

LAND AT STAGE LANE AND MILL LANE, LYMM, WARRINGTON.

**DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

MAY 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONTENTS

This Development Framework has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Anwyl Land (hereafter referred to as ‘our Client’). It demonstrates that land to the north of Stage Lane and west of Mill Lane, Lymm, Warrington (the Site) represents a sustainable solution to deliver new family and affordable housing to contribute to the future housing needs of Warrington Borough and the wider Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area, as part of a mixed use scheme.

The Site is submitted to Warrington Borough Council as an option for mixed use development in response to work being undertaken by the Council in progressing its Local Plan Review. Our Client will make representations to that process.

The Council’s Scope and Contents Document Draft of its Local Plan identified that if Warrington is to meet its development needs, then based on the updated assessment of urban capacity, sufficient Green Belt land will need to be released to deliver at least 5,000 homes and 261 hectares of employment land over the next 20 years.

The Site is located to the east of Lymm and is currently designated as Green Belt. Lymm is a Second Tier Settlement within the Warrington Core Strategy (2014) and a location which we consider to be a sustainable location in which to help Warrington meet its housing needs. Lymm is the largest and most sustainable settlement outside of Warrington within the borough. The Site has access to public transport and a range of local amenities and employment opportunities. At this time, Lymm is significantly constrained by its being inset into the Green Belt, however, given the need to release Green Belt land across the Borough, we consider that the Site, by virtue of its limited contribution towards the Green Belt, can be developed without harming the overall integrity of the Green Belt to the east of Lymm.

This document has been prepared to take into account key technical and spatial considerations to inform the preparation of a Concept Masterplan which demonstrates the suitability of the Site for mixed use development. Moreover, it sets a clear case for allocating the Site for development within the emerging Local Plan.

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HEATLEY

OUGHTRINGTON

LYMM

Stage Lane

Mill Lane

— Site Boundary

VISION

Our Vision for the Site is the creation of a sustainable mixed use development which makes a positive contribution to the surrounding context. This will include a range of new homes, comprising affordable properties, starter homes, self-build plots, and elderly accommodation. Moreover, new footpath and cycleways will provide enhanced links with the surrounding area, including links to the Bridgewater Canal and the Trans Pennine Trail.

Key to the delivery of the Site successfully will be the phasing of the Site to ensure its integration with surrounding land uses and provide opportunities for the development to assimilate with the surrounding area.

We see the Site providing a range of development uses set within a network of accessible landscaped spaces. This will include the retention and enhancement of the existing Public Rights of Way through the centre of the Site and to create areas of recreation and amenity value for current and future residents in Lymm.



Figure 1: Indicative Perspective of New Homes

PLANNING CONTEXT

The adopted Development Plan for Warrington comprises the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2014) which provides the overarching strategic policy document in the Local Planning Framework. It sets out the planning framework for guiding the location and level of development in the Borough up to 2027.

The High Court Challenge to the adoption of parts of the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy was heard and decided in February 2015 by Mr Justice Stewart. The Judge quashed the Local Plan with regard to its housing target of 10,500 new homes and reference to 1,100 new homes at the Omega Strategic Proposal.

The Council published its Initial Scope and Contents Draft of the Local Plan in October 2016 and is due to publish its Preferred Options Draft at the beginning of Summer 2017. The revised Local Plan will set the housing target for the number of new homes that will need to be delivered in the Borough over the Plan period. National Planning Policy requires the Local Plan to fully meet the 'Objectively Assessed Needs' (OAN) for market and affordable housing in the Borough.

The most up to date study assessing the housing OAN for the Borough is the Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 (SHMA). For Warrington, the Mid Mersey SHMA identified an

Objectively Assessed Need of **839 new homes (to include 220 Affordable units)** per year up to 2037, and an additional 62 bed spaces in Care Homes (specialist housing for elder people), per year up to 2037. The OAN figure is only the starting point and in line with the requirements of national planning policy, the OAN figure should be tested against the Borough's land supply position, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, improved affordability and market signals, as well as the Council's economic growth aspirations in order to arrive at a housing target within the Local Plan. This ensures the alignment of all relevant strategies, which might result in a higher or lower housing target within the Local Plan, other than the identified OAN.

As set out above, the likely increased housing needs for the Borough result in further requirements on housing land across the Borough. The initial draft of the Local Plan identified that if Warrington is to meet its development needs, then based on the updated assessment of urban capacity, sufficient **Green Belt land will need to be released to deliver approximately 5,000 homes and 261 hectares of employment land over the next 20 years.**

Clearly, the above changes in relation to the identified housing needs within the Borough will rightly require the re-visitation of the Council's strategy for development as a whole; including an assessment as to

whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist to justify a review of the Green Belt boundaries. This is clearly a task for the emerging Local Plan and its evidence base to undertake in the round. However, at this stage we consider that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a Green Belt review is likely to be necessary.

