

Warrington Borough Council
Green Belt Assessment
Garden Suburb Options

Final for Issue | 23 April 2021

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The Council paused progress on the Local Plan towards the end of 2020 due to the Government issuing the consultation on the Planning White Paper (August 2020) and due to further amendments to the standard method for calculating housing need announced in December 2020.

In light of the revised standard method, the Council has been reviewing the draft Local Plan, including the spatial strategy and the site allocations, factoring in the latest urban capacity figures and any changes in the availability of sites.

As part of this review the Council is considering options for a smaller Garden Suburb. The Council has identified a number of housing and employment options for a revised Garden Suburb based on the contribution to Green Belt purposes of the submitted sites within this area and based on land ownership within the area. This assessment provides a review of Green Belt considerations for each option.

1.2 Structure of Report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a review of the existing contribution to Green Belt purposes for each of the housing options and the employment option.
- Section 3 considers the potential implications of releasing the housing options (including any cumulative impacts of the employment option) in terms of any harm to the function and integrity of the Green Belt and the resultant Green Belt boundary.

1.3 The Options

The four options for housing development are shown in Figure 1-4 below. Figure 5 shows the option for employment development.

Figure 1. Garden Suburb Housing Option 1

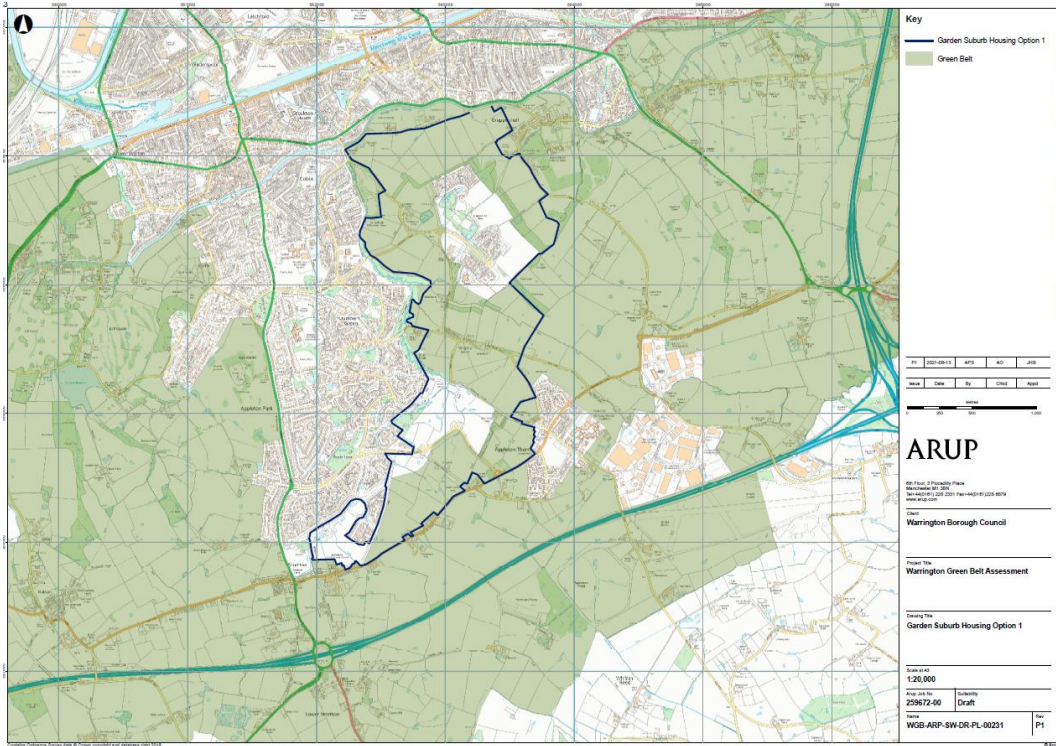


Figure 2. Garden Suburb Housing Option 2

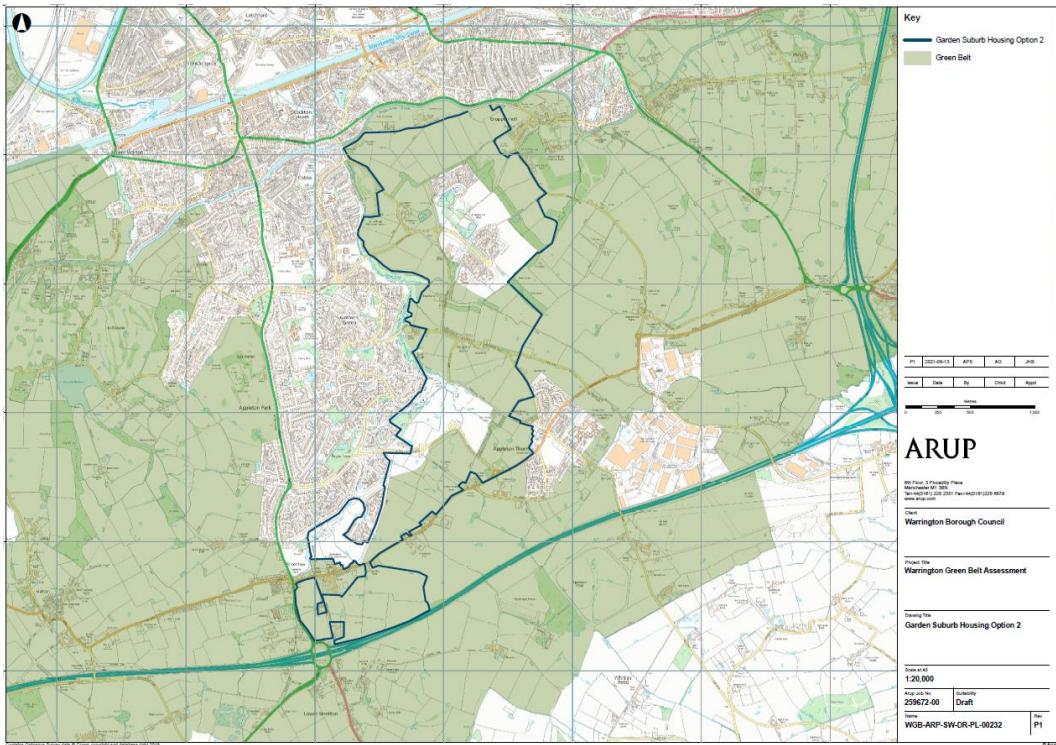


Figure 3. Garden Suburb Housing Option 3

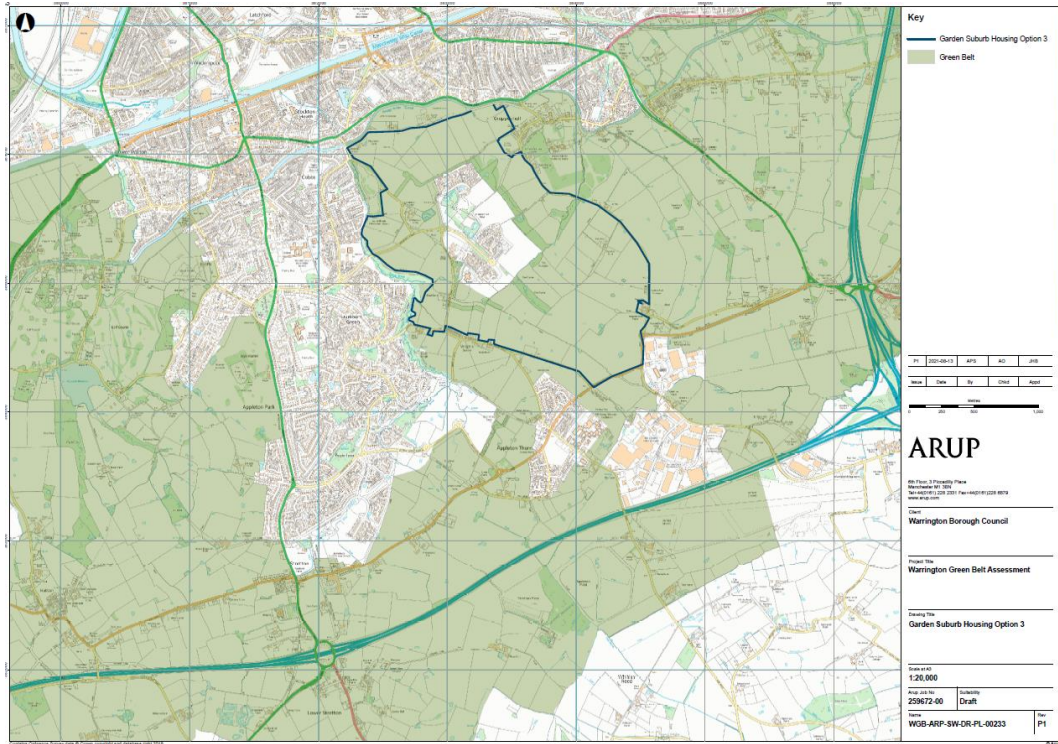


Figure 4. Garden Suburb Housing Option 4

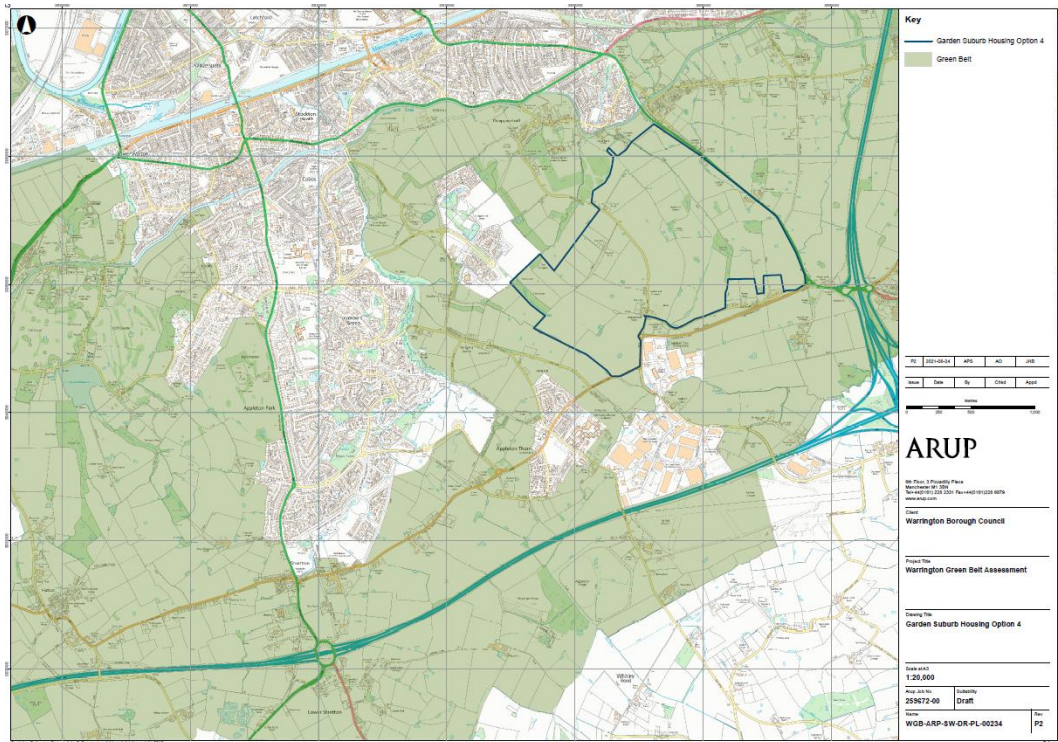
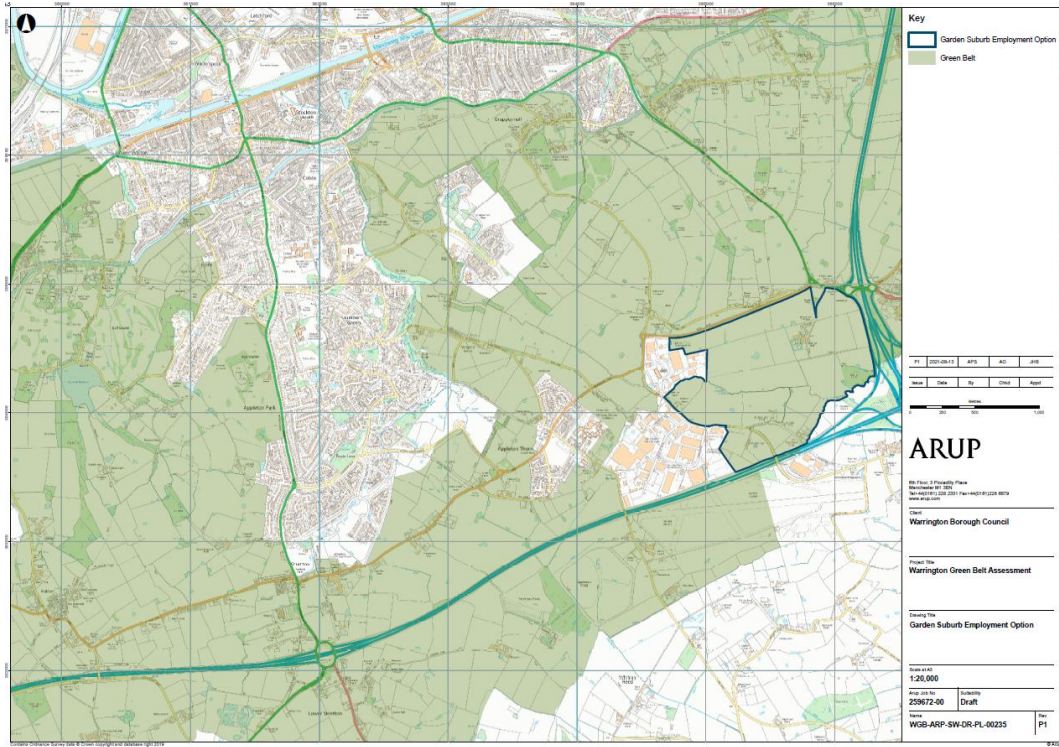


Figure 5. Garden Suburb Employment Option



2 Existing Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

2.1 Overview

