



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020-2035

BOLD FOREST GARDEN SUBURB POSITION STATEMENT

OCTOBER 2020

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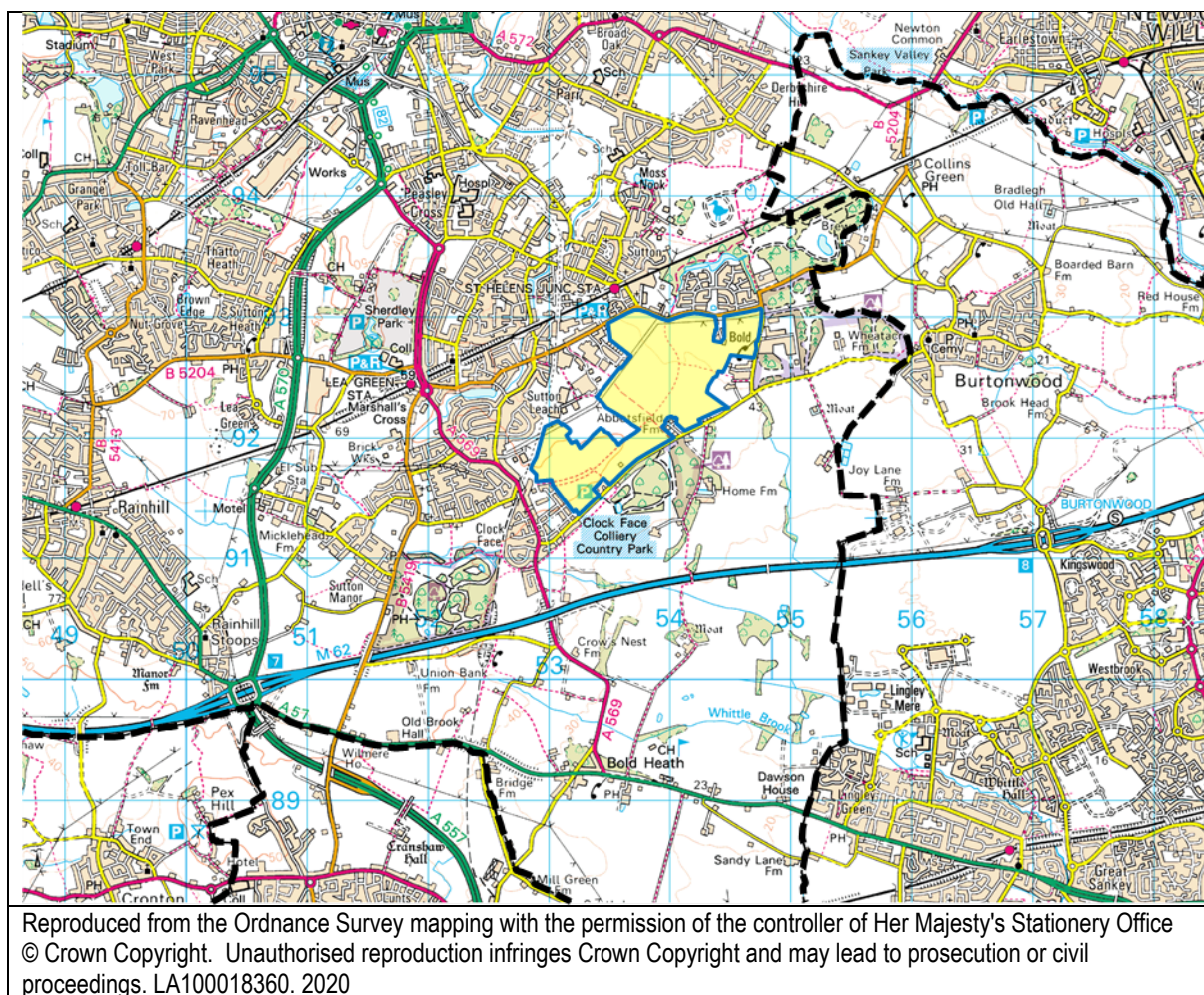
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Position Statement is one of several background papers that have been prepared by the Council. It will provide evidence for the forthcoming Examination in Public of the St. Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 (the SHBLP).

Location

1.2 The St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 includes a proposed significant housing allocation located south of the Borough in Bold. The site lies adjacent to the Clock Face Country Park, within the Bold Ward and partly within the Parish of Bold (as shown in Figure 1). The proposed allocation, known as the Bold Forest Garden Suburb (BFGS) is identified as site 4HA in the SHBLP

Figure 1: Location and Borough Boundary



Description

1.3 The BFGS comprises of a large area of undeveloped agricultural land, located on the urban edges of Clock Face, Sutton and Bold. The site contains disused colliery buildings, a scattering of farm buildings, a transmitter station and some limited areas containing trees and hedges. A line of electric pylons run through the site along the north western boundary, and a Local Wildlife Site 108 (LWS)

(Tunstalls Farm), lies to the north-western side of the site. This area, however, is not included within the overall developable area of proposed allocation 4HA. Existing residential development surrounds the site on three sides, including Reginald Road Industrial Estate; the southern edge, for the most part, is defined by Gorsey Lane.

