



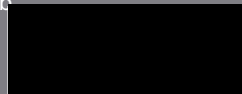
South Warrington Urban Extension Framework Plan Document

FINAL JUNE 2017

Prepared by:



Checked by:



Created:

Bramastra Prabowo
Graduate Urban Designer

Verified:

Wei Deng
Senior Urban Designer

Approved:

Richard Green
Richard Green
Senior Director

Rev	Comments	Checked	Verified	Approved	Date
A	Updated to Client Comments	RG	WD	RG	25/04/17
B	Updated to Client Comments	RG	WD	RG	10/05/17



Executive Summary

This document presents AECOM's analysis and concept masterplanning approach to the potential development of the South Warrington Urban Extension area (SWUE). The analysis has helped the Council to confirm the SWUE as part of its Preferred Development Option. It has provided additional detail to understand the sustainable development capacity of the area, the infrastructure required to support new development and the phasing of development to ensure infrastructure comes forward in a timely manner to support new homes and jobs.

The framework plan within this document is underpinned by AECOM and initial analysis of landscape, historic assets, transport considerations, utilities, and the environmental context. The subsequent framework plan process explores the extent of the development area, and establishes development parcels, green space areas and required infrastructure. The SWUE is looking for a long term large scale sustainable mixed-use development for next 20 years, to provide around 7,979 new homes, 117.3 ha employment land, 55 ha District Core for community facilities, 7.6 km new strategic road, a new 84 ha Country Park, around 332 ha associated Open Spaces, and 264.4 ha Safeguarded Land for future development.

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1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 About the Document

South Warrington Urban Extension area (SWUE), forming part of the wider south Warrington area, is defined by its proximity to large scale transport infrastructure (i.e. M6, M56 and Bridgewater Canal, etc.) and hosts a number of scattered residential communities and employment areas. This expanse of land provides an opportunity for a natural urban extension to southern Warrington, which can accommodate sustainable residential growth, promote economic activity and unlock further employment development and recreational spaces within this part of the borough.

The framework plan presented in this document builds upon AECOM's experience in the Warrington area, where they have been involved in masterplanning schemes across the town centre, Warrington Waterfront Development Area, and throughout wider Warrington.

1.2 Site Location

The SWUE area, which comprises 1,227.8 hectares of land and potential 264.4 ha Safeguarded Land, is situated immediately to the south of Warrington built-up area. To the west of the site are existing communities, i.e. Appleton and Dudlow's Green, which connect the site to London Road (A49) and then further north towards Warrington Town Centre. To the south is the M56 motorway, which provides wider strategic connections via junctions 9 and 10. The M6 motorway, defines the eastern boundary of the site, which provides a further strategic connection via junction 20. Grappenhall lies to the north of the site, and it defines, together with A56 and the Bridgewater Canal, the northern boundary of the site. The SWUE area comprises General Areas 9 and 10 from the councils Green Belt Assessment (2016).



Figure 1.1: SWUE Study Area

1.3 Planning Background

This section provides a summary of key national, regional, and local policy relevant to the SWUE. It demonstrates how the framework aligns with overall national, regional and local planning objectives. At a national level, The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) sets out the Government's planning policies for achieving sustainable development in England. It performs an economic, social and environmental role, and provides the foundation for which local and neighbourhood plans can develop.

At a local level, the Warrington Local Plan, adopted in 2014, sets out the framework to guide decisions in the borough over the next 15 years, including a wide range of activities that shape areas, from the role of the town in the economy, the health of the Town Centre, and how future housing needs can be accommodated, to the location of new schools and opportunities for outdoor play for children. The Warrington Core Strategy is the central policy document in Warrington's Local Planning Framework.

In October 2016, the council launched its Local Plan Review to drive forward the growth and development of the borough over the next 20 years. There was a 'Call for Sites' exercise being undertaken to support the borough's development needs. The responses of this consultation have been incorporated within this framework process.

Appleton Parish Council have prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for Appleton Thorn, providing more detailed development principles for this area. The Plan has successfully passed examination and a local referendum and is due to be adopted by the council in summer 2017.

The HCA have planning permission for up to 180 homes at their Pewterspear site and have submitted applications for up to 400 new homes and up to 370 new homes at their Grappenhall Heys and Appleton Cross sites respectively. These sites are not within the Green Belt and are able to come forward independent of the Local Plan review. With the exception of the inset settlements of Appleton Thorn and Grappenhall Heys and the Appleton and Barley Castle trading estates, the rest of the area is currently designated as Green Belt.

1.4 Call for Sites

Warrington Council have received over 20 'call for sites' submissions in the SWUE area, from both public and private sector landowners and developers. AECOM has taken into consideration developers' proposals and their development capacity work, and this has formed part of the key considerations for the framework developing process.

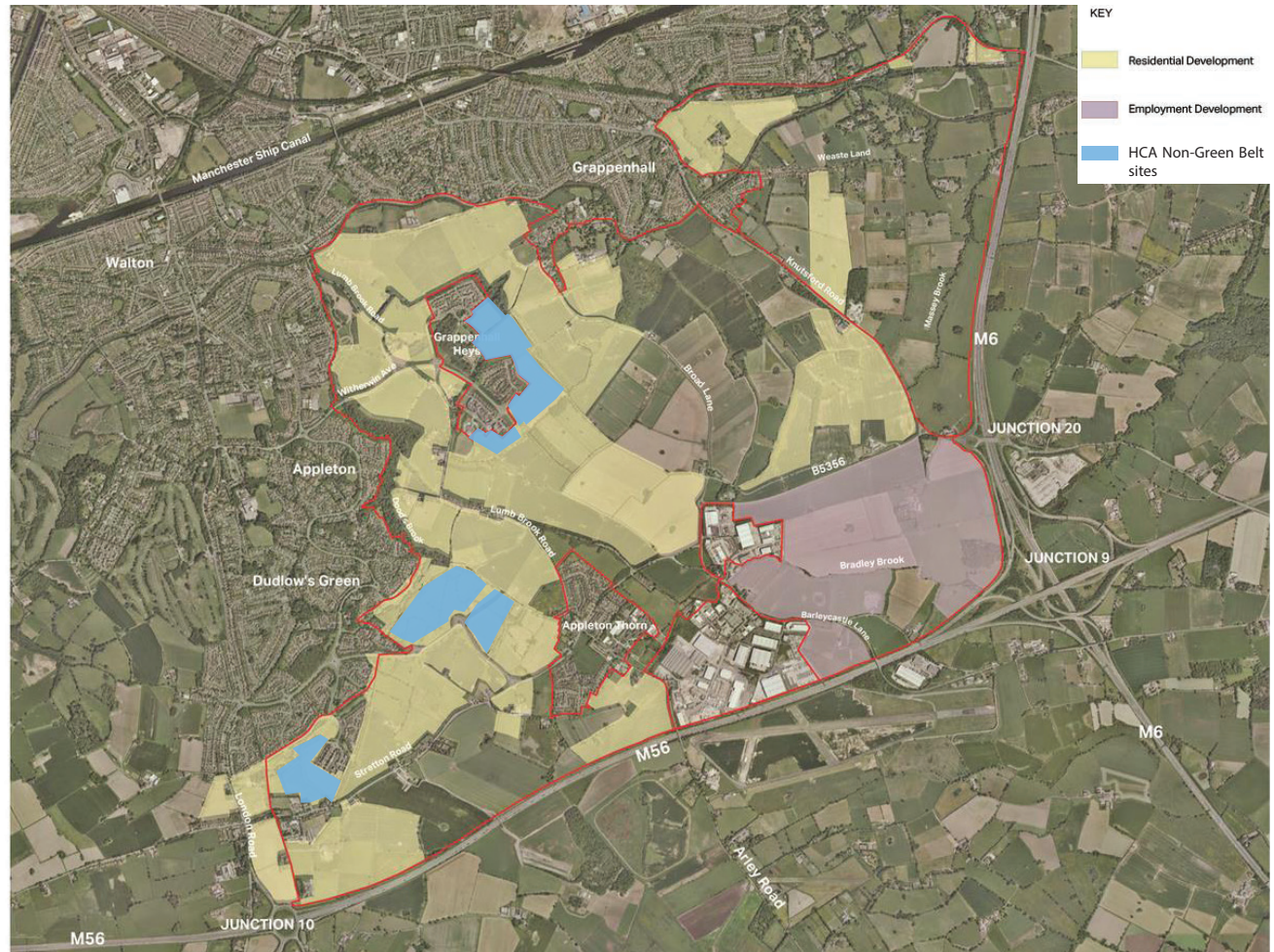


Figure 1.2: Call for Sites Map

2. BASE LINE STUDY



2.1 Landscape Character and Site Photograph

Landscape and Visual Impact

This study comprises a desk-top review of the landscape character and site survey; consequently the potential landscape impact of development and its mitigation principles will be cooperated into the masterplanning process. The appraisal is based upon principles set out within 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' GLVIA (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 3rd Edition, 2013).

National Landscape Character Context:

The broad study area is identified by Natural England and falling within National Landscape Character Area NCA 60, Mersey Valley. Its pertinent key characteristics are identified as comprising:

- Trees and woodland are mainly associated with settlements, occasional parkland and isolated woodland blocks, and in recent years new community woodlands have been planted;
- The field pattern is regular and large scale, often defined by hedgerows with isolated hedgerow trees; many hedgerows are intermittent and have been replaced by post-and-wire fencing, while field

boundaries on the mosses are marked by ditches; and

- The predominant building material is red brick though some sandstone construction remains, and some survival of earlier timber frame.

