



# Ashall Property Limited

Annex 3:

**SWUE Prospectus, Supporting Technical Appendices, and Memorandum of Understanding Between: Peel L&P Investments (North) Limited, Story Homes Limited, Riley Properties Limited and Ashall Property Limited for the SWUE**

[REDACTED]

# Warrington South West Urban Extension

## Development Prospectus

November 2021



**Turley**

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Manchester Ship Canal ▶



# 01 Introduction

This Development Prospectus sets out a vision and concept masterplan for the sustainable development of the Warrington South West Urban Extension ('SWUE'), which was identified as a housing allocation in the Proposed Submission version of the Warrington Local Plan.

This document has been prepared on behalf of Peel Holdings (Management) Ltd, Story Homes and Ashall Property, who are working together as a consortium to promote the SWUE site.

The SWUE Consortium members each have land interests within the SWUE allocation and are committed to continuing to work together, and with Warrington Borough Council (WBC), to secure the delivery of much-needed housing and associated infrastructure at the earliest opportunity.

The Consortium members have extensive experience of promoting land for development and delivering high-quality, sustainable residential communities.



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## Peel:

Peel Holdings (Management) Ltd is part of Peel Land and Property, which is in turn part of the Peel Group; one of the leading infrastructure, real estate, transport and investment enterprises in the UK. Peel Land and Property has extensive real estate assets which consist of 1.2 million sq m (12 million sq ft) of investment property and over 8,100 hectares (20,000 acres) of strategic land and water throughout the UK. The breadth of Peel Land and Property's assets covers transformational developments including MediaCityUK and Liverpool Waters.



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## Story Homes:

Story Homes is a privately owned housebuilder with a long and successful reputation of building quality and high specification homes across the North West. A passion for quality and excellence has seen Story Homes become a multi award-winning UK property developer, with modern and attractive homes instantly inspiring buyers. Story Homes' success is underpinned by a determination to understand the needs of communities where they build and a goal to deliver design quality and high quality building specifications that enhance locations.



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## Ashall Property:

Ashall Property is a private property and development investment company which focuses on creating investment value through property development and asset management. Ashall Property has been successfully developing residential and commercial property since the 1930s and, in recent years, has developed projects with an investment value in excess of £500 million.

## Context & Opportunity

The emerging Warrington Local Plan acknowledges a requirement to identify a suitable and sustainable portfolio of sites, including existing Green Belt sites, to meet its future housing needs over the period 2021 to 2038.

The Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan ('PSLP') proposed the 'release' of land at Higher Walton from the Green Belt and its allocation for housing and related development over the plan period. However, it is not proposed to be released and allocated in the Proposed Updated Submission Local Plan (PUSLP). The Consortium fully objects to the change in position on the SWUE in the PUSLP and considers that the approach taken by WBC renders the PUSLP unsound. The South West Urban Extension (SWUE) represents an important opportunity as a sustainable urban extension to the main urban area of Warrington, to support a new community in a high quality residential setting with ease of access to Warrington's employment, recreation and cultural facilities.

The SWUE presents an opportunity to deliver a significant scale of new housing and associated infrastructure which will benefit both existing and new residents.

The development of the SWUE aligns with the overarching vision, objectives and spatial strategy of the PUSLP. It also aligns with national policy which recognises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, including significant extensions to existing towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

## This Document

This document demonstrates that the SWUE site represents a sustainable opportunity capable of accommodating a desirable and high quality residential development. It is capable of making a positive contribution to Warrington by integrating into the existing settlement, retaining and enhancing important features within and surrounding the site.

The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

- Overview of the relevant planning policy context
- Description of the site and its context
- An overview of the opportunities and constraints
- Presentation of a concept masterplan for the development of the site, including the site analysis and design process that has informed it
- An assessment of the proposals, to demonstrate that development of the site is suitable and achievable
- Confirmation of the Consortium's commitment to the comprehensive delivery of the site
- Summary of the community and socio-economic benefits that the development will secure
- Summary and conclusions



WARRINGTON  
WATERFRONT

WALTON

HIGHER WALTON

MOORE

Chester to Manchester Rail

Crewe to Warrington Rail

Manchester Ship Canal

HOLY HEDGE  
LANE

A56 Chester Road



# 02 Policy Context

## National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') came into effect in March 2012, and has been subject to a number of updates in the years since. The most recent iteration of the Framework was published in July 2021.

Sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework. For 'plan-making', this means that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area (including for housing and affordable housing) with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change.

The Framework recognises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be achieved through planning for larger scale development, including significant extensions to existing towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

Green Belt boundaries may be altered (but only in exceptional circumstances) through the preparation or updating of Local Plans. When defining Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. New Green Belt boundaries should, inter alia, reflect the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development, identify areas of safeguarded land (where necessary) in order to meet longer-term development needs, be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period and define boundaries clearly, using recognisable physical features which are likely to be permanent.

## Warrington Local Plan

WBC is currently preparing a new Local Plan for Warrington which will guide development in the Borough over the plan period (2021 - 2038). The Proposed Updated Submission version of the Local Plan was published for consultation in September 2021, and sets out the Council's proposed policies, including site allocations.

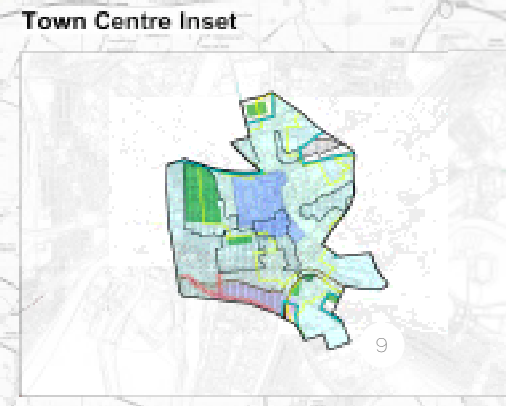
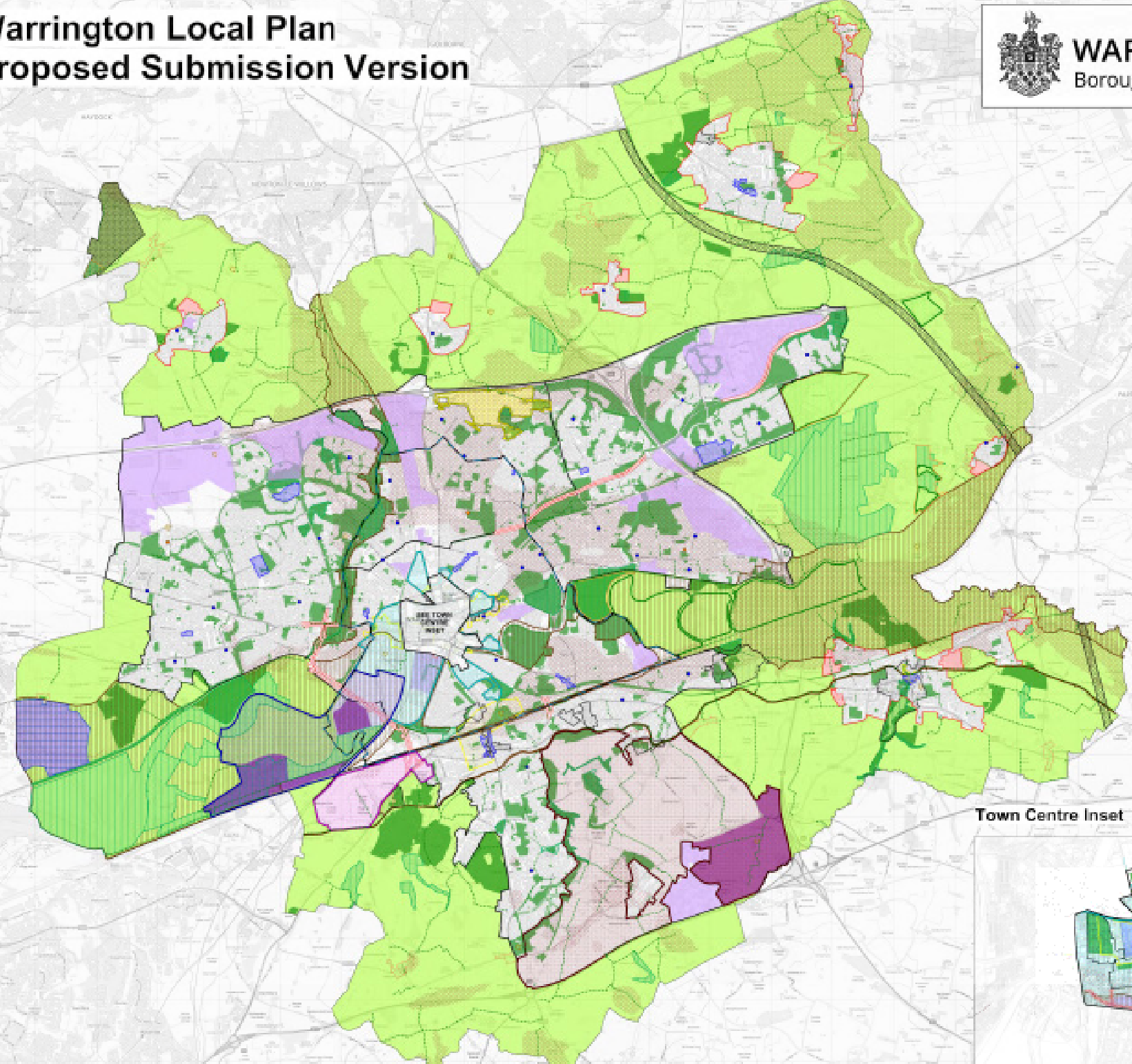
The PUSLP recognises the need for Green Belt release in order to accommodate the borough's housing and economic requirements, and identifies the 'exceptional circumstances' required to justify Green Belt release. There is no other alternative than to release land from the Green Belt.

Land at Higher Walton had been identified for removal from the Green Belt and allocated as a sustainable urban extension to the main urban area of Warrington in the PSLP. The SWUE was to be developed to support a new community in a high-quality residential setting with ease of access to Warrington's employment, recreation and cultural facilities. Policy MD3 of the PSLP indicated that the site will deliver around 1,600 homes alongside supporting infrastructure, including a new primary school and mixed-use local centre, areas of open space, landscape buffers and flood and ecological mitigation.

# Warrington Local Plan Proposed Submission Version

-  Existing Employment Area (EPA)
-  Future City (FC)
-  District / Neighbourhood Centre (DNC)
-  Local Centre (LC)
-  Community Node (CN)
-  Warrington's Green Belt (GB)
-  Local Green Belt (LGB)
-  Green Belt Extension (GBE)
-  Settlement (S)
-  Town Centre Boundary (TCB)
-  Primary Shopping Area (PSA)
-  Town Centre Mile (TCM)
-  Independent Transport Infrastructure (ITI)
-  Inner Warrington (IC)
-  Suburban Area (SA)
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM)
-  Areas of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
-  Conservation Area (CA)
-  Strategic Green Links (SGL)
-  Geopark Network (GN)
-  Green Infrastructure / Open Space (GI / OS)
-  Local Nature Mile (LNM)
-  Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
-  Mineral Safeguarding Area - Sand / Gravel (MSA)
-  Mineral Safeguarding Area - Coal (MSA)
-  Watercourse (WC)
-  Sewerage Main (SM)
-  Sewerage Main Extension (SME)
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**Scale**  
Main Map - 1:22,000 at A0  
Inset - 1:12,000 at A0

# 03 Site Context

## Strategic Context

Warrington is a Unitary Authority adjoining the city regions of Liverpool and Manchester. It is well connected to both by the strategic transport network and is therefore well placed to capitalise on the growth ambitions for these areas and the wider North, as articulated through the Northern Powerhouse ambition.

The SWUE site adjoins the urban area of Warrington, and lies less than 2km south-west of its town centre and immediately adjacent to the neighbourhood of Walton. It also adjoins the wider Warrington Waterfront area, which is identified for significant housing and employment development over the plan period.

## The Site

The SWUE site comprises approximately 119 ha of land to the south-west of the built-up area of Warrington. It currently comprises a mix of agricultural land and associated buildings and property.

The site slopes to the north: the highest point is around 30m AOD adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal, falling to 10m AOD along the Manchester Ship Canal.

Mature trees are located adjacent to the Ship Canal and railway embankments. There is also an area of mature woodland vegetation associated with a watercourse that flows north through the centre of the site. Trees subject to tree preservation orders (TPOs) are located in the hedgerows along Runcorn Road and adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal to the south of the site. Mature hedgerows line either side of Runcorn Road, Mill Lane and the A56 Chester Road, with the occasional gap for field access and in some locations degraded hedgerows.

Runcorn Road and Mill Lane traverse the site. Mill Lane is an access track to the existing dwellings within the site. The route of the proposed Western Link Road lies at the eastern end of the site.

A public right of way runs through the site on a north west/south east alignment. The route crosses through the centre of an agricultural field connecting Runcorn Road and Mill Lane adjacent to the existing housing at Grange Green Manor, a barn conversion development.



## Surroundings

The site is bound by the Manchester Ship Canal to the north and the West Coast railway line to the north west. To the south east, the A56 forms the boundary, with a parcel of land to the south of the A56, immediately adjoining Walton and the Warrington settlement boundary, included. The Bridgewater Canal encloses the site at its southern boundary. At the eastern extent, the boundary follows Bellhouse Lane and Runcorn Road.

An area of industrial uses lies on the northern side of the Ship Canal, including Port Warrington and Salvay Interlox Ltd.

The site is well related to existing facilities serving the established local residential area within Walton, including primary schools, a range of shops, public transport routes, a pub and a range of recreational facilities.

The Council confirmed in the PSLP and associated evidence base that the site's location will ensure good access to Stockton Heath District Centre, Warrington Town Centre, the major development area at Warrington Waterfront and other major existing and proposed employment areas, including Daresbury.

Existing bus routes along the Chester Road (A56) site frontage and through the site along Runcorn Road are summarised in the table below. The existing bus routes provide a good level of service and existing bus stops are within walking distance of the dwellings proposed on the site.

Both the 62 and X30 services run to Warrington Interchange where there are connections to a range of other bus services in Warrington and the nearby Warrington Central station provides national rail services.

The size of the site is such that it can, if necessary and subject to detailed evaluation, support improved bus services, providing enhanced connectivity. It is expected the full development will support additional bus services in due course, provided commercially by bus operators and with revenues off-setting operating costs.

Service No.	Route	Frequency
62	Warrington – Stockton Heath – Sci-Tech Daresbury – Runcorn – Widnes – Halebank (via Runcorn Road)	Half hourly (Weekdays) Hourly (Weekends)
62A	Warrington – Runcorn – Widnes – Halebank (via A56)	3 – 5 services daily (Weekdays)
X30	Warrington – Daresbury – Frodsham – Chester	Hourly (Weekdays and Saturdays)

1. View from Mill Lane looking north
2. View from PRoW FP Walton 2 looking west north across the site
3. View from A56/Chester Road looking east
4. View from A56/Chester Road looking west north ▶

1



2



3



4





PRoW Penketh 26

Manchester Ship Canal

PRoW Walton 5

HIGHER WALTON

PRoW Walton 2  
Retained view line

A56 / Chester Road

Walton Hall

Runcorn Road

PRoW Walton 4

Holly Hedge Lane

Cheshire Ring Canal Walk

Moore Lane

Chester to Manchester Railway Line  
Crewe to Warrington Railway Line

Bellhouse Lane

A56 / Chester Road

MOORE

14

WALTON

PRoW App


















PRoW App

A5060

# 04 Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities and constraints relevant to the development of the site are shown on the plan opposite. They have been informed by site visits, reference to existing data such as the DEFRA Magic Mapping service and evidence base documents such as the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment 2007 and survey work instructed by the Consortium and presented in the technical appendix to this prospectus.

## Key:

 Site boundary	 Sensitive boundary
 Warrington Borough boundary	 Nationally listed buildings/structure
 Retain existing vegetation within the site where possible	 Locally listed buildings
 Existing buildings within/ bounding site	 Conservation areas
 Existing watercourses/water bodies	 Proposed Green Belt
 Extend of flood risk on site (Flood Zone 3)	<b>HSE Consultation zones:</b>
 National Trail	 Zone 1
 Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	 Zone 2
 Gas pipe	 Zone 3



# 05 The Proposals

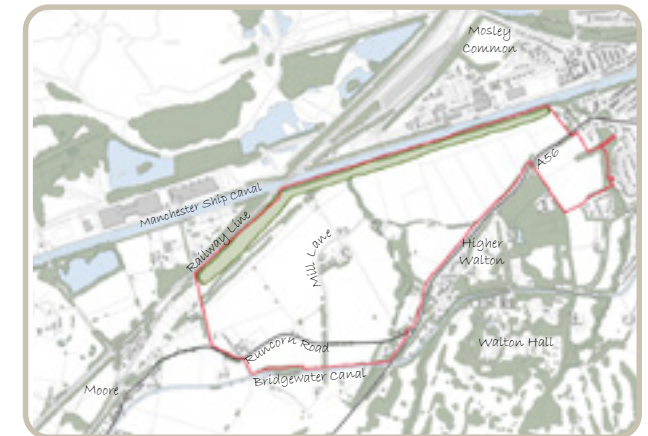
The opportunities and constraints identified through a landscape and visual appraisal have been combined with analysis of site constraints and opportunities in relation to arboriculture, ecology, heritage, noise, transport, flood risk and utilities.

The resultant concept masterplan demonstrates the potential development opportunities of the site.

The SWUE would be developed as a sustainable urban extension to the main urban area of Warrington, providing around 1,800 dwellings. The urban extension would support a new community in a high quality residential setting with ease of access to Warrington's employment, recreation and cultural facilities and be supported by a new primary school, local centre and extensive areas of open space and recreation provision.

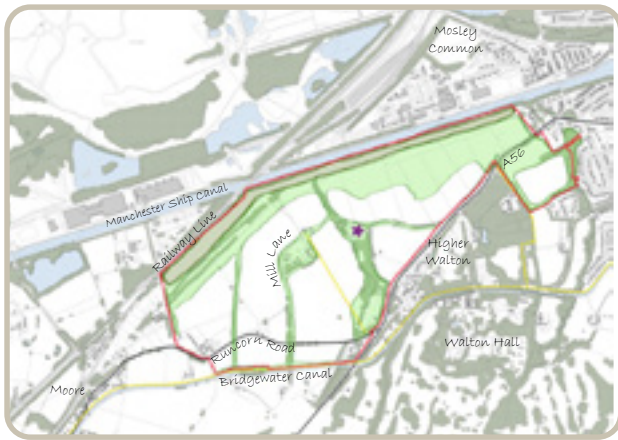
The concept masterplan has been designed to support walking and cycling for local trips and to ensure that important ecological assets within the site are preserved with opportunities to provide additional habitats and enhance biodiversity.

The urban extension will preserve, and where possible enhance the heritage assets within the site and will be designed to respect the setting of nearby heritage assets, including the Bridgewater Canal and its bridges and the Walton Village Conservation Area.



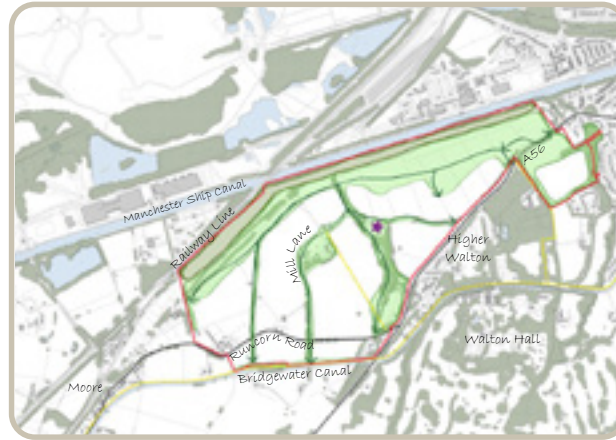
## Concept 1: Landscape buffer

Creation of landscape buffers along the northern and north western boundaries of the site. The planting of a woodland strip along these boundaries would strengthen the existing woodland and help to screen views of the industrial uses to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. It would also help to reduce noise generated from the railway line on the western boundary.



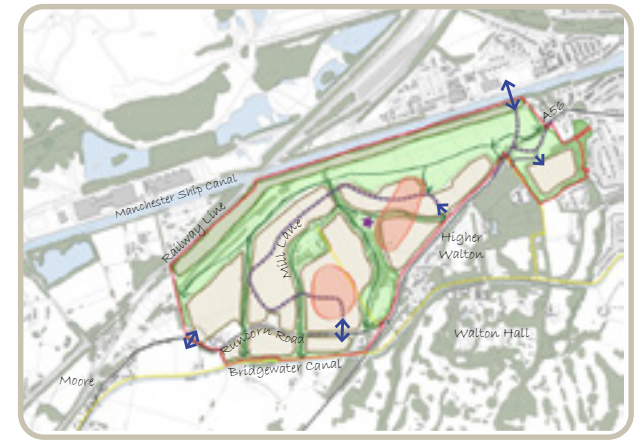
### Concept 2: Open space and recreational network

Creation of a green infrastructure network that preserves and enhances the existing landscape features within the site and provides an attractive setting for development. A wide landscape corridor along the northern and western boundaries would create an attractive linear park, incorporating the old dismantled railway line. A central green space set around the existing water course and woodland would create a focal community space including provision for a play area.



### Concept 3: Access and circulation

Creation of a network of recreational routes throughout the site towards the National Trail, which runs alongside the Bridgewater Canal to the south of the site. These routes would offer a range of recreational loops of varying distance, linking the site to Moore, Higher Walton, Walton Hall, the existing Public Right of Way network and the Bridgewater Canal.



### Concept 4: Development parcels

The remaining parts of the site would be available for development. The development areas radiate out from Mill Lane and the central green space, fronting onto the green infrastructure network. A link road in the north east provides a vehicular connection from the A56 to the Warrington Waterfront development, whilst providing additional access to the site and Warrington Town Centre. The site provides an opportunity to develop a community hub located along the primary route, this hub could include a local centre and school.



Former Norbert Dentressangle

Solway Interrox Ltd

MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL

A5060

A56

A56 Walton New P

WALTON

HIGHER WALTON

A56 Chester Road

Railway line

Runcorn Road

Runcorn Road

Cheshire Ring Canal Walk

Holly Hedge Lane




Chester Road

**KEY:**

-  Site boundary
-  Local Authority Boundary
-  Proposed Green Belt
-  Existing vegetation
-  Proposed trees and woodland
-  Proposed development cells
-  Proposed development to be no higher than 2 storey along A56
-  Potential locations for a school (A or B)
-  Proposed play area
-  Potential location for retail / local centre
-  Proposed primary road
-  Proposed secondary / tertiary roads
-  Proposed public open space
-  Proposed allotments
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed footpath
-  Proposed cycleway with existing residential access retained
-  Proposed route of western link road
-  Gas pipeline and easement
-  Proposed vehicular access points

NB: Masterplan subject to change following detailed survey work

**HSE Consultation Zones**

-  Inner Zone (50m)
-  Middle Zone (65m)
-  Outer Zone (100m)

- Total site area: 119.59 ha / 295.52 ac
- Total existing properties within red line: 6.37 ha / 15.74 ac
- Total existing roads within red line (A56/Runcorn Road): 1.80 ha / 4.45 ac
- Total proposed spine road corridor within red line (outside development cells): 2.74 ha / 6.77 ac
- Total proposed green infrastructure (all typologies): 55.82 ha / 137.93 ac

**Land north of A56 and Runcorn Road:**

- Potential school (location to be confirmed): 1.40 ha / 3.46 ac
- Potential retail/local centre: 0.50 ha / 1.24 ac
- Residential development: 41.15 ha / 101.68 ac
  - Residential development within Solvay Interrox Ltd outer zone: 13.50 ha / 33.36 ac (up to 473 units @ 35/ha)
  - Residential development within Solvay Interrox Ltd middle zone: 0.86 ha / 2.13 ac (up to 30 units @ 35/ha)
  - Residential development within former Norbert Dentressangle outer zone: 6.70 ha / 16.56 ac (up to 235 units @ 35/ha, units @ 35 units per ha: 1440)

**Land south of Runcorn Road:**

- Residential development: 5.53 ha / 13.66 ac
- units @ 35 units per ha: 194**

**Land south of A56 Chester Road:**

- Residential development: 4.28 ha / 10.57 ac
  - Residential development within Solvay Interrox Ltd outer zone: 0.47 ha / 1.16 ac (up to 16 units @ 35/ha)
- units @ 35 units per ha: 149**
- Total units across whole site @ 35 units per ha: 1783**

# 06 Suitable & Achievable

The Council has demonstrated that there are ‘exceptional circumstances’ to warrant the review of the Green Belt boundaries in the Borough. There are insufficient sites available within the existing urban area to meet the full housing needs of the borough, and neighbouring authorities are unable to accommodate some of Warrington’s identified housing needs.

The Council has previously recognised that an urban extension in the form proposed is of a sufficient scale to provide a range of services to support a new residential community in this part of Warrington, including a local centre, primary school, health facility and a network of open spaces. Its location will also ensure good access to Stockton Heath District Centre, Warrington Town Centre, the major development at Warrington Waterfront and other major existing and proposed employment areas, including Daresbury. The ability of the SWUE to make such a significant and sustainable contribution towards meeting Warrington’s development needs provides the exceptional circumstances required to justify the removal of the site from the Green Belt.

A significant amount of technical assessment work has been undertaken on behalf of the SWUE Consortium to demonstrate that the SWUE site is suitable and achievable.

This technical work supplements the evidence base work undertaken by the Council and is submitted as a technical

appendix to this Development Prospectus.

The following suite of investigations have been undertaken to inform this assessment:

- Landscape, Townscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment and Development Appraisal (Randall Thorp)
- Ecological Appraisal (TEP)
- Noise Screening Assessment (Miller Goodall)
- Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Appraisal (SGI)
- Arboricultural Walkover Survey and Desktop Assessment (TEP)
- Heritage Appraisal (Turley Heritage)
- Transport Appraisal (iTransport)
- Health & Safety (SGI)

The key findings of the technical work undertaken on behalf of the SWUE Consortium are summarised in the following table, and has influenced the concept masterplan presented in this Development Prospectus.

## Environment

### Landscape, Townscape & Visual Sensitivity

A Landscape, Townscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment and Development Appraisal has been undertaken by Randall Thorp. The report considers the existing character and visibility of the site, reviews the landscape, adjacent townscape and visual baseline in order to provide evidence to support the allocation of the site and inform the concept masterplan for residential development.

The appraisal demonstrates the site's ability to accommodate development in principle without undue impacts on the surrounding landscape, and concludes that there is no reason why a well-designed development that preserves the existing landscape features such as watercourse and trees within a green infrastructure network and responds sensitively to the setting of the Walton Village Conservation Area and heritage assets, would have any significant effects on the landscape and townscape character of the surroundings.

With appropriate good design and well thought out landscape mitigation measures, development within the site has the potential to avoid significant effects on the visual amenity of the surrounding receptors.

There are no landscape, townscape or visual sensitivities which would prevent the SWUE site being developed as a sustainable urban extension for around 1,800 dwellings and associated infrastructure.

### Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site has been undertaken by TEP, informed by the results of a desktop assessment and site surveys.

The appraisal concludes that the provision of large areas of open greenspace in the northern part of the SWUE site will be of benefit. New crossings through existing hedgerows, treelines and across watercourses will be designed so as to impose minimal impacts on protected species and habitats. Any losses will be mitigated within the open greenspace to be provided within the site.

Further detailed surveys will be required at planning application stage, including in relation to bats, amphibians, otter and water voles, badgers and nesting birds. A Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS) for brown hare, hedgehog and potentially common toad will be provided to detail how harm to these species will be avoided during construction works. Management plans to prevent the spread of invasive species (Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, Japanese rose and rhododendron) during development can be secured via condition at planning application stage.

The appraisal presents a number of measures which could be included to ensure that there is a measurable gain in biodiversity on the site. Such measures could potentially include the installation of bird and bat boxes around the site, the provision of areas of wildflower / grassland planting as part of the landscaping proposals, the inclusion of berry-bearing and nectar rich species of ornamental / landscape planting to provide a foraging resource for a range of wildlife species, including invertebrates, birds and bats.

The appraisal concludes that there are no overriding ecological constraints which preclude sustainable development of the site.

In addition, future development of the site will achieve a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity. A future application for the development of the site will be accompanied by a completed biodiversity metric using the methods set out in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment. It will meet the expected future legal requirements in this regard.

### Noise

Miller Goodall has undertaken a desktop noise screening assessment, a preliminary walkover survey and preliminary noise measurements to review potential issues and solutions associated with noise at the SWUE site.

The assessment concludes that noise would not be a barrier to residential development on the site. Whilst the assessment identifies some areas of the site where noise will need to be considered at the detailed design stage (e.g. adjacent to existing roads and the railway line and industrial and commercial operations around the periphery of the site), a suitable and commensurate level of protection against noise can be provided following a detailed noise assessment(s). Such mitigation could include the orientation of plots within the layout, enhanced glazing / alternative ventilation to affected properties and / or acoustic barriers.

There will be no significant impacts for noise as a result of the development and, with good acoustic design, the impacts can be minimised.

## Environment

### Flood Risk and Drainage

A Flood Risk & Drainage Appraisal has been undertaken by Shepherd Gilmour Infrastructure (SGI) to provide an in-depth assessment of the potential flood risk on-site and identify an initial foul and surface water drainage strategy for the SWUE, which has informed the concept masterplan for the site.

The majority of the SWUE site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with some small areas close to the unnamed watercourse which crosses the site indicated as Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high probability). Where possible, built development will be located within Flood Zone 1.

SGI has presented an indicative site-wide drainage strategy which demonstrates one option for how the site could be drained; there are likely to be a number of suitable drainage strategy options available.

The indicative drainage strategy presented by SGI indicates that the proposed development will prioritise infiltration as a means to dispose of surface water runoff. If ground conditions prohibit infiltration, plots / parcels will be allowed to discharge clean / untreated runoff into the main network(s) in the highway. The main surface water infrastructure will discharge clean / treated runoff into the Manchester Ship Canal or onsite watercourse at an approved greenfield runoff rate. Discharge locations and attenuation structure(s) can be approved at detailed design stage. The proposed foul flows from the development will discharge to existing United Utilities combined water sewer(s) via the main foul water infrastructure within the highway. Connection point(s) to the combined water sewer are to be agreed with United Utilities at detailed design stage.

### Arboriculture

A preliminary arboricultural survey and desktop assessment of the SWUE site has been undertaken by TEP, to identify potential constraints and opportunities for future development and report on the preliminary assessment effects of the concept masterplan for the site.

Trees cover a relatively small proportion of the total site area and are predominantly concentrated towards the western half of the site. The majority are located along watercourses, on field boundaries and within hedgerows parallel to public highways.

In terms of quality and particularly habitat and amenity benefits, the tree population is good but could be improved. The extant population provides good screening and contributes to visual amenity and the creation of a rural aesthetic. However, canopy cover is relatively low and connectivity would benefit from reinforcement in some areas.

Existing tree cover on the site is relatively limited and mostly confined to a few key areas following water courses, the canals and railway, and public highways. Due to these areas being less suitable for development due to proximity to sensitive receptors or sources of noise, the concept masterplan generally respects existing tree cover. It is therefore likely that residential development in broad accordance with the concept masterplan could be delivered without necessitating significant tree removal.

Given the landscaping and green infrastructure shown on the concept masterplan, it is also likely that development of the site would result in an increase in tree canopy cover. This point is reinforced by the relatively low extant tree cover within agricultural fields.

A detailed tree survey undertaken according to BS5837:2012 will be undertaken to inform the detailed design stage.

## Environment

### Heritage

A Heritage Appraisal has been undertaken and identifies heritage assets with potential to be affected by the development of the SWUE site and identifies whether there are heritage constraints to development and how these constraints could be resolved or mitigated.

The appraisal recommends a number of measures which will help to reduce the impact of the development on the significance (by way of setting) of the identified heritage assets. These measures have been incorporated into the concept masterplan that has been prepared by Randall Thorp. The Heritage Appraisal concludes that, if these measures are implemented, the development of the SWUE will sustain the significance of the following designated heritage assets, in accordance with NPPF Paragraphs 197 and 199:

- Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line)(grade II listed)
- Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal (grade II listed)
- Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal) (grade II listed)
- Walnut Tree Farmhouse (grade II listed)
- Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium) (grade II listed)
- Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium) (grade II listed), and
- Walton Village Conservation Area (grade II listed).

The requirement of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act can be satisfied in determining future planning applications, subject to a considered design approach.

The development of the SWUE site will result in the partial loss of the rural setting of the following locally listed buildings (non-designated heritage assets):

- 2 Cockfight Cottages
- 4 Cockfight Cottages
- Porch House Farm
- Canal Farmhouse
- Grange Green Manor
- Grange Mill House
- The Vicarage
- School converted to Home
- Underbridge Cottages
- Stoneoaks Cottage, and
- 99 Chester Road.

In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 203, in weighing future applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.



## Infrastructure

### Highways

iTransport has prepared a transport appraisal which considers the transport and highways related aspects of the development proposals at SWUE.

The appraisal demonstrates that the proposed development will support and promote sustainable development and sustainable travel patterns with residents able to meet day-to-day needs locally. As such, it is a suitable location for development.

Access to the site is proposed off Chester Road and Runcorn Road and feasibility level designs of the principal accesses have been produced and the capacity of these considered. The access arrangements will operate satisfactorily. Access to the site is deliverable and achievable.

The proposed Western Link will provide significant additional capacity in the central Warrington Road network and will assist in facilitating the full SWUE development proposals.

Traffic assessments of a first phase of development, delivered in advance of the Western Link, demonstrate that the generated traffic flows will form only a small proportion of existing traffic flows, well within daily variations in traffic, and will not result in severe traffic impacts.

The residual cumulative traffic impacts of development on the site will not be severe and therefore, in accordance with the NPPF, development should not be prevented on transport grounds.

### Health & Safety

Solvay Interox Ltd and the Former Norbert Dentressangle site are located to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. Both facilities are identified by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as an upper tier COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2006) site. The Inner, Middle and Outer HSE Consultation Zones extend into the SWUE site.

The concept masterplan has been prepared to accord with the HSE safety zoning. Consequently, the proposed housing will be located in the middle and outer consultation zones, which will comply with the HSE guidelines.

Discussions with the HSE to agree this position are ongoing.

There is no health and safety reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.

**The technical assessments demonstrate that the site is not affected by any insurmountable constraints. The concept masterplan as presented is, therefore, fully deliverable.**



# 07 Deliverable

The SWUE Consortium members each have land interests within the South West Urban Extension. All three members have significant experience of promoting and delivering residential development across the North West of England.

The Consortium objects to the failure to allocate the SWUE in the PUSLP, despite the previous recognition in the PSLP and associated evidence base of the suitability of the site as an allocation. The SWUE presents an opportunity to deliver a significant scale of new housing and associated infrastructure which will benefit both existing and new residents.

The development of the SWUE aligns with the overarching vision, objectives and spatial strategy of the PUSLP. It also aligns with national policy which recognises that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, including significant extensions to existing towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

The SWUE Consortium are committed to continuing to work together, and with the Council, to ensure that the SWUE is developed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner at the earliest opportunity. A Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared and confirms the Consortium members' commitment to joint working.