History of Bold

1.4 Bold is located on the former site of the Bold Hall estate, the home of the ancient family of Bolde. When Peter Bold MP died in 1762, the estate passed out of the hands of the family and was eventually broken up. The Hall and the remaining 1500 acres were sold in 1893 to a syndicate of colliery proprietors.

1.5 As the town of St Helens grew, residential and industrial development spread up to the northern edges of Bold and comprises of the areas of Clock Face, Sutton Leach and Sutton.

1.6 Towards the latter part of the twentieth century the industrial uses of land at Bold declined and much of the former colliery workings and associated railway infrastructure, which was extensive, was rehabilitated, including the creation of Clock Face Country Park and the New Bold housing estate built on the former power station.

2. ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020-2035

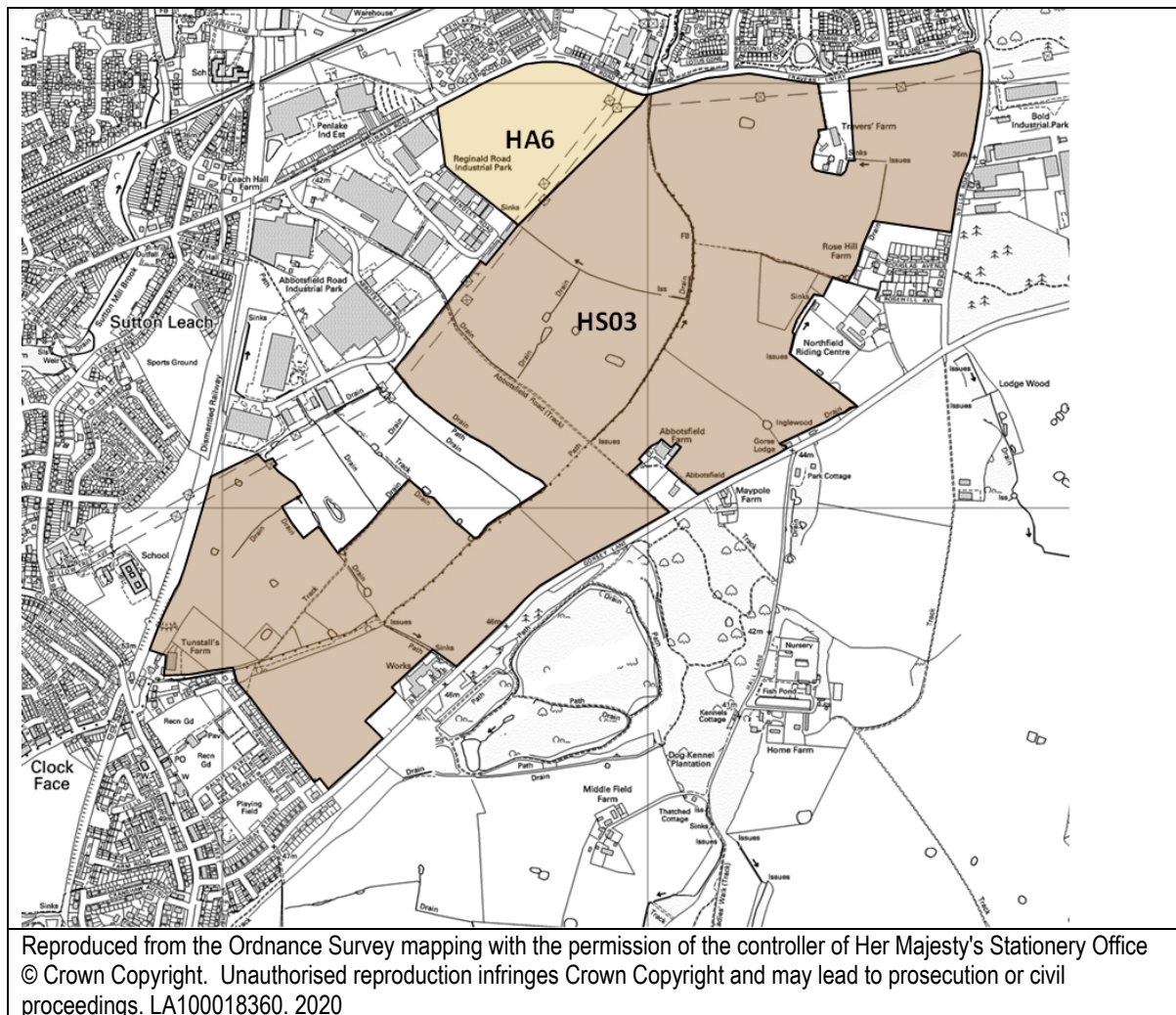
Green Belt

2.1 The BFGS site has been included in the Green Belt from 1983 when the Merseyside Green Belt was established.

Local Plan Preferred Options (LPPO) Consultation

2.2 A draft Green Belt Review 2016 was published alongside the LPPO. The site as a whole was considered to be well contained, in close proximity to St Helens Core Spatial Area, and not hampered by any prohibitive constraints. The BFGS site was identified in the LPPO mostly as land safeguarded for possible future development (Ref: HS3); a small section of the site adjacent to Reginald Road to the north was proposed to be allocated as a housing site within the Plan period (Ref: HA6) as shown at Figure 2.

Figure 2: Local Plan Preferred Options sites HA6 and HS03



2.3 Following the LPPO consultation, a total of 5,695 representations were received from individuals and representatives of organisations, local groups, and businesses. The main issues raised by these were identified and summarised by the

Council and published in the report entitled “*St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035: Local Plan Preferred Options Report of Consultation December 2018*”¹.