Local Landscape Character Context:

At local level, the 'Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment' report, prepared by Agathoclis Beckmann Landscape Architects for Warrington Council in 2007 identifies 6 types of Landscape Types. Each landscape Type area is divided into further sub-divisions of Landscape Areas. The site covers six sub-divisions of Landscape Areas, as listed below:

- Area 1A – Stretton & Hatton
- Area 1B - Appleton Thorn
- Area 2C - Stretton & Appleton Moss
- Area 3A - Appleton Park & Grappenhall
- Area 3B - Massey Brook
- Area 4C - Former Stretton Airfield

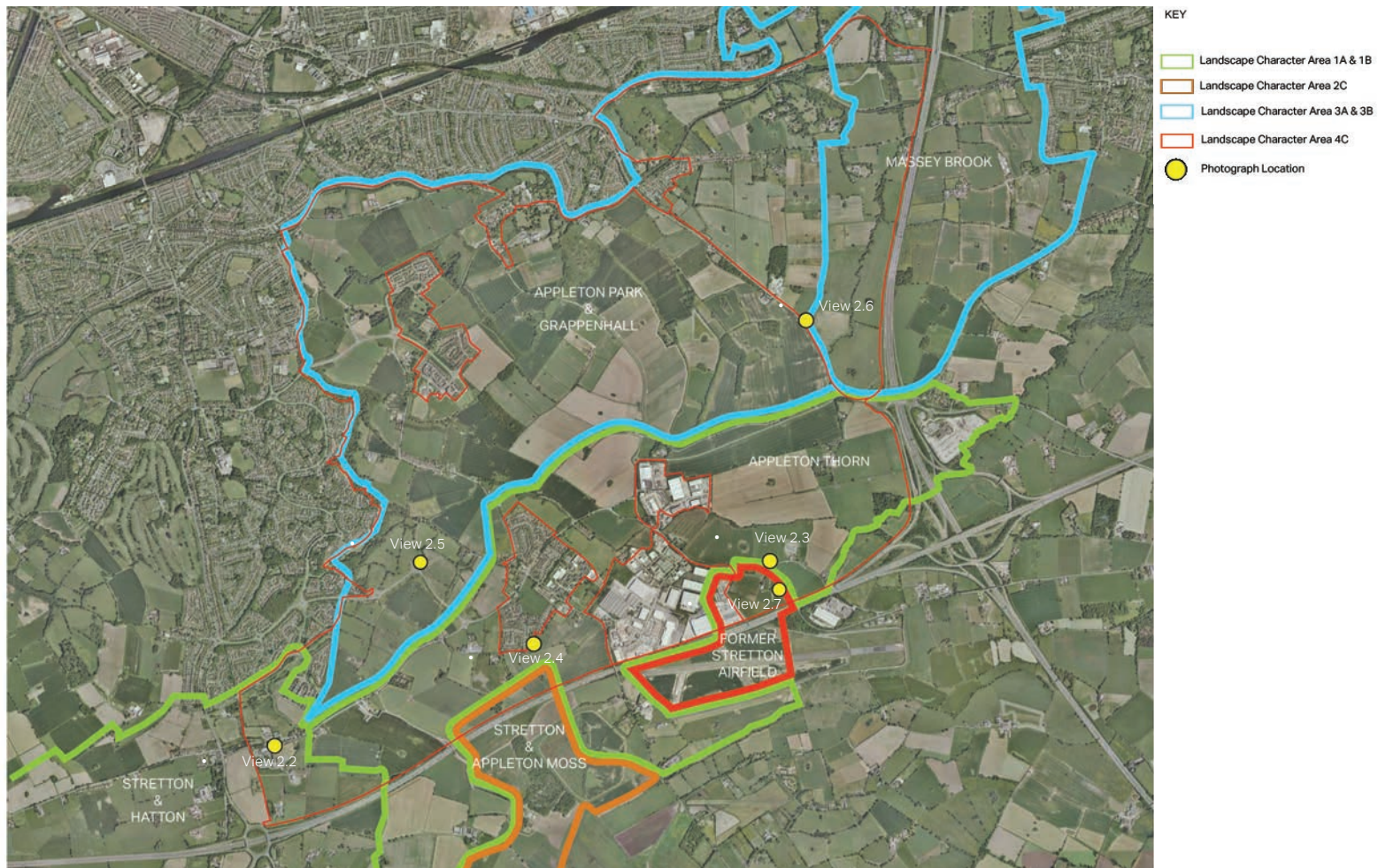


Figure 2.1: Landscape Character Area

Area 1A – Stretton & Hatton

The Hatton area comprises of a broad, gently undulating agricultural landscape situated to the south-west of the study area. To the north, the land forms the crest of the Red Sandstone Escarpment and from this crest, the land gently falls to the south. The area is strongly influenced by the M56 motorway which runs through the area just to the south of the crest of the Escarpment. Hatton Lane, just north of the M56, is built on the line of a Roman Road. The farmland is a traditional mix of pasture and arable although more recent changes include noticeable areas of horse grazing, fishing ponds and a farm shop development.

Area 1B - Appleton Thorn

Farmland is generally undulating and slopes down to reasonably level areas of mosslands known as Appleton and Stretton Moss. Agriculture is mainly arable and is characteristically composed of very large fields with a sparsity of hedgerows. Settlement is mainly represented by the attractive village centre of Appleton Thorn, highlighted by its church tower set on the ridgeline and by the 'village extension' of Appleton Thorn Trading Estate. Farm complexes tend to be larger than those found on surrounding areas, possibly reflecting the improved agricultural production related to the mosslands.

Area 2C - Stretton & Appleton Moss

Stretton and Appleton Mosses form one contiguous, reasonably level area of mossland drained by a main ditch through the centre of the area to the south. The ditch forms the parish boundary between the two parishes of Stretton and Appleton. Field patterns are defined by ditches rather than hedge lines and notably large with sweeping views into the 'basin' area. The M56 motorway cuts through the northern perimeter of the mossland and much of the area has been affected by spoil deposition from the motorway construction. The mossland is clearly viewed from the M56.

Area 3A - Appleton Park & Grappenhall

The Appleton Park and Grappenhall areas form two parcels of land of similar character split by housing development associated with the A49 London Road. The landscape character of these areas comprises of strongly sloping land to the north, affording sweeping long distance views, occasionally restricted by the presence of linear deciduous woodlands, coverts and tree groups. The presence of red sandstone frequently punctuates the landscape in the form of outcrops to road and canal cuttings, quarries and in the building of vernacular houses and walls.

Area 3B - Massey Brook

The catchment area of Massey Brook forms a sheltered landscape valley basin cut into the Red Sandstone Escarpment. The area is bisected and visually dominated by the M6 motorway running north/south between the Thelwall Viaduct and the M6 Stretton interchange at Junction 9. The landscape has broad open views both internally and to the north and east. Agriculture is mainly arable with gapped hedgerows. A narrow linear band of deciduous woodland is associated with Massey Brook.

Area 4C - Former Stretton Airfield

The former Stretton Airfield occupies an area of level ground situated adjoining the Appleton Thorn Trading Estate. In common with Burtonwood Airfield, the site is split into two sections by motorway construction. To the north of the M56 a trading estate has developed over former runways. The land is unrestricted by any notable tree growth and is dominated by the M56 along its northern boundary.



Figure/ View 2.2: Area 1A Stretton & Hatton



Figure/ View 2.3: Area 1B Appleton Thorn



Figure/ View 2.4: Area 2C Stretton & Appleton Moss



Figure/ View 2.5: Area 3A Appleton park & Grappenhall



Figure/ View 2.6: Area 3B Massey Brook



Figure/ View 2.7: Area 4C Former Stretton Airfield

2.2 Topography and Water Courses

The SWUE area has subtly north-facing slopes which are dropping from London Road, towards Appleton Thorn, then across the central area to the edge of Bridgewater Canal, and is predominately in agricultural use, but exclusive of some existing small communities (i.e. Appleton Thorn, Grappenhall Heys) and Appleton Thorn Trading Estate area. The SWUE area boundaries are marked by M56 and M6 to the south and east, Appleton to the west, and A56 and Grappenhall to the north. The highest area is around Appleton, about 85m AOD, and the site starts fall down toward north to reach about 20m AOD at Bridgewater Canal.

There are several 'Main Rivers' running within the site. Bradley Brook starts from Appleton Thorn Trading Estate and travels through M56 junction 9, flows towards east to Lymm Dam. Messey Brook is running alongside M6 and creates a lower valley which is full of mature trees. Dood's Brook and Dingle Brook run through mature woodlands alongside eastern Appleton edge, and defines the western boundary of the SWUE. Some minor water courses, ditches and ponds can be found within fields throughout the site, which can be seen in the Figure 2.8.

