reflect the NPPF core planning principles.	It is considered that Objective W4 essentially says the same thing as the suggested amendment, and is therefore already deemed to be in accordance with the NPPF. "Where possible" should not be deleted from the final bullet of Policy CS2 because it may not always be possible to access rail and / or the Ship Canal.	No Change Considered Necessary		Yes, with minor changes		Consistent with National Policy
section		<u>SCS224</u>	Support. Recognition should be given to windfall sites in the housing figures.	Noted. The clarification statements produced as a result of the Exploratory Meeting now suggest a modification which recognises and	No Change Considered Necessary				Justified

eb

4. Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 – Hearing Statements

**Warrington Borough Council
Local Plan Core Strategy**

Hearing Statement WBC-A

Warrington Borough Council Response

Matter 1 (Statement 1 of 10)

Issues:

- 1.1 Legal Requirements**
- 1.2 Duty to Co-operate**
- 1.4 Spatial Strategy**
- 1.16 Green Belt**
- 1.17 Strategic Green Links**

Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA1 2NH

Tel:01925 442795

March 2013

www.warrington.gov.uk/localplans
ldf@warrington.gov.uk

region that a departure from the existing RSS [RP011] is required or will take place.

45. There has been some suggestion through the consultation process that Warrington is out of step with other local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside who are reviewing their Green Belts. The Council refutes this as the reviews referred to are anticipated in RSS (Policy RDF4) but clearly not in Warrington 'before 2021'. Indeed the Council's approach to Green Belt is welcomed by neighbouring authorities.

46. There is no basis for a review of the Green Belt in Warrington arising from cross-boundary considerations.

- **More houses are needed to meet aspirations for economic growth**

47. The current UDP and the RSS [RP011] housing requirement is less than the level now planned for in the Plan, and was significantly less than levels achieved before the end of the New Town period. Economic growth has been maintained across a wide range of levels of housing development. There is no reason to suggest that this will not resume when the economy emerges from recession.

48. The issue is more fully addressed in relation to the balance between employment land supply and housing provision, addressed by the Council in their response to the Inspector's Issues 1.18, under Matter 1.

- **A Review is necessary to identify 'Safeguarded Land'**

49. The Council's evidence (Issue 1.8 and Issue 2.2) demonstrates that, at the planned levels of development for housing and employment growth, the Green Belt boundary is capable of enduring beyond the plan period and has identified broad locations where longer term needs will continue to be met.

5. Local Plan Core Strategy Hearing Statements 2013

Report to Warrington Borough Council

by **Mike Fox**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Date 12 May 2014

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004 (AS AMENDED)

SECTION 20

REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO WARRINGTON

LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY

Document submitted for examination on 19 September 2012

Examination hearings held between 4 -7 June, 11 June 2013 and 5 March 2014

File Ref: PINS/M0655/4291

within the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area (HMA), comprising Warrington and its neighbouring authorities of Halton and St Helens. This grouping, which stems from the NWRSS, has been endorsed at various levels over the last few years and is addressed in more detail under Issue 2 below.

43. Policy CS2 aims to deliver a minimum of 10,500 new homes between 2006 and 2027, with 80% of all new homes to be developed on previously developed land (PDL) and 60% to be developed within Inner Warrington. These aims are supported by the evidence base in the Council's latest version of the *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)*²⁹. The SHLAA provides detailed site locations within each phase of the Plan and trajectories of expected housing delivery, both in total and on PDL over the plan period.
44. Policy CS2 also supports economic growth by providing 277 ha of employment land over the plan period. Its relatively large employment land provision reflects Warrington's role as an economically vibrant centre within its sub-region.

Transport

45. Policy CS3 sets out the strategic transport parameters for Warrington, to support its role as a regional transport gateway.

Green Belt

46. Policy CS4 affirms the Council's commitment to the long term protection of the Green Belt, which washes over much of the Borough and is contiguous with the Green Belt in Merseyside, Greater Manchester and North Cheshire. This strategy is in accordance with *the Framework*, which states (paragraph 79) that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence, and that once established, Green belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances (paragraph 83).
47. There are no proposals to review the Green Belt during the plan period, which I consider to be sound for reasons that I explore more fully further on in my report.

Strategic overview

48. Taking all these matters into consideration, I conclude that the spatial strategy of the Plan is the most appropriate for Warrington. It is therefore justified and accords with national policy.

Issue 2 – Is the Plan's approach to the Borough's housing provision, both in terms of its requirement, and its distribution and delivery, sound? Are the needs for particular types of housing addressed satisfactorily, including affordable housing?