Currently, the Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SN1 seeks to distribute some 40% of new homes within the suburban areas of the town of Warrington and development within the Borough's defined outlying settlements; including Lymm. However, this model for distribution is likely to be revised in light of new emerging evidence.

We support the Core Strategy's recognition that Lymm is a sustainable location within which to locate new housing development. Clearly, in previous iterations of the Local Plan, Lymm has been significantly restrained as a location for new development. However, in light of the emerging evidence base, we consider that it is likely that a review of the Green Belt will be necessary and that the Site can be removed from the Green Belt without significantly undermining the purposes or function of the Green Belt at Lymm. We consider that the Site, and Lymm as a settlement are a sustainable location to help meet the Borough's housing needs.

In October 2016 the Council published a Green Belt Assessment (GBA) undertaken by

ARUP which assesses large strategic parcels of land within the Green Belt and their contribution that they make towards the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The Green Belt assessment provides a strategic overview of those parcels and then goes on to assess individual sites. This Development Framework provides a more focussed assessment of our Client's Site set out later in this document and concludes that the Site performs a limited Green Belt function. It is not the purpose of this document to address whether 'exceptional circumstances' exist to justify the review of Green Belt boundaries.

The Site is considered to be a strong housing market area that provides the potential to provide a mix of densities and a range of value homes. The size of the Site and its ability to be phased across the Plan Period will enable the development to deliver housing to help meet the Council's housing requirements across the Plan Period. In total, it is envisaged that the Site will be able to deliver **c.350-400 dwellings** and other uses as part of a mixed use scheme across the Site area of 20.9 hectares.

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

LOCATION

Lymm is identified as a second tier Settlement within the Council's established Settlement Hierarchy, and is the largest settlement outside of the town of Warrington. The Site is located adjacent to local convenience shopping facilities at Heatley Mere to the north, 1.8km from Lymm Neighbourhood Centre to the west and 13km from Warrington Town Centre to the north west.

DESCRIPTION

Oughtrington is part of Lymm's urban area and has a predominantly residential character. The majority of existing properties in Oughtrington take the form of semi-detached and detached dwellings and bungalows with newer development to the north of the Site comprising higher density town houses. Some employment uses are available off Millers Lane which runs between the north of the Site and Rush Green Road to the north west.

The Site is outside the settlement boundary and is designated as Green Belt land. To the south of the Site is Stage Lane with the Bridgewater Canal beyond, both of which run in an east-west direction with Spud Wood beyond to the south. To the east the Site is bound by Mill Lane with open countryside beyond comprising predominantly of agricultural land.

To the north of the Site is Heatley Flash lake which sits between the Site and residential development to the north; the lake is designated as a feature of Biodiversity Importance.

The Site is currently used as agricultural land split into 4 irregular shaped fields separated

by hedgerows of various condition and quality and interspersed with a number of mature native trees. The north easterly field includes a small pond surrounded by a few mature trees; the pond is designated as a feature of Biodiversity Importance. There is a Public Right of Way running roughly west to east across the Site between the junction of Sandy Lane and Stage Lane in the west and Mill Lane in the east. The Site boundaries along the perimeter of the Site comprise similarly mixed condition of hedgerow planting with sporadic mature native trees; some groups of trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

To the south east corner of the Site there are a mix of sporadic land uses including residential, horticultural and agricultural plots and groups of commercial buildings. To the south of those buildings is a small car park providing access to the canal and Spud Wood.

The Site sits entirely within Flood Zone 1 as denoted by the Environment Agency's Indicative Flood Zone Mapping as an area of least flood risk. There are no features of heritage significance near the Site or within a range where development of the Site would be considered to affect their setting.





Heatley Mere

Millers Lane

Heatley Flash Lake

OUGHTRINGTON

Mill Lane

Stage Lane

Spud Wood

— Site Boundary

CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

The Site is located in a sustainable location at the urban edge of Oughtrington, which forms part of the wider settlement of Lymm. The adopted Warrington Core Strategy identifies Lymm as a sustainable and suitable location for new development in the Borough.

Existing services and facilities in Oughtrington are located adjacent to the Site in between a 1 minute and a 5 minute walk from the Site and include Heatley Mere Co-op food store, hairdressers and beauty salon, independent cycle shop and some small local employment uses. Oughtrington Community Primary School is within easy walking distance from the Site to the south west.