The options are comprised of numerous submitted sites (SHLAA, Regulation 18 Part 1 and 2, and Regulation 19). Green Belt assessments of these sites have been undertaken at various stages of the emerging Local Plan process after the publication of the original Green Belt Assessment in October 2016. All of the Green Belt site assessments were undertaken using the same method as per the original Green Belt Assessment. A site visit of each site was undertaken. The assessments are detailed in the Green Belt Assessment Additional Site Assessment Report (July 2017) and the subsequent Green Belt site assessments for the remaining Call for Sites and SHLAA sites (July 2017, May 2018, and November 2018). It should be noted that the Council will be combining all of the previous assessment work into a Green Belt Site Assessments Collated Report in order to provide a single point of reference.

The aim of the Green Belt Assessment was to provide the Council with an objective, evidence-based and independent assessment of how each site contributed to the five purposes of Green Belt set out in national policy. The Assessment did not consider whether ‘exceptional circumstances’ exist or make any recommendations relating to the alteration or review of Green Belt boundaries.

The submitted sites which make up each option have been identified below. Some sites have multiple reference numbers due to them having been resubmitted at different ‘Call for Site’ stages. For most of the sites, the entire site is included within the option however where this is not the case it has been noted in the ‘Site Ref’ column. For each option, the tables below set out the site reference, site name, any alternative references, the Green Belt overall assessment contribution, and at what stage the site was assessed. Chloropleth maps for each option are also provided below.

2.2 Housing Option 1

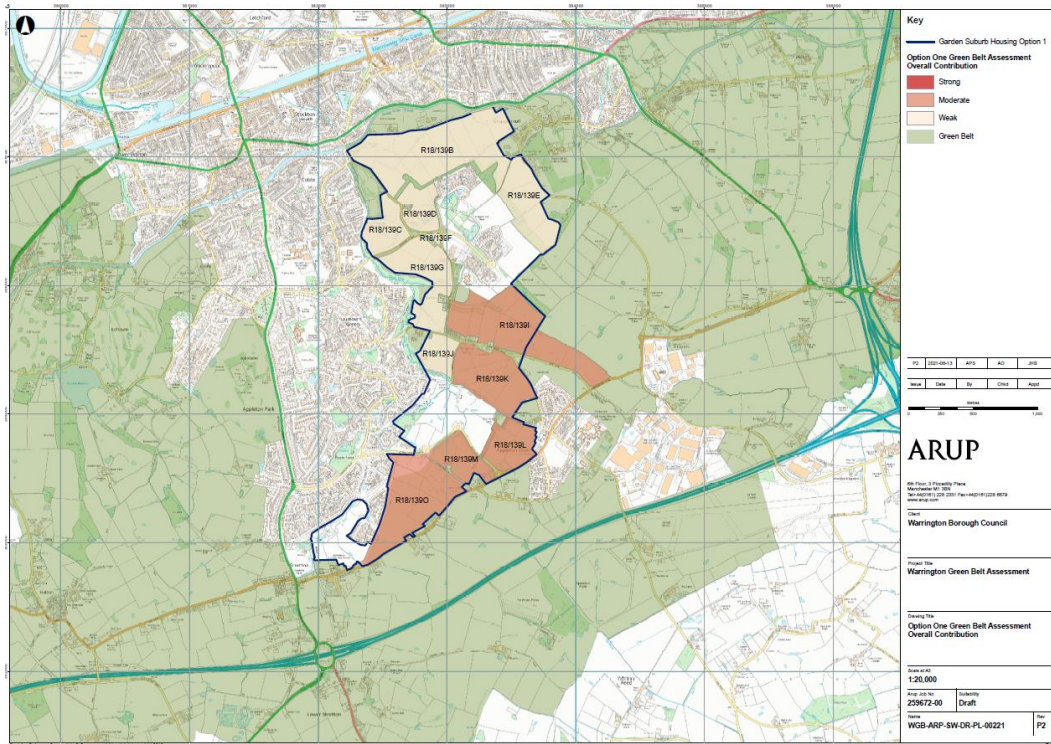
This option is comprised of weak and moderate performing sites only. The weak sites are located to the north and west of the option given that these are enclosed by the urban area and Grappenhall Heys and they are predominately contained by durable boundaries. The sites to the south of this option made a moderate contribution to the Green Belt with some sites having less durable boundaries in parts and a strong degree of openness.