Local Plan Submission Draft (LPSD)

2.4 When preparing the strategy in the LPSD, Council officers carefully weighed the issues raised at the LPPO consultation stage, alongside updated evidence² (including a revised Green Belt Review (2018)) and the changing requirements of Government policy. The strategy now proposes that (instead of most of the site being safeguarded for post Plan period development) the whole site is proposed to be allocated for development.

2.5 Although development of the site will begin before 2035, it is acknowledged that most of the resultant housing will be delivered well beyond 2035. The site will be a major site providing for medium to long term housing delivery. This approach is justified by the highly sustainable location of this site, which is capable of accommodating an estimated 2,988 dwellings, and the need to ensure an effective master planning process, in accordance with national policy.

2.6 The revised Green Belt Review (2018) was published in December 2018 to inform the LPSD. It identified a substantive parcel of land to the south of the Borough (Ref: GBP_074) (which was sub-divided into four sub-parcels as shown in Figure 3 (sub parcel GBP_074_B includes land previously identified as GBP_073) all of which formed the boundary of the BFGS).

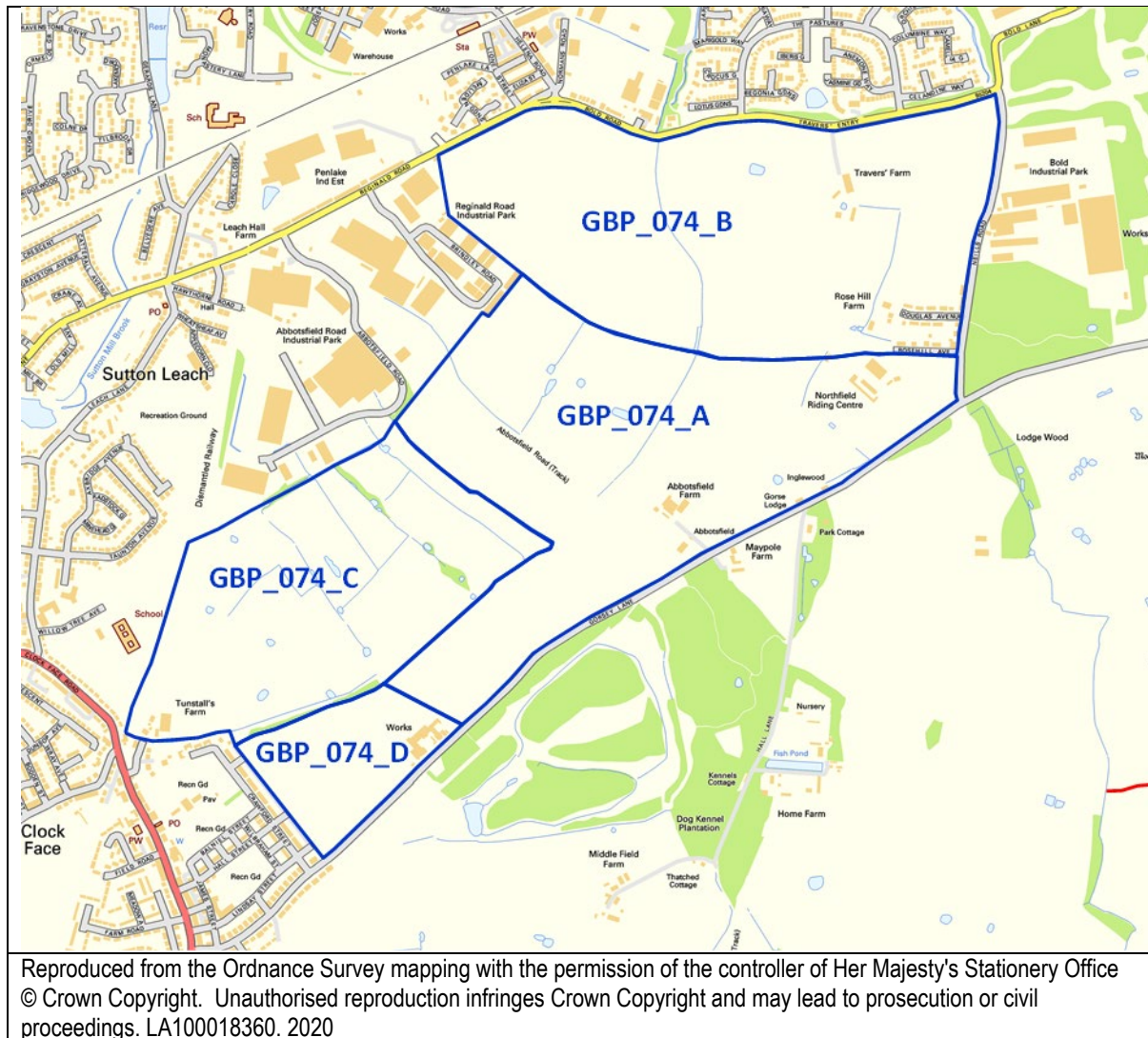
2.7 The Green Belt Review identifies that land at Bold forms a major strategic opportunity to provide a wide range of new housing in an area that is close to some of the more deprived parts of the Borough, it would thereby contribute to its balanced growth. It also has good accessibility to jobs and services and high levels of compliance with other aspects of the Green Belt Review methodology. This site therefore forms a substantial element within the overall strategy, striking the right balance between meeting housing and employment development needs, while protecting the most valuable environmental resources and the overall function of the Green Belt, albeit with a limited assumed delivery within the Plan period to reflect the currently early stage of the masterplanning of this large site.

