



Land North West of Croft Development Prospectus

Warrington Local Plan



November 2021



Turley



Client

Peel Holdings (Management) Ltd

Our reference

PEEM3056

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1. Introduction

This development prospectus has been prepared on behalf of Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Ltd (“Peel”) in respect of land north-west Croft. It sets out a vision and masterplan for the sustainable development of the site and its allocation through the emerging Warrington Local Plan. It also presents an assessment of the site’s suitability for development as proposed.

This prospectus is submitted in response to Warrington Council’s consultation on the Proposed Updated Submission version of the Local Plan (PUSLP). It should be read in conjunction with the suite of papers (dated September 2021) submitted by Peel, in response to the same consultation.

This prospectus builds on the document entitled ‘Site Prospectus’ submitted in December 2016 which accompanied a ‘Call for Sites’ submission to the Local Plan. It comprises an update to the Development Prospectus dated June 2019 which accompanied Peel’s representations to the Proposed Submission version (PSLP) consultation on the Local Plan.

Context

This prospectus is presented in the context of an acknowledged requirement that Warrington will need to identify a suitable and sustainable portfolio of Green Belt sites to meet its future housing needs over the period 2021 to 2038. Peel agrees with this conclusion as set out in its suite of representation papers. The papers provide general comments on the PSLP published by the Council in April 2019 and the associated evidence base (including documents published with previous versions of the Local Plan in so far as they remain relevant). They consider the following:

- The adequacy of the proposed housing requirement and supply;
- The proposed spatial distribution of residential development and appraisal of spatial options;
- The type and range of sites needed to meet the Borough’s development needs.

Land North West of Croft

The site is located to the immediate north of the settlement of Croft, located within the northern part of the Borough, close to the intersection of the M6 and M62 motorways. The site is well related to the settlement of Croft with its southern boundary adjoining existing residential properties, which currently form the settlement boundary in this location, to the south. The site extends to 124.5 ha in total and currently comprises a mix of agricultural land and tree belts.

The site is presently designated as Green Belt land within the Warrington Unitary Development Plan (June 2005). Peel consider that the site would represent a sustainable location for residential development, capable of making a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs of Warrington over the emerging plan period. Peel therefore proposes that the site be released from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development through the Local Plan.

This prospectus demonstrates that the site represents a sustainable opportunity capable of accommodating a desirable and high quality residential development. It will make a positive contribution to the settlement of Croft by integrating into the existing settlement, retaining and enhancing important features within and surrounding and providing significant benefits to future and existing residents such as land for new schools, retail and commercial areas and extensive greenspace and parkland areas.

Having regard to this context, the prospectus goes on to consider how the site could be developed in a manner which ensures the role and integrity of the wider Green Belt is maintained and endures over the long term, consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (‘the Framework’).

The remainder of the document is structured as follows:

- Overview of the relevant strategic and planning policy context;
- Description of the site and its context;
- An overview of the opportunities and constraints presented by the site;
- An assessment of the contribution which the site makes to the Green Belt;
- Initial proposals, including the site analysis and design process that has informed them;
- An assessment of site deliverability;
- Summary of the benefits that development will secure;
- An assessment of the proposals, to demonstrate that development of the site is sustainable and achievable;
- Summary and conclusions.



2. Strategic Context and Development Needs

National Planning Policy: 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 was published in February 2019.

Sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework. In planning for sustainable development, Local Planning Authorities, when ‘plan-making’, 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. LPAs should identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites to provide a minimum of five years’ housing against their housing requirement as set out within their adopted strategic policies. Beyond this timescale, they should identify specific developable sites or broad locations for growth.

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

The Warrington Local Plan (“WLP”) consultation invites comments on the Council’s Proposed Submission Version of the Local Plan (PSLP), the published evidence base and the Council’s conclusions on the Borough’s development needs intended to be met over the plan period.

The WLP recognises the need for Green Belt release in order to accommodate the borough’s housing and economic requirements. The suite of papers comprising Peel’s main representations deal with the questions of the extent and location of Green Belt release.

Peel welcomes the progression of the WLP and the opportunity to provide comment on the Borough’s aspirations and strategic policies for the plan period.

The figure to the right shows the proposed development site at Land North West of Croft in the context of the wider region.

KEY:

-  Urban area
-  Primary employment areas in Warrington
-  Warrington city centre
-  Key future growth areas
-  Potential key future growth areas
-  Manchester Ship Canal
-  Motorway
-  A580 East Lancashire Road
-  Railway line
-  Indicative proposed HS2 route
-  Potential strategic housing sites (green belt release)



Securing a sustainable future for the settlements of Warrington

Evidence prepared by Turley (see suite of papers submitted as Peel's main representations to the PUSLP) sets out a case for supporting further growth within the Outlying Settlements of the Borough to ensure the Borough can meet its housing needs across the plan period, that Green Belt boundaries can endure the possibility of further growth in Warrington and that the Outlying Settlements continue to be sustainable places to live.

Peel recognises that the Council's proposed growth strategy of directing incremental growth towards the Outlying Settlements is appropriate. However it considers that the sites identified by the Council to accommodate this growth are not the most sustainable and have been selected on a flawed basis. There are more appropriate, more sustainable sites which are capable meeting the development needs of the settlements. This includes the site contained within this document.

Allocation of the sites promoted by Peel would represent a more appropriate strategy than that currently proposed by the Council.

Peel has identified sites which are capable of accommodating this growth in a more suitable and more sustainable way than the sites identified by the Council.

Allocation of the sites promoted by Peel would represent a more appropriate strategy than that currently proposed by the Council.





3. Local Context and Site Sustainability

Warrington Borough 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. It has its own plans and aspirations for growth.