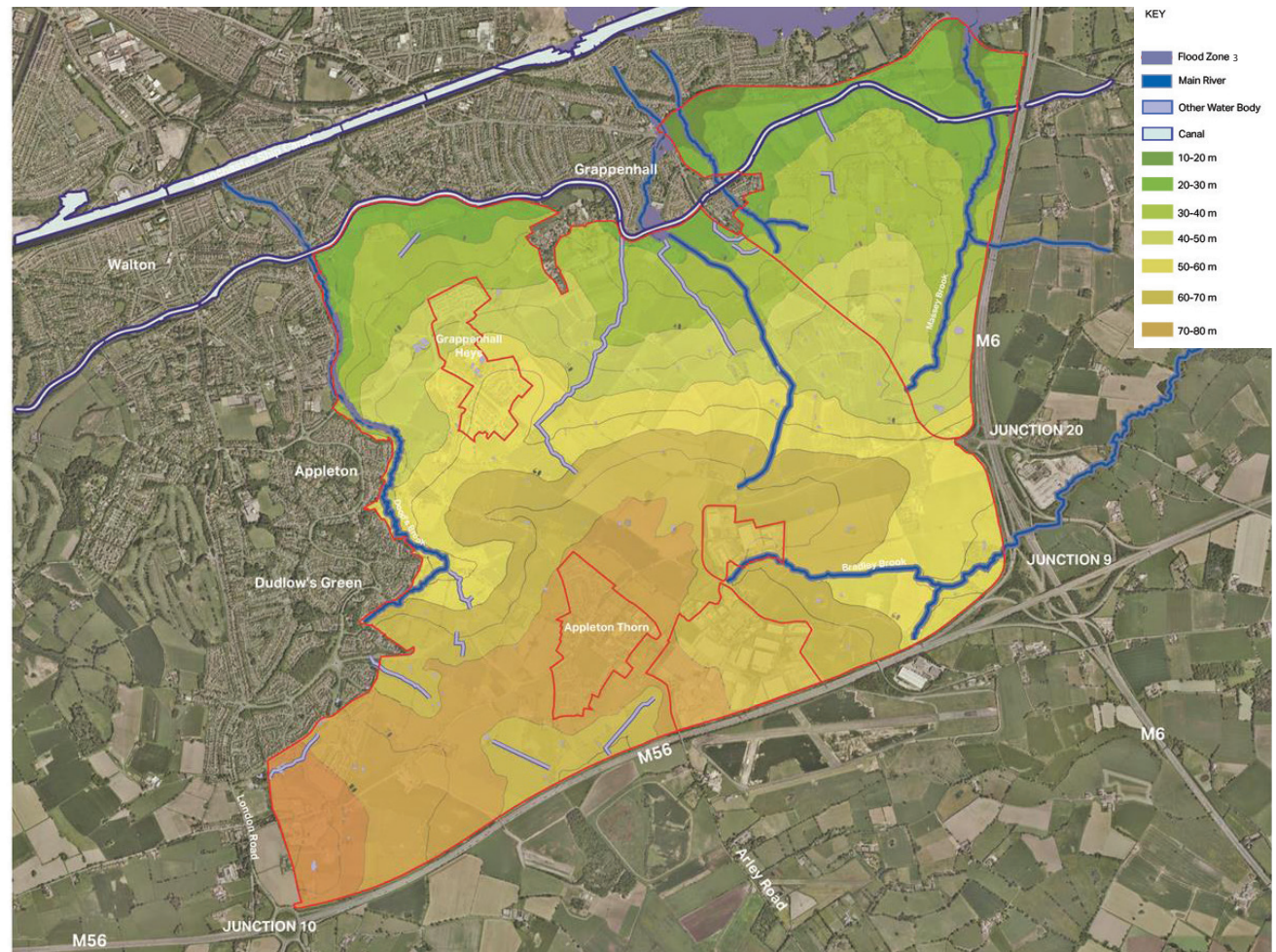


Figure 2.8: Topography and Water Courses Map

2.3 Vegetation and Environmental Designations

As Figure 2.9 shows, several local designated areas (Local Wildlife Sites) can be found along Appleton edge, which are dominated by mature woodlands. Dense woodland areas also can be seen around Grappenhall Heys and the south of Bridgewater Canal. The fields within the site are mainly divided by well-maintained low hedgerows, ditches, and tree belts alongside with water courses. The proposed framework plan will look for retain and enhance existing good quality vegetation and environmental features.

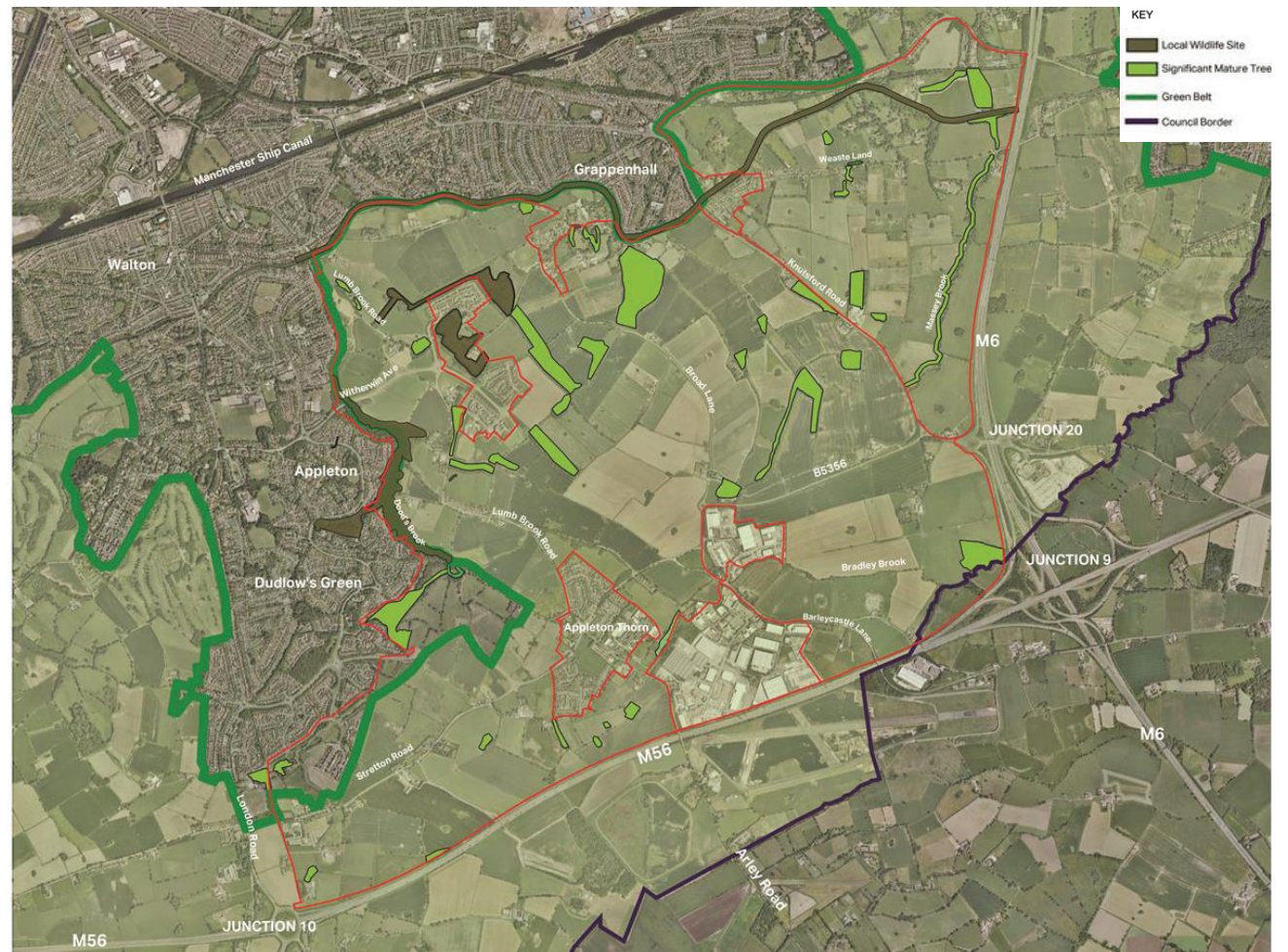


Figure 2.9: Vegetation and Environmental Map

2.4 Movement Network

As Figure 2.10 indicates, the site is well connected to the wider area, being in immediately proximity to the M65/M6 interchange junctions. London road (A49) and Knutsford road (A50) provide north-south connections from SWUE to Warrington Town centre. B5356, runs west-east via Appleton Thorn centre, connects London Road and Knutsford Road. Broad Lane, from Grappenhall, connects B5356 and provides links to further north, beyond the Bridgewater Canal. Current, only few bus routes travel through the site as the majority of SWUE area is kept undeveloped. Nr. 8 bus route enters the site via Witherwin Avenue from Appleton, then travels through Grappenhall Heys via Lumb Brook Road, passes Appleton Thorn centre, and comes back to Appleton via London Road from south.

From the Transport Assessment work undertaken in support of the HCA's current applications for Appleton Cross and Grappenhall Heys, it is clear that the road network in this part of south Warrington cannot accommodate any further development traffic over and above that coming forward on non-Green Belt sites. Any significant further development in the South Warrington area will therefore need to be accompanied by significant road infrastructure improvements.

There are two strategic long distance trails running closely to the site. The Trans Pennine Trail (cycling and walking) runs alongside the Manchester Ship Canal and cuts through the northern corner of the site via a disused railway. Another long distance trail, the Mersey Valley Trail, overlapping with the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk, is also runs along the northern boundary of the site, mainly alongside the northern side of the Canal though.