49. The Plan's approach to both its housing requirement and its housing provision and delivery was challenged on a number of grounds, both in written

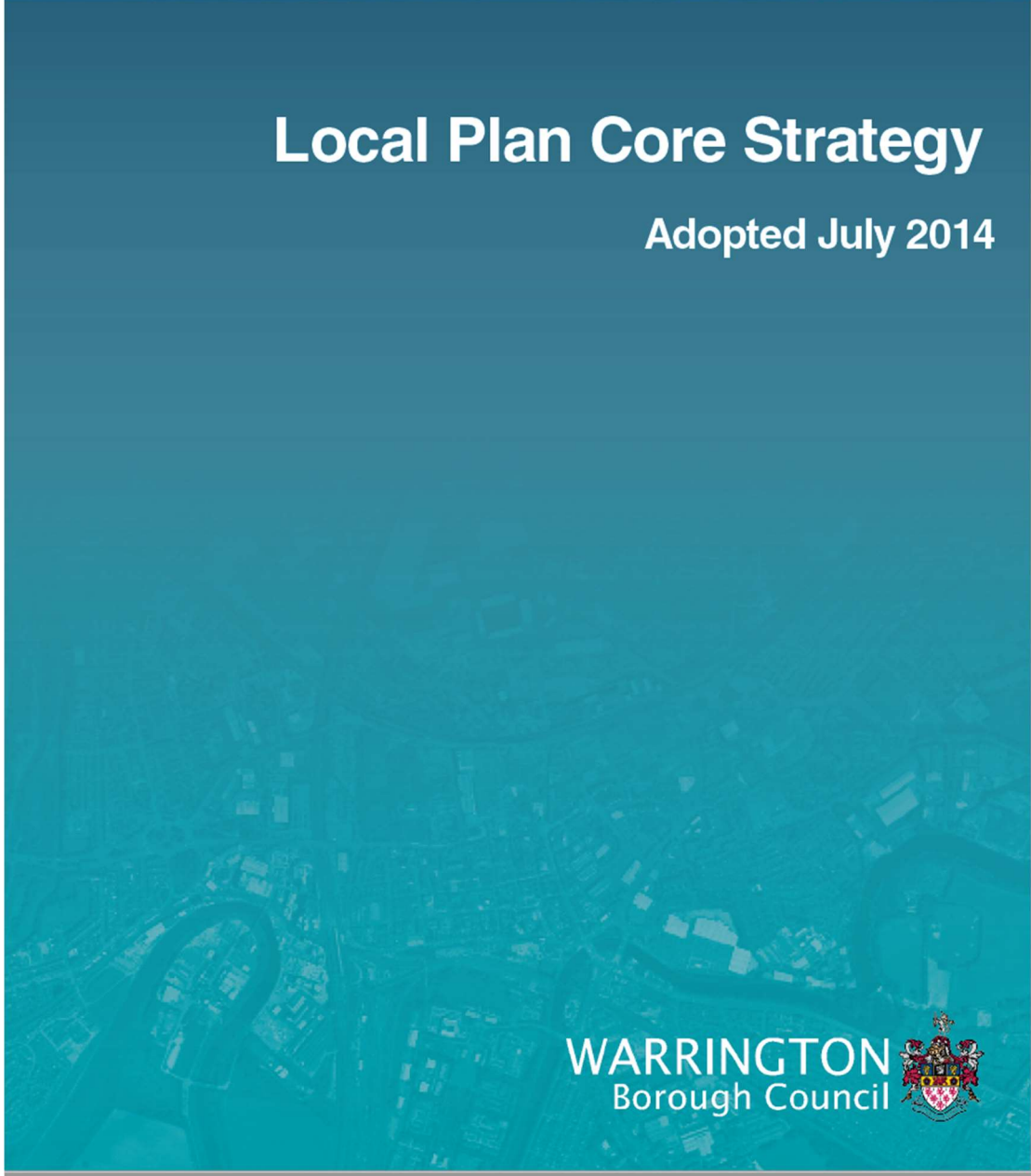
²⁹ Warrington Borough Council: *Draft 2012 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)*; February 2013 [Examination Document TPS074].

6. Warrington Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy



Local Plan Core Strategy

Adopted July 2014



WARRINGTON
Borough Council



Green Belt

6.20 The integrity of the Green Belt, which was established within the borough for the first time in 2006, is to be preserved across the entirety of the plan period and beyond. National policy makes clear that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are therefore their openness and their permanence.