The main town in the Borough is Warrington and its surrounding urban area. Croft is an established settlement located close (less than 1km) to the north-east of the urban area of Warrington. It lies north-east of the interchange of the M6 and M62 Motorways (known as the Croft Interchange) and close to Birchwood Park, one of the borough's flagship employment locations, recognised as being of 'sub-regional importance' in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy.

Croft has a population of c.3,000 and a range of shops, services and facilities. These are focussed on the local centre. The range of facilities is considered further below.

The Site and its Surroundings

The site encompasses an area of land to the north west of Croft, extending north to the small settlement of New Lane End. The site comprises a number of fields currently used for agricultural purposes, separated by remnant hedgerows, with limited hedgerow trees and small pockets of woodland.

The site is bordered by Southworth Lane, Smithy Brow and Lord Street to the south, Heath Lane to the east and Stone Pit Lane to the north. Cockshot Brook runs along part of the western boundary. An active sand quarry and former colliery tip are situated to the west of the site

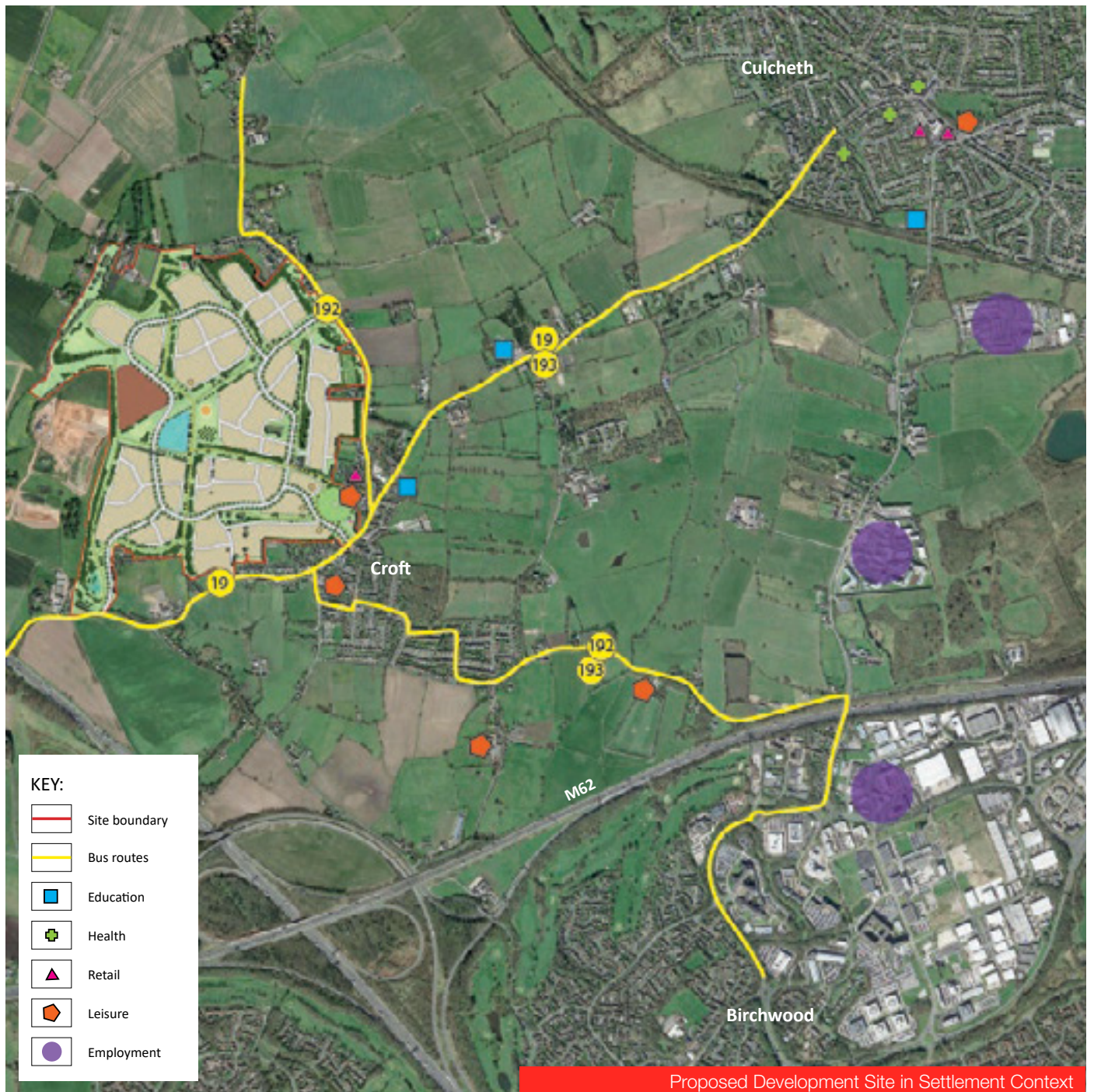
The proposed location is well related to existing facilities serving the established local residential area, including two primary schools, a convenience store, public transport routes, a public house, youth centre and a range of recreational facilities.

The area falls within the 'undulating enclosed farmland' of Winwick, Culcheth, Glazebrook and Rixton, described in the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment (2007) as 'undulating farmland with a medium to large scale field pattern'.

Connectivity

Buses serve Croft, on a route between Leigh via Culcheth and Warrington via Winwick. There are also services to and from Birchwood Park.