FACILITIES

Within the main settlement of Lymm, local residents can enjoy access to a range of services and amenities within comfortable walking and cycling distance from the Site. These include, but are not limited to:

- Lymm Village Pre-School;
- Sainsbury's Supermarket;
- Boutique and Independent Retailer;
- Coffee Shops and Bakeries / Delicatessens;
- Restaurants and Takeaways;
- Lymm Community Centre;
- Maple Lodge Scout Group;
- Lymm United Reform Church;
- Public Houses;
- Banking Facilities;
- Post Office;
- Newsagent;
- Dental Practice;
- Hairdressers and Barbers;
- Beauty Salon(s);
- Pharmacy; and
- Doctors.

Lymm Centre provides a full range of shops and services associated with a higher order centre. It has a strong retail offer, night time economy and a wide range of employment opportunities.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Site has access to public transport in the form of existing bus stops/services on Sandy Lane and on Rush Green Road and onwards via Lymm Centre. The closest bus stop is located on Rush Green Road, 700m from the centre of the Site and provides regular direct connections via services number 5 and 43 between Warrington and Altrincham.

- 5, 43, 191– Rush Green Road
- 191 - Sandy Lane

Onward travel via public transport is available via bus connection to Warrington Station which is located on the national rail network providing links to major towns and cities across the region such as Manchester and Liverpool as well as links further afield to Birmingham and London.

WALKING AND CYCLING

The Site is well connected in terms of walking and cycling links. Links into Oughtrington provide a residential area with pedestrian walkways and safe cycling routes which extend to Lymm Centre. A Public Right of Way runs through the centre of the Site from west to east and provides access to the residential areas to the west of the Site as well as providing public access to the wider open countryside. To the south of the Site are recreational walking and cycling facilities along the Bridgewater Canal. To the north of the Site is the Trans-Pennine Way which provides access to the national cycle network.

The proximity of these routes provides opportunities to connect to existing facilities and services at Lymm, and recreational opportunities within the wider open countryside.

The plan opposite demonstrates that a significant proportion of facilities and public transport opportunities are within a convenient and safe walking and cycling distance from the Site.

