

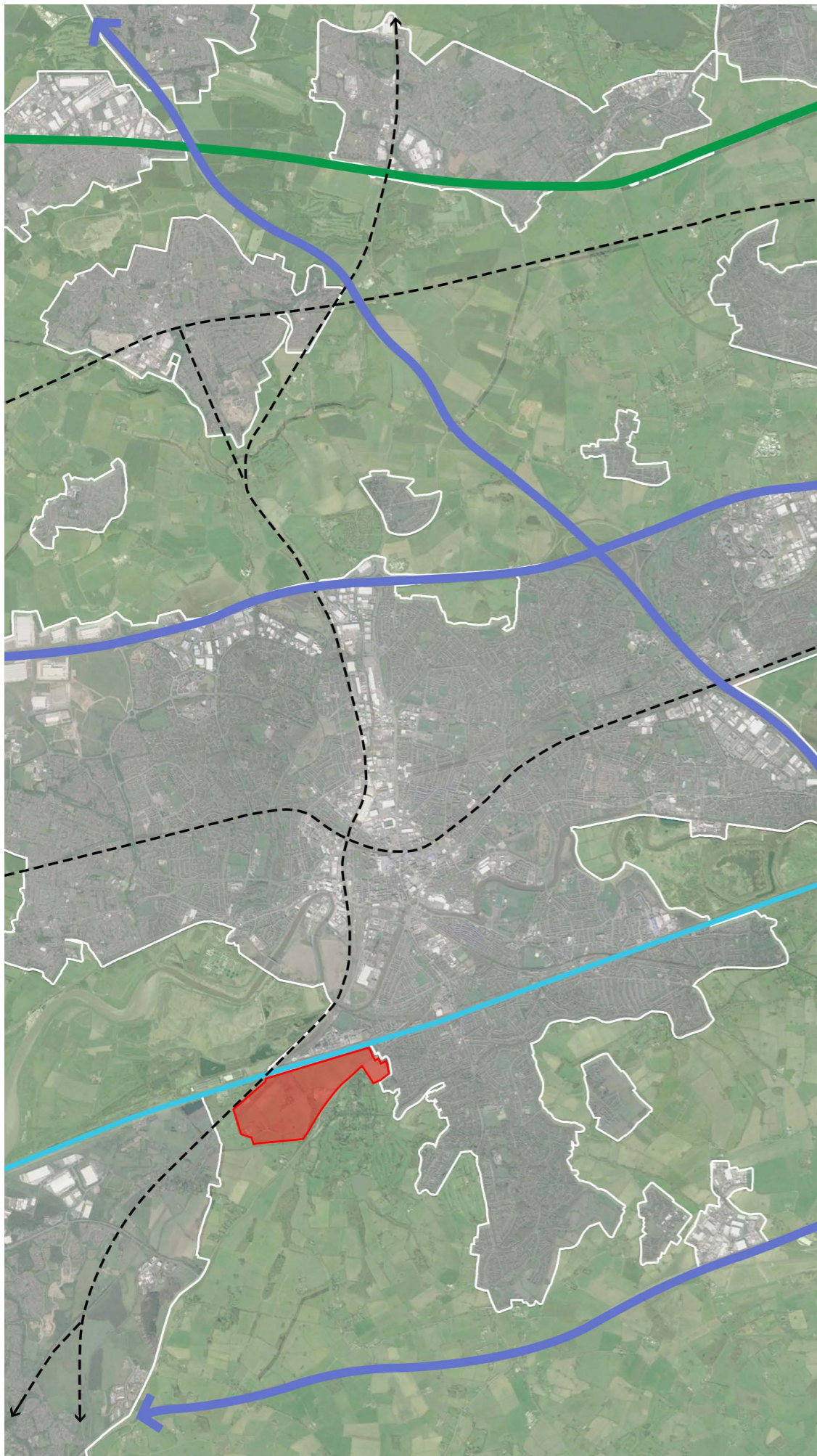


# South West Urban Extension Warrington

Landscape, Townscape and  
Visual Sensitivity Assessment  
and Development Appraisal