Service No.	Route	Frequency
19	Leigh - Warrington	Hourly

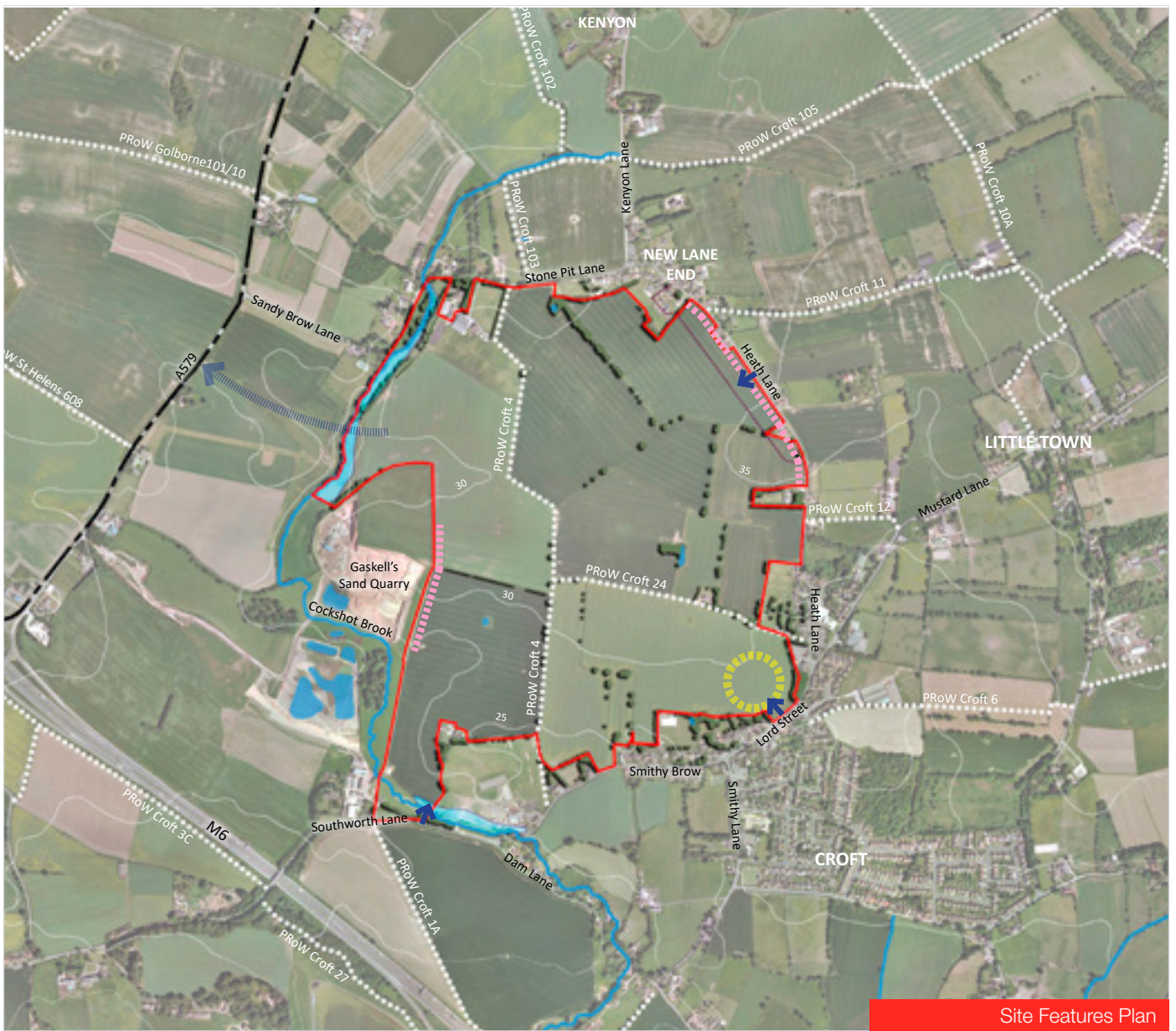
















Images showing existing site context

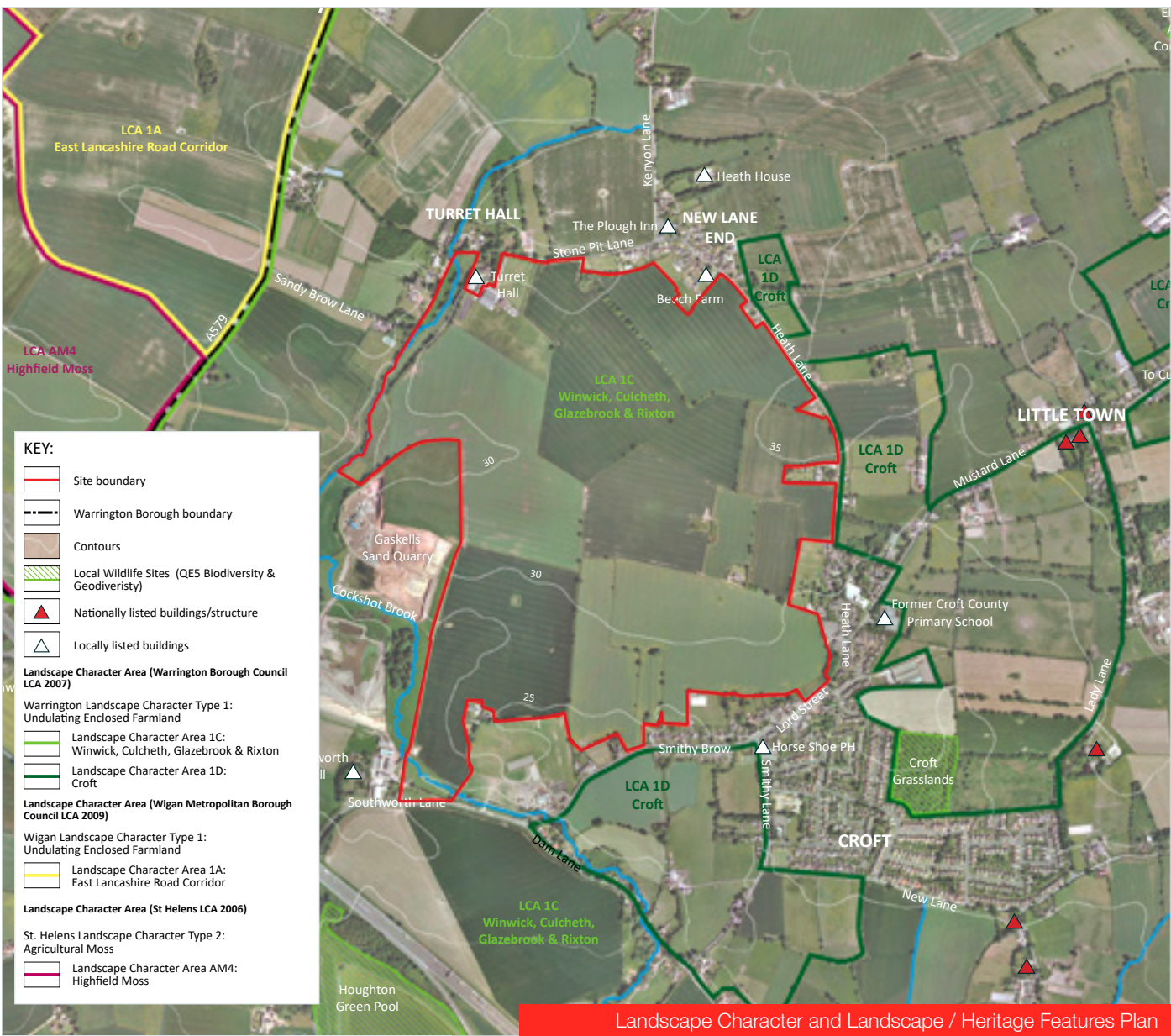
4. Opportunities and Constraints

The following plans have been prepared to show the opportunities and constraints relevant to development of the site. They have been informed by site visits and by 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 presented in the technical appendix to this prospectus.



KEY:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  Site boundary |  Retain existing vegetation within site where possible |  Sensitive boundaries |
