



Warrington Local Plan – Updated Proposed Submission Version

Representation in Respect of Land to the east of
Waterworks Lane, Winwick

On behalf of **Rowland Homes**



Document Control Sheet

Project Name: Warrington Local Plan: Updated Proposed Submission Version, September 2021

Project Ref: 332010647

Report Title: Representation in Respect of Land at Waterworks Lane, Winwick

Date: November 2021

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Jack Hobbs	Principal Planner	JH	November 2021
Reviewed by:	Michael Gilbert	Senior Associate	MG	November 2021
Approved by:	Bernard Greep	Director	BG	November 2021
For and on behalf of Stantec UK Limited				

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved

This report has been prepared by Stantec UK Limited ('Stantec') on behalf of its client to whom this report is addressed ('Client') in connection with the project described in this report and takes into account the Client's particular instructions and requirements. This report was prepared in accordance with the professional services appointment under which Stantec was appointed by its Client. This report is not intended for and should not be relied on by any third party (i.e. parties other than the Client). Stantec accepts no duty or responsibility (including in negligence) to any party other than the Client and disclaims all liability of any nature whatsoever to any such party in respect of this report.

Contents

1 Introduction 1

 1.1 Purpose of this Submission 1

 1.2 Structure of this Representation 2

2 Characteristics of the Rowland Homes Site and the Proposed Allocation Site 4

3 Policy Requirements in Relation to Green Belt 10

 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework 10

 3.2 Local Planning Policy Context 12

4 Further Observations Regarding the Proposed Allocation Site and the Rowland Homes Site 13

 4.1 Introduction 13

 4.2 Warrington Site Assessment Proformas 2018 13

 4.3 Rowland Homes Site (pages 546-548) 15

 4.4 Summary 16

 4.5 UPSVLP: Heritage Impact Assessment for the Outlying Settlements Allocations (August 2021) 17

 4.6 Green Belt Assessment 17

5 Rowland Homes’ Other Supporting Documents 20

 5.1 Introduction 20

 5.2 Landscape and Visual Appraisal 20

 5.3 Concept and Parameter Plans 21

 5.4 Ecological Appraisal 22

 5.5 Initial Highways Site Appraisal 22

6 The Supply of New Homes in Warrington 23

 6.1 Housing Supply 23

7 Summary 26

Appendices

Appendix A – Updated Rowland Homes Development Statement, Incorporating Illustrative Masterplan

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Submission

- 1.1.1 Stantec UK Ltd ('Stantec') has been appointed by Rowland Homes – one of the North West's leading builders of family homes, with a long history of creating sustainable places for people to live – to prepare this response to Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan ('UPSVLP').
- 1.1.2 The reason for Rowland's interest in the emerging Warrington Local Plan is because it controls a site on the northern edge of Winwick, to the east of Waterworks Lane, which is the subject of this representation (hereafter referred to as 'the Rowland Homes site').
- 1.1.3 We submitted a representation to the initial Proposed Submission Version Local Plan ('PSVLP') on behalf of Rowland Homes in June 2019¹. In that submission, we demonstrated that the Rowland Homes site represents a suitable, sustainable and deliverable candidate for housing development and should be allocated instead of, or in addition to, the proposed allocation site under draft Policy OS9 of the PSVLP ('Land to the north of Winwick', hereafter referred to as 'the proposed allocation site').
- 1.1.4 Our submission of June 2019 drew upon extensive assessments undertaken by Rowland Homes' team of professional advisors. In the interests of brevity we do not repeat all of that detail here², but the key points are summarised below, for ease of reference:
- Our submission demonstrated that the proposed allocation site is significantly more constrained than the Rowland Homes site. Development at the proposed allocation land would have a long term moderate adverse impact in landscape and visual terms, which is difficult to mitigate due to the physical characteristics of the site, in contrast to the Rowland Homes site, which is less sensitive to development, relates better to the existing urban area and is capable of appropriate and effective mitigation.
 - The Rowland Homes site extends no further north than the current development pattern established by the residential properties to the west off Green Lane Close and Squires Gardens, and is highly enclosed on all sides by existing development, trees/vegetation and roads.
 - The proposed allocation site contains pylon structures and overhead power lines, and is situated upon higher ground than the Rowland Homes site.
 - The Rowland Homes site therefore has much greater capacity to accommodate residential development, without leading to adverse effects, than the proposed allocation site.
 - We also drew attention to the content of the Council's 'Site Assessment Proformas 2018' document, which confirms that the proposed allocation site is more constrained than our client's site.
- 1.1.5 Against the background outlined above, we and our client are extremely disappointed to find that the Rowland Homes site does not feature as a proposed housing allocation within the UPSVLP. Despite the compelling points that we have raised previously regarding the shortcomings of the site to the north west of our client's site, the latter site has been carried

¹ At that time, we were known 'PBA, now part of Stantec', following PBA joining forces with Stantec in 2018.

² Our June 2021 submission was given the identifier reference 'LPR 0308' and is available to view in full via this link: https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/lpr_0308_redacted.pdf

forward as a proposed housing allocation, under Policy OS6 of the UPSVLP ('Land to the north of Winwick').

- 1.1.6 In this submission, we therefore reiterate why the Rowland Homes site should be released in preference or in addition to the proposed allocation site, and we highlight its excellent credentials which we believe make it a much more obvious and deliverable candidate for residential use than the 'Land north of Winwick' site. The proposed allocation site is (inter alia) at a higher level, protrudes into the open countryside to a greater degree (some 130m), contains no existing boundary features to the north that could be enhanced to create a new settlement limit, is only capable of delivering a sub-optimal layout, and the Council's evidence confirms that development at the site would cause harm to the setting of the Registered Battlefield to the immediate west.
- 1.1.7 At the outset, we welcome the Council's acknowledgement that there are exceptional circumstances which justify Green Belt release. The Green Belt in Warrington was first defined in 1977 and is tightly drawn around settlements, and the new Local Plan is the appropriate time to release land which is shown to not perform an important Green Belt role. The various settlements have been gradually developed in the intervening years between 1977 and now, leaving very little residual developable land within the settlement boundaries. There is a compelling need to release Green Belt land for development, without which it will not be possible to meet the needs of the local population and the economy. Any sites that are released from the Green Belt must be the most appropriate opportunities.

1.2 Structure of this Representation

- 1.2.1 The remainder of this representation is structured as follows:
- Section 2 summarises the physical characteristics of our client's site at Waterworks Lane and compares those characteristics with the proposed allocation site;
 - Section 3 outlines the requirements of the NPPF (July 2021) in relation to the release of Green Belt land;
 - Section 4 provides our further observations regarding the two sites, referring to the Council's Site Assessment Proformas 2018 document, and other Council evidence;
 - Section 5 highlights key findings from the other documents commissioned by Rowland Homes which demonstrate the suitability of its site;
 - Section 6 provides our observations regarding the Council's stated land supply; and
 - Section 7 contains our overall summary.
- 1.2.2 Our written representation to the Council's consultation on the PSVLP in June 2019 was supported by the following documents:
- 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Land at Waterworks Lane, Winwick, Warrington' (dated June 2019), produced by PBA, which identified the key landscape and visual characteristics, and their sensitivities, of both the Rowland Homes site and the proposed allocation site, and then assessed the likely magnitude of landscape and visual effects that are anticipated to result from residential development at each site. The report also identified the scope for potential landscape mitigation and reached conclusions as to which site has the greatest capacity, in landscape and visual terms, to accommodate residential development.
 - 'Concept and Parameter Plans' (June 2019), produced by Environmental Associates, showing how a high-quality development of family homes can be comfortably

accommodated at the site within a green setting and strong, permanent boundaries on all sides.

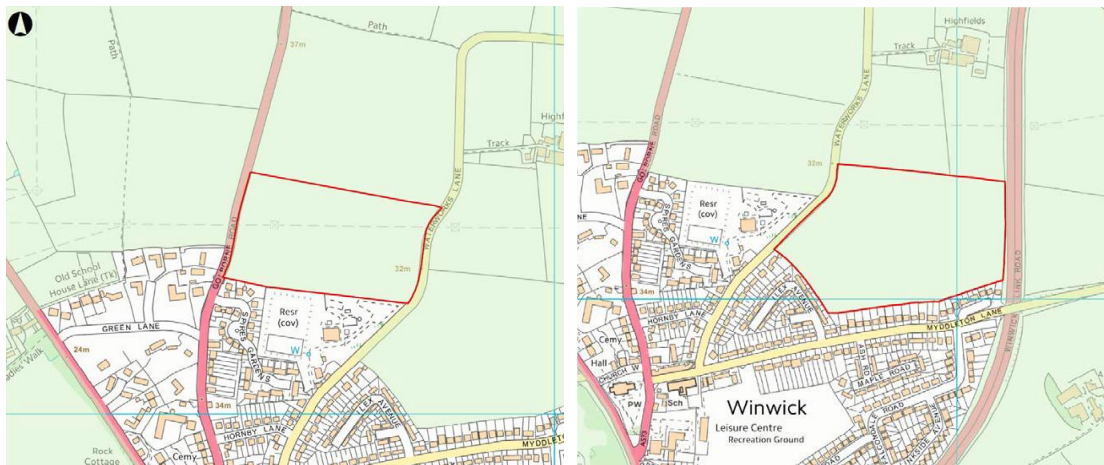
- 'Ecological Appraisal' (May 2019), undertaken by Envirotech, to establish the presence or absence of notable species at or close to the Rowland Homes site that may be affected by a residential scheme at the site.
- 'Initial Highways Site Appraisal' (June 2019), produced by Mode Transport, which provided an initial review of highways and access options for the Land off Waterworks Lane site.
- 'Development Statement' (June 2019), produced by Rowland Homes, which reviewed the townscape and existing housing stock in the local vicinity and provides a summary of the proposed scheme and design parameters.

1.2.3 The content of the aforementioned documents remains relevant and as such we have resubmitted them as part of this representation. In addition, Rowland Homes has recently commissioned an updated Illustrative Masterplan for its proposed scheme, which we also provide as part of this current submission within the updated version of the Development Statement referred to above (see Appendix A).

2 Characteristics of the Rowland Homes Site and the Proposed Allocation Site

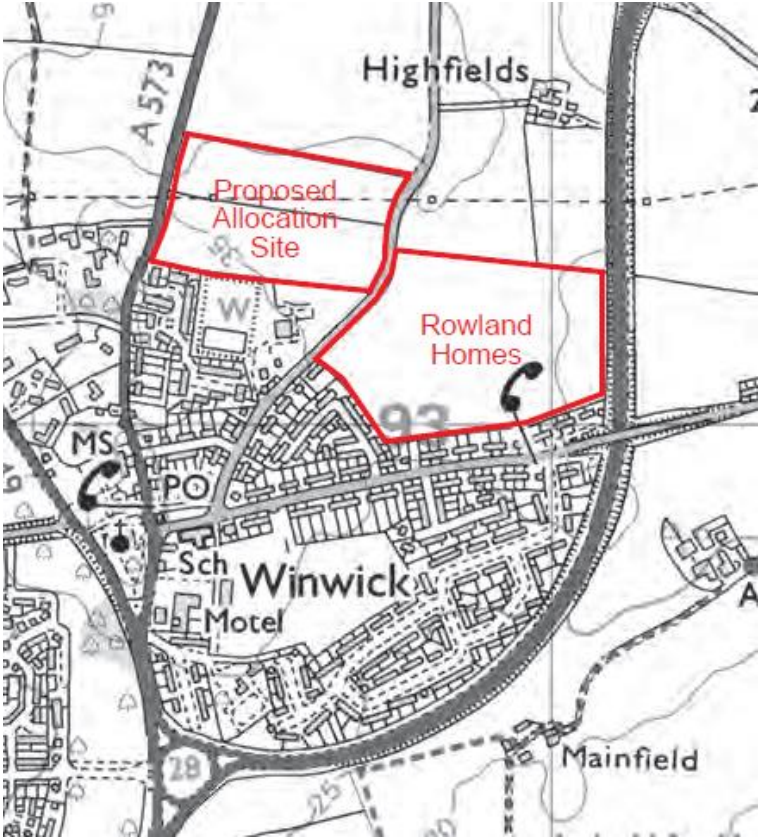
- 2.1.1 In its representation dated September 2017, Rowland Homes raised concern that the comments in the Green Belt Assessment (2016) regarding Parcel W18 did not reflect the characteristics of the much smaller parcel of land within its control.
- 2.1.2 In our representation of June 2019, we welcomed the Council's subsequent assessment of the smaller area of land that is controlled by Rowland Homes, in relation to 'suitability', 'availability' and 'achievability' criteria. We drew attention to the site-specific comments relating to the Rowland Homes site, contained at pages 546-548 of a document entitled 'Proposed Submission Version Local Plan – Site Assessment Proformas'.
- 2.1.3 As we explained in our June 2019 submission, it is immediately apparent that the proposed allocation site encroaches significantly further into the open countryside than the northern extent of built development in Winwick established by the residential properties to the west off Green Lane Close, which coincides with the northern boundary of the Rowland Homes site. The additional protrusion into the countryside equates to some 130 metres. The red-line boundaries of the two sites are reproduced again below, for ease of reference.