Table 1 below provides a full list of the sites. These are illustrated on Figure 6 below.

Table 1. List of sites which comprise Housing Option 1

Site Ref	Site Name	Alternative SHLAA Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Part 2 Ref	Green Belt Assessment Overall Contribution	Green Belt Assessment Stage
R18/139B	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139C	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139D	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	October 2016 - Site is same as parcel GH8 so not reassessed
R18/139E	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139F	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139G	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139I (western part of site only)	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Moderate	July 2017
R18/139J	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139K	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Moderate	July 2017
R18/139L	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Moderate	October 2016 - Site is same as parcel AT16 so not reassessed
R18/139M	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Moderate	October 2016 - Site is same as parcel WR44 so not reassessed
R18/139O	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Moderate	October 2016 - Site is same as parcel WR45 so not reassessed

Figure 6. Sites within Housing Option 1



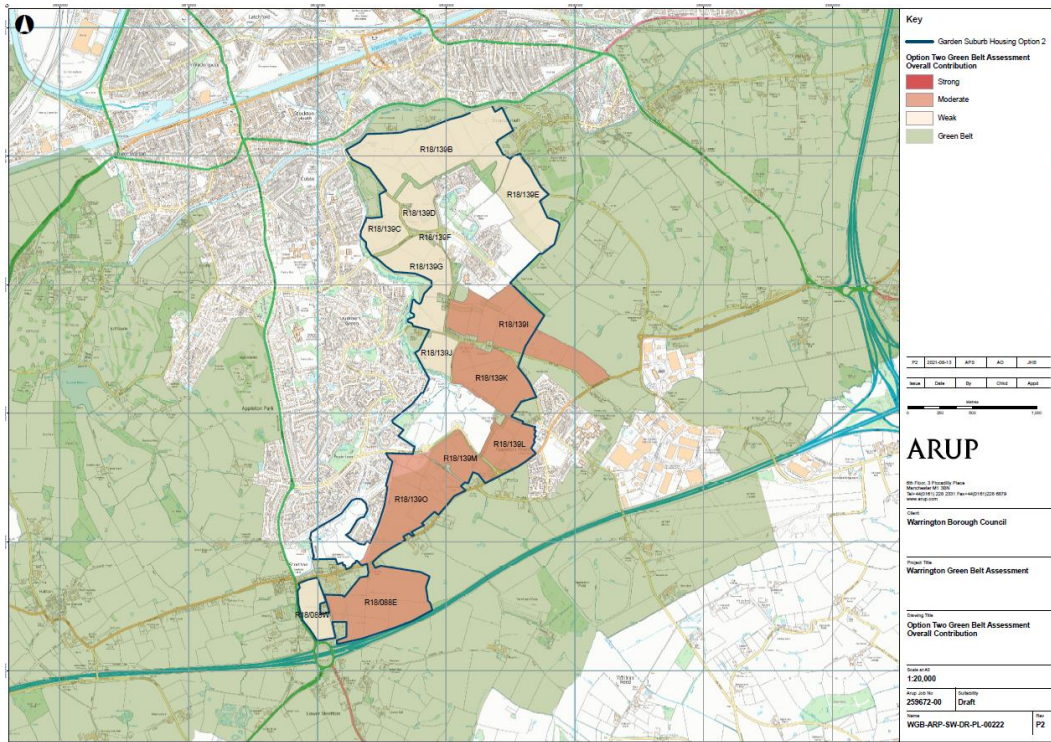
2.3 Housing Option 2

Option 2 includes exactly the same sites as Option 1 however it extends slightly further south therefore including one additional site – R18/088. This additional site is shown in Table 2 below. As per Option 1, this option is comprised of weak and moderate performing sites only. All of the sites which comprise Option 2 are illustrated on Figure 7 below.

Table 2. Additional Site in Housing Option 2

Site Ref	Site Name	Alternative SHLAA Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Part 2 Ref	Green Belt Assessment Overall Contribution	Green Belt Assessment Stage
R18/088	Land adjacent to M56 (Jtn 10), Sretton	2902		R18/P2/013	East site - Moderate	July 2017
					West site - Weak	

Figure 7. Sites within Housing Option 2



2.4 Housing Option 3

As per Option 1 and 2, this option is comprised of weak and moderate performing sites only. The weak sites are located to the north and west of the option given that these are enclosed by the urban area and Grappenhall Heys. Compared to Option 1 and 2, this option extends east instead of south. The sites to the east made a moderate contribution to the Green Belt given they have a strong degree of openness and a mix of durable and less durable boundaries.

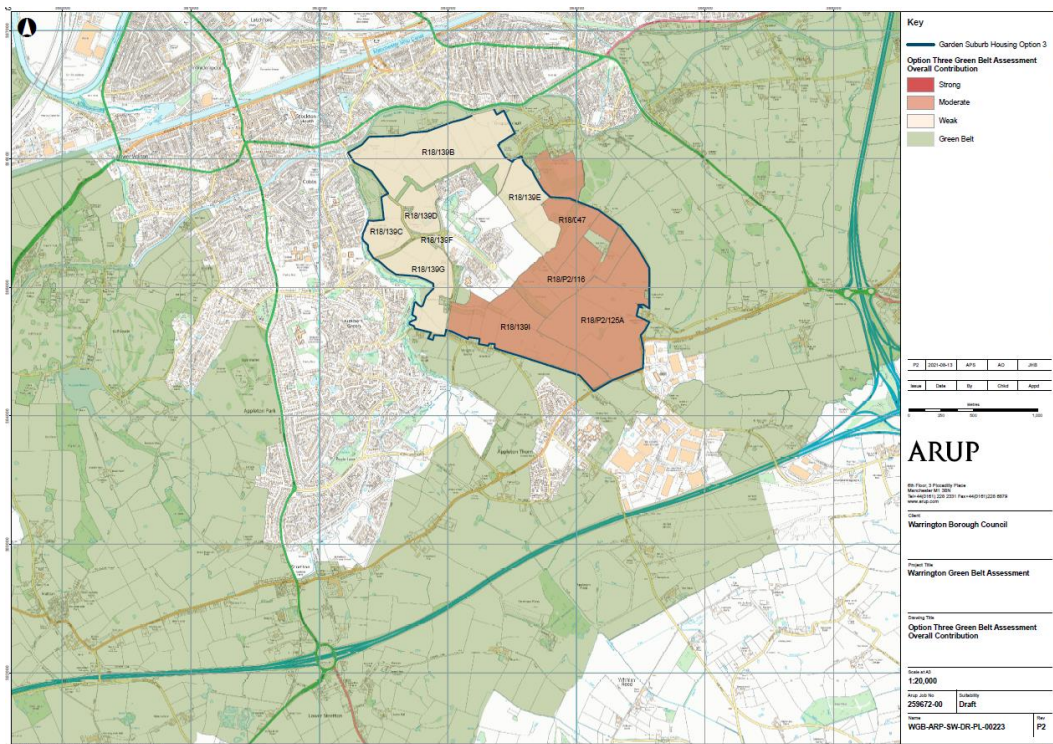
Table 3 below provides a full list of the sites. Site R18/142 and R18/146 are also located within this option however they fall within the larger sites of R18/P2/125A and R18/P2/116 respectively and therefore have not been included in the table below. The sites are illustrated on Figure 8 below.