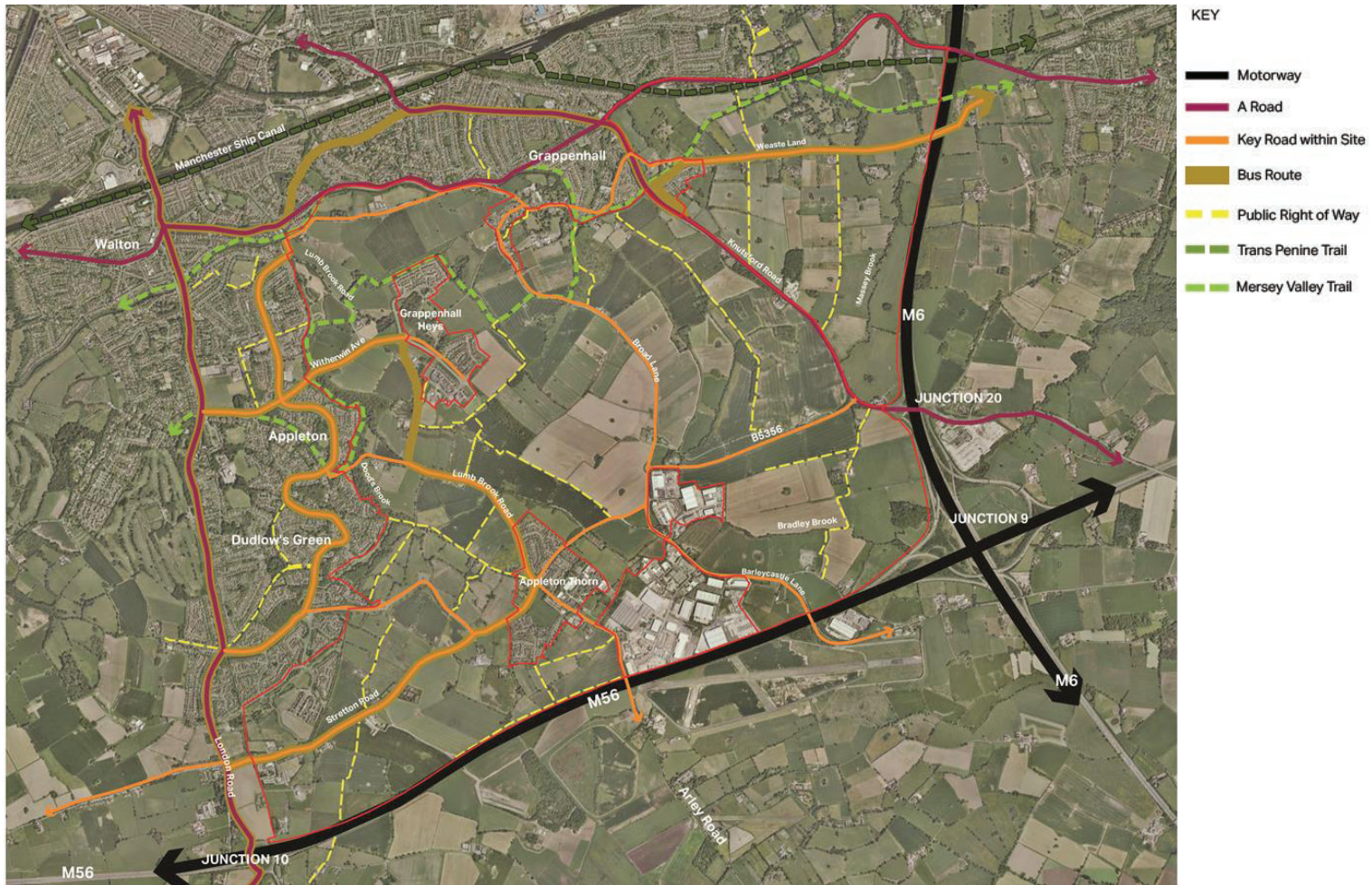


Figure 2.10: Movement Network

2.5 Historic Assets

The SWUE consists of many historic assets, including three Ancient Monuments, National Grade II or II* Listed Buildings and Local Listed buildings. As Figure 2.11 shows, majority of historic designations are located to the northern part of the site, close to Grappenhall Heys and along Bridgewater Canal. There are also some Listed Buildings alongside B5356, Appleton Thorn and Appleton Thorn Trading Estate. A small part of the Grappenhall Village Conservation Area (extended in 1980) falls within the northern boundary of the site. There are three conservations areas can be found at proximity of northern boundary of SWUE, i.e. Grappenhall & Stockton Heath, Stockton Heath, and Thelwall Village. These designations enhance the historic value of the SWUE, and help to define the local characters of the study area.

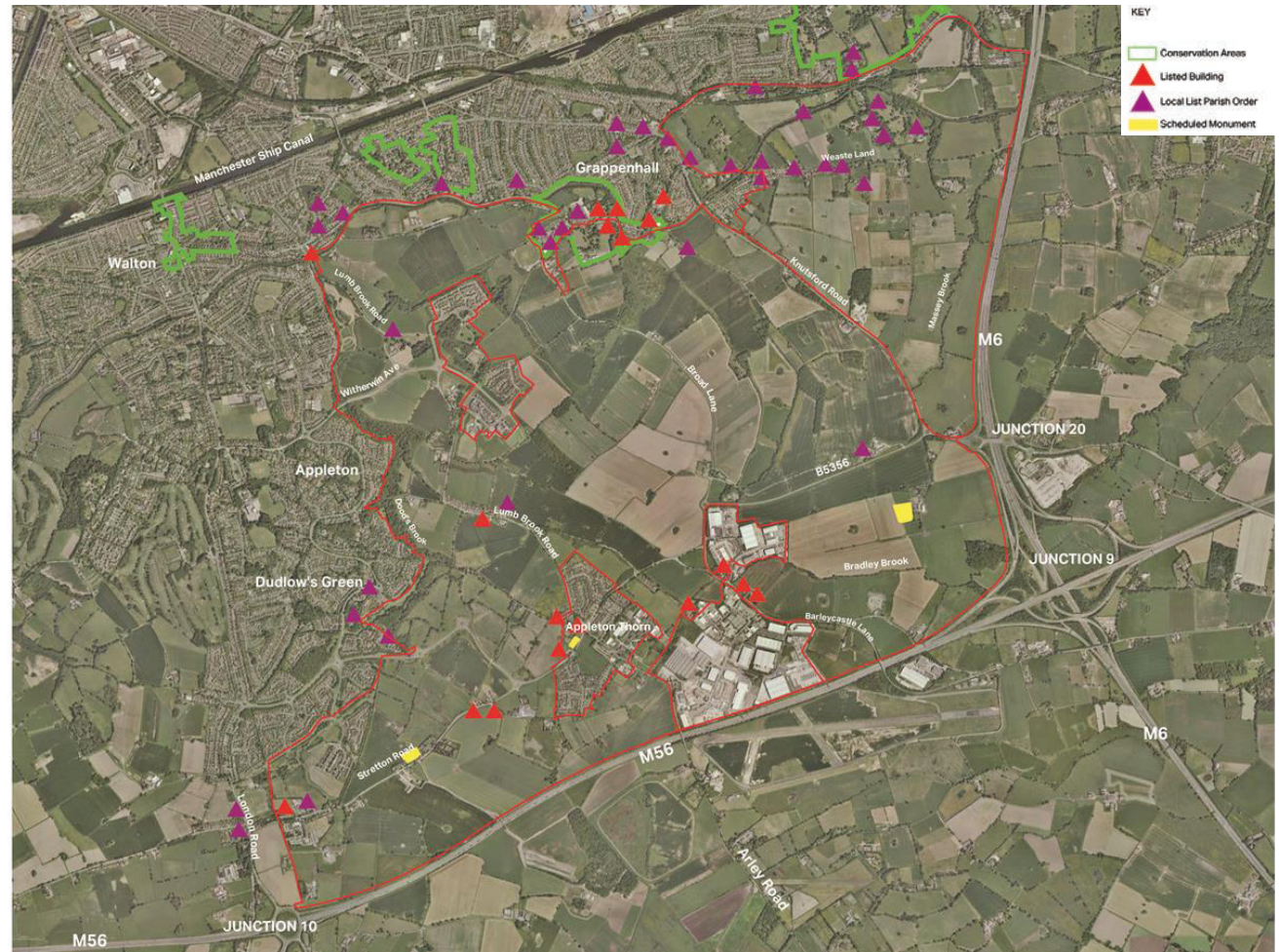


Figure 2.11: Historic Assets Map

2.6 Utilities and Site Constraints

A major oil pipe main crosses the site (from west to east) and requires easements on both sites. This corridor will be integrated into Green Infrastructure and road network. The proposed framework of the development will well consider the existing constraints, including landscape characters/features, land form, water bodies, existing movement network, historic designations, etc. The key constraints are shown in the Figure 2.12.