Figure 2.1 SHLAA Site 3334 (Proposed Allocation Site, Left) and SHLAA Site 2670 (Rowland Homes Site, Right)



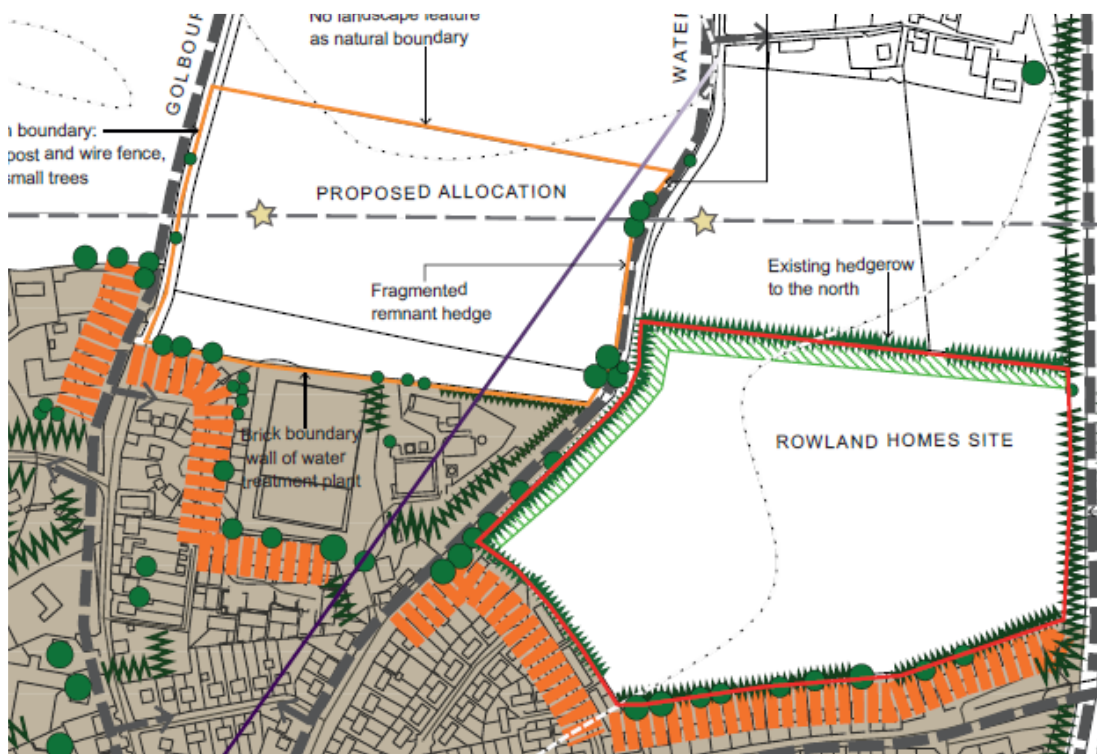
- 2.1.4 The Rowland Homes site is thus a much more logical candidate for residential use than the proposed allocation site. That position is shown illustrated even more clearly by Figure 1 of PBA's separately bound 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Land at Waterworks Lane, Winwick, Warrington' report (dated June 2019), which we also reproduce below for ease of reference.

Figure 2.2 Proposed Allocation Site and Rowland Homes Site in Context



- 2.1.5 Furthermore, the Rowland Homes site is demarcated by much stronger boundaries than the proposed allocation site. The site is bounded to the west by Waterworks Lane, beyond which is existing built development; to the east by Winwick Link Road (the A49); to the south by existing residential uses which front onto Myddleton Lane and Ilex Avenue; and to the north by an existing field boundary hedgerow.
- 2.1.6 In stark contrast, the proposed allocation site is bounded to the west by Golborne Road, beyond which there is no existing built development; to the east by Waterworks Lane; and to the south by approximately three existing residential properties as well as an open, covered reservoir and a water treatment works.
- 2.1.7 Whilst the proposed allocation site is generally less well-enclosed than the Rowland Homes site, the text within Policy OS9 of the PSVLP (page 243) stated that a *'landscape scheme will be required that reinforces these Green Belt boundaries, particularly the hedgerow along the northern boundary.'* [Our emphasis added]. As we explained in our earlier submission, PBA's Landscape and Visual Appraisal (June 2019) confirms that the northern boundary of the proposed allocation site is devoid of hedgerow vegetation and is delineated by a post and wire fence which separates the site from further large agricultural fields to the north.
- 2.1.8 An extract from the 'Landscape and Visual Analysis' plan, which was contained within the separately bound 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal' report that also formed part of our June 2019 submission, is provided below as Figure 2.3. The plan clearly shows that the Rowland Homes site is much better related to existing built development in Winwick than the proposed allocation site.

Figure 2.3 Proposed Allocation Site and Rowland Homes Site – Relationship with Existing Built Form (shown in orange hatching)



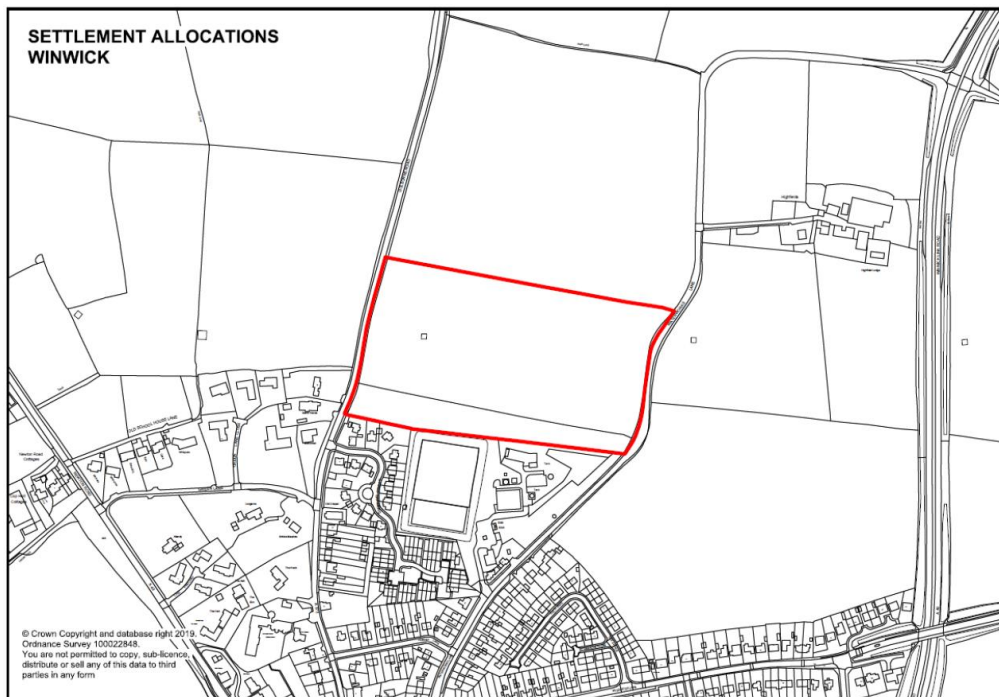
2.1.9 The characteristics of our client's site and the surrounding area are described and illustrated comprehensively in Rowland Homes' previous representations, but headline points are highlighted below, for ease of reference:

- The Rowland Homes site is sustainably located and free from physical, legal, environmental or ecological constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for housing development in the short term.
- The site is conveniently located in relation to a wide range of community services/ facilities and is close to public transport facilities (as detailed in our client's previous submission, as well as the Council's Site Assessment Proformas document).
- The Environment Agency's online Flood Map for Planning confirms that the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 – land at a low risk of flooding – and Rowland Homes expects that any risk of surface water flooding can be engineered out, given the absence of topographical constraints.
- An initial appraisal by specialist ecologists concludes that there are unlikely to be any ecological constraints that would preclude development at the site.
- Rowland Homes' highways advisor confirms that a scheme of 130-150 dwellings could comfortably be accommodated at the site via a single vehicular access point, which is sufficient for the scale of development that is envisaged.
- There are not anticipated to be any utilities related constraints that will prevent residential development at the site.
- Overhead power lines to the north and west of the site do not represent a constraint to the site's development, in contrast to the proposed allocation site, which contains pylons and overhead power lines.

- The strong locational characteristics of the site and the relative absence of constraints at the Rowland Homes site are recognised in the Council's Site Assessment Proformas document, which confirms that the site is considered suitable, available and deliverable for residential use.
 - There is very limited vegetation at the Rowland Homes site, other than the hedgerow along the northern boundary, and there are no trees within the body of the site.
 - The Rowland Homes site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings either within or adjacent to the site. Furthermore, a Registered Battlefield³ is located to the immediate west of the proposed allocation site. There are open views from the proposed allocation site across the 1648 historic battlesite, which therefore represents a heritage constraint to the development of that site. In contrast, there are no views towards or across the historic battlefield from the Rowland Homes site.
- 2.1.10 Regarding the latter point above, we drew attention in our June 2019 submission to a letter from Historic England to St Helens Council in relation to a (then live) planning application for a proposed development at a site to the north-west of the proposed allocation site in Winwick. In that letter (dated 14 January 2019), Historic England afforded significant weight to the Registered Battlefield of the Battle of Winwick and noted its concern regarding the high level of harm to the heritage asset.
- 2.1.11 The proposed allocation site has the potential to impact upon the setting of this important heritage asset, whereas the Rowland Homes site is located further away from the Registered Battlefield and will therefore have no impact.
- 2.1.12 Against the background outlined above, it is both surprising and disappointing to find that the UPSVLP simply carries forward the site to the north west of the Rowland Homes site as a proposed housing allocation. It is immediately obvious from the various figures provided above that the Rowland Homes site is far better related to the existing settlement pattern than the proposed allocation site.
- 2.1.13 The extract from page 254 of the UPSVLP, which is provided below as Figure 2.4, clearly shows that the proposed allocation amounts to an incongruous northerly expansion of Winwick – with no existing development to the west, east and north – in stark contrast to the Rowland Homes site to the south east, which represents a logical rounding-off of the settlement.

³ The site of a battle that took place at Red Bank in 1648, adjacent to Newton Brook at the crossing with the A49, between Cromwell and the Scots forces. The event is known as the Battle of Winwick and also the Battle of Red Bank.

Figure 2.4 Extract from page 254 of the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan



2.1.14 We also note that the Registered Battlefield of the Battle of Winwick is referred to within 'Policy DC2 – Historic Environment' of the UPSVLP, which states as follows:

'1. The Council will, through planning decisions and in fulfilling its wider functions, proactively manage and work with developers, the local community and others to support proposals which conserve or, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of Warrington.'

'2. Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of those elements of the historic environment which contribute most to the Borough's distinctive identity and sense of place are not harmed.'

2.1.15 Reflecting the importance of the Registered Battlefield and the content of Policy DC2, the supporting text to 'Policy OS6 – Land to the north of Winwick' contains the following text:

'The development will be designed to respect the setting of the site of the Battle of Winwick, which is a Registered Battlefield.' [Paragraph 10.11.2]

'The site is located in a sensitive location with regard to historic Battlefield. It is therefore imperative that development respects the setting of this important heritage asset.' [Paragraph 10.11.8]

2.1.16 The wording of the policy itself also emphasises the sensitive heritage setting of the proposed allocation site:

'Historic Environment

22. Development will be required to preserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting.

23. Development proposals will be required to be in accordance with the Winwick Heritage Impact Assessment including the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures.

24. Development proposals will be expected to conserve and enhance the historic significance, appearance and integrity of and the ability to understand and appreciate the setting of the Battle of Winwick.'

- 2.1.17 We note that the masterplan submitted in support of the proposed site allocation in June 2019 shows built development up to the western edge of the site (Golborne Road). Whilst a buffer could potentially be incorporated within the western part of the site to keep that land open given its close proximity to the Registered Battlefield, such a buffer would reduce the amount of development achievable at the site.
- 2.1.18 The foregoing comments are important against the backdrop of paragraph 200 of the latest version of the NPPF (July 2021), which places registered battlefields within the list of *‘assets of the highest significance’*. The same paragraph also advises that:
- ‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.’*
- 2.1.19 Our client firmly believes that there is *‘no clear and convincing justification’* to release the proposed allocation site in preference to its site, from which there are no views towards or across the 1648 historic battlefield.