|  Warrington Borough boundary |  Existing water bodies/ watercourses |  Potential site access |
|  Public Right of Way |  Extent of flood risk on site (Flood zone 2) |  Potential village hub |
|  Contours |  Existing minor foul water sewer |  Potential link to A579 |



Landscape Character and Landscape / Heritage Features Plan

5. Green Belt Assessment

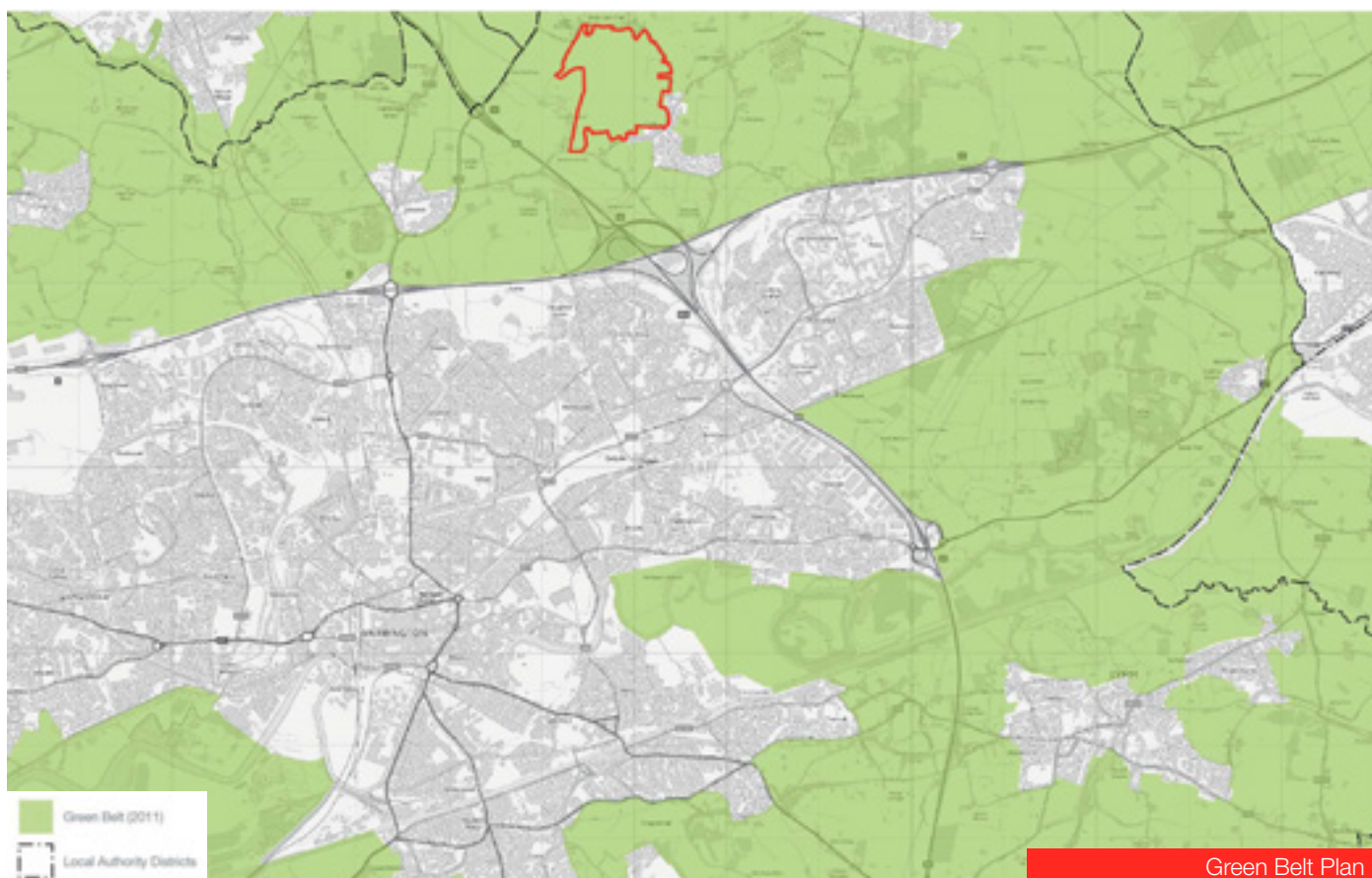
Croft is inset from the Green Belt, with the existing settlement boundaries defined by the extent of built development.