Table 3. List of sites which comprise Housing Option 3

Site Ref	Site Name	Alternative SHLAA Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Part 2 Ref	Green Belt Assessment Overall Contribution	Green Belt Assessment Stage
R18/047 (southern part of site only)	Land at Carr House Farm, Broad Lane	3129		R18/P2/113	Moderate	July 2017
R18/139B	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139C	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017

R18/139D	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	October 2016 - Site is same as parcel GH8 so not reassessed
R18/139E	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139F	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139G	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Weak	July 2017
R18/139I	Land to SE of Warrington	3168		R18/P2/107	Moderate	July 2017
R18/P2/116	Land adj to Yew Tree Farm, Grappenhall				Moderate	May 2018
R18/P2/125A	Land west of Broad Lane				Moderate	May 2018

Figure 8. Sites within Housing Option 3



2.5 Housing Option 4

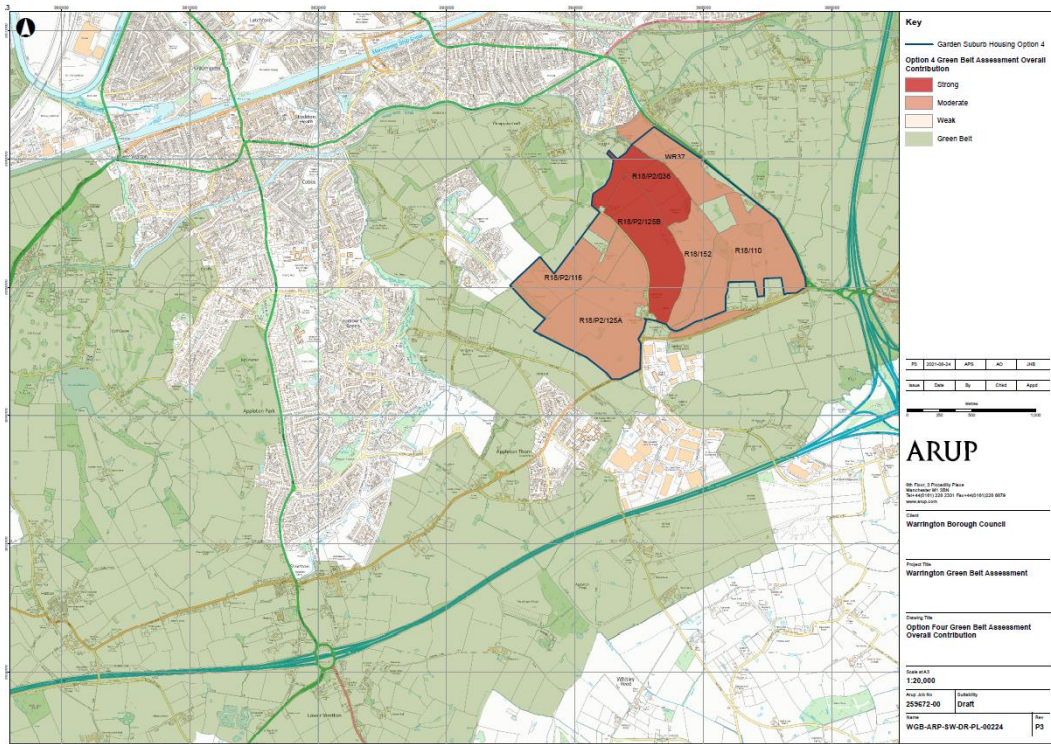
This option is comprised of moderate and strong performing sites. The two strong sites are located in the middle of this option whilst the moderate sites are located to the east and west. The two strong sites have no connection to a settlement and are completely connected to the countryside with a strong degree of openness and a mix of durable and less durable boundaries. The parcel of land to the north east of the option along Knutsford Road was not assessed as a submitted site however was previously assessed as a parcel in the Green Belt Assessment (October 2016).

Table 4 below provides a full list of the sites. As per Option 3, site R18/142 and R18/146 are also located within this option however they fall within the larger sites of R18/P2/125A and R18/P2/116 respectively and therefore have not been included in the table below. The sites are illustrated on Figure 9 below.

Table 4. List of sites which comprise Housing Option 4

Site Ref	Site Name	Alternative SHLAA Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Part 2 Ref	Green Belt Assessment Overall Contribution	Green Belt Assessment Stage
Parcel WR37 (Green Belt Assessment 2016) (majority of site, but not all)	N/A				Moderate	October 2016
R18/110	Land north of Grappenhall Lane	2903			Moderate	July 2017
R18/152	North side of Cartridge Lane, Grappenhall			R18/P2/087	Moderate	July 2017
R18/P2/036	Land at White House Farm, Broad Lane			R18/P2/059 R18/P2/119	Strong	May 2018
R18/P2/116	Land adj to Yew Tree Farm, Grappenhall				Moderate	May 2018
R18/P2/125A	Land west of Broad Lane				Moderate	May 2018
R18/P2/125B	Land east of Broad Lane				Strong	May 2018

Figure 9. Sites within Housing Option 4



2.6 Employment Option

This option is comprised of strong, moderate and weak performing sites. The strong sites are located to the north of Barleycastle Lane. These were assessed as being strong due to their less durable boundaries with the countryside and strong degree of openness. The weak sites are located to the south of Barleycastle Lane and are enclosed by the M56 to the south. Site R18/106 is contained by durable boundaries and was therefore assessed as moderate despite supporting a strong degree of openness.

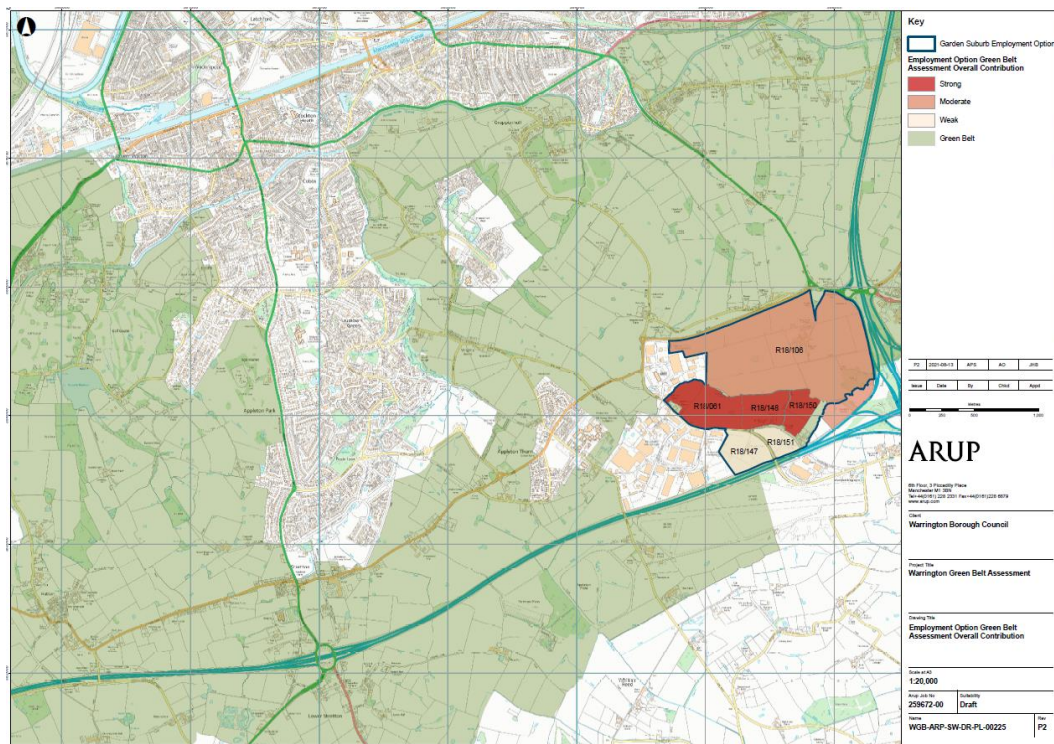
Table 5 below provides a full list of the sites. Site R18/043 is also located within this option however it falls within the larger site of R18/147 and therefore has not been included in the table below. The sites are illustrated on Figure 10 below.