3 Policy Requirements in Relation to Green Belt

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

3.1.1 Section 3 of our submission to the PSVLP of June 2019 contained a detailed review of the requirements for Green Belt release, as set out within the NPPF. The NPPF was updated in July 2021 and, whilst the requirements in relation to Green Belt remain materially unaltered, the paragraph numbering has been updated. For ease of reference we therefore reiterate the requirements, below, but highlighting the latest NPPF references.

3.1.2 Green Belt is covered in Chapter 13 of the revised NPPF. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF confirms that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, and that *'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.'*

3.1.3 Paragraph 134 confirms that the Green Belt serves five purposes, which are unaltered from the earlier versions of the NPPF:

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

3.1.4 Paragraph 140 of the NPPF contains the following advice:

'Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period. Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.'

3.1.5 Paragraph 141 of the revised NPPF sets out the requirements relating to the demonstration of 'exceptional circumstances' necessary to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, as follows:

'Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This will be assessed through the examination of its strategic policies, which will take into account the preceding paragraph, and whether the strategy:

- a) *makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;*
- b) *optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of this Framework, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and*
- c) *has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.'*

- 3.1.6 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF carries forward the previous advice that the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, and it goes on to advise as follows:

'Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.'

- 3.1.7 Accordingly, the NPPF sets out the requirements that need to be satisfied before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries. The burden of evidence placed upon LPAs has therefore increased, albeit there remains no statutory approach or standardised methodology for assessing exceptional circumstances, and so ultimately it is for LPAs to determine an appropriate approach and reach a view as to whether they consider that exceptional circumstances exist to justify removing land from the Green Belt.

- 3.1.8 Whilst the NPPF does not refer to it, a High Court Judgment of 21 April 2015⁴ may be instructive to LPAs which are considering amending their Green Belt boundaries. In paragraph 50 of his Approved Judgment, Mr Justice Jay found that the existence of an objectively assessed need is not sufficient to amount to exceptional circumstances. In paragraph 51, Mr Justice Jay then set out the following five matters for consideration in assessing whether there are exceptional circumstances with regard to the release of Green Belt land through the local plan process:

- the acuteness/intensity of the objectively assessed need;
- the inherent constraints on supply/availability of land prima facie suitable for sustainable development;
- the consequent difficulties in achieving sustainable development without impinging on the Green Belt;
- the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt (or those parts of it which would be lost if the boundaries were reviewed); and
- the extent to which the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt may be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent.

- 3.1.9 When making Green Belt boundary changes, paragraph 143 of the NPPF advises that LPAs should apply the following criteria:

- a) *ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;*
- b) *not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;*
- c) *where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;*
- d) *make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an updated to a plan review which proposes the development;*
- e) *be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and*

⁴ High Court Judgment in relation to a challenge by Calverton Parish Council to the adopted Nottingham, Broxtowe and Gedling 'Aligned Core Strategies'

- f) *define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.*

3.2 Local Planning Policy Context

- 3.2.1 The Green Belt boundary in Warrington was established in the late 1970s. The Council has conducted various consultations on the Borough's housing needs and land supply over recent years, as part of the preparation of the emerging Local Plan, and has assessed potential supply from a range of sources that are not within the presently defined Green Belt.
- 3.2.2 As Section 3.4 of the UPSVLP explains, the Council's assessments have found that there are insufficient development opportunities to meet the stated need for new housing across Warrington. The Council considers that sources within the urban area are capable of delivering around 11,800 new homes over the plan period, which leaves a requirement to release Green Belt land for around 4,500 homes.
- 3.2.3 The shortfall in relation to the identified dwelling requirement is substantial and we agree with the conclusion reached by the Council that exceptional circumstances exist which justify the release of land from the presently defined Green Belt. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, it is essential that any sites selected for release are those that will result in the least harm to the purposes of the Green Belt, and those sites should have physical boundaries that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.
- 3.2.4 In our assessment, the Council's intention to release 'Land to the north of Winwick' in preference to the Rowland Homes site does not satisfy the stringent requirements for Green Belt release summarised above. In Section 4 of our report, we provide further observations in relation to the Council's assessment of the two sites which reinforce our concerns.

4 Further Observations Regarding the Proposed Allocation Site and the Rowland Homes Site

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In this section of our representation, we provide our further observations in relation to the proposed allocation site and the Rowland Homes site.
- 4.1.2 At the outset we note that the two sites are located close to each other, to the north of Winwick, and so the locational suitability of the two sites is very similar. We therefore focus instead on key differences between the sites.

4.2 Warrington Site Assessment Proformas 2018

- 4.2.1 In Section 4 of our June 2019 submission, we provided a detailed critique of how the two sites were assessed in the 'Warrington Site Assessment Proformas 2018'⁵. We explained that the document provides clear evidence that the proposed allocation site is significantly more constrained than the Rowland Homes site. Given that the proposed housing allocation has been carried forward into the UPSVLP (under Policy OS6) – despite it being more constrained than the Rowland Homes site – we therefore reiterate the concerns that we raised previously.
- 4.2.2 We note that a document entitled 'Additional Site Assessment Proformas' (dated September 2021) has been published in relation to the UPSVLP, but it relates to 'A small number of sites were submitted for consideration as residential allocations late in the Local Plan preparation process, after the Regulation 19 Consultation'. Accordingly, the document does not provide an update to the comments that were contained within the original 'Site Assessment Proformas 2018' document for either the proposed allocation site or the Rowland Homes site.

Proposed Allocation Site (pages 543-545)

Potential site capacity

- 4.2.3 A potential capacity of 132 dwellings was identified for the proposed allocation site, based on a stated net developable site area of 4.4 hectares, which was provided by the landowner in 2016.
- 4.2.4 As we noted in Section 2 of our current representation, however, the 'Sketch Layout' submitted in support of the proposed site allocation in June 2019 showed built development right up to the western edge of the site (Golborne Road). Whilst a buffer could potentially be incorporated within the western part of the site to keep that land open given its close proximity to the Registered Battlefield to the west, such a buffer would reduce the amount of development achievable at the site.
- 4.2.5 We also note that the Sketch Layout shows built development right up to the northern boundary of the site, with only very sparse tree planting along that boundary. Given the requirement within NPPF paragraph 143 (f) for Green Belt boundaries to be clearly defined, 'using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent', there could be potential for any more densely planted new woodland buffer along the northern boundary to the site to further eat into the site's capacity.
- 4.2.6 For the reasons outlined above, we suspect that the true capacity of the proposed allocation site is likely to be markedly different in practice from the '132 dwellings' figure suggested within the Site Assessment Proformas document, and the 'minimum of 130 homes' suggested within draft UPSVLP Policy OS6.

⁵ The footers refer to Arup and so whilst the front cover only displays the Warrington Borough Council logo, we assume that the assessments were carried out by Arup. Similarly, the front cover of the report is undated but the Proformas for the proposed allocation site and the Rowland Homes site are dated 27 November 2018.

- 4.2.7 The Council's Site Assessment Proforma referred to the presence of *'electricity pylons running across the site'*. Whilst, as a generality, circa 130 dwellings could potentially be achieved at a site with a developable site area of 4.4 hectares, the landowner's submission to the Council's Call for Sites in October 2016 stated: *'Electricity pylons split our site, but development can occur either side.'* The Sketch Layout that formed part of the promoter's submission of June 2019 showed two linear belts of development either side of the pylon easement which, whilst representing an area of publicly accessible open space, is not necessarily an optimal layout and appears rather contrived to accommodate what is a very significant constraint that is not present at the Rowland Homes land.
- 4.2.8 Following on from the point above, we note that the 'Overall Site Conclusions' section stated: *'...the site capacity would be lower than this [132 dwellings] given that development will need to avoid the pylons running across the site however the site capacity currently exceeds the housing requirement for Winwick anyway.'* That comment contradicts draft UPSVLP 'Policy DEV1 – Housing Delivery', which identifies Winwick for 'a minimum of 130 homes.'
- 4.2.9 Furthermore, as noted above, draft UPSVLP Policy OS6 identifies the proposed allocation site for 'a minimum of 130 homes', despite the Council's evidence base confirming that this quantum of development realistically cannot be delivered at the site.

Workshop comments

- 4.2.10 The 'workshop comments' section of the Proforma states: *'...although the existing boundary is less durable, a more durable boundary could be established.'* As we highlighted, criterion f) of NPPF paragraph 143 advises that, when making Green Belt boundary changes, local planning authorities should *'define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'* The northern boundary of the proposed allocation site is devoid of hedgerow vegetation, however, and is delineated by a post and wire fence which separates the site from further large agricultural fields to the north.
- 4.2.11 A post and wire fence does not amount to the sort of existing boundary referred to within paragraph 143 of the NPPF. The following photograph confirms that what would become the northern boundary of the proposed allocation site is devoid of hedgerow vegetation. The same image also shows the overhead power lines and pylons to the south of that boundary.



Source: Google Maps© 2021

4.3 Rowland Homes Site (pages 546-548)

Potential site capacity

- 4.3.1 A potential capacity of 198 dwellings was identified for the Rowland Homes site, based on a stated net developable site area of 6.6 hectares. Rowland Homes' representation to the Preferred Development Option consultation in July 2017, however, confirmed that the site is capable of accommodating 150-200 dwellings, *'or the equivalent of the final housing requirement for Winwick.'*
- 4.3.2 As we explained within our submission of June 2019, and for the avoidance of doubt, Rowland Homes would be happy to cap the level of development at its site to around 130 dwellings if that is the Council's preference – albeit the requirement for Winwick specified within draft UPSVLP Policy DEV1 is for 'a minimum of 130 homes'. The site should certainly not be ruled out from consideration simply on the basis of a notional capacity figure of 198 dwellings, which is based on the application of a standard density multiplier to a stated net development area.
- 4.3.3 A document entitled 'Concept and Parameter Plans', produced by Environmental Associates, formed part of our June 2019 submission. The document showed various ways of achieving a high-quality development of family homes at the Rowland Homes site, within a green setting and with strong, permanent boundaries on all sides. All of the potential options show a dense woodland buffer on the northern boundary, which would be achieved by bolstering the existing hedgerow in that location as opposed to having to create a completely new boundary, as would be the case with the proposed allocation site. This submission is accompanied by a more detailed indicative layout which further demonstrates how a high quality and sustainable residential development can be accommodated at the Rowland Homes site.

Other constraints

- 4.3.4 The Rowland Homes site does not contain any electricity power lines or overhead power lines. The absence of that constraint will enable a high-quality residential scheme to be devised for the site, rather than having to split the site into two distinct sections and working around the constraint.
- 4.3.5 There is also no evidence of our client's site being affected by areas of contamination, nor will development at this land have any impact on the setting of the historic battlefield. This is in contrast to the currently proposed allocation site, the development of which will unavoidably result in some detrimental impact on the setting of this important and heavily protected heritage asset.

Workshop comments

- 4.3.6 The 'suitability' section of the Proforma states: *'the lack of a secondary access point may limit numbers'*. The 'workshop comments' section of the Proforma then provides the following supplementary comment: *'...it is considered that the lack of a secondary access point would not be an issue given that the site capacity far exceeds the housing requirement for Winwick.'*
- 4.3.7 A document entitled 'Initial Highways Site Appraisal', produced by Mode Transport, formed part of our June 2019 submission. The document confirmed that a residential scheme of approximately 130-150 dwellings could be achieved via a single point of access. As confirmed above, Rowland Homes would be happy to deliver a scheme comprising approximately 130 homes if that is the Council's preference; the purpose of Mode's note was to demonstrate that there are no access constraints which should prevent the site from coming forward for development.
- 4.3.8 In our June 2019 submission, we expressed our bemusement regarding the comment in the Proforma that *'there are no potential boundaries which could be used to divide the site into a smaller site which would better accommodate the requirement [for Winwick, of approximately 130 dwellings]'*. As we have repeatedly emphasised, the northern boundary of our client's site is demarcated by an established field boundary hedgerow. There is no need to sub-divide the Rowland Homes site because its northern boundary extends no further north than the current

development pattern established by the residential properties to the west off Green Lane Close.

- 4.3.9 The conclusion reached in the Proforma for the Rowland Homes site was 'Exclude from process.' No further explanation was given.

4.4 Summary

- 4.4.1 The Site Assessment Proformas document confirmed that the proposed allocation site and the Rowland Homes site are both well-located in relation to community services and public transport facilities, and both sites are considered to be suitable for residential use.