2.8 The Green Belt Review concluded that the BFGS site as a whole should be allocated for development, noting that it “*forms a notable indent in the alignment of the southern edge of the built-up area of St Helens.*” It added that due to “*the size of the parcel, it has the potential to form a ‘garden suburb’ extension to the south of Bold, which would be sufficiently large to include new social infrastructure (such as a new primary school, local retail centre and potentially health facilities).* It would constitute a major strategic opportunity to provide a wide range of new housing in an area that is close to some of the more deprived parts of the Borough.”

¹ This document can be viewed via the Council’s Examination Library page Ref: LPI006

² More information is contained in submission documents SD026 ‘Developing the Site Strategy Background Paper’, SD020 ‘Green Belt Review 2018’ and SD025 ‘The Housing Need and Supply Background Paper’ in relation to the housing need and supply position and the exceptional circumstances justifying release of the BFGS site.

Figure 3: Green Belt Review 2018 – Sub-parcels



2.9 It further noted that development “*would need to be guided by a comprehensive master plan approved by the Council*” and that due to its scale and location “*development of the parcel would contribute strongly towards meeting the strategic aims and objectives of the Local Plan.*”

2.10 The BFGS site was therefore taken forward in the LPSD as a proposed housing allocation (Ref: 4HA). The site is given the status of a Strategic Housing site and has an area of 132.86 hectares (ha) of which 75% is considered to be developable for the purposes of calculating site development density. The resultant capacity of the site (based on 30 dwellings per hectare) is expected to be circa 2,998 dwellings, of which it is anticipated that some 360 dwellings would be completed within the Plan period (i.e. before 2035). This number is considered realistic as it is anticipated that more than one developer will be building at the same time on a site of this size.

Deliverability and Potential Supporting Infrastructure Requirements

2.11 Given the size of the BFGS site, a lead in time of seven years on adoption of the Plan has been applied for the BFGS to allow for a thorough masterplanning process. This work will then form the basis of a site-specific Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2.12 The build out rate assumptions of 60 units per annum utilised for the BFGS, are slightly lower than what some site promoters have indicated they expect to deliver on the site. The Council have taken a slightly cautious approach to assumed build out rates, given the current market uncertainty surrounding the economic impact of COVID19, the supporting infrastructure required to deliver the site and the fact that quite a lot of large former Green Belt sites will be coming to the market at the same time. Actual build out rates will depend on how many housebuilders and sale centres are operational at one time on the site.³

2.13 Throughout the preparation process for the Local Plan, the Council have consulted with various internal and external infrastructure providers, including the Council's School's Support Services Team, Highways England and St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to ascertain the level of infrastructure required to support the BFGS.