The Warrington Green Belt Assessment considers the site as part of a much larger parcel of land (ref. CR4). It makes an assessment of the site's Green Belt contribution based on a methodology which Peel consider to contain a number of flaws. The Green Belt review concludes that this parcel makes a moderate contribution to the Green Belt.

In considering the release of any site from the Green Belt and its allocation for development, alongside understanding the general Green Belt sensitivity of the site, it is necessary to have regard to the likely form and layout of the proposed development. This will enable a full understanding of impact to be established.

Of relevance in this regard is the following:

- The form of development envisaged for this site has been informed by a detailed analysis of the site and its context, including its position – as part of the new proposed boundary of the settlement.
- The site has robust defensible boundaries which will be reinforced where appropriate, for example through the planting of woodland belt along the northern site boundary and features that serve to permanently contain the site.
- The draft masterplan incorporates areas of open space that will be retained, thus limiting the extent to which encroachment will occur.





6. The Proposals

The land north-west of Croft site has the essential components of a high quality place. It has a strong landscape framework and can form a logical and sustainable expansion of the existing community. It has the potential to accommodate additional uses and facilities including retail (in the form of a small, neighbourhood centre) and a primary school.

The conceptual masterplan takes its cue from the existing landscape features both within and around the site; vegetation, landform, views, ecology, drainage and built form. The key opportunities of the site are explained through the following 'placemaking concept' steps.

1. Wildlife and Pedestrian Connectivity

- Existing public rights of way (PRoWs) to be set within green corridors and complemented by additional routes along field boundaries.
- Existing landscape features to be retained and linked by green corridors, planted with trees and hedgerows to enhance wildlife connectivity.
- Connections provided west towards Cockshot Brook.

2. Open Space and Recreation Network

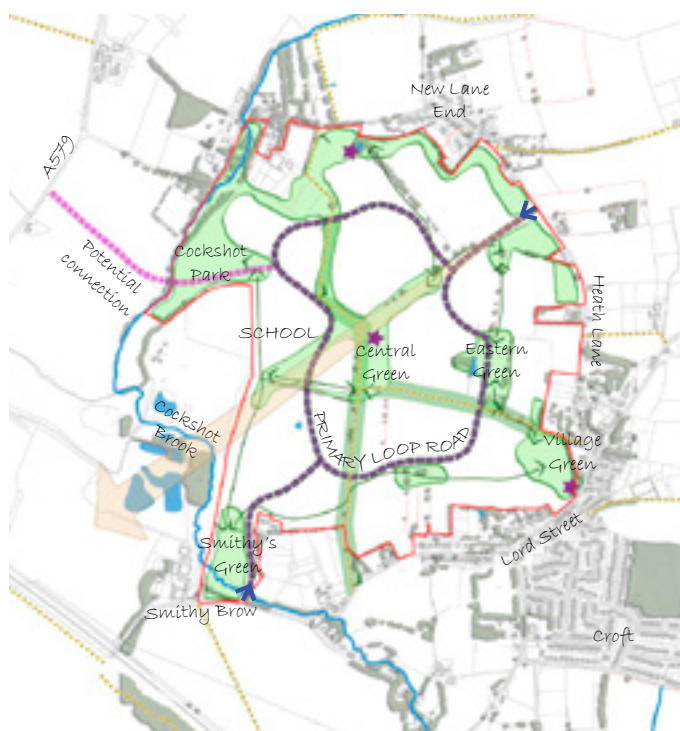
- Series of public open spaces to be set around the pedestrian network, creating a well-connected green infrastructure network.
- Open spaces located around existing landscape features, providing an opportunity to improve existing deficiencies in open space and recreation provision within Croft.
- New village green on the south eastern boundary could become a focal space between Croft and new development and could provide community facilities.
- Opportunities for community food growing and Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play (NEAP) in the central green area. Cockshot Park could provide access to informal recreation.





3. Access and Connections

- The primary entrances to the site are from Heath Lane in the north east, where the proposed road enters the site and leads onto an internal loop road. The primary road will make a connection to Lord Street through the Village Green, creating an attractive entrance from Croft.
- The road network provides access throughout the western side of the development, before framing Smithy's Green and connecting to Smithy's Brow on the southern boundary. This route would provide an alternative access into the site, and an alternative route avoiding the centre of Croft.
- Potential future access link to A579 to take traffic away from Croft village (subject to further investigations in the future).



4. Development to Enhance Place and Amenities

- Development areas to be arranged to complement existing field patterns and character.
- Denser development will be to the east, whilst development will be looser and less dense to the west, forming an 'edge of village' character.
- Development to the north east will be set back from Heath Lane to retain rural character.
- New school and retail/commercial facilities could be located adjacent to the central green.








The Masterplan

The Masterplan shows how Land to the North West of Croft could be developed to provide a new sustainable urban extension. Development of this nature could secure a significant level of housing over the plan period, in addition to strategic level infrastructure such as a new secondary school.



KEY:

-  Site boundary
-  Existing vegetation
-  Existing watercourses & waterbodies
-  Existing settlement
-  Existing public rights of way
-  Existing roads
-  Proposed vehicular access
-  Proposed development area
-  Proposed primary road
-  Proposed secondary road
-  Potential secondary school location
-  Potential Primary school location
-  Proposed focal green spaces
-  Proposed key pedestrian & cycle links within green corridors
-  Proposed retail / commercial / medical
-  Potential future link to A579
-  Proposed SuDS
-  Proposed allotments
-  Proposed LEAP
-  Proposed NEAP



7. Suitability

This section demonstrates that the site is suitable to accommodate residential development.