As demonstrated in the preceding section of this Development Prospectus, a significant amount of technical assessment work has been undertaken on behalf of the SWUE Consortium members, both collectively and individually. This technical assessment work demonstrates that, subject to obtaining planning permission, there are no insurmountable obstacles to immediate development on the SWUE site.





# 08 Benefits

## Community Benefits



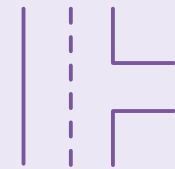
### New local centre

including retail and health facilities



### 53 hectares

of green infrastructure, including formal play space, recreation areas and allotments



Land and contributions to a new

### Western Link Road



### 30%

affordable housing



Land and contributions to a new

### Primary School



Financial contributions towards additional

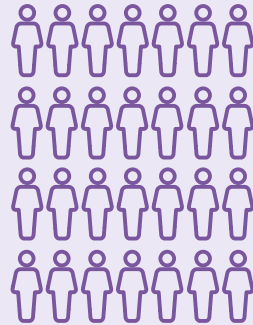
### Secondary School Places

## Construction Phase



**£244 million**

Investment<sup>1</sup> in the developments' construction



**105 net additional jobs**

Full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs supported on average during the construction period (circa 17 years)

**Including 70 direct jobs**

Supported in the North West (FTE), including 35 for Warrington residents

**Plus 35 indirect/induced jobs**

Supported in the North West (FTE), including 10 for Warrington residents



**£223 million**

GVA<sup>2</sup> economic output during construction, including £196 million in Warrington

## Operational Phase



**4,200**

New residents, of whom 2,035 are likely to be in employment



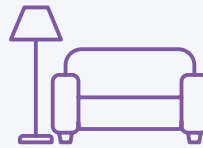
**£3.3 million**

Annual Council Tax revenue collected by Warrington Borough Council



**£55.9 million**

Gross annual resident income



**£9.8 million**

Resident expenditure upon first occupation to 'make a house feel like a home'



**£26.1 million**

Annual retail expenditure by residents



**£14.7 million**

Annual leisure expenditure by residents



**270 jobs**

In retail and leisure industries supported resident expenditure

<sup>1</sup> Construction investment figure relates to housing development only and includes infrastructure costs and professional fees

<sup>2</sup> GVA (Gross Value Added) measure the value of output created (i.e. turnover) net of inputs used to produce a good or service (i.e. production of outputs). It provides a key measure of economic productivity. Put simply the GVA is the total of all revenue into businesses, which is used to fund wages, profits and taxes.



# 09 Summary & Conclusions

This Development Prospectus sets out a vision and concept masterplan for the sustainable development of the Warrington South West Urban Extension (SWUE).

The concept masterplan presented within this document provides a framework which responds to its context. It demonstrates that the site is capable of accommodating around 1,800 new homes (including affordable housing) alongside supporting infrastructure including a potential primary school and local centre, strategic green infrastructure, local open space and drainage and highways infrastructure.

This document has been prepared on behalf of the South West Urban Extension (SWUE) Consortium, which comprises Peel Holdings (Management) Ltd, Story Homes and Ashall Property. The Consortium are committed to continuing to work together, and with Warrington Borough Council, to secure the delivery of much-needed housing and associated infrastructure on the site at the earliest opportunity.





**Turley**



**NOISE SCREENING ASSESSMENT**

on behalf of

**PEEL L&P HOLDINGS (UK) LIMITED**

for the site at

**SOUTH WEST URBAN EXTENSION**

**REPORT DATE: 12TH NOVEMBER 2021**

**REPORT NUMBER: 101780\_V8**

Miller Goodall Ltd





## Summary

Miller Goodall Ltd (MG) has, on behalf of Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Ltd, undertaken a desktop noise screening assessment, a preliminary walk over survey and preliminary noise measurements to review potential issues and solutions associated with noise on a proposed development of a residential led mixed-use development with the potential to deliver around 1,800 dwellings. The study has been undertaken to support the promotion of the land through the Warrington Local Plan. Warrington Borough Council (WBC) is currently undertaking a review of its Local Plan which will guide development in the Borough to 2038. The Council has now prepared its Proposed Submission Local Plan 2021.



The study concludes that noise should not be a barrier to residential development on the land. Areas have been identified where noise will need to be carefully considered at the design phase of the development, these include the areas in close proximity to industrial or transport sources. In these areas it is recommended that a detailed noise assessment is undertaken which considers noise mitigation measures to minimise noise to achieve recommended National standards.

In relation to the impact of the development on the noise environment, information is limited and significance will need to be assessed via detailed modelling at a later date and mitigation measures considered.

The aim of this assessment was to provide an initial overview to determine whether the site is suitable for the proposed use. The assessment has identified a number of noise sources which will require further assessment, however with suitable design of the site and acoustic mitigation measures it is considered that a suitable and commensurate level of protection against noise will be provided to the occupants of the proposed accommodation.

The impact of the development has not been able to be assessed in detail however it is not expected that there will be significant impacts for noise as a result of the development and with good acoustic design the impacts can be minimised.

### Record of changes

Prepared By	James Sharpe AMIOA	Reviewed By	Jo Miller MIOA CIEH
Signed		Signed	
Date	12th November 2021	Date	12th November 2021

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Version	Date	Change	Initials
1	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	Initial issue	JLM
2	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Minor amendments	JLM
3	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2018	Amendments to final draft	JLM
4	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2019	Amendments to Masterplan	JLM
5	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	Minor amendments	RM
6	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Minor alterations	JS
7	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Minor alterations	JS
8	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Amendments to Masterplan	JS

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This noise report is submitted in support of a proposed housing allocation within the Warrington Local Plan for a site located to the south east of the Manchester Ship Canal, namely the South West Urban Extension. The site sits within the administrative boundary of Warrington Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC).
- 1.2 This report provides a review of the existing noise sources in proximity to the proposed development site and assesses the potential impact of the proposed development on the local noise environment. It is provided as part of a suite of documents which have informed the development of the illustrative masterplan for the site's development and which collectively demonstrate that the site presents a suitable and deliverable development opportunity and is not affected by any insurmountable constraints which would impede its development over the emerging plan period
- 1.3 The external noise in urban areas is generally dominated by road traffic sources, along with industrial and commercial sources in some areas. Generally residential areas do not generate significant noise sources of concern.
- 1.4 Noise impacts need to be considered as part of the planning process both to ensure the new development does not create adverse noise impacts on existing receptors and also that new developments are not adversely impacted by existing noise sources to an unacceptable degree.
- 1.5 An initial review of the area has been undertaken to determine existing and future noise sources and noise sensitive receptors and any potential key noise issues have been identified together with any additional work which may be required.

# 2 Site Description

- 2.1 The site lies to the immediate south west of the settlement boundary of Warrington. It is bound by the Manchester Ship Canal to the north, the West Coast Railway to the north west, the A56/Chester Road to the south east and Runcorn Road to the south. There is a plot of land to the south of the A56, immediately adjoining the Warrington settlement boundary, which is included in the proposed development.
- 2.2 The site currently comprises a mix of agricultural land and associated buildings and property. Mill Lane runs through the site, providing access to a number of private properties and farm buildings. An Industrial area lies on the northern side of the Ship Canal, known as Warrington Waterfront. The route of the proposed Western Link Road lies at the eastern end of the site.
- 2.3 The site is presently designated as Green Belt land within the Warrington Unitary Development Plan (June 2005), but has been identified by the Council as a site to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing development through the emerging Local Plan.

# 3 Proposed Development

- 3.1 Land at Higher Walton will be developed as a sustainable urban extension to the main urban area of Warrington, providing around 1,800 new homes. The urban extension will support a new community in a high-quality residential setting with ease of access to Warrington's employment, recreation and cultural facilities.

3.2 The new community will be supported by:

- A new primary school
- A local centre comprising local shops, a potential new health facility (subject to needs), and other community facilities as necessary to support the new residential community
- Extensive areas of open space and recreation provision.

3.3 The development will be designed to support walking and cycling for local trips. It will benefit from the new Western Link and improved public transport to enable access to the town centre, Stockton Heath, the Waterfront development and other major employment areas, including Daresbury.

3.4 Development will ensure that important ecological assets within the site are preserved with opportunities to provide additional habitats and enhance biodiversity.

3.5 The urban extension will preserve, and where possible enhance, the heritage assets within the site and will be designed to respect the setting of nearby heritage assets, including the Bridgewater Canal and its bridges and Walton Village Conservation Area.

3.6 Five site access points are proposed, as indicated in the draft Illustrative Masterplan in Appendix 2.

3.7 The assessment for noise is based on the development taking place both with and without the Warrington Western Link Road (WWLR), which will provide a new road connection to the south-west of Warrington, linking the A56/A5060 Chester Road with the A57 at Great Sankey. The WWL is proposed to run to the south and west of Warrington town centre between A56 Chester Road and A57 Sankey Way. The preferred route of the scheme is included in Appendix 2. The scheme includes (starting from its southern end):

- A large traffic signal-controlled junction with A56 Chester Road.
- A roundabout junction within the site.
- A high-level crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal.
- A road under the West Coast Mainline railway and Walton Viaduct.
- A large roundabout junction providing connections to the north and south for development at Warrington Waterfront.
- A bridge over the River Mersey, adjacent to the existing crossing at Forrest Way.
- Bridges over the Fiddler's Ferry railway line, Sankey Brook, Liverpool Road and the St Helens Canal.
- A large traffic signal-controlled cross-roads junction with A57 Sankey Way and Cromwell Avenue.

## 4 Policy Context

### 4.1 Noise Policy Statement for England

4.1.1 The Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE<sup>1</sup>), published in March 2010, sets out the long-term vision of Government noise policy. The Noise Policy aims, as presented in this document, are:

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<sup>1</sup>Noise Policy Statement for England, Defra, March 2010

“Through the effective management and control of environmental, neighbour and neighbourhood noise within the context of Government policy on sustainable development:

- avoid significant adverse effects on health and quality of life;
- mitigate and minimise adverse effects on health and quality of life; and
- where possible, contribute to the improvement of health and quality of life.”

4.1.2 The NPSE makes reference to the concepts of NOEL (No Observed Effect Level) and LOAEL (Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level) as used in toxicology but applied to noise impacts. It also introduces the concept of SOAEL (Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level) which is described as the level above which significant adverse effects on health and the quality of life occur.

4.1.3 The first aim of the NPSE is to avoid significant adverse effects, taking into account the guiding principles of sustainable development (as referenced in Section 1.8 of the Statement). The second aim seeks to provide guidance on the situation that exists when the potential noise impact falls between the LOAEL and the SOAEL, in which case:

“...all reasonable steps should be taken to mitigate and minimise adverse effects on health and quality of life while also taking into account the guiding principles of sustainable development”.

4.1.4 Importantly, the NPSE goes on to state:

“This does not mean that such adverse effects cannot occur”.

4.1.5 The Statement does not provide a noise-based measure to define SOAEL, acknowledging that the SOAEL is likely to vary depending on the noise source, the receptor and the time in question. NPSE advises that:

“Not having specific SOAEL values in the NPSE provides the necessary policy flexibility until further evidence and suitable guidance is available”

4.1.6 It is therefore likely that other guidance will need to be referenced when applying objective standards for the assessment of noise, particularly in reference to the SOAEL, whilst also taking into account the specific circumstances of a proposed development.

## 4.2 National Planning Policy Framework

4.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF<sup>2</sup>) initially published in March 2012, was updated in July 2021. One of the documents that the NPPF replaces is Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 (PPG 24) “Planning and Noise”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2021

<sup>3</sup> Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise, DCLG, September 1994

4.2.2 The revised NPPF advises that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives). One of these is an environmental objective which is described in par. 8 (c):

*“to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

4.2.3 At par. 174 we are advised that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

*e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.*

4.2.4 Par. 185 goes on to state:

*“Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

*a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;*

*b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.*

4.2.5 Par. 187 seeks to ensure that any development does not prejudice the legally permitted operations and activities of other, existing non-residential uses, stating:

*“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or ‘agent of change’) should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.”*

## 4.3 Planning Practice Guidance – Noise

4.3.1 As of March 2014, a Planning Practice Guidance<sup>4</sup> for noise was issued which provides additional guidance and elaboration on the NPPF, the guidance was updated in July 2019. It advises that when plan-making and decision-taking, the Local Planning Authority should consider the acoustic environment in relation to:

- Whether or not a significant adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur;
- Whether or not an adverse effect is occurring or likely to occur; and
- Whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved.

4.3.2 In line with the Explanatory Note of the NPSE, the PPG goes on to reference the LOAEL and SOAEL in relation to noise impact. It also provides examples of outcomes that could be expected for a given perception level of noise, plus actions that may be required to bring about a desired outcome. However, in line with the NPSE, no objective noise levels are provided for LOAEL or SOAEL although the PPG acknowledges that:

“...the subjective nature of noise means that there is not a simple relationship between noise levels and the impact on those affected. This will depend on how various factors combine in any particular situation”.

4.3.3 Examples of these factors include:

- The source and absolute noise level of the source along with the time of day that it occurs;
- Where the noise is non-continuous, the number of noise events and pattern of occurrence;
- The frequency content and acoustic characteristics of the noise;
- The effect of noise on wildlife;
- The acoustic environment of external amenity areas provided as an intrinsic part of the overall design;
- The impact of noise from certain commercial developments such as night clubs and pubs where activities are often at their peak during the evening and night.

4.3.4 The PPG also provides general advice on the typical options available for mitigating noise. It goes on to suggest that Local Plans may include noise standards applicable to proposed developments within the Local Authority’s administrative boundary, although it states that:

“Care should be taken, however, to avoid these being implemented as fixed thresholds as specific circumstances may justify some variation being allowed”.

4.3.5 The PPG was amended in December 2014 to clarify guidance on the potential effect of noise from existing businesses on proposed new residential accommodation. Even if existing noise levels are intermittent (for example, from a live music venue), noise will need to be carefully considered and appropriate mitigation measures employed to control noise at the proposed accommodation.

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<sup>4</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Noise, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise--2> 22nd July 2019.

## 4.4 Local Planning Policy

### ***Warrington South West Urban Extension Framework Plan Document – June 2017***

- 4.4.1 A report was prepared by AECOM for the master-planning of the South West Urban Extension for Warrington Borough Council. The framework plan options have been developed giving consideration to the landscape, historic assets, transport considerations, utilities and the environmental context. The WSWUE is looking to provide a long-term large scale sustainable mixed-use development, to provide around 1,800 new homes, 2 ha Local Centre for community facilities, a new 2 ha primary school, a new 20 ha local park and around 31 ha of associated Open Spaces.
- 4.4.2 The Framework Plan developed in 2017 does not provide specific technical evidence in relation to noise. The only specific reference to noise is the within conceptual approach, option 1, which provides a green buffer to the A56 to reduce the impact of noise and air quality.

### ***Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan – September 2021***

- 4.4.3 The Proposed Submission Version Local Plan has been published for consultation between Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Section 3.3.17 addresses the proposed removal of some of the previous green belt sites which includes the South West Urban Extension.

*“The Council also considered a range of alternative locations for Green Belt release adjacent to the main urban area. The previous version of the PSVLP (2019) included the South West Urban Extension. This was given further detailed consideration, but options including this urban extension did not perform as well as the chosen spatial strategy. In particular, the South West Urban Extension would not enable the brownfield regeneration benefits of Fiddlers Ferry or such wide ranging infrastructure benefits as the South East Warrington Urban Extension. The Council also has concerns about the potential impact on the Western Link.”*

## 5 Acoustic Standards and Guidance

### 5.1 ProPG: Planning & Noise – Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise – New Residential Development – May 2017

- 5.1.1 ProPG: Planning and Noise is new guidance with the aim of delivering sustainable development and promoting good health and well-being through the effective management of noise which may impact on new residential developments. The guidance aims to complement the national planning policy and encourages the use of good acoustic design at the earliest phase of the planning process. It builds upon the recommendations of various other guidance documents including NPPF, NPSE and PPG-Noise, BS 8233 and WHO.
- 5.1.2 The guidance is applicable to new residential developments which would be exposed predominantly to noise from existing transport sources. The ProPG advocates a risk based approach to noise using a two-stage process:
- Stage 1 – an initial noise risk assessment of the proposed development site; and
  - Stage 2 – a systematic consideration of four key elements: –
    - Element 1 – demonstrating a ‘Good Acoustic Design Process’;

- Element 2 – observing internal ‘Noise Level Guidelines’;
- Element 3 – undertaking an ‘External Amenity Area Noise Assessment’; and
- Element 4 – consideration of ‘Other Relevant Issues’.

5.1.3 The ProPG approach is underpinned by the preparation and delivery of an ‘Acoustic Design Statement’ (ADS), whereby the higher the risk for noise at the site, the more detailed the ADS. The ADS should address the following issues:

- Present the initial site noise risk assessment, including the pre-development acoustic conditions prior to development;
- Describe the external noise levels that occur across the site both before and after any necessary mitigation measures have been incorporated. The external noise assessment with mitigation measures in place should use an informed judgement of typical worst-case conditions;
- Demonstrate how good acoustic design is integrated into the overall design and how the proposed acoustic design responds to specific circumstances of the site;
- Confirm how the internal noise level guidelines will be achieved, including full details of the design measures and building envelope specifications;
- A detailed assessment of the potential impact on occupants should be undertaken where individual noise events are expected to exceed 45 dB  $L_{AF,max}$  more than 10 times a night inside bedrooms;
- Priority should be given to enable the use of openable windows where practical across the development. Where this is not practical to achieve the internal noise level guidelines with windows open, then full details of the proposed ventilation and thermal comfort arrangements must be provided;
- Present the findings of the external amenity area noise assessment;
- Present the findings of the assessment of other relevant issues;
- Confirm for a low risk site how adverse impacts of noise will be mitigated and minimised;
- Confirm for a medium or high noise risk site how adverse impacts of noise will be mitigated and minimised and clearly demonstrate that a significant adverse noise impact has been avoided.

5.1.4 ProPG target noise levels are based on existing guidance from BS 8233 and WHO (see below). Table 1 below outlines the guidance noise levels for different room types during day and night times.

**Table 1: ProPG guideline indoor ambient noise levels for dwellings**

Activity	Location	07:00 to 23:00	23:00 to 07:00
Resting	Living Room	35 dB $L_{Aeq,16hr}$	-
Dining	Dining room/area	40 dB $L_{Aeq,16hr}$	-
Sleeping (daytime resting)	Bedroom	35 dB $L_{Aeq,16hr}$	30 dB $L_{Aeq,8hr}$ 45 dB $L_{Amax,F}$

5.1.5 The footnotes to this table suggest that internal noise level limits can be relaxed by up to 5 dB where development is considered necessary or desirable, and still represent “reasonable” internal conditions. They also suggest that in such cases, external levels which exceed WHO guidance target levels (see WHO section below) may still be acceptable provided that reasonable internal noise levels are achieved. Although, where the acoustic environment of external amenity areas is intrinsic to the overall design, “noise levels should ideally not be above the range 50 – 55 dB  $L_{Aeq,16hr}$ ”. The wording of ProPG (and BS 8233:2014) is clear that exceedance of guideline noise levels in external areas should not prohibit the development of desirable developments in any event.

## 5.2 BS 8233:2014 Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings

5.2.1 This standard provides recommended guideline values for internal noise levels within dwellings which are similar in scope to guideline values contained within the World Health Organisation (WHO) document, Guidelines for Community Noise (1999)<sup>5</sup>. These guideline noise levels are shown in Table 2, below.

**Table 2: BS 8233: 2014 guideline indoor ambient noise levels for dwellings**

Location	Activity	07:00 to 23:00	23:00 to 07:00
Living Room	Resting	35 dB $L_{Aeq,16hr}$	-
Dining room/area	Dining	40 dB $L_{Aeq,16hr}$	-
Bedroom	Sleeping (daytime resting)	35 dB $L_{Aeq,16hr}$	30 dB $L_{Aeq,8hr}$

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organisation Guidelines for Community Noise, 1999



### 5.2.2 BS 8233:2014 advises that:

*“regular individual noise events...can cause sleep disturbance. A guideline value may be set in terms of SEL<sup>6</sup> or  $L_{Amax,F}$  depending on the character and number of events per night. Sporadic noise events could require separate values”.*

5.2.3 BS 8233:2014 adopts guideline external noise values provided in WHO for external amenity areas such as gardens and patios. The standard states that it is “desirable” that the external noise does not exceed 50 dB  $L_{Aeq,T}$  with an upper guideline value of 55 dB  $L_{Aeq,T}$  whilst recognising that development in higher noise areas such as urban areas or those close to the transport network may require a compromise between elevated noise levels and other factors that determine if development in such areas is warranted. In such circumstances, the development should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels in external amenity areas.

## 5.3 World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines for Community Noise 1999

5.3.1 The WHO Guidelines 1999 recommends that to avoid sleep disturbance, indoor night-time guideline noise values of 30 dB  $L_{Aeq}$  for continuous noise and 45 dB  $L_{AFmax}$  for individual noise events should be applicable. It is to be noted that the WHO Night Noise Guidelines for Europe 2009<sup>7</sup> makes reference to research that indicates sleep disturbance from noise events at indoor levels as low as 42 dB  $L_{AFmax}$ . The number of individual noise events should also be taken into account and the WHO guidelines suggest that indoor noise levels from such events should not exceed approximately 45 dB  $L_{AFmax}$  more than 10 – 15 times per night.

5.3.2 The WHO document recommends that steady, continuous noise levels should not exceed 55 dB  $L_{Aeq}$  on balconies, terraces and outdoor living areas. It goes on to state that to protect the majority of individuals from moderate annoyance, external noise levels should not exceed 50 dB  $L_{Aeq}$ .

## 5.4 BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 ‘Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound’

5.4.1 BS 4142:2014+A1:2019<sup>8</sup> provides guidance on the assessment of the likelihood of complaints relating to noise from industrial sources. It replaced the 1997 edition of the Standard in October 2014 and was amended in June 2019. The amended version corrected a number of printing errors and further clarified that the standard is used to assess external noise levels, and not internal noise levels (although this can form part of the discussion regarding context). The key aspects of the Standard are summarised below.

5.4.2 The standard presents a method of assessing potential noise impact by comparing the noise level due to industrial sources (the Rating Level) with that of the existing background noise level at the nearest noise sensitive receiver in the absence of the source (the Background Sound Level).

5.4.3 The Specific Noise Level - the noise level produced by the source in question at the assessment location - is determined and a correction applied for certain undesirable acoustic features such as tonality, impulsivity or intermittency. The corrected Specific Noise Level is referred to as the Rating Level.

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<sup>6</sup> Sound exposure level or  $L_{AE}$

<sup>7</sup> WHO Night Noise Guidelines for Europe 2009

<sup>8</sup> BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound

5.4.4 In order to assess the noise impact, the Background Sound Level is arithmetically subtracted from the Rating Level. The standard states the following:

- *Typically, the greater this difference, the greater the magnitude of the impact,*
- *A difference of around +10 dB or more is likely to be an indication of a significant adverse impact, depending on the context,*
- *A difference of around +5 dB is likely to be an indication of an adverse impact, depending on the context,*
- *The lower the Rating Level is relative to the measured Background Sound Level, the less likely it is that the specific sound source will have an adverse impact or a significant adverse impact. Where the Rating Level does not exceed the Background Sound Level, this is an indication of the specific sound source having a low impact, depending on the context.*

5.4.5 In addition to the margin by which the Rating Level of the specific sound source exceeds the Background Sound Level, the 2014+A1:2019 edition places emphasis upon an appreciation of the context, as follows:

*An effective assessment cannot be conducted without an understanding of the reason(s) for the assessment and the context in which the sound occurs/will occur. When making assessments and arriving at decisions, therefore, it is essential to place the sound in context.*

The 2014 edition of BS 4142 also introduces a requirement to consider and report the uncertainty in the data and associated calculations and to take reasonably practicable steps to reduce the level of uncertainty.

## 6 Impact of Existing Noise Sources on the Development

### 6.1 Noise Survey

6.1.1 Noise measurements were undertaken at two locations identified in Appendix 1 in accordance with BS 7445-1:2003<sup>9</sup> by Gareth Willox of Miller Goodall Ltd. The measurement locations were to provide an estimate of the current noise levels during the daytime, night-time measurements have not been undertaken at this stage, since the assessment is proposed as a strategic screening exercise.

6.1.2 The calibration of the sound level meter was checked before and after measurements with negligible deviation (<0.1 dB). Details of the equipment used are shown in Table 3, below.

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<sup>9</sup> BS 7445-1: 2003 Description and measurement of environmental noise - Part 1: Guide to quantities and procedures

**Table 3: Noise monitoring equipment**

Equipment Description	Type Number	Manufacturer	Serial No.	Date Calibrated	Calibration Certification Number
Class 1 <sup>10,11</sup> Integrating Real Time 1/3 Octave Sound Analyser	NOR 140	Norsonic	1406815	12/01/17	474629844
Microphone	NOR 1225	Norsonic	264687	15/12/16	474629844
Class 1 Calibrator <sup>12</sup>	NOR 1251	Norsonic	34123	05/07/17	02777/1

6.1.3 Specific, background and ambient noise monitoring was undertaken at the times specified in Table 4, below. Weather conditions were determined both at the start and on completion of the survey. It is considered that meteorological conditions were appropriate for environmental noise measurements. Measurement locations are shown in Appendix 1.

**Table 4: Dates, times and weather conditions during noise measurements**

Measurement Location	Date	Time	Weather conditions
MP1 and MP2	29/03/2018	10:35 – 11:35	Overcast, dry, 3 – 7 °C, still

6.1.4 Measurements were taken to establish an estimate of the noise levels in the area and were not intended as a full detailed noise assessment. As part of the further design of the site and development of the full planning application further more detailed noise monitoring would be required. This would include longer term daytime and night-time noise monitoring at a number of locations across the site.

6.1.5 The measurement locations are detailed below and indicated on Appendix 1.

- MP1 Approximately 130 m from A56 on Mill Lane
- MP2 At the northern end of the site approximately 85 m from the Manchester Ship Canal and opposite Solvay Interlox Industrial site and approximately 340 m from the railway line.

6.1.6 The noise sources within the vicinity of the measurement locations are summarised in Table 5, below:

<sup>10</sup> IEC 61672-1 (2002) Electroacoustics – Sound level meters Part 1: Specifications

<sup>11</sup> IEC 61260 (1995) Electroacoustics – Octave-band and fractional-octave-band filters

<sup>12</sup> IEC 60942 (2003) Electroacoustics – Sound calibrators

**Table 5: Description of noise sources affecting the site**

Measurement Locations	Noise Sources
MP1	Birds, distant road traffic noise from A56 Chester Road.
MP2	Train noise, bird song and distant road traffic noise. No noise evident from Solvay Interlox.

## 6.2 Monitoring Results

6.2.1 A summary of the broadband measurement data is provided in Table 6 below. All data are sound pressure levels in dB re 20  $\mu$ Pa.

**Table 6: Summary of noise measurements**

Measurement Location	Start Time	$L_{Aeq,T,5}$ mins (dB)	Overall $L_{AFmax}$ (dB)	$L_{AF10,5}$ mins (dB)	$L_{AF90,5}$ mins (dB)
MP1	10:35:06	45.3	51.8	46.8	43.5
MP1	10:40:06	47.8	61.6	51.0	42.9
MP1	10:45:06	46.8	67.2	48.3	44.1
MP1	10:50:06	46.3	58.2	49.3	42.0
MP1	10:55:06	45.5	56.2	47.4	43.1
MP1	11:00:06	44.5	58.7	46.0	42.5
MP2	11:10:06	47.2	60.3	49.8	43.4
MP2	11:15:06	50.4	65.6	54.7	43.4
MP2	11:20:06	47.0	62.8	48.7	42.8
MP2	11:25:06	46.4	57.4	48.8	43.7
MP2	11:30:06	49.8	70.2	53.0	44.5
MP2	11:35:06	49.0	68.5	52.3	44.2

6.2.2 Each measurement period consisted of sequential 5-minute samples.

6.2.3 The results of the noise monitoring have been assessed against the ProPG noise risk levels to determine the potential effect of noise on the proposed site without mitigation measures. The risk level has been determined based on the measured daytime noise levels at the monitoring positions.



6.2.5 As can be seen in Table 7 above, the noise levels measured at the site indicate “no adverse effect”, however as previously stated these levels are a short-term indication of the noise levels for the site and do not include night-time levels.

## 6.3 Noise Mapping

6.3.1 Environmental noise mainly consists of noise from transport sources, such as road, rail and aviation. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is responsible for creating noise maps and drawing up Action Plans under the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), which requires Defra to:

- adopt noise maps which show people’s exposure to environmental noise;
- adopt action plans based on the results of noise mapping
- aims to preserve environmental noise quality where it is good; and
- provides information to the public on environmental noise and its effects.

6.3.2 Noise mapping has been undertaken by Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in 2017. Maps have been provided for main noise sources including road traffic noise and rail noise. The noise maps for the area are shown for both road traffic noise and railway noise in Appendices 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b respectively. The results show the predicted daytime  $L_{Aeq,16hour}$  and night time  $L_{Aeq,8hour}$  levels around the site for both road traffic noise and railway noise, taken at a grid height of 4 m.

## 6.4 Road Traffic Noise

6.4.1 The main existing road traffic noise source which has the potential to impact on the site is from the A56 with further potential from the proposed strategic road link WWLR. The main parcels of land which are likely to be impacted by the road traffic noise are those located within approximately 150 m of the road. These are areas where the road traffic noise levels are predicted to exceed 55 dB  $L_{Aeq,16hour}$  in the daytime and 50 dB  $L_{Aeq,8hour}$  in the night time.

6.4.2 The WWLR preferred route is proposed to run north from the A56 across the eastern parcel of the site. An assessment of the noise levels from this source shall be required in order to assess the impact of this noise source on any proposed housing. Notwithstanding the additional need to assess this area for noise the use of standard mitigation measures such as those outlined at 6.4.4 below will assist in bringing the noise levels in line with National Standards.

6.4.3 Bellhouse Lane to the south western boundary of the site is not expected to impact on the site in relation to noise in any significant way, due to the likely low level of transport use of this lane.

6.4.4 The road network in this area is not dissimilar to other typical areas at the edge of an urban environment. The area will require a more detailed noise assessment and noise modelling to show how National noise standards may be achieved. The assessment would include noise modelling predictions of the WWLR, and identify preferred mitigation measures to protect future residents. The standard mitigation measures which are likely to be suggested include:

- Suitable buffer zones between noise sources and proposed residential developments;
- Orientation of properties to provide the most protection to noise sensitive areas, such as bedrooms and private garden areas;

- Noise mitigation in the form of acoustic glazing and ventilation for those properties where achieving the guidance values cannot be achieved with openable windows; and
- Potentially the use of noise bunds and barriers to protect private garden areas.

6.4.5 This form of noise assessment is very common in urban areas and it is considered that suitable mitigation measures and careful design will enable guidance levels to be achieved.

## 6.5 Railway Noise

6.5.1 Results of the noise mapping produced on behalf of DEFRA for the railway are provided in Appendix 4a and 4b. Areas of the north western element of the housing allocation would appear to fall within the 55 – 60 dB  $L_{Aeq,16hr}$  range for the daytime and 50 – 55 dB  $L_{Aeq,8hr}$  for the night time.

6.5.2 The railway line runs diagonally to the north-west boundary of the site. The railway line consists of the main West Coast Railway Line and the Crewe to Warrington Railway Line.

6.5.3 The height of the railway line is approx. 10m higher than the site. The closest proposed houses are approximately 150 m from the railway line. Railway line mapping data (Appendix 4a and 4b) would suggest that the closest houses are within the 55 – 60 dB  $L_{Aeq,16hr}$  zone in the daytime and 50 – 55 dB  $L_{Aeq,8hr}$  for the night time. The level of noise in the external garden areas of those properties closest to the railway line would therefore need to be carefully considered at the design stage of the planning application. The following forms of noise mitigation may be required at the detailed design phase of the development.

- Orientation of private gardens away from the railway line
- Use of acoustic glazing and ventilation to reduce the noise ingress to achieve National guidance values
- Use of acoustic barriers where necessary to achieve National external noise guidance levels.

6.5.4 A detailed noise assessment is likely to be required at the full design stage to enable the noise mitigation measures to be fully assessed, however it is considered that with the mitigation measures proposed above the external noise limit values will be able to be achieved.

## 6.6 Industrial Noise

6.6.1 Appendix 5 provides the locations of the main industrial and commercial noise sources identified during the noise screening assessment.

6.6.2 The main industrial areas which have the potential to impact on the development site have been identified from a desktop internet search, computer modelling software, GIS and site observations during the noise monitoring and site visit. The sources identified are detailed in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Industrial Sources with Potential to Impact on the Site**

Identity No.	Location	Name of Site	Type of Operation	Types of Noise Sources
1	Baronet Works, off Baronet Way	Solvay Interlox	Industrial manufacturing Process	Industrial manufacturing noise
2	Port Warrington	Port Warrington	Port	Industrial noise, movement of containers and activities within the Port.
3	Port Warrington	Proposed Extension to Port Warrington	Port	Industrial noise, movement of containers and activities within the Port.
4	Off Bellhouse Lane, Walton	Sewerage Works	Sewerage works	Unlikely to produce any significant noise sources.
5	Off Runcorn Road, Walton	P&G LGV Driver Training	Training facility	Vehicle movements
6	Mill Lane	Walton Turf	Turf production	Vehicle movements
7	Holy Hedge Lane	Holy Hedge Farm	Farm	Farm operations.

6.6.3 The onsite survey work did not identify any significant noise sources from the industrial and commercial sites identified in Table 8 above, however at the detailed design stage the sources will be assessed in more detail to determine the need for any specific mitigation measures.

6.6.4 Miller Goodall have been working on the noise impact assessment for the proposed extension of Port Warrington. Final details of this assessment are not fully complete, however the impact of the Port Extension on the proposed SWUE is minimised by the effective bund provided by the railway line and sidings, which is 10 m higher than the site, with the exception of the bridge going under the line at the northern portion of the development site. The distance from the Port is relatively large, approximately 350 m and consequently we do not consider the existing or proposed activities of the Port likely to be a significant issue for the development. The detailed design of the site will need to consider both the proposed and existing activities of the Port to include noise mitigation as necessary.



6.6.5 It is considered that the noise impact from those industrial sources identified can be mitigated against as part of the detailed design of the site. The mitigation measures may include:

- Orientation of private garden areas to provide protection from industrial noise sources;
- Use of noise bunds or barriers to minimise noise impacts and
- Acoustic glazing and ventilation strategies identified where necessary.

6.6.6 It is considered that with these mitigation measures provided as part of the full design of the site, a suitable and commensurate level of protection will be afforded to the proposed residential accommodation.

## 7 Impact of Noise from the Proposed Development

### 7.1 Transport Noise

7.1.1 New residential development and infrastructure developments of this size will result in additional vehicles on the local road network. I-Transport have completed a draft transport appraisal for the site, dated July 2018. The assessment has identified the likely increases in traffic as a result of the proposed development. The transport appraisal has considered the transport and highways implications of residential development on WBC's draft allocation at the South West Urban Extension.