Education

2.14 In relation to primary school provision, the Council's School's Support Services Team have indicated that presently there is existing capacity at some of the nearby primary schools, but moving forward they are aware that this could be reduced due to other proposed Local Plan allocations in the Bold areas (sites 5HA, 9HA and 10HA). The School's Support Team have indicated that there could be options for expansion at some of the primary schools nearby to the BFGS.

2.15 In relation to secondary school provision, nearby secondary schools St Cuthbert's Catholic High School and The Sutton Academy, have been oversubscribed in recent years.

2.16 In order to identify specific education requirements for the BFGS the Council's School's Support Services Team is currently in the process of assessing schools in this location (and other locations in the Borough where new housing development is proposed⁴) to determine which schools would be capable of extension and where a new school could be required. These findings will feed into the BFGS masterplanning process moving forward.

³See the housing trajectory set out in the Housing Need and Supply Background Paper (SD025).

⁴ See the St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2020 for more information (SD013).

Health

2.17 St Helens CCG advised that there is a deficiency of healthcare practitioners to the south of the Borough, particularly in Bold. Therefore, there could be a need for a new general practice surgery to be constructed within the BFGS to accommodate the increased demand for healthcare in Bold (and from surrounding areas). The CCG have indicated that this new practice could be in the form of relocating and expanding an active practice onto the site.

Transport

2.18 Consultants WSP have undertaken an initial transport review to understand the likely impact of the BFGS on the wider highways network and to consider transport initiatives that could support development of the site. Please see Chapter 7 for more information.

Retail

2.19 The proposed BFGS is not within walking distance of a local or district centre. However, due to its size it is considered that the BFGS could possibly support a small local centre containing community and retail facilities. The BFGS may also provide an opportunity to help sustain the existing small row of shops north of the BFGS that were built as part of the 'New Bold' estate, which currently struggle to maintain occupancy. Again, this will be looked at in more detail through the comprehensive masterplanning process and in the subsequent SPD.

Constraints

2.20 For a site the size of BFGS, there are very few known physical constraints. Local Wildlife Site 108 (Tunstalls Farm) is a constraint that requires sensitive management and integration into the eventual site masterplan.

2.21 Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) have advised that there are known great crested newt ponds within the Local Wildlife Site, and some of their terrestrial habitat falls outside the Local Wildlife Site and within the BFGS allocation. In addition, MEAS have advised, there are other ponds within the allocation site which may also be used by great crested newt. Some of these ponds have not been subject to past survey. The requirement for great crested newt mitigation will be considered as part of the masterplanning process and preparation of the SPD.

2.22 There are pylons on the site, which run along the northern boundary and continue to follow the boundary with the industrial estate to the west. The need for a buffer to the pylons and the industrial estate will be considered in the masterplanning process.

Viability

2.23 As part of the LPSD a comprehensive Economic Viability Assessment (EVA) was carried out, which included individual construction costs for all proposed allocated sites. For site 4HA (BFGS) the viability assessment included costings for 'normals' (construction costs and public open space etc.) and 'abnormals' which

included additional public open spaces, off-site highway works, potential allowance for any unknown contamination etc. and habitat mitigation.

2.24 The costings included a full mix of dwellings including 20% of new dwellings to be built to the '*accessible and adaptable*' standard as set out in Part M4(2) of Building Regulations 2010 (as amended). Including 5% of new dwellings to be constructed to the '*wheelchair user*' standard as set out in Part M4(3) of Building Regulations 2010 (as amended), and at least 5% of new dwellings to be bungalows. The EVA costed for the provision of public open space, highway infrastructure, including improvements to Gorsey Lane and Regional Road and the provision of a new spinal road through the site. All of which was found to be viable at the headline level.

2.25 The economic viability testing also showed that the BFGS site could support a 30% affordable housing provision and as a strategic site, it could deliver at least 10% of the site's energy from renewable and or other low carbon energy sources. The construction cost sheets for 4HA of the EVA can be found in Appendix A.

2.26 It is acknowledged that as part of the master planning process, further detailed viability work will have to be carried out in consultation with site promoters to ensure that the necessary supporting infrastructure can be delivered and affordable housing requirements are achieved. In many schemes of the size of the BFGS, development agreements are a useful tool to deal with the practical delivery of the overall scheme, such as the equalisation of planning obligations. At this stage in the masterplanning process, no such agreement has been reached. This will be all be progressed as part of the masterplanning process.