- 4.4.2 The same document also confirmed that the proposed allocation site is affected by contamination and pylons/overhead power lines, in contrast to the Rowland Homes site. Furthermore, the document referred to the northern boundary of the proposed allocation site as 'less durable' – stopping short of referring to it being a post and wire fence – again in contrast to the Rowland Homes site which is demarcated by an established field boundary hedgerow.

- 4.4.3 The document therefore provided clear evidence that the proposed allocation site is significantly more constrained than the Rowland Homes site, which is in addition to the fact that it protrudes considerably further (130 metres) into the countryside and is clearly a less logical candidate for residential use than our client's site.

- 4.4.4 Furthermore, as we have explained, a Registered Battlefield is located to the immediate west of the proposed allocation site. There are open views from the proposed allocation site across the 1648 historic battlesite, which therefore represents a heritage constraint to development at that site. In contrast, there are no views towards or across the historic battlefield from the Rowland Homes site.

- 4.4.5 Against the background outlined above, it was very surprising that the Site Assessment Proformas 2018 document recommended that the more constrained site should be taken forward as a proposed housing allocation. There was nothing in the Council's evidence base that substantiated that conclusion, but the site was identified as a proposed allocation within the PSVLP.

- 4.4.6 The proposed allocation has been carried forward as a proposed housing allocation, under Policy OS6 of the UPSVLP ('Land to the north of Winwick'), despite it clearly being a more constrained and far less obvious housing site than the Rowland Homes site. That position is bewildering given that the proposed allocation site:

- protrudes into the open countryside to a far greater degree than the Rowland Homes site (some 130m);
- contains no existing boundary features to the north that could be enhanced to create a new settlement limit;
- has question marks over the amount of development that is realistically achievable;
- is only capable of delivering a sub-optimal layout, either side of an easement associated with pylon structures and overhead power lines; and
- is adjacent to an historic Registered Battlefield.

- 4.4.7 Accordingly, we have significant reservations over the soundness of this aspect of the new Local Plan and again submit that the Rowland Homes site should be allocated instead of, or in addition to, the proposed allocation site under draft Policy OS6 of the UPSVLP.

4.5 UPSVLP: Heritage Impact Assessment for the Outlying Settlements Allocations (August 2021)

- 4.5.1 Pages 32 and 33 of the Heritage Impact Assessment' document of August 2021 contain a detailed commentary of the history surrounding the Registered Battlefield of the Battle of Winwick, and the Battlefield's historical significance/importance. The final four paragraphs from that section of the report, which outline the likely effect of development at the proposed allocation site on the Registered Battlefield, are reproduced in full below for ease of reference:

'The Winwick battlefield is sited west directly opposite the site, separated by the A573 Golborne Road. The site is an agricultural field with field boundaries. The site provides a rural and open setting to the Battlefield and therefore makes a moderate contribution to the heritage asset.'

Allocation of the site for development may result in the loss of the historic rural setting of the site/asset and therefore would result in a moderate impact on the significance of the Battlefield and its rural setting.

If the site is allocated for development, harm to the Battlefield can be mitigated by ensuring surrounding development is designed sympathetically to its rural setting, buffers and adequate separation distances are implemented and existing planting remains in situ/is enhanced where possible.

The site allocation has the potential to have a moderate impact on the heritage asset. It is therefore recommended that mitigation measures outlined above are considered to mitigate this harm.'

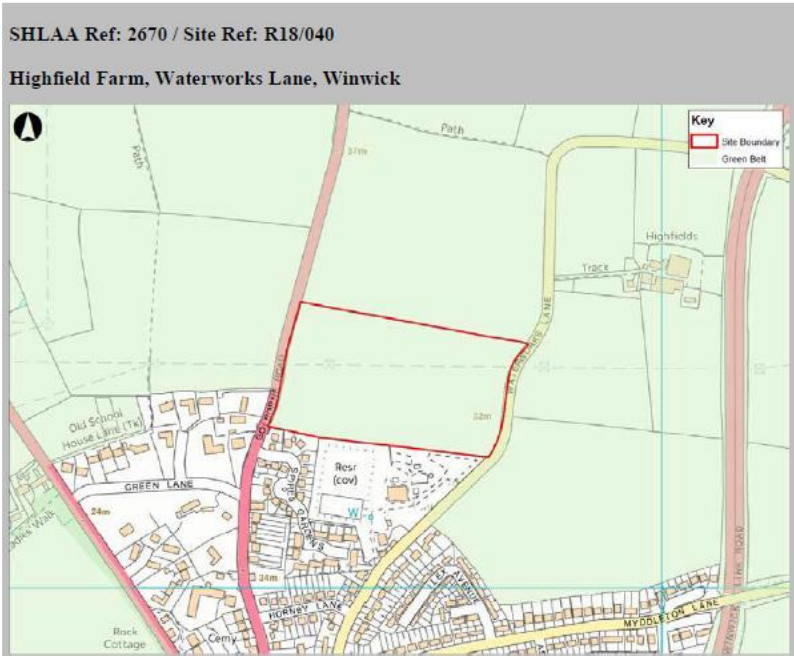
- 4.5.2 The report therefore confirms that development at the proposed allocation site would have a moderate impact on the significance of the Battlefield and its rural setting. Whilst the report therefore recommends that mitigation measures should be incorporated into any development scheme at the proposed allocation site, it would clearly be more logical to meet Winwick's identified housing requirement at the Rowland Homes site and thereby obviate any potential for harm to the Registered Battlefield which, as we highlighted within Section 2, are placed within the list of 'assets of the highest significance' by paragraph 200 of the NPPF, which also advises that

'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.'

4.6 Green Belt Assessment

- 4.6.1 Our client's representation to the Preferred Development Option consultation in July 2017 provided evidence which showed that the Rowland Homes site makes an overall 'weak' contribution to the Green Belt purposes, in contrast to the conclusion within the Green Belt Assessment that the much larger Parcel WI8 makes a 'moderate' contribution.
- 4.6.2 The suite of evidence base documents on the Council's website includes a document entitled 'Green Belt Assessment – Additional sites assessments: call for sites/SHLAA', dated July 2017. The document contains an assessment of the Rowland Homes site, under site reference 2670. The site is adjudged to make 'no' contribution in relation to the first and fourth Green Belt purposes; a 'weak' contribution in terms of the second Green Belt purpose; a 'strong contribution' regarding the third Green Belt purpose; and a 'moderate' contribution in relation to the fifth Green Belt purpose.
- 4.6.3 Overall, the Rowland Homes site is deemed to be making a 'moderate' contribution to the five Green Belt purposes. That is the same conclusion that was reached in the original Green Belt Assessment regarding the much larger Parcel R18. The overall conclusion is effectively based on our client's site being assigned a 'strong contribution' in relation to the third Green Belt purpose.

- 4.6.4 We are concerned that the assessment of the Rowland Homes site does not properly reflect the nature of the site’s boundaries, or the realistic contribution that the site makes to the Green Belt purposes. In particular, we reiterate that the site’s northern boundary comprises an existing field boundary hedgerow, in contrast to the northern boundary of the proposed allocation site which is devoid of hedgerow vegetation and is delineated by a post and wire fence.
- 4.6.5 We therefore maintain that the Rowland Homes site should be adjudged to be performing a ‘weak’ overall role in relation to the Green Belt purposes, rather than a ‘moderate’ role. Furthermore, for the reasons outlined in this report – and the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, which formed part of our June 2019 submission – it is abundantly clear that the Rowland Homes site is a more logical candidate for release, given its stronger boundaries and its significantly more limited encroachment into the countryside than the proposed allocation site.
- 4.6.6 Notwithstanding our comments above regarding the Council’s Green Belt evidence base, the Council’s ‘Site Assessment Proformas 2018’ document confirmed that the Rowland Homes site is considered suitable, available and deliverable for residential use.
- 4.6.7 Following on from the point above, it is important to recognise that paragraph 68 of the NPPF (July 2021) requires local authorities to identify specific, deliverable sites that are capable of meeting the identified housing requirement for the first five-year period (plus an appropriate buffer as specified in paragraph 74 of the NPPF), as well as sites that can meet the identified requirements for years 6-10 and 11-15 of the Local Plan. Our client’s site is capable of being delivered within the first five-year period given that it is controlled by a long-established housebuilder, is not reliant on significant new infrastructure and is acceptable in Green Belt terms with or without the inclusion of the proposed allocation site to the north west.
- 4.6.8 The Council has published a document entitled ‘Green Belt Site Selection Implications of Green Belt Release’, dated August 2021. The proposed allocation site is covered within Section 4.7 of the report and is referred to as ‘Highfield Farm, Waterworks Lane, Winwick’, as shown by the plan at page 34 of the document, which is reproduced below for ease of reference:



Source: Warrington Council, https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/green_belt_site_selection_-_implications_of_green_belt_release_-_august_2021.pdf

- 4.6.9 Once again, it is immediately apparent that the proposed allocation site (delineated in red outline on the plan) represents a far greater incursion into the countryside (some 130 metres) than the Rowland Homes site to the south east, which is a logical rounding off of Winwick.

- 4.6.10 The August 2021 report contains the following text Under the heading 'Conclusion' within Section 4.7:

'The site currently makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Whilst development of the site would entail a small incursion into undeveloped countryside, the removal of the site from the Green Belt will not harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt around Winwick. A new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary would be created by strengthening existing boundaries.'

- 4.6.11 Whilst no commentary is provided for the Rowland Homes site given that the report focuses on proposed Green Belt releases, the same conclusion would naturally apply equally to our client's site. Indeed, for the reasons that we have outlined, release of the Rowland Homes site would result in a lower level of harm than with the proposed allocation site given its location and the greater potential to create a permanent, defensible new Green Belt boundary.

5 Rowland Homes’ Other Supporting Documents

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Our submission of June 2019 on behalf of Rowland Homes was supported by a range of other documents. For ease of reference, we reproduce the headline findings from those documents in this section of our report as they demonstrate the suitability and relative freedom from constraints of the Rowland Homes site.

5.2 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

5.2.1 This document, produced by professionally qualified and highly qualified landscape architects at Stantec, identified the key landscape and visual characteristics, and their sensitivities, of both the Rowland Homes site and the proposed allocation site, and it assessed the likely magnitude of landscape and visual effects that are anticipated to result from residential development at each site. The report also identified the scope for potential landscape mitigation and reached conclusions as to which site has the best capacity, in landscape and visual terms, to accommodate residential development.

5.2.2 The table within Section 8.1.1 of the document summarised the key conclusions in relation to both sites. The text highlighted in red indicates where the proposed allocation site fares worse in the assessment, indicating that the site is more sensitive to development and more limited opportunities for appropriate and effective mitigation. The table is reproduced below for ease of reference:

	Rowland Homes Site	Proposed Allocation Site
Landscape Character Sensitivity		
<i>Landscape character attractiveness</i>	Pleasant	Pleasant
<i>Consistency of landscape character</i>	Some key characteristics present	Mostly consistent
<i>Contribution to settlement setting</i>	Limited association	Some features contributing
<i>Remoteness and tranquillity</i>	Some interruption	Some interruption
Visual Prominence and Quality		
<i>General visibility and visual prominence</i>	Moderate-Low	Moderate to high
<i>Public accessibility</i>	Low sensitivity	Low sensitivity
<i>Key or important views</i>	No key or important views	Some important views
Potential Landscape Effects		
<i>Magnitude of effect on landscape character</i>	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
<i>Mitigation potential</i>	Moderate-high potential	Moderate-low potential
<i>Magnitude of effect on public views</i>	Moderate-negligible adverse	Moderate adverse
<i>Magnitude of effect on private views</i>	Major-moderate adverse	Major and slight adverse

5.2.3 Key points highlighted in the report which have led to conclusions summarised above are as follows:

- The proposed allocation site is more consistent with the local landscape character, contains more features that contribute towards the landscape setting, is more visually prominent, contains some important views, and is more difficult to mitigate in terms of landscape impact.
- The proposed allocation site sits at a higher level, protrudes into the open countryside to a greater degree (some 130m), and contains no existing boundary features to the north that could be enhanced to create a new settlement limit.

- The proposed allocation site is more open and exposed in the wider landscape and its development would represent an intrusion into the open countryside and Green Belt to the north of Winwick. The proposed allocation site therefore has a more limited capacity in landscape and visual terms to accommodate development than the Rowland Homes site.
- It would be difficult to successfully mitigate residential development at the proposed allocation site without causing undue harm to the wider landscape character of the Green Belt and people's views and amenity in the long-term.
- In contrast, the Rowland Homes site has few characteristics that are consistent with the landscape, moderate-low visibility and prominence, no key or important views, and moderate-high potential for appropriate and successful landscape mitigation.
- The Rowland Homes site is far more screened by existing vegetation and encroaches less into the wider countryside and Green Belt beyond to the north. Indeed, the site extends no further north than the current development pattern established by the residential properties to the west off Green Lane Close, and is enclosed on all sides by existing development, trees/vegetation and roads.
- The short-term effect on landscape character following development is likely to be no more than moderate-adverse, which over time will reduce dramatically as a result of mitigation.
- The Rowland Homes site therefore has much greater capacity to accommodate residential development without leading to undue harm to landscape character, views and visual amenity.