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

- Ecological Appraisal (The Environmental Partnership)
- Heritage Appraisal (Turley)
- Preliminary Drainage Strategy (Shepherd Gilmour)
- Flood Risk Advice (Shepherd Gilmour)
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Randall Thorp)
- Health and Safety Check (Shepherd Gilmour)
- Noise Screening Assessment (Miller Goodan)
- Transport Appraisal (i-Transport)
- Utilities Infrastructure Assessment (Shepherd Gilmour)

These are provided in a separate technical appendix to this prospectus. They are summarised below.

Environment

Ecology	<p>An initial Ecological Appraisal has been carried out to identify the ecological constraints and opportunities and the development potential of the site.</p> <p>The site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. There are two local wildlife sites (LWS), approximately 230m to the south east and 800m to the east of the site respectively, but given the lack of connectivity between the sites it is unlikely to be negatively impact by development opportunities. Owing to the distances (>1km) of other statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations, and taking account of the residential nature of the development proposals, it is very unlikely the development would result in adverse effects here.</p> <p>The majority of the site has been identified as being of low ecological constraint, consisting of either arable crop or improved grassland, which offers little opportunity to local wildlife. The Ecological Appraisal has identified some features of high and medium ecological value, such as semi-natural broadleaved woodland, groups of mature trees, hedgerows, ponds, and drainage ditches. The masterplan will retain those features of highest ecological value and will provide buffers to ensure such habitats continue to function as wildlife corridors for a range of species. Where possible the masterplan will retain less sensitive habitats, but if removal is unavoidable, mitigation or compensate will be provided.</p> <p>The presence of any protected species will be protected through the adoption of relatively simple design principles, which will be informed by future detailed survey work.</p> <p>There are opportunities to increase the biodiversity of the site through tree and hedgerow planting, drainage design, and provision of new habitat. The retained areas of habitat will also maintained and enhanced to further provide opportunities to both wildlife and the local community. The development can also secure the removal of non-native invasive species (such as Himalayan balsam) recorded within the site boundary which will enhance existing green corridors by removing species that exclude native vegetation.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>There are no ecological reasons to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Heritage	<p>A Heritage Appraisal has been carried out. It identifies heritage assets with potential to be affected by development of the site and broadly describes their significance and setting.</p> <p>The appraisal concludes that there are no significant heritage constraints to development, development of the type and arrangement identified in the masterplan will sustain the significance of nearby heritage assets.</p> <p>There is no heritage reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>



Flood Risk	<p>A desktop flood risk assessment has been carried out. The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency. The site is therefore within an area considered to have a low risk of flooding (i.e. less than a 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding) and is sequentially preferable in terms of the Framework and associated technical guidance.</p> <p>There are small areas of Flood Zone 3 along the southern and western boundaries of the site. The masterplan will ensure that these areas are not developed.</p> <p>There is no flood risk reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Landscape	<p>An appraisal has been carried out to evaluate the landscape character and assess the value and sensitivity of an established Study Area which includes the site. Following this, the appraisal uses the outcome of the sensitivity assessment to assess the sensitivity of the site and to advise on its development potential.</p> <p>The appraisal states that the landscape surrounding Croft is a tapestry of large scale, visually open arable farmland with a lack of hedgerow boundaries coupled with small scale historic fields, which are more visually enclosed and closely associated with the settlement of Croft. The landscape within the study area is not designated nationally or regionally for its landscape value.</p> <p>The site is located at the north western edge of the existing settlement and is currently in use as arable farmland with a medium to large scale field pattern. The majority of the existing field boundaries are formed by small mounds or ditches with very few hedgerows, which have left a number of semi-mature/mature trees and small blocks of deciduous woodland as isolated features within the landscape.</p> <p>The proposed masterplan would make a contribution to the landscape by providing a housing development within a well landscaped setting, with existing landscape features preserved within the public open space network throughout the site. A development focused around a new village green in the south eastern corner of the site would become a focal community space for the existing residents of Croft as well as the residents of the new development. The existing Public Rights of Way would be set within green corridors and provide recreational links within the public open space network.</p> <p>The appraisal concludes that there is no reason why a well-designed development that preserves the existing landscape features and Public Rights of Way within a green infrastructure network would have any significant effects on the character of the wider landscape of the Study Area.</p> <p>There is no landscape reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Trees and Hedgerows	<p>The development can be designed to retain the boundary hedges and trees and where necessary supplement them with new tree planting. Trees can be retained within open space and footpath links. Development of the site will ensure that the trees are managed for the future and that they are retained as long term landscape features.</p> <p>There are no arboricultural reasons to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Land Quality	<p>The most recent use of the site was for agricultural purposes and it has never been subject to a use which may pose insurmountable contamination risks.</p> <p>A Predicted Agricultural Land Classification report has been carried out and states that the land is likely to comprise Grades 3a and 3b and is unlikely to comprise better quality land than other areas around Croft.</p> <p>There is no contamination or agricultural land reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Health and Safety	<p>A preliminary consultation with the Health and Safety Executive indicated that there are no major hazard sites or major accident hazard pipeline in the area.</p> <p>There is no health and safety reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Noise	<p>A Noise Screening Assessment has been carried out to review potential impacts of noise on the site. It is considered that noise impact would not be a barrier to residential development, provided good acoustic design measures are implemented.</p> <p>There is no reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development on the basis of noise.</p>