Regulation 19 Responses

2.27 The Council published the 'Submission Draft' version of the St Helens Borough Local Plan: 2020-2035 (LPSP) with its supporting documents in January 2019. The Plan was accompanied by a Policies Map and a suite of supporting evidence base documents. The public consultation took place from the 17 January 2019 to 13 May 2019. In total the Council received a total of 1,991 unique responses from individuals, organisations, local groups and businesses. A number of these responses⁵ were objections from local residents to the proposed allocation of this site. Key issues raised by objectors included (amongst others):

- The loss of Green Belt;
- Proposed allocation is contrary to the Bold Forest Area Action Plan;
- Loss of large equestrian business;
- Loss of Public Rights of Way and Bridleways;
- Brownfield land should be built on first;
- Impact on Local Highways;
- Lack of health facilities in the area;
- Lack of school places for potential residents;
- Loss of wildlife and impact on biodiversity; and

⁵ A number of Part A forms (in excess of 400) were submitted but with no reference to a particular site, however the Bold and Clockface Action Group claim their submission included 400+ Part A forms.

- The proposal would double the size of the existing population in that parish.

2.28 These responses and comments have been assessed and summarised within the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (submission document ref: SD004) and full representations received can be viewed in submission documents SD007.1 - 07.35 and SD08.1 – 08.27. Appendix B contains extracts from representations received at LPSD stage from site promoters specifically relating to the BFGS.

3. POLICY

National Policy

3.1 In February 2019, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that:

“The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities. Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way” (paragraph 72).

The NPPF further states that in doing so, they should:

“b) ensure that their size and location will support a sustainable community, with sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself (without expecting an unrealistic level of self-containment), or in larger towns to which there is good access;

c) set clear expectations for the quality of the development and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles), and ensure that a variety of homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community will be provided;

d) make a realistic assessment of likely rates of delivery, given the lead-in times for large scale sites, and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation (such as through joint ventures or locally-led development corporations).”

3.2 It also recognises that in proposing such developments, the delivery of sites of this size may need to extend beyond an individual plan period, and the associated infrastructure requirements may not be capable of being identified fully at the outset, with anticipated rates of delivery and infrastructure requirements being kept under review and reflected as policies are updated.

Garden City Principles

3.3 In 2013, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) published a guide for Councils across the country titled “Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs Today”. Commonly known as the Garden City Principles, it sets out a number of principles considered fundamental for a successful Garden Suburb. These principles (as outlined in the TCPA’s publication) include:

- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable.

- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

3.4 Having regard to these principles and the key objectives of the Bold Forest Area Action Plan, and applying them to the BFGS site, the Council has identified the following key requirements for the site (as set out in Appendix 5 of the LPSD):

- The development must be consistent with the vision, aims, objectives and policies of the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (BFPAAP).
- The development must provide a well landscaped setting including extensive green links through and around the site, and tree planting to reduce impact on the landscape and promote the objective of the BFPAAP to increase tree cover by 30% across the Bold Forest as a whole.
- Any adverse impacts on biodiversity interests within the existing Local Wildlife Site (LWS 108 as indicated on the Policies Map) and the proposed extension to this must be either avoided or minimised. Any resultant harm must be adequately mitigated.
- The development must create a permeable layout with a range of highways provided through the site with access via the B5204, Neills Road and Gorsey Lane. The layout must be compatible with the provision of a bus service through the site between Clock Face and St Helens Junction.
- The development must also provide a choice permeable network of foot, bridleway, and cycle routes through the site to facilitate access between homes, workplaces, recreational facilities, and other key services in the area. These must where necessary be segregated to ensure safety and include new provision in line with policy INF6 “Creating an Accessible Forest Park” of the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan 2017.
- The provision of any other measures necessary to secure suitable access to the site by walking, cycling and public transport such as: (a) the provision of new accessible bus stops to an agreed specification through the site so that none of the proposed dwellings is more than 400 metres walking distance from a bus stop; and (b) a financial contribution towards the improvement of St Helens Junction station.
- Financial contributions or the provision of on-site infrastructure for education, local retail, health and other community facilities, and off-site highway works

may be required; this. These and other requirements will be subject to further assessment at the master planning stage.

- The master planning of the site must be informed by the findings of the Bold Forest Garden Suburb Transport Review (August 2019) and any other relevant evidence.
- The design and layout should provide for a range of house types in accordance with Policy LPC01 and LPC02.
- The layout must avoid causing excessive noise or disturbance to occupiers of existing dwellings and businesses within or around the site and for users of walking and cycling routes and open spaces.

3.5 It is considered that the above requirements (which are not limited) will provide a strong and robust foundation in developing the vision and objectives for the Bold Forest Garden Suburb, which will be further refined moving forward in the process through the various masterplanning stages and positive engagement with local residents, developers, land owners and relevant stakeholders.

