

Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Consultation Scope and Contents Document

October 2016

WARRINGTON
Borough Council 



Growing a Strong Warrington

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1. Introduction

What is this Document?

1.1 This document represents the first stage in reviewing the Council's adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014). Stage one of this process, in line with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, is the opportunity for the local community and wider stakeholders to comment on the scope and contents of the revised Local Plan.

1.2 The document looks at the Council's evidence base to date and what key issues the evidence base raises that the Council will need to consider as part of the review of the Local Plan. It then sets out the proposed scope of the review and the process the Council will undertake in carrying out the review. The last section provides details on how to respond to this first consultation.

The need to Review the Current Local Plan Core Strategy

1.3 The Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 21 July 2014 and is the current Statutory Development Plan for the Borough, setting out the overarching strategic policies for guiding the location and level of development in the Borough up to 2027.

1.4 Upon adoption, there was a High Court Challenge which resulted in parts of the Plan being quashed:

- The housing target of 10,500 new homes (equating to 500 per year) between 2006 and 2027 and;
- References to 1,100 new homes at the Omega Strategic Proposal

1.5 Not all of the Local Plan Core Strategy has been overturned and all other policies within the Plan remain unaltered and are considered to be a sound and robust basis for the determination of planning applications across the Borough at this point in time.

1.6 However, given the results of the High Court challenge and the emerging evidence underpinning the Borough's growth needs and economic development ambitions, the Council recognises the need to undertake a review of the Local Plan.

1.7 It is essential that the Council continues to have an up-to-date Development Plan in order to retain control over the type and location of development within the Borough, and so ensuring that development across the Borough is genuinely 'Plan led'.



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2. Evidence Base Issues

2.1 Every Council should ensure that their Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area.

2.2 The Council has for some time been developing an evidence base to support the Local Plan and the Council's current evidence base to date can be viewed [here](#).

2.3 This includes evidence undertaken following the High Court ruling which will provide the basis for the review of the Local Plan. This evidence, and the key issues arising from it, are summarised below.

Housing Needs

2.4 The revised Local Plan will set the housing target for the number of new homes that will need to be delivered in the Borough over the Plan period. National Planning Policy requires the Local Plan to fully meet the 'Objectively Assessed Needs' (OAN) for market and affordable housing in the Borough.

2.5 The most up to date study assessing the housing OAN for the Borough is the Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 (SHMA). The study was undertaken with the neighbouring Local Authorities of Halton and St. Helens and used information consisting of population projections, household formations, the need for affordable housing and the projected jobs growth across the Plan Period to reach the OAN figure.

2.6 For Warrington, the Mid Mersey SHMA identified an Objectively Assessed Need of 839 new homes (to include 220 Affordable units) per year up to 2037, and an additional 62 bed spaces in Care Homes (specialist housing for elder people), per year up to 2037.

2.7 The OAN figure is only the starting point and in line with the requirements of national planning policy, the OAN figure should be tested against the Borough's land supply position, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, improved affordability and market signals, as well as the Council's economic growth aspirations in order to arrive at a housing target within the Local Plan. This ensures the alignment of all relevant strategies, which might result in a higher or lower housing target within the Local Plan, other than the identified OAN.

Employment Land Needs

2.8 The revised Local Plan will also set out the required amount of employment land to facilitate Warrington's economic growth. For the Local Plan to adequately plan for economic growth it is necessary to understand the amount of new employment land (for offices, factories and warehouses) that is needed. As with housing needs, national planning policy expects the Local Plan to fully meet Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for economic development in the Borough, taking account of market intelligence, market signals and the locational requirements of particular types of business.



2.9 In order to meet the requirements of national planning policy, the Council commissioned consultants to carry out an Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) to establish the OAN figure for employment land across the Borough. **This study has resulted in an identified OAN figure of 381 hectares of employment land over the next 21 years.**

2.10 This assessment has been based on Warrington's past economic performance, historic take up rates and a detailed analysis of current and future market demand.

Aligning Housing Need with Job Growth

2.11 The Council has also assessed the number of additional jobs that will be created through the Council's growth aspirations set out in the 'Warrington Means Business' economic development programme as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan and future growth ambitions. **These growth aspirations will deliver 31,000 new jobs in Warrington up to 2040 which is approximately 30% above the baseline forecasts.**

2.12 This number of jobs is considered to be realistic based on comparison with the level of job growth Warrington has achieved over the last 20 years and if the level of employment land identified in the EDNA is brought forward for delivery.