Infrastructure

Highways	<p>An initial transport appraisal has been carried out to identify the potential constraints and opportunities relating to highways and the development potential of the site.</p> <p>The new community at Croft will include a range of facilities and services which will be provided to ensure the site is sustainable as well as bringing benefits to Croft village. These include: a primary school; secondary school; retail/commercial/medical facilities and country park on the site. These will all be within easy walk or cycle ride of residential dwellings and will therefore encourage active travel.</p> <p>The appraisal confirms that the proposed access points to the site are deliverable and evidence has been provided to demonstrate that they will operate without giving rise to unacceptable residual highways effects on the local network.</p> <p>Development in any location in the Borough will increase traffic flows on the local road network surrounding it. The site at Croft affords significant and many opportunities for local active travel making which will reduce traffic flows. Indications of traffic speeds in and around Croft show that traffic conditions could not be categorised as severe and the Council's own conclusion is that there is only a small amount of peak hour congestion.</p> <p>On this basis it is concluded that, in accordance with the NPPF, development should not be prevented on transport grounds as the residual cumulative impacts of development will not be severe.</p> <p>There is no highways reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Drainage and Sewerage	<p>A preliminary drainage strategy has been prepared. This confirms that the site is greenfield and that any surface water is likely to discharge into local watercourses, such as Cockshot Brook.</p> <p>The masterplan will be designed to limit surface water to the greenfield run-off rate, and attenuate surface water volumes on site, including an allowance for climate change. Attenuation will be provided either above ground (i.e. swales, ponds and detention basins) or below ground (i.e. oversized pipes or geocellular modules). By restricting discharge rates, the post-development discharge rate will mimic the existing conditions.</p> <p>United Utilities (UU) asset plans indicate a network of foul and surface water sewers located in close proximity to the site. It is likely that any foul drainage generated by the development will connect into the combined sewer within Lord Street. Further consultation will be conducted with United Utilities.</p> <p>There is no drainage or sewerage reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.</p>
Utilities	<p>An initial assessment of utilities in the area has identified that existing electricity, gas, water, and telecommunications connections are available in the surrounding area and the proposed development can connect to those without adversely impacting on the provision to the wider community. Some minor works will be necessary to deliver services to the site, however this would not be insurmountable or hinder the delivery of the development.</p> <p>The provision of services will not constrain the development of the site.</p>

Suitability Conclusion

This technical assessment demonstrates that the site is not affected by any insurmountable constraints. The Masterplan as presented is therefore fully deliverable.

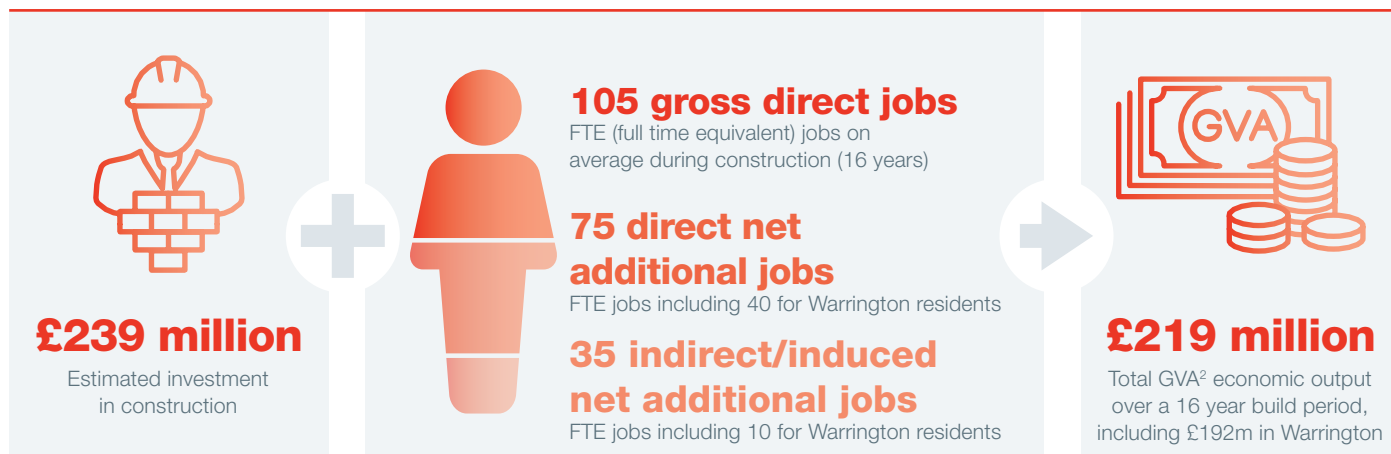


8. Benefits

Site: Land North West of Croft

Proposed development: 1,765 residential dwellings¹

Construction Phase



Operational Phase



¹ Based on the upper estimated dwelling range (1,539 - 1,795)

² 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.

9. Sustainable and Achievable

New Homes for Croft

The site presents a sustainable and achievable development opportunity and a chance to create a new community. It is capable of accommodating between 1,513 and 1,765 dwellings (depending on density) of mixed tenure (including affordable housing), size and type, with a focus on good quality family housing. It will make a very important contribution to meeting Warrington's housing requirement and meeting the need for new homes in Croft. It also offers the potential to accommodate new community facilities (such as a school) and small scale retail and commercial uses.

The site has the potential to form an attractive and desirable new neighbourhood and an addition to Croft which is integrated with it and respects its rural character and setting.

The concept masterplan provides a framework which responds to its context. It seeks to retain and enhance existing features, for example by providing substantial network of green spaces which link to the existing settlement and the wider countryside beyond. A new village green and other open spaces towards the edge of the settlement will reinforce the link and sense of integration with Croft. The provision of structural boundary planting towards the eastern boundary of the site (and particularly the northern boundary) and the retention of existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows within this green network will result in existing features being enhanced. The site also provides the opportunity to deliver new primary and secondary schools to serve Croft and the northern part of Warrington, addressing an existing and growing infrastructure capacity issue affecting this part of Warrington.

A Sustainable Opportunity

A sustainability checklist, based on the themes set out in the Warrington Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal is provided at Appendix 1. This demonstrates that the proposal represents sustainable development, having regard to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Delivery

Peel has a proven track record of promoting land to facilitate development and growth and working with house-builders (ranging from small to national) to ensure that important development is delivered.