5.2.4 The report therefore clearly demonstrated that, in landscape and visual terms, the proposed allocation site is significantly more constrained than the Rowland Homes site, and that the development of the proposed allocation land would have a long term moderate adverse impact which is difficult to mitigate due to the physical characteristics of the site. In contrast, the Rowland Homes site is a far more suitable candidate to release from the Green Belt in landscape and visual terms. The Rowland Homes site is less sensitive to development, relates better to the existing urban area, and is capable of appropriate mitigation.

5.3 Concept and Parameter Plans

5.3.1 Environmental Associates produced a series of drawings in support of our June 2019 submission which show:

- a series of development parcels arranged around a hierarchy of primary residential streets and secondary residential drives;
- generous provision of public open space, including children's play facilities;
- homes around the perimeter of the site arranged to front onto Waterworks Lane and public open space;
- existing trees and hedgerows retained along the western, northern and eastern boundaries all retained;
- additional hedgerow incorporated along the western boundary; and
- the existing hedgerow along the northern and eastern boundaries supplemented by woodland planting.

5.3.2 The initial drawings were indicative, but they demonstrated that a high-quality development of 130-140 family homes can be comfortably accommodated at the Rowland Homes site within a green setting and strong, permanent boundaries on all sides.

- 5.3.3 A more refined Illustrative Masterplan has now been produced and is submitted as part of this representation (within Appendix A) which demonstrates how a high-quality scheme could be accommodated at the Rowland Homes site, and which would represent a far more logical extension to Winwick than the currently proposed allocation, which protrudes further into the Green Belt and is afflicted with a range of significant constraints that are not present at the Rowland Homes site.
- 5.3.4 The Illustrative Masterplan also confirms that built development at the Rowland Homes site will extend no further north than the current development pattern established by the properties to the west off Green Lane Close and Squires Gardens. Furthermore, there is sufficient land available to create a new, densely planted woodland buffer along the northern boundary.

5.4 Ecological Appraisal

- 5.4.1 Key findings from the Ecological Appraisal report, produced by licensed ecologists from Envirotech, were as follows:
- The plant species assemblages recorded at the site are all common in the local area and are considered to be of low ecological value. Domestic gardens and sympathetically landscaped open space is considered to offer habitat of equal or greater ecological value.
 - None of the hedgerows around the site perimeter are considered important under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997), but all should be retained with adjacent ground flora.
 - The protection of trees along the site boundary and landscaping will promote structural diversity in both the canopy and at ground level and will encourage a wider variety of wildlife to use the site than already occurs.
 - The ditch adjacent to the northern hedge may provide refuges for amphibians and small mammals and should be retained. There was however no conclusive evidence of any specifically protected species regularly occurring at the site or the surrounding areas which would be negatively affected by site development.
 - It was considered unlikely that bats will roost at the site, but the ecologists recommended that some roosting provision for bats should be incorporated into the new homes at the Rowland Homes site.
 - Similarly, the ecologists recommended that some nesting provision for birds should be incorporated into the scheme.
 - No other notable or protected species were recorded at the site.

5.5 Initial Highways Site Appraisal

- 5.5.1 Mode Transport's initial technical note provided an initial review of highways and access options for the Rowland Homes site. The note confirmed that a residential scheme of approximately 130-150 dwellings could be comfortably accessed via a priority junction with Waterworks Lane, and that sufficient visibility splays can be achieved.

6 The Supply of New Homes in Warrington

6.1 Housing Supply

- 6.1.1 Section 3.4 of the UPSVLP explains that the Council's assessments have identified insufficient development opportunities to meet the stated need for new housing across Warrington. The Council considers that sources within the urban area are capable of delivering around 11,800 new homes over the plan period, which leaves a requirement to release Green Belt land for around 4,500 homes.
- 6.1.2 It is important that the stated housing land supply is sufficient to deliver balanced and inclusive growth to ensure deliverability and a degree of choice in delivery, and so that the Green Belt boundary can endure beyond the plan period. We have therefore reviewed the sites that feature within the Council's stated land supply, focusing on larger sites. It is clear that the assumed supply from a significant number of those sites is ambitious and/or unlikely to be achieved in practice.
- 6.1.3 Below, we highlight a selection of those sites. Delivery at some of the sites is questionable. Other sites are likely to come forward but not within the ambitious timescales assumed by the Council, thereby triggering a need for additional sites to be released in the short term in order to ensure a sufficient supply of housing across Warrington. That is particularly important given that the Council is proposing a 'stepped' approach to housing delivery, with lower rates of delivery in the earlier years of the Local Plan period:
- Former Wilderspool Stadium, Priory Street, Warrington, WA4 6YP (SHLAA Reference 1752):
 - An outline planning application (reference 2018/33771) for 160 dwellings was submitted in October 2018 and is still awaiting a decision.
 - In November 2018, the Council agreed to extend the determination period for this application until February 2019.
 - The SHLAA states: *'Development Management Committee resolution to grant permission subject to S106 Agreement being signed'*.
 - To date, a S106 Agreement has not been signed and, therefore, with no permission in place, there can be no guarantee that 160 dwellings will be delivered within the timescales assumed by the Council.
 - Grappenhall Heys (Remainder), Land South of Astor Drive, East of Lichfield Avenue and South of Witherwin Avenue, Grappenhall Heys (SHLAA Reference 1646):
 - Outline planning permission for up to 400 dwellings was approved in January 2018 (application reference 2017/29929).
 - A reserved matters application for the development of 58 dwellings and associated development within Phase 1a was approved in March 2020 (reference 2019/36202).
 - A reserved matters application for the development of 114 dwellings and associated development within Phase 1b was approved in March 2020 (reference 2019/36204).
 - A reserved matters application for the remaining 228 units (reference 2021/38524) has been approved.
 - However, we have reservations over the rate of delivery and we do not consider it is realistic that the full site capacity will come forward in the first five year period.

- Omega (Remainder), Zones 3-6, Omega South, Warrington, WA5 (SHLAA Reference 2135):
 - Outline planning permission for up to 1,100 dwellings (and a mixed-use zone) was approved in June 2016, subject to a S106 Agreement (reference 2015/26469).
 - A reserved matters application for the development of 200 dwellings with associated landscape measures and infrastructure was approved in April 2017 (Omega Zone 6 Phase 1, reference 2017/29537).
 - A reserved matters application for the development of 158 dwellings and associated works was approved in November 2017 (Omega Zone 6 Phase 2, reference 2017/30837).
 - A reserved matters application for the development of 86 dwellings and associated works was approved in July 2018 (Omega Zone 6 Phase 3, reference 2018/32124).
 - Reserved Matters for Phase 3B comprising 145 units has also been approved (reference 2020/38148).
 - No reserved matters application has been submitted for the remaining dwellings and there is no evidence of a planning performance agreement detailing the timescale for approval of further reserved matters.
 - We have significant reservations over the delivery timescales and build out rates associated with the various phases of this site, both in terms of dwellings with reserved matters and the remainder of the site capacity where no reserved matters application has been made or approved.

- Blackburn Arms Public House, Orford Green, Orford, Warrington, WA2 8PL (SHLAA Reference 3474):
 - The SHLAA states that 59 dwellings will be developable in 2027/28.
 - Full planning permission was sought for demolition of the existing public house and construction of 63 affordable retirement units and two bungalows (reference 2019/34688). The application was withdrawn in June 2019.
 - Full planning permission was sought for the demolition of the existing public house and construction of 52 affordable retirement units (reference 2019/35678). The application was refused in March 2020 and went to appeal, which was dismissed in February 2021:
 - (Appeal reference: APP/M0655/W/20/3255990). The Inspector concluded that the main issues were the effect of the proposal on (i) the character and appearance of the area; (ii) the provision of community facilities and local services, in particular through the loss of a public house (the public house was listed relatively recently as an Asset of Community Value [ACV]); (iii) highway safety and the free flow of traffic by way of the traffic generation and the parking provision; and (iv) flood risk.
 - A revised application for residential development would not be able to overcome the issue concerning the loss of an ACV.
 - We have serious doubts as to whether any of these dwellings will come forward.

- New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, WA1 2NH (SHLAA Reference 2673a):
 - We are not aware of any planning application for residential development at this site.
 - Offices are located on-site.
 - The SHLAA states that the site is considered developable within the medium term onwards (6-10 years), namely within after 2025/26.
 - The assumed supply of 203 dwellings from this site is therefore questionable and unlikely to materialise within the first five-year period.

6.1.4 We emphasise that the examples highlighted above represent a small snapshot from our analysis, which we may refer to at subsequent stages of the Local Plan making process.

These examples demonstrate, however, that the stated supply from those sites alone appears to be ambitious. Further detailed scrutiny of the anticipated supply is likely to highlight other sites where housing delivery is likely to be slower than predicted, or in some cases will not come forward at all.

- 6.1.5 Taking account of the above, we consider that there is a demonstrable need for the Council to identify additional land for allocation to ensure that the emerging Local Plan meets its housing needs in full and can be found sound. As we have explained in detail, the Rowland Homes site at Waterworks Lane in Winwick represents a suitable site to help meet such housing needs.

7 Summary

- 7.1.1 Our submission demonstrates that the proposed allocation site, 'Land to the north of Winwick', is significantly more constrained than the Rowland Homes site. The proposed allocation site:
- is significantly more sensitive in landscape and visual terms than the Rowland Homes site, being at a higher elevation, with much weaker boundaries, and affected by various other constraints that do not affect our client's site;
 - is devoid of hedgerow vegetation along its northern boundary, which is delineated by a post and wire fence, in contrast to the Rowland Homes site, the northern boundary of which is defined by an existing hedgerow;
 - is constrained by existing pylon structures and overhead power lines, again in contrast to the Rowland Homes site where a high-quality residential scheme can be delivered without having to split the site into two distinct sections to avoid a no-build zone;
 - protrudes much further (130 metres) into the countryside than the Rowland Homes site, which extends no further north than the current development pattern established by the residential properties to the west off Green Lane Close and Squires Gardens, and is highly enclosed on all sides by existing development, trees/vegetation and roads; and
 - is situated to the immediate east of a Registered Battlefield, which therefore represents a heritage constraint to development at the site.
- 7.1.2 Regarding the latter point above, the Council's 'Heritage Impact Assessment' document of August 2021 confirms that development at the proposed allocation site would have a moderate impact on the significance of the Battlefield and its rural setting. Whilst the report therefore recommends that mitigation measures should be incorporated into any development scheme at the proposed allocation site, it would clearly be more logical to meet Winwick's identified housing requirement at the Rowland Homes site and thereby obviate any potential for harm to the Registered Battlefield. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF places Registered Battlefields within the list of '*assets of the highest significance*', and also advises that:
- 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.'*
- 7.1.3 The Council's evidence base confirms that the proposed allocation site is more constrained than our client's site, and that the proposed allocation site is incapable of accommodating the 'minimum of 130 homes' which the Local Plan identifies for Winwick.
- 7.1.4 For the reasons outlined above and in greater detail in the body of our submission, we are therefore bemused to find that the proposed allocation site continues to be identified within the draft Local Plan in preference to our client's site, despite the documented constraints which render the site a less deliverable and appropriate opportunity for residential use than the Rowland Homes site.
- 7.1.5 In our assessment, the Council's intention to release 'Land to the north of Winwick' in preference to the Rowland Homes site does not satisfy the stringent requirements for Green Belt release summarised within Section 3 of our report, thereby bringing into question the soundness of this aspect of the plan. We therefore submit that our client's site should be allocated instead of, or in addition to, the proposed allocation site under draft Policy OS6 of the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan in order to ensure that Winwick's identified growth requirements can be achieved.
- 7.1.6 We have also reviewed the sites that contribute towards the Council's stated supply, and it is clear that the assumed supply is ambitious and/or unlikely to be achieved in practice. Warrington Council should therefore identify additional land for allocation to ensure that the emerging Local Plan meets its housing needs in full and can be found sound.