Government's Garden Communities Initiative

3.6 In August 2018, the Government announced their Garden Communities Programme through a prospectus which set out their vision and expectations for high-quality place-making across the country. The Government want to champion ambitious councils who see garden communities as a central to their plans for housing and growth, encouraging such councils to come forward and see how they can assist them in delivering their vision for new garden communities.

3.7 The Government suggest that these new garden communities should offer opportunities for significant long-term housing and economic growth in a local area. Funding proposals for Garden Communities must demonstrate how the new garden community fits with the housing need for the housing market area, including expected future population growth. The Government will prioritise proposals which respond to housing need in high demand areas, and they will particularly welcome proposals which release more land through local plans to meet local housing need, and / or go above local housing need. Proposals should also demonstrate how the new garden community fits with wider strategies to support economic growth and increase productivity.

3.8 In February 2019 the Government announced a further £9 million cash injection to help speed up the locally-led building of a new town or village across the country to build 200,000 homes in new garden towns. The Garden Communities project is expected to deliver 200,000 properties on large sites by 2050, and the latest funding will help get 21 sites ready for development.

3.9 Work is already underway on 10,000 properties across the country in garden towns and villages, with 36,000 expected to be underway or completed by 2022. The funding is administrated by Homes England. It is hoped that further funding bids will be invited to be submitted to gain this Government assisted funding, as the BFGS scheme satisfies all the criteria set out in the prospectus.

Emerging St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035 Policies

3.10 The following policies, (although not in isolation) will help shape and facilitate the Bold Forest Garden Suburb site coming forward. Policy LPA05.1 addresses the requirements of what a masterplan will need to provide, and Policy LPC06 addresses how the biodiversity will be treated within the site.

Policy LPA05.1: Strategic Housing Sites

3.11 The SHBLP sets out at Policy LPA05.1 that, as a Strategic Housing site, 4HA's scale and importance to the delivery of the Plan is such that it will be subject to a number of requirements; principally that planning applications for its development are required to be:

“supported by a comprehensive masterplan covering the whole site that must set out details of at least:

- a) amount of development and proposed uses;*
- b) phasing of development across the whole site;*
- c) indicative layout and design details for the whole site that must provide for an attractive built form with high quality landscaping when viewed from within the development and elsewhere;*
- d) measures to provide good levels of accessibility to the whole site from the surrounding area by public transport, walking and cycling;*
- e) indicative layout promoting permeability and accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking;*
- f) a Green Infrastructure Plan addressing biodiversity, geodiversity, greenways, ecological network, landscape character, trees, woodland and water storage in a holistic and integrated way;*
- f) measures to address any potential flood risk and surface water drainage issues in accordance with Policy LPC12;*
- g) measures to promote energy efficiency and generation of renewable or low carbon energy in accordance with Policy LPC13;*
- h) a comprehensive strategy for the provision of all new, expanded and / or enhanced infrastructure that is required to serve the development of the whole site; and*
- i) details of how development of the site as a whole would comply with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.”*

3.12 The Policy further adds that detailed development proposals will be required to provide, or make financial provisions for, necessary infrastructure to serve the development.