Table 5. List of sites which comprise the employment option

Site Ref	Site Name	Alternative SHLAA Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Part 2 Ref	Green Belt Assessment Overall Contribution	Green Belt Assessment Stage
R18/061	Land N of Barleycastle Lane, Appleton	3353		R18/P2/100	Strong	July 2017
R18/106	Land at Bradley Hall Farm, Cliff Lane	3369		R18/P2/145	Moderate	July 2017
R18/147	Land South of Barleycastle				Weak	October 2016 - Site

	Lane/North of M56					is same as parcel AT10 so not reassessed
R18/148	Land N of Barleycastle Lane, Appleton Thorn	3352		R18/P2/099	Strong	July 2017
R18/150	Land off Barleycastle Lane (Plot 1), Appleton Thorn	3351		R18/P2/098	Strong	July 2017
R18/151	Land off Barleycastle Lane (Plot 2), Appleton Thorn	3350		R18/P2/097	Weak	July 2017

Figure 10. Sites within the Employment Option



An alternative includes extending the employment option further north beyond Grappenhall Lane and Cliff Lane. Between Broad Lane and Knutsford Road, the site would extend north up to the line of Barry’s Covert, and between Knutsford Road and the M6, it would extend up to the next field boundary. This would incorporate parts of the sites listed in Table 6 below. These sites are larger than the proposed extension to this option (particularly R18/P2/125B). The extended employment option would overlap with part of Housing Option 4 so it would not be feasible to have alongside this option. It would connect with Housing Option 3 along its eastern boundary.

Table 6. List of sites which comprise the extension to the Employment Option

Site Ref	Site Name	Alternative SHLAA Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Ref	Alternative Reg 18 Part 2 Ref	Green Belt Assessment Overall Contribution	Green Belt Assessment Stage
R18/110 (majority of site)	Land north of Grappenhall Lane	2903			Moderate	July 2017
R18/152 (majority of site)	North side of Cartridge Lane, Grappenhall			R18/P2/087	Moderate	July 2017
R18/P2/125B (southern section only)	Land east of Broad Lane				Strong	May 2018
R18/P2/125C (majority of site)	Land north of Cliff Lane				Moderate	May 2018

2.7 Other Considerations

The following sites are not within Housing Options 1, 2 and 3 however would need to be considered for release in order to avoid islanded pockets of Green Belt remaining: R18/139A and R18/P2/012. Site R18/035J would also need to be considered for Option 1 and 2.

2.8 Conclusion

Based on the submitted sites' contribution to Green Belt purposes, Housing Option 1, 2 and 3 should be considered in the first instance (in purely Green Belt terms) given that they comprise lower performing Green Belt sites (weak and moderate only). This does not mean that Housing Option 4 should not be considered however a greater exceptional circumstances case will need to be made.

In relation to the Employment Option, this comprised weak, moderate and strong performing sites and therefore a greater exceptional circumstances case will need to be made. The sites within the extension to the Employment Option are moderate and strong performing sites given that it extends the option into the open area of countryside to the north of Grappenhall Lane and Cliff Lane

3 Implications of Green Belt Release

3.1 Overview

This section considers the potential implications of releasing the options from the Green Belt (in terms of any harm to the function and integrity of the Green Belt) and the resultant Green Belt boundary. There is no recognised approach as to how this should be assessed, and a review of national policy and good practice was undertaken in order to develop the methodology.

The good practice review demonstrated that most authorities simply applied a brief commentary referencing Green Belt purposes. Beyond the consideration of a site's existing contribution to Green Belt purposes, most of the local authorities considered the impact of removing the site on Green Belt function and purposes, alongside any potential cumulative impacts. Furthermore, the resultant Green Belt boundary and whether this would be readily recognisable and likely to be permanent was also a key consideration.

3.2 Assessment Criteria

Based on this, Table 7 below therefore sets out the qualitative criteria which will be used in the assessment.

The definitions relating to the Green Belt purposes set out in the Green Belt Assessment (October 2016) have been applied in this assessment. In particular, this relates to the 'large built up area' for Purpose 1 being defined as the Warrington urban area only (see p27 of the 2016 Assessment). The 'neighbouring towns' for Purpose 2 were defined as the Warrington urban area, Culcheth, Lymm, St Helens, Newton-le-Willows, Runcorn, Goldborne, Cadishead, Partington and Widnes (see p29). 'Historic town' for Purpose 4 was defined as Lymm, Warrington, Widnes and Runcorn (see p35). It is considered important to retain the same definitions in this assessment in order to ensure consistency and robustness. It should be noted that these definitions are for Green Belt assessment purposes only.

Table 7. Qualitative assessment criteria to consider Green Belt implications

Key Question to Consider	How will this be assessed?
What is the site's existing contribution to Green Belt purposes?	See findings from Section 2 above – Strong / Moderate / Weak / No Contribution.
What is the impact on Green Belt function and purposes of removing the site from the Green Belt?	This assessment will draw on the definitions and approach set out in the original Green Belt Assessment (October 2016) however it will consider <i>how development of the site would impact</i> upon the purposes instead of <i>how the site in its existing state contributes</i> to the purposes:

	<p>Purpose 1 – would development of the site represent unrestricted sprawl?</p> <p>Purpose 2 – would development of the site result in the merging of neighbouring towns¹ or increase the potential for merging?</p> <p>Purpose 3 – would development of the site represent an encroachment into the countryside?</p> <p>Purpose 4 – would development of the site impact upon the setting or character of a historic town²?</p> <p>As Purpose 5 relates to the role of the Green Belt in encouraging urban regeneration, it will therefore not be assessed.</p>
Are there any cumulative impacts (due to release of adjacent sites)?	<p>This will only be relevant if a number of sites in the same area are proposed allocations.</p> <p>The cumulative impacts should apply the same considerations as above taking all sites together.</p>
Would a new Green Belt boundary be defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?	Description of the resultant Green Belt boundary and whether it is recognisable and permanent.
Conclusion	<p>A summary will be provided which will conclude on the Green Belt impact as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of the site (or sites, if cumulative) will harm Green Belt function and purposes. • Removal of the site will not harm Green Belt function and purposes.

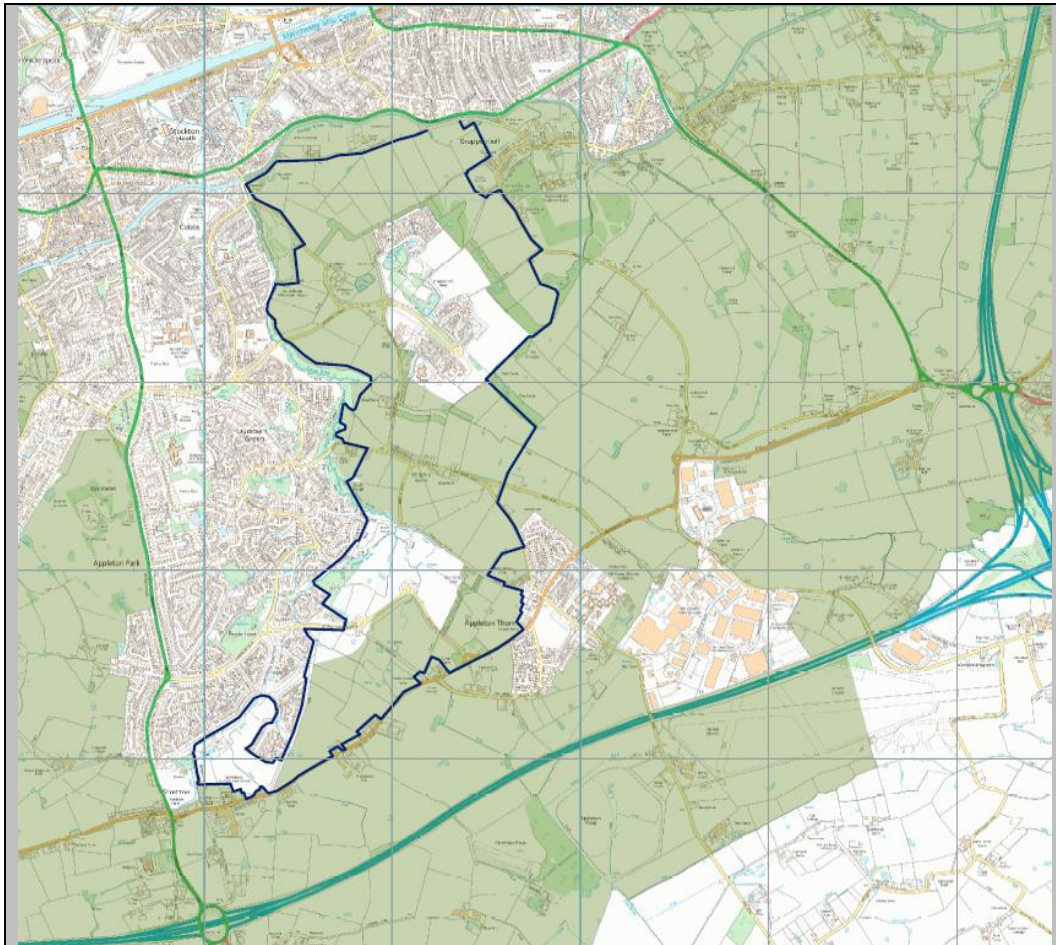
Each housing option has been assessed on its own with the cumulative impact of releasing the employment option (or the extended version) alongside it also considered. The extension to the employment option is not relevant for housing option 4 however it has been considered alongside the other housing options. The boundary of the options has been used to undertake this assessment rather than the individual submitted sites considered in Section 2 above.