**RANDALL  
THORP**

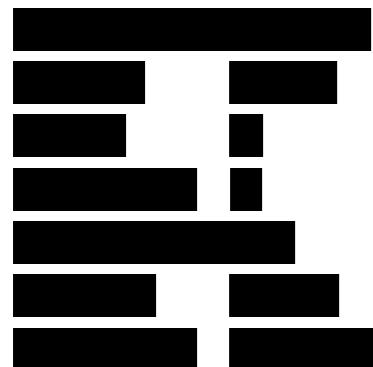
November 2021





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## Overview

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

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

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

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

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

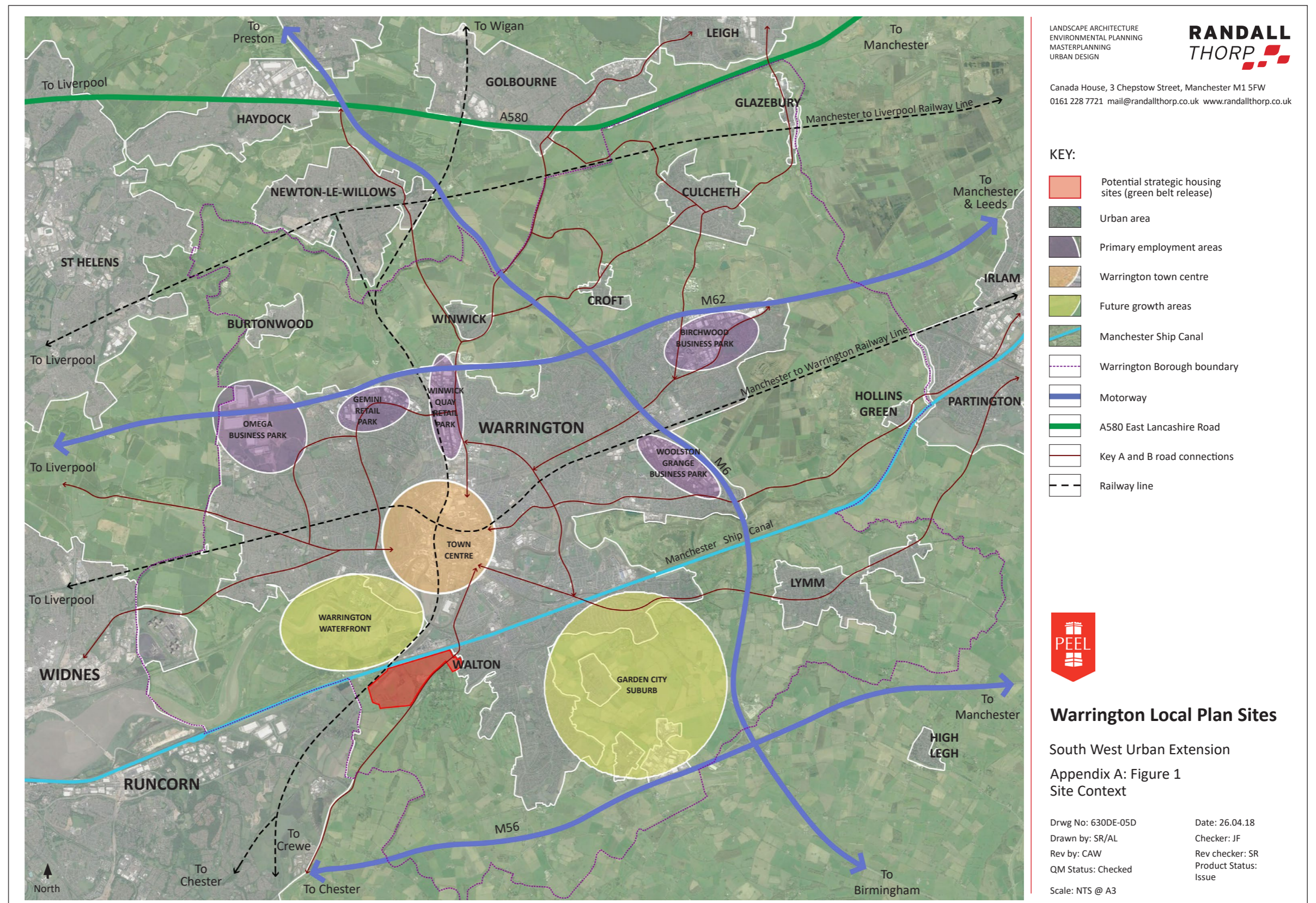


Figure 1 - Site Context

## Methodology

### Guidance

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

### Study area

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

### Approach

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

The principle objectives of the assessment are:

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

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

### Baseline studies

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

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

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

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

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

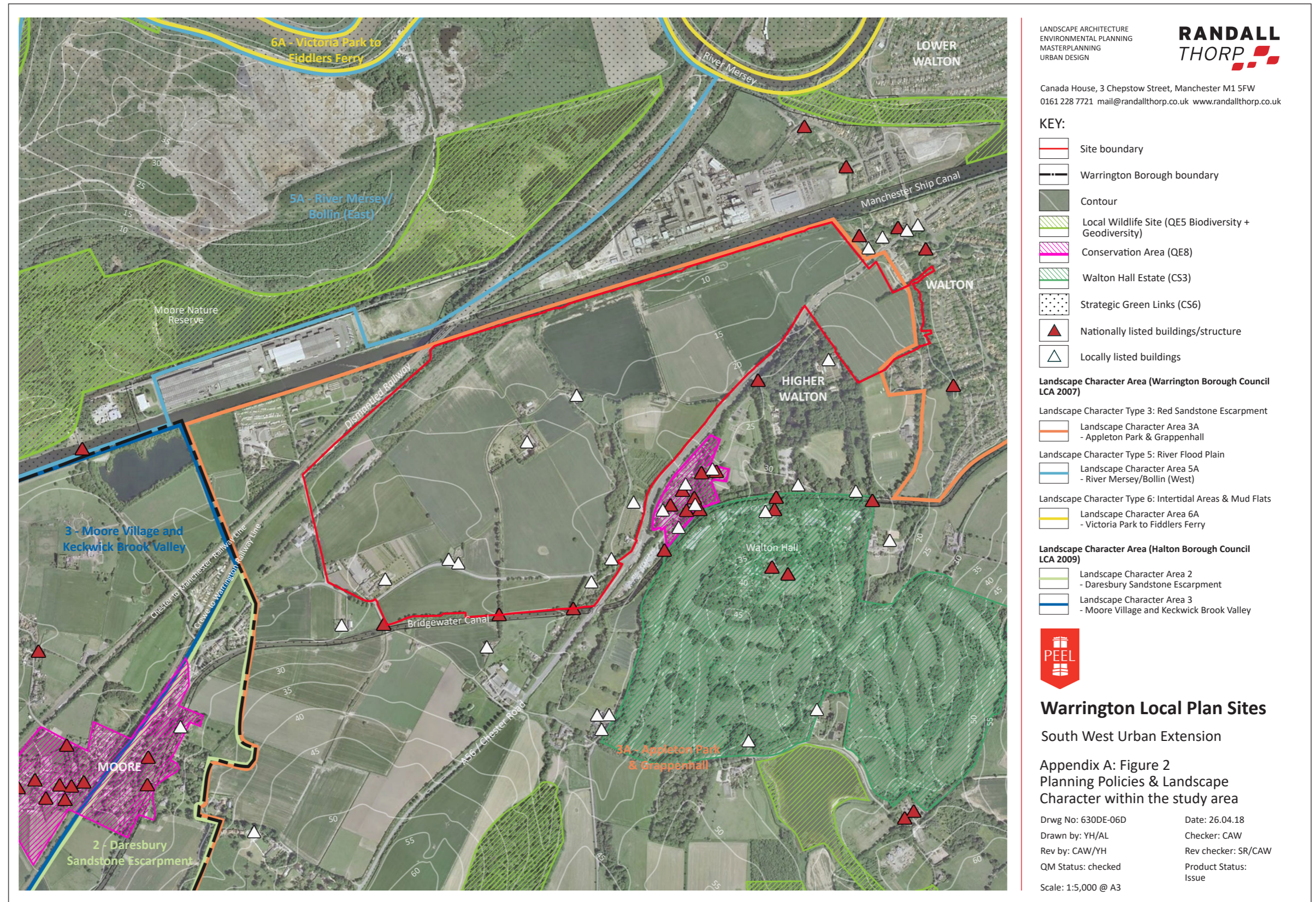


Figure 2 - Character within the study area

## Methodology for appraising the sensitivity of the landscape

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

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

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

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

### Box 5.1

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

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

Based on Swanwick and Land Use Consultants (2002)

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

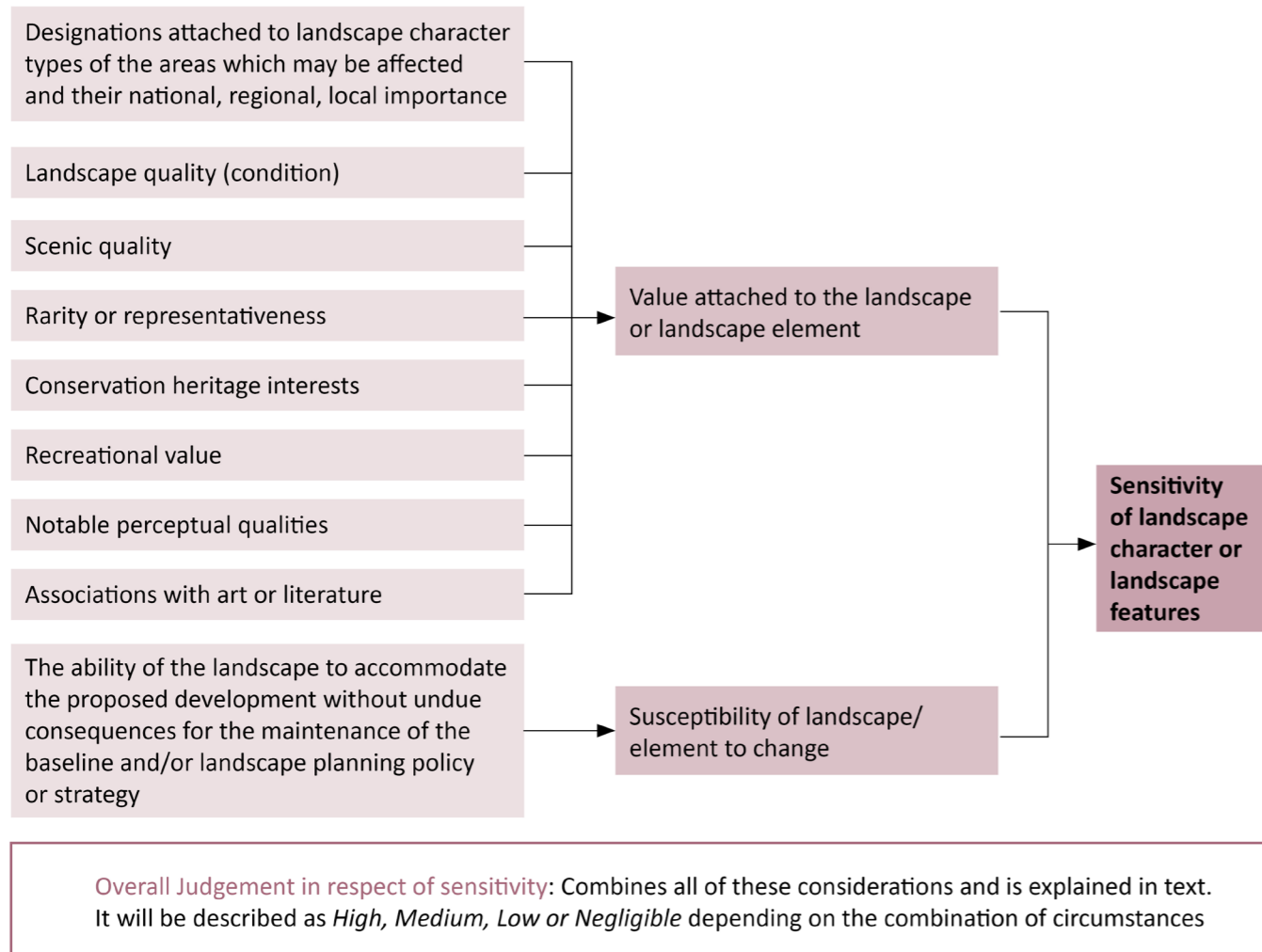
‘Susceptibility to change’ is defined at paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 which states:

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

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

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





**Methodology for evaluating the townscape character**

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

Townscape is described in GLVIA3, paragraph 2.7: *“the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.”*

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

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

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

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

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

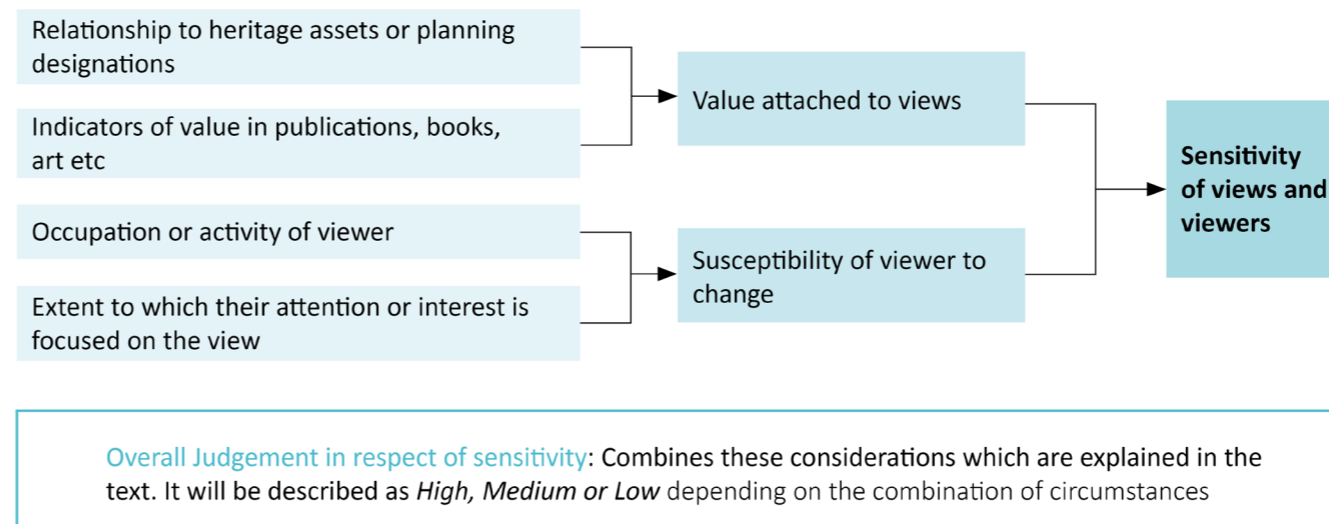
Visual sensitivity is a considered combination of the value attached to a view and the susceptibility of the viewer to change.