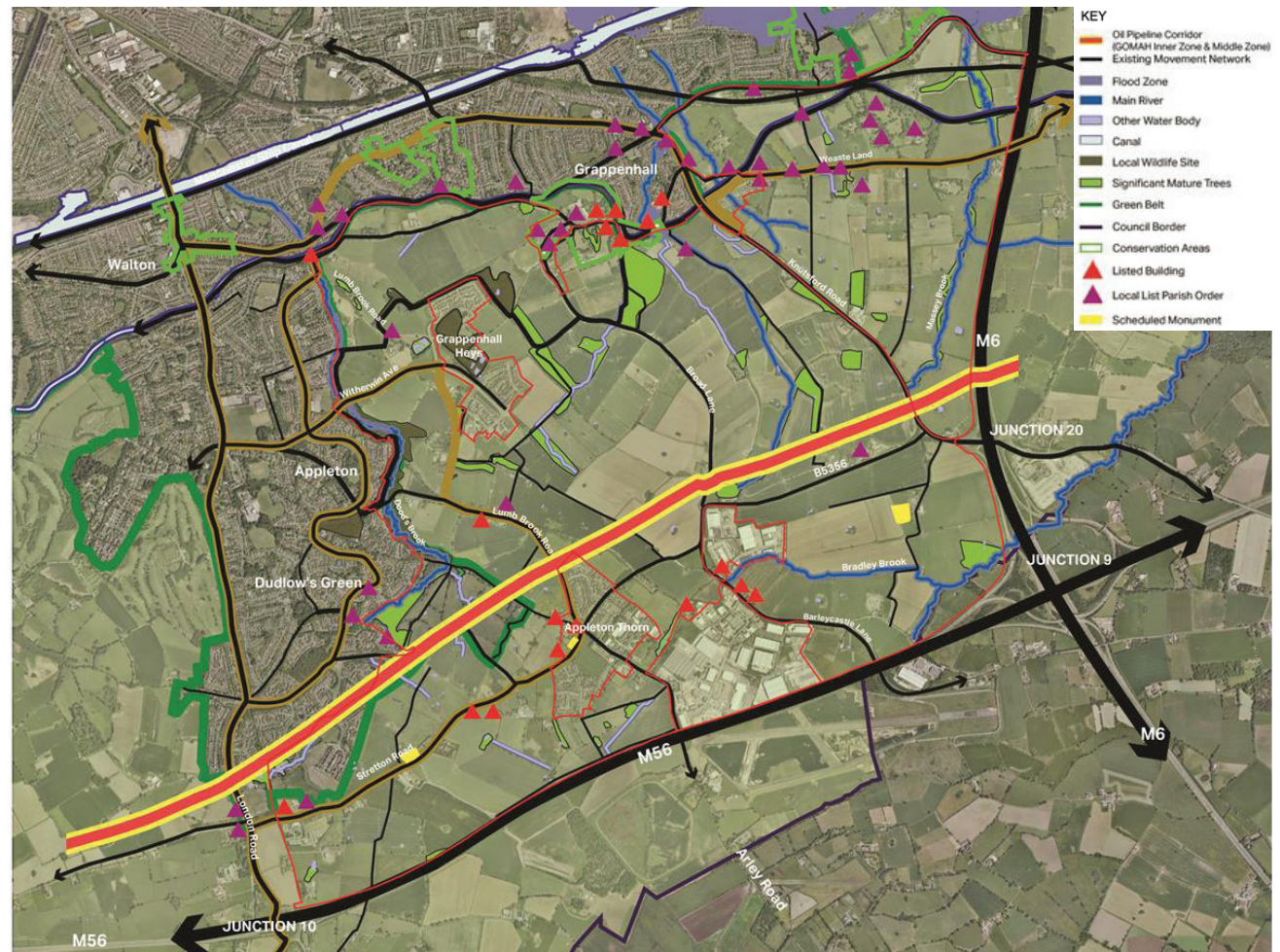


Figure 2.12: Constraints and Utilities Map

3. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



3.1 Key Urban Design Concepts

3.1.1 New Country Park:

A new Country Park, around 84 ha, will be proposed at the centre of SWUE as the key recreational destination, which will incorporate existing high quality landscape asset into the scheme, including Listed Buildings, mature woodlands, and water courses, etc. Permeable and convenient strategic amenity routes should be provided to allow easy access to the new Country Park.

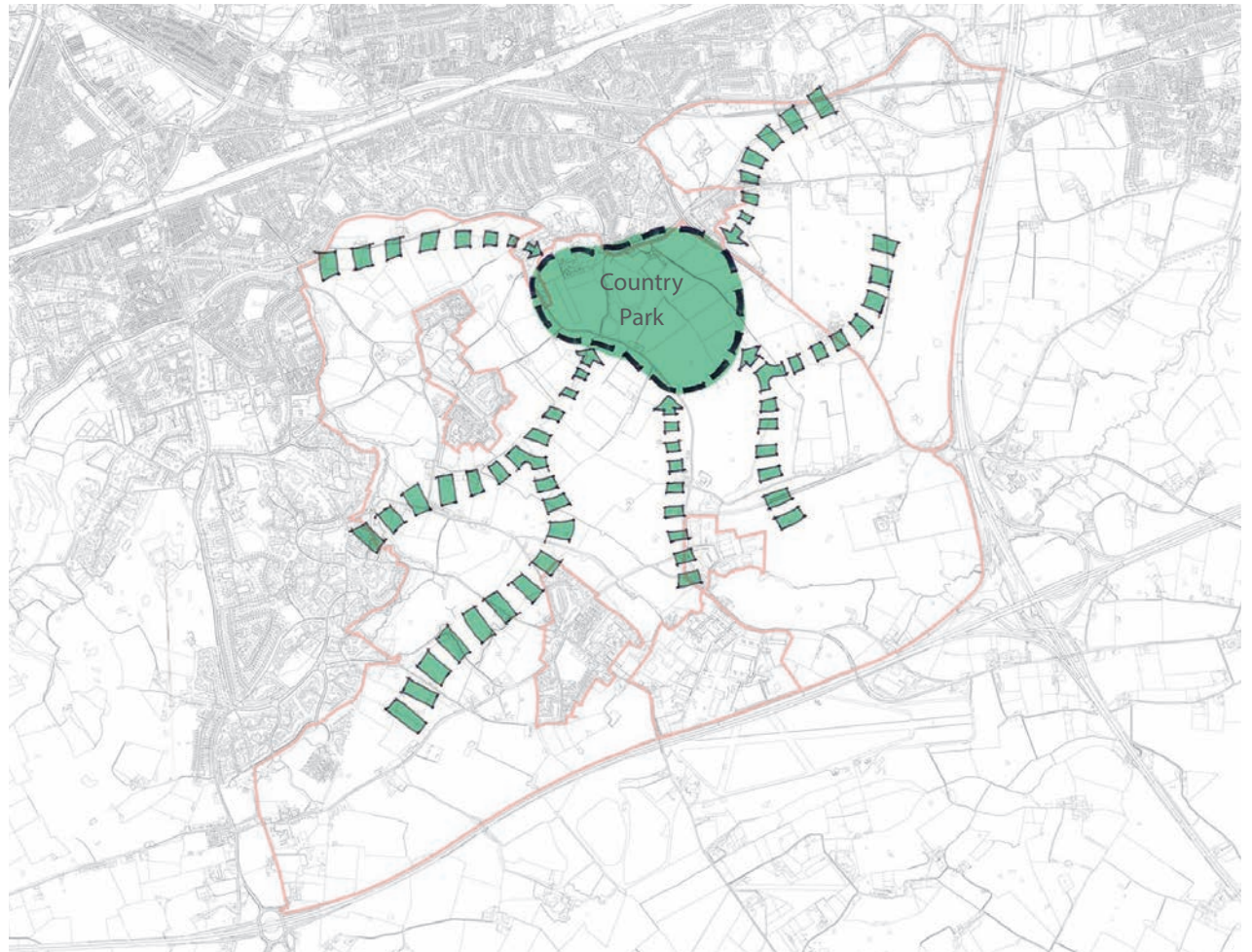


Figure 3.1: Country Park Concept

3.1.2 Land Use Spatial Structure:

A District Core will be proposed at the centre of SWUE providing a new secondary school, leisure centre, sports pitches, health facilities and shops to serve the SWUE area as a whole and the wider south Warrington area. A large area of employment land will be provided to the south of the District Core, adjacent to the M6/56 junction as an extension of the existing Appleton Thorn and Barley Castle trading estates. Several new residential communities will be allocated to the remaining areas together with appropriate local services, including new primary schools. Convenient access routes will be provided throughout the area, utilising the framework of open space and green corridors, to encourage sustainable movement methods including bus, walking, and cycling.

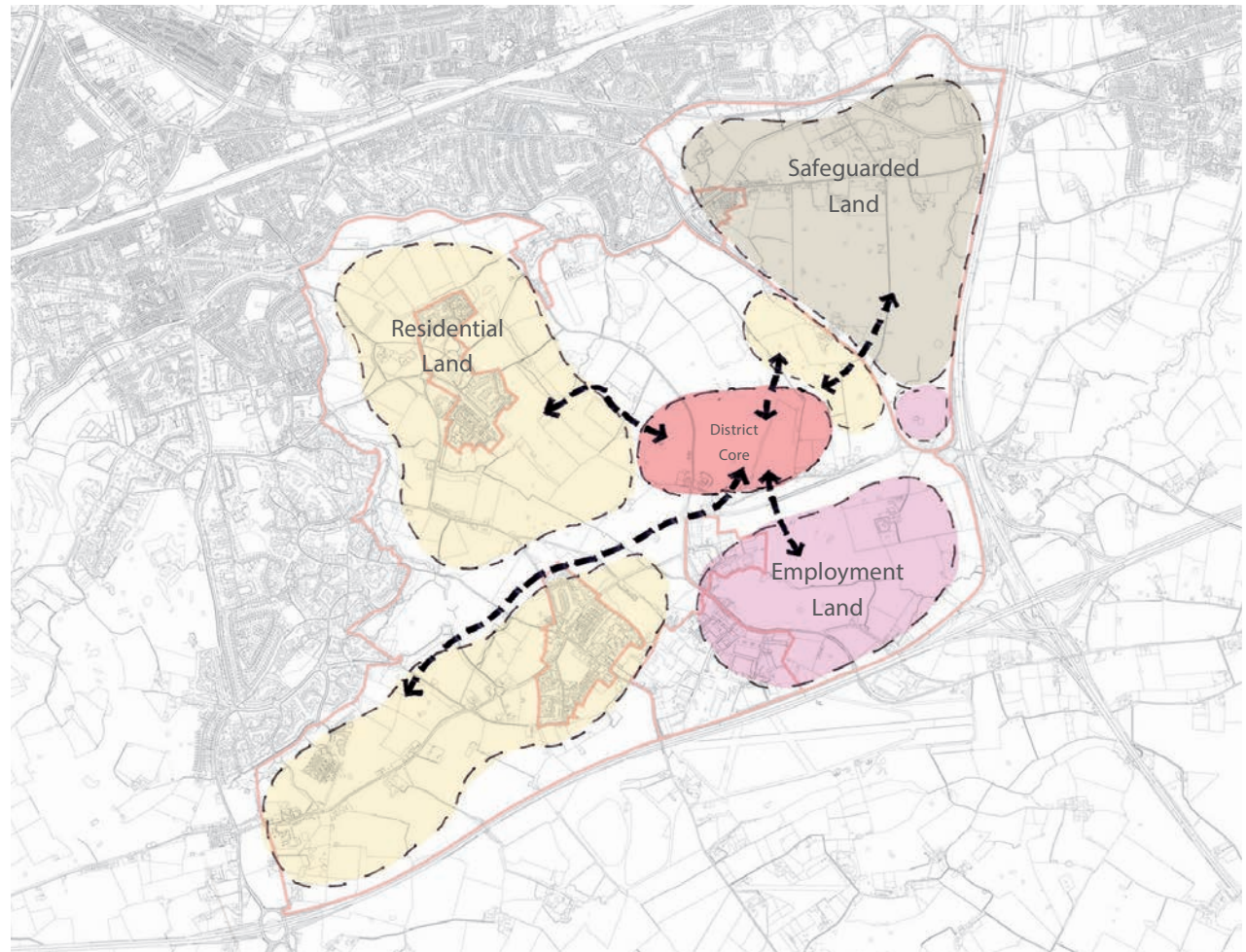


Figure 3.2: Land Use Concept

3.1.3 Permeable Movement Network:

The scheme will improve the current movement network and provide a more well-connected permeable access network. This will include not only adding new strategic roads through the site and connecting the site to Warrington town centre, but also introducing new bus routes throughout the site and providing opportunities for walking and cycling. Given existing congestion in the wider south Warrington area, the initial phases of the proposed strategic road will need to be completed before any new residential development comes forward in land currently within the Green Belt.