2.13 As the SHMA was based on a baseline forecast of employment growth, it has been necessary to revisit the housing need figure to ensure it is in line with the increase in job numbers envisaged. **To ensure a balance between homes and jobs it will be necessary to increase the minimum supply of homes to around 1,000 per annum.**

2.14 This is the level of housing need the Council intends to take forward through the review of the Local Plan. It will need to be refined ahead of confirmation of the preferred development option to reflect more recent demographic population and household projections which have been released following publication of the SHMA.

Land Supply

2.15 The Council undertook a major review of its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which was published in January 2016, identifying committed and planned housing land supply over the next 15 years and beyond. This has subsequently been updated to reflect planning permissions and completions up to 31st March 2016, additional anticipated supply up to 20 years and an updated assessment of windfall allowance. **This identifies a total housing land supply in the urban area and on green field sites outside of the Green Belt of approximately 11,500.**

2.16 Warrington & Co have commissioned more detailed master planning work relating to the town centre and inner Warrington, including the Waterfront Strategic Development Opportunity. **This has identified the potential for approximately 3,500 homes in addition to those identified in the SHLAA over the next 20 years.**



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2.17 **The EDNA has identified a realistic deliverable supply of 107 hectares of employment land within existing and planned employment areas.** In reviewing existing employment areas, it did not identify any potential sites which are no longer suitable for employment use and could be released for housing in addition to those sites already identified within the SHLAA.

2.18 The Council published its updated Open Space Audit in July 2016. This identifies that the majority of the borough has a deficiency of open space and there are no readily available areas of surplus open space in the urban area which lend themselves to development in addition to those sites already identified within the SHLAA.

2.19 Having explored all potential sources of additional land supply, the Council has therefore concluded it is unable to accommodate all of its development needs within the existing urban area and on green field sites outside of the Green Belt. The Council has summarised the work it has undertaken in establishing urban capacity in the Urban Capacity Statement, published as part of this initial consultation.

2.20 **If Warrington is to meet its development needs, then based on the updated assessment of urban capacity, sufficient Green Belt land will need to be released to deliver approximately 5,000 homes and 261¹ hectares of employment land over the next 20 years.**

2.21 The Council will review its assessment of urban capacity ahead of confirmation of the preferred development option to take into account any additional sites within the urban area submitted as part of the 'call of sites' process (see para 4.5).

Green Belt Assessment

2.22 Warrington is heavily constrained by a tight Green Belt boundary around its 'urban areas'. Several inset settlements are excluded from the Green Belt, but also constrained at their outer edges by it, and several settlements are 'washed over' by the Green Belt within the Borough boundary.

2.23 Given evidence is suggesting Warrington cannot meet its development needs within the existing urban area, as part of its evidence base the Council commissioned consultants to carry out an assessment of the Borough's Green Belt against the 5 purposes the Green Belt serves, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This assessment will contribute to the consideration of options for meeting development need if it is confirmed that Green Belt land needs to be released.

2.24 In accordance with the NPPF the Council must demonstrate exceptional circumstances to justify the release of Green Belt through a Local Plan review.

Further Evidence Base

2.25 The Council is in the process of updating its Multimodal Transport Model and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. These pieces of work will feed into the broader assessment of development options under the Sustainability Appraisal process and the development site assessment as set out in Appendix 2.



3. Proposed Scope of Local Plan Review

Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

3.1 The current Local Plan was prepared to facilitate a much lower level of development which could be accommodated without the need for any release of Green Belt. This is reflected in the first two of the six strategic objectives which underpin the Plan. The first objective establishes the level of development to be delivered to 2027 and the second objective reaffirms the current extent of the Green Belt.

3.2 The remaining objectives relate to strengthening the town centre, reducing the need to travel, ensuring high quality design and maintaining and enhancing environmental quality.

3.3 Whilst the first two objectives and the detailed policies which sit under them are no longer consistent with Warrington's identified development needs, the other objectives and associated detailed policies are still considered appropriate to guide future development. They accord with the NPPF, are consistent with the Council's Warrington Means Business programme and were found to be sound following the Examination in Public in 2014.