7.1.2 In order to assess whether traffic increases impact on the noise environment, it is useful to determine whether there are any increases in traffic flow as this may necessitate the requirement for a detailed noise assessment. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) November 2011 section A1.8 (ii) states:

*Changes in traffic volume on existing roads or new routes may cause either of the threshold values for noise to be exceeded. A change in noise level of 1 dB  $L_{A10,18h}$  is equivalent to a 25% increase or a 20 % decrease in traffic flow, assuming other factors remain unchanged and a change in noise level of 3 dB  $L_{A10,18h}$  is equivalent to a 100 % increase or a 50 % decrease in traffic flow.*

7.1.3 The Transport Appraisal identifies Runcorn Road as a road that will be subject to increased traffic. As part of a full noise assessment at the detailed design stage, it will need to be determined if a DMRB assessment will be necessary, once more detailed traffic flows are available.

7.1.4 Although a full detailed assessment of the traffic noise has not as yet been undertaken, it is considered that the impact will be not be significant. The detailed assessment will need to consider the new infrastructure and methods to minimise any potential impacts.

### 7.2 Construction Noise and Vibration Impacts

7.2.1 It is common for the control of construction noise, vibration and dust emission to be addressed by the application of Best Practicable Means (BPM) and detailed within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The impact of construction noise from a development of this size is likely to be the main noise impacting on existing noise sensitive receptors, albeit over a relatively short period of time.

7.2.2 Prior to commencement of works, a quantitative noise impact assessment using guidance in BS 5228<sup>13</sup> on site may also be required but in our experience is usually only necessary where long-term remediation of a site is required, or where large-scale piling works are required in close proximity to existing sensitive receptors. It will be necessary to provide a robust CEMP which is agreed by the Local Authority.

7.2.3 Warrington Borough Council are likely to have their own recommended wording for planning conditions relating to the control of noise and vibration from construction works.

### 7.3 New Commercial and Educational developments

7.3.1 Any new commercial, retail and educational developments will need to be considered as part of the detailed design for the site. The noise sources from the proposed commercial, educational and retail developments within the site are not considered likely to have a significant impact on existing or future residential dwellings. They may include noise sources such as loading bays, plant noise and school playgrounds. It is not likely that any of the proposed noise sources will have a significant impact and the use of good acoustic design incorporated at an early stage in the development of the site will help to minimise any potential impact.

### 7.4 Protecting areas from increased noise.

7.4.1 The NPPF recommends protecting areas of tranquillity and areas prized for their recreational and amenity value. Table 9 identifies areas which it is felt meets this criterion. The identified sites are shown in Appendix 6.

**Table 9: Locations where noise should be protected**

Identity No.	Name of Site	Type of Operation	Reason
8	Walton Crematorium	Crematorium	Protect the use of the site
9	Higher Walton Golf Club	Golf Course	Protect the open space

7.4.2 The use of good acoustic design would enable the site to be developed to protect the identified tranquil areas. This would be considered as part of the noise assessment submitted to support the planning application.

## 8 Summary and Conclusions

8.1 A noise screening assessment, site visit and preliminary noise measurements have been undertaken to identify any potential noise sources which are likely to have an impact on the development of a site for a significant housing and infrastructure development. The information indicates that the impact of noise would not be a barrier to residential development on the land which the masterplan proposes for the development.

<sup>13</sup> BS 5228 Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites - Part 1: Noise: 2009+A1:2014

8.2 The assessment has identified a number of possible noise sources which may impact on the proposed development or existing noise sensitive receptors which may be impacted by the development. However, it is not considered that any of the identified noise sources are likely to have a significant impact or likely to be a barrier to development. There are a number of recommendations in relation to noise which will assist in minimising the potential impact on both the future and existing noise sensitive receptors. With good acoustic design it is considered that National standards for noise will be achieved for the proposed masterplan.

8.3 The recommendations include:

- Detailed assessment of noise from transportation sources, including road and rail transport around the site including the inclusion of noise mitigation measures as the detailed masterplan is developed for the site.
- Detailed assessment of noise from industrial and commercial sources located around the periphery of the site and include where necessary mitigation measures and use of good acoustic design as the masterplan is developed to a full planning application.
- There are areas within the site and located close to the site which are considered tranquil areas and careful design of the masterplan should aim to protect the noise environment at these locations.

8.4 It is considered that part of the detailed noise assessment will include the consideration of a number of mitigation measures for acoustics, including;

- Careful design of the site to ensure National target for noise are achieved at noise sensitive receptors;
- Consideration of acoustic mitigation measures to control noise levels to National guidance levels, including acoustic glazing and ventilation.

8.5 An assessment of the impact of the development in terms of noise from; transport, new infrastructure, construction noise and commercial and retail sources will need to be undertaken as part of the planning submission for the application site. The initial screening assessment does not consider that there is likely to be a significant impact as a result of the development. Good acoustic design should be considered as the masterplan is developed to protect existing noise sensitive receptors.

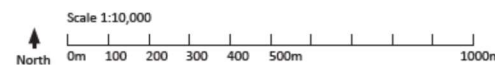
8.6 It is considered that with good acoustic design a suitable and commensurate level of protection against noise will be provided to the occupants of the proposed accommodation. Good acoustic design will also assist in reducing the potential impacts of the development for existing noise sensitive receptors.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Site Outline and Monitoring Positions



## Appendix 2: Illustrative Master Plan and Development Constraints



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total site area: 119.59 ha / 295.52 ac</li> <li>• Total existing properties within red line: 6.37 ha / 15.74 ac</li> <li>• Total existing roads within red line (A56/Runcom Road): 1.80 ha / 4.45 ac</li> <li>• Total proposed spine road corridor within red line (outside development cells): 2.74 ha / 6.77 ac</li> <li>• Total proposed green infrastructure (all typologies): 55.82 ha / 137.93 ac</li> </ul>	
<p>Land north of A56 and Runcom Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential school (location to be confirmed): 1.40 ha / 3.46 ac</li> <li>• Potential retail/local centre: 0.50 ha / 1.24 ac</li> <li>• Residential development: 41.15 ha / 101.68 ac                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residential development within Salvay Interax Ltd outer zone: 13.50 ha / 33.36 ac (up to 473 units @ 35/ha)</li> <li>- Residential development within Salvay Interax Ltd middle zone: 0.86 ha / 2.13 ac (up to 30 units @ 35/ha)</li> <li>- Residential development within former Norbert Dentressangle outer zone: 6.70 ha / 16.56 ac (up to 235 units @ 35/ha)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>units @ 35 units per ha: 1440</p>	
<p>Land south of Runcom Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential development: 5.53 ha / 13.66 ac</li> </ul> <p>units @ 35 units per ha: 194</p>	
<p>Land south of A56 Chester Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential development: 4.28 ha / 10.57 ac                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residential development within Salvay Interax Ltd outer zone: 0.47 ha / 1.16 ac (up to 16 units @ 35/ha)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>units @ 35 units per ha: 149</p> <p>Total units across whole site @ 35 units per ha: 1783</p>	

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
MASTERPLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN

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**KEY:**

- Site boundary
- Local Authority Boundary
- Proposed Green Belt
- Existing vegetation
- Proposed trees and woodland
- Proposed development cells
- Proposed development to be no higher than 2 storey along A56
- Potential locations for a school (A or B)
- Proposed play area
- Potential location for retail / local centre
- Proposed primary road
- Proposed secondary / tertiary roads
- Proposed public open space
- Proposed allotments
- Existing Public Right of Way
- Proposed footpath
- Proposed cycleway with existing residential access retained
- Proposed route of western link road
- Gas pipeline and easement
- Proposed vehicular access points

NB: Masterplan subject to change following detailed survey work



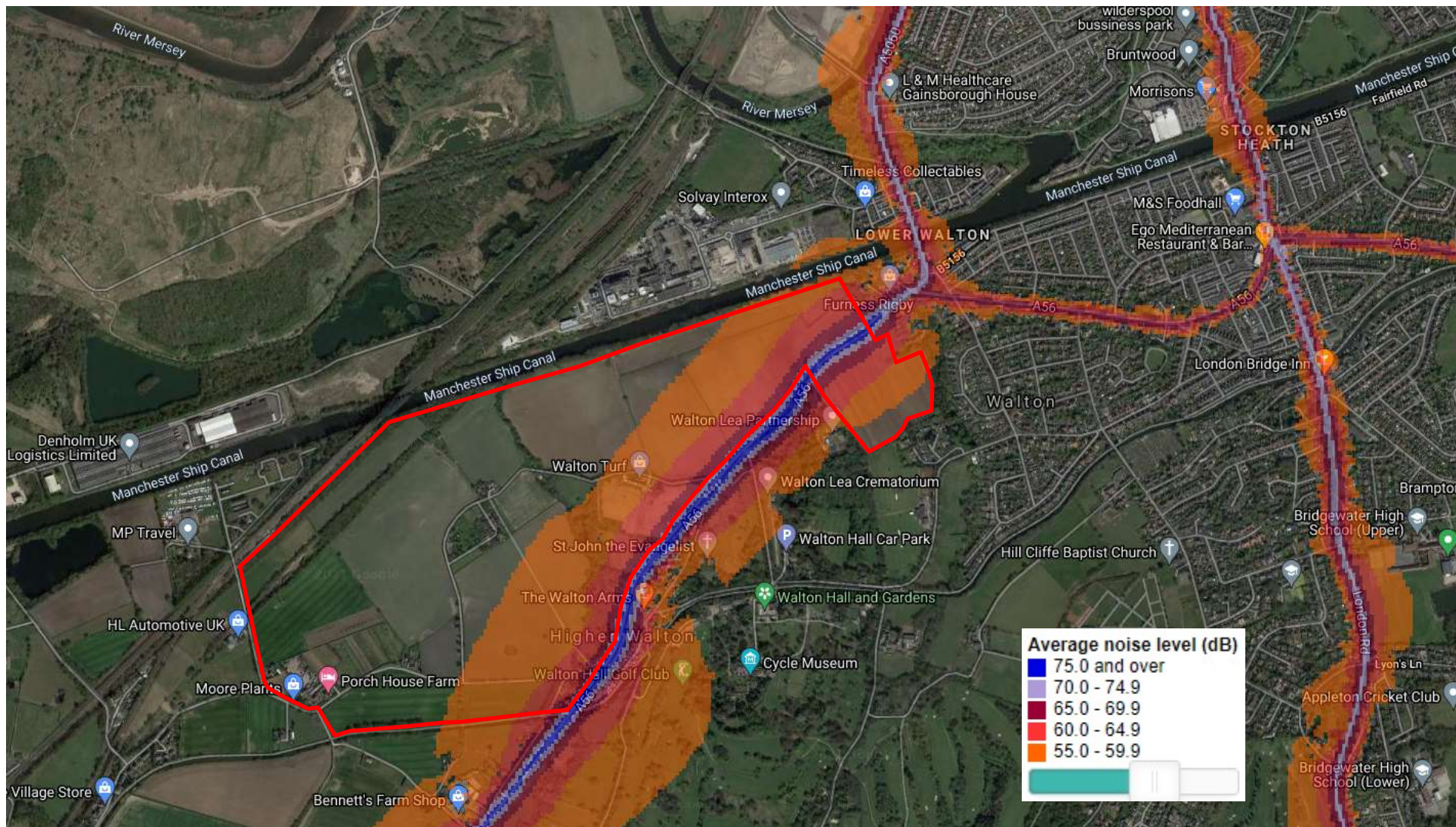
**Warrington Local Plan Sites**

South West Urban Extension  
Illustrative Masterplan and development constraints

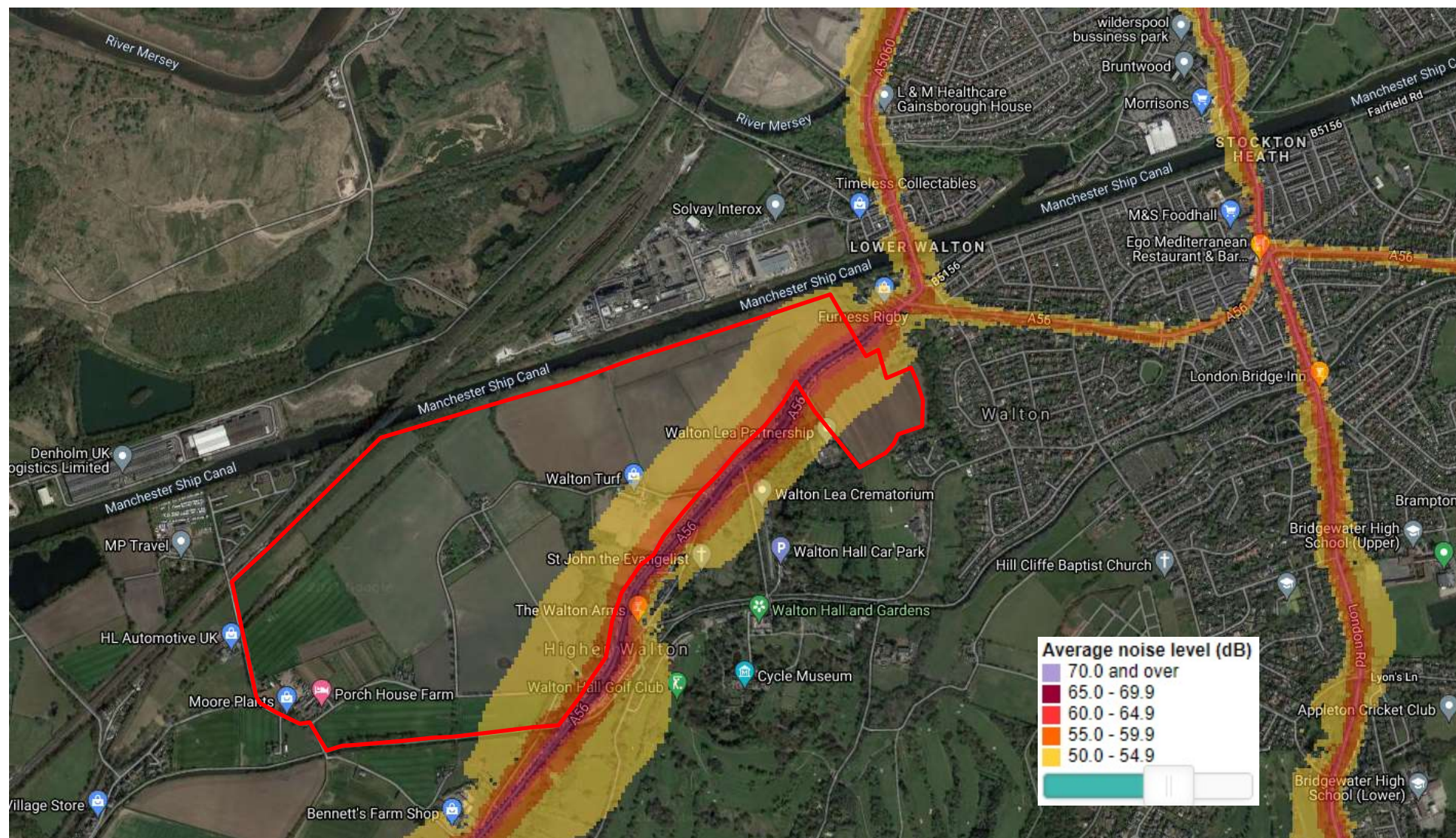
Drwg No: 630DE-13M Date: 11.06.2018  
 Drawn by: AH Checker: SR  
 Rev by: SB (10.11.21) Rev checker: DL  
 QM Status: Checked Product Status: Issue

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

### Appendix 3a: DEFRA Daytime Road Traffic Noise Mapping, $L_{Aeq}$ , Daytime, 16hr

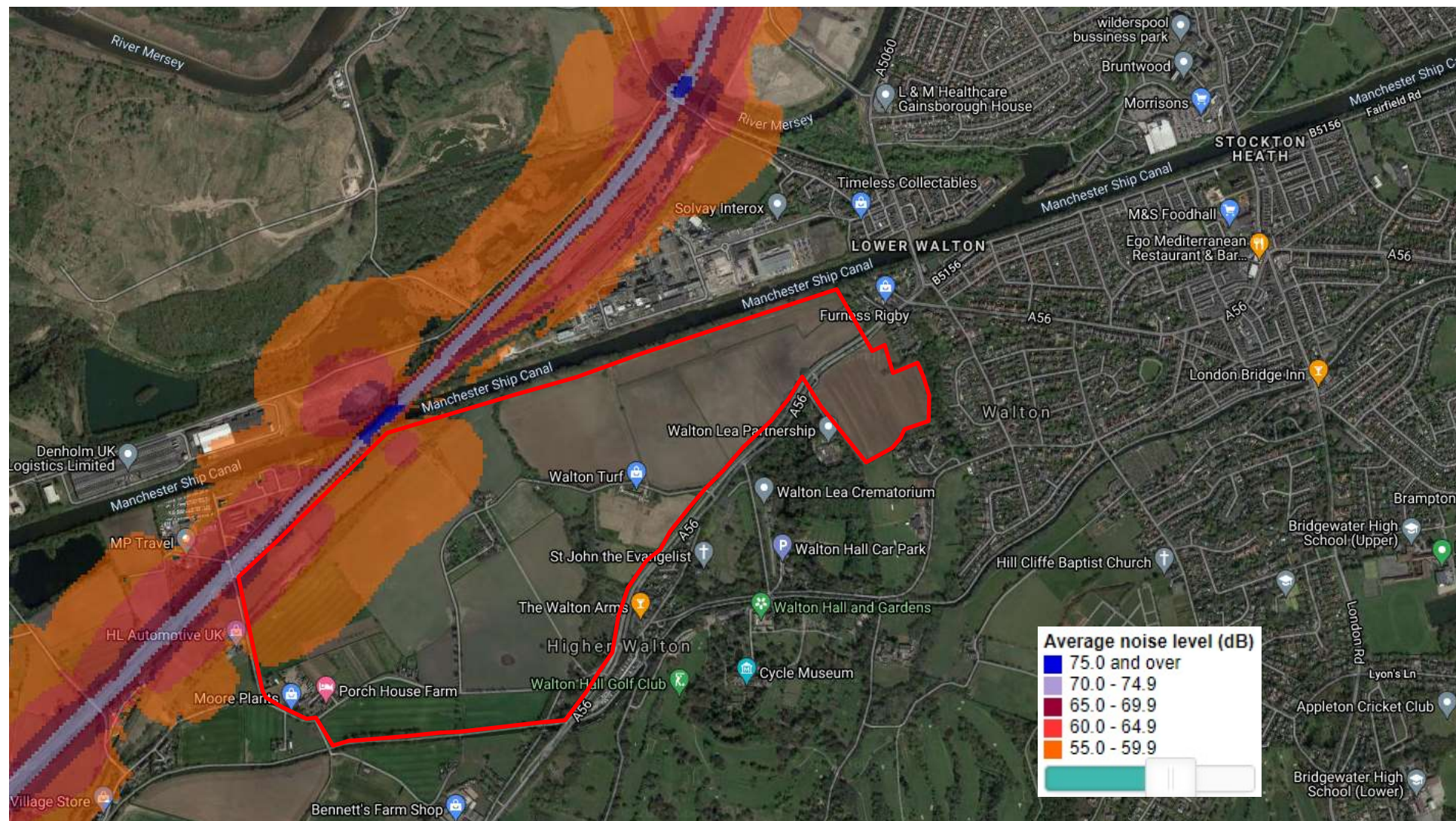


### Appendix 3b: DEFRA Night time Road Traffic Noise Mapping, $L_{Aeq}$ , Night, 8hr

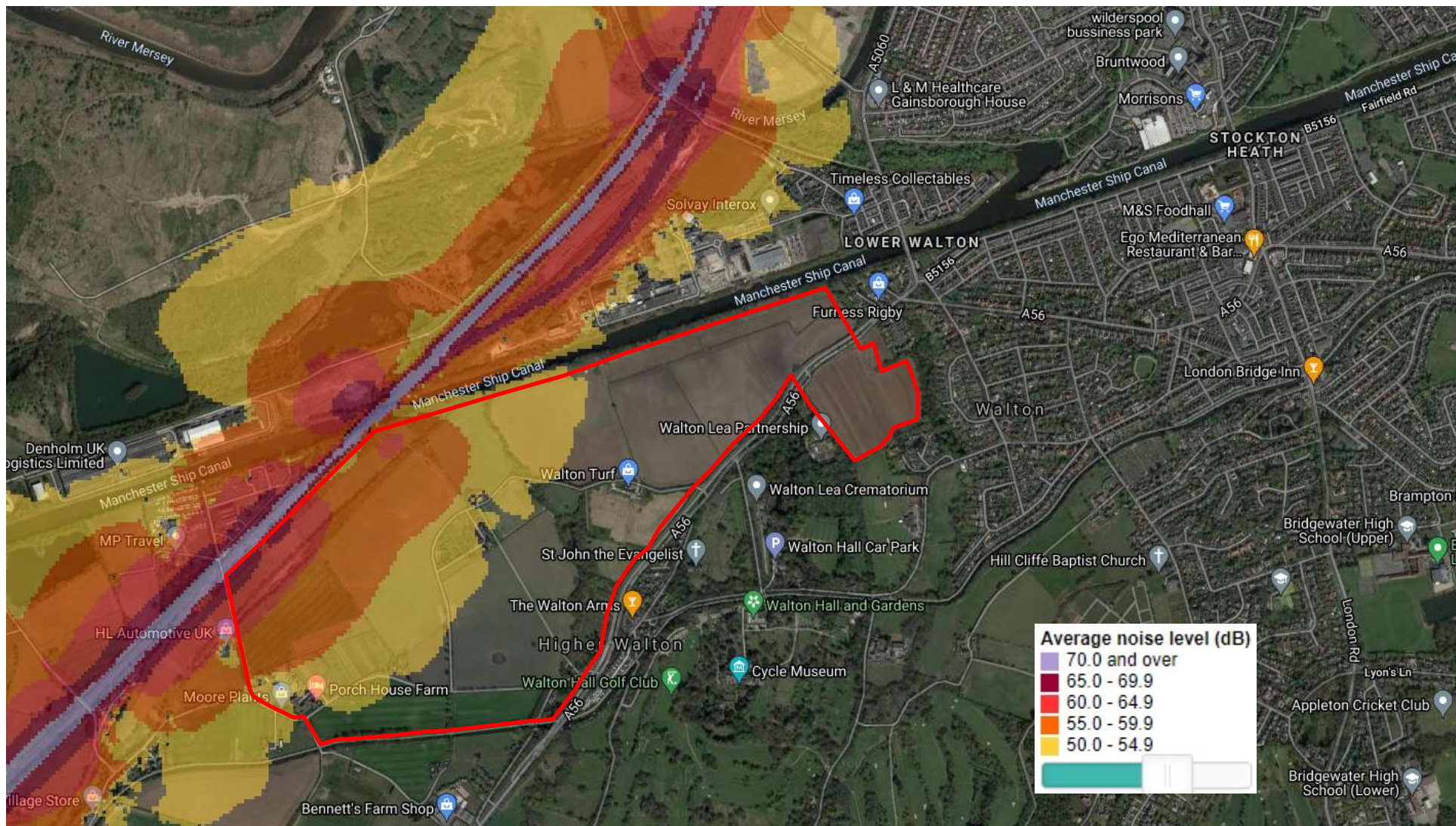




## Appendix 4a: DEFRA Daytime Railway Noise Mapping, $L_{Aeq}$ , Daytime, 16hr



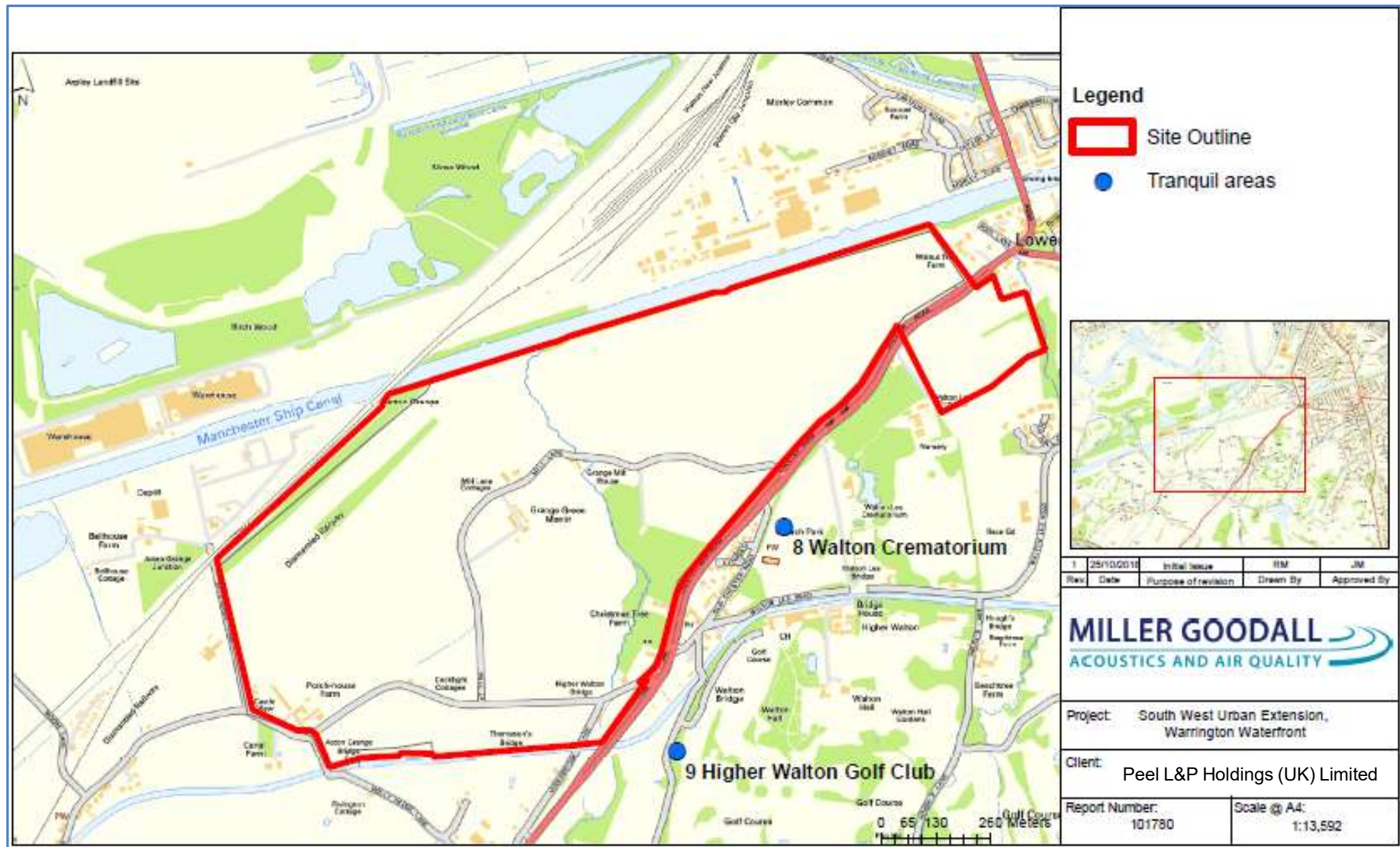
### Appendix 4b: DEFRA Night time Railway Noise Mapping, $L_{Aeq}$ , Night, 8hr



## Appendix 5: Potential Industrial and Commercial Noise Sources



## Appendix 6: Tranquil Areas



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## Glossary of Terms

- Decibel (dB)** The unit used to quantify sound pressure levels; it is derived from the logarithm of the ratio between the value of a quantity and a reference value. It is used to describe the level of many different quantities. For sound pressure level the reference quantity is 20  $\mu\text{Pa}$ , the threshold of normal hearing is in the region of 0 dB, and 140 dB is the threshold of pain. A change of 1 dB is usually only perceptible under controlled conditions.
- dB  $L_A$**  Decibels measured on a sound level meter incorporating a frequency weighting (A weighting) which differentiates between sounds of different frequency (pitch) in a similar way to the human ear. Measurements in dB  $L_A$  broadly agree with an individual's assessment of loudness. A change of 3 dB  $L_A$  is the minimum perceptible under normal conditions, and a change of 10 dB  $L_A$  corresponds roughly to halving or doubling the loudness of a sound. The background noise level in a living room may be about 30 dB  $L_A$ ; normal conversation about 60 dB  $L_A$  at 1 meter; heavy road traffic about 80 dB  $L_A$  at 10 meters; the level near a pneumatic drill about 100 dB  $L_A$ .
- $L_{A90,T}$**  The A weighted noise level exceeded for 90% of the specified measurement period ( $T$ ). In BS 4142: 1997 it is used to define background noise level.
- $L_{Aeq,T}$**  The equivalent continuous sound level. The sound level of a notionally steady sound having the same energy as a fluctuating sound over a specified measurement period ( $T$ ).  $L_{Aeq,T}$  is used to describe many types of noise and can be measured directly with an integrating sound level meter.
- $L_{Amax}$**  The highest A weighted noise level recorded during the time period. It is usually used to describe the highest noise level that occurred during the event.
- NOEL** No observed effect level: the level of noise exposure below which no effect at all on health or quality of life can be detected.
- LOAEL** Lowest observed adverse effect level: the level of noise exposure above which adverse effects on health or quality of life can be detected.
- SOAEL** Significant observed adverse effect level: the level of noise exposure above which significant adverse effects on health or quality of life can be detected.



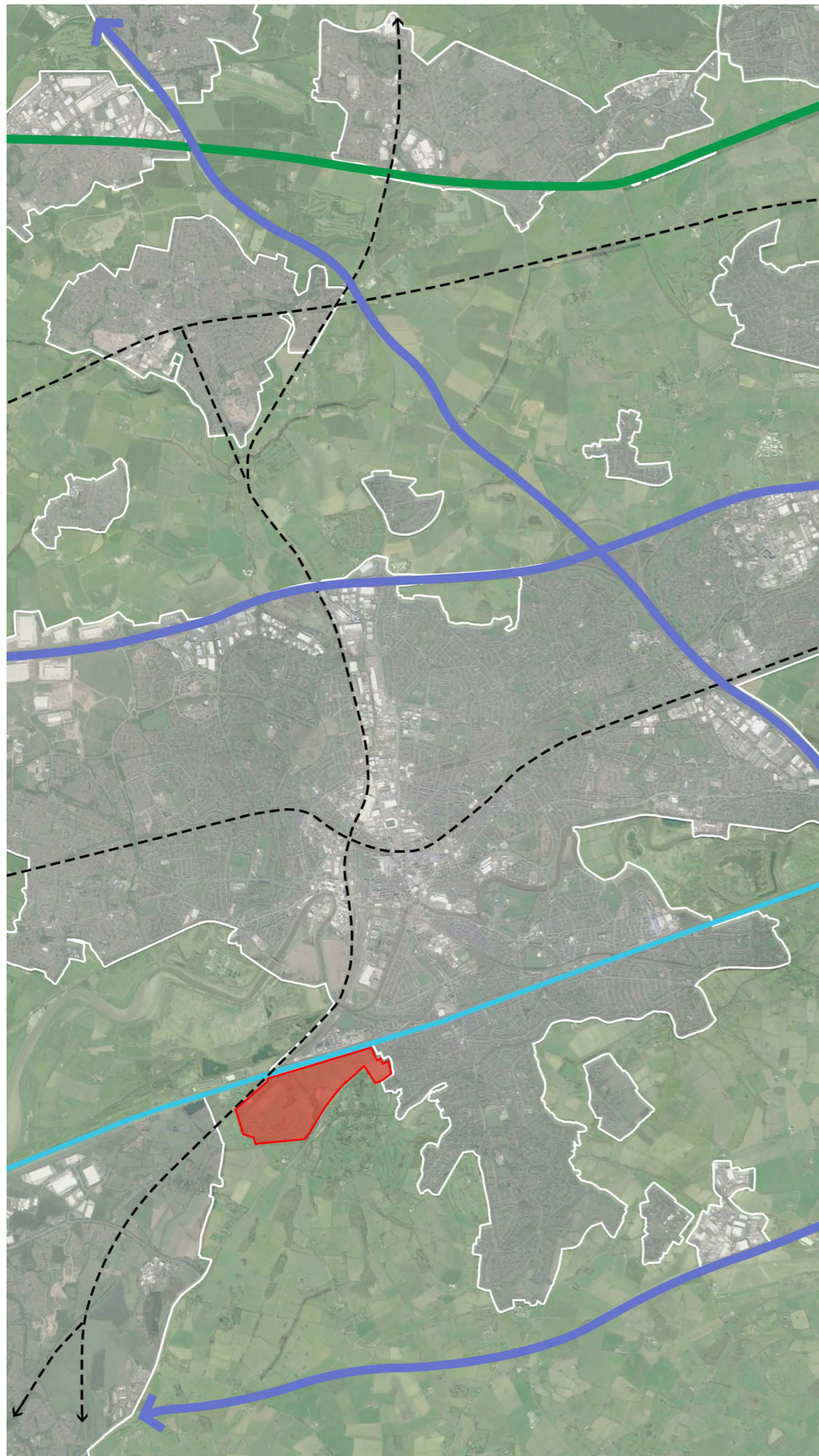


# South West Urban Extension Warrington

Landscape, Townscape and  
Visual Sensitivity Assessment  
and Development Appraisal

**RANDALL  
THORP**

November 2021







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## Overview

Randall Thorp LLP has been commissioned by a consortium of developers (Peel Holdings, Story Homes, Ashall Property) to produce a Landscape, Townscape and Visual sensitivity assessment.

This report has been produced in response to the proposed allocation of this site as an urban extension to Warrington Town within Warrington Borough Council's Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (2021) (UPSVLP).

This assessment will assist in demonstrating the site is suitable to accommodate new residential development in relation to landscape character, townscape character and visual sensitivity.

This forms one of a suite of reports commissioned to inform the development of a masterplan for the site and to assess its deliverability. Together, these reports form part of the evidence base which underpins the proposed allocation of the site within the PSLP.

## Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the landscape, townscape and visual sensitivity of the South West Urban Extension site and its surroundings, and demonstrates the sites ability to accommodate development in principle without undue impacts on the surrounding landscape. The strategic location of the site and the existing settlement of Higher Walton within the Warrington Borough are shown on **Figure 1** (Page 3).

**Figure 2** (Page 5) shows the site in relation to Higher Walton, Lower Walton and the surrounding landscape. Higher Walton is located in close proximity to the edge of Warrington, on the southern side of the A56, in the south west of the Warrington Borough.

The site lies to the immediate south west of the settlement boundary of Warrington. It is bound by the Manchester Ship Canal to the north and the West Coast Railway to the north west. To the south east the A56 forms the boundary, with a plot of land to the south of the A56, immediately adjoining the Warrington settlement boundary, included. The Bridgewater Canal encloses the site at its southern boundary. At the eastern extent, the boundary follows Bellhouse Lane and Runcorn Road.

The site currently comprises a mix of agricultural land and associated buildings and property. Mill Lane runs through the site, providing access to a number of private properties and farm buildings. An area of industrial uses lies on the northern side of the Ship Canal, known as Warrington Waterfront. The route of the proposed Western Link Road lies at the eastern end of the site.

The site is presently designated as Green Belt land within the Warrington Unitary Development Plan (June 2005), but has been identified by the Council as a site to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing development through the PSLP.

This report considers the existing character and visibility of the site. The report reviews the landscape, adjacent townscape and visual baseline in order to provide evidence to support the allocation of the site and inform the future masterplanning for residential development.

An illustrative masterplan is provided to demonstrate one possible solution for the development of the site, which has been informed by the findings of this report.