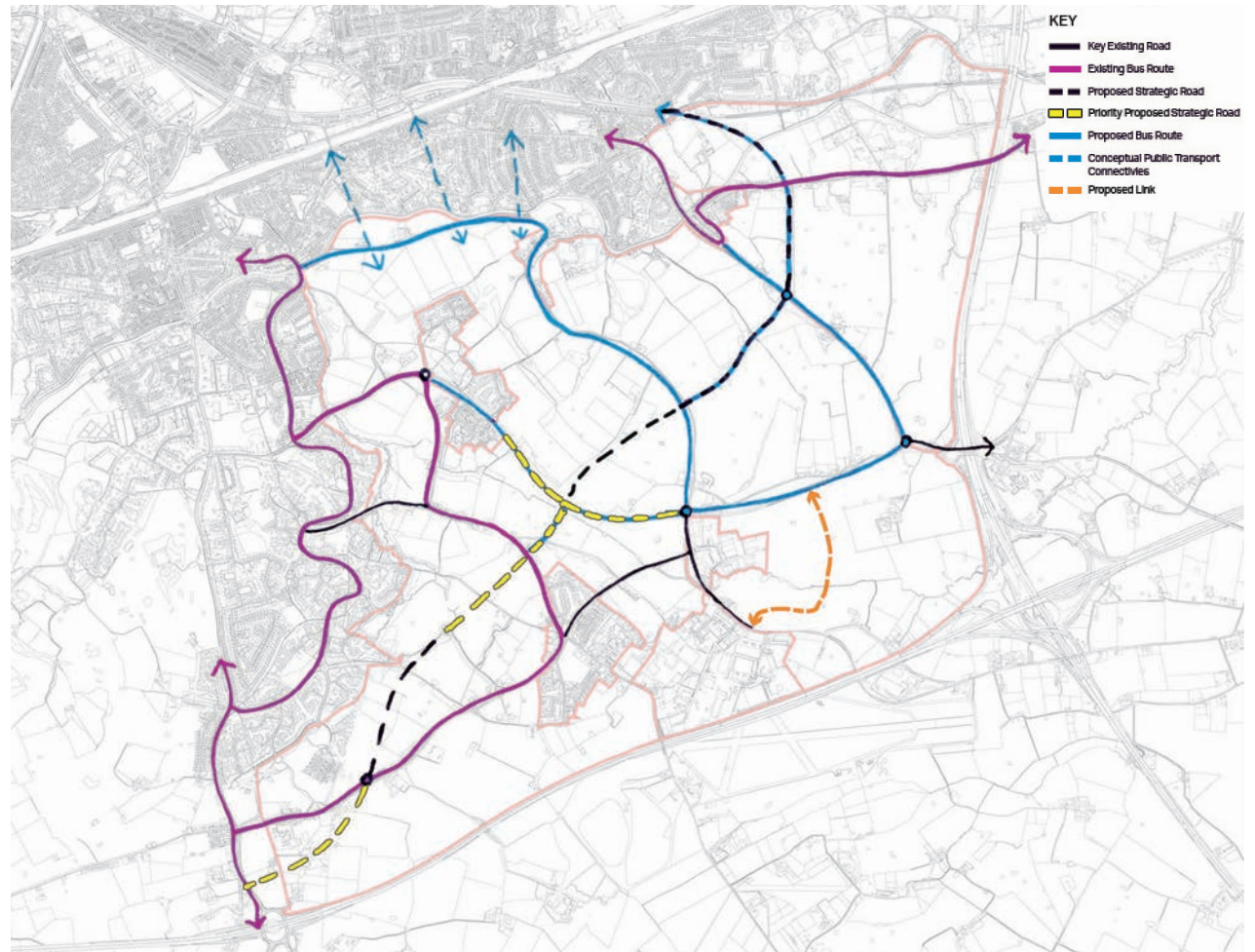


Figure 3.3: Movement Concept

3.1.4 Green Infrastructure Network:

The existing pipe line easement will be integrated into a strategic green corridor. Significant green buffers will be provided along frontages to existing communities and motorways. Green links will be provided to connect these strategic green spaces, providing excellent opportunities for walking and cycling.



Figure 3.4: Green Infrastructure Concept

3.2 Conceptual Approaches

Based on the principle urban design concepts suggested in section 3.1, the approach to the SWUE development is underpinned by the following considerations:

1. Delivering quality new homes which make best use of the SWUE land and meet the housing needs of Warrington;
2. Providing major employment land use which will provide work opportunities for local people;
3. Creating a new Country Park at the centre of the site, next to Bridgewater Canal, mature woodlands, and the Grappenhall Village Conservation Area, to utilize the existing landscape assets within the site;
4. Providing a multi-functional District Core to the south of the new Country Park, including secondary and primary schools, shopping centres, library, health care, and other social facilities;
5. A series of local residential neighbourhoods, with easy access to local services such as new primary schools, which are well connected into the wider SWUE area;
6. Providing high quality, accessible, green and recreational corridors/spaces to link the District Core to the wider SWUE areas;
7. Investing new strategic vehicular roads, and facilitate new cycle and pedestrian links;
8. Extending existing bus routes, and providing new bus services throughout the SWUE area and
9. The ambition is to create a safe and desirable place to work and live to the south of Warrington.

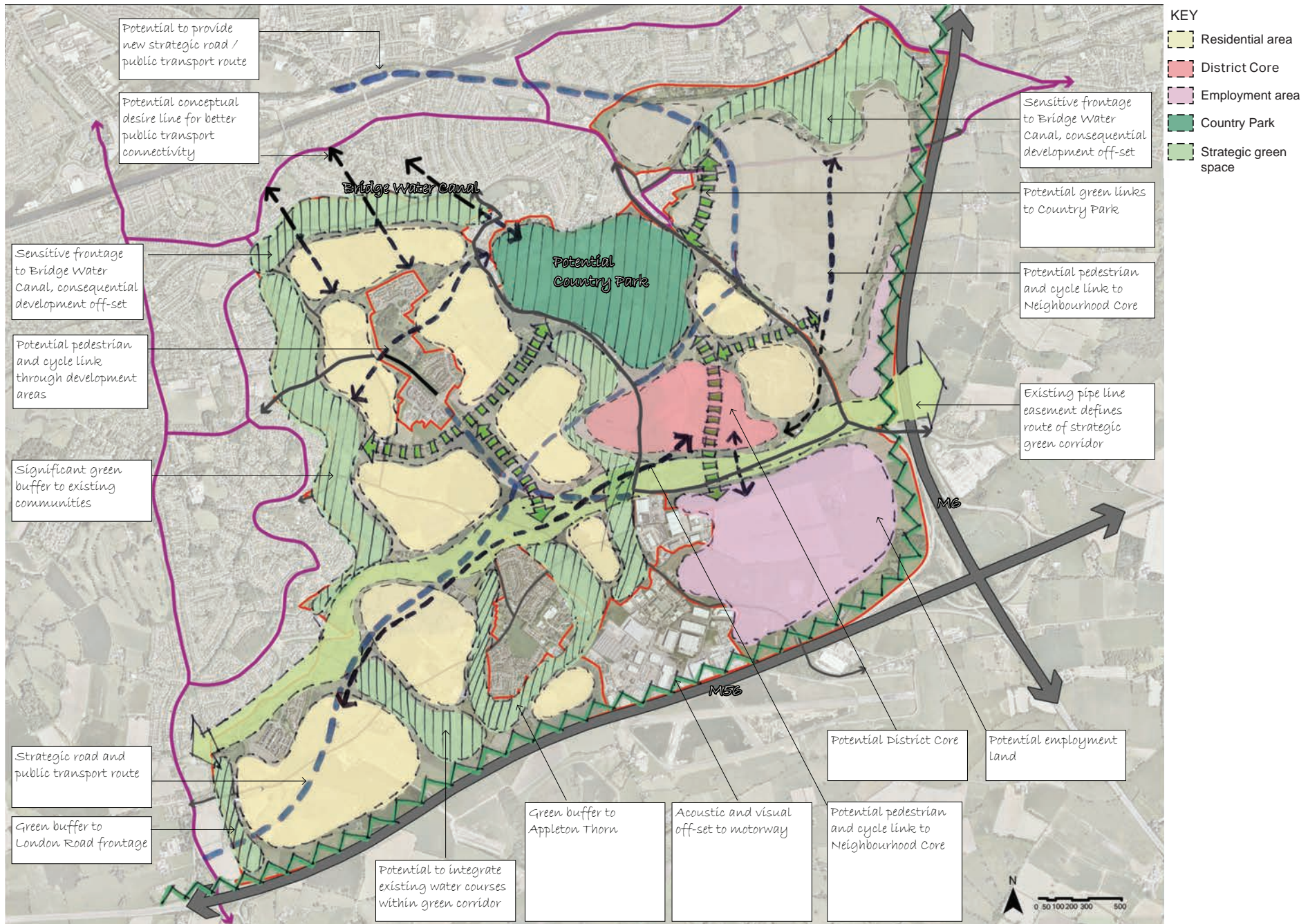


Figure 3.5 Conceptual Approaches

3.3 Framework Plan and Land Uses

The framework plan for the SWUE area will demonstrate how a responsive development and associated landscape structure will respect local context of the site and deliver a new sustainable community. The framework plan presented in the document demonstrates how approximately 7,979 new homes could be accommodated on the site, together with 117.3 ha employment land, 55 ha District Core, and a new Country Park, etc. the key elements of the vision are listed in the Table 3.2.