3.4 In addition, an underlying theme of the Local Plan, running from the strategic vision, strategic objectives and through into detailed objectives and policies, is the need to unlock major development opportunities in the town centre and inner Warrington and in doing so address existing congestion in the town. This remains a key Council priority and will need to remain integral to the revised Local Plan.

3.5 The Council therefore considers that it is appropriate and more expedient to review the existing Local Plan, rather than preparing an entirely new Plan.

Focus for the review

3.6 Given that evidence is suggesting much more development across the Borough than the current Local Plan anticipated, the review of the Plan will be focused on three strategic matters, which will have a significant impact on the future planning strategy for the area: These are:

- **The provision of land and level of housing development that can be accommodated within Warrington, taking into account Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN);**
- **The provision of land for economic development and a growing local economy, taking into account Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN); and**
- **Ensuring the timely delivery of new and improved physical and social infrastructure required to meet the needs of new development and mitigate the impacts on existing communities.**



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3.7 Following confirmation of the preferred development option, the Council will assess all of the existing visions, objectives and policies in the Plan to establish if they require major or minor alteration. The Council's initial view on the parts of the Plan that will need to be subject to either a major or minor alteration is set out in Appendix 1.

Local Plan Period

3.8 National Planning Policy requires Local Plans to be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and kept up to date.

3.9 In considering amending Green Belt boundaries the NPPF is clear that the Council needs to have regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period. **For this reason, the Council is proposing a Plan period of 20 years.**

3.10 A 20 year Plan period would also enable the Council to consider more comprehensive forms of development which may provide a more sustainable development solution than smaller areas of incremental development.

Safeguarded Green Belt Land Needs-Post Local Plan Review

3.11 A Key feature of Green Belts are their permanence and they should, once established, be capable of enduring beyond the current Plan period. For a Local Planning Authority, this means there is potentially a need to remove further land from the Green Belt and Safeguard it for future longer term development, beyond the current Plan period. **Safeguarded Land will therefore also need to be part of the Plan Review.**

Minerals and Waste Needs

3.12 The current Plan does not contain all the necessary policies relating to Minerals and Waste. **The opportunity for including Minerals and Waste as part of the review of the Local Plan will be considered following the scoping consultation, taking into account representations received.**

Gypsy and Traveller Needs

3.13 The current Plan does not allocate sites to accommodate the needs for permanent gypsy and traveller sites. **The opportunity for including the allocation of permanent gypsy and traveller sites as part of the review of the Local Plan will be considered following the scoping consultation, taking into account representations received.**



4. Local Plan Review Process

Summary of Process

4.1 The flow diagram at Figure 1 summarises the Local Plan process, up to adoption by the Council. Full details of the process are set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) available [here](#). Further details on how the Council intends to undertake consultation at each stage of the process is contained in the Council's Consultation Statement, available [here](#).