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

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

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

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



## Planning policy and published landscape character assessment

### National Planning Policy Framework

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Published landscape character assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Halton Landscape Character Area 2 – Daresbury Sandstone Escarpment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Landscape/townscape character and visual receptors

### Landscape character of the study area

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

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

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

### Townscape character of the study area

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

### Historical development

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

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

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

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

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

### Movement and connectivity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Urban structure and built form

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

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

#### Heritage assets

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

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

#### Green infrastructure and public realm

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

#### Tranquillity

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

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

#### Stakeholder engagement

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

#### Site description

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

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

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

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

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

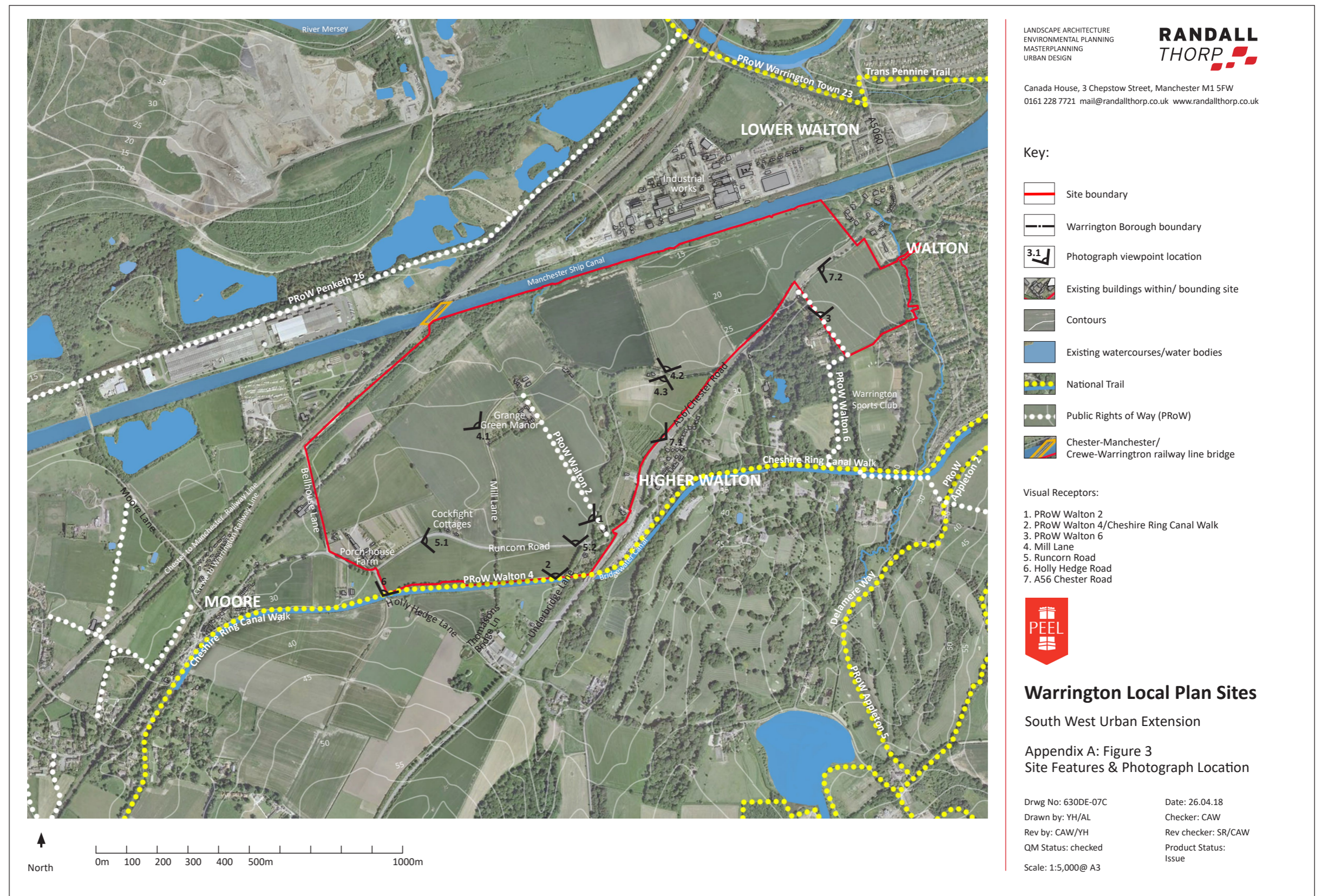


Figure 3 - Site Features & Photograph Location



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

#### Visual receptors and views of the site

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

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

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

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

#### Description of the visual receptors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5 Runcorn Road (Photographs 5.1 – 5.2)

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

## 6 Holly Hedge Lane (Photographs 6)

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

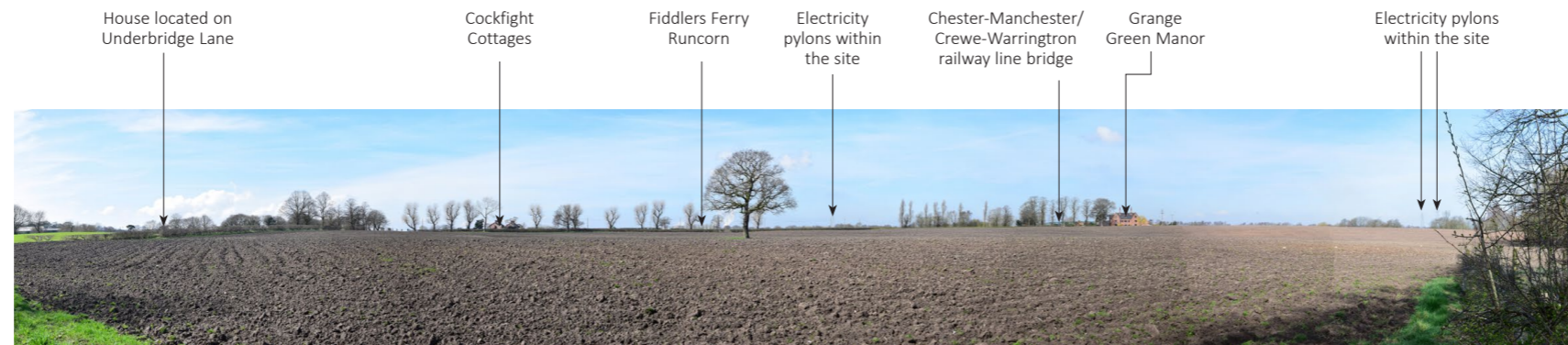
## 7 A56 Chester Road (Photographs 7)