The gross density of 20 dwellings per hectare is considered appropriate for the type of development envisaged in this part of Warrington. It reflects best practice examples from AECOM's experience in designing successful urban extensions of a similar scale and context to south east Warrington. It also provides an overall balance between built and green space which is consistent with the most recent guidance on garden city design. It is noted however that the Council's approach to density in its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) for this area would be to assume a net developable area of 75% of the size of the individual parcel areas and then apply a net density of 30 dwellings per hectare. Using this approach would give a higher total of 7,979 homes. Applying the same approach, the safeguarded land would deliver 3,195 homes.

Table 3.1: Land Use Breakdown for District Core

Parcel	Parcel Area (ha)
Secondary School	11
Primary School	2.5
Neighbourhood Hub (including sports pitches)	30
Commercial Centre	11.5
Total	55

Table 3.2: SWUE Land Use Schedule

Land Use	ha	acre	Note
District Core	55	135.9	
Employment Land	116.8	288.6	Footprint: 408,827 square metre , based on 35% of land area
Residential	354.6	876.2	
Local/ Village Centre	5	12.4	
Country Park	84.1	207.8	
Proposed Strategic Road	15.3	37.8	
Strategic Green Space	332.4	821.4	
Safeguarded Land	264.4	653.3	Potential 142 ha Residential, 17.5 ha Employment land use
Total	1227.6	3033.5	

Table 3.3: Potential Housing Units

Residential Area	Parcel	Parcel Area (ha)	Parcel Area (acre)	Potential Gross Density (20 dph)
A	A1	19.3	47.7	386
	A2	52.1	128.7	1042
	A3	9.1	22.5	182
	A4	29.5	72.9	590
	A5	13.7	33.9	274
B	B1	39	96.4	780
	B2	3.3	8.2	66
	B3	10.9	26.9	218
	B4	14.9	36.8	298
	B5	41	101.3	820
	B6	18.9	46.7	378
	B7	17.1	42.3	342
	B8	25.4	62.8	508
	B9	13	32.1	260
	B10	13.3	32.9	266
C	C1	8.1	20.0	162
	C2	9.7	24.0	194
	C3	16.3	40.3	326
Total		354.6	876.2	7092
Safeguarded Land		142	350.9	2840

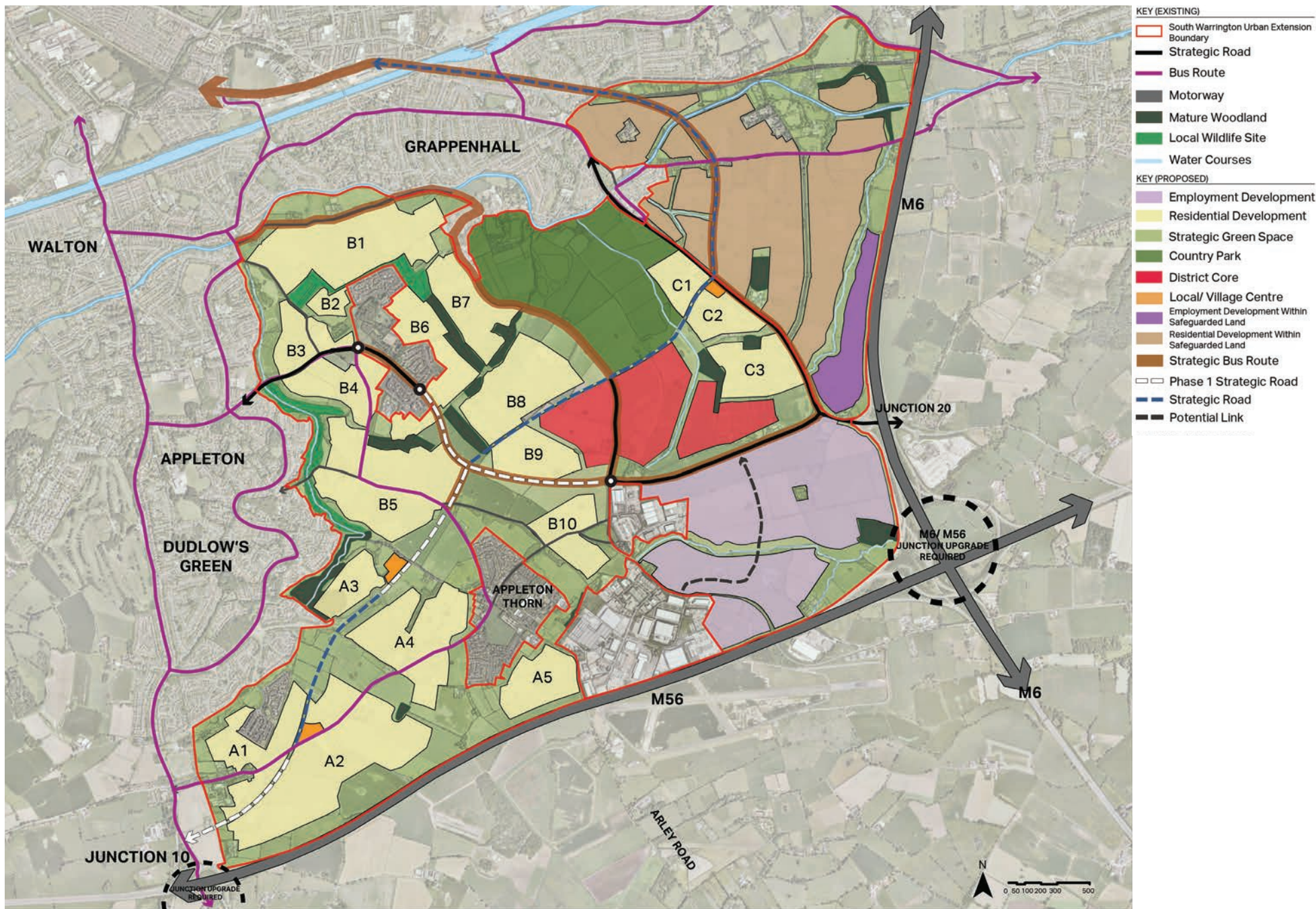


Figure 3.6: Framework Plan

4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION



4.1 Phasing

Effective phasing is about ensuring that the physical form of SWUE vision remains faithful to overarching framework plan and urban design approaches, as well as building in a mechanism for monitoring and managing the impact of development over time. It is also about planning in advance for the provision of supporting infrastructure, as part of a place-making ethos.

SWUE will be developed in a 20-year phased manner. Each phase will consist of delivery of necessary infrastructure identified by Warrington Council both within and around the site. This will help to ensure that the site is developed out in a sustainable manner and does not overstretch the existing infrastructure network. An Indicative Phasing Strategy has been suggested based upon the future infrastructure, housing and employment requirements of the Borough. The phasing plan reflects these priorities in an appropriate way and the likely infrastructure delivery that could be achieved in each phase.

Within the site, construction will occur over 20 years in 4 phases, and each phase covers 5-year period including site remediation and advanced works. Housing development will take place concurrently with employment, neighbourhood facilities and other infrastructure works.

The HCA non-green belt sites can be delivered independent of the Local Plan review and will be delivered as the first phase of residential development within the area. However, the surrounding road network cannot accommodate any further development traffic without significant infrastructure improvements. The initial phases of the proposed strategic road will therefore need to be completed before any further residential development comes forward. It is also important to stress that the Secondary school will need to be completed by the end of phase 2 given capacity constraints on secondary school places across south and central Warrington.

Table 4.1: South East Warrington Phase 1 Schedule

Land Use	ha	acre
Residential	38.4	94.9
Employment	22	54.4
Local/ Village Centre	0	0.0
Total	60.4	149.3

Table 4.2: South East Warrington Phase 2 Schedule

Land Use	ha	acre
Residential	105.7	261.2
Employment	30.3	74.9
Local/ Village Centre	4.2	10.4
District Core	16.5	40.8
Total	156.7	387.2

Table 4.3: South East Warrington Phase 3 Schedule

Land Use	ha	acre
Residential	104.8	259.0
Employment	45.9	113.4
District Core	23.8	58.8
Total	174.5	431.2

Table 4.4: South East Warrington Phase 4 Schedule

Land Use	ha	acre
Residential	105.7	261.2
Employment	18.6	46.0
District Core	15.5	38.3
Total	139.8	345.5