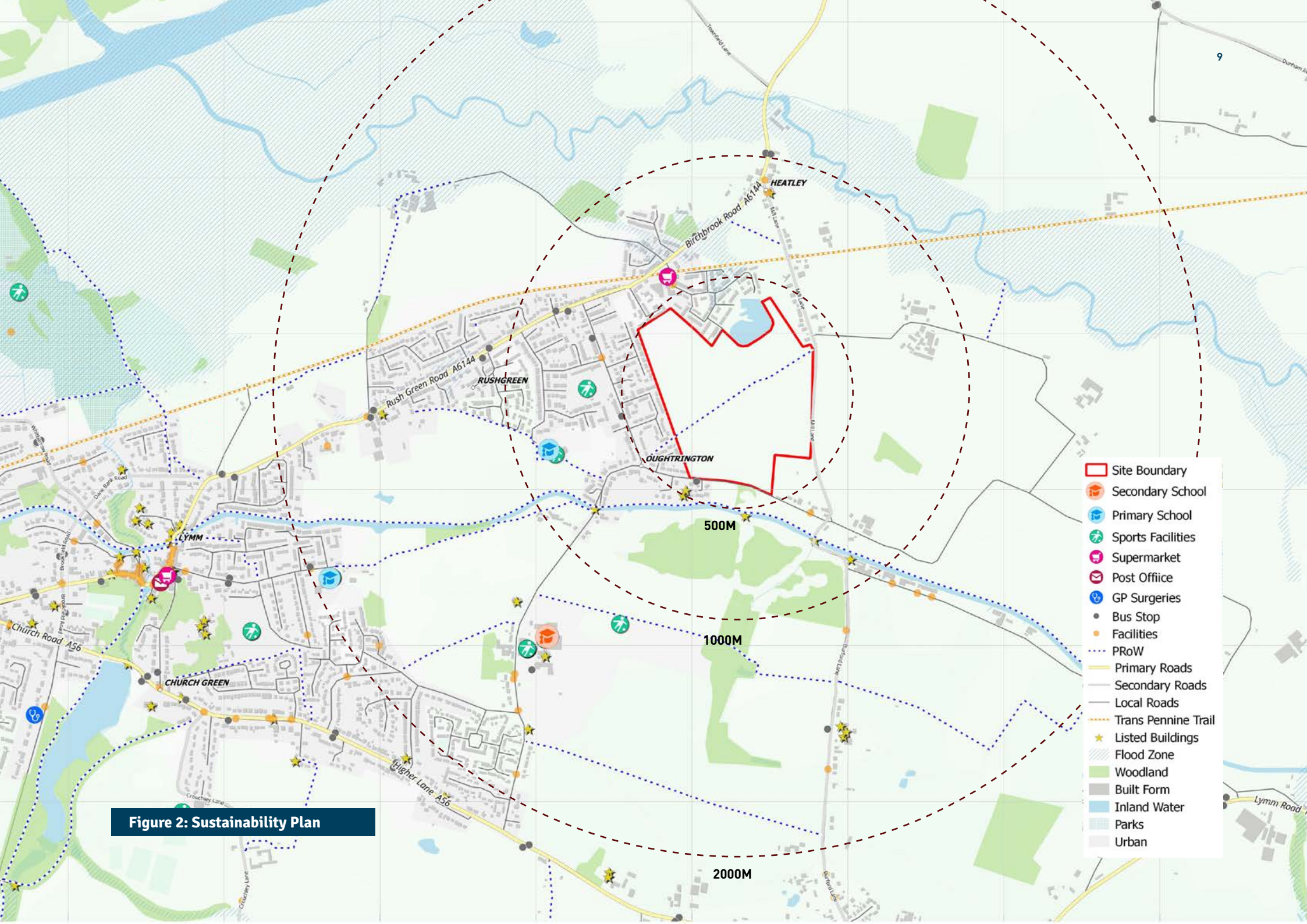


Figure 2: Sustainability Plan

- Site Boundary
- 🏫 Secondary School
- 🎓 Primary School
- 🏃 Sports Facilities
- 🛒 Supermarket
- ✉️ Post Office
- 🏠 GP Surgeries
- Bus Stop
- Facilities
- ⋯ PRow
- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Local Roads
- ⋯ Trans Pennine Trail
- ★ Listed Buildings
- Flood Zone
- Woodland
- Built Form
- Inland Water
- Parks
- Urban

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

The urban area of Oughtrington adjoins the Site and typically comprises Post-War residential housing interspersed with historic residential development, employment uses and community facilities.

Immediately adjacent to the western Site boundary is an area of Post-War housing served off Sandy Lane, which comprises both private and social housing. This area includes privately built 1980s bungalows characterised by brown/red brick, grey roof tiles and the occasional render (image 1), and examples of council built semi-detached and terraced properties (image 2).

Sandy Lane itself provides a varied street scene characterised by different Post-War house types and the occasional example of more historic development, including agricultural worker's cottages and Victorian Villas (image 3). This tightly knit street is softened by several mature trees (image 4) and the presence of a landscape strip adjacent to residential development fronting its northern section (image 5).

To the west of Sandy Lane is a further area of Post-War development, comprising bungalows backing onto an area of public open space. Development is typically arranged in cul-de-sac fashion with more generous road and pavement widths and the presence of front gardens and on-plot parking (image 6).

Adjacent to the northern Site boundary is an area of higher density modern residential development at Chaise Meadow (image 7 and 8). Comprising a mix of three storey flatted blocks, town houses, and two and a half storey detached units, properties are constructed in red brick with grey roof tiles and examples traditional detailing around the cills, lintels, and doors. The area also includes a small parade of shops (image 9) which provides a clear gateway to the residential area and welcoming interaction with the adjacent Trans Pennine Trail.

To the east of the Site, along Mill Lane, are examples of more historic residential development with the occasional modern infill development. This includes large detached and semi-detached properties (images 10 and 11) set within generous plots and typically constructed with red brick and grey slate roof tiles.



Figure 3: Photo Location Map



GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

The Warrington Green Belt is contiguous with the Green Belt in Merseyside, Greater Manchester and North Cheshire. Lymm is the largest of the outlying settlements surrounded by the Green Belt. As a whole, settlements within the Borough are tightly constrained by Green Belt. Warrington Borough Council's evidence base points towards the need to review the Green Belt boundaries within across the Borough to meet its development requirements. This will necessitate an evidence based review of sites suitable for release should a Green Belt Review take place.

In October 2016 the Council published a Green Belt Assessment (GBA) which assesses large strategic parcels of land within the Green Belt and their contribution that they make towards the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The Green Belt assessment provides a strategic overview of those parcels before going on to assess individual sites.

The Site is assessed as part of strategic 'Parcel 7' comprising land to the east of Lymm before a focussed assessment of the Site is undertaken as part of 'Parcel LY14'. Parcel LY14 predominantly comprises the Site but includes additional land including Heathley Flash Lake to the north, adjacent residential development at the north east of the Site fronting Mill Lane and the farm buildings to the south east corner of the Site.

Notwithstanding the additional land included within Parcel LY14, it is considered that the Parcel assessed is reflective of our Client's Site in terms of its character and Green Belt function.