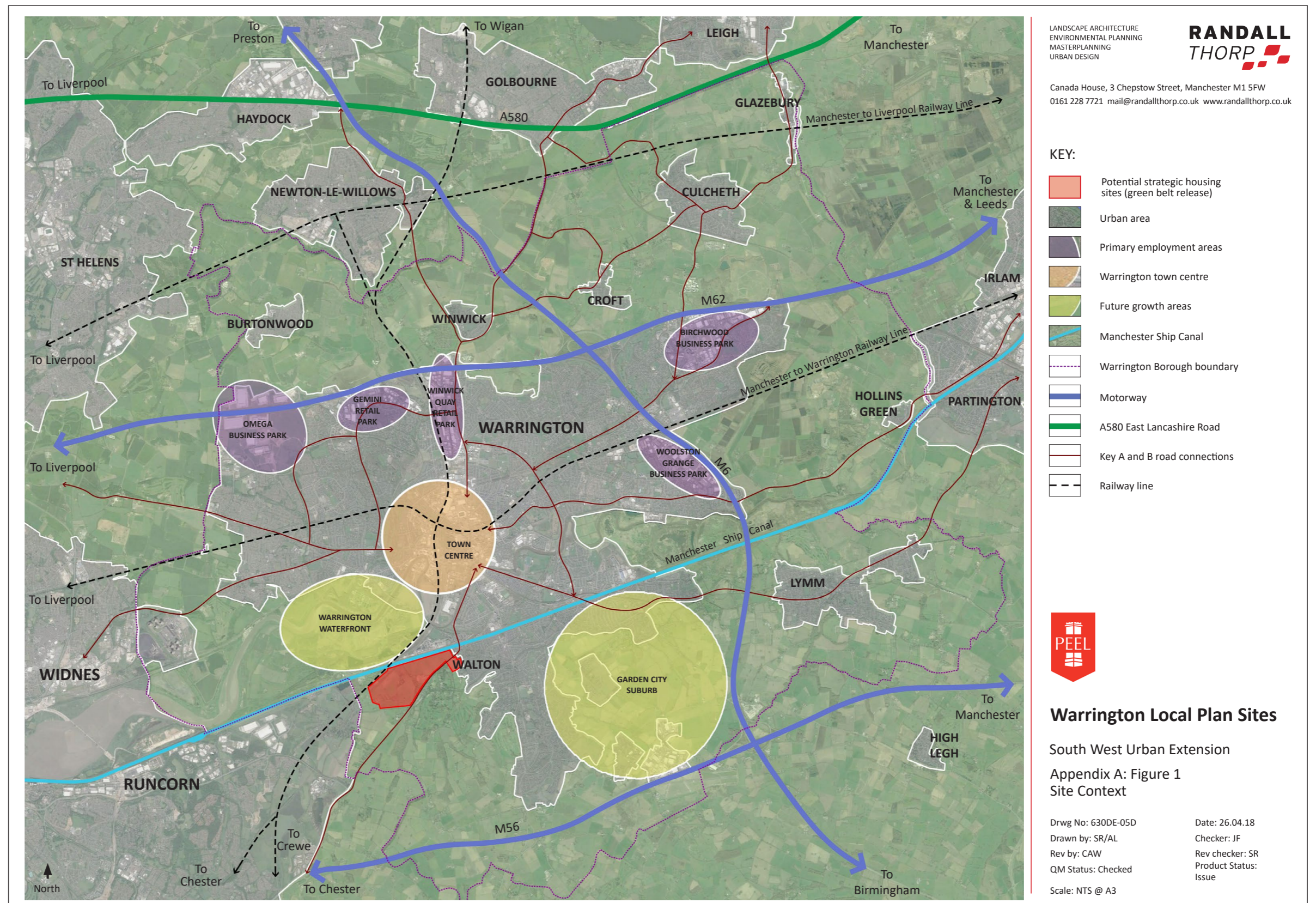


Figure 1 - Site Context

## Methodology

### Guidance

This Landscape, Townscape and Visual Sensitivity Assessment has been prepared in accordance with “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” (GLVIA3), Third Edition. These guidelines explain that it is necessary to tailor Landscape and Visual Appraisals to the specific nature of the proposals, and that a prescriptive approach should not be applied.

### Study area

For the purposes of the report a landscape study area, which encompasses the wider landscape context of Higher Walton has been adopted. **Figure 2** (Page 7) illustrates the study area.

### Approach

An appropriate level of assessment has been carried out for the purposes of demonstrating that the site is suitable for allocation. The findings of the assessment have informed the development of the illustrative masterplan as shown later in the report.

The principle objectives of the assessment are:

- Identify the planning policy constraints
- Consider the published Landscape Character Assessments
- An evaluation of the landscape and townscape character
- Identify visual receptors
- Describe and evaluate the existing landscape character of the site and its immediate surroundings
- Assess the landscape and visual sensitivity of the site and its immediate surroundings

- Advise on the development potential of the site considering the landscape and visual sensitivity and the evaluation of the adjoining townscape as set out above.

### Baseline studies

The baseline study identifies the landscape, townscape and visual character and components of the site within the study area shown in **Figure 2** (Page 7).

The following documents have been reviewed as part of the desk study:

- Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment – Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition (2013)
- Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 – Photography and Photomontages in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (March 2011);
- Townscape Character Assessment Technical Information Note 05/2017
- Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment – Prepared 2007 (Warrington LCA 2007)
- Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy – Adopted July 2014
- Warrington Borough Council PSLP (2019)
- Warrington Borough Council Local Plan, Settlement Profiles - Outlying Settlements July 2017
- Walton Village Conservation Area (December 2000)
- Halton Core Strategy (April 2013)
- Moore Village Parish Plan (2006)
- Halton Landscape Character Assessment – Prepared 2009

Initial field work was undertaken in April 2018; the field work establishes an understanding of the landscape within and around the site, its component parts and subdivisions, as well as the contribution currently made by different areas in terms of landscape quality and character, value, green infrastructure functions and accessibility. It also establishes the visual baseline to identify the range of views of the site, and whether there are any public viewpoints which are important in terms of appreciating the character of the site.

Photographs have been taken from publicly accessible locations as an aide-mémoire.

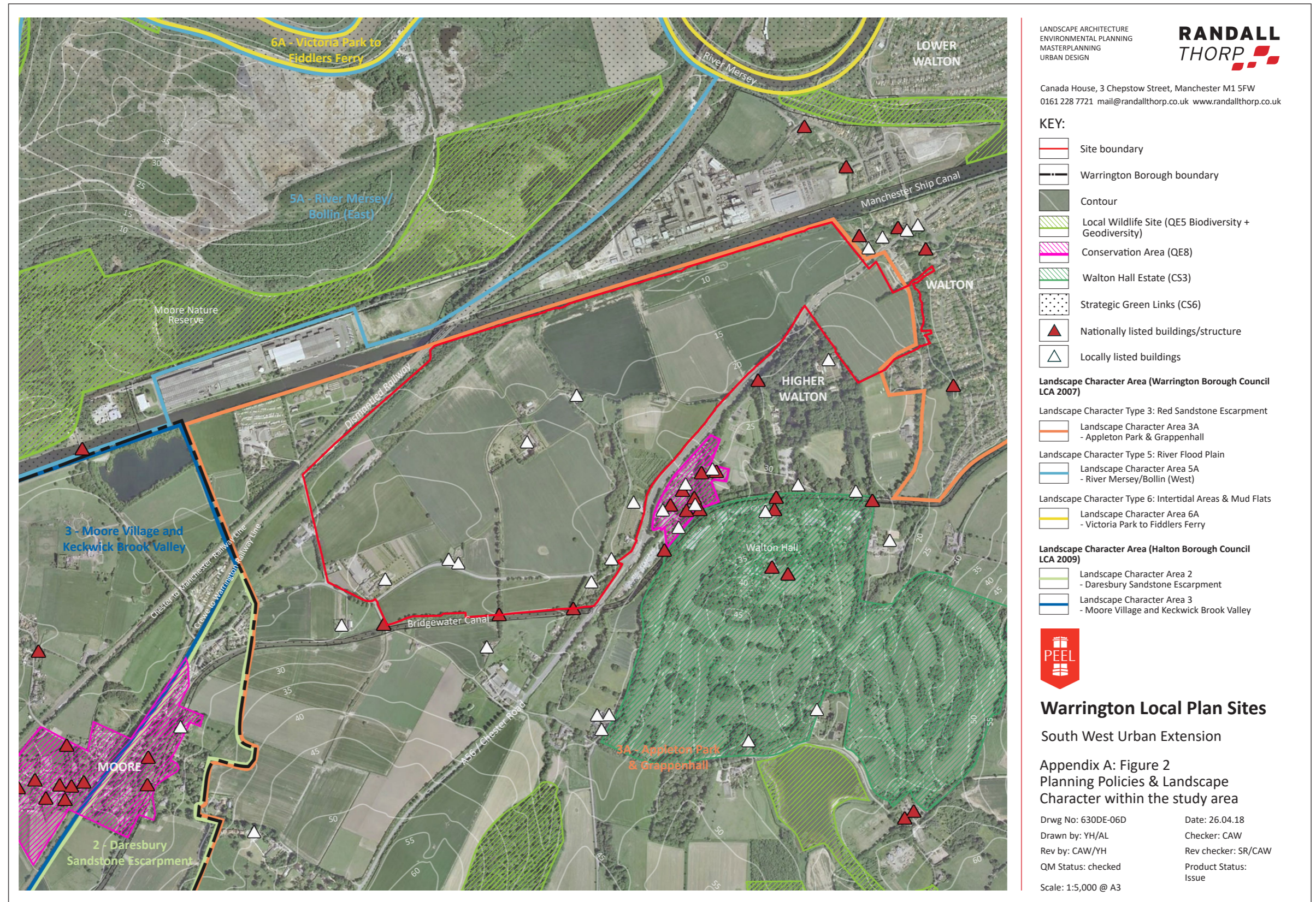


Figure 2 - Character within the study area

### Methodology for appraising the sensitivity of the landscape

The guidance in GLVIA3 underpins the complete process of landscape and visual impact assessment and states that the value of the landscape should be considered as part of the baseline studies. ‘Landscape value’ and ‘susceptibility to change’ are taken into account when establishing the overall sensitivity of a landscape prior to making an assessment of the landscape impacts. In broad terms landscape ‘sensitivity’ is defined as a considered combination of the value of the landscape with its susceptibility to change.

GLVIA3 suggests two approaches to determining landscape value, the first applies to areas where there are existing landscape characterisation studies and where there are landscape designations in place, and the second applies when there is no existing evidence base. It goes on, however to suggest (para 5.29) that in practice a combination of these approaches is most effective.

In the case of this settlement there is a published assessment, Warrington LCA (2007), which sets out the key landscape characters in the Warrington Borough. This LCA does not attach any values to any particular landscape type or landscape area. It is an objective assessment of the 2007 landscapes within Warrington Borough.

In addition Box 5.1 on page 84 of GLVIA lists a range of factors that are generally agreed to help in valuing landscapes.

#### Box 5.1

#### Range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes

- **Landscape quality (condition):** A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- **Scenic quality:** The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).
- **Rarity:** The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.
- **Representativeness:** Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.
- **Conservation interests:** The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.
- **Recreation value:** Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- **Perceptual aspects:** A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- **Associations:** Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

Based on Swanwick and Land Use Consultants (2002)

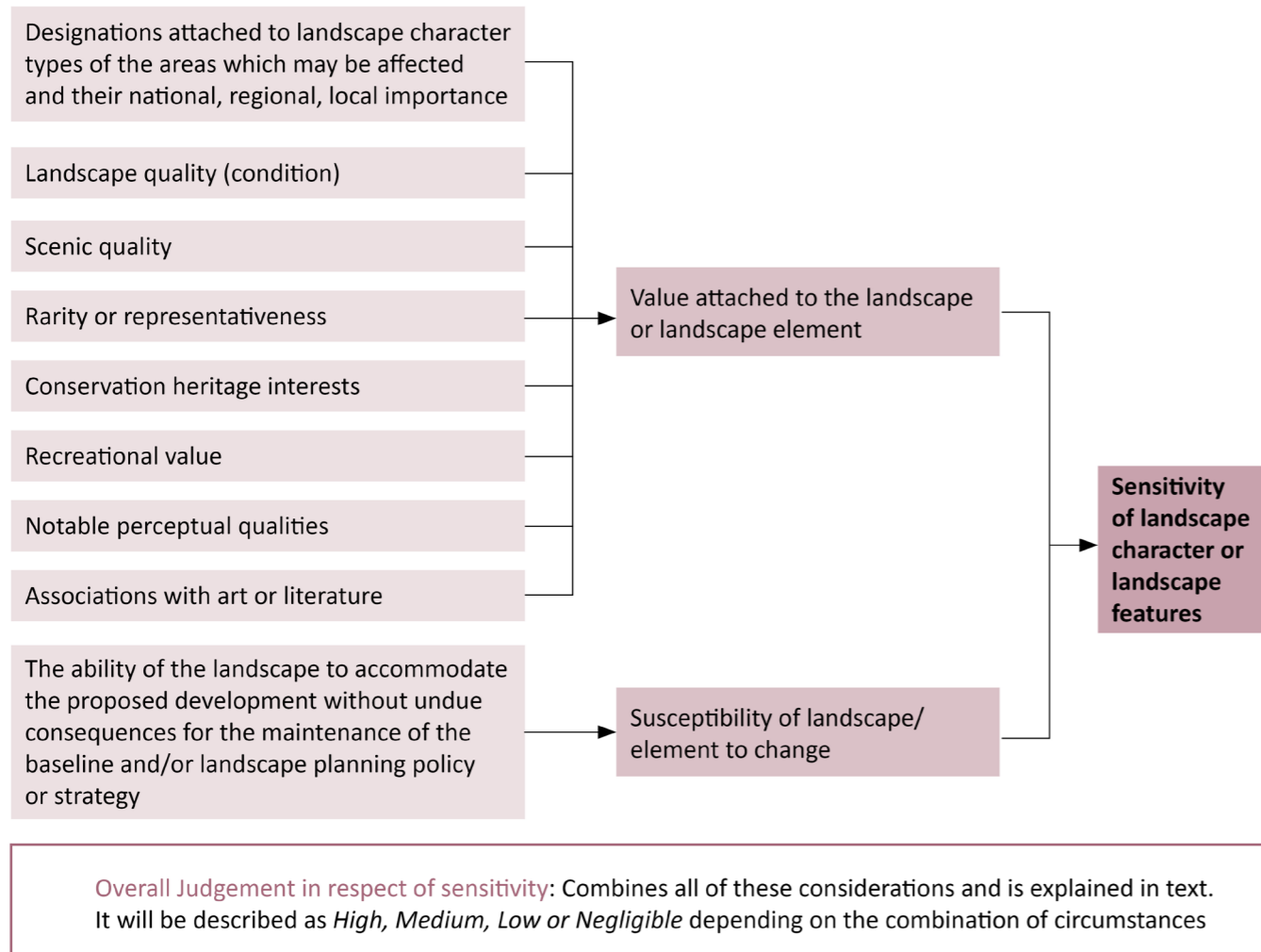
The value of the landscape is assessed in this report using a combination of the considerations set out in Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 and the key characteristics identified in the Warrington LCA (2007).

‘Susceptibility to change’ is defined at paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 which states:

*“This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of planning policies and strategies”.*

The level of susceptibility to change of any landscape will depend on both its existing characteristics and on the characteristics of the development being proposed. A landscape may have a high susceptibility to change if the elements are proposed which are completely new/alien in the context of the landscape, or where new elements would be highly visible in an open view. Likewise a landscape would have a low susceptibility to change if the site is not widely visible and the new elements proposed are already found in the existing environment.

The following diagram summarises some of the considerations contributing to the evaluation of landscape sensitivity.



**Methodology for evaluating the townscape character**

Using GLVIA and the Landscape Institute Townscape Character Assessment Technical Information Note 05/2017 (TIN) this report includes an evaluation of the townscape character within close proximity of the site.

Townscape is described in GLVIA3, paragraph 2.7:

*“the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.”*

Consideration of the townscape character will provide an understanding of how a place has evolved and developed over time to respond to natural, social and economic drivers; and how this is reflected in the layout of the streets, the architecture of the buildings and materials used; and the historic development of the surroundings.

A study of the historic development; movement and connectivity; urban structure and built form; heritage assets; green infrastructure and public realm and tranquility has been carried out in order to evaluate the townscape relevant to the site and surrounding area.

This evaluation will provide an understanding of the intrinsic character and qualities of a place and can be used as a guide to the location, design, scale, massing and type of development that can be accommodated. A townscape character assessment can form the basis for assessing the effects of change and whether a new development is appropriate in its context.

### Methodology for appraising the sensitivity of the visual receptors

In line with GLVIA a visual appraisal has been carried out to identify the sensitivity of the visual receptors.

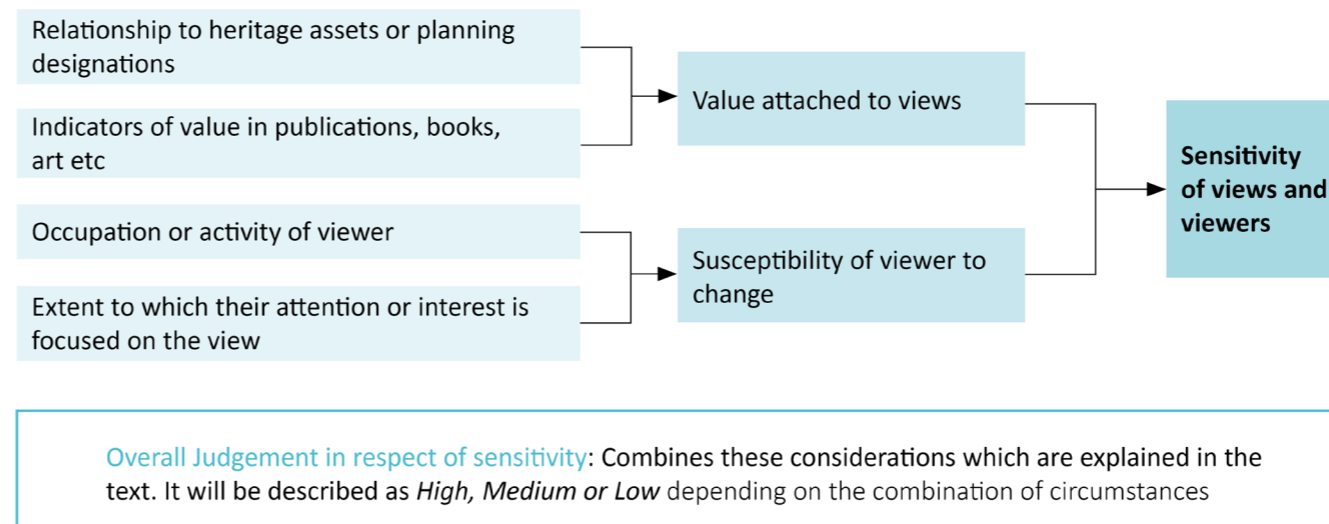
Visual sensitivity is a considered combination of the value attached to a view and the susceptibility of the viewer to change.

The value attached to views takes account of the recognition of value through planning designation and value attached through appearance in tourist literature.

The susceptibility of visual receptors to change will vary according to the occupation or activity of those experiencing the view and the extent to which their attention is focused on the view.

Viewpoints considered representative of potentially sensitive receptors situated within the study area at varying distances and directions have been identified. Views from public viewpoints, such as Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and roads in the vicinity have been considered.

The following diagram summarises some of the considerations contributing to the evaluation of visual sensitivity.





## Planning policy and published landscape character assessment

### National Planning Policy Framework

Section 15 of the NPPF, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, (paragraph 170) sets out how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

The site is not nationally or locally designated for its landscape or biodiversity value. It is not remarkable and does not contribute to the intrinsic character and beauty of the open countryside. It is not yet known if the site is considered to be best and most versatile agricultural land, this will be subject to further survey work. Therefore the site is not considered to be a valued landscape in terms of NPPF February 2019.

### Emerging planning policy - Warrington PSLP 2017-2037

The draft version of the Warrington PSLP was approved for consultation in March 2019. This includes emerging landscape policies that require consideration as part of the site promotion. Once adopted, the PSLP will replace the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

The site is proposed to be allocated under policy MD3 - South West Urban Extension of the PSLP. It is identified as *"land comprising*

*approximately 112ha to the south west of Warrington"* and that it *"will be removed from the Green Belt and allocated as a sustainable urban extension."*

Policy GB1 - Green Belt of the PSLP identifies that there are exceptional circumstances that require Green Belt release within the Borough in order *"to ensure that sufficient land is provided to meet the Council's development needs and aspirations."*

Other emerging policies of relevance to the site include DC3 - Green Infrastructure, DC5 - Open Space, Outdoor sports and recreation provisions, DC6 - Quality of place, design and layout.

### Adopted planning policy - Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy

The Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted by Warrington Borough Council (WBC) on 21st July 2014 and replaced the previously Adopted Unitary Development Plan. **Figure 2** (Page 5) identifies the site and the surrounding landscape planning policies within the study area.

The majority of the landscape to the south and west of Higher Walton and within the South West Urban Extension site is indicated as Green Belt, which is set out within Policy CS 5 – Overall Spatial Strategy – Green Belt. This is a spatial policy which is not specifically related to landscape quality objectives.

Warrington Borough Council recognises the need for Green Belt release in order to accommodate the Borough's housing and economic requirements.

Walton Village Conservation Area is located to the east of the urban extension site and to the west of Walton Hall, there are a number of Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area and study area; these features are identified in Policy QE8 – Historic Environment. The Local Plan recognises the value of the heritage assets to the Borough and sets out the policy to appropriately protect and enhance these areas. To the north of the SWUE site is the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Mersey, and to the south is the Bridgewater Canal; these areas are designated within the Local Plan under Policy CS6 – Strategic Green Link. This policy sets out the need to care for and manage the Green Infrastructure in the Borough.

Located within the study area are a number of Local Wildlife Sites designated under Policy QE5 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity including the Moore Nature Reserve to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. This policy sets out the need to protect and enhance (where possible) these sites which are recognized locally for nature and geological value.

The site lies within close proximity of Halton Borough Council boundary and Moore Conservation Area designated as BE12,13,14 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

### Published landscape character assessment

**Figure 2** (Page 5) shows the extent of the Landscape Character Areas within the study area. The Landscape Character Area within which the site is located, and the adjoining Landscape Character Areas are detailed below.

Warrington LCA 2007 sets out and describes, on an area by area basis, the Borough's distinctive landscape, its cultural history, landscape sensitivity and landscape change, together with recommended management and landscape objectives. The Borough is divided into broad Landscape Character Types; these are then divided into more detailed Landscape Character Areas.

**Appendix B** includes extracts of the relevant Landscape Character Area descriptions from the Warrington LCA 2007.

Landscape Character Areas within Halton Borough are identified within the Halton Borough Landscape Character Assessment carried out in 2009.

**Appendix C** includes extracts of the relevant Landscape Character Area descriptions from the Halton Landscape Character Assessment.

## Landscape Character Area 3A – Appleton Park and Grappenhall

The site is located within Landscape Character Area 3A. The relevant key characteristics of Landscape Character Area 3A are:

- Sweeping northerly views
- Strongly sloping land to the north
- Incised stream valleys running in a northerly direction
- Exposed red sandstone in outcrops, walls and older buildings
- Gorse in hedgerows and sandy banks
- Numerous small ponds in the farmland
- Linear woodlands, coverts and tree clumps
- Raised knolls
- Sparsity of hedgerow trees

- Hedge running along contour lines or at right angles to them
- Advanced landscaping and 'entrance' features relating to proposed housing development

Landscape Character Area 3A is described within the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment as:

*“The Appleton Park and Grappenhall areas form two parcels of land of similar character split by housing development associated with the A49 London Road. These areas are bordered to the south by the distinct ridgeline crest and the ridge road running between the villages of Hatton, Stretton and Appleton Thorn and to the north by the flood plain of the River Mersey, marking the bottom of the escarpment slope. The western boundary is formed by Warrington Borough boundary at Moore and the eastern boundary by a subtle landscape character change on the spur line to Massey Brook basin.”*

## Landscape Character Area 5A – River Mersey/Bollin

Landscape Character Area 5A lies to the north of the site. The relevant key characteristics of Landscape Character Area 5A are:

- The River Mersey and the River Bollin
- Mounded landfill sites
- Slurry and dredging lagoons
- Importance for nature conservation
- Dominance of floodplain crossings (road and rail bridges)
- Residual floodplain meadows
- Widespread residential and industrial development on the floodplain
- Artificial levee and channel constraints to the river

- Lack of visual importance of the river (normally screened from views)
- The Mersey Way recreational footpath

Landscape Character Area 5A is described within the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment as:

*“The River Mersey and its broad floodplain forms a major landscape character, dividing the Borough into roughly two halves on an east/west axis. The River Bollin flood plain merges with the Mersey floodplain from the east. The Mersey displays the typical characteristics of a lowland mature river, winding across a broad floodplain with large meander loops. Much of the river has been prevented from naturally flooding onto its floodplain by the creation of artificial levee embankments, whilst its channel has also been occasionally straightened or restricted by sheet piling, walls or other hard structures.”*

## Halton Landscape Character Area 2 – Daresbury Sandstone Escarpment

Landscape Character Area 2 Daresbury Sandstone Escarpment is located to the west of the site beyond the Warrington Borough boundary. The relevant key characteristics of are:

- Distinctive escarpment landform with the east steeply sloping, western slopes are more gently undulating
- Rural Character although views of industry in the north reduce this slightly
- Landuse is predominately pasture on steeper slopes and pockets of arable on gentler slopes
- Regular geometric field pattern with a high proportion of post medieval fields

- Farmland bordered by generally intact closely clipped low hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees
- Pockets of parkland around Daresbury Hall
- Frequent isolated trees within fields
- Frequent clusters of wooded field ponds
- Long linear tree groups; most are prominent on high ground
- Small tracks and lanes often with walled boundaries
- Avenue of trees along tracks and lanes
- Small linear settlement and infrequent scattered farmsteads
- Expansive views from high ground although landform creates a high level of enclosure on lower ground

#### Landscape Character Area 2 is described within the Halton Landscape Character Assessment as:

*“This character area extends from Moore in the north along the Bridgewater Canal to Newton Lane in the south. The area retains a rural character although views of industrial warehouses and development along the Mersey in views within the north reduce this sense of tranquillity particularly close to Moore. The area has strong similarities and correlation with the adjacent Appleton Park and Grappenhall Red Sandstone Escarpment Character Area (within Warrington Borough).*

*Landform is a distinctive escarpment with a steeper slope to the east and a shallower gentle slope to the west. This area is at a relatively high elevation compared with Runcorn to the west with a high point of 78m AOD immediately to the south of Daresbury.”*

#### Halton Landscape Character Area 3 – Moore Village and Keckwick Brook Valley

Landscape Character Area 3 – Moore Village and Keckwick Brook Valley is located to the west of the site beyond the Warrington Borough boundary. The relevant key characteristics of are:

- Narrow shallow river valley
- Informal open space and isolated pockets of farmland
- Frequent infrastructure routes such as railways overhead lines and roads
- Long linear field pattern following watercourse; smaller fields closer to settlements
- Segmentation of the landscape through railways on embankments; watercourses and canals and roads which bisect the area
- Prominent wooded watercourse
- Two spurs of the Bridgewater Canal area features within the area
- Small pockets of woodland and clumps of trees
- Daresbury Firs is a prominent conifer woodland on higher ground
- Large areas of informal open space are rough grassland on the fringes of Runcorn
- Frequent stone and brick bridges over canals
- Urban fringes and industrial development prominent within views
- Commercial/ industrial development prominent on ridgeline

#### Landscape Character Area 3 is described within the Halton Landscape Character Assessment as:

*“This character area forms a narrow valley along Keckwick Brook. The western extent of the area is defined by housing development at the edge of Sandymoor, Runcorn. The eastern extent is defined by*

*the ridgeline of Keckwick Hill and A56. A small belt of land extends south from the M56 between Barker’s Hollow Road and the Bridgewater Canal.*

*This is a broad valley with steeper slopes to the east rising to a high point of approximately 70m AOD at Keckwick Hill. The land falls towards the Bridgewater Canal and is a shallow floodplain that gradually begins to rise at the residential edge of Sandymoor and reaches a high point at Windmill Hill outside the character area.”*

#### Summary of the landscape character of the site and its surroundings

The site sits within Landscape Character Area 3A ‘Appleton Park and Grappenhall’. Northerly views from within the site are visually obstructed by the industrial works to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. The site does not benefit from the sweeping northerly views that can be enjoyed elsewhere in the character area. Whilst the site does have typical characteristics such as a stream valley, ponds and linear woodlands these features are not unusual and can be found in many other character areas.

The site is located on the lower lying land within this character area and is therefore less visually sensitive to development than the land on the ridgeline of the sand stone escarpment. The site is not noted as being a particularly important or representative example within this landscape character area.

Development within this area is in keeping with the general characteristics of the adjacent urban and suburban characteristics.

## Landscape/townscape character and visual receptors

### Landscape character of the study area

The study area comprises low-lying land which falls north towards the ship canal. To the north of the ship canal an area of industrial works dominates views. The well vegetated nature reserve and landfill site provide some screening to the north.

The majority of the vegetation within the study area is focused around Higher Walton and along the water courses, with areas of mature woodland following the Bridgewater Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal and the nearby brooks/ tributaries.

The Chester to Manchester and Crewe to Warrington train lines, and the dismantled railway run through the study area and are also heavily vegetated.

### Townscape character of the study area

The townscape adjacent to the site comprises of Higher Walton and Lower Walton which forms part of Walton Parish.

### Historical development

The historic Walton Village Conservation area is identified on **Figure 2**. The Walton Village Conservation Area is described in the Conservation Leaflet produced by Warrington Borough Council in December 2000. The part of the village with the Conservation Area is situated south west of the site in Higher Walton and dates back to Roman times. It was once part of the Walton Hall Estate. The conservation area “owes much of its character however to the unity in architectural style of its building” (Walton Village Conservation Area Leaflet Dec 2000) which gives the village its character. Until the 1960s Walton Village,

Higher Walton “consisted solely of Victorian and Edwardian buildings comprising a post office, 3 pairs of semi-detached cottages, the Parish Hall and attached cottage, a small works, the church and 3 detached houses” (Walton Village Conservation Area Leaflet Dec 2000). In the 1960’s 11 houses were constructed to the north of the Walton Village, Higher Walton at Lychgate. The Walton Village fronts onto the Old Chester Road, and development is focused along this route. The A56/ Chester New Road by pass has been built to the west diverting through-traffic along the dual carriageway.

Lower Walton is located to the north of the site and has more of an association with the urban area of Warrington and Stockton Heath. The architectural style is mixed in terms of ages and types of built form include semi-detached houses, rows of terrace housing adjacent the canal, an area of detached bungalows, farmhouses and barn conversions as well as more recently built development.

Moore Conservation Area is also located within the study area approximately 500m from the South Warrington Urban Extension site, there is no inter-visibility between Moore and the site.

Due to the distance, topography and intervening vegetation and built form it is considered that any development of the site would not affect the characteristics or heritage assets of Moore Village Conservation Area.

### Movement and connectivity

The A56 Chester Road is the main vehicular transport link through Walton connecting Runcorn to Warrington. The route is a dual carriageway with a segregated cycle lane and grass verges. On the

approach to Lower Walton the surroundings become more urbanised the grass verges and central reservation to the A56 ends, and the existing vegetation in view is located within the curtilage of the properties at Lower Walton.

The vegetation adjacent to the Walton Village and the layout of the existing buildings with housing backing onto or siding onto the A56 means that there is no visual connection between the A56 and the Higher Walton Conservation Area.

Runcorn Road passes through the site on an east-west alignment connecting Moore to Higher Walton. The road has a rural character on the approach to Moore Village from Higher Walton, the retention of Green Belt between Moore Village and Warrington is required in order to maintain the character and approach to Moore village.

The Manchester Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal traverse the study area connecting Liverpool and Warrington to Manchester City Centre.

The Chester to Manchester and Crewe to Warrington Railway Lines run diagonally through the study area crossing the Manchester Ship Canal over a large cantilever bridge which is a visible urbanising feature in the landscape.

Within the study area there are two nationally recognised trails; the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk and the Trans Pennine Trail. Access to these trails from the adjacent townscape is via the surrounding highways network and through residential areas (see **Figure 3**, Page 14).

#### Urban structure and built form

Lower Walton comprises a mixture of housing styles and densities; with the denser terrace housing running adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal and less dense development to the south. The roads are set out in a traditional grid pattern and the buildings tend to follow a regular building line parallel to the road edge.

Higher Walton is less dense than Lower Walton and comprises mainly large detached buildings, with a less rigid layout. There is an abundance of hedgerows and vegetation to the fronts of the properties giving a softer street scene. Despite the various building materials used there is a unity in the architectural style in the village; most commonly the use of red sandstone block to create decorative features in the brickwork to the south of the village. In the north a cluster of 1960s brick and white render present a different building style. The village comprise 2 storey buildings only.

#### Heritage assets

The listed and locally listed buildings are heritage assets including listed bridges located in both Higher Walton and Lower Walton; the majority of which are located to the south east of the study area, and focused within Walton Village Conservation Area.

There are a number of listed and locally listed buildings located within Moore Village Conservation Area; however there is no intervisibility between these buildings and the site. A heritage assessment has been carried out and records that there are no known associative relationships between the site and Moore Conservation Area.

#### Green infrastructure and public realm

Walton Hall is a country house and Grade II Listed building. The garden and grounds of the Hall are open to the public. To the south is Walton Hall Golf Course and the Appleton reservoir. These areas form the majority of the green infrastructure throughout the study area however the cemetery and other incidental green space contribute to the public realm.

#### Tranquillity

The heavily trafficked A56 and the railway line mean that the area is not considered to be tranquil (as defined by CPRE).

Lower Walton sits adjacent to one of the few bridges that crosses the Manchester Ship Canal and is heavily trafficked. The hub of the town centre is around the junction of the A56 Chester Road, B5156 Ellesmere Road and A5060. The busy roads and industrial uses to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal mean the townscape of Lower Walton is not considered to be a tranquil setting.

#### Stakeholder engagement

The site lies directly west of Lower Walton and is proposed to be allocated by Warrington Borough Council under Policy MD3 of the PSLP.

#### Site description

**Figure 3** (Page 14) shows the site in relation to Warrington, Lower Walton and Higher Walton; its landscape features and context.

The South West Urban Extension site comprises approximately 119ha of agricultural land, associated buildings and property. It is situated

to the south west of the built-up area of Warrington. The Manchester Ship Canal forms the northern boundary of the site. The west coast mainline /Chester- Manchester Railway line forms the north western boundary on a raised embankment. To the south the Bridgewater Canal defines the site boundary and the A56/Chester Road forms the majority of the western boundary. To the north the site boundary crosses the A56 and includes a field parcel adjacent to Walton at the most northerly point of the site. Runcorn Road traverses the southern part of the site and links Warrington to Runcorn. The site slopes to the north which is a typical feature of the landscape character of the area. The highest point is around 30m AOD adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal; falling to 10m AOD along the Manchester Ship Canal.

Within the site there are mature tree belts that follow the ship canal and the railway embankments. There is also an area of mature woodland vegetation associated with a water course that flows north through the centre of the site. Trees with TPOs are located in the hedgerows along Runcorn Road and adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal to the south of the site. Mature hedgerows line either side of Runcorn Road, Mill Lane and the A56 Chester Road, with the occasional gap for field access and in some locations degraded hedgerows. To the south west, beyond the A56 Chester Road boundary, mature woodland and trees cover a large portion of Higher Walton and Walton Hall. To the north of the site, on the opposite side of the Manchester Ship Canal beyond the industrial works, is a large area of mature woodland that is identified as the Moore Nature Reserve.