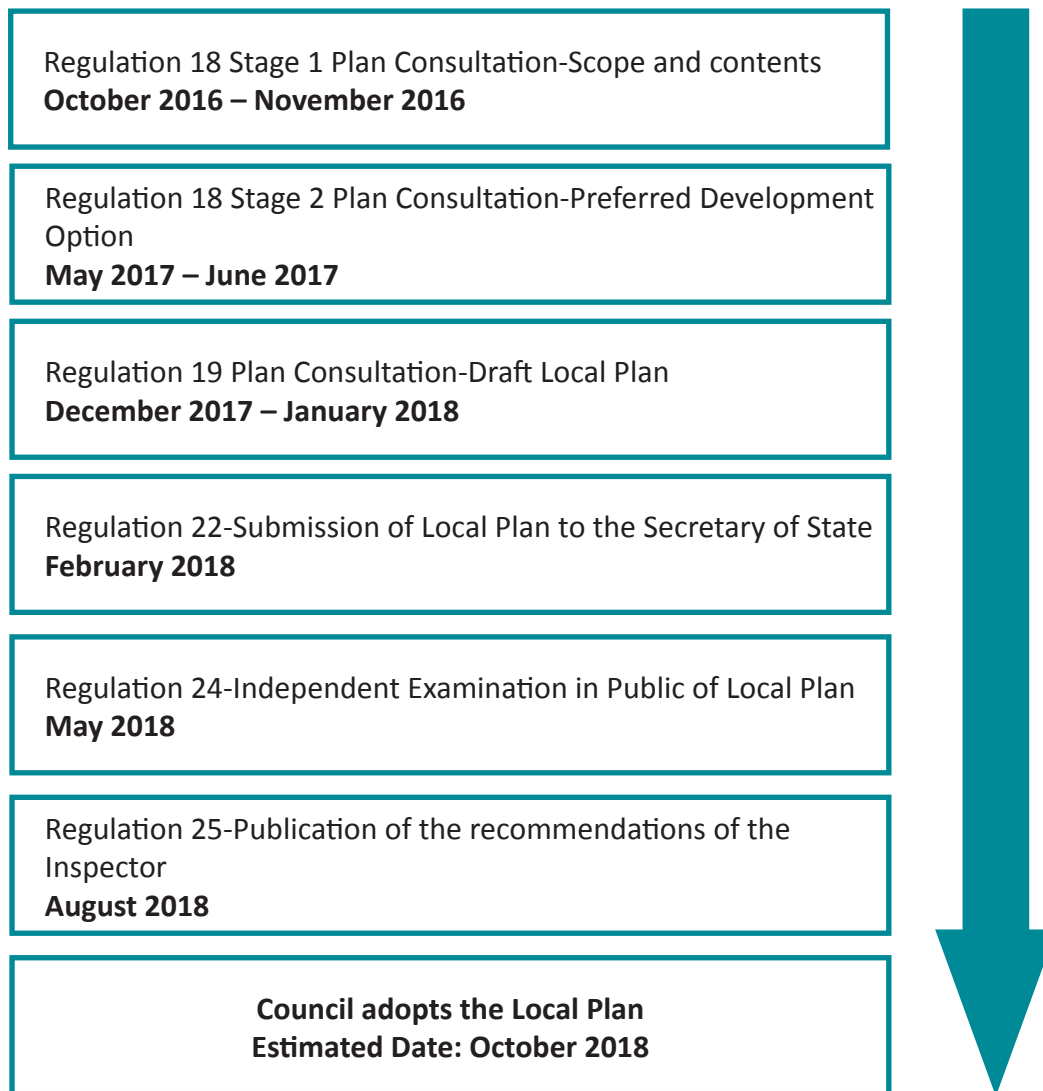


Figure 1: Summary of the Local Plan Review Process & Local Development Scheme



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Scope and Contents Consultation

4.2 To ensure the new Local Plan for Warrington is sound; being positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy, this first stage of consultation seeks representations on the initial scope and subject matter of the revised Warrington Local Plan as set out in this document. This represents stage 1 of the statutory Regulation 18 consultation¹.

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

4.3 Alongside this initial Local Plan Scoping Document, the Council are also consulting on a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report 2016. The SA Scoping Report will set out the Social, Economic and Environmental baseline data for the Borough and will also contain a Sustainability Appraisal Framework (SAF), setting out how the local Social, Economic and Environmental issues identified will be addressed through the Plan making process.

4.4 The SA Scoping Report is available to view [here](#).

Local Plan Call for sites

4.5 To ensure enough land is available to meet the identified development needs across and beyond the Plan period, the Council is also conducting a 'call for sites' (including Green Belt sites). The Council will invite land owners, developers, the local community and other stakeholders to put forward sites for consideration as part of the Plan review.

4.6 The 'Call for Sites' is for five or more dwellings or economic development on sites of 0.25 hectares (or 500 sqm of floorspace) and above, Gypsy, Traveller and Show People and Minerals and Waste sites.

4.7 The 'Call for Sites' submission form and accompanying guidance notes are all available [here](#).

Moving from Regulation 18 Stage 1 to Stage 2

4.8 The Council has set out the process it intends to follow to establish a preferred development option in Appendix 2.

4.9 The process will complement the Sustainability Appraisal process and ensure that any adverse impacts of meeting Warrington's development needs do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It will enable consideration of spatial development options before considering individual sites in more detail on both an individual and cumulative basis.