This assessment is based on the assumption that the option is released from the Green Belt and therefore potentially developed in its entirety. It is acknowledged that the layout and design of development could be used to reduce the potential harm to the Green Belt.

¹ The 'neighbouring towns' are defined in the original Green Belt Assessment (October 2016) at page 29.

² The 'historic towns' are defined in the original Green Belt Assessment (October 2016) at page 35.

3.3 Housing Option 1

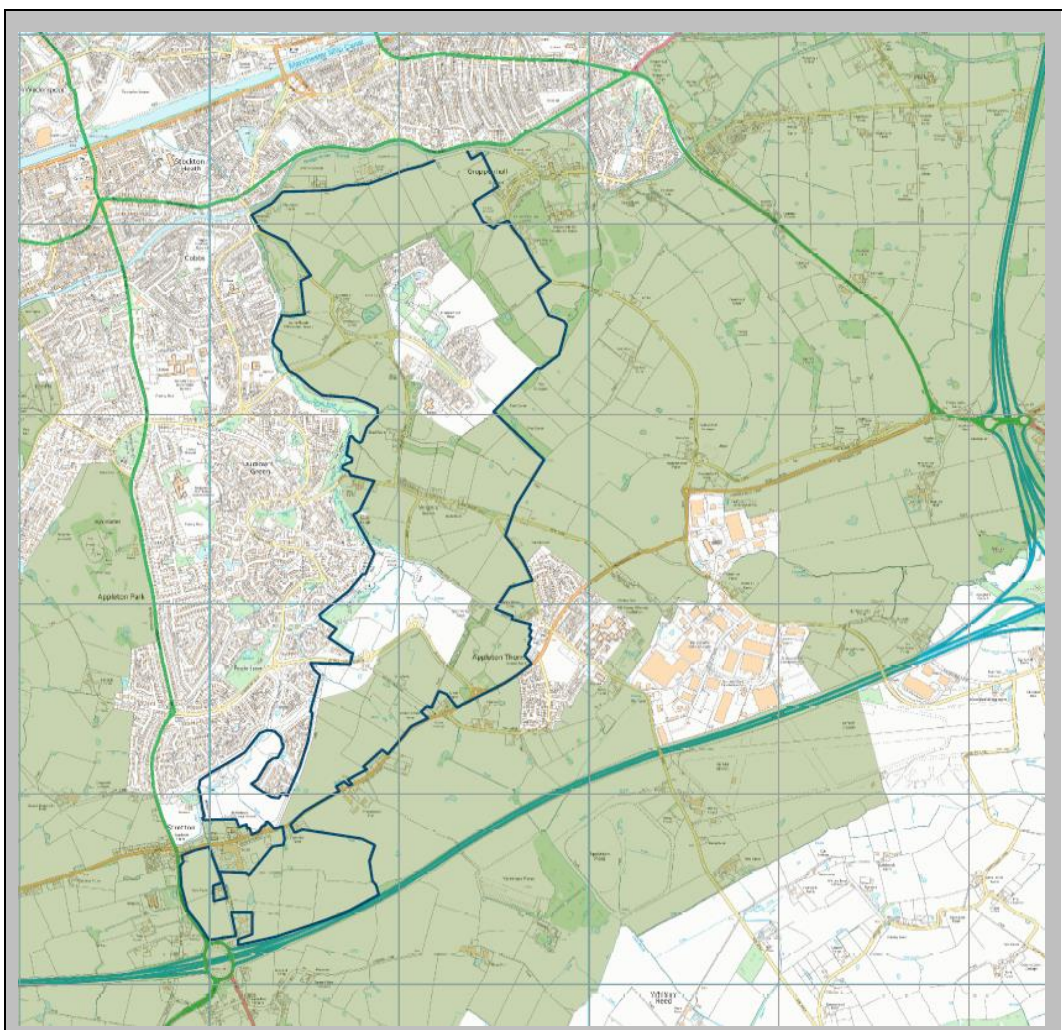


Key Question to Consider	Assessment
<p>What is the site’s existing contribution to Green Belt purposes?</p>	<p>As set out in Section 2.2 above, this option is comprised of weak and moderate performing sites only.</p>
<p>What is the impact on Green Belt function and purposes of removing the site from the Green Belt?</p>	<p>Purpose 1 – Whilst entailing growth of the Warrington urban area, development would not represent unrestricted sprawl. As an urban extension it would be reasonably contained and well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries (including the B5356 Stretton Road to the south, and Broad Lane and Lumb Brook Road to the east). Development, particularly to the north of this option could constitute ‘rounding off’ of the settlement pattern. Development in this location would align with the historic context of the Green Belt and the intentions of the New Town Outline Plan (see Section 2 of the original Green Belt Assessment, October 2016).</p>

	<p>Purpose 2 – Development of this option would have no impact on preventing neighbouring towns from merging as it is relatively enclosed by the Warrington urban area.</p> <p>Purpose 3 – Development of this option would entail an incursion into undeveloped countryside.</p> <p>Purpose 4 – Warrington is a historic town however this option is not near to the Warrington Town Centre Conservation Areas. This option does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.</p>
<p>Are there any cumulative impacts (due to release of adjacent sites)?</p>	<p>The only other site proposed for release in this location is the employment option (and the extended version). The employment option would form an extension to the Appleton Thorn Trading Estate which is inset within the Green Belt. Housing Option 1 would adjoin Appleton Thorn however an area of Green Belt would continue to separate Appleton Thorn and Appleton Thorn Trading Estate. The employment option would be contained by strong permanent boundaries consisting of the M6, M56 and the B5356. The extension to the employment option would not be as contained as the existing northern boundaries would need to be strengthened. Collectively, the release of this option alongside the employment option would have a similar impact as set out above however it would represent a larger incursion into undeveloped countryside in this location. The remaining surrounding Green Belt could continue to perform its Green Belt function. Development would not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt.</p>
<p>Would a new Green Belt boundary be defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?</p>	<p>The new Green Belt boundary would be defined by the B5356 Stretton Road to the south, and Lumb Brook Road, Broad Lane, Green Lane, The Gorse woodland and further sections of dense woodland to the east which represent recognisable and permanent boundaries. The remainder of the eastern boundary consists of sections of field boundaries which would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>The sites within this option made a weak and moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Development of this option would result in some encroachment into the countryside however development would not represent unrestricted sprawl as it would be reasonably contained by the existing urban area and well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries. Development in this location would be consistent with the historic context of the Green Belt and the intentions of the New Town Outline Plan. The remaining surrounding Green Belt could continue to perform its Green Belt function. The removal of this option</p>

	<p>from the Green Belt will not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt. The new Green Belt boundary would be recognisable and permanent being strongly defined to the south and the east by the B5356 Stretton Road, Lumb Brook Road, Broad Lane, Green Lane, The Gorse woodland and further sections of dense woodland. Parts of the eastern boundary which currently consist of field boundaries would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.</p>
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3.4 Housing Option 2