Runcorn Road and Mill Lane traverse the site. Mill Lane is an access track to the existing dwellings within the site.

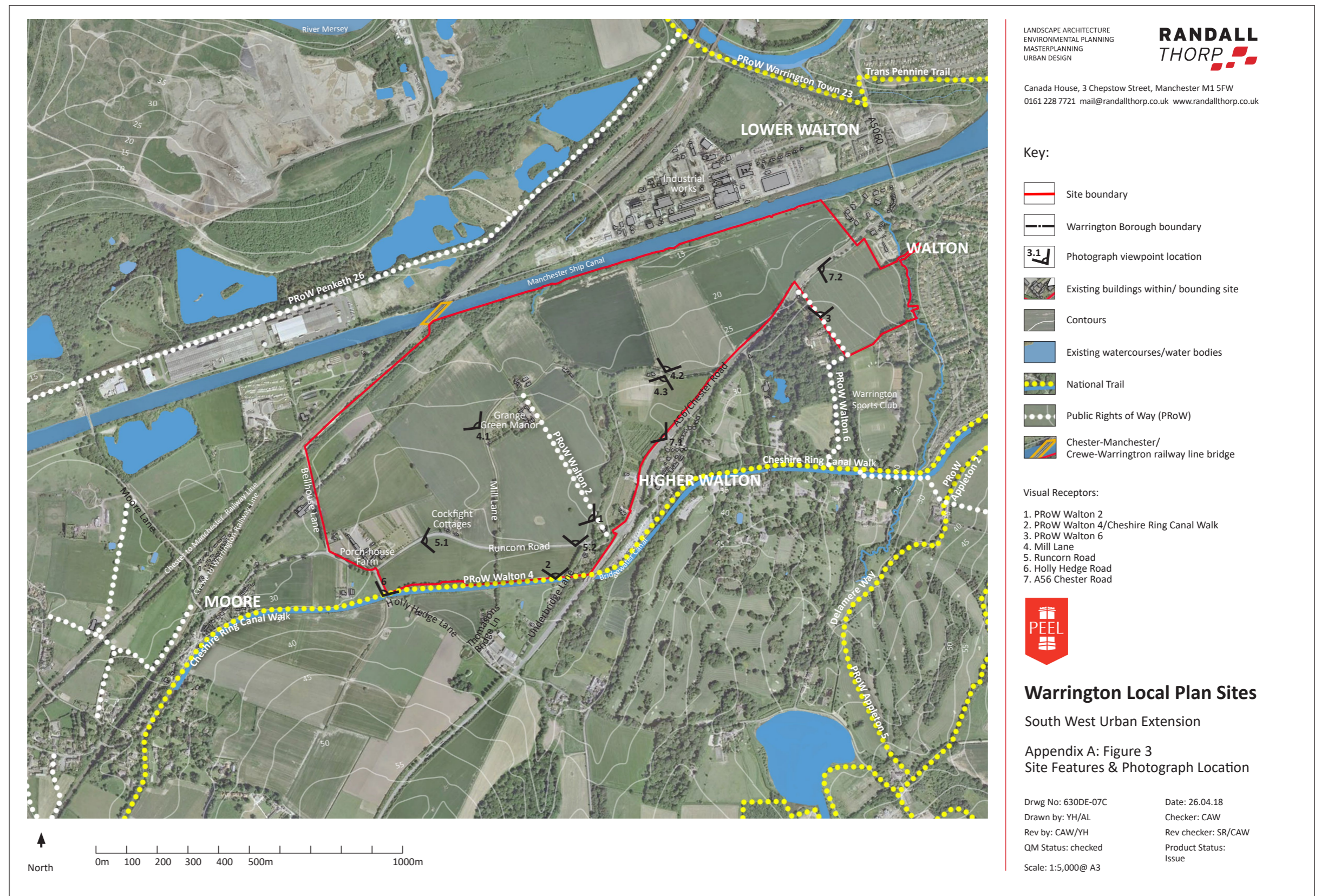


Figure 3 - Site Features & Photograph Location

A public right of way runs through the site on a north west/ south east alignment. The route crosses through the centre of an agricultural field connecting Runcorn Road and Mill Lane adjacent to the existing housing at Grange Green Manor, a recently renovated barn conversion development. The remaining PRoWs within close proximity lie outside the site and along the site boundaries.

#### Visual receptors and views of the site

**Figure 3** (Page 14) illustrates the locations of the photograph viewpoints taken from visual receptors within and around the site.

**Figures 4 - 7** (Page 17 - 20) include the Photographs 1 - 7 which are taken from publicly accessible viewpoints within and around the site. Views from private residencies have not been considered. Any consideration of residential amenity would need to be carried out as a separate assessment.

Observations made during the site visit identified the following publicly accessible visual receptors:

- 1 Pedestrians using PRoW FP Walton 2
- 2 Pedestrians using PRoW FP Walton 4/ Cheshire Ring Canal Walk
3. Pedestrians using PRoW FP Walton 6
- 4 Motorists using Mill Lane
- 5 Motorists using Runcorn Road
- 6 Motorists using Holly Hedge Lane
- 7 Motorists and cyclists using A56/ Chester Road

#### Description of the visual receptors

##### 1 PRoW FP Walton 2 (Photographs 1)

The footpath provides a pedestrian link from Grange Green Manor to Runcorn Road and beyond to Higher Walton via the A56 crossing. From Runcorn Road the route passes down the side of a detached house towards a small timber footbridge. Mature trees associated with the unnamed watercourse which flows through the site filter views of the site. After crossing the watercourse, the route continues north through the centre of site across an agricultural field. From this point there are clear views across the agricultural land to the north and west. In these views the house at Underbridge Lane, Grange Green Manor, and Cockfighter Cottages are visible. The chimneys at Fiddlers Ferry, the railway bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal, and the pylons through the site can also be seen. Further north the route passes down the side of Grange Green Manor with vegetation either side of the path limiting any long-distance views. The footpath terminates at Mill Lane.

##### 2 PRoW Walton 4/ Cheshire Ring Canal Walk (Photographs 2)

The footpath forms part of the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk which connects six historic canals. The walk is a nationally recognised trail and has recreational value. The route runs outside of the site adjacent to the southern boundary. Due to the intervening vegetation, views into the site are screened or filtered for the majority of the route. There is a portion of the footpath that runs on higher ground and in this location there are clear views across the open agricultural fields towards Runcorn Road, the site can be seen in the middle distance. In these views the residential buildings at Underbridge Lane and Grange Green Manor are visible. The railway bridge over the Manchester Ship

Canal, the pylons through the site, and the industrial works located to the north of the site can also be seen.

##### 3 Walton 6 (Photograph 3)

This footpath provides a pedestrian link from Cheshire Ring Canal Walk/ PRoW Walton 4 to Higher Walton. The majority of the route is enclosed by existing vegetation. As the route follows the boundary of the site there are filtered views across the site towards residential development at Walton. As the route emerges from the trees on the site edge there are clear views across the site. In these views the industrial works to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal, central Warrington and the existing residential development of Walton can be seen.

##### 4 Mill Lane (Photographs 4.1 – 4.3)

Mill Lane is a narrow single-track lane which is framed on both sides by well-managed hedgerows. The lane runs through the centre of the site creating a loop from Runcorn Road on the southern boundary of the site connecting to the A56 on the eastern boundary. The track provides vehicular access to existing dwellings. There are no footpaths on either side of the lane. Due to the mature hedgerows on both sides of the lane there are limited views across the site, although any tall elements within the site may be evident and the rooftops of development may be visible. Gaps in the hedgerow provide glimpsed/ fleeting views across the agricultural fields. In these views the pylons within the site, the railway bridge and the industrial works located to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal can be seen. The railway embankment and associated vegetation to the north of the site restrict long distance views to the north and screens Moore Nature Reserve.

### 5 Runcorn Road (Photographs 5.1 – 5.2)

Runcorn Road runs on a west-east alignment connecting Warrington and Chester Road to Moore village and Runcorn beyond. The road is a well-used vehicular link but not a popular pedestrian route as there is often no footpath or a footpath on only one side of the road. There are clear views across the agricultural fields to the south of the site towards the vegetation associated with the Bridgewater Canal. Views to the north of the road are fleeting and often screened by existing hedgerows or residential buildings and their associated boundary treatments. When travelling east along Runcorn Road towards the site through Moore Village Conservation Area it is not possible to see the site. When travelling west along Runcorn Road it is not possible to see Moore Village Conservation Area from within the site. It is important to retain the rural character of this route on the approach to Moore village.

### 6 Holly Hedge Lane (Photographs 6)

Holly Hedge Lane is a narrow lane running from the A56 to Runcorn Road. Due to the intervening vegetation and the topography of the lane the site is not visible for the majority of the route. As the road travels north over the Bridgewater Canal there are clear views across the field parcels to the south of the site. In this view the houses fronting on to Runcorn Road are visible in the middle distance and the industrial works north of the Manchester Ship Canal can be seen.

### 7 A56 Chester Road (Photographs 7)

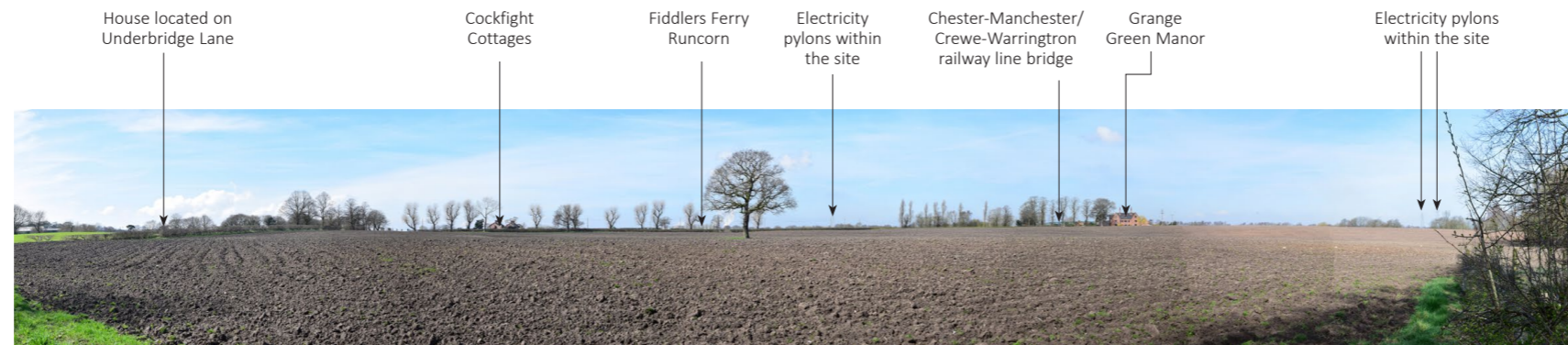
The A56 Chester Road follows the south eastern boundary of the site. The route is a dual carriageway with segregated cycle lane and grass verges. Due to the tall mature hedgerow running along this boundary there are no direct views into the site. However, if developed it may be possible to see rooftops of the development if not set back from the road. The road is a dual carriageway, it is heavily trafficked with a cycle lane and not a popular walking route. There are gaps in the hedgerow providing views across the agricultural fields however these are glimpses views that are experienced at speed.

### Visual receptors scoped out of this assessment

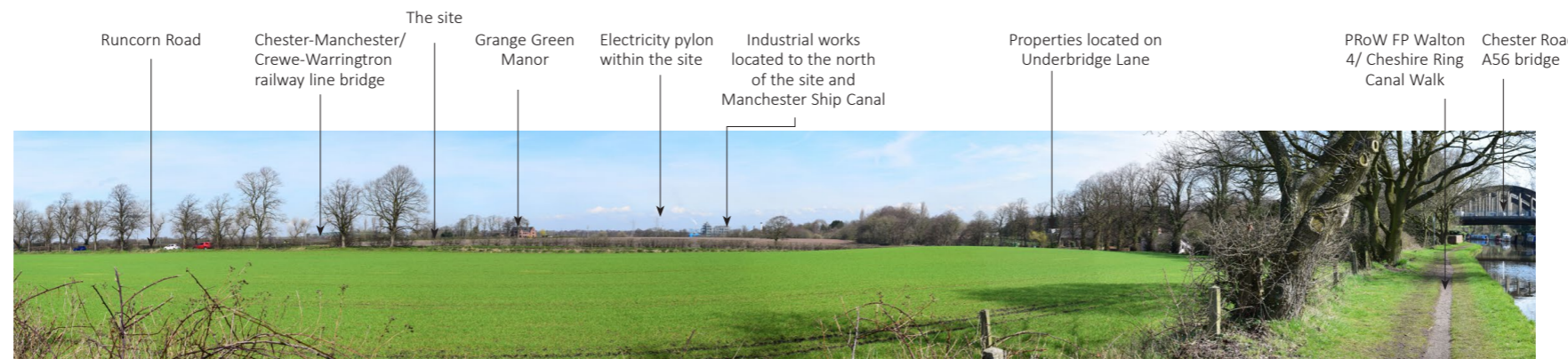
The site borders the existing settlement edge of Lower Walton, which lies to the east of the site. A number of residential roads in Lower Walton have glimpsed views of the field or boundaries of the site immediately adjacent to the settlement edge. These roads include Hill Cliffe Road, Grantham Avenue and Rutland Avenue. Due to the limited nature of these views, these receptors have been scoped out of this appraisal.

Warrington Sports Club lies to the south of the site adjacent to the edge of Lower Walton. There is potential for glimpsed views of a small part of the site through the existing boundary vegetation. However, as the primary focus of the users of this facility is the sports they are playing/watching. Views of the surrounding areas for users of this facility have been scoped out of this appraisal.





**Photo 1** - View from PRoW FP Walton 2 looking west north across the site



**Photo 2** - View from PRoW FP Walton 4/ Cheshire Ring Canal Walk looking north across to the site



**Photo 3** - View from PRoW Walton 6 looking north

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
MASTERPLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN



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## Warrington Local Plan Sites

South West Urban Extension

Appendix A: Figure 4  
Viewpoint Photographs

Drwg No: 630DE-09D

Date: 09.04.18

Drawn by: YH

Checker: CAW

Rev by: CAW

Rev checker: SR

QM Status: checked

Product Status:

Scale: NTS

Issue

Figure 4 - Viewpoint Photographs

**Photo 4.1** - View from Mill Lane east north

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
MASTERPLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN

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**Photo 4.2** - View from Mill Lane looking north

**Photo 4.3** - View from Mill Lane looking east

**Warrington Local Plan Sites**  
South West Urban Extension

Appendix A: Figure 5  
Viewpoint Photographs

Drwg No: 630DE-10D	Date: 09.04.18
Drawn by: YH	Checker: CAW
Rev by: CAW/YH	Rev checker: SR
QM Status: checked	Product Status: Issue
Scale: NTS	

Figure 5 - Viewpoint Photographs



Photo 5.1 - View from Runcorn Road looking east south



Photo 5.2 - View from Runcorn Road looking north

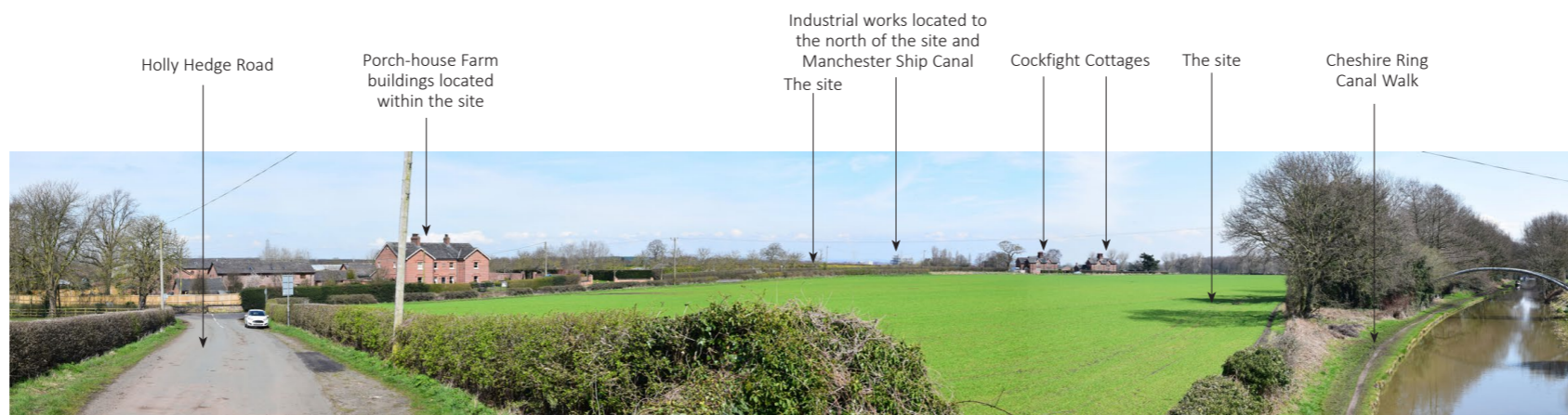


Photo 6 - View from Holly Hedge looking east north across the site

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## Warrington Local Plan Sites

South West Urban Extension

Appendix A: Figure 6  
Viewpoint Photographs

Drwg No: 630DE-11D

Drawn by: YH

Rev by: CAW/YH

QM Status: checked

Scale: NTS

Date: 09.04.18


Checker: CAW

Rev checker: SR

Product Status:

Issue

Figure 6 - Viewpoint Photographs



**Photo 7.1** - View from A56/Chester Road looking west north


LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
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**Photo 7.2** - View from A56/Chester Road looking east



**Warrington Local Plan Sites**  
South West Urban Extension

Appendix A: Figure 7  
Photography Location Plan

Drwg No: 630DE-12D	Date: 30.10.18
Drawn by: YH	Checker: CAW
Rev by:	Rev checker:
QM Status: checked	Product Status: Issue
Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3	

Figure 7 - Viewpoint Photographs

### Landscape and visual sensitivity

The landscape within the study area is not designated for its landscape value.

**Section 3** above sets out the designations within the wider landscape context.

The value of the landscape within the site and its immediate surroundings is considered below using the guidelines of GLVIA3 Box 5.1.

Overall it is considered that this is not a valued landscape. The landscape value of the site and its immediate surroundings is therefore considered to be **Medium - Low**.

<b>LANDSCAPE VALUE</b>
<b>LANDSCAPE QUALITY (CONDITION)</b>
The areas to the south of the Manchester Ship Canal comprises a mixture of agricultural land, industrial works, areas of parkland at Walton Hall, the golf course and residential development. The Warrington LCA 2007 describes the <i>“presence of red sandstone frequently punctuates the landscape and in the form of outcrops to road and canal cuttings, quarries and in the building vernacular houses and wall.”</i> , <i>“farmland comprises mainly pastureland”</i> and <i>“hedgerow trees are present but not in great numbers”</i> . To the north of the Ship Canal, the landscape character assessment 5A River Mersey/ Bollin describes: <i>“The flood plains have been extensively developed and altered without consideration to its landscape sensitivity”</i> . The site is predominantly agricultural land comprising existing vegetation and landscape features such as the water course give the site landscape quality. There are no designated landscape features within the site.
<b>SCENIC QUALITY</b>
To the south of the Manchester Ship Canal the knolls and crest lines of the sandstone escarpment are visually sensitive features in the landscape; the landscape character assessment 3A Appleton Park and Grappenhall describes the landscape <i>“comprises of strongly sloping land to the north, offering sweeping long-distance views, occasionally restricted by the presence of linear deciduous woodlands, coverts and tree groups.”</i> There are sweeping views north experienced from within the site and surrounding footpath network, however these views are experienced in the context of industrial works and electricity pylons which stand out in the landscape.
<b>RARITY</b>
There are some locally recognised nature reserves within the site and the study area, but these are not known for their rarity; the remaining landscape within the study area is common of the Landscape Character Areas and is considered to be ordinary.
<b>REPRESENTATIVENESS</b>
There are some landscape features within the site and landscape setting which are considered to be characteristic of the landscape character. However these features such as incised stream valleys and small farmland ponds are found widely across the borough. The landscape does not contain elements which are considered particularly important examples.
<b>CONSERVATION INTERESTS</b>
There are a number of listed buildings, including two listed bridges that cross the canal on the southern boundary of the urban extension site. The Walton Village Conservation Area at Higher Walton and the Moore Conservation Area within the Halton Borough are located within the Study Area adding to the overall landscape value. The undeveloped floodplains area to the north of the site are described in the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment as having <i>“conservation importance”</i> and there a number of locally designated wildlife sites, including the Moore Nature Reserve located to the north of Manchester Ship Canal. The A56/ Chester Road and the Manchester Ship Canal provide a strong separation between the site and these surrounding conservation interests. There are no nationally designated areas such as SSSI located within the study area or within close proximity of Higher Walton.
<b>RECREATION VALUE</b>
The Trans Pennine Trail, which provides links to the Mersey Valley Trail and the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk, which follows the Bridgewater Canal are important nationally recognised recreational links. Walton Hall Estate comprises a golf course, gardens and a number of recreational facilities. The site itself has little recreational value with one PRow crossing into the site with no clear recreational destination.
<b>PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS</b>
The heavily trafficked A56/ Chester Road; and the Chester- Manchester and Crewe - Warrington railway line run through the study area. The development and industrial buildings on the flood plain has altered this agricultural landscape. The character of the Daresbury Sandstone Escarpment describes <i>“views of industrial warehouses and development along the Mersey in views within the north reduce this sense of tranquillity particularly close to Moore”</i> . From much of the land to the south of the Manchester Ship Canal the views north include Industrial Units and infrastructure which comprises features such as chimneys. This is not a landscape which can be perceived as wilderness or tranquil.
<b>ASSOCIATIONS</b>
There are no known associations with any published art, literature or folklore which would add to its landscape value.

## Susceptibility to change

The study area comprises of a mixture of agricultural, industrial and urban landscapes and much of the study area is experienced in the context of the adjacent existing residential or industrial uses reducing the vulnerability to change.

The landscape to the south of the Manchester Ship Canal is considered in the local landscape character assessment to be “sensitive to development” in respect of visual prominent built development on the knolls and crest/skylines. Development in the low-lying areas could be incorporated into the area without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline and as such susceptibility to change is considered to be **Medium**.

## Conclusion in respects of the landscape sensitivity

As can be ascertained from the descriptions there is nothing to indicate that there is anything about the study area which should be considered remarkable or out of the ordinary. Landscape features such as field boundaries, watercourses, public rights of way, and existing large mature trees are identified as having local importance and are site specific.

There are a number of locally listed buildings within the site which are separated from Walton Conservation Area by the A56/ Chester Road.

The landscape character assessment identifies the higher land on the sandstone escarpments as visually sensitive to development. The site and surrounding study area are within the less prominent lower lying land which is less visually sensitive to development.

The landscape sensitivity of the site and its immediate surroundings results from the consideration of the landscape value and its susceptibility to change. As the **landscape value is considered to be Medium - Low, and the susceptibility to change is considered to be Medium**. The landscape sensitivity of the site and its immediate surroundings is considered to be **Medium – Low**.

## Value and sensitivity of views and visual receptors

In line with GLVIA and **Diagram 2** within the methodology, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is a considered combination of the value of the view and the susceptibility to change of the visual receptor.

The following **Table 1** illustrates the sensitivity of the identified visual receptors

The landscape is not designated nationally or locally for its landscape value and is not valued for its scenic quality.

Table 1: Sensitivity of visual receptors

VISUAL RECEPTOR TYPE	VALUE OF THE VIEW	SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE	RESULTING SENSITIVITY
<b>Receptor 1</b> (Photograph 1.1) Pedestrians using PRow FP Walton 2	<b>Medium</b> No recognised value attached to the views. Some value in relation to locally designated heritage assets.	<b>High</b> The landscape setting is likely to be valued by those engaged in recreational activity	<b>High - Medium</b>
<b>Receptor 2</b> (Photograph 2) Pedestrians using PRow FP Walton 4/ Cheshire Ring Canal Walk	<b>High - Medium</b> Published recreational route. Some value in relation to designated heritage assets. Views across an ordinary landscape with industrial works visible in the distance.	<b>High</b> The landscape setting is likely to be valued by those engaged in recreational activity	<b>High</b>
<b>Receptor 3</b> (Photograph 3) Pedestrians using PRow FP Walton 6	<b>Medium</b> No recognised value attached to the views. Some value in relation to locally designated heritage assets.	<b>High</b> The landscape setting is likely to be valued by those engaged in recreational activity	<b>High - Medium</b>
<b>Receptor 4</b> (Photograph 4.1 – 4.3) Motorists using Mill Lane	<b>Medium</b> No recognised value attached to the views. Some value in relation to locally designated heritage assets. Long distance views in the gaps in the vegetation north towards the industrial works	<b>Medium</b> Primarily using routes for access rather than focusing on the views.	<b>Medium</b>

VISUAL RECEPTOR TYPE	VALUE OF THE VIEW	SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE	RESULTING SENSITIVITY
<b>Receptor 5</b> (Photograph 5.1 – 5.2) Motorists using Runcorn Road	<b>Medium</b> No recognised value attached to the views. Some value in relation to designated heritage assets. Views across an ordinary landscape with industrial works visible in the distance.	<b>Medium</b> Taking in to account their speed of travel, the fleeting views and because their interest is focused on the road and driving rather than the views.	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Receptor 6</b> (Photograph 6.1) Motorists using Holly Hedge Lane	<b>Medium</b> No recognised value attached to the views. Some value in relation to locally designated heritage assets. Views across an ordinary landscape with industrial works visible in the distance.	<b>Medium</b> Taking in to account their speed of travel, the fleeting views and because their interest is focused on the road and driving rather than the views.	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Receptor 7</b> (Photograph 7) Motorists and cyclists using A56/ Chester Road	<b>Low</b> No recognised value attached to the views. Views of the highway, corridor.	<b>Low</b> Taking in to account their speed of travel, the fleeting views and because their interest is focused on the road and driving rather than the views.	<b>Low</b>

## Development potential of the site

The evaluation of landscape, townscape and the visual receptors highlights any sensitivities of the site. Any proposed masterplan should take into consideration the sensitivities in order to demonstrate good design and a contribution to the landscape and its existing character. The opportunities and constraints plan on page 27 and appended to this assessment (**Appendix D**) illustrates the relevant considerations for the site.

### Evaluation of the landscape

The landscape sensitivity of the site and its surroundings is considered to be **Medium-Low** in Chapter 5 of this report.

The site is located on the lower lying land in this Landscape Character Area, which is less sensitive than the more prominent escarpment, knolls and crest-lines.

There would be an inevitable loss of arable farmland as a result of developing the site, however the urban area of Warrington, existing residential development and industrial uses lie within close proximity to the site and influence the character of the area.

The existing field boundaries and landscape features within the site such as trees, hedgerows, and watercourses, should be preserved and enhanced to maintain a sense of the former rural character. These features are of local value, which should be retained and incorporated within the illustrative masterplan. The existing hedgerow should be retained and enhanced along the A56 in the proximity of Walton Hall Lodge. The proposals should include for new hedgerow and tree planting which would complement the existing character.

Due to the restrictions on development within the consultation zones set by the industrial works to the north of the site, the scale of developable area would be constrained. A large area of land to the south of the Manchester Ship Canal would be retained as public open space with a potential opportunity for a country park.

Development of the site could achieve the relevant recommended management and landscape objectives identified within the Warrington LCA 2007 and with good design contribute to the landscape and its existing character. The relevant recommended management and landscape objectives within Warrington LCA 2007 are:

- *Control planned housing development, pulling back construction on the skyline crest*
- *Encourage hedgerow retention and restoration*
- *Encourage the replacement of new hedgerow trees*

### Evaluation of the townscape

The key townscape features in both Higher and Lower Walton are the listed buildings and conservation areas and any development adjacent to the town will need to respect the character and setting of these areas, with restricted building heights along the A56 and adjacent Walton Lodge.

There are two listed bridges located on the southern boundary of the site. Any development should be set back from the canal and respect the setting of these bridges.

Lower Walton is heavily trafficked, and its character is influenced by adjacent industrial uses. Higher Walton has a more distinctive character and is more tranquil, with most of the through traffic diverted onto the A56 which separates the village to the north from the site.

The townscape comprises a mix of age, architectural style, scale and materials and new development can therefore be integrated into the urban structure. The characteristics and qualities of the adjacent townscape should be used as a guide to the design, scale and massing and type of development to ensure that any proposals for new development are appropriate in the site context.

Due to the intervening vegetation and built form, and the topography of the land there is no inter visibility between the site and Moore Village. On the approach to Moore from Walton and Higher Walton the proposals should demonstrate a gap between the two settlements and retain the character of the approach to the conservation area at Moore Village. Any site access from Runcorn Road should be sensitively designed to retain the rural character of this road on the approach to Moore Village.

### Evaluation of the visual receptors

The sensitivity of each visual receptor with views of the site has been assessed in Chapter 5 of this report.

Any proposals should retain Mill Lane within a wide open green corridor. Where possible view lines towards locally listed buildings



should be retained, and views towards the industrial uses to the north of the site should be screened.

The alignment of FP Walton 2 should be retained as part of any development proposals in order to retain connectivity to the surroundings. The public right of way should be retained within green routes and would benefit from an attractive active frontage and natural surveillance, as well as maintained views towards the principle elevation of Grange Green Manor. There is also the opportunity to retain the former mill and mill pond within a green corridor with a potential to reinstate the mill pond at part of the proposed development.

The elevated position of the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk provides opportunities for views into the site. Development proposals should be set back to retain the character of PRow FP Walton 4, whilst screening views of the heavy industry on the horizon.

Development should be set back from PRow FP Walton 6 to provide a soft development edge alongside this footpath. There is opportunity for views into the site through gaps in the existing vegetation from this route and these could be retained within the development proposals.

Runcorn Road, the A56 Chester Road, and Holly Hedge Lane are all part of longer route through Warrington, Cheshire and Runcorn. Any proposals should be designed to ensure these routes are screened from development where appropriate or benefit from attractive active frontages of development. Residential development is not at odds with the surroundings and many of the existing buildings within the site are residential or agricultural buildings converted for residential uses.

The site is visually contained from the north by the vegetation associated with the railway embankment and the canal. In views from the site, looking north, the industrial works are visible unattractive features on the horizon. Fiddler Ferry chimneys and the railway bridge are urbanising features visible from within the site. Proposals should include additional screen planting along this north edge to screen the taller industrial land uses. Higher Walton and Walton Hall Estate are also densely vegetated preventing any long-distance views towards the site from the south.

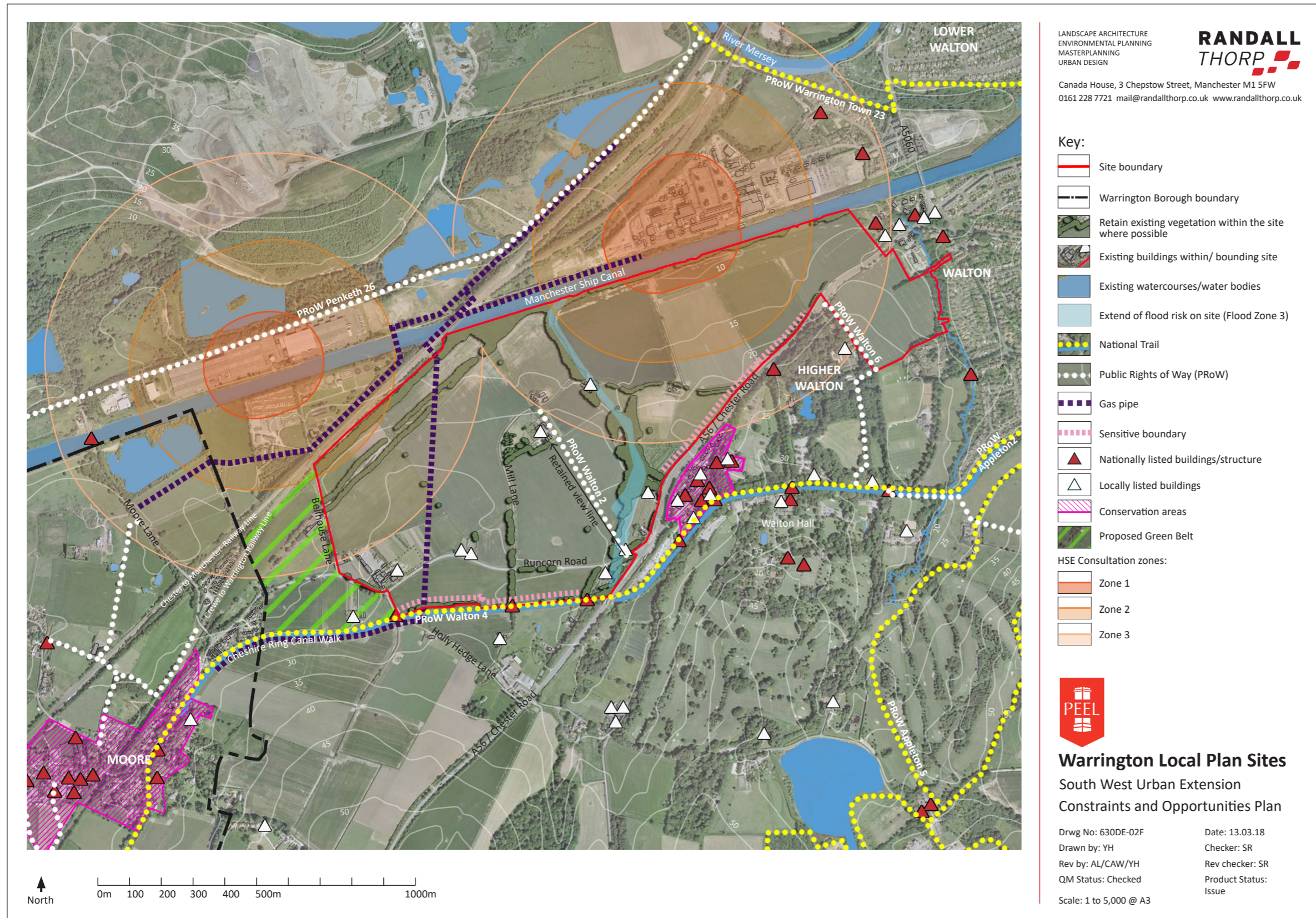
## Development potential of the site

The plan over leaf highlights the opportunities and constraints established through this appraisal, as well as the identified areas of flood risk, HSE consultation zones, and gas pipe easements which will need to remain free from development.

There is no reason why a well-designed development that preserves the existing landscape features such as water course and trees within a green infrastructure network and responds sensitively to the setting of the Conservation Area and heritage assets would have any significant effects on the landscape and townscape character of the surroundings.

With appropriate good design and well thought out landscape mitigation measures, development within the site has the potential to avoid significant effects on the visual amenity of the surrounding receptors.

For the reasons outlined above, this report considers the South West Urban Extension site to be a sustainable and achievable location to be allocated for new housing development within the new Warrington Borough PSLP.



Constraints and opportunities

## Illustrative masterplan

The opportunities and constraints identified through the landscape and visual appraisal have been combined with analysis of site constraints and opportunities from other consultants in relation to arboriculture, ecology, heritage, noise, transport, flood risk and utilities. This resultant illustrative masterplan (Page 29) has been prepared to demonstrate the potential development opportunities of the site with a proposed allocation for housing under Policy MD3 of the PSLP.