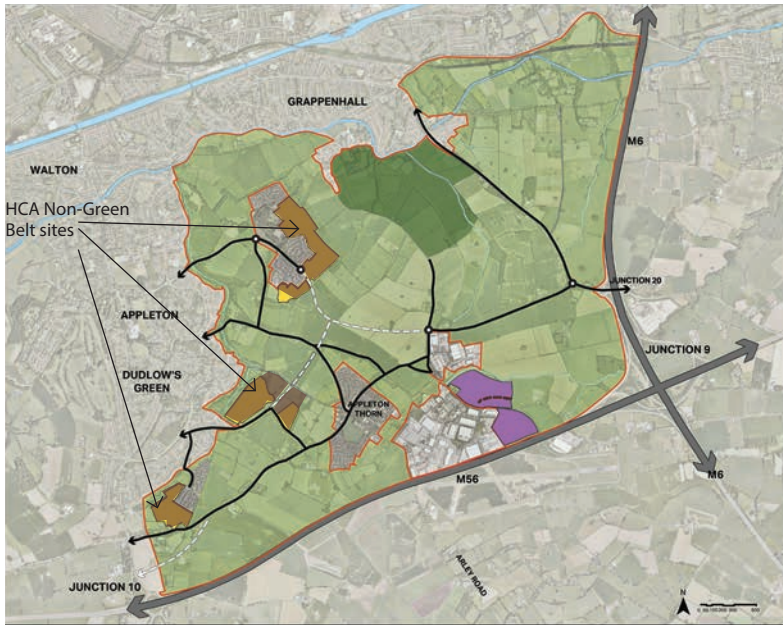


Figure 4.1: South East Warrington Phase 1

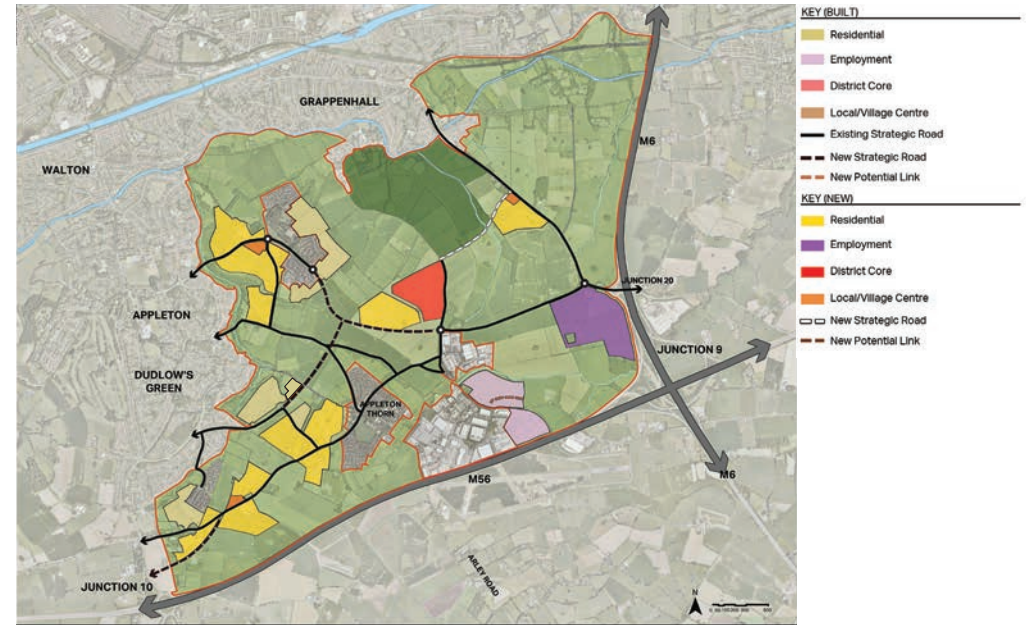


Figure 4.2: South East Warrington Phase 2

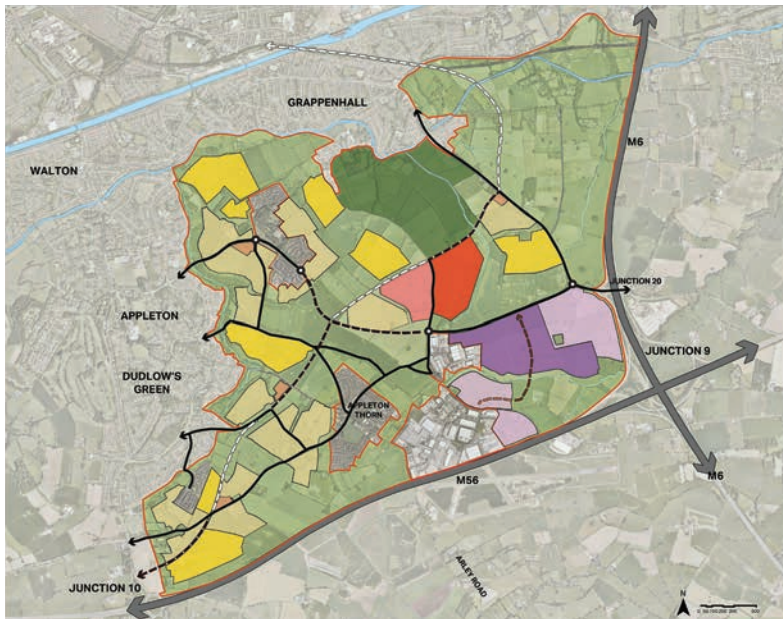


Figure 4.3: South East Warrington Phase 3

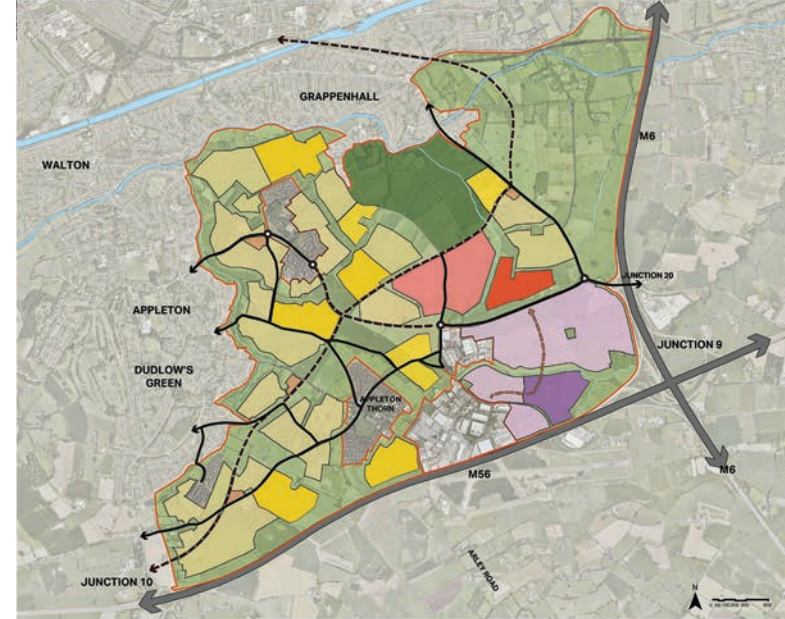


Figure 4.4: South East Warrington Phase 4

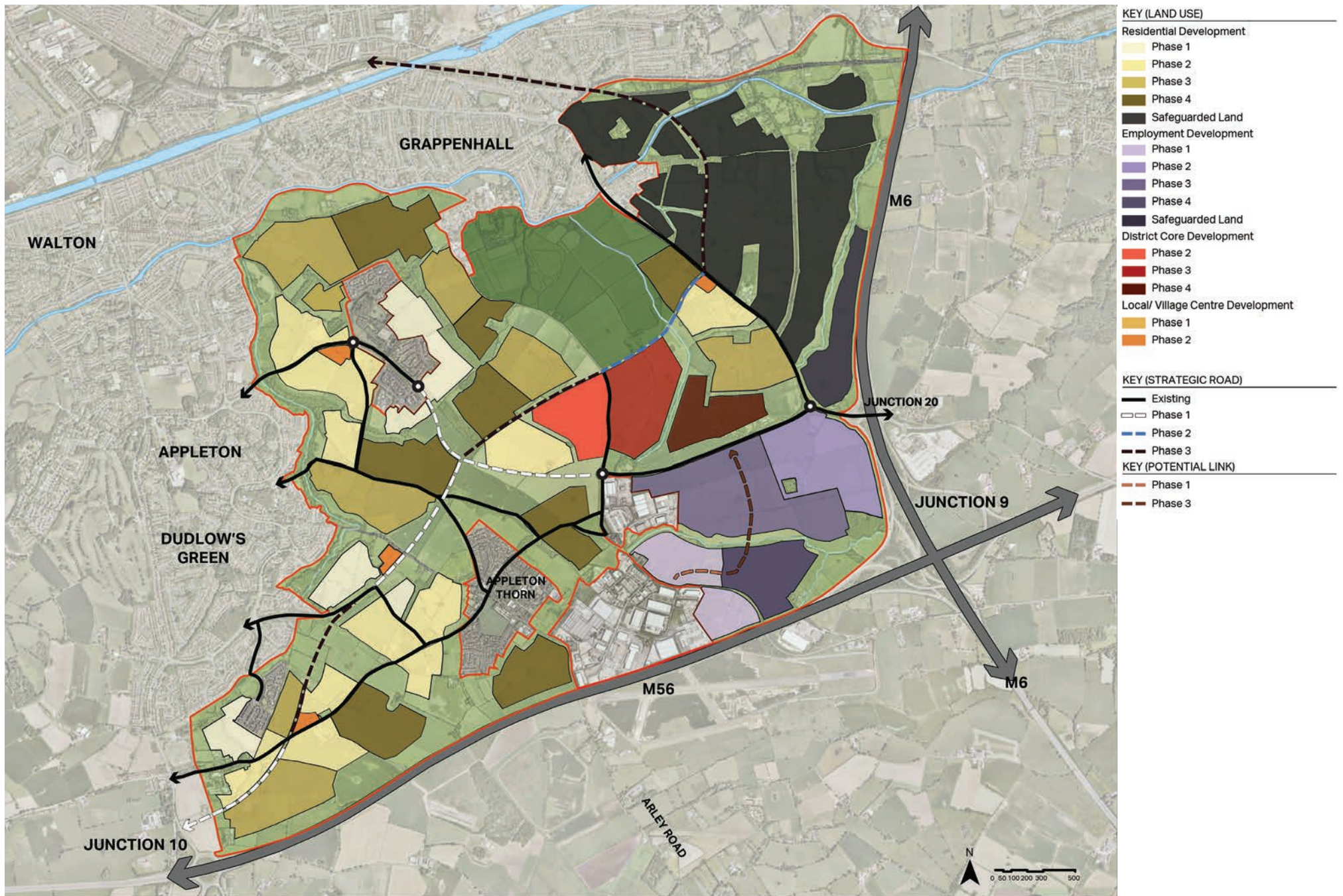


Figure 4.5: SWUE Completion Phase Plan

4.2 Conclusion

Development of the SWUE site presents a significant positive opportunity for Warrington, which will help to meeting housing and employment land supply requirements in the following 20 years. The framework plan provided in this document demonstrates potential solutions to achieving this ambition and vision, which will include 7,979 housing units, 117.3 ha employment land, one secondary school, up to 3 primary schools, a new 84.1 ha Country Park, and 55 ha District Core. This will be a significant opportunity for Warrington to create a new sustainable urban extension to the south of Warrington, and welcome people to live and work to this new neighbourhood.

AECOM