The Green Belt assessment assesses the proposed Site against the 'five purposes' of including land within the Green Belt as outlined within paragraph 80 of the NPPF. We consider the Site to be suitable for release from the Green Belt.

Overall, the GBA concludes that the Site makes only a moderate contribution to the Green Belt. The GBA states that the parcel makes no contribution in terms of its affect on urban sprawl of Warrington, no contribution towards preventing towns merging together and no contribution towards protecting the setting of a historic town. We agree with those conclusions.

The Site is considered within the GBA to make a moderate contribution towards urban renewal insofar as the Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development. Whilst we do not disagree with this conclusion, all greenfield Green Belt Sites within the Borough will inevitably make the same contribution in this sense. In light of a review of the Green Belt boundary being necessary for the borough to meet its housing needs, we consider that this function of Green Belt land can be discounted from the Site's contribution towards the purposes of the Green Belt.

The Site is considered within the GBA to make a strong contribution towards preventing the encroachment of development within the countryside which is the primary reason for its being considered to make a moderate contribution overall. The GBA notes that the parcel is connected to the settlement along its northern and western boundaries; with the western boundary lacking durability and the northern boundary having some weaknesses.

Importantly, the GBA identifies that the parcel is connected to the countryside predominantly along Mill Lane to the east and Stage Lane to the south both of which form durable boundaries which could prevent further encroachment if the parcel was developed.

The GBA also notes that the parcel supports long line views of the countryside and overall supports a strong degree of openness and therefore the parcel makes a strong contribution to safeguarding from encroachment.

We agree with the conclusions of the GBA with regard to the lack of durability with regard to the Site's existing boundaries with the settlement and the potential durability of Stage Lane and Mill Lane and defensible edges of the Green Belt. Whilst the Site is clearly open in its character when viewing outwards from the settlement, it is contained to a certain extent by its surrounding land uses, including residential and farm

development to the south and south-east and by woodland to the south; as well as residential development along its western and northern boundaries.

Whilst the Site clearly makes a contribution to the openness and function of the Green Belt, we consider that function is limited by the factors above. When considered in the context of the Green Belt as a whole, and in light of the likely need to release Green Belt land within the Borough, we consider that there are unlikely to be other sites which are capable of delivering the scale and quality of development within such a sustainable location that would perform less of a Green Belt function. At settlements that are enclosed by the Green Belt the loss of land which protects against encroachment into the countryside is considered to be an inevitability. However, what is considered to be vital, is the ability of the Council to release land from the Green Belt whilst minimising harm and which provides new strong and defensible boundaries to the Green Belt; as is the case with the Site.

We believe that the Site makes a weak overall contribution to the Green Belt, but we do agree with the Conclusions of the GBA summary with regard to the Site which states:

“In line with the methodology, professional judgement has therefore been applied to evaluate the overall contribution. The parcel has been judged to make a moderate overall contribution as, **while it supports a strong degree of openness and it has non-durable boundaries with the settlement, the durability of its boundaries with the countryside means that any encroachment resulting from development would be contained and would therefore not threaten the openness and permanence of the Green Belt as a whole.**”



BARTON WILLMORE GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

Overall our Client’s Site performs well when judged against the five purposes; in particular the assessments notes that the Site:

- Is well connected to the built-up area;
- Has well defined boundaries and a low potential for unrestricted sprawl;
- Will not result in the merging of two settlements;
- Does not impact the special character of historic settlements; and
- Provides an opportunity to ‘round-off’ the settlement.

As set out within the accompanying table, we have also undertaken our own Green Belt assessment of the Site.