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

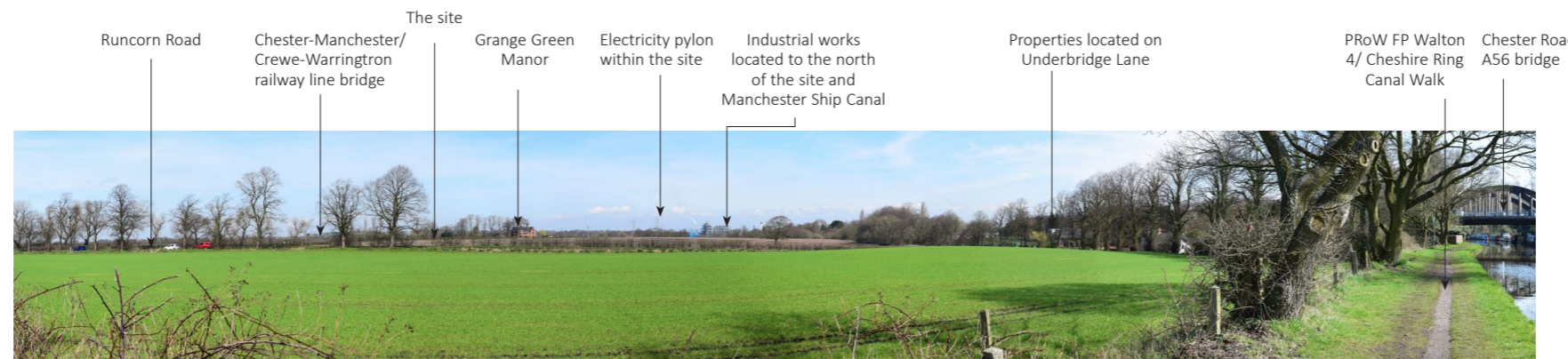
## Visual receptors scoped out of this assessment

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

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



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



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



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

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ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
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URBAN DESIGN



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## Warrington Local Plan Sites

South West Urban Extension

Appendix A: Figure 4  
Viewpoint Photographs

Drwg No: 630DE-09D

Date: 09.04.18

Drawn by: YH

Checker: CAW

Rev by: CAW

Rev checker: SR

QM Status: checked

Product Status:

Scale: NTS

Issue

Figure 4 - Viewpoint Photographs

Vegetation associated with the disused railway line and Manchester Ship Canal

Electricity pylon within the site    The site    Electricity pylon within the site    Chester-Manchester/Crewe-Warrington railway line bridge

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

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING  
MASTERPLANNING  
URBAN DESIGN

**RANDALL THORP**

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Vegetation associated with the disused railway line

Mill Lane    Chester-Manchester/Crewe-Warrington railway line bridge    Railway embankment    Electricity pylons within the site    Industrial works located to the north of the site and Manchester Ship Canal    Vegetation associated with Manchester Ship Canal    The site