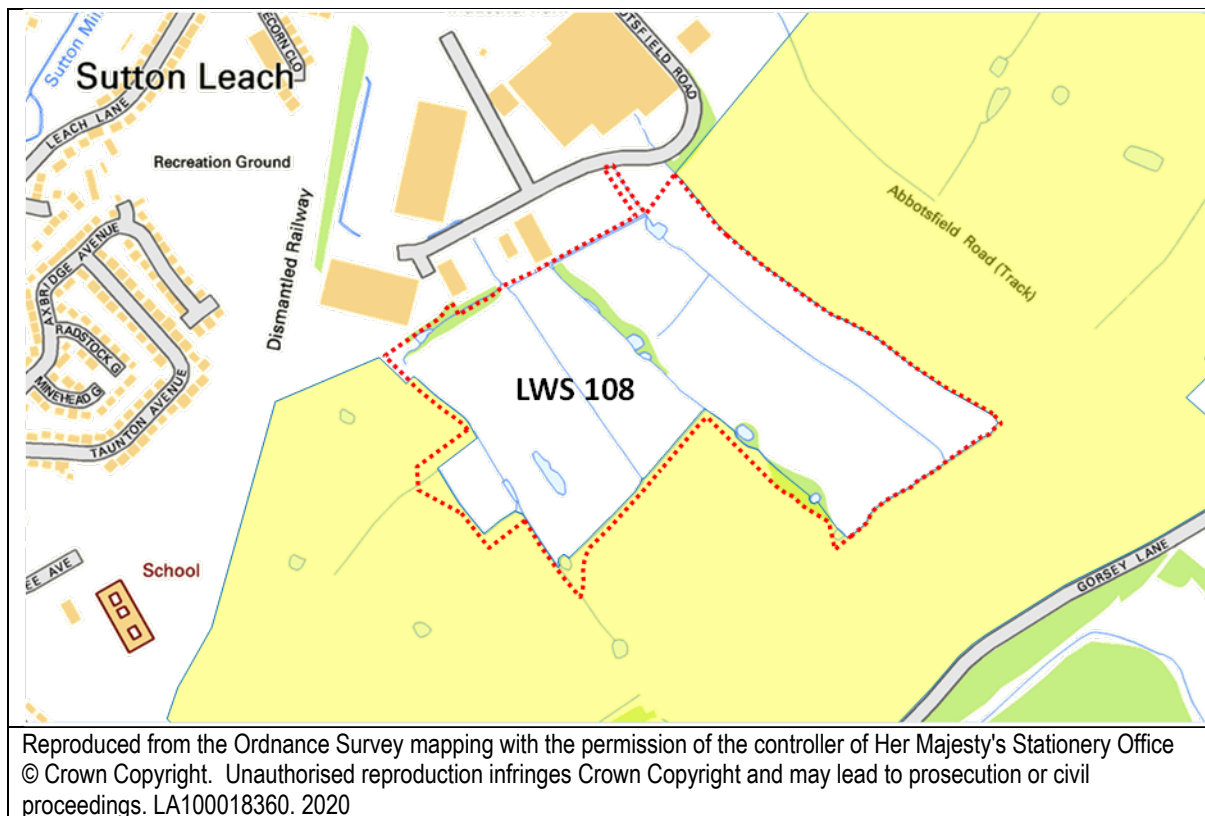
Policy LPC06: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

3.13 Policy LPC06 of the SHBLP sets out how sites, habitats and species within a hierarchy of designated nature and geological sites will be protected and managed with the objective of ensuring that there will be no net loss of the ecological resource. The Policy also guides how appropriate, mitigation, replacement or other compensation measures should be identified.

3.14 With respect to the BFGS, the site abuts and partly surrounds a Local Wildlife Site (LWS108) that was identified by MEAS and designated in 1994. LWS108 is included in the St Helens Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (June 2011) with the following description:

“... field north of Gorsey Lane - An agricultural field which is no longer cultivated due to flooding. The field is now under Countryside Stewardship and is developing into a species rich meadow including, regionally and locally important species. The ponds and ditches on site provide habitat for water vole.”

Figure 4: Local Wildlife Site 108



3.15 Work is already underway to look at the mitigation for the Great Crested newts located within the LWS, including a net gain credit scheme for the site as part of the masterplanning with colleagues at MEAS

4. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

Interim Sustainability Appraisal 2016

4.1 Appraisal of the proposed development strategy set out in the LPPO (2016) was included in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report that was produced for the LPPO by AECOM. It presented a series of alternative strategies for growth and appraised them against a series of sustainability criteria.

4.2 The Interim SA indicated that the distribution strategies and policy alternatives that were considered to be “reasonable” included those that incorporated proposals for an urban extension at Bold (in effect, Bold Forest Garden Suburb).

LPSP Sustainability Appraisal: SA Report, 2019

4.3 The Sustainability Appraisal report (SD005) that was prepared to accompany the LPSP took a similar approach to that used for the Interim SA. Various growth scenarios were considered and rejected by the Council, for various reasons; inadequate housing provision over the Plan period; too much housing provision leading to the release of even more Green Belt that was considered necessary.

4.4 It concluded that the reasonable alternative for growth and distribution (Growth Scenario 4) represented the most sustainable strategy for the Local Plan in order to meet the Plan’s aims in that it would direct new development to sustainable locations which are appropriate to its scale and nature, and which will enable good accessibility between homes, jobs and key services. It would propose a *“balanced growth, close to employment opportunities with a longer term aspiration to deliver a garden suburb.”*

4.5 The SA also indicated that as part of the spatial strategy taken would help to continue landscape reclamation and environmental improvements within the Bold Forest Park. The positive effects in this area is predicted to be significant in the longer term. It also identified that some allocated sites are of lower quality, and therefore create the potential for positive effects should new development implement attractive features that enhance the current landscape appearance and function. This applies to Site 4HA (BFGS) *“which as a large urban extension should be capable of delivering substantial improvements to green infrastructure. The site specific measures also explicitly state that extensive green links should be established in a well landscaped setting”*.

4.6 An account of the strategy development process and the alternatives considered is set out in the Developing the Spatial Strategy Background Paper (Ref: SD026) that has been prepared to accompany submission of the SHBLP.