4.10 The process will consider a range of issues linked to the Local Plan evidence base, including Green Belt performance, transport impacts and flood risk. It will also ensure detailed consideration is given to environmental impacts, development viability, availability of social and physical infrastructure, as well as assessment of potential mitigation measures including new infrastructure provision.



1 - The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

4.11 The preferred development option will be the subject to extensive consultation in spring 2017, through the Regulation 18 stage 2 consultation.

Moving from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19

4.12 The Council will work up the draft Plan in detail, taking into account the responses received during the preferred development option consultation. It will then publish the draft Plan for consultation in accordance with Regulation 19 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, enabling residents, community groups, land owners, developers and other stakeholders to make formal representations.

Examination in Public and Adoption

4.13 An Examination in Public (EIP) will be undertaken into the draft Plan by an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. It is anticipated that the EIP will be held in the spring of 2018, with the Inspector's Report published in summer 2018 ahead of adoption by full Council in autumn 2018.

Main Modifications

4.14 When submitting the Local Plan to the Secretary of State, the Council will request that the appointed Inspector, should they consider them necessary, suggest Main Modifications to the Local Plan to allow the Council to adopt the Local Plan.

4.15 If the Inspector does suggest Main Modifications then the Council will be required to consult on them for a 6 week period following receipt of the Inspector's report. This will therefore mean adoption of the Plan will be delayed to enable the consultation to be undertaken and the Council to consider any final consultation responses.



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5. How to get Involved and Comment

5.1 You are invited to comment on the subject matter the revised Local Plan ought to consider. We would like to hear your views on the proposed scope of the review as set out in this document and whether there are any matters which you feel we have not identified and should be included in the revised Local Plan.

5.2 We would also welcome your views on the evidence base we have prepared and the Council's initial conclusions on Warrington's development needs.

5.3 The standard response form is the quickest and simplest method for submitting your comments and a blank form can be found [here](#). The Council will, of course, accept representations by other means.

5.4 Please send your comments, representations, call for sites information and completed standard reply forms to:

By e-mail: ldf@warrington.gov.uk

By writing to: Warrington Borough Council, Planning Policy and Programmes, New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, Cheshire, WA1 2NH.

5.5 Representations must provide a contact name and address. Any comments you make will not be confidential and will be made publicly available, however your address and contact details will not be shown online.

5.6 Should you require further advice and guidance, please contact the Planning Policy Team by telephone on 01925 442826 or by e-mail at ldf@warrington.gov.uk

Consultation Periods

5.7 The Regulation 18 consultation, the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report consultation and the 'Call for Sites' exercise will all run for a **six week** period from 24th October to 5th December 2016. **Please return your representation(s) to Warrington Borough Council no later than 5.00pm on 5th December 2016.**

What will happen to your Comments?

- Your comments will be acknowledged either in writing or by email.
- A summary of the results of the consultation will be publicly available.
- Your comments will be considered by the Council in working up the Preferred Development option.
- All comments will be made available for viewing.
- In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 your details will be retained on our database for the purposes of preparing the Local Plan and any other planning policy documents, they will not be used for any other purpose.



Appendix 1: Local Plan Policy Review

The table below lists the visions, objectives and policies currently contained within the Warrington LPCS.

The table indicates whether these will be subject to major or minor alterations.

Major alterations will be required where the vision, objective or policy is not compatible with the development needs driving the review of the Plan.

Minor alterations are likely to include factual updates rather than any change to the main principle or purpose of the vision, objective or policy.

These will be reviewed as the Plan progresses including the need for any new visions, objectives or policies.

Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) – Policy Review		
Policy	Minor Alterations	Major Alterations
Strategic Vision		✓
Key Diagram		✓
Strategic Objective W1		✓
Strategic Objective W2		✓
Strategic Objective W3	✓	
Strategic Objective W4	✓	
Strategic Objective W5	✓	
Strategic Objective W6	✓	
Policy CS1	✓	
Policy CS2		✓
Policy CS3		✓
Policy CS4		✓
Policy CS5		✓
Policy CS6	✓	
Policy CS7	✓	
Policy CS8		✓
Policy CS9	✓	
Policy CS10		✓
Policy CS11		✓
Creating Prosperity & Vibrancy Visions		
Investing in Warrington & its Workforce		✓
Focusing on the Town Centre		✓
Supporting the Visitor Economy		✓
Creating Prosperity & Vibrancy Objectives		
E1	✓	



Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) – Policy Review

Policy	Minor Alterations	Major Alterations
E2	✓	
T3	✓	
I3	✓	
WC1	✓	
WC2	✓	
I1	✓	
E3	✓	
BE1	✓	
E4	✓	
Policy PV1	✓	
Policy PV2	✓	
Policy PV3	✓	
Policy PV4	✓	
Policy PV5	✓	
Policy PV6	✓	
Policy PV7	✓	
Strengthening Neighbourhoods Visions		
Ensuring a home for all		✓
Providing Local Services and Facilities		✓
Nurturing Health and Wellbeing		✓
Strengthening Neighbourhoods Objectives		
H1	✓	
H2	✓	
H3	✓	
H4	✓	
I5	✓	
H5	✓	
H6	✓	
I2	✓	
T2	✓	
HP1	✓	
HP2	✓	
HP3	✓	
HP4	✓	
GI3	✓	
Policy SN1		✓
Policy SN2		✓
Policy SN3		✓
Policy SN4	✓	
Policy SN5	✓	
Policy SN6	✓	
Policy SN7	✓	



Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) – Policy Review		
Policy	Minor Alterations	Major Alterations
Securing a High Quality Environment Visions		
Being Carbon Neutral		✓
Being Natural and Durable		✓
Being Distinct and Attractive		✓
Securing a High Quality Environment Objectives		
S1	✓	
S2	✓	
S4	✓	
S5	✓	
T9	✓	
I4	✓	
G11	✓	
G16	✓	
G12	✓	
BE1	✓	
BE2	✓	
S3	✓	
G15	✓	
Policy QE1		✓
Policy QE2	✓	
Policy QE3	✓	
Policy QE4	✓	
Policy QE5	✓	
Policy QE6	✓	
Policy QE7		✓
Policy QE8	✓	
Making the Place Work Visions		
Connecting People and Places		✓
Dealing with Waste and Minerals		✓
Providing Infrastructure		✓
Making the Place Work Objectives		
T1	✓	
T4	✓	
T5	✓	
T6	✓	
T8	✓	
T7	✓	
T10	✓	
I3	✓	



Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) – Policy Review

Policy	Minor Alterations	Major Alterations
MW1	✓	
MW2	✓	
MW3	✓	
MW4	✓	
MW5	✓	
INF1	✓	
INF2	✓	
INF3	✓	
INF4	✓	
Policy MP1	✓	
Policy MP2	✓	
Policy MP3	✓	
Policy MP4		✓
Policy MP5	✓	
Policy MP6	✓	
Policy MP7	✓	
Policy MP8		✓
Policy MP9		✓
Policy MP10	✓	
The Town Centre Vision		
Town Centre		✓
The Town Centre Objectives		
TC1		✓
TC2		✓
TC3		✓
TC4		✓
TC5		✓
TC6		✓
TC7		✓
TC8		✓
TC9		✓
TC10		✓
WC3		✓
Policy TC1		✓
Policy TC2	✓	
Inner and North Warrington Vision		
Inner and North Warrington		✓