Land to the north of the A56 at Higher Walton would be developed as a sustainable urban extension to the main urban area of Warrington, providing up to 1,800 new homes. The urban extension would support a new community in a high quality residential setting with ease of access to Warrington's employment, recreation and cultural facilities. The new community would be supported by:

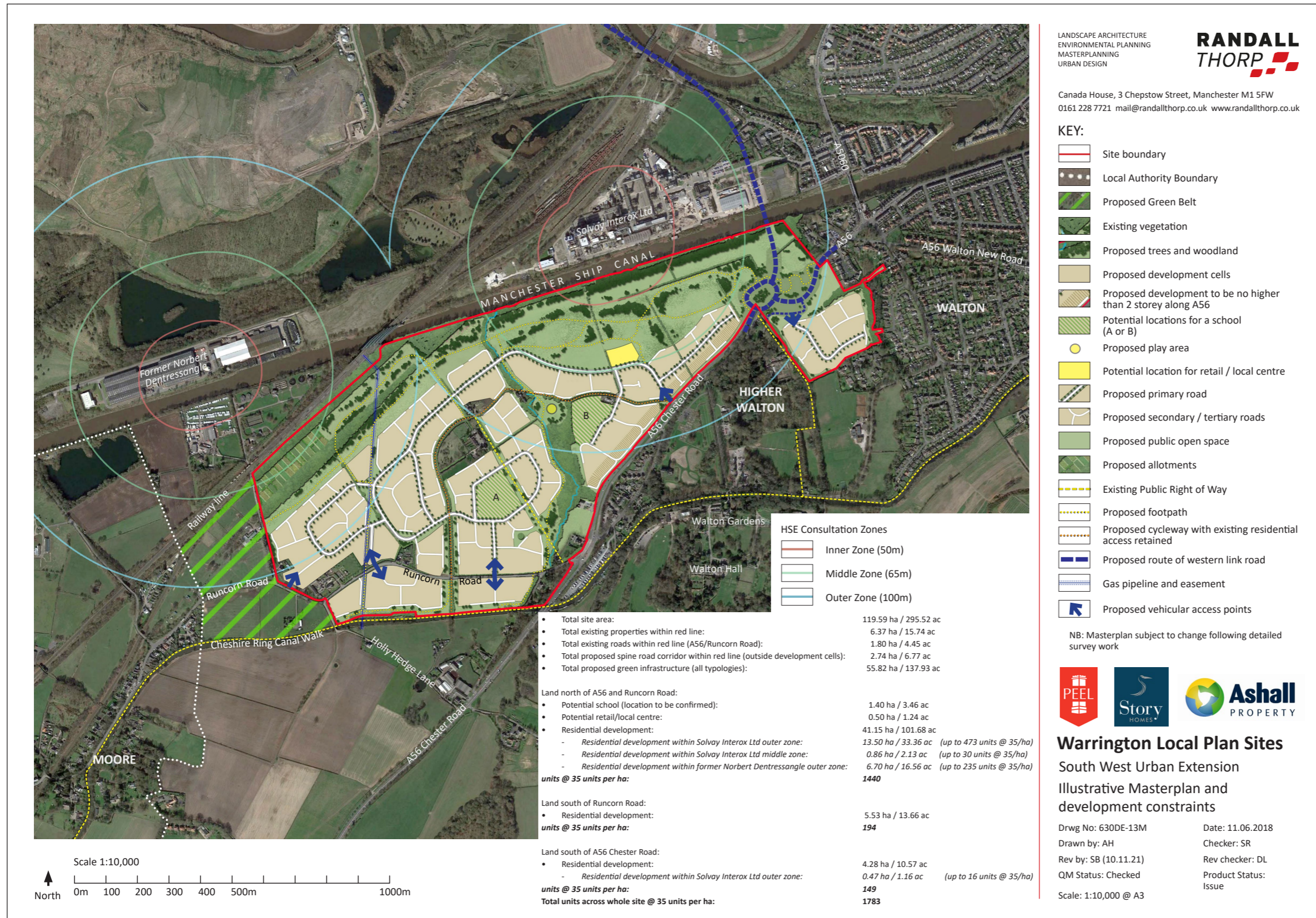
- a new primary school
- a local centre comprising local shops, a potential new health facility, subject to needs, and other community facilities as necessary to support the new residential community.
- extensive areas of open space and recreation provision.

The development will be designed to support walking and cycling for local trips. It will benefit from the new Western Link and improved public transport to enable access to the town centre, Stockton Heath, the Waterfront development, and other major employment areas, including Daresbury.

The new Green Belt boundary will ensure clear separation between Warrington and Runcorn and will provide a strategic gap between the urban extension and the village of Moore. It is essential that this separation is maintained to preserve the function of the Green Belt and the separate identity of Warrington and Halton communities.

Development will ensure that important ecological assets within the site are preserved with opportunities to provide additional habitats and enhance biodiversity.

The urban extension will preserve, and where possible enhance the heritage assets within the site and will be designed to respect the setting of nearby heritage assets, including the Bridgewater Canal and its bridges and the Walton Village Conservation Area.



Illustrative masterplan



Prepared for:



**RANDALL**  
*THORP*

# **Memorandum of Understanding**

Between: Peel L&P Investments (North) Limited,  
Story Homes Limited, Riley Properties Limited and  
Ashall Property Limited

**Warrington Borough Council Local Plan 2021-38  
Proposed Submission Version (September 2021):  
Warrington South West Urban Extension**

November 2021

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been prepared jointly by Peel L&P Investments (North) Limited, Story Homes Limited, Riley Properties Limited and Ashall Property Limited; hereby known as the South West Urban Extension Consortium (or 'the Consortium').
- 1.2 This document relates to the South West Urban Extension (SWUE), previously identified for residential development in the Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (March 2019) in Policy MD3 – South West Urban Extension. The SWUE allocation has since been removed from the Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (September 2021).
- 1.3 This document sets out the Consortium commitment to delivering the South West Urban Extension in a collaborative manner.



## 2. Background

2.1 The SWUE was previously allocated in the Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (March 2019) in Policy MD3 – South West Urban Extension to deliver:

- A new residential community of around 1,600 homes
- A two-form entry primary school
- A mixed-use local centre providing a health facility and a range of units
- Variety of high-quality open space including a new Local Park, playing pitches and play spaces.

2.2 Within the Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (March 2019) the SWUE allocation is intended to be delivered from Year 7 of the Plan Period (2023/24) continuing beyond the Plan Period. As identified in Appendix 1 – Housing Trajectory and Stepped Housing Supply in the 2019 version of the Local Plan. The Consortium fully supported the principle of this allocation and subsequent policy.

2.3 Collaboratively the site is under the control of Peel L&P Investments (North) Limited, Story Homes Limited, Riley Properties Limited and Ashall Property Limited. The Consortium Group collectively own a significant majority of the site, this includes the access points and locations for key pieces of infrastructure required to deliver the development. Through representations previously submitted, and meetings with Warrington Borough Council, the Consortium Group have consistently expressed clear support for the site's allocation and also the Council's decision to bring forward an ambitious growth-led Local Plan.

2.4 The iterations of the Warrington local Plan and subsequent evidence base documents, up to the 2019 Version, clearly show support for the allocation of the SWUE. Warrington Councils South Warrington Urban Extension Framework Plan Document (June 2017) shows clear support for the site and the benefits it could bring to the wider area.

*“The Development of the SWUE site presents a significant positive opportunity for Warrington, which will help to meet housing land supply requirements in the following years... This will be a significant opportunity for Warrington to create a new sustainable urban extension to the south west of Warrington.”<sup>1</sup>*

2.5 The SWUE Consortium Group has been working collaboratively to refine proposals for the scheme at South West Warrington. Over the duration of the Local Plan production the Consortium Group has engaged and worked with the Council and enhanced the Masterplan to reflect this progression. This has been informed via the instruction or update of technical evidence, ensuring that the proposals are technically deliverable.

2.6 Following the consultation on the Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (March 2019), Warrington Borough Council has proposed a number of changes to the Local Plan. These include:

- A reduction in the Housing Requirement from 945 to 816 dwellings per annum (dpa)

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<sup>1</sup> Warrington Borough Council: South Warrington Urban Extension Framework Plan Document (June 2017) p.39

- The allocation of Land at Fiddlers Ferry for both employment and residential development
  - The subsequent removal of draft allocations including the South West Urban Extension
- 2.7 The SWUE allocation has now been removed from the Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (September 2021). The Consortium are disappointed in the Council's decision to remove this allocation given that the scheme aligned with the wider ambitions of the Local Plan and were supported in principle by the Council themselves.
- 2.8 The Consortium Group considers it vital that Warrington Borough Council progress with an ambitious growth-led Local Plan which ensures appropriate levels of housing and economic development are pursued. The Consortium Group is disappointed in the Council's change in stance on housing need and growth, between the 2019 and 2021 Submission Version Local Plan, which has resulted in the SWUE being removed from the Plan.
- 2.9 The Consortium Group consider that this removal is unjustified. In addition, the Group is concerned that the Council has decided to move away from a Plan that was growth-led, to a version of the Local Plan which seems to adopt the minimum requirement as dictated by the Standard Method. This sudden contradiction is deeply concerning and is not considered to be robustly justified.
- 2.10 The Consortium remains fully committed to promoting the SWUE for residential development and have previously demonstrated through technical evidence that the site is a sustainable and deliverable option for development within the Borough. This will be demonstrated further in the combined and independent representations to the current Local Plan consultation.

### 3. Commitment


- 3.1 Despite the loss of an allocation at SWUE, the Consortium members are fully committed to work collaboratively in order to promote the site for development.
- 3.2 The Consortium are also fully committed to continue to work with Warrington Borough Council in order to develop a sustainable and deliverable vision for SWUE, subject to an allocation in the future iterations of the Local Plan.
- 3.3 The Consortium agrees that development at the SWUE should be comprehensive and coordinated. A Development Prospectus has been prepared and agreed by all Consortium members to demonstrate how the site could be brought forward for development in a comprehensive manner. It demonstrates how the individual and collective land ownerships are complementary and can contribute towards meeting the housing needs of Warrington in accordance with the overarching vision and objectives of the Local Plan.
- 3.4 The Consortium Group notes that the SWUE has the ability to deliver homes earlier than the anticipated trajectory, as seen within the Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (March 2019).
- 3.5 The Consortium have collectively and separately undertaken significant technical work to ensure that there are no insurmountable obstacles to the delivery of residential development and can demonstrate clear achievability.
- 3.6 The Consortium are committed to working with Warrington Borough Council (as Local Planning Authority and Local Highway Authority) and have held a number of joint meetings with the Council.
- 3.7 The Consortium remains committed to continuing to work in partnership with the Council to secure the delivery of housing on the SWUE at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.8 Finally, the Consortium Group remains in agreement that the Warrington South West Urban Extension remains deliverable, achievable, available and viable.

## 4. Declaration

Signed on behalf of Peel L&P Investments (North) Limited:

Name: Steven Underwood


Date: 12/11/2021

Signature: 

Signed on behalf of Story Homes Limited:

Name: John Winstanley

Date: 12/11/2021

Signature: 

Signed on behalf of Riley Properties Limited:

Name: Stafford Clever

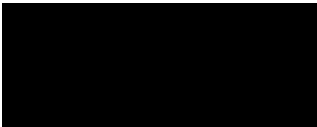
Date: 12/11/2021

Signature: 

Signed on behalf of Ashall Property Limited:

Name: Scott Ashall

Date: 

Signature: 



November 2021

**Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Ltd**

**Warrington South West Urban Extension**

**Predicted Agricultural Land Quality**



## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd (RAC) is instructed by Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Limited to assess the likely Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) of land to the immediate south west of the settlement boundary of Warrington by means of a desktop appraisal of soil and site characteristics.
- 1.2 Guidance for assessing the quality of agricultural land in England and Wales is set out in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land (1988)<sup>1</sup>, and summarised in Natural England's Technical Information Note 049<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3 Agricultural land in England and Wales is graded between 1 and 5, depending on the extent to which physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The principal physical factors influencing grading are climate, site and soil which, together with interactions between them, form the basis for classifying land into one of the five grades.
- 1.4 Grade 1 land is excellent quality agricultural land with very minor or no limitations to agricultural use, and Grade 5 is very poor quality land, with severe limitations due to adverse soil, relief, climate or a combination of these. Grade 3 land is subdivided into Subgrade 3a (good quality land) and Subgrade 3b (moderate quality land). Land which is classified as Grades 1, 2 and 3a in the ALC system is defined as best and most versatile agricultural land.

## 2 Site and climatic conditions

### General features, land form and drainage

- 2.1 The site comprises approximately 119ha of land to the immediate south west of the settlement boundary of Warrington. It is bound by the Manchester Ship Canal to the north and the West Coast Railway to the north west. To the south east the A56 Runcorn Road forms the boundary, with a plot of land to the south of the A56, immediately adjoining the Warrington settlement

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<sup>1</sup> **MAFF (1988)**. *Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales. Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land*. MAFF Publications.

<sup>2</sup> **Natural England (2012)**. *Technical Information Note 049 - Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land*, Second Edition.

boundary, included. The Bridgewater Canal encloses the site at its southern boundary. At the eastern extent, the boundary follows Bellhouse Lane and Runcorn Road.

- 2.2 The site currently comprises a mix of agricultural land and associated buildings and property. Mill Lane runs through the site, providing access to a number of private properties and farm buildings. An area of industrial uses lies on the northern side of the Ship Canal, known as Warrington Waterfront. The route of the proposed Western Link Road lies at the eastern end of the site.
- 2.3 Most of the agricultural land on the site is in arable use. Topography at the site is gently sloping from around 25m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the east and south, to 10m AOD in the north-east.

### **Agro-climatic conditions**

- 2.4 Agro-climatic data for the site have been interpolated from the Meteorological Office's standard 5km grid point data set at a representative altitude of 15m AOD, and are given in Table 1. Climate at the site is wet and moderately warm with moderate moisture deficits. The number of field capacity days is greater than is typical for lowland England and is unfavourable for providing opportunities for agricultural field work.

**Table 1:** Local agro-climatic conditions

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Value</b>
Average Annual Rainfall	800mm
Accumulated Temperatures >0°C	1,438 day°
Field Capacity Days	189 days
Average Moisture Deficit, wheat	92mm
Average Moisture Deficit, potatoes	81mm

### **Soil parent material and soil type**

- 2.5 The underlying geology mapped by the British Geological Survey<sup>3</sup> across most the site is pebbly sandstone of the Helsby Sandstone Formation. In the south and north-east, the sandstone is of the Wilmslow Formation, which includes reddish brown, generally pebble-free sandstones.
- 2.6 Superficial deposits across most of the site comprise fine-grained sand of the Shirdley Hill Sand Formation. A small pocket of glaciofluvial sand and gravel overlies the bedrock in the north of the site, lying adjacent to Tidal Flat deposits of clay, silt and sand, associated with the River

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<sup>3</sup> **British Geological Survey (2021).** *Geology of Britain viewer*, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Mersey further north. In the north-east and south-west of the site are two small pockets of glacial which can include material ranging in size from clay to boulders.

- 2.7 The Soil Survey of England and Wales soil association mapping<sup>4</sup> (1:250,000 scale) shows the Blackwood association across the site. Profiles within this association are characterised by deep sandy and loamy soils which are affected by groundwater. Where drainage is poor, soils tend to be waterlogged for long periods during winter and are commonly of Wetness Class (WC) III and IV. Where the regional water table has been lowered and soils are drained assessment of WC I or II may be recorded<sup>5</sup>.

### 3 Agricultural land quality

#### Existing data

- 3.1 Provisional ALC mapping shows the site to be mostly Grade 2 with undifferentiated Grade 3 mapped in the north. However, Natural England's TIN049 explains that:

*"These maps are not sufficiently accurate for use in assessment of individual fields or development sites, and should not be used other than as general guidance. They show only five grades: their preparation preceded the subdivision of Grade 3 and the refinement of criteria, which occurred after 1976. They have not been updated and are out of print. A 1:250 000 scale map series based on the same information is available. These are more appropriate for the strategic use originally intended ..."*

- 3.2 Detailed ALC survey data is not available for the site, although detailed data in the vicinity to the west and south-west shows agricultural land quality in the locality to range from Grades 1 to 4 on land that has also been mapped provisionally as Grade 2. The detailed reports are not however available from Natural England.
- 3.3 Soils characteristic of the Blackwood association that are likely to be found on the site, with coarse and sandy textures, may be limited to each of these grades according to the specific WC: profiles of WC I would be Grade 1; WC II would be Grade 2; WC III would be Subgrade 3a; WC IV would be Subgrade 3b; and WC V would be Grade 4, limited by wetness.

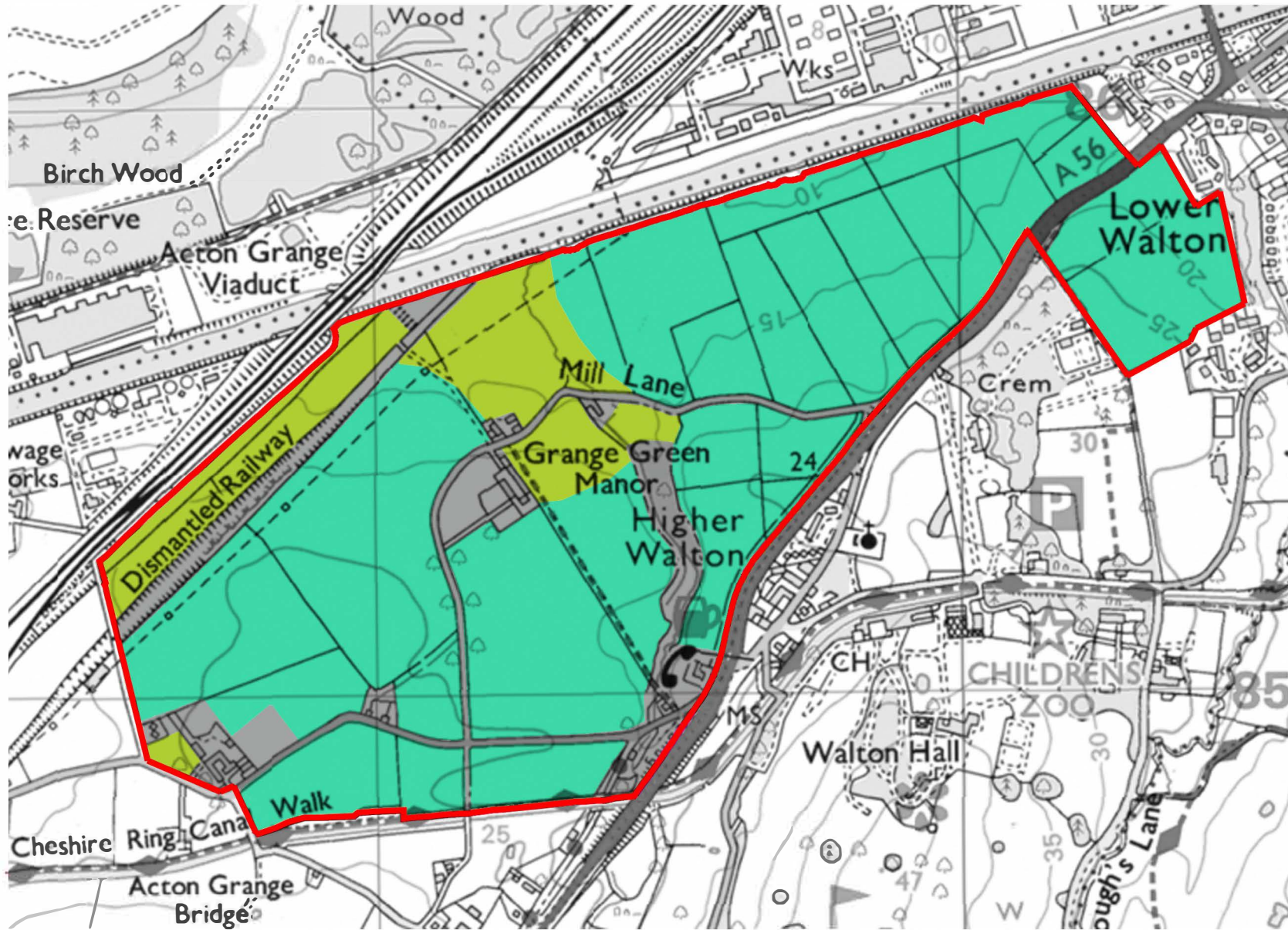
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<sup>4</sup> **Soil Survey of England and Wales (1984)**. *Soils of Midland and Western England* (1:250,000), Sheet 3

<sup>5</sup> **Ragg et al. (1984)**. *Soils and Their Use in Midland and Western England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales, Bulletin 12. Harpenden



- 3.4 A small, unnamed watercourse runs through the site, north and south of Mill Lane, and connects with the Manchester Ship Canal to the north. Land adjacent to this watercourse north of Grange Green Manor is within Flood Zone 3. Aerial photography shows patchiness in crop establishment in this area, which is considered likely to be of Subgrade 3b, as is the permanent grassland to the west of Bellhouse Lane.
- 3.5 Across the remainder of the site, crop establishment is more uniform and the land is considered more likely to include best and most versatile land in Subgrade 3a or Grade 2. However, as there is a single soil association mapped, the likely distribution of these grades cannot be mapped without undertaking a detailed ALC survey.
- 3.6 Guidance in paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework is that in respect of plan-making, where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. At the strategic level, Warrington is surrounded by Grade 2 land on the Provisional ALC plan, except for Grade 3 land mapped in the floodplain of the River Mersey which is clearly not available for development.
- 3.7 All of the land proposed for the Garden City Suburb to the south of the town is shown as Grade 2 on the Provisional ALC map. However, there have been some detailed ALC surveys within that site that cover nearly 300ha, and that classify the land as approximately 50% best and most versatile land in Grades 2 and 3a, and 50% lower quality land in Subgrade 3b.
- 3.8 Given the potential for a range of grades associated with the soil type found at the South West Urban Extension Site, and that other land to the south (and indeed surrounding) Warrington is also classified provisionally as Grade 2 but is a mix of best and most versatile and lower quality land on detailed examination, it is a reasonable expectation that a similar mix of grades will be found on the South West Urban Extension Site, and that any development around the town will involve the loss of a proportion of best and most versatile agricultural land.



- BMV Quality
- Not BMV Quality
- Non Agricultural

DRAWING TITLE

RAC8025-1d: Predicted ALC

CONTRACT

Warrington South West Urban Expansion

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1:10,000@A4 Nov 2021

Rev.



## Warrington South Western Urban Extension Secondary School Position

This briefing note has been drawn up to review the secondary school position with regard to the needs arising from the proposed South Western Urban Extension (SWUE) as part of the Local Plan going forward.

It will conclude that across the Borough sufficient spaces will exist to meet the needs of the SWUE across Warrington through the Local Plan period. It will also conclude that while some local shortfalls of places may be identified, these can be resolved through the efficient working of the admissions system and the existing fluidity of school admissions across Warrington.

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The proposed site lies to the south west of Warrington immediately to the south of the Manchester Ship Canal (MSC). It was originally identified as a potential residential site by Warrington Borough Council (WBC) but has not been included within the latest version of the Local Plan - Reg 19 version dated September 2021. One reason for this is specified in the Development Options and Site Assessment Technical Report (September 2021 – Appendix 5, Option 5) on the basis that “... *there are likely to be pressures on existing infrastructure in south Warrington, in particular in respect of secondary school provision...*”. The site was originally identified as having the potential to yield 1,700 dwellings, but for the purposes of this paper, a figure of 1,800 has been adopted as being deliverable.

1.2 The WBC has a Planning Obligations SPD dating to January 2017, which uses a pupil product ratio (PPR) of 0.18 to calculate the approximate number of secondary age pupils likely to arise from new developments. When this is applied to the 1,800 dwellings currently proposed, a total of 324 pupils is calculated, representing approximately 2.16 Forms of Entry (2.16FE).





1.3 This paper will review the secondary position, both locally and for the Borough of Warrington to demonstrate that across the period of the Local Plan 2017-37 sufficient secondary school places will exist to meet, not only the needs of pupils arising from the SWUE but also from the totality of the housing identified within the emerging Local Plan.

2. Borough Situation

2.1 The proposed development site lies just south of the MSC close to the with Halton (Map 1). However, while some cross boundary movement is inevitable, as each education authority has responsibility for the children residing in its area, only the schools within the Warrington boundary will be reviewed here.

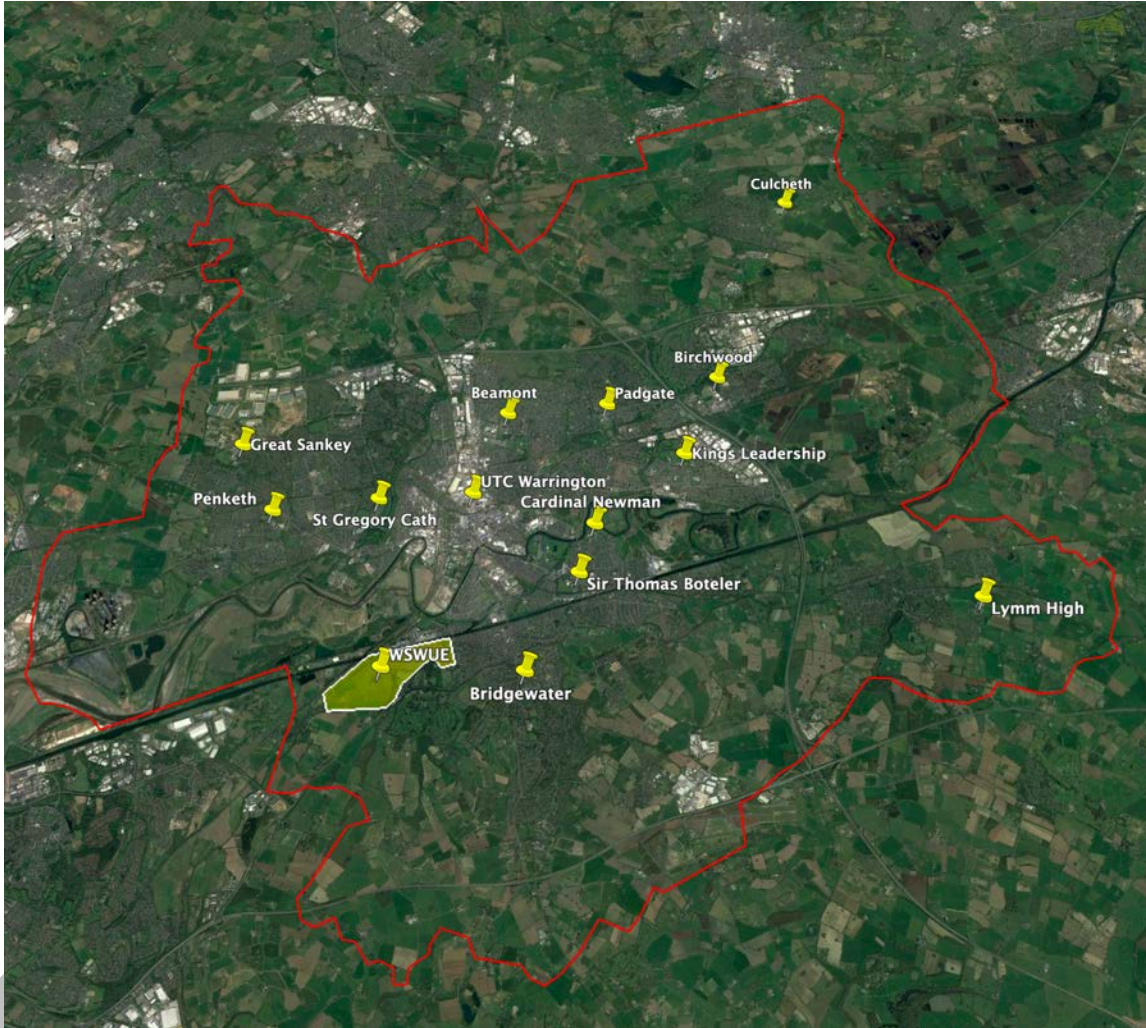


Map 1: Site of proposed development and Warrington Borough Boundary (approximate)

2.2 There are thirteen secondary schools within Warrington, the majority of which are located in the urban area north of the canal (Map 2) with three more rurally located to the north east, south and south east of the Borough. One of the schools is a University Technical College, which accepts pupils at age 14, the remainder accept pupils at age 11. Four of the



schools host sixth form capacity, but for clarity of data this will not be examined in detail within this report



Map 2: Warrington secondary schools

2.3 The schools’ capacity and roll data are shown in Table 1. Between them, the schools have capacity for 13,502 main school pupils, excluding sixth form capacity, which provides a further 1,677 places. At present there is a total of 12,377 main school pupils on roll, leaving a surplus of 1,125 places across the Borough. The majority of the surplus places exist within the older year groups with the younger years showing higher numbers of pupils. This is largely due to the failure of the UTC Warrington to admit fully at Year 10, which leaves surplus capacity from that point.



School	Postcode	Distance	P Area	CAP	PAN Yr R	PAN Yr 10	NoR	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11
Penketh High	WA5 2BY		8770012	1200	180	180	820	150	166	146	160	198
Great Sankey High	WA5 3AA		8770012	1536	375	375	1770	374	375	368	337	316
St Gregory's Catholic High	WA5 1HG		8770012	1141	240	240	1096	239	244	235	191	187
King's Leadership Acad	WA1 4PF		8770013	600	120	120	694	164	151	135	123	121
Culcheth high	WA3 5HH		8770013	1296	240	240	1174	240	239	232	233	230
Birchwood community High	WA3 7PT		8770013	1050	170	170	790	161	153	145	153	178
Beamont Collegiate Acad	WA2 8PX		8770014	1065	180	180	914	180	183	182	180	189
UTC Warrington	WA2 7NG	2.7	8770014	283	0	130	108	0	0	0	53	55
Sir Thomas Boteler CE High	WA4 1JL	2.9	8770014	825	165	165	615	134	147	134	108	92
Padgate Acad	WA2 0LN		8770014	750	150	150	502	110	125	100	82	85
Cardinal Newman Catholic High	WA4 1RX		8770014	825	165	165	795	157	162	172	155	149
Bridgewater High	WA4 3AE	2.15	8770015	1522	300	300	1544	306	314	316	306	302
Lymm High	WA13 0RB	3+	8770015	1409	300	300	1555	308	319	309	308	311
			<b>Total</b>	<b>13502</b>	<b>2585</b>	<b>2715</b>	<b>12377</b>	<b>2523</b>	<b>2578</b>	<b>2474</b>	<b>2389</b>	<b>2413</b>
			Surplus				1125	62	7	111	326	302

Table 1: Warrington secondary schools (excluding 6<sup>th</sup> form)

2.4 It is important to note at this stage that patterns of admission across the Borough show that many pupils do not automatically attend their closest school. Parents are entitled to express a preference for their favoured schools(s) and this results in pupils being admitted to schools which are not their closest.

2.5 Within Warrington this is particularly clear for Lymm High School, which has on roll pupils from Grappenhall and Partington and Sir Thomas Boteler High School which takes many pupils from south of the MSC. The majority of the central Warrington schools admit pupils for whom the school is not the most local. It is notable that in the admissions round for September 2021, WBC data lists two schools, Padgate Academy and Penketh High School, which admitted their last pupil from “more than 10 miles away” in a straight line, and four others admitted their last pupil from three or more miles away.

2.6 This emphasises the fluid nature of school choice and admissions across the Borough and suggests that in a situation of local deficit places, the admissions patterns will have the flexibility to adapt to local pressures by “pushing back” applications from less local pupils.

2.7 Each year, WBC is required to provide to the Department for Education (DfE) forecasts of pupil numbers based on groups of schools within its area. There are four groups within Warrington, and when combined the forecasts based on Spring 2019 were as shown in Table 2. No forecasts were published in 2020 due to the Covid situation.

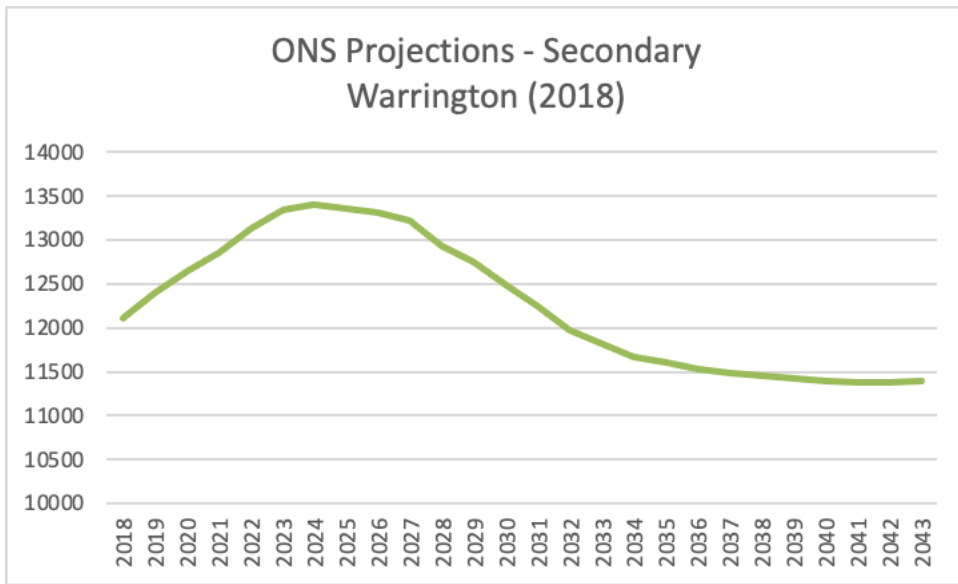


8770012, 13, 14 & 15	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Main Total
May 2019 Actual	2495	2373	2408	2382	2268	11926
2019-20 F/c	2579	2509	2398	2416	2406	12308
2020-21 F/c	2549	2609	2537	2416	2444	12555
Spring 2021 Actual	2523	2578	2474	2389	2413	12377
2021-22 F/c	2697	2584	2642	2550	2449	12922
2022-23 F/c	2764	2721	2607	2657	2573	13322
2023-24 F/c	2795	2790	2744	2624	2679	13632
2024-25 F/c	2765	2811	2805	2753	2638	13772
2025-26 F/c	2710	2792	2832	2826	2777	13937
<b>Total Listed PAN / Capacity</b>	<b>2585</b>					<b>13502</b>

Table 2: Warrington combined secondary forecast

2.8 WBC clearly anticipates a deficit of approximately 435 places by 2025-26. There are, however, two things to note. The first is that the actual number of pupils on roll in Spring 2021 (pink highlighted row) is some 178 pupils lower than forecast for that year (row above). It appears that the forecast anticipates in-year growth as pupils move through the school system, but the check on the actual suggests that this has not occurred and that the numbers of pupils in each cohort has remained largely stable as they progress. Consequently, the forecasts could be overstated by that number, and this may slow down the arrival of any deficit. Admissions data published by WBC indicates that places were offered to 2,557 Year 7 children for September 2021. While this is higher than in 2020, it is 140 below the forecast figure for 2021-22 and will exacerbate the over-forecast currently shown.

2.9 The second thing to note is that the 2018 based ONS Population Projections for Warrington for the 11-15 year-old age group shows that while numbers are currently expected to rise through to 2024, they are then due to level off, before commencing a significant decline – of approximately 2,005 children. The ONS Projections are trend based and take into account the effect of population migration, births and will include the impact of new housing in prior years (delivered at an average of 639 dwellings per annum since 2001).