Table 1 : Green Belt Assessment

PURPOSE	CRITERIA AND DEFINITIONS	ASSESSMENT	CONCLUSIONS
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Would development of the Site lead to / constitute ribbon development?	No. The Site forms part of a very distinct parcel of physically and visually contained land with very definite identifiable boundaries. The Site offers a logical extension to the east of Lymm.	No unrestricted sprawl.
	Would development result in an isolated development Site not connected to existing boundaries?	No. The Site would adjoin the built-up area to the east of Lymm.	
	Is the Site well connected to the built-up area? Does it have 2 or more boundaries with the existing built-up area?	Yes. The Site is bound by residential development on its western and northern boundaries. The Site therefore has two boundaries that are urban in character.	
	Would development of the Site effectively ‘round off’ the settlement pattern?	Yes the proposed development would help round off the east of Lymm.	
	Do natural and physical features (major road, river etc.) provide a good existing barrier between the existing development and undeveloped land, which if breached may set a precedent for unrestricted sprawl.	Stage Lane to the south and Mill Lane to the east provide significant defensible boundaries to further development. To the south beyond Stage Lane is the Bridgewater Canal.	
2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Do natural features and infrastructure provide a good physical barrier or boundary to the Site that would ensure development was contained?	Yes. The Site is currently bound to the north and west by residential development. To the south and east by Stage Lane and Mill Lane respectively.	Development of the Site would not result in the merging of settlements.
	Would development of the Site lead to physical connection of two or more settlements?	No. The nearest other main settlement to the Site to the east is Altrincham which is over 6km away. By virtue of distance, physical barriers, topography and surrounding land use, development of this Site would not lead to coalescence between the two settlements.	
	Would the development of the Site help preserve the physical separation of settlements across the district?	Yes. As a strategic parcel of land, the Green Belt to the east of Lymm is less constrained and less important in terms of its function or preventing the urban sprawl of Warrington and the merging of settlements across the Borough than most strategic areas of Green Belt. Development of the Site will make a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs of Warrington, alleviating development pressure in the more constrained parts of the Borough.	

PURPOSE	CRITERIA AND DEFINITIONS	ASSESSMENT	CONCLUSIONS
3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Is there a strong, defensible boundary between the existing urban area and the Site – wall, river, main road etc (as opposed to garden boundaries)?	No.	The Site does perform a role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment but a role that is considered to be less important than most Green Belt land within the Borough.
	Does the Site provide access to the countryside – footpaths, bridleways across the land, or it is designated park / green space?	The Site comprises agricultural land that does not provide access to the wider public. There is a Public Right of Way that runs through the centre of the Site to provide access to open countryside to the east of Lymm. The Public Right of Way would be retained and enhanced to provide usable and accessible public amenity space and enhancing access to the countryside as part of the development proposals. The Site is not a designated park/green space.	
	Does the Site include national or local nature conservation designation areas?	No. There is a pond feature within the Site which is designated for its nature conservation interest. The development of the Site offers an opportunity to enhance that interest and access to nature.	
	Does the Site include areas of woodland, trees, hedgerow that are protected (protected ancient woodland) or significant unprotected tree / hedge cover?	Yes. There are several trees across the Site which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Those trees would be retained and enhanced as part of the proposed development to encourage new wildlife habitats and to ensure the trees are protected in the future.	
	Does the Site include any best and most versatile grade 1,2,3a (where known) agricultural land?	Unknown.	
	Does the Site contain buildings?	No.	
4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Lymm is a town of historic importance but the Site is not considered to interact with any feature of historical importance or its setting.		Development of the Site would have no effect on the setting and special character of a historic town.
5. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling or urban / derelict land	N/A	No. The Site is promoted as a suitable housing site for Green Belt release to meet the future housing needs of Warrington and the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area. There is insufficient brownfield land to achieve this. Development of this Site will be to pick up the shortfall and will not conflict with the Council's regeneration strategy aimed to assisting urban regeneration through the re-use of urban land.	Development of the Site would not have any impact on regeneration within the Borough.

As set out within this Development Framework, the Site would provide development within clearly defined boundaries, using prominent and permanent physical features. The development of this Site would not compromise the integrity of the surrounding landscape, moreover, as above the development of the Site would lessen development pressure elsewhere in the area in more sensitive locations, thus helping to preserve the openness of the Green Belt as a whole.

The Site is adjacent to the existing urban edge of Lymm, and its located between Stage Lane and Mill Lane which means the Site will not encroach into the open countryside and will provide a logical extension to the settlement. It is clear from the Sustainability Assessment set out earlier in the Framework that the Site is located close to a number of facilities and services in Oughtrington and accessible to Lymm Neighbourhood Centre.

The Site is accessible to a public transport route along Rush Green Road. Frequent bus services are available to Altrincham and Warrington where there is a wider range of services and employment opportunities. There are also extensive bus, rail and tram services from Warrington and Altrincham to Manchester City Centre as the wider Greater Manchester conurbation and the national public transport system.

The development of the Site will continue to provide an attractive and accessible residential area as well as help to safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Oughtrington Centres as well Lymm Neighbourhood Centre for retail and service provision. Warrington will at least need to meet its own housing needs to maintain its anticipated population growth but will also require housing to meet the needs of an expanding workforce associated with employment growth in the district.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS FROM GREENBELT ASSESSMENT

National Planning Policy acknowledges that in order to fulfil housing requirements, a review of the Green Belt may be necessary. We consider that a future spatial strategy for Warrington that relies predominantly on the renewal of urban areas will not deliver the housing needs of the Borough. Due to the urban nature of the land to the west and north of the Site and the tightly drawn Green Belt at Lymm and throughout the Borough, any significant alternative development opportunities are likely to necessitate development within the Green Belt.