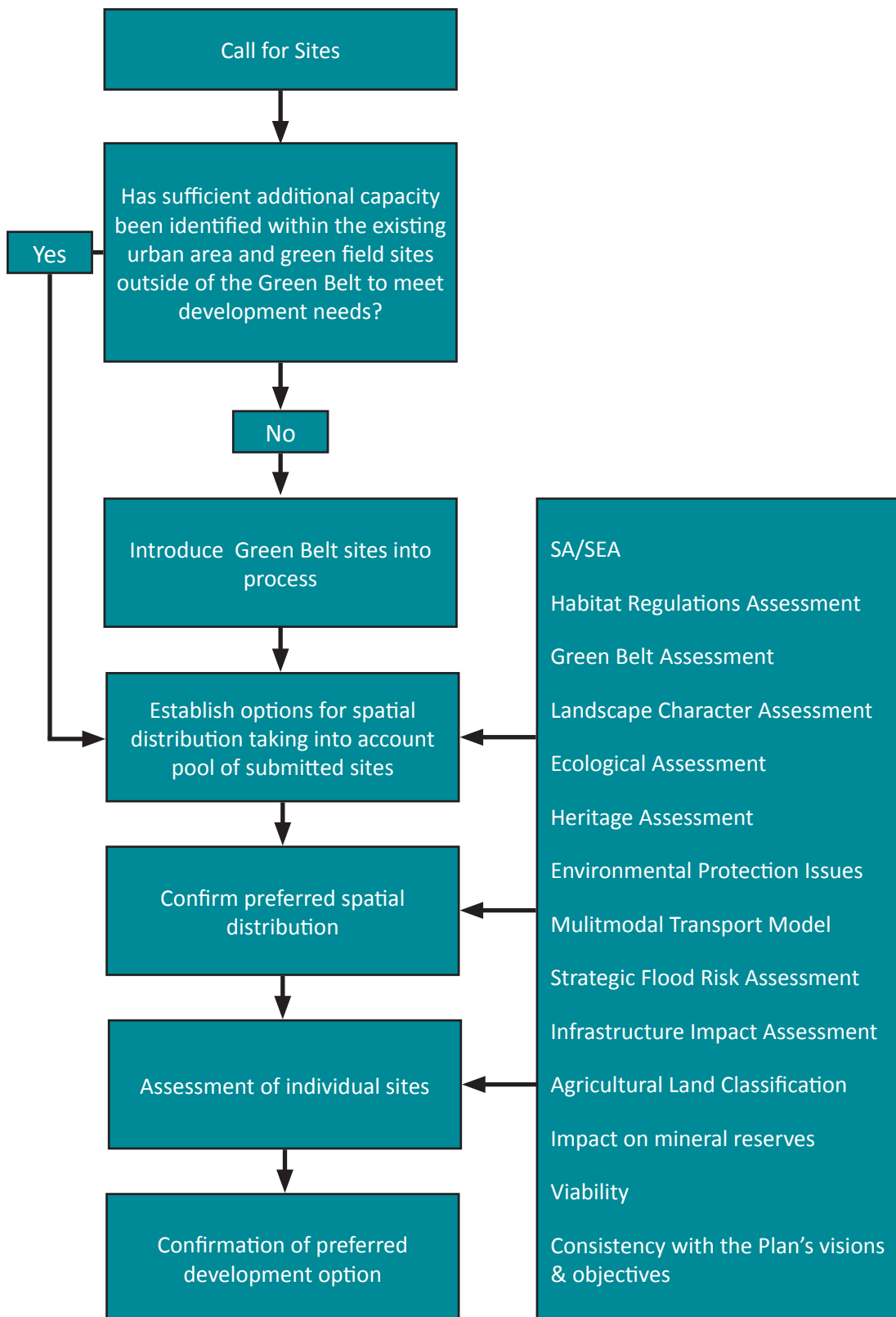
Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) – Policy Review		
Policy	Minor Alterations	Major Alterations
Inner and North Warrington Objectives		
RA1		✓
RA2		✓
RA3		✓
RA4		✓
RA5		✓
RA6		✓
RA7		✓
Policy IW1	✓	
Policy IW2		✓
West Warrington Vision		
West Warrington		✓
West Warrington Objectives		
WW1		✓
WW2		✓
WW3		✓
WW4		✓
WW5		✓
WW6		✓
WW7		✓
WW8		✓
Policy WW1		✓
East Warrington Vision		
East Warrington		✓
East Warrington Objectives		
EW1		✓
EW2		✓
EW3		✓
EW4		✓
EW5		✓
EW6		✓
Stockton Heath and South Warrington Vision		
Stockton Heath and South Warrington		✓
Stockton Heath and South Warrington Objectives		
SW1	✓	
SW2	✓	



Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) – Policy Review		
Policy	Minor Alterations	Major Alterations
Policy SW1	✓	
Countryside and its Constituent Settlements Vision		
Countryside and its Constituent Settlements		✓
Countryside and its Constituent Settlements Objectives		
CC1	✓	
CC2	✓	
CC3	✓	
CC4	✓	
CC5	✓	
CC6	✓	
GI4	✓	
Policy CC1		✓
Policy CC2		✓
Policy CC3		✓



Appendix 2: Spatial Distribution and Site Assessment Process





**Planning Policy & Programmes
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