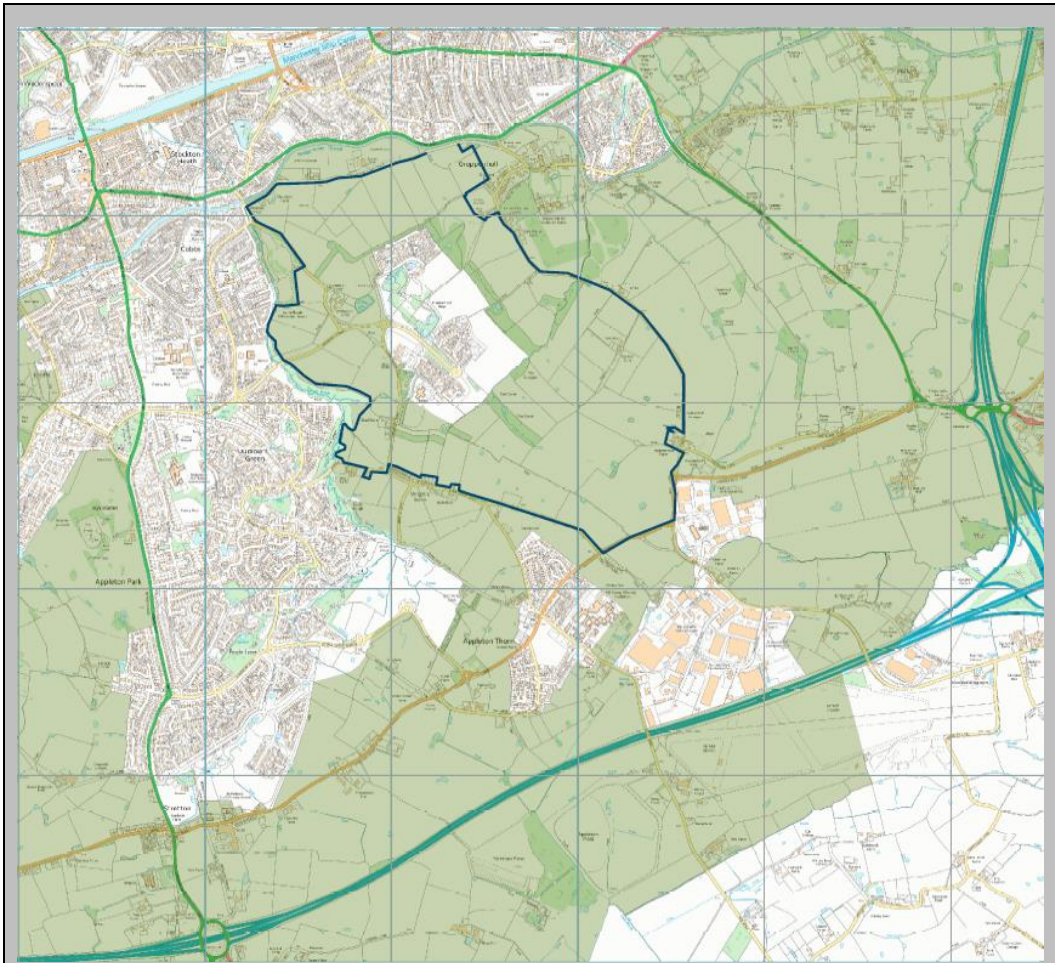


Key Question to Consider	Assessment
<p>What is the site's existing contribution to Green Belt purposes?</p>	<p>As set out in Section 2.3 above, this option is comprised of weak and moderate performing sites only.</p>

<p>What is the impact on Green Belt function and purposes of removing the site from the Green Belt?</p>	<p>Purpose 1 – Whilst entailing growth of the Warrington urban area, development would not represent unrestricted sprawl. Development would extend the urban area further south however the M56 provides a strong permanent boundary to prevent sprawl. As an urban extension it would be reasonably contained and well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries (including the M56 and the B5356 Stretton Road to the south, and Broad Lane and Lumb Brook Road to the east). Development, particularly to the north of this option could constitute ‘rounding off’ of the settlement pattern. Development in this location would align with the historic context of the Green Belt and the intentions of the New Town Outline Plan (see Section 2 of the original Green Belt Assessment, October 2016).</p> <p>Purpose 2 – Development of this option would have no impact on preventing neighbouring towns from merging as it is relatively enclosed by the Warrington urban area. Although development would extend the urban area further south, there are no neighbouring towns to the south. Northwich is located over 7.5km away.</p> <p>Purpose 3 – Development of this option would entail an incursion into undeveloped countryside.</p> <p>Purpose 4 – Warrington is a historic town however this option is not near to the Warrington Town Centre Conservation Areas. This option does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.</p>
<p>Are there any cumulative impacts (due to release of adjacent sites)?</p>	<p>The only other site proposed for release in this location is the employment option (and the extended version). The employment option would form an extension to the Appleton Thorn Trading Estate which is inset within the Green Belt. Housing Option 2 would adjoin Appleton Thorn however an area of Green Belt would continue to separate Appleton Thorn and Appleton Thorn Trading Estate. The employment option would be contained by strong permanent boundaries consisting of the M6, M56 and the B5356. The extension to the employment option would not be as contained as the existing northern boundaries would need to be strengthened. Collectively, the release of this option alongside the employment option would have a similar impact as set out above however it would represent a larger incursion into undeveloped countryside in this location. The remaining surrounding Green Belt could continue to perform its Green Belt function. Development would not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt.</p>
<p>Would a new Green Belt boundary be defined using physical features that are</p>	<p>The new Green Belt boundary would be defined by the M56 and B5356 Stretton Road to the south, and Lumb Brook Road, Broad Lane, Green Lane, The Gorse woodland and further</p>

readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?	sections of dense woodland to the east which represent recognisable and permanent boundaries. The remainder of the eastern boundary consists of sections of field boundaries and the south eastern boundary consists of a field boundary. These would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.
Conclusion	The sites within this option made a weak and moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Development of this option would result in some encroachment into the countryside however development would not represent unrestricted sprawl as it would be reasonably contained by the existing urban area and well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries. Development in this location would be consistent with the historic context of the Green Belt and the intentions of the New Town Outline Plan. The remaining surrounding Green Belt could continue to perform its Green Belt function. The removal of this option from the Green Belt will not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt. The new Green Belt boundary would be recognisable and permanent being strongly defined to the south and the east by the M56, B5356 Stretton Road, Lumb Brook Road, Broad Lane, Green Lane, The Gorse woodland and further sections of dense woodland. Parts of the eastern boundary and the south eastern boundary which currently consist of field boundaries would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.

3.5 Housing Option 3

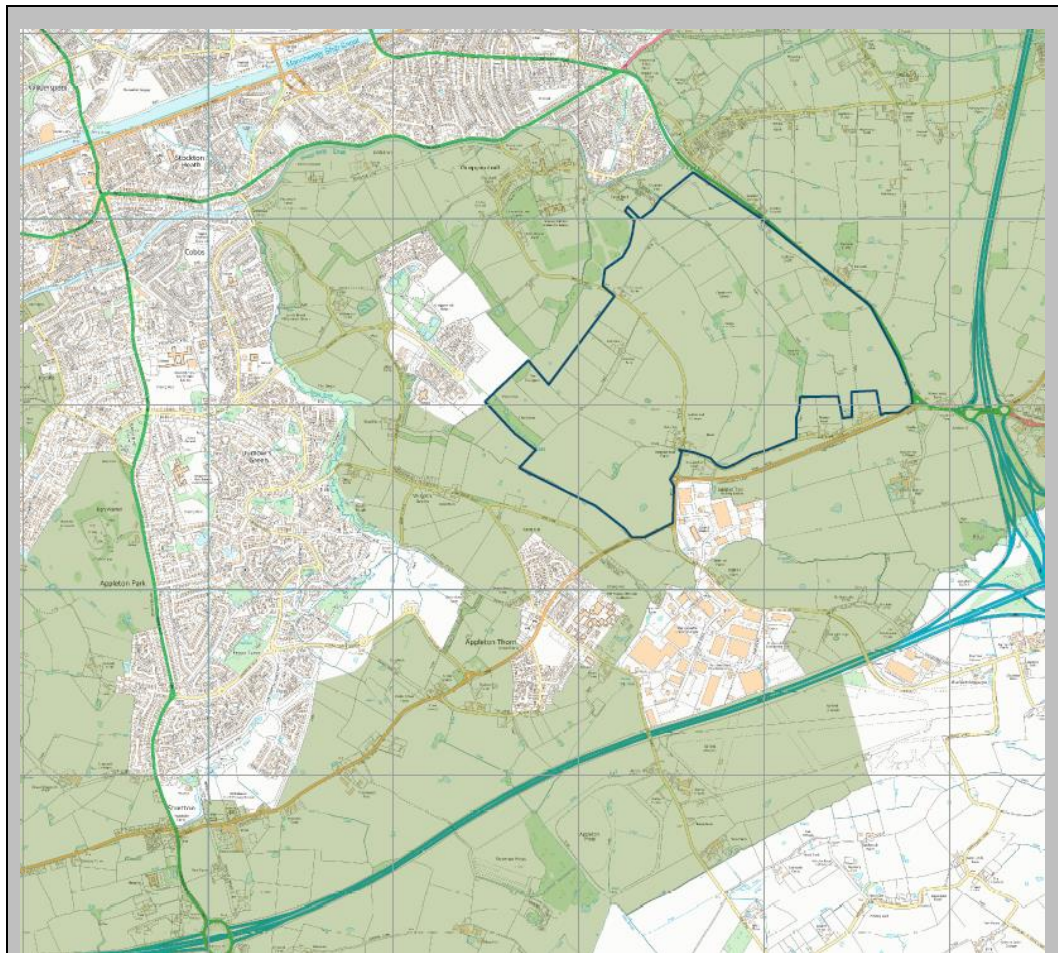


Key Question to Consider	Assessment
<p>What is the site’s existing contribution to Green Belt purposes?</p>	<p>As set out in Section 2.4 above, this option is comprised of weak and moderate performing sites only.</p>
<p>What is the impact on Green Belt function and purposes of removing the site from the Green Belt?</p>	<p>Purpose 1 – Whilst entailing growth of the Warrington urban area, development would not represent unrestricted sprawl. Development would be reasonably contained and well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries (including Broad Lane to the east and Dingle Lane/Lumb Brook Road/New Lane and the B5356 Stretton Road to the south). Development, particularly to the north of this option could constitute ‘rounding off’ of the settlement pattern. Development in this location would align with the historic context of the Green Belt and the intentions of the New Town Outline Plan (see Section 2 of the original Green Belt Assessment, October 2016).</p>