Clearly, preference should be given to those sites that no longer meet at least one of the five purposes for its inclusion within the Green Belt as defined at paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

This assessment demonstrates that the Site is an appropriate location to allocate new housing development within the Borough and can be achieved without conflicting with the purposes or function of the Green Belt; including conflicted with the regeneration principles proposed by the Council.

We welcome further discussions with the Council regarding the assessment of the Site.





SITE ASSESSMENT

This Section presents our initial Site investigations that future development proposals should consider.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Established boundary treatments and land uses restrict short and medium distance views into the Site from the east and the south. The flat topography of the Site will assist in restricting visibility from short, medium and longer distances views.

Residential development to the north and west of the Site as well as the area of woodland located along the southern edge of the Site are considered to be permanent and impermeable landscape features that will prevent views of the Site.

An initial appraisal suggests the arboricultural, ecological and amenity value of the Site could be enhanced further subject to the appropriate development of the Site and through careful management. The PROW through the Site can be enhanced with additional amenity land and the development of the Site can be used to enhance access to the countryside beyond Mill Lane to the east.

An arboricultural survey has yet to be undertaken, however, there is the potential to retain existing landscape features within the proposed development. Suitable replacements should be provided to compensate for any losses.

There may also be opportunities to use land to the south of the Site to provide facilities to improve access to the Bridgewater Canal.

ECOLOGY

The Site is largely within agricultural use. In the main, the agricultural parts of the Site are considered likely to have relatively low ecological value, and limited suitable habitats for protected species. Notwithstanding this, the lake, hedgerows and protected trees may have some ecological value, however, the proposed development provides the opportunity to integrate any features of value in to a landscape framework capable of supporting and enhancing biodiversity through the provision of species rich planting.

TOPOGRAPHY

The Site is generally flat and is typical of many of the open field patterns that lie between Lymm and Altrincham in this area.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

The entirety of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 of the Environment Agency's indicative Flood Map which means that it is considered to have a low risk of flooding. There are two water bodies to the northern part of the Site, however, indications from the Flood Map show this would not increase the risk of flooding on the Site.

Further investigations will be necessary to understand if the Site drainage can be achieved via an appropriate designed Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDs).

ACCESS

The Site is currently accessed via a gated access off Mill Lane and Stage Lane. There is the potential to create two new vehicular junctions on Mill Lane and an emergency access on Stage Lane. There is also currently access via a gated access from Millers Lane via an unclassified track.

Pedestrian access can also be achieved via the PROW through to Sandy Lane to the west of the Site as outlined above. The proposed development provides the opportunity to integrate, enhance and add to this route.

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Established boundary treatments and land uses along the northern, southern and western edge of the Site restrict long and medium distance views into the Site; giving the Site a low sensitivity to built development in visual and landscape terms.

To the east views are relatively open and will require sensitive landscape screening. Views of the existing urban edge of Lymm are available from Mill Lane currently and additional planting and landscaping will help to strengthen this edge.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

In account of our initial Site investigations a series of opportunities and constraints have been identified to help inform the proposed development.

The opportunities and constraints presented have informed the preparation of a Concept Mastepplan (see Figure 5) .

CONSIDERATIONS

Achieve suitable vehicle access from Mill Lane and Stage Lane.

- Integration of existing woodland and trees within and surrounding the Site.
- Consider a range of house types to reflect local character.
- Consideration of the surrounding character.
- Consideration of views west from Mill Lane.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide pedestrian and cycle connections to the established PRoWs within and surrounding the Site.
- Provide subtle references to the materiality featured within the wider settlement through the occasional use of modern equivalent materials.
- Provide public well overlooked and usable public open space.
- Provide public open space and woodland planting.
- Enhance the amenity, ecological and arboricultural value of the existing landscape features within the Site.
- Provide pedestrian links through the Site.
- Strengthen the western boundary with appropriate landscaping



Figure 4: Site Assessment Plan

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Site provides a unique opportunity to deliver a high quality residential development along with significant community uses and benefits.

The opportunities and considerations previously presented have informed the preparation of the Concept Masterplan opposite, which illustrates a truly sustainable mixed use development.

Our thinking is not limited to the community uses and benefits illustrated and we are open to any other ideas that the Council might have. We firmly believe that this Site offers a solid opportunity to do something beyond simply becoming another housing estate.