**Appendix A Updated Development Statement,
Incorporating Illustrative Masterplan**

Land East of Waterworks Lane, Winwick Rowland Homes Development Statement





Contents Page



Table of Contents

- Site Location and Description..... 1
- Waterworks Lane Location Plan..... 2
- Introduction to the Site..... 3
- Introduction to Rowland Homes..... 4
- Planning..... 5
- Settlement..... 6
- Settlement (continued)..... 7
- Townscape & Existing Housing Stock..... 8
- Townscape & Existing Housing Stock (Central Winwick/ Golborne Road).. 9
- Townscape & Existing Housing Stock (Spire Gardens/ Myddleton Lane).. 10
- Townscape & Existing Housing Stock (Faringdon Road/ Winwick Park).... 11
- Proposed Scheme and Design Parameters..... 12
- Concept and Parameters Plan..... 13
- Development Outcomes and Conclusions..... 14

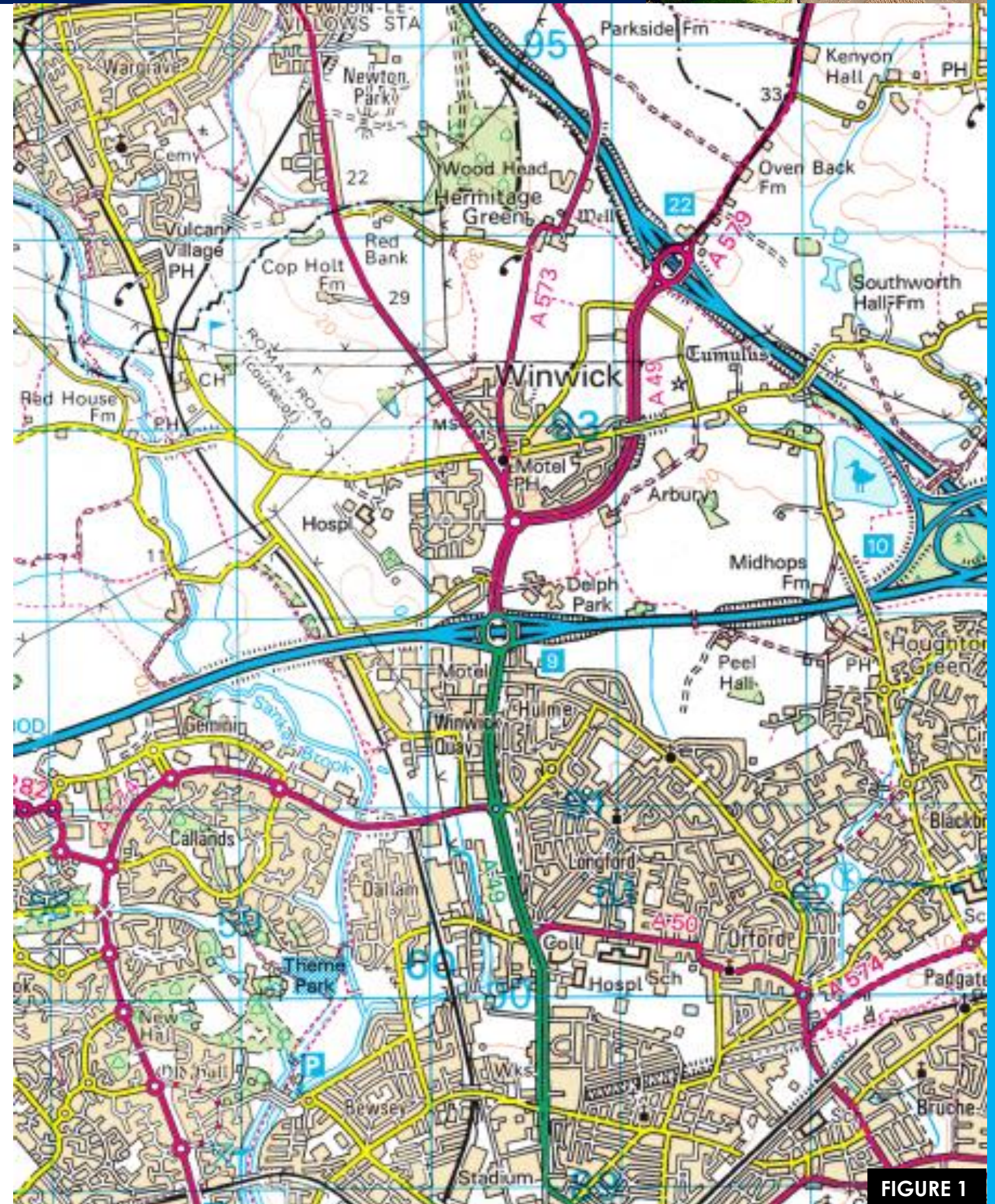


FIGURE 1



Site Location and Description



Land East of Waterworks Lane, Winwick

Site

As indicated by Figure 2, the site comprises approximately 8.8 hectares of land located immediately adjacent to existing north eastern settlement boundary of Winwick. The site is surrounded to the south, south-west and west by existing built development, and it is enclosed to the west and east by existing roads which are lined by trees. The site comprises a single field containing no vegetation or other physical features of interest, and it is wholly controlled by Rowland Homes.

Surrounding Area

- **North** – The northern site boundary is formed by a low-level hedgerow, beyond which is a large agricultural field, an existing collection of farm buildings and a farm shop.
- **East** – The eastern site boundary is formed by a well-established buffer of trees which separates the site from the A49, beyond which is open countryside.
- **South** – the southern site boundary is formed by existing properties along Myddleton Lane, beyond which lies a concentration of suburban style residential development.
- **West** – the south-western boundary is formed by existing properties along Ilex Avenue. Waterworks Lane runs along the full extent of the north-western boundary, beyond which is Winwick Water Treatment works. Overhead power lines along the north west boundary do not encroach onto the main body of the site.

Location

The site is adjacent to the north-eastern edge of Winwick, within the Borough of Warrington, 1.2km north east of junction 22 of the M62 motorway. The site is situated in a sustainable location and the Council's Site Assessment Proformas document confirms that it is suitable for residential use. Located within easy walking distance of the village centre, approximately 300m to the south west, residents can take full advantage of the following services and facilities:

- Winwick CE Primary School and Winwick Leisure Centre: 350m to the south west.
- The local shop (Thoroughgoods) and Highfield farm shop are located 350m to the south west and 200m to the north of the site, respectively.
- The local pub, The Swan, is located approximately 500m to the south west; and
- St Oswald C of E Church, approximately 450m to the south west of the site.

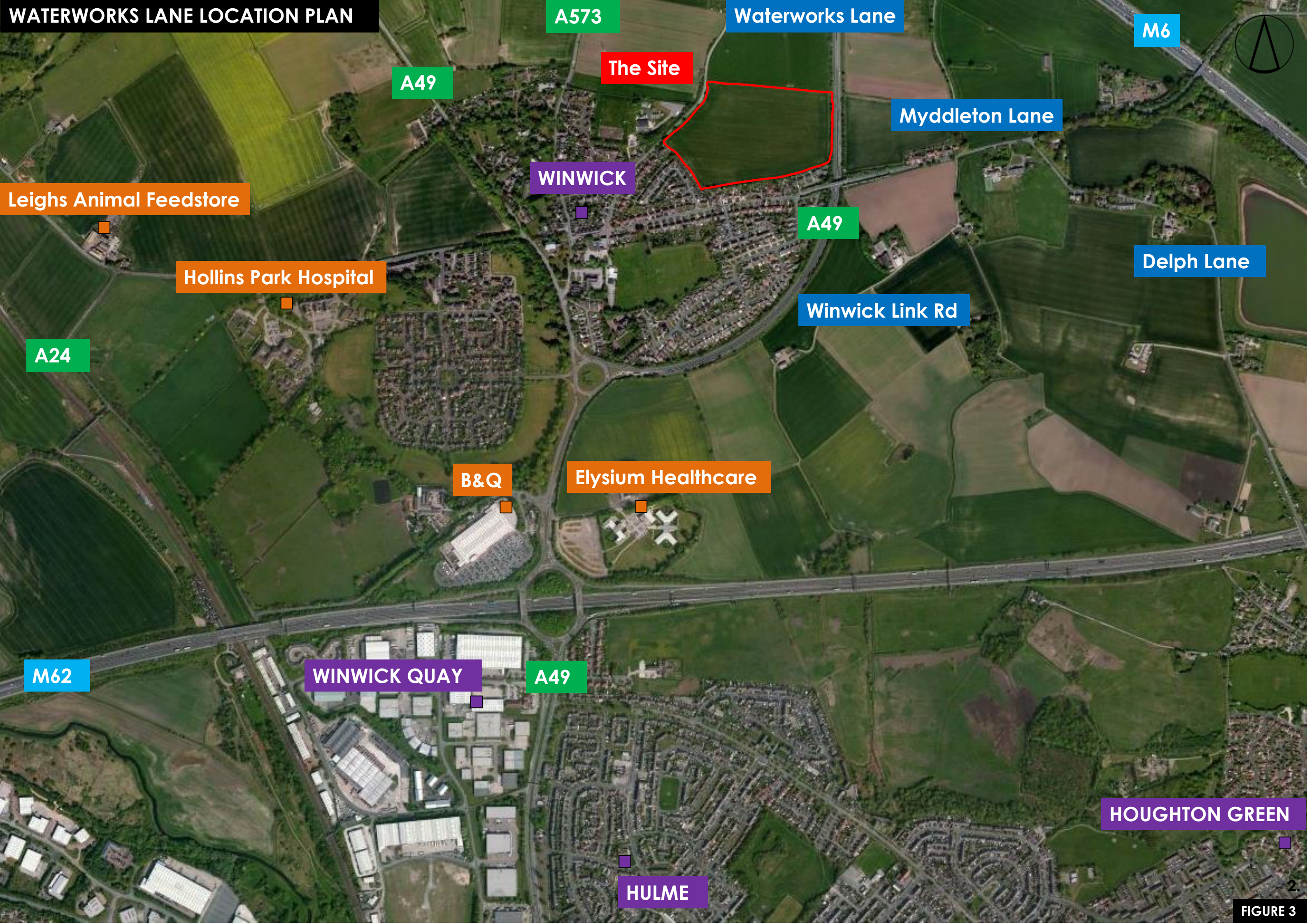
Transport

Well served by public transport, the site is located 500m from two bus stops at Ilex Avenue to the south and the Post Office to the south west, served by route 19, which provides a regular daily service to Warrington, Leigh and Culcheth. Additionally, a bus stop 550m west of the site, at Newton Road – the St Oswald Church stop – provides access to routes 22 and 22E, which offer regular daily services to Warrington, Bruntwood, Earlestown and Vulcan Village. Within easily accessible cycling distance, Newton-le-Willows railway station is located approximately 3.2km to the north west of the site, from which regular daily services to Warrington Bank Quay, Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Victoria and Liverpool Lime Street operate.



FIGURE 2

WATERWORKS LANE LOCATION PLAN



A573

Waterworks Lane

M6



A49

The Site

Myddleton Lane

Leighs Animal Feedstore

WINWICK

A49

Delph Lane

Hollins Park Hospital

Winwick Link Rd

A24

B&Q

Elysium Healthcare

M62

WINWICK QUAY

A49

HOUGHTON GREEN

HULME

FIGURE 3



Introduction to the Site



Land at Waterworks Lane, Winwick

The subject site at Waterworks Lane, Winwick is within the ownership of a single landowner. Rowland Homes confirms its active interest in the site and that the landowner is supportive of a residential development scheme at the site. Rowland Homes is a long-established regional house-builder with a track record of delivering new, good quality family homes in the area, and is now actively promoting the 8.8 ha site for development. The site is therefore deliverable in the short term.

The site stands out as a suitable candidate to help meet Warrington's future housing requirements due to:

- The sustainable location adjacent to existing built development on the north eastern edge of Winwick, close to various services and facilities.
- No material impact upon the key purposes of the Green Belt, with potential to create a new permanent defensible boundary along the site's northern edge.
- A logical rounding-off of the settlement, with the proposed development extending no further north than the current development pattern established by the residential properties to the west off Green Lane Close, and enclosed on all sides by existing development, trees/vegetation and roads.

Rowland Homes has the necessary skills and knowledge required to deliver the development at Waterworks Lane. Since 1993, Rowland Homes has been successfully developing high quality homes across the North West. Rowland Homes has appointed Stantec, Mode Transport, Envirotech and Environmental Associates to take account of the key technical constraints including accessibility, landscape and visual impact. This Development Statement contains an Illustrative Masterplan that demonstrates the site's suitability for residential development.

Figure 3 clearly shows how well-located the Rowland Homes site is, immediately adjacent to the existing built-up area of Winwick. The site is enclosed by the A49 (Winwick Link Road) to the east and Waterworks Lane to the west. The site is not constrained by any ransom strips or covenants, and so there is nothing to prevent the site from coming forward in the very early years of the Local Plan period. The site is available, suitable and achievable.