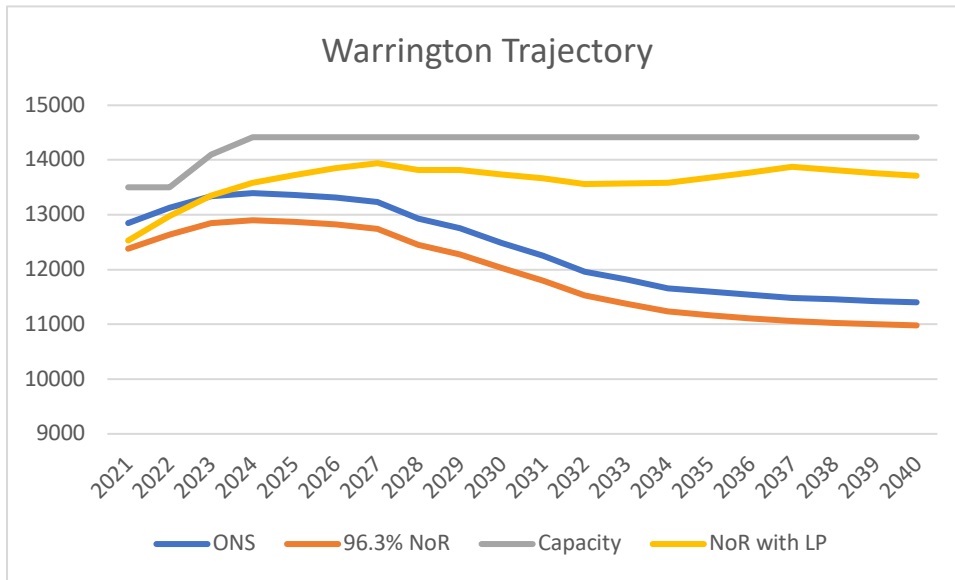
Graph 1: ONS Projections for secondary age children (2018 base)

2.10 There is no indication that the stabilisation and subsequent reduction in child numbers within Warrington post-2024 has yet been factored into WBC’s forecasts. With 2024 now just three years away there is every suggestion that by the time the major Allocations start to come forward, this change in population will have become noticeable and the secondary school population will have started to decline, if it has not already done so.

2.11 A trajectory to model future pupil numbers into the future within the Borough has been constructed and is shown in Graph 2. It is based on the ONS Projections with additions made for the Local Plan housing target of 16,495 (2021-37) spread across the Local Plan period. The Borough’s pupil product ratio of 0.18 has then been applied and decayed to the Borough average of 0.139 across twenty years.

2.12 The trajectory gives a picture of a rapidly falling number of secondary-age children living in Warrington, from 2024 onwards (blue line). A reduction has been made to account for the fact that WBC school rolls reflect a 96.3% take-up rate of places (orange line) and the Local Plan housing targets are then added in (yellow line). Capacity rises to 14,417 following the planned addition of 300 places at Bridgewater High School, 75 places at Sir Thomas Boteler CE School and 240 places at St Gregory’s Catholic High School - and is not exceeded within the Local Plan Period.





Graph 2: Warrington trajectory including Local Plan Housing

2.13 In summary, in a complex situation and with updates not yet published, it appears probable that WBC has overstated the impact of population growth in its forecasts for at least Spring 2021 and 2022. It is becoming clear that the numbers emerging in the medium term for the Borough will be lower than anticipated. In addition, the decline in the numbers of secondary-age children projected by the ONS is currently of such an extent that the full quotient of Local Plan housing could be accommodated with little need for further capacity additions, through to at least the end of the Local Plan period.

2.14 In these circumstances there can be no question that across the whole of the Borough there will be sufficient secondary school places to meet the needs of the Local Plan housing, including the proposed development of the SWUE. With current admissions patterns, at least some of these surplus places will become available for the secondary age children moving into new homes in the southern part of Warrington.

### 3. Local Situation

3.1 There are three schools within the statutory walking distance of the proposed SWUE development site, Bridgewater High, St Thomas Boteler CE High and the UTC Warrington. Focusing on the two mainstream schools which admit pupils at Year 7 (aged 11), a similar picture to the one in Table 1 emerges, with 188 surplus places currently available, the



majority of which are within Years 10 and 11. Both schools admitted fully for September 2021 and the picture suggests pressure could emerge in the system before long.

3.2 The UTC Warrington has not recruited fully for some years and in its main school years had 108 on roll in Spring 2021 compared to capacity of 260. It accepts pupils from across Warrington at Year 10 and specialises in science, technology and engineering – it does not provide Year 7, 8 or 9 places. As such, while it is part of the secondary school offer within Warrington, it has a specific rather than a general offer and will not be considered in detail here, other than to note that some secondary places remain available here, but only within the two last mainstream year groups.

3.3 Bridgewater High School, the closest school to the SWUE, is grouped with Lymm High School to the east for planning and forecasting purposes. Both schools are located south of the MSC and serve the southern rural extent of Warrington, the data provided in Table 3, shows that both schools are currently under some pressure, with a deficit of 168 places in Spring 2021, distributed across all year groups.

School	Postcode	Distance	P Area	CAP	PAN Yr 7	NoR	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11
Bridgewater High	WA4 3AE	2.15	8770015	1522	300	1544	306	314	316	306	302
Lymm High	WA13 0RB	3+	8770015	1409	300	1555	308	319	309	308	311
<b>Total</b>				<b>2931</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>3099</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>613</b>
						-168	-14	-33	-25	-14	-13

Table 3: Warrington South secondary schools

3.4 The WBC forecast for this group of two schools is shown in Table 4. It shows that the schools accepted in excess of their admission numbers in both September 2018 (May 2019 actual) and in 2020 (2021 Actual) and are expected to continue to do so. Published WBC data states, however, that offers were made to just 600 pupils by the two schools for September 2021, in line with their published admission numbers.



South - 8770015	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Main Total	Post-16	Total
May 2019 Actual	627	615	609	597	590	3038	377	3415
2019-20 F/c	632	635	628	611	609	3115	369	3484
2020-21 F/c	641	642	645	631	621	3180	371	3551
Spring 2021 Actual	614	633	625	614	613	3099	404	3503
2021-22 F/c	643	649	650	646	639	3227	366	3593
2022-23 F/c	686	650	657	651	654	3298	377	3675
2023-24 F/c	679	690	654	653	655	3331	374	3705
2024-25 F/c	661	679	690	647	653	3330	370	3700
2025-26 F/c	668	663	681	686	650	3348	363	3711
<b>Total Listed Capacity</b>	<b>600</b>					<b>2931</b>		<b>3431</b>

Table 4: Warrington South secondary forecast Spring 2019

3.5 As with Warrington as a whole, the actual rolls recorded in Spring 2021 are lower than were forecast by WBC, and again this is likely to produce a slower overall rise in numbers.

3.6 What is also clear, however, is that Warrington schools admit pupils from Boroughs outside Warrington, in the south from Runcorn, Cheshire West and Chester as well as Cheshire East. In 2020 Warrington schools had on roll 185 pupils from these three authorities, while just 26 from Warrington took up places in schools in them. Thus, for the southerly part of Warrington, there was a net inward migration of 159 pupils. In Warrington Borough the trend has been in the other direction, with 463 children travelling to schools outside the authority (mostly St Helens and Trafford) and 365 travelling in to Warrington schools (mostly Halton, Salford, St Helens, Trafford and Wigan).

3.7 Nonetheless, for the southern part of Warrington, there is a significant number of pupils travelling into the Borough to take up places in Bridgewater High School and Lymm High School and were the SWUE to go ahead, pupils living there would take admissions priority over many non-Warrington pupils on the grounds of proximity. This suggests that up to 159 places could gradually become available as the SWUE is constructed.

3.8 ONS Mid-Year Estimates of population for the Wards south of the MSC indicate that in 2020, by year group, there were more children of secondary age currently living in that area than younger children. Table 5 shows the current 11-15 year-olds estimated by the ONS to be living in the Wards:



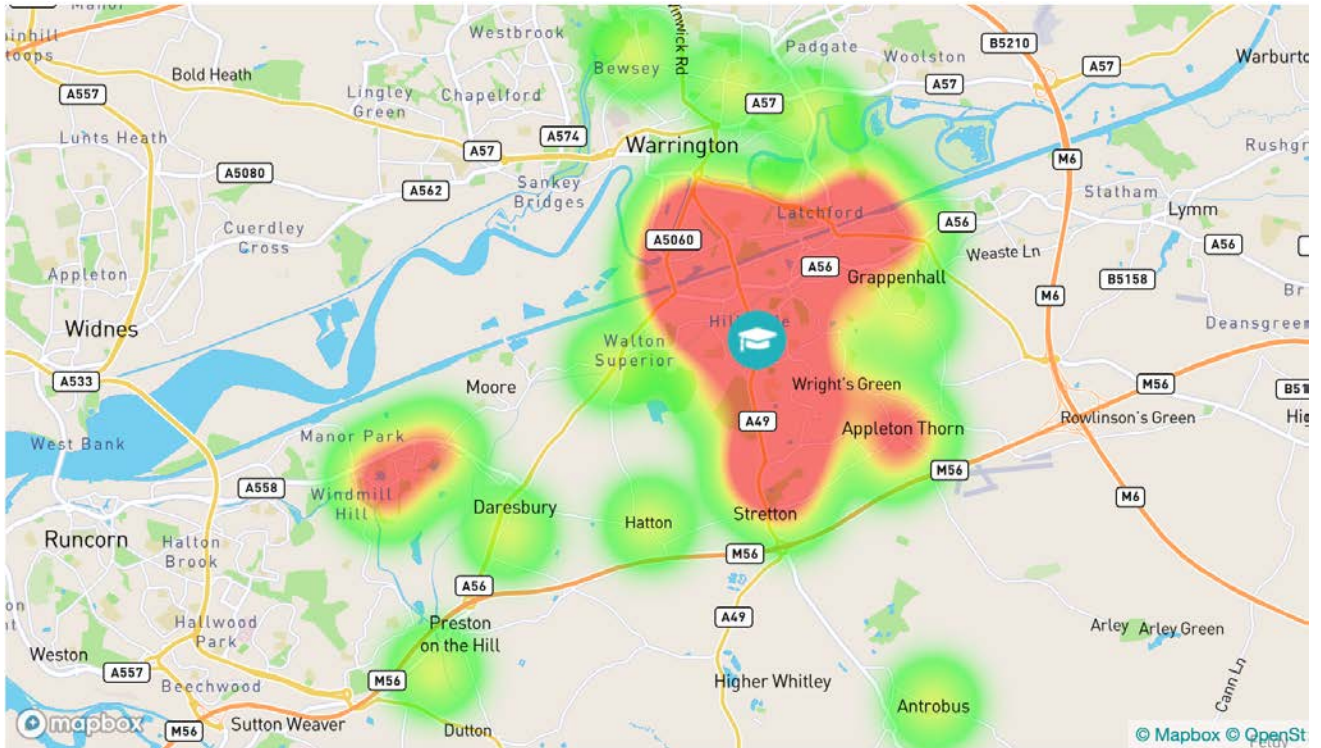
Year of Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Children Resident	290	321	342	377	429	447	440	454	434	475	470	476	500	500	493	506
2020																2,475
2021																2,439
2022																2,421
2023																2,355
2024																2,309
2025																2,273
2026																2,250
2027																2,204
2028																2,147
2029																2,035
2030																1,916
2031																1,759

Table 5: ONS Population Estimates – Southern Wards

3.9 For 2020, approximately 2,475 11-15 year-olds were estimated as resident. As these children move through the system over time they are replaced by smaller numbers of younger children, until by 2031 the numbers have fallen to 1,759. Both of these figures are far lower than the number of children attending the two southern group schools (3,099) and the schools’ capacity (2,931). Clearly, a considerable number of the schools’ current pupils are travelling in from other parts of Warrington, and beyond.

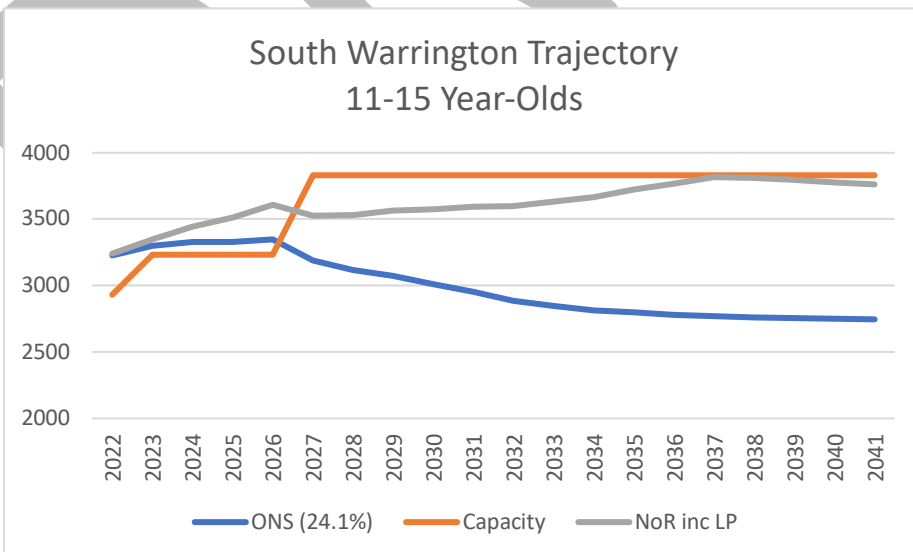
3.10 While this does not, of course, account for additional housing or future increases in the birth rate, it has to bring into question the forecasts shown in Table 4. Even with approximately 400 dwellings currently under construction in the area south of Bridgewater High School, producing approximately 72 additional pupils, there is still a potential reduction in local child numbers of 644 by 2031.

3.10 It appears that Bridgewater High School is a major draw for pupils from north of the MSC and from other neighbouring authorities. A “heat map” of school attendance (Map x) shows clearly the extent of this pattern, with many pupils travelling from north of the MSC as well as from Windmill Hill in Halton, 3.75 miles to the west and some from Cheshire West and Chester, four miles to the immediate south.



Map xx: Bridgewater High School – Heat map 2020

3.11 A trajectory (Graph 4) has been prepared on the basis of the two schools sitting south of the MSC. The forecast numbers on roll for 2026 at the two schools have been apportioned to the ONS Projection for Warrington (25.14%) and carried forward at that proportion through to the end of the Local Plan period.



Graph 4: South Warrington ONS including Local Plan Housing



3.12 Current Allocations proposed for developments south of the Canal, together with the SWUE have then been factored in, to a total of 6,126 dwellings, and these comprise:

- SEUE – 2,400
- SWUE – 1,800
- Fiddlers Ferry – 1,310
- Thelwall Heys – 310
- Lymm - 306

In addition, expansion works at Bridgewater High School and the new 4FE school proposed for the South Eastern Urban Extension have also been included. The proposed developments have been spread through the Local Plan period and a model decaying from 0.18 to 0.139 pupils per dwelling over a number of years has been employed.

3.13 The capacity line (orange) is shown rising on two occasions; the first represents the expansion of Bridgewater High School while the second is the potential new school at 4FE to meet the needs of the SEUE.

3.14 This trajectory (grey line) demonstrates that the area will be technically short of places until approximately 2026 when the ONS Projections start their downward movement and the new school is shown. This shortfall is, in part, a pre-existing problem which WBC is making efforts to meet. However, with the LP housing coming forward during the period, the need for the 4FE school is clear, and once that is in place the area's needs will be met.

3.15 If, for some reason, the South Eastern Urban Extension and its attendant school did not progress within the Plan period, but the SWUE did, a similarly based trajectory indicates that the development of approximately 3,746 dwellings in the southern area would peak at a temporary deficit of between 107 and 270 pupils. The lower figure excludes the admission of pupils from outside of the Borough. In either scenario, the deficit could be met through the “push-back” of pupils to outside of the Borough or to schools with surplus places elsewhere in Warrington. This would be facilitated by the provision of the western access which is planned to cross the MSC, railway and River Mersey between the site of the SWUE and west Warrington.



3.16 As an alternative, the expansion of Lymm High School could also be considered. Although already a large school, its site is of a size (15.5ha) which indicates a maximum of 2,900 pupils - 1,000 more than it accommodates at present.

3.16 In summary, it is agreed that there is currently pressure on places for the South group of schools. However, as with the Borough as a whole, a review of the actual figures on roll and the ONS Projections suggests that the WBC forecast are set higher than is likely to become the case. While the addition of a new 4FE school within the SEUE would be a useful local addition, were that development not to progress, the needs arising from the remaining developments and the SWUE could be met through the use of places elsewhere in Warrington through the “pushing-back” of admissions - or consideration of a small expansion of Lymm High School. While this school is further than the statutory three mile walking distance from the proposed SWUE, it regularly accepts a large number of its pupils from the Grappenhall / Stockton Heath area.

#### 4. Conclusions – Borough Wide

4.1 Forecasts – it is far from clear that WBC’s forecasts are currently as accurate as they could be as forecasts were not collected or published by the DfE in 2020. There are fewer pupils listed on roll at the Borough’s schools than were forecast in 2019 and this will undoubtedly have a knock-on effect in forthcoming years. Consequently, it is highly likely that there will be more places available than forecast through to 2025-26.

4.2 Long-Term Projections – the ONS-based trajectory for the area shows that the impact from the housing will not all come at once and that the significant reductions in the long-term projections will make sufficient places available to meet the housing need through to 2037.

4.3 Borough-wide, therefore, there can be no objection to the proposed SWUE development as one of a number of Allocations within the Local Plan.

#### 5. Conclusions – Local

5.1 The local position, when focusing on the area south of the MSC, is that there are fewer children resident there than attend the two local schools. Pupils travel from south central Warrington to attend Bridgewater High School. There is also a net gain of



approximately 159 pupils travelling in from other Local Authorities to the area. With fluidity of admissions across the Borough, admissions for these pupils will naturally be pushed back to closer to their home area as and when pressures increase in the southern group of schools.

5.2 An assessment of the proposed Allocations together with 1,800 additional dwellings in the SWUE shows that there would be a need for the proposed new school at the SEUE, and with this in place there would be sufficient places for all pupils throughout the period.

5.3 Were the SEUE not to progress, or to progress later in the period, and the new 4FE school be delayed, this could create some issues in meeting the need for new pupils particularly in the early part of the period before the ONS Projected decline in numbers starts to take effect. The impact could be as high as approximately 270 pupils in excess of the places available.

5.4 However, this could be met through the flexible and fluid admissions patterns seen across the Borough, with schools just north of the MSC accepting more pupils from the south than currently is the case. An alternative would be for an expansion of Lymm High School to be considered.

5.5 While the potential for some pressure the southern area is acknowledged, it is not calculated to be of such a scale that should prevent consideration of the SWUE being included within the Local Plan Allocations.

Heather Knowler  
Consultant – EFM Partnership Ltd  
25 October 2021



# Heritage Appraisal

## Warrington Local Plan

South West Urban Extension (SWUE)

November 2021

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Appendix 1: Heritage Asset Plan

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Appendix 2: Masterplan

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**Client**

Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Limited

**Our reference**



November 2021

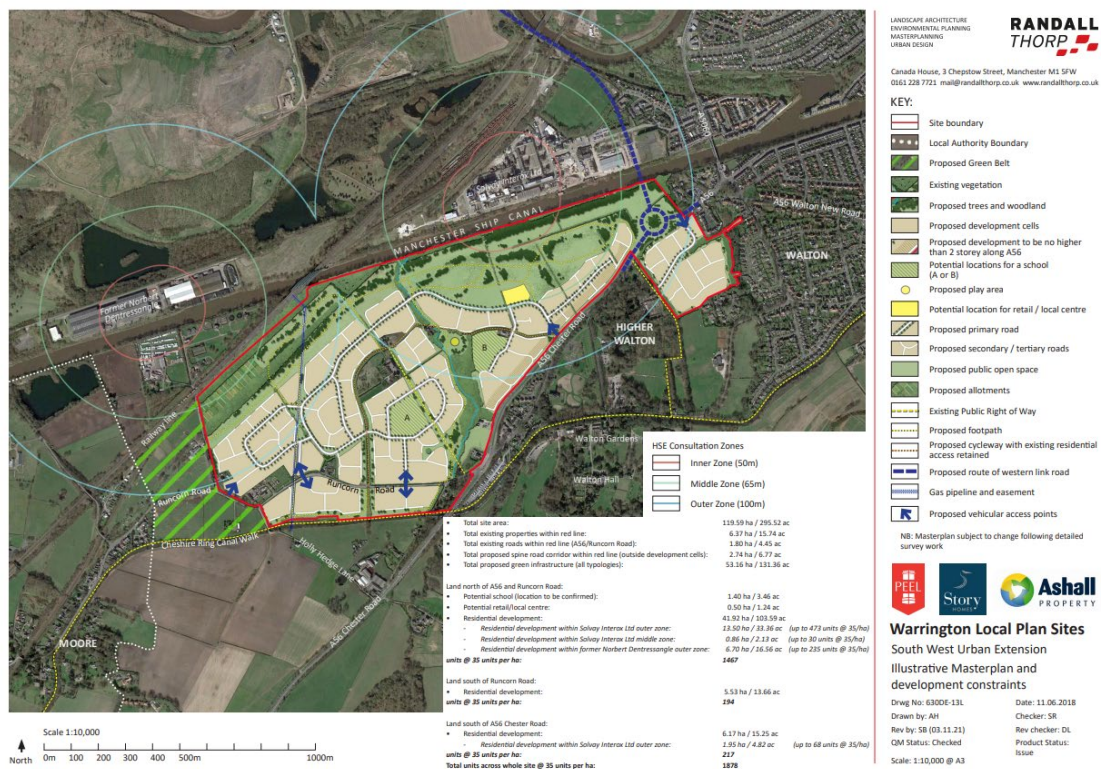
# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Limited in connection with the South West Urban Extension (SWUE) (the 'Appraisal Site'). It identifies heritage assets with potential to be affected by development of the Appraisal Site and broadly describes their significance and setting for the South West Urban Extension (SWUE).
- 1.2 The Appraisal identifies whether there are heritage constraints to development and how these constraints could be resolved or mitigated. It has informed the development of an illustrative Masterplan submitted as part of the Development Perspective (November 2021).
- 1.3 This forms one of a suite of reports commissioned to inform the development of a masterplan for the Site and to assess its deliverability. Together, these reports form part of the evidence base which underpins the proposed allocation of the Site through the emerging Local Plan.

## 2. The Appraisal Site

2.1 The Site lies to the immediate south west of the settlement boundary of Warrington. It is bound by the Manchester Ship Canal to the north and the West Coast Railway to the north west. To the south east the A56 Runcorn Road forms the boundary, with a plot of land to the south of the A56, immediately adjoining the Warrington settlement boundary, included. The Bridgewater Canal encloses the Site at its southern boundary. At the eastern extent, the boundary follows Bellhouse Lane and Runcorn Road.

**Figure 2.1: Site boundary plan (red line indicates appraisal site boundary)**



2.2 The Site currently comprises a mix of agricultural land and associated buildings and property. Mill Lane runs through the Site, providing access to a number of private properties and farm buildings. An area of industrial uses lies on the northern side of the Ship Canal, known as Warrington Waterfront. The route of the proposed Western Link Road lies at the eastern end of the Site.

2.4 The topography is generally flat with individual mature trees and groups of trees spread across the Appraisal Site including a more substantial band of trees along a disused railway in the north west of the Appraisal Site. The rural character of the

Appraisal Site is experienced alongside the A56 and industrial chemical processing sites north of the Manchester Ship Canal.

- 2.5 Historic cartographic evidence suggests the Appraisal Site has changed little since the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century. Porch-house Farm, Canal Farm and Grange Green Manor Farms, three historic farmsteads within the Appraisal Site, and Grange Flour Mill and mill pond are discernible on the 1841 Tithe Map. The Map also shows that historically the field pattern around the farms was comprised of noticeably smaller fields than at present; particularly to the east of Grange Green Farm (now Grange Green Manor). The Bridgwater Canal (opened 1761) and the Chester to Manchester Railway Line are also present on the 1841 Tithe Map.
- 2.6 The Manchester Ship Canal was constructed between 1887 and 1894, and is present on the 1896 Ordnance Survey Map. Cockfight Cottages were built in 1892-3 and are also present on the 1896 Map. At the eastern edge of the Appraisal Site, a school and a vicarage are identified on the 1896 Map (constructed between c1877 and c1896). The field pattern as seen today had largely been adopted by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The plot of land south of the A56 saw further field boundaries removed in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.7 There was very little change during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mill Lane cottages to the north of Mill Lane had been constructed by the 1911 Ordnance Survey Map. By the 1937 Ordnance Survey Map the 'old railway' identified on the 1896 Map had been dismantled and Grange Mill is identified as being disused. The greatest change to the Appraisal Site and the wider area was the construction of the Chester New Road (A56) in the late 1950s/early 1960s which bounds the Appraisal Site and separates it from the village of Higher Walton. By the late 1960s Grange Mill had been rebuilt/converted to a house. The Christmas Tree farm is not present on Ordnance Survey Maps from the late 1980s and early 1990s and is therefore presumed to be more recent.

### 3. The Heritage Assets

3.1 The NPPF (2021) defines a heritage asset as:

*“A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest”<sup>1</sup>.*

3.2 A site visit was completed on 22 May 2018 to assess the potential for designated and non-designated heritage assets to be affected by future development of the Appraisal Site for residential use. Due to the intervening distance, topography, landscape and/or development it is concluded that the significance of the following listed buildings would not be affected and they are not considered further within this Appraisal:

- Walton Hall (grade II listed) (7 on the accompanying Heritage Asset Plan, Appendix 1)
- Retaining wall, balustrades and steps between lawns east of Walton Hall (grade II listed) (8 on the Heritage Asset Plan)

3.3 In addition, there are a number of listed buildings within Walton Village Conservation Area. Having considered the significance of these assets and the contribution made by their setting, it is concluded that the significance of these assets are unlikely to be affected by the development of the Site due to their orientation and the intervening distance, landscape and development. These assets are considered proportionately as part of the Heritage Appraisal but are considered as part of the Walton Village Conservation Area.

3.4 In relation to Moore Conservation Area, intervisibility between the asset and the Appraisal Site is greatly limited due to:

- The distance between the asset and the Appraisal Site.
- The curvature of Runcorn Road and the Bridgewater Canal between the conservation area and the Appraisal Site.
- The intervening development along Runcorn Road.
- The proposed retention of an area of green belt between Moore Village and the Appraisal Site.
- The extent and maturity of tree belts and vegetation between the conservation area and the Appraisal Site.

3.5 There is no known associative relationship between the Appraisal Site and the conservation area. Therefore it is concluded, based on the available information, that the significance of the Moore Conservation Area is unlikely to be affected by the

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<sup>1</sup> DCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

development of the Appraisal Site for residential use and it is not considered further within this Heritage Appraisal.

3.6 The following locally listed building (non-designated heritage assets) are proximate to the Site, however the significance of these assets is unlikely to be affected by the development of the Appraisal Site, as summarised below, and accordingly these assets have not been considered further within this Heritage Appraisal:

- 34 & 35 Chester Road and The Ship PH (2 locally listed buildings): These assets are situated proximate to the north of the Site. Both are altered and experienced within a changed setting that is principally defined by the A56 and the urban context of Lower Walton including the modern residential development along Springbrook to the rear of the assets.
- 1-3 Walton Lea Cottage (3 locally listed buildings): The setting of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages is characterised by the enclosure provided by the surrounding woodland. The woodland to the north and east of the cottages adjacent to the Site is not as extensive as the woodland to the north, south and west. However the orientation of the cottages means they overlook the approach from the north and the walled gardens to the south (and not the Site). There are no known functional associations between the assets and the Site.

3.7 The following heritage assets were identified as having the potential to be affected by the development of the Appraisal Site and accordingly, their significance (including the contribution made by setting and the Appraisal Site) and the potential effects of development are considered in this Appraisal. The locations of the heritage assets are shown on the accompanying Heritage Asset Plan.

Ref.	Asset Name	Grade (if applicable)	Location, relative to Site
1	Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line)	Grade II listed	On the southern boundary of the Site, over Underbridge Lane.
2	Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal	Grade II listed	On the southern boundary of the Site under Mill Lane.
3	Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal)	Grade II listed	On the southern boundary of the Site at Holly Hedge Lane.
4	Walnut Tree Farmhouse	Grade II listed	Approximately 35m from the north eastern extent of the Site.
5	Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)	Grade II listed	Approximately 30m from the Site at its nearest point at the A56.

6	Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)	Grade II listed	Approximately 30m from the Site at its nearest point at the A56.
	Walton Village Conservation Area	N/a	Approximately 20m from the west boundary of the Site at its nearest point at the A56.
A	2 Cockfight Cottages	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
B	4 Cockfight Cottages	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
C	Porch House Farm	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
D	Canal Farmhouse	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
E	Grange Green Manor	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Mill Lane.
F	Grange Mill House	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Mill Lane.
G	The Vicarage	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, off Chester Road
H	School converted to House	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, off Chester Road
I	Underbridge Cottages	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, off Underbridge Lane
J	Stoneoaks Cottage	Locally listed	Approximately 185m from the southern boundary of the Site at its nearest point.
K	99 Chester Road	Locally listed	Approximately 15m from the plot of land south of the A56.



## 4. Assessment of Significance

### Introduction

- 4.1 The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

*“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”*

### Listed Buildings

- 4.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest. The Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (2010) are published by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and are supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type.

### Conservation Areas

- 4.3 Conservation areas are *“areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”*<sup>2</sup>
- 4.4 Historic England has published Good Practice Advice (GPA) on *‘Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment’*<sup>3</sup> to assist in assessing the significance of heritage assets. This guidance has informed the following assessments of significance.

### Setting

- 4.5 The setting of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF (2021) as:

*“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”*<sup>4</sup>

- 4.6 Historic England has published updated guidance in respect of the setting of heritage assets<sup>5</sup>, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes. The guidance confirms that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the relevant heritage asset itself.
- 4.7 Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be taken into account is set out in national Planning Practice Guidance. In assessing the contribution of setting

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<sup>2</sup> s69(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1900

<sup>3</sup> Historic England (2015) Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2

<sup>4</sup> DCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

<sup>5</sup> Historic England (2017) The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3

to the significance of the following identified assets, the role of the Application Site has been considered.

### **Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road, Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal and Acton Grange Bridge (all grade II listed)**

#### **Special Architectural and Historic Interest**

- 4.8 These assets form a group of three listed bridges on the Bridgewater canal between the A56 and Holly Hedge Lane on the southern boundary of the Appraisal Site. All three bridges were built c1770 and were designed by James Brindley, the engineer of the Bridgewater Canal, for the Duke of Bridgewater. The two road bridges are very similar in appearance; both are constructed of brown brick with sandstone dressings and retaining walls. The aqueduct has stone dressed brickwork and a 20<sup>th</sup> century parapet to the towpath on the north bank of the canal.
- 4.9 The three bridges are principally listed due to their late 18<sup>th</sup> century date, high degree of intactness and their functional association with the Bridgewater Canal; often referred to as the first truly man-made canal.

#### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

##### ***Physical Surroundings***

- 4.10 The bridges are situated consecutively (circa 250m to 350m apart) on the Bridgewater Canal which defines the southern boundary of the Appraisal Site. The assets do not have a designed setting. As a group they have a functional relationship which is also shared with other assets associated with the Bridgewater Canal.
- 4.11 The topography of the land surrounding the assets is relatively flat, although there is a slight embankment up to the canal from the surrounding fields (see Figures 1 and 2). Continuing along the towpath in a north easterly direction approximately 350m beyond the aqueduct is Walton Bridge (grade II listed), another c1770 bridge designed by James Brindley, and the Walton Village Conservation Area. The Moore Conservation Area is situated approximately 600m along the towpath to the south west.
- 4.12 The two road bridges are orientated roughly north-south across the canal which runs east to west. The aqueduct follows the orientation of the canal. The immediate surrounding landscape is comprised of arable fields to the north and south of the canal. The roads above and below the bridges are surfaced with modern tarmac and the towpaths have a natural surface. To the east of Acton Grange Bridge pipework bridges cross the canal in an arch (see Figure 1). There are single trees and groups of trees growing intermittently along the towpaths which, together with vegetation along the canal banks and the adjoining fields, provide a semi-rural setting experienced alongside the industrial development north of the Manchester Ship Canal and, to the west of the assets, the principal route of the A56 Chester Road.
- 4.13 Due to the slightly raised position of the canal, towpath and the road bridges there is a degree of openness; although to the east of Acton Grange Bridge the towpath feels more enclosed due to a banking of trees along the north bank of the canal (see Figure 2). Beyond the immediate setting of this part of the canal, there have been large scale changes within the wider setting of the bridges since their construction in c1770 (i.e.

the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, the Chester to Manchester Railway Line and the A56).

**Figure 4.1:** View looking west along the north towpath of the Bridgewater Canal towards Thomasons Bridge from near the aqueduct (left) and view looking west towards Acton Grange on the same towpath.



#### ***Experience of the Asset***

- 4.14 The road bridges have a degree of dominance along the towpath due to their height and their built form. There is intervisibility between the aqueduct and Thomasons Bridge and Thomasons Bridge and the Acton Bridge due to their close proximity. This intervisibility arises from the functional requirement for the bridges to be constructed at communication points and is not a designed aspect of their setting. There is no intervisibility between the listed bridges and the Walton Bridge, Walton Village Conservation Area or Moore Conservation Area but these assets are experienced sequentially along the canal. Wider views encompassing the surrounding area are experienced from the bridges and the tow paths close to the bridges.
- 4.15 The immediate setting of the listed bridges has a picturesque quality, but the assets are not experienced in 'splendid isolation'. The noise from the A56 diminishes the sense of remoteness, as does the intermittent noise of the nearby train line. The industrial landscape to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal is also present in views from the assets and along the tow path on the northern bank of the canal. During the winter months when trees are not in leaf, there would be greater visibility of the wider setting of the bridges from the tow paths; in particular to the east of Acton Grange Bridge looking north where there is a bank of deciduous trees along the canal bank. The bridges are publically accessible with the canal and tow path used regularly for leisure purposes.
- 4.16 The significance of the bridges lies primarily in their age, former function, group value and association with the Bridgewater Canal. Whilst the immediate setting is picturesque, it is not essential to their special interest.

**Figure 4.2: Most enclosed setting along the Canal to the east of Acton Grange Bridge (left) and view north from the canal towpath proximate to the aqueduct (right).**



#### **Contribution made by the Appraisal Site**

- 4.17 The southern part of the Appraisal Site forms part of the bridges immediate setting to the north and south of the towpath. The Appraisal Site does not contribute to an understanding of the age, former function, group value and association with the Bridgewater Canal but provides a rural backdrop to the assets.

#### **Walnut Tree Farmhouse (grade II listed)**

##### **Special Architectural and Historic Interest**

- 4.18 Walnut Farmhouse is of special interest as a (mainly) early 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse, which is likely to incorporate earlier structures. Although altered, its vernacular architecture is of interest and contributes to an understanding of traditional farm buildings in this part of the country. Its central square brick chimney with sloped projecting courses suggests a former steeped roof which was possibly thatched.

#### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

##### ***Physical Surroundings***

- 4.19 The farmhouse is situated on the western edge of the suburban area associated with Stockton Heath and Walton which, close to Walnut Farm, is characterised by a mixture of modern low density housing, brick terraces, former agricultural buildings and cottages of various ages. Adjacent to the farmhouse, separated by a narrow track, is a car showroom. To the west are the undeveloped fields of the Appraisal Site; at a distance of approximately 35m from its north eastern extent. The asset does not have a designed setting.
- 4.20 Walnut Farmhouse is adjacent to and orientated towards the A56. On the opposite side of the A56 is the plot of land south of the A56 which forms part of the Site and comprises open fields. The farmhouse has two large, later outshuts to the rear. The topography surrounding the farmhouse is flat. There is dense coniferous and deciduous trees and planting in the farmhouse garden along its boundary with the Appraisal Site and the A56. As a result it has a high degree of enclosure and is not easily seen from within the surrounding area.

- 4.21 The 1844 Tithe Map and apportionment details for Lower Walton indicate that Walnut Farm was owned by Ann Grime; along with the properties immediately to the north and the field to the west of the Farmhouse, which forms part of the Appraisal Site. The farmhouse and adjacent field were both occupied by James Swinton. This suggests there was historically a functional relationship between the farmhouse and at least the first field to the west.
- 4.22 Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, development has encroached on the farmhouse from the east and this part of its setting has become more urban in character. The greatest change to the farmhouse's setting was the construction of the A56 in the late 1950s/early 1960s. It is probable that the extensive planting of trees along the garden boundaries was a reaction to the resulting close presence of heavy vehicular traffic travelling along the road.

***Experience of the Asset***

- 4.23 Due to the enclosure of the garden surrounding the farmhouse there are no views of the farmhouse from the street or surrounding area. . The farmhouse is a private residential dwelling and there is no public access to the house or its surrounding garden. The very close proximity of the A56 means there is a high degree of noise and any historic rural tranquillity in which the farmhouse may historically have been experienced has been diminished. Due to the density and inclusion of coniferous species in the planting around the farmhouse, it is unlikely that anything more than glimpsed views to and from the farmhouse would be possible even during the winter months. The visual separation from the field to the west diminishes the legibility of any former historic association between the asset and that part of the Appraisal Site. For these reasons it is concluded that setting makes a very limited contribution to the significance of Walnut Tree Farmhouse.

**Contribution made by the Appraisal Site**

- 4.24 As previously identified, the northern extent of the Appraisal Site is adjacent to Walnut Tree Farm and the 1841 Tithe Map indicates there was a historic functional relationship between the asset and this small part of the Appraisal Site. However, today there are dense coniferous and deciduous trees and planting along its boundary with the Appraisal Site and the legibility of any historic functional relationship is greatly diminished. Part of the Appraisal Site also sits to the east of Walnut Tree Farm, separated by the A56. Although it provides a degree of rural context, the presence of the A56 and the enclosure of the farmhouse greatly limit any contribution the Site makes to the significance of the listed building. Therefore it is concluded that the Appraisal Site makes a very limited contribution to the significance of Walnut Tree Farmhouse.

**Walton Hall Lodge and Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now lodge to the crematorium, both grade II listed)**

**Special Architectural and Historic Interest**

- 4.25 The lodge was originally the lodge to Walton Hall and was built in 1838. It is listed for its early 19<sup>th</sup> century date, group value in its association with Walton Hall, and for the architectural interest of its Jacobean architecture. The gates, gatepiers and screens are of the same date and are listed for completeness, their architectural quality and group

value with the lodge. The lodge is constructed of brown brick with dressed sandstone and a Westmorland green slate roof. It is a single-storey cottage with a T-shaped plan. It has a stone-mullioned oriel window to the drive and a gabled porch with a stone Jacobean-arched doorway. The gatepiers and screens are sandstone with wrought iron railings and gates.

**Figure 4.3: Lodge from the avenue of trees to the south (left) and looking north from the lodge across the Appraisal Site (right).**



#### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

##### ***Physical Surroundings***

- 4.26 The lodge, gates and gatepiers are situated on the A56 immediately opposite the Appraisal Site. Historically the lodge and gates formed part of the Walton Hall estate and the Hall's wider designed parkland setting. However, the lodge and gates now form part of the crematorium site. The avenue of trees along the driveway towards the Hall largely remains intact, although there is car parking for both the crematorium and Walton Hall to the east of the drive. To the west of the driveway is the crematorium burial ground.
- 4.27 The A56 and the lodge sit at a higher position than the Appraisal Site (north of the A56) at this point (see Figure 3 above). Beyond the Appraisal Site is industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. The topography gradually rises from the lodge towards Walton Hall in the south. The grade II listed Walton Hall and its associated garden terraces (also grade II listed) are situated at some distance (approximately 600m) from the lodge. Where the driveway crosses the Bridgewater Canal, en-route to the Hall, there is a listed bridge and house (Walton Lea Bridge and Bridge House, both grade II listed). The lodge has a historic, functional relationship with these assets. The Church of St John the Evangelist (grade II\* listed) is situated across the burial ground, approximately 300m to the south west and formed part of the Walton Hall estate village. The Walton Village Conservation Area has been extended to the west of the driveway to include the burial ground.
- 4.28 At this point, the A56 follows the route of an earlier road. The gate piers, gates and screens were clearly designed to address that earlier road and mark the entrance to Walton Hall and the lodge is orientated to address both the road and the driveway. In addition to the avenue of trees south of the lodge, there are belts of mature trees and vegetation along the south east side of the A56 on approach to the lodge from both

directions. The tree belt to the east of the lodge extends southwards creating an area of woodland that encloses the lodge to the east and south east. Further to the east is the plot of land south of the A56 which forms part of the site; separated from the lodge by the woodland.

#### ***Experience of the Asset***

- 4.29 The lodge is experienced as part of an altered parkland setting, where key elements of the designed landscape, such as the avenue of trees, remain legible but the aesthetic effect has been somewhat diminished. The Appraisal Site formed part of the wider rural setting within which the country estate was historically situated. However, due to the topography and lower position of the Appraisal Site (north of the A56), the present agricultural character of the Site is not immediately apparent in the view from the lodge to the north. Instead, the view is dominated by the industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. The presence of industrial development within this view, combined with the close proximity of the A56 and the associated visual and noise impact of its heavy traffic, greatly diminish the historic rural character of this part of the asset's setting. Accordingly, the view north from the lodge does not contribute to the significance of the lodge.
- 4.30 The view from the lodge looking south along the driveway to Walton Hall does provide an understanding of the lodge's historic associative relationship with the Hall and the former designed parkland setting of the lodge and Hall. Views from the lodge and along the driveway to the Church provide picturesque views and intervisibility with an important building within the Walton Hall Estate village. It is likely that these views were designed for their picturesque qualities to create architectural and landscape interest on arrival at the estate. These two views contribute to the significance of the lodge and associated gates and gatepiers.
- 4.31 Due to the density of the tree belts and woodland to the east and south east of the lodge, it is unlikely that seasonal changes would materially alter the setting of the listed building in terms of its visibility, views from the lodge or its sense of enclosure. The crematorium, Walton Hall and the Church are all publically accessible and the lodge remains prominent on arrival at the crematorium.

#### **Contribution made by the Appraisal Site**

- 4.32 The Appraisal Site (north of the A56) is separated from the lodge by the A56 and, as described above, is at a lower level relative to the lodge and gates. The plot of land to the south of the A56 is separated from the assets by an area of woodland. The Site forms part of the wider historic rural context for the assets but as identified above, due to the nearby industrial development north of the Manchester Ship Canal and the A56, this context is not readily appreciable in views north from and in close proximity to the lodge. For these reasons, the Appraisal Site does not contribute to the significance of the lodge and gates.

#### **Walton Village Conservation Area**

- 4.33 Walton Village conservation area is focused on the village of Walton, historically known as Walton Superior or Higher Walton. It is bounded by the A56 in the west and the Bridgewater Canal in the south. The conservation area extends to include the Church of

St John the Evangelist in the north east and Walton Bridge on the Bridgewater Canal to the south west. It is comprised of a small number of residential properties with a church and public house. The village is described in Pevsner as “*The most accomplished estate village was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by a family of successful brewers, Greenhalls, at Walton (Warrington)*”.

- 4.34 Until the 1960s, the village was small and consisted solely of Victorian and Edwardian buildings. These buildings are unified in their Jacobethan architectural style and common palette of materials comprising brown brick, half timbering, red Runcorn sandstone, white painted render, red brick and stone dressings. The historic buildings are freely arranged and set back from the Old Chester Road, which runs through and is the primary street in the conservation area, with small gardens to the front enclosed by railings. There are a high number of mature trees within the conservation area and, together with the aforementioned gardens and trees belts along the boundaries of the conservation at the A56 and Bridgewater Canal, they provide a green and attractive character. Post 1960, a cul-de-sac development of c13 dwellings was added at the north end of the village opposite the Church (Lychgate).
- 4.35 The special character and appearance of the conservation area lies in its rural, attractive village character and the quality and consistency of the Victorian and Edwardian architecture.

#### **Contribution made by Setting to Significance**

##### ***Physical Surroundings***

- 4.36 Walton Village Conservation Area is situated approximately 20m from the eastern boundary of the Appraisal Site on the opposite side of the A56. The topography within and surrounding the conservation area is relatively flat, although it rises to an escarpment to Walton Hall (grade II listed) to the east of the conservation area. To the south of the conservation area is a caravan park and golf course. The surrounding landscape to the east of the A56 can be characterised as an altered parkland estate and gardens associated with Walton Hall. To the west of the A56 the landscape is more rural in character. Both are comprised of green open spaces, areas of woodland, tree belts and sparsely spaced buildings or groups of buildings. At a greater distance to the west is industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal
- 4.37 The Victorian and Edwardian buildings within the conservation area are principally orientated inwards towards Old Chester Road and are largely separated from the conservation area’s eastern boundary with the A56 by later development and a belt of trees along the south section of the boundary to the A56. Along Old Chester Road the character of the conservation area feels very enclosed. Beyond this to the north, the aspect to the A56 is more open however this is where the modern housing within the conservation area is situated. To the north eastern boundary, the mature parkland of the Walton Hall estate encloses the conservation area (see Figure 4 below). There is a historic associative relationship between the conservation area, in particular the Church and Walton Hall.



**Figure 4.4: Looking west to Lynchgate with the Appraisal Site beyond from Chester Old Road (left) and looking north from St John’s Church towards the Appraisal Site (right).**



***Experience of the Asset***

- 4.38 The conservation area’s setting to the east is characterised by the altered parkland of the Walton Hall Estate and to the west, it is characterised by the A56, the arable fields of the Appraisal Site and industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal beyond.
- 4.39 Due to the enclosure along Chester Old Road, the A56 and to the north of the conservation area, there are limited views into or out of the conservation area. Those views which contribute to the character of the conservation area are:
- views along Chester Old Road where the historic rural character of the conservation area and the architecture of its historic buildings can be appreciated, and
  - views of the parkland which forms part of the conservation area and extends beyond it to the north east.
  - As previously stated, it is likely that the view from Walton Hall lodge to the church was designed and this view contributes to the architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.
- 4.40 Views to the Appraisal Site to the west are views from upper floors of (principally modern) buildings along the western edge of the conservation area and from gardens. These views are not experienced within those parts of the conservation area that are of high architectural or historic interest and as such as considered to make a very limited contribution to its significance.
- 4.41 Views from the Appraisal Site to the conservation area are limited due to the intervening hedgerows. Where there are views to the east, the spire of St John’s Church is visible above the mature tree cover associated with the conservation area, however the character and appearance of the conservation area is not readily discernible due to its enclosed character. These views therefore contribute to the significance of the Church, but make a limited contribution to the significance of the conservation area.

- 4.42 These views will encounter seasonal changes and, in particular due to the limited depth of the tree belt along the A56, there will be greater visibility to and from the western edge of the conservation area during the winter months.
- 4.43 Despite background noise from the nearby A56, the enclosed character previously described means the most significant parts of the conservation area (Chester Old Road and the grounds of the Church of St John) have a sense of tranquillity and seclusion.
- 4.44 The setting of the conservation area contributes to an understanding of its historic context and development, but due to the conservation area's enclosure there is a limited visual relationship between the asset and its wider setting. For these reasons, setting is considered to make a moderate contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### **Contribution made by the Appraisal Site**

- 4.45 As previously stated, the arable fields of the Appraisal Site form part of the setting of the conservation area to the west of the asset. However, it is separated from the conservation area by the A56 and, as set out above, intervisibility between the Appraisal Site and the asset is limited. For these reasons, the Appraisal Site is concluded to make a minor contribution to the significance of the Walton Village Conservation Area.

#### **Locally Listed Buildings (Non-Designated Heritage Assets) – Various**

- 4.46 As set out above, there are a number of locally listed buildings within the Appraisal Site. These are set out within Appendix 4 of the Warrington Borough Council Core Strategy which was adopted in 2014.
- 4.47 A broad overview of their significance and setting is provided below, culminating in an assessment of the contribution made by the Site to their significance. For clarity, there is no clear guidance or existing assessment by Warrington Borough Council as to why these buildings or structures are formally locally listed.
- **2 Cockfight Cottages and 4 Cockfight Cottages** (2no. locally listed buildings): two semi-detached, two storey cottages dating from 1892 and 1893 built in brown stone with red brick quoins and banding, brick and sandstone window mullions, lintels and cills and gabled slate roof with a central Tudor-style chimney. Each cottage is symmetrical with two bays to the front with a gabled porch on each of the return elevations. The cottages are situated on Runcorn Road and are set within their own gardens to the north and south but have relatively open aspects over the surrounding arable fields.
  - **Porch House Farm:** a vernacular farmhouse complex of an unknown date (present on the 1841 Tithe Map). The farmhouse is a symmetrical four-bayed two-storey property with two projecting gabled wings. It is constructed from red brick above two courses of Runcorn red sandstone. The ground floor windows and first floor windows on the wings have brick hood moulds. The farmhouse provides a frontage to a complex of former agricultural buildings and modern farm buildings, principally to the west and formal gardens to the south. Its wider setting is comprised of a garden nursery and open arable fields.

- **Canal Farmhouse:** a vernacular farmhouse complex with a square plan form. On the 1841 Tithe Map it has a linear form and has therefore either been extensively extended or rebuilt. It is a two storey, red brick farmhouse with attached outbuilding to the east and a large detached barn. It is situated within fields, proximate to and facing towards the Bridgewater Canal.
- **Grange Green Manor:** Grange Green Manor (formerly Grange Green Farm) is a substantial late 19<sup>th</sup> century three-storey farmhouse red brick farmhouse set on an H-plan. Former agricultural buildings, set around a formal courtyard immediately to the north of the farmhouse have been converted to residential use. The farmhouse overlooks an open arable fields to the south across which there is a footpath linking to the Runcorn Road, which would provide views of its principal southern elevation.
- **Grange Mill House:** Grange Mill is a former flour mill present on the 1841 Tithe Map but became disused by the 1930s after which it was converted or rebuilt as Grange Mill House. It is situated on a bend on Mill Lane at a stream. The former mill pond to the south has been drained, reducing the legibility of the building's former use. There is woodland along the stream and the house overlooks an open arable field to the west.
- **The Vicarage:** The Vicarage was constructed between c1877 and c1896 and is the former vicarage associated with St John's Church in Higher Walton. It is a large detached, three-storey brick-built house with a multi-gabled roof and tall brick chimneys. The house sits within grounds that are enclosed from by a high boundary wall, gates and planting which limit visibility of the building from Chester Road. The Christmas Tree Farm wraps around the grounds of the house from Chester Road in the north east to the former school and public footpath in the south west which provide further enclosure. Beyond this is a tree belt separating the Christmas Tree Farm from agricultural land to the west. There is no visual connection between St John's Church and the Vicarage due to the intervening village (Higher Walton). The former relationship between the buildings has been further eroded by the construction of the A56 and the loss of its historic function as a vicarage.
- **School converted to House:** The former school was built between c1877 and c1896. It has a picturesque architectural character with a low form, large gables and what may have been a small belfry or ventilation tower topped by a weather vane. The school hall is lit by a large gothic window which faces Runcorn Road. The former school has an open aspect to the street and a public footpath running along its north eastern boundary. Whilst there is some planting to the north and west, there are views across the fields to the north west.
- **Underbridge Cottages:** A small row of altered cottages, dating from around the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are surrounded by gardens and a mature tree belt along the A56 to the rear and overlook fields to the east and north; separated by Underbridge Lane and Runcorn Road.

4.48 The following locally listed buildings are located outside, but proximate to the Appraisal Site:

- **Stoneoaks Cottage:** A cottage dating from around the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and forming part of a cluster of buildings of varied age on Thomasons Bridge Lane. The property overlooks fields to the east, south of the Bridgewater Canal, which the 1845 Tithe Map and apportionment indicate were in the same occupation as the cottage. Although the cottage and parts of the Site were both in the ownership of Sir Richard Brooke at this time, they were in separate occupation and formed a small part of Sir Richard's substantial land holdings in the area.
- **99 Chester Road:** A late 19<sup>th</sup> century former lodge associated with Walton Lea, a mansion house (now demolished) which was located to the south. It is situated on the A56 with gardens to the rear, woodland to the south and a band of trees to the north. The Site sits to the east, separated by an access road and deciduous and evergreen planting including.

#### **Contribution made by the Appraisal Site**

- 4.49 As described earlier, the Appraisal Site comprises open fields largely used for arable crops with a series of farms, small holdings and cottages. To varying degrees the Appraisal Site forms part of their rural context. In the case of the farms the Appraisal Site forms part of their historic functional setting which, along with their vernacular architecture, provides an understanding of their former use.

## 5. Overview of Legislation and Key National Planning Policy Considerations

### Statutory Duty (1990 Act)

- 5.1 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

*“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

- 5.2 The concept of ‘preserve’ has been interpreted through case law to mean ‘to cause no harm’.

### The National Planning Policy Framework, revised 2021

- 5.3 Conservation areas are 'designated heritage assets' within the meaning of the NPPF. Paragraph 190 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

- 5.4 Paragraph 195 sets out the principles guiding the determination of applications affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets, and states that:

*'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal . . . They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.'*

- 5.5 Paragraph 197 elaborates that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.6 Paragraph 199 requires when considering the impact of a Proposed Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be. Paragraph 200 confirms that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification.
- 5.7 In the event that harm is perceived to arise from proposals, the NPPF provides a policy framework at paragraphs 201 and 202 within which such harm can then be weighed against public benefits (202) or substantial public benefits (201) bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that should be attached to the statutory duty of the Act.
- 5.8 Paragraph 203 requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.9 Paragraph 206 requires local planning authorities look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. With respect to setting, the policy notes that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- 5.10 The setting of a conservation area is not enshrined in legislation and does not attract the weight of statutory protection.<sup>6</sup> It is however a consideration as set out in the NPPF and has therefore been addressed in this Appraisal.

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<sup>6</sup> APP/H1705/A/14/2219070 & APP/U3935/V/14/2216792

## 6. Key Heritage Considerations

- 6.1 The development of the Appraisal Site would result in the partial loss of arable fields to the north and south of The Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal, Thomasons Bridge and Acton Grange Bridge (all grade II listed). However this aspect of setting is not essential to their special interest, which primarily lies in their age, former function, group value and association with the Bridgewater Canal.
- 6.2 Due to the enclosure and visual separation of Walnut Tree Farm (grade II listed) from the Appraisal Site, which has also diminished the legibility of any former historic association between the asset and the north east part of the Appraisal Site, the sensitivity of the asset to the development of the Appraisal Site is limited.
- 6.3 The Appraisal Site forms part of the wider rural context for Walton Hall Lodge (grade II listed), the Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (grade II listed), and 99 Chester Road (locally listed). Due to the lower position of the Appraisal Site (excluding the plot of land to the south of the A56), relative to the assets, the visual impact of the development of this part of the Appraisal Site will be minimised. Due to the intervening distance and woodland between the lodge, gates, gatepiers and screens and the plot of land to the south of the A56 no visual impact is anticipated in relation to this part of the Appraisal Site and these assets. 99 Chester Road is closer to this part of the Appraisal Site (c15m) however the proposed landscape buffer will minimise the visual impact on this asset. There is no known historic or functional relationship between these assets and the Appraisal Site.
- 6.4 As previously identified, there are limited views into and out from the Walton Village Conservation Area to the Appraisal Site. Where there is intervisibility, this is from the upper floors of mainly modern houses in the west of the Conservation Area. Whilst the development of the Appraisal Site will result in the reduction of the village's wider rural setting, the extent to which this will affect the character and appearance of the conservation area is greatly limited; depending on the location and treatment of access roads and the height of development.
- 6.5 The development of the Appraisal Site will result in the loss or partial loss of the historic rural setting of the identified locally listed buildings which are situated within the Appraisal Site and Stoneoaks Cottage. In particular this will affect the setting of Porch House Farm, Canal Farmhouse and Grange Green Manor which, as agricultural buildings, have a functional association with their surrounding landscape which contributes to the legibility of their former use. In preparing the Masterplan (Appendix 2), consideration has been given to retaining some open land around these assets to maintain a degree of legibility of their former rural setting and agricultural use. In relation to the Vicarage, the effect would be minor due to the high degree of enclosure previously described which limits intervisibility between the asset and the Appraisal Site.
- 6.6 There is an opportunity to enhance the appreciation of Grange Mill House (locally listed) through interpretation of the former mill pond and its surroundings and of

Grange Green Manor by utilising the historic footpath that connected the farm with Runcorn Road.

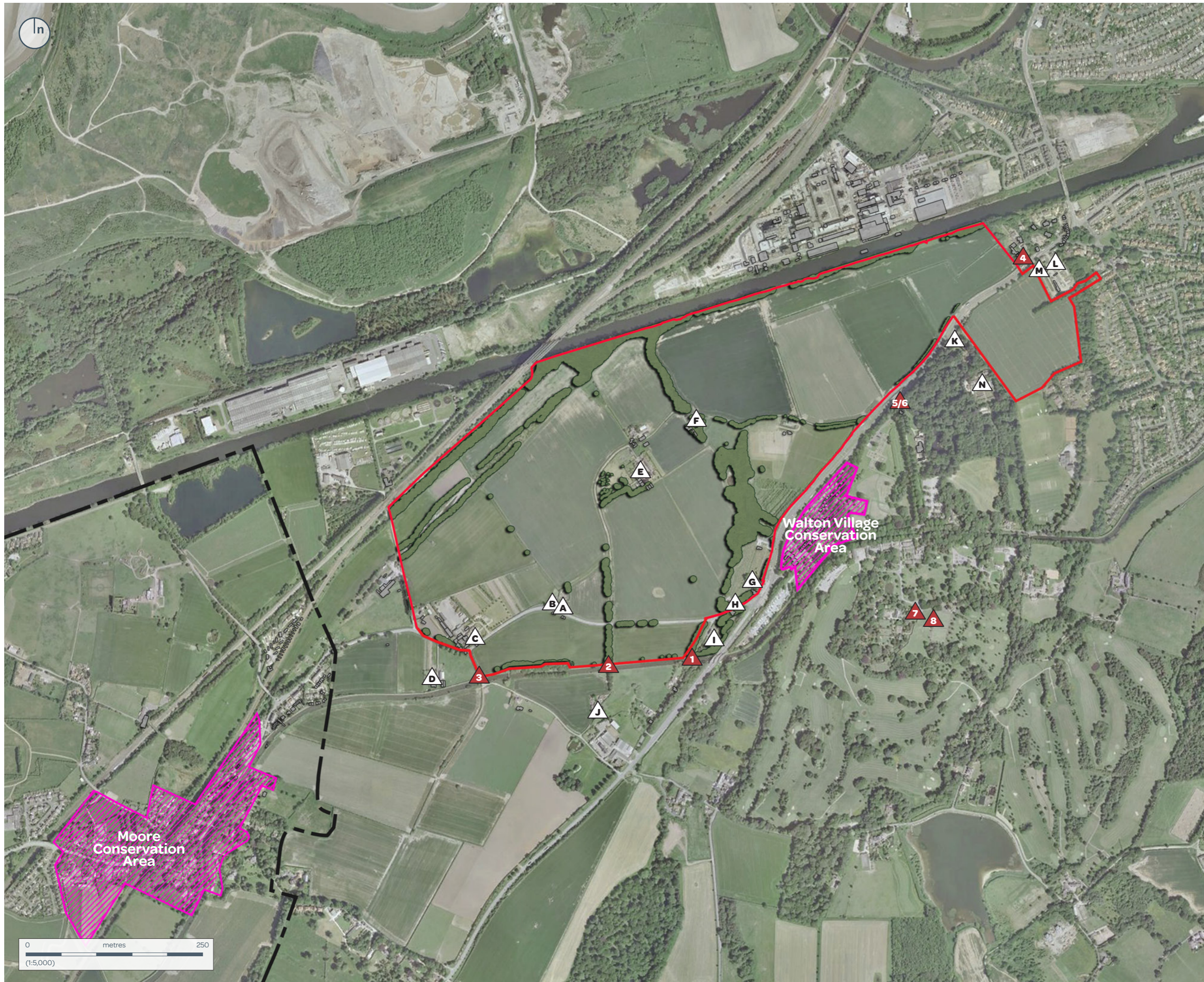
- 6.7 In accordance with Historic England guidance, we would recommend that the following measures are considered:
- Where possible, retain hedgerows across the Appraisal Site to maintain a sense of its former rural character. Retain and bolster the hedgerow along the A56, proximate to the Walton Village Conservation Area and Walton Hall Lodge and associated gates.
  - It is recommended that opposite Walton Lodge the height of development is restricted to a maximum of two storeys to avoid visual intrusion in views north from and proximate to the Lodge.
  - Look to retain locally listed buildings within the Appraisal Site.
  - Where possible development to the south of Grange Green Manor should be sited to maintain views of it from the south/south east.
  - There is an opportunity to enhance legibility of the former mill and mill pond within the retained open space around Grange Mill House.
- 6.8 If the following measures are implemented, as shown on the Masterplan (Appendix 2), it is considered that the urban extension will sustain the significance of the following designated heritage assets, in accordance with NPPF Paragraphs 192 and 193:
- Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line)(grade II listed)
  - Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal (grade II listed)
  - Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal) (grade II listed)
  - Walnut Tree Farmhouse (grade II listed)
  - Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium) (grade II listed)
  - Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium) (grade II listed)
  - Walton Village Conservation Area (grade II listed).
- 6.9 In determining future planning applications for the site, it is concluded that the requirement of s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act can be satisfied, subject to a considered design approach.
- 6.10 As previously identified, the development of the Appraisal Site will result in the partial loss of the rural setting of the following locally listed buildings (non-designated heritage assets):



- 2 Cockfight Cottages.
- 4 Cockfight Cottages.
- Porch House Farm.
- Canal Farmhouse.
- Grange Green Manor.
- Grange Mill House.
- The Vicarage.
- School converted to Home.
- Underbridge Cottages.
- Stoneoaks Cottage.
- 99 Chester Road.

6.11 In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 203, in weighing future applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

## **Appendix 1: Heritage Asset Plan**



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- Site boundary
- Warrington Borough boundary
- Conservation areas
- Locally listed buildings
- ▲ Statutory listed buildings

**Listed Buildings (all grade II listed):**

- 1** Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line)
- 2** Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal
- 3** Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal)
- 4** Walnut Tree Farmhouse
- 5** Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)
- 6** Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)
- 7** Walton Hall
- 8** Retaining wall, balustrades and steps between lawns east of Walton Hall

**Locally Listed Buildings (non-designated Heritage Assets):**

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> 2 Cockfight Cottages      | <b>I</b> Underbridge Cottage  |
| <b>B</b> 4 Cockfight Cottages      | <b>J</b> Stoneoaks Cottage    |
| <b>C</b> Porch House Farm          | <b>K</b> 99 Chester Road      |
| <b>D</b> Canal Farmhouse           | <b>L</b> 34 & 35 Chester Road |
| <b>E</b> Grange Green Manor        | <b>M</b> The Ship PH          |
| <b>F</b> Grange Mill House         | <b>N</b> 1-3 Walton Cottages  |
| <b>G</b> The Vicarage              |                               |
| <b>H</b> School converted to House |                               |

**CLIENT:**

**PEEL**

**PROJECT:**

**Warrington Local Plan – South West Urban Extension**

**DRAWING:**

**Heritage Assets**

**PROJECT NUMBER:**

**PEEM3056**

**DRAWING NUMBER:**

**20\_**

**CHECKED BY:**

**KM**

**REVISION:**

**00**

**STATUS:**

**Final**

**DATE:**

**November 2018**

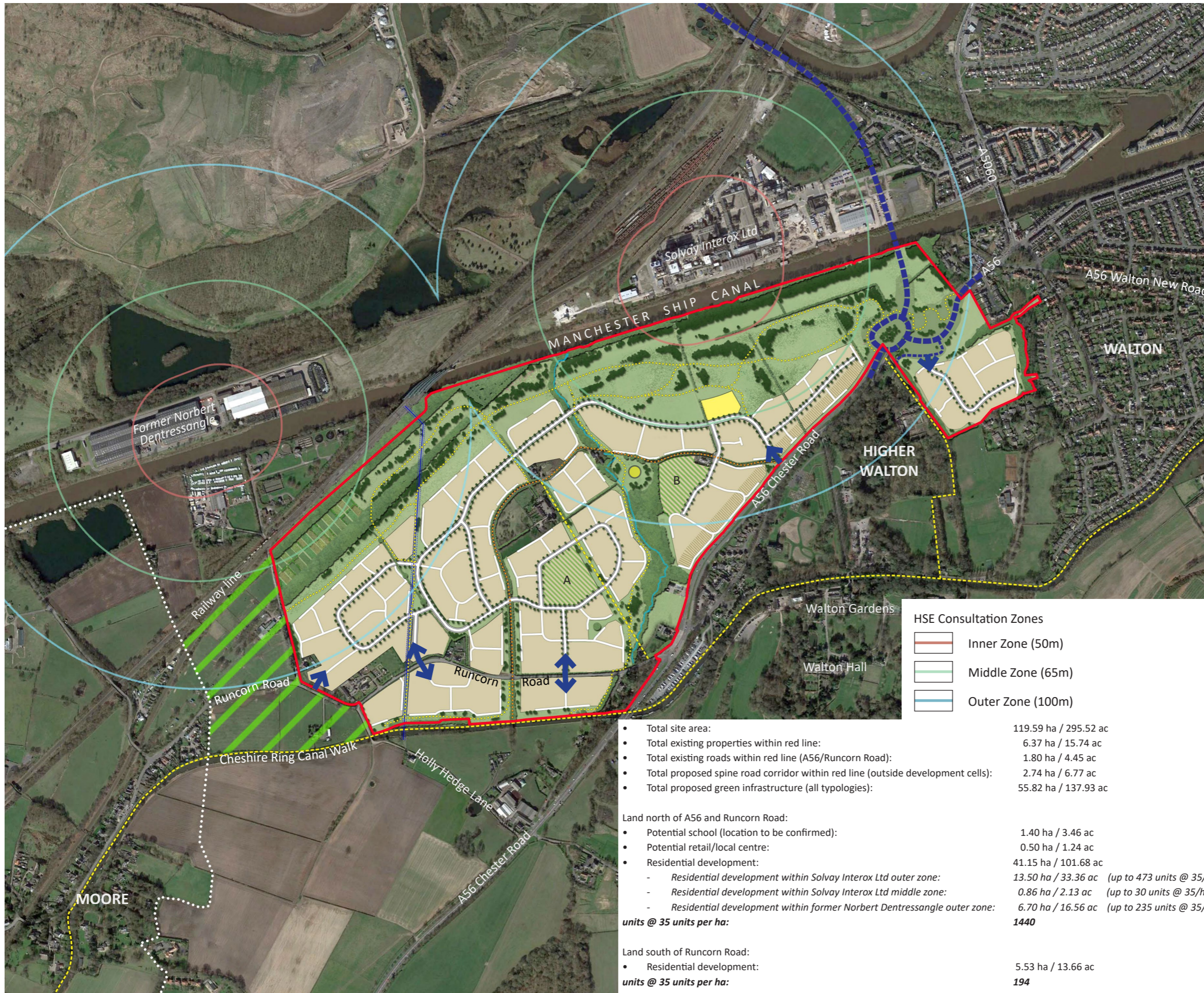
**SCALE:**

**1:5,000 @ A3**




## **Appendix 2: Masterplan**

**KEY:**

-  Site boundary
-  Local Authority Boundary
-  Proposed Green Belt
-  Existing vegetation
-  Proposed trees and woodland
-  Proposed development cells
-  Proposed development to be no higher than 2 storey along A56
-  Potential locations for a school (A or B)
-  Proposed play area
-  Potential location for retail / local centre
-  Proposed primary road
-  Proposed secondary / tertiary roads
-  Proposed public open space
-  Proposed allotments
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed footpath
-  Proposed cycleway with existing residential access retained
-  Proposed route of western link road
-  Gas pipeline and easement
-  Proposed vehicular access points



**HSE Consultation Zones**

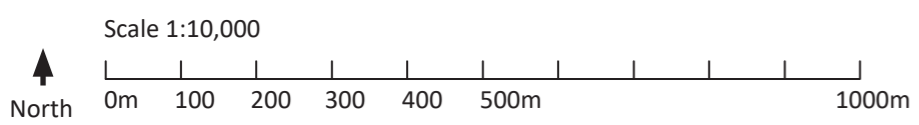
-  Inner Zone (50m)
-  Middle Zone (65m)
-  Outer Zone (100m)

- Total site area: 119.59 ha / 295.52 ac
- Total existing properties within red line: 6.37 ha / 15.74 ac
- Total existing roads within red line (A56/Runcorn Road): 1.80 ha / 4.45 ac
- Total proposed spine road corridor within red line (outside development cells): 2.74 ha / 6.77 ac
- Total proposed green infrastructure (all typologies): 55.82 ha / 137.93 ac

- Land north of A56 and Runcorn Road:
- Potential school (location to be confirmed): 1.40 ha / 3.46 ac
  - Potential retail/local centre: 0.50 ha / 1.24 ac
  - Residential development: 41.15 ha / 101.68 ac
    - Residential development within Solvay Interlox Ltd outer zone: 13.50 ha / 33.36 ac (up to 473 units @ 35/ha)
    - Residential development within Solvay Interlox Ltd middle zone: 0.86 ha / 2.13 ac (up to 30 units @ 35/ha)
    - Residential development within former Norbert Dentressangle outer zone: 6.70 ha / 16.56 ac (up to 235 units @ 35/ha)
- units @ 35 units per ha: 1440**

- Land south of Runcorn Road:
- Residential development: 5.53 ha / 13.66 ac
- units @ 35 units per ha: 194**

- Land south of A56 Chester Road:
- Residential development: 4.28 ha / 10.57 ac
    - Residential development within Solvay Interlox Ltd outer zone: 0.47 ha / 1.16 ac (up to 16 units @ 35/ha)
- units @ 35 units per ha: 149**
- Total units across whole site @ 35 units per ha: 1783**



NB: Masterplan subject to change following detailed survey work



**Warrington Local Plan Sites**  
South West Urban Extension  
Illustrative Masterplan and  
development constraints

Drwg No: 630DE-13M Date: 11.06.2018  
 Drawn by: AH Checker: SR  
 Rev by: SB (10.11.21) Rev checker: DL  
 QM Status: Checked Product Status: Issue  
 Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

Turley Office