- 01 **Residential development** with the potential to deliver between 350 to 400 new homes including 30% affordable housing
- 02 **C2 Care / Extra Care Village:** the delivery of 6 to 7 acres as a care village for the over 55's.
- 03 **Self build units** will be provided to deliver between 15-20 plots.
- 04 **Land reserved for a new primary school and nursery** with the Council to deliver this.
- 05 **Public Open Space** will be provided within the centre of the development to aid orientation and provide an attractive, functional and accessible place for leisure and recreation. This is likely to accommodate the existing PRoW, a multi-use games area and a children's play space.
- 06 **Pedestrian and cycle connections** to the surrounding area will be provided throughout the development and within areas of public open space. The existing PRoW traversing the Site will be maintained, and new paths will provide new pedestrian and cycle connections to the surrounding area, including links to the Bridgewater Canal to the south of the Site, and links to existing amenities and the Trans Pennine Trail to the north.
- 07 **Landscape features** will be retained, enhanced, and incorporated into a green infrastructure network. This will create a setting and identity for the new development, whilst providing increased biodiversity, recreation opportunities and landscape visual mitigation.
- 08 **The street hierarchy** will be designed to priorities pedestrians whilst creating a hierarchy of routes to aid orientation.
- 09 **Access** to the Site will be delivered from the surrounding road network, including proposed access points off Mill Lane.
- 10 **Community Allotments** could be provided and will accommodate a number of different sized plots, for use by the development and those living in the surrounding areas.

Trans Pennine Trail

Local Shops

Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections to Local Shops and Trans Pennine Trail

Additional Landscape Area Adjacent to Heatley Flash Lake

Additional Landscape Area Adjacent to Heatley Flash Lake

Heatley Flash Lake

Over 55's/ Extra Care Village:

Defensible Green Belt Boundary

Play MUGA Allotments

Residential Plots

Primary School

Public Right of Way

Parkland Views Towards St Peters Church

Self Build Plots

Bridgewater Canal

Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections to the Bridgewater Canal



- █ Site Boundary
- █ Residential Plot
- █ Over 55's Accommodation
- █ Self Build Plot
- █ Potential School

BENEFITS AND CONCLUSION

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The Site represents an available, suitable and sustainable site to be released from the Green Belt, having regard to the following benefits:

Economic Role

- The proposed development will secure a number of economic and fiscal benefits in terms of job creation (direct and in-direct through construction and new workforce provision);
- The proposed development will provide for an increased expenditure in the local economy which will support the continued vitality and vibrancy of nearby services and facilities in Oughtrington and Lymm Neighbourhood Centre.

Social Role

- The Site has the potential to deliver a high quality residential-led mixed use development delivering approximately 350-400 dwellings within Lymm, one of the preferred location for housing growth in the Borough. The proposed development would make a valuable contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough.

- The Site provides the opportunity to deliver new housing, serving as a logical extension to the existing settlement.
- Housing on the Site will be well-integrated with its surroundings, in particular existing housing to the west and north.
- The Site occupies a sustainable location for development, with easy access to a range of services and facilities located in Lymm.
- The Site has the potential to secure safe vehicular access from multiple places along Mill Lane and Stage Lane, without having an unacceptable impact on the local highway network.
- The Site benefits from access to local bus services, in turn providing access to Altrincham and Warrington, and further beyond via connections at both locations.
- There is the opportunity to create integrated pedestrian and cycle linkages as part of the Site's development, encouraging alternative modes of transport to the private car and contribution towards a low-carbon community.

Environmental Role

- The Site has the potential to accommodate a residential development without having any adverse impact on the local landscape character.
- The proposed development will be set within a strong landscape framework which will assist in absorbing the proposed development into the surrounding landscape character.
- The Concept Masterplan for the Site has taken full account of local landscape and nature conservation interest.
- The proposed development will retain and enhance existing land features, including the existing trees, hedgerows and water features, and this will be strengthened through the implementation of new soft landscaping at the edges of and within the Site.





CONCLUSION

This Development Framework has undertaken an assessment of the Site, its context and its development potential. In doing so, it has been demonstrated that there are sound planning and design reasons for the Site to be released from the Green Belt for housing.

We consider there is likely to be a clear need for Green Belt release within Warrington to meet future housing need. Lymm is an appropriate strategic location for housing growth within the Borough and should accommodate some of the future needs of the Borough.

In conclusion, the Site is available and offers a suitable location to help Warrington Council meet its future housing growth needs across the plan period.

Next Steps

The Site is considered deliverable and could start to deliver within the next five years and our Client is committed to progressing the emerging Concept Masterplan towards a high quality residential-led mixed use development that responds to the local housing need, whilst taking into account and reflecting the character of the surrounding settlement.

We look forward to working with Warrington Council to progress the proposals for the Site and welcome any feedback and/or the opportunity to meet and discuss.

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