The site may be delivered in whole or part by Northstone, Peel L&P's housebuilding company. Northstone was established in 2018 with a mission create homes, exceptional spaces and communities where families will thrive. Northstone have a focus on creating sustainable, energy-efficient homes in community-focused spaces that shape the future of living. Northstone have delivered and are delivering a number of high-quality residential developments throughout the North West.

An initial assessment of the site has identified that there are no environmental issues that would preclude delivery of the site. The site does not require the provision of significant or unusual infrastructure to enable it to be delivered. It is also situated in a strong market area, which experiences high demand for new homes. The site is therefore readily deliverable over the plan period.





10. Summary and Conclusions

This development prospectus sets out a vision and masterplan for the sustainable development of land north-west of Croft. It is submitted as part of Peel's representations to the Warrington Local Plan Proposed Submission version consultation.

It demonstrates that the site represents a sustainable opportunity capable of accommodating a desirable and high quality residential development in a substantial parkland setting. It presents the opportunity to create a new community, but one which is integrated with the existing settlement of Croft. Existing natural features will be retained and enhanced within and surrounding the site and protecting and enhancing local service provision.

The concept masterplan presented within the document provides a framework which responds to its context. It demonstrates that site is capable of accommodating between 1,513 and 1,765 dwellings depending on density (including affordable housing), with a focus on good quality family housing and can therefore make a very substantial contribution to Warrington's housing requirement. It can also secure the the provision of new primary and secondary schools to address existing and growing capacity issues affecting the northern part of the Borough.



Appendix 1: Sustainability Checklist

(Based on sustainability themes set out in the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal)



Economy and Regeneration

Strengthen the local economy and ensure sustainable economic growth	The site will generate numerous temporary and permanent economic benefits as set out at Section 7 of the Site Prospectus.
Improve the education and skills of the population overall	The construction phase will provide an opportunity for skills and training to be offered to local residents. It can deliver new school provision to serve the northern settlements of Warrington.
Reduce poverty, deprivation and social exclusion and secure economic inclusion	By providing and supporting jobs and the flow of money through the supply chain and local services, development of the site will contribute to achieving this objective.

Health and Wellbeing

Improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	The site will include several large areas of open space interconnected by a network of walking / cycling routes (which also allow access to the surrounding countryside). These facilities will contribute to physical and mental health wellbeing for future residents and others in Croft.
Reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime	The detailed site layout and design of development can contribute to achieving this objective.
Enable groups to contribute to decision making and encourage a sense of community identity and welfare.	The development will provide a range of housing types and tenures, offering the opportunity for a mixed and socially inclusive community.
Provide, protect or enhance leisure opportunities, recreation facilities, green infrastructure and access to the countryside	The new open space and walking / cycling routes proposed can be used for recreation and allow access to the surrounding countryside.

Accessibility

Reduce the need to travel, especially by car, improve choice and the use of more sustainable modes	<p>The site is located immediately adjacent to an established settlement (Croft). Good linkages between the site and the surrounding area will enable future residents to access a range of facilities and services present in the village without the need to travel by car.</p> <p>The site also offers the potential to accommodate community and small-scale retail/commercial facilities, contributing to the wider sustainability of Croft.</p> <p>Croft is accessible by bus with a route running between Leigh via Culcheth and Warrington via Winwick. There are also services to Birchwood Park.</p>
Protect and enhance accessibility for all the essential services and facilities.	An increase in population in Croft will support existing services and facilities, with potential for improved facilities and further investment in the future.

Housing

Ensure access to good quality, sustainable, affordable housing	The site presents a sustainable and achievable development opportunity comprising residential development. It is capable of accommodating between 1,500 and 1,765 homes of mixed tenure (including affordable housing), size and type, with a focus on good quality family housing. It will make a very important contribution to meeting Warrington's housing requirement and meeting the need for new homes in Croft.
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Natural Resources

Ensure the sustainable and prudent use and management of natural resources including the promotion of natural resources including the promotion of sustainable drainage and water conservation.

The concept masterplan provides a framework which responds to its context, seeking to retain and enhance existing features.

A new village green and other open spaces towards the edge of the settlement will reinforce the link and sense of integration with Croft. The provision of structural boundary planting towards the eastern boundary of the site (and particularly the northern boundary) and the retention of existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows within this green network will result in existing features being enhanced.

Protect, manage and improve local environmental quality including land, air and controlled waters and reduce the risk of flooding.

Any future development will be subject to a rigorous assessment of the environmental impact of the development to ensure that it does not result in any unacceptable environmental effects. Initial appraisals presented in the technical appendix demonstrate that the site is not affected by any insurmountable constraints.

Built and natural heritage

Protect and enhance places and buildings of historic cultural and archaeological value.

By responding to its context through a rigorous process of site analysis, the masterplan achieves a layout which is sympathetic to its position at the edge of the settlement.

Protect and improve the quality and character of places, landscapes, townscapes and wider countryside whilst maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Additional safeguards over the quality and character of the development, including the public realm, can be achieved with detailed site layout and design. The masterplan presents an appropriate framework for this.

Ensure high quality and sustainable design for buildings, spaces and the public realm that is appropriate to the locality.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.

The supporting ecological appraisal provided within the supporting technical appendix demonstrates that the site is of limited ecological value. The development provides the opportunity to enhance the site's ecological value.

Climate Change and resource use

Limit, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Increase energy efficiency and production of renewable energy.

The site offers the potential to incorporate sustainable drainage measures (subject to further assessment) and to ensure that the development will not be susceptible to the effects of climate change.

Minimise waste and maximise reuse, recovery and recycling.

Development will seek to minimise the use of resources as far as possible and the construction process will be subject to a Site Waste Management Plan.