This document follows on from the representations submitted to the consultation on the 'Proposed Submission' version of the emerging Local Plan produced by PBA/Stantec (June 2019), which was accompanied by documents entitled 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal' (PBA/Stantec), 'Ecological Appraisal' (Envirotech), 'Transport Assessment' (Mode Transport) and 'Concept and Parameters Plan' (Environmental Associates).

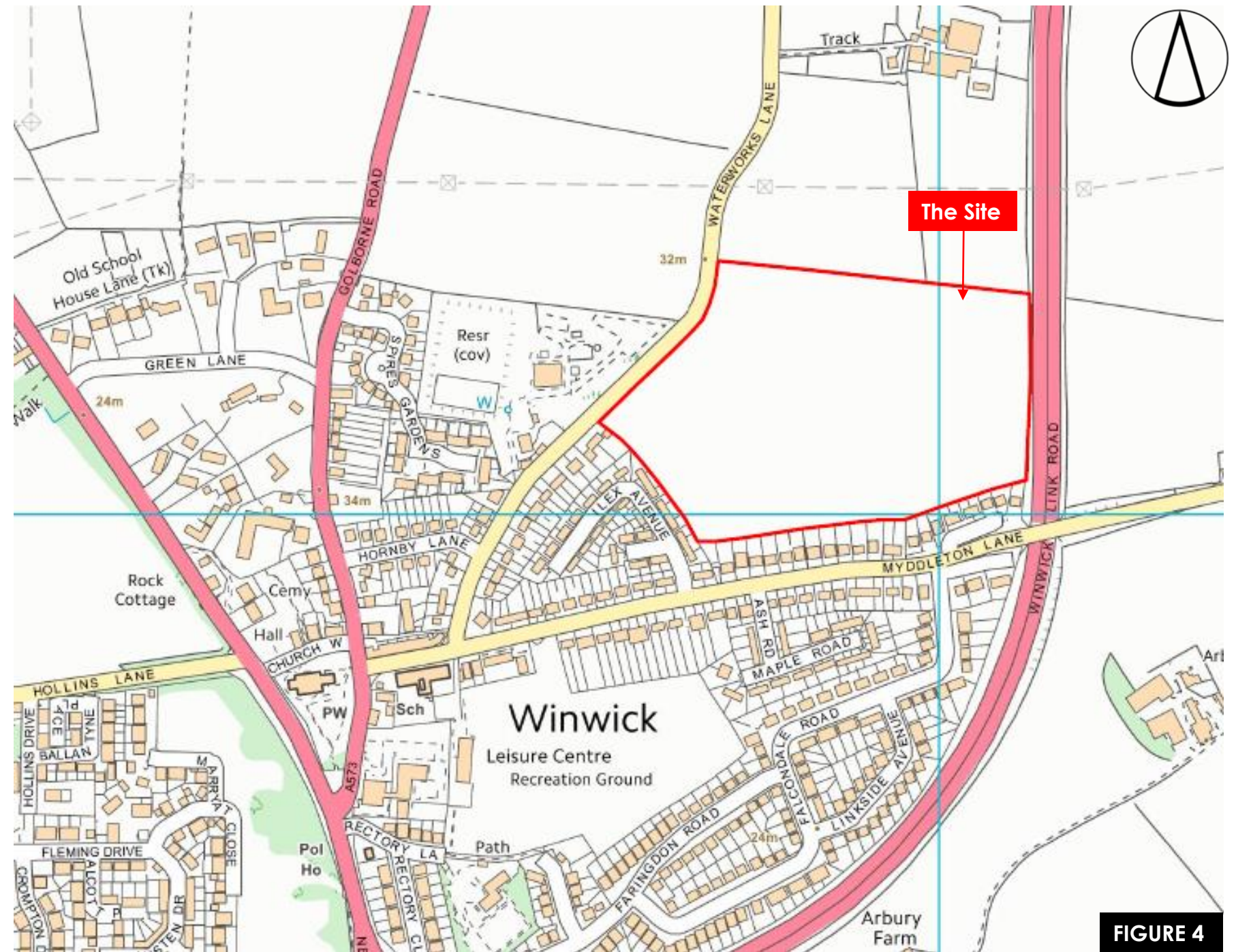


FIGURE 4

This Development Statement has been prepared by Rowland Homes and sets out our plans for a logical rounding-off of Winwick. The Waterworks Lane site is sustainably located and provides an excellent opportunity to help Warrington Borough Council achieve its future housing growth requirements.



Introduction to Rowland Homes



About Rowland

Independently owned and dedicated to creating stylish developments, Rowland has a strong track record in house design, construction and the creation of vibrant communities, spanning more than 25 years. At Rowland, we believe in providing a varied portfolio of traditional, modern and contemporary family homes in a range of popular locations throughout the North West. The environments that we create may vary in shape and size, but our commitment to quality means that all are built to the same exacting standards. Externally, Rowland homes incorporate eye-catching design features, whilst careful interior planning ensures that we maximise every square metre of available living space.



Creating Quality Environments

The latest heating, glazing and insulation products combine optimum comfort with minimal maintenance, in keeping with today's busy lifestyles. Our commitment to quality doesn't stop inside the home though. Time and careful planning go into the layout of each development to create neighbourhoods, blending the development and areas of public open space into the local environment in a complementary and sympathetic manner. We are committed to working with both public and private sector landowners to deliver high quality family housing schemes in keeping with local character. Rowland Homes has been building new homes as a privately owned company based in South Ribble for more than 25 years.

Corporate Capability

All of Rowland's developments are managed from our Farington House office in Leyland where all Departments are based including:

- CEO
- Managing Director
- Commercial Department
- Construction Department
- Finance Department
- Land Department
- Sales Department
- Technical Department



Farington House

Our Sales Team and Site Managers are based across our operational sites and rotate locations as required. We have a large network of sub-consultants and sub-contractors that have a proven track record of contributing to the successful delivery of residential schemes.





Warrington Emerging Local Plan Review

Once adopted, the new Local Plan will shape, guide and influence how Warrington develops over the next 18 years. It is important that sufficient housing sites are released in order to deliver balanced and inclusive growth to ensure deliverability and a degree of choice in delivery, and so that the Green Belt boundary can endure beyond the plan period.

Section 3.4 of the latest draft explains that the Council's assessments have identified insufficient development opportunities to meet the stated need for new housing across Warrington. The Council considers that sources within the urban area are capable of delivering around 11,800 new homes over the plan period, which leaves a requirement to release Green Belt land for around 4,500 homes.

Stantec's analysis of the sources that contribute to the Council's stated supply demonstrates that the supply assumptions are ambitious. We therefore believe that there is a demonstrable need for the Council to identify additional land for allocation to ensure that the emerging Local Plan meets its housing needs in full and can be found sound. The Rowland Homes site at Waterworks Lane in Winwick represents a suitable site to help meet such housing needs.

WARRINGTON
UPDATED
PROPOSED
SUBMISSION
VERSION
LOCAL PLAN

2021 - 2038

SEPTEMBER 2021



Landscape and Visual Appraisal (PBA/Stantec)

As noted in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, when compared to other sites, the land east of Waterworks Lane contains fewer features that contribute towards the landscape setting, is less visually prominent, contains fewer important views and can be more easily mitigated in terms of landscape.

The site has moderate-low visibility and prominence, no key or important views, and moderate-high potential for appropriate and successful landscape mitigation. Additionally, the site is screened by existing vegetation and extends no further north than the current development pattern established by the residential properties to the west off Green Lane Close.

The site is enclosed to the east, south and west by existing development and roads, and the existing trees/hedgerow to the north can be supplemented to create dense woodland boundary. The proposed residential scheme can therefore be readily accommodated without leading to undue harm to landscape character, views and visual amenity.

Ecological Appraisal (Envirotech)

The Ecological Appraisal concludes that there is no evidence of any specifically protected species at the site or in the surrounding areas which could negatively be affected by development at the site following the mitigation proposed. Existing trees and hedges along the site boundaries are to be retained and enhanced, whereas the vegetation has a low significance to the local area and is to be cleared. Protecting trees on the site boundary and providing landscaping promotes structural diversity at the ground level and within the canopy encouraging biodiversity. In this respect contractors are to remain observant for protected species and all nesting birds, and if any species are found during construction, all site works are to cease until further ecological advice has been sought. Construction may continue once a detailed method statement and programme of mitigation measures has been prepared and implemented accordingly.

Planning Representation (Stantec)

Warrington Borough Council's Site Assessment Proformas document confirms that the land East of Waterworks Lane, Winwick is well-located in relation public transport and community services, is not affected by contamination, pylons or overhead cables, and is clearly demarcated by an established field boundary hedgerow. The document concludes that the site is suitable for residential use. Compared to the other sites that surround Winwick – including sites adjacent to the 1648 Registered Battlefield – it is clear that the Rowland Homes site is the least constrained and therefore should be removed from the Green Belt and taken forward as a housing allocation in Warrington's Local Plan.

Transport Assessment (Mode Transport)

The site will be accessed via Waterworks Lane, and the site can comfortably accommodate between 130 and 150 dwellings, without adverse impacts to traffic flows along Waterworks Lane and the surrounding area. A priority junction is proposed, subject to confirmation by junction capacity analysis. Streetlighting will be implemented on Waterworks Lane along the western boundary

Bus stops at Myddleton Lane provide a half-hourly and hour service via the no.19 bus route to Warrington and Leigh. To ensure that the site is accessible by sustainable modes, connection by walking and cycling will be provided to local amenities including a new 3m wide footway along the site frontage.

Concept and Parameters Plans (Environmental Associates)

The Concept and Parameters Plans (Figure 14) demonstrate ways of achieving a high-quality development of family homes at the Waterworks Lane site, which is characterised by strong, permanent boundaries on all sides. The current green setting will be enhanced by a woodland buffer on the northern and eastern boundary, maintaining and enhancing the current site boundary.



Settlement



Settlement and Connectivity

The site is located immediately to the north east of Winwick adjacent to the existing settlement boundary. Sustainably situated within easy walking distance of Winwick Village Centre, the Rowland Homes site is the most appropriate location to meet Winwick housing needs sustainably.

The site is well connected to surrounding settlements by frequent bus routes that serve Warrington, Leigh, Culcheth, Bruntwood, Earlestown and Vulcan Village. Winwick has a wide range of facilities, including a local shop, a leisure centre, a primary school and a church, and the frequent public transport services provide access to a much wider range of employment, retail and leisure opportunities. Winwick is located close to numerous major settlements in the North West of England which provide a myriad of employment, leisure and entertainment opportunities, situated only 20 miles from Liverpool, 17 miles from Manchester, 5 miles from Warrington and 26 miles from Chester.



FIGURE 5

Transport Connections

The site is accessible from Waterworks Lane, from which the A49 (Newton Road) can easily be accessed, connecting the site to the Winwick Link Road, the M6 and the M62. The site is strategically positioned, within a commutable distance of major cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. Furthermore, sustainable transport modes can be easily accessed from the site including bus stops/services on Newton Road, Myddleton Lane and Hollins Lane from which regular bus services 22, 360, 329 and 19 can be used to access Newton-le-Willows to the north and Warrington Town Centre through during the day, and services 22E and 24E link Winwick to Newton-le-Willows and Warrington until 11pm.

Onward regional and national connections are available using a bus connection to Warrington Station available every 12 minutes from St Oswald Church. This provides national rail network links demonstrating that the site is situated in a sustainable location. The site is within easy walking distance of services within the settlement of Winwick, including the Swan Public House, St Oswald CofE Church, Winwick Cof E Primary School, Winwick Leisure Centre and additional amenities in the village centre. International and domestic flights are available from Manchester Airport, the third biggest airport in the UK and only 18 miles from the site, and accessible within 20 minutes by car. Alternatively, Liverpool John Lennon Airport is also 18 miles from the site and provides flights to an array of destinations.

Warrington Central Station



Amenities

Services and facilities located in the village include:

- The Swan Public House
- St Oswald CofE Church
- Winwick CofE Primary School
- Winwick Leisure Centre
- Hollins Park Hospital
- The Cheshire Day Nursery
- Premier Inn
- Thorougoods Convenience Store
- B&Q
- St Oswalds House Care Home
- Pampa Hair and Beauty

1. The Swan Public House



2. St Oswald CofE Church



3. Winwick CofE Primary School



4. Winwick Leisure Centre



5. Hollins Park Hospital





Settlement cont.



6. Winwick Hospital



7. Premier Inn



8. B&Q

Winwick Facilities – Visual Layout Plan



FIGURE 6



9. St Oswalds House Care Home



9. Cheshire Day Nursery



10. Church Grounds



Townscape & Existing Housing Stock



Settlement Character

The expansion of Winwick has occurred over a series of phases, which is reflected in the various characters of properties in the village. Subsequently the settlement can be divided into separate, well-defined character areas as defined in Figure 7.