	<p>Purpose 2 – Development of this option would have no impact on preventing neighbouring towns from merging as it is relatively enclosed by the Warrington urban area.</p> <p>Purpose 3 – Development of this option would entail an incursion into undeveloped countryside. Development to the south of this option would have an impact on the surrounding Green Belt to the south as these remaining areas of Green Belt around Appleton Thorn would become relatively enclosed by the urban area which would reduce their sense of openness. This would reduce their contribution to Green Belt purposes.</p> <p>Purpose 4 – Warrington is a historic town however this option is not near to the Warrington Town Centre Conservation Areas. This option does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church.</p>
<p>Are there any cumulative impacts (due to release of adjacent sites)?</p>	<p>The only other site proposed for release in this location is the employment option (and the extended version). The employment option would form an extension to the Appleton Thorn Trading Estate which is inset within the Green Belt. Housing Option 3 would also join the Appleton Thorn Trading Estate to the west. The employment option would be contained by strong permanent boundaries consisting of the M6, M56 and the B5356. The extension to the employment option would not be as contained as the existing northern boundaries would need to be strengthened. Collectively, the release of this option alongside the employment option would have a similar impact as set out above however it would represent a larger incursion into undeveloped countryside in this location. Development would not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt.</p>
<p>Would a new Green Belt boundary be defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?</p>	<p>The new Green Belt boundary would be defined by Broad Lane to the east and Dingle Lane/Lumb Brook Road/New Lane and the B5356 Stretton Road to the south which represent recognisable and permanent boundaries. A small section of the eastern boundary consists of a field boundary which would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.</p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>The sites within this option made a weak and moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Development of this option would result in some encroachment into the countryside however development would not represent unrestricted sprawl as it would be reasonably contained by the existing urban area and well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries. Development in this location would be consistent with the historic context of the Green Belt and the intentions of the New Town Outline Plan. This option would have a localised impact on the remaining surrounding Green Belt to the south as it would become relatively enclosed by the urban area which</p>

	<p>would reduce its contribution to Green Belt purposes. The removal of this option from the Green Belt will not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt. The new Green Belt boundary would be recognisable and permanent being strongly defined to the south and the east by Broad Lane, Dingle Lane/Lumb Brook Road/New Lane and the B5356 Stretton Road. A small section of the eastern boundary which currently consist of a field boundary would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.</p>
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3.6 Housing Option 4



Key Question to Consider	Assessment
<p>What is the site's existing contribution to Green Belt purposes?</p>	<p>As set out in Section 2.5 above, this option is comprised of moderate and strong performing sites. The two strong sites are located in the middle of this option whilst the moderate sites are located to the east and west.</p>

<p>What is the impact on Green Belt function and purposes of removing the site from the Green Belt?</p>	<p>Purpose 1 – Whilst entailing growth of the Warrington urban area, development would not represent unrestricted sprawl. Development would be well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries (including Knutsford Road to the east, the B5356 Grappenhall Lane and Cartridge Lane to the south and areas of dense woodland to the north west).</p> <p>Purpose 2 – Development of this option would have no impact on preventing neighbouring towns from merging.</p> <p>Purpose 3 – Development of this option would entail an incursion into undeveloped countryside. Development would have an impact on the surrounding Green Belt to the west and south west as these remaining areas of Green Belt around Appleton Thorn and Grappenhall Heys would become relatively enclosed by the urban area which would reduce their sense of openness and cut them off from the wider countryside to the east. The land around Grappenhall Heys already makes a weak contribution to Green Belt purposes so this would remain unchanged however the contribution of the land to the north of Appleton Thorn would be reduced.</p> <p>Purpose 4 – Warrington is a historic town however this option is not near to the Warrington Town Centre Conservation Areas. The eastern edge of this option along Knutsford Road does cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church however due to the location of the church this viewpoint would still be visible along Knutsford Road.</p>
<p>Are there any cumulative impacts (due to release of adjacent sites)?</p>	<p>The only other site proposed for release in this location is the employment option. The extension to the employment option overlaps with this option and is not relevant. The employment option would be contained by strong permanent boundaries consisting of the M6, M56 and the B5356 however the area of remaining Green Belt to the north of the B5356 would be enclosed and would not fulfil Green Belt purposes. Collectively, the release of this option alongside the employment option would have a similar impact as set out above however it would exacerbate the separation between the remaining Green Belt to the west and the surrounding countryside to the east. It would also represent a larger incursion into undeveloped countryside in this location. Development would therefore have a localised impact on the surrounding Green Belt but it would not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt.</p>
<p>Would a new Green Belt boundary be defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?</p>	<p>The new Green Belt boundary would be defined by Knutsford Road to the east, the B5356 Grappenhall Lane and Cartridge Lane to the south and areas of dense woodland to the north west which represent recognisable and permanent boundaries. A small section of the southern boundary around Manor Farm and Cliff Lane Farm follows field boundaries which would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent</p>

	boundary (unless this option is connected to the employment option). The remainder of the northern and western boundary which consists of field boundaries would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.
Conclusion	The sites within this option made a moderate and strong contribution to Green Belt purposes. Development of this option would result in some encroachment into the countryside however development would not represent unrestricted sprawl as it would be well defined along a number of strong permanent boundaries. This option would have a localised impact on the remaining surrounding Green Belt to the south and south west as it would become relatively enclosed by the urban area which would reduce its contribution to Green Belt purposes. In addition, the cumulative impact of releasing this option alongside the employment option would exacerbate the separation between the remaining Green Belt to the west and the surrounding countryside to the east. In addition, the area of Green Belt between this option and the employment option would not serve a Green Belt purpose (unless the option is connected to the employment option). The removal of this option from the Green Belt will not harm the overall function and integrity of the Warrington Green Belt. The new Green Belt boundary would be recognisable and permanent in parts, being strongly defined to the south, east and north west by Knutsford Broad, the B5356 Grappenhall Lane, Cartridge Lane and areas of dense woodland. The remainder of the northern, southern and western boundaries which currently consist of a field boundaries would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary.

3.7 Conclusion

In purely Green Belt terms, Housing Option 1 or 2 should be considered in the first instance as comparatively these result in the least harm to the Green Belt. There is very little difference in the Green Belt impact of these options. Housing Option 2 extends the urban area further south but this has no impact on purpose 2 (preventing towns from merging). The existing field boundary in this southern section would need to be strengthened to create a new recognisable and permanent boundary. Housing Option 2 incorporates more land for development which could enable the Council to demonstrate with increased confidence that boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period which would be a benefit.

Housing Option 3 and 4 result in localised harm to the remaining surrounding Green Belt. Housing Option 3 would impact the surrounding Green Belt to the immediate south as this would become relatively enclosed by the urban area which would reduce its contribution to Green Belt purposes. Housing Option 4 would have a similar impact as the surrounding Green Belt to the south and south west would become relatively enclosed by the urban area which would reduce

their sense of openness and cut them off from the wider countryside to the east. This does not mean that these options should not be considered however a greater exceptional circumstances case will need to be made.

The cumulative impact of releasing the employment option (and the extended version of the employment option) has been considered alongside the housing options. The employment option is contained by strong, defensible boundaries and the impact of removing it alongside the housing options is similar for all options (albeit representing a greater incursion into undeveloped countryside). The extended version of the employment option has a similar cumulative impact however would require a new recognisable and permanent northern boundary to be established as there are currently no physical features to define the boundary in this location. For Housing Option 4, the employment option does exacerbate the separation between the remaining Green Belt to the west from the surrounding countryside to the east. If it is to be taken forward, Housing Option 4 should be joined with the employment option in order to avoid leaving the area of Green Belt to the north of the B5356 which would serve no Green Belt purpose and also in the interests of providing stronger boundaries.

All of the options should be considered alongside other evidence and the site selection process.

All of the options utilise some existing recognisable and permanent boundaries, however all of them will require new recognisable and permanent boundaries to be established in parts.