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

The site    Former Mill    Mill Lane

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

**Warrington Local Plan Sites**  
South West Urban Extension  
Appendix A: Figure 5  
Viewpoint Photographs

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

Figure 5 - Viewpoint Photographs



Photo 5.1 - View from Runcorn Road looking east south

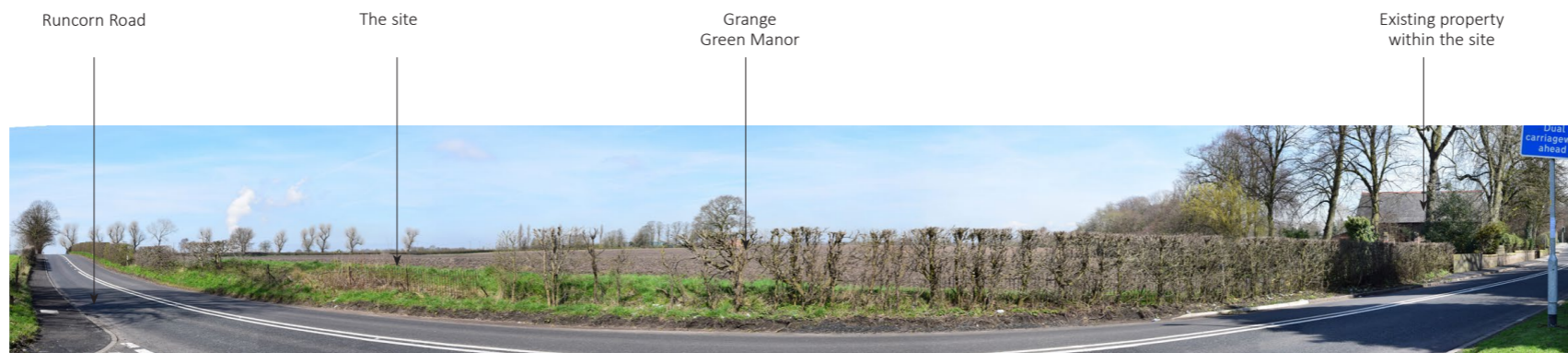


Photo 5.2 - View from Runcorn Road looking north



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

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## Warrington Local Plan Sites

South West Urban Extension

Appendix A: Figure 6  
Viewpoint Photographs

Drwg No: 630DE-11D

Drawn by: YH

Rev by: CAW/YH

QM Status: checked

Scale: NTS

Date: 09.04.18


Checker: CAW

Rev checker: SR

Product Status:

Issue

Figure 6 - Viewpoint Photographs




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


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**Photo 7.2** - View from A56/Chester Road looking east