Central Winwick: Characterised by community facilities and amenities, residential properties in the centre of Winwick consists of traditional red brick terraced cottages which have been replicated in the form of both one- and two-storey properties to the west.

Golborne Road: Constituting the main village high street, properties along this road comprise bespoke designed large detached and semi-detached properties with generous garden spaces.

Spire Gardens: Comprising a varied mix of newly built red brick large detached, semi-detached, mews and apartment style properties in an attractive residential estate, this character area is comparable to previous Rowland Homes developments.

Myddleton Lane: Characterised by large semi detached properties, this character area presents a variety of building vernaculars including Victorian red brick and areas of 1950s and 1960s Post-War.

Faringdon Road: Properties in this area are characterised by bungalow-style brown/red brick and cladded properties with grey roof tiles, some of which have been extended into the attic. The southern boundary of this character area is formed by the Winwick Link Road.

Winwick Park: Located west of Newton Road, Winwick Park is a modern housing estate characterised by a mix of housing types including 3, 4 and 5 bedroom detached and semi-detached houses. Taking inspiration from the Georgian architectural vernacular displayed by historic dwellings in the settlement, aesthetically these properties demonstrate a mix of red-brick, render and mock Tudor features. Built on the former Winwick Hospital, the layout of this scheme takes inspiration from the former hospital buildings which were closed in 1997. The former hospital entrance and recreational grounds have been retained, providing a large publicly assessable park area that surrounds the development.

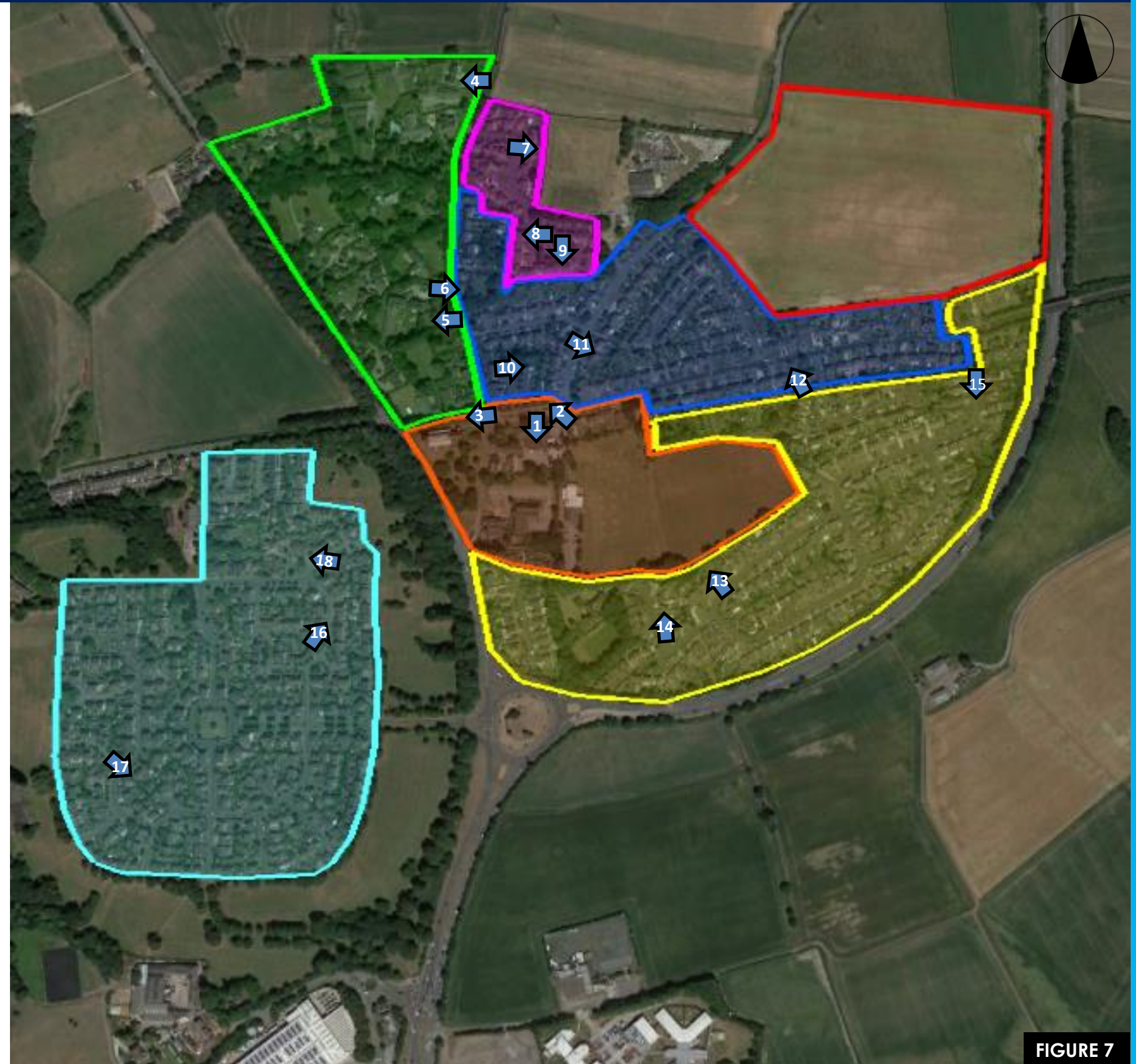


FIGURE 7



Townscape and Existing Housing Stock



Central Winwick



FIGURE 8

1. Myddleton Lane



2. Waterworks Lane



3. Myddleton Lane



Constituting the historic heart of the settlement, central Winwick is characterised by early 1800s agricultural workers' red brick cottages and farmhouses fronting Myddleton Lane and separated by traditional hedgerow boundaries. The majority of the settlement's services and amenities are located in this character area.

Golborne Road



FIGURE 9

4. Apple Garth



5. Golborne Road



6. Hornby Lane



Golborne Road is the main village high street and displays a variety of properties including traditional detached farm cottages followed by new housing development to the north situated on generous plots with outlooks across the open countryside.



Townscape & Existing Housing Stock



Spire Gardens



FIGURE 10

7. Detached Spire Gardens



8. Mews Spire Gardens



9. Apartments Spire Gardens



New housing development at Spire Gardens is characterised by large detached and semi-detached properties with grey roof tiles and a variety of red brick and render facades. This character area also incorporates flats and mews properties to ensure that the development is accessible to a variety of types and tenures.

Myddleton Lane



FIGURE 11

10. Pilgrim Close



11. Waterworks Lane



12. Myddleton Lane



Located to the south and west of the Rowland Homes site is an area of 1950s and 1960s post-War semi-detached housing characterised by bay windows and attached single garages. Additionally, a small modern development of semi-detached properties is located within this character area.



Townscape & Existing Housing Stock



Faringdon Road



FIGURE 12

13. Faringdon Road Road



14. Faringdon Road



15. Falcondale Road



Served off Faringdon Road, the area to the south of the site is characterised by bungalow-style housing developed in the 1970s. These properties are typically constructed of red and brown brick, grey roof tiles and weatherboard cladding. Although generally one storey in height, this area occasionally displays 2 storey properties and some dwellings that have been extended into the attic space. Each plot has a generously sized front garden and most have either an integral or attached garage.

Winwick Park



FIGURE 13

16. Austen Drive



17. Browning Drive



18. Marryat Close



Built on the former site of the Winwick Hospital mental asylum, to the south west of the site is a modern medium density residential estate characterised by a mix of housing styles including large 4-5 bedroom detached and semi-detached dwellings. The layout of this development takes inspiration from the former layout of the hospital buildings and has been designed in a contemporary Georgian architectural style and are surrounded by grounds which form a large public park.



Proposed Scheme and Design Parameters



Key Design Principles

The proposed development at the Rowland Homes site to the east of Waterworks Lane reflects the following design principles:

- Establishment of a sense of place that encourages biodiversity, the natural environment and the site's character, through an integrated web of green infrastructure.
- Development of aspirational and superior quality housing that generates the formation of a sustainable community, reflecting the existing settlement and positively responding to the site's geographical setting.
- Creation of an urban location that promotes accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists through the development of linkages to community infrastructure, local amenities and existing residential areas within the settlement.
- Provision of a variety of housetypes that reflects the current and future generations housing requirements of residents living in Winwick, whilst also responding to the existing type, size and density of existing residential development within the settlement.
- Designation of spaces for recreation amenity on site to ensure residents have easy access to spaces for leisure and relaxation, improving quality of life.

Quantum of Development

Reflecting the site's location and responding to Winwick's housing requirements within the emerging Local Plan period, we anticipate that the site is suitable to accommodate approximately 130 dwellings, enclosed to the north and east by densely planted boundaries.

We believe this quantum of development appropriately reflects the character and location of the site in terms of the varied array of development densities displayed by existing residential development in Winwick.

The key design principles have been integrated and used to inform the design of a Concept Masterplan which also takes account of opportunities and site constraints.

Design Parameters

The Rowland Homes site to the east of Waterworks Lane in Winwick presents a multitude of opportunities that require consideration, as well as a limited number of constraints. Reflected in the Concept and Parameter Plan (Figure 14), this takes account of the Design Parameters outlined below:

- **Enhanced northern site boundary woodland buffer** to provide a greater level of screening.
- **New woodland eastern site boundary buffer** to provide screening and mitigate noise from Winwick Link Road.
- **Vehicular access** to be provided from Waterworks Lane.
- **A wide range of housetypes** across the site, including affordable homes.
- **Pedestrian and cycle links** will connect the site to surrounding residential areas and local services and amenities.
- **Strategic tree planting and landscaping** along primary residential streets to maintain and enhance a sense of place.
- **Retained trees on western boundary** minimise the impact of development on Green Belt to the north of the site, which will be materially unaffected.
- Retain and incorporate **existing landscape features** into the development to bolster place making, increase biodiversity whilst also mitigating the impact upon the visual landscape.
- **Provision of formal and informal play areas** gives residents a space for leisure and recreation whilst also signifying a landmark to aid orientation.
- Where possible, properties will **front onto Green Spaces** to improve outlook and increase surveillance of shared spaces.





Concept and Parameters Plan





Illustrative Masterplan



The Concept and Parameters Plan has been used as the basis for an Illustrative Masterplan, which confirms that built development at the Rowland Homes site will extend no further north than the current development pattern established by the properties to the west off Green Lane Close and Squires Gardens. Furthermore, there is sufficient land available to create a new, densely planted woodland buffer along the northern boundary.





Development Outcomes and Conclusions



Development Outcomes

Representing a sustainable site, suitable for residential development, the Rowlands Homes site to the east of Waterworks Lane in Winwick is available for development and will facilitate the following outcomes in the very early part of the Local Plan period:

- Provision of new family homes to help meet Winwick's growth requirements.
- Provision of an array of housetypes suitable for the current and future generations living in Winwick and across Warrington.
- Release of a logical rounding-off site which is surround to the east, south and west by built development and permanent boundaries, and which will extend no further north than existing built development in Winwick, thereby having no material effect on the Green Belt.
- Safe and convenient access provision from Waterworks Lane.
- Enhancement and provision of new pedestrian and cycle links from the site to other parts of the settlement.
- New family homes at a site close to public transport links, thereby encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes.
- Retention and enhancement of existing landscape features to establish a strong sense of place.
- Implementation of a new, dense woodland buffer.
- On-site provision of recreational spaces including equipped play space for children.



Conclusion

This Development Statement demonstrates that the Rowland Homes site to the east of Waterworks Lane in Winwick is ideally placed to provide a modest yet meaningful development of family homes. The Council's own evidence confirms that the site is the least constrained and most suitable opportunity to meet Winwick's housing needs, without needing to extend the settlement further north than the current development pattern or adversely impacting on the 1648 Registered Battlefield to the west of Golborne Road.

We therefore conclude that the site should be allocated in the new Warrington Local Plan.

Next Stage

Rowland Homes is keen to deliver its proposed development of family homes within the next five years and commits to achieving a high-quality scheme that responds positively to local housing requirements.

Informed by the Concept and Parameters Plan and the related Illustrative Masterplan, Rowland Homes will deliver a scheme that sympathetically echoes the townscape and various character areas displayed in the village and surrounding settlement whilst not having any material effect on the retained Green Belt to the north.

Rowland Homes looks forward to progressing its proposals for residential development at its Waterworks Lane site in Winwick by working closely with Warrington Borough Council. We would welcome the opportunity to respond to any feedback and to discuss our proposals in further detail.