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

Appendix A: Figure 7  
Photography Location Plan

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

Figure 7 - Viewpoint Photographs

### Landscape and visual sensitivity

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

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

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

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

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

## Susceptibility to change

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

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

## Conclusion in respects of the landscape sensitivity

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

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

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

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

## Value and sensitivity of views and visual receptors

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

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

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



Table 1: Sensitivity of visual receptors

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

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

## Development potential of the site

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

### Evaluation of the landscape

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Evaluation of the townscape

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

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

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

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

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

### Evaluation of the visual receptors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

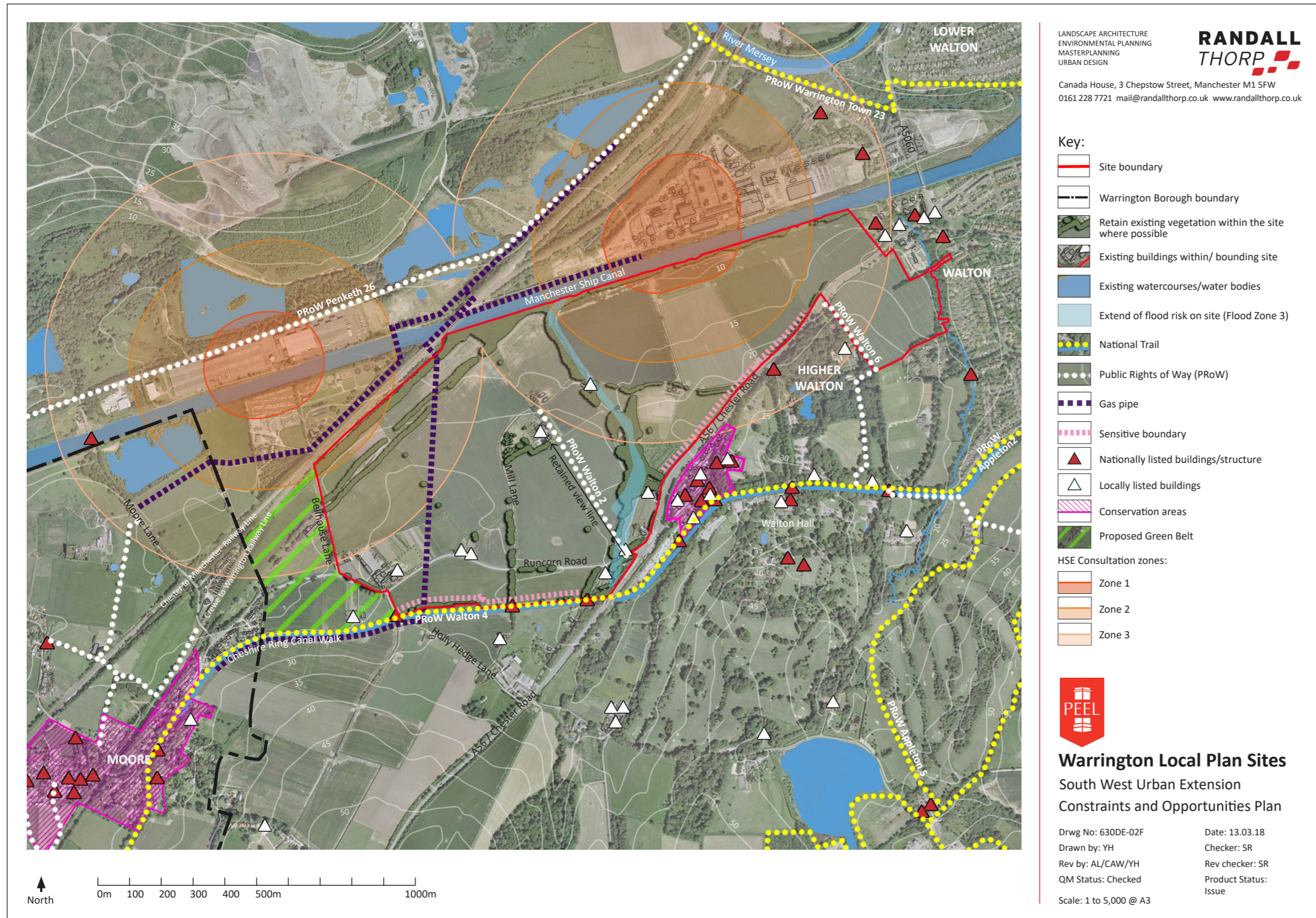
## Development potential of the site

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

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

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

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



Constraints and opportunities

## Illustrative masterplan

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

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

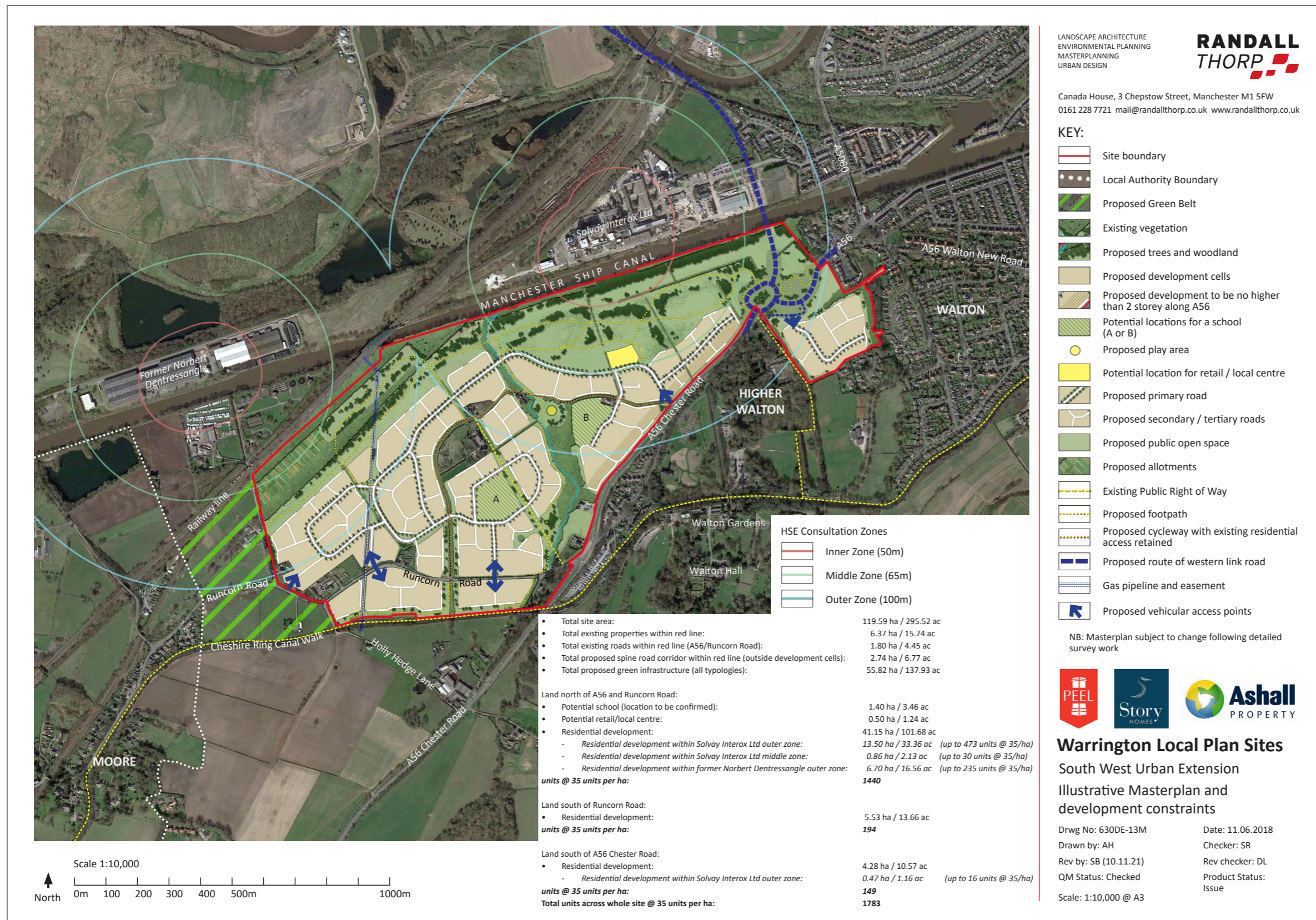
- a new primary school
- a local centre comprising local shops, a potential new health facility, subject to needs, and other community facilities as necessary to support the new residential community.
- extensive areas of open space and recreation provision.

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

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

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

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



Illustrative masterplan



Prepared for:



**RANDALL**  
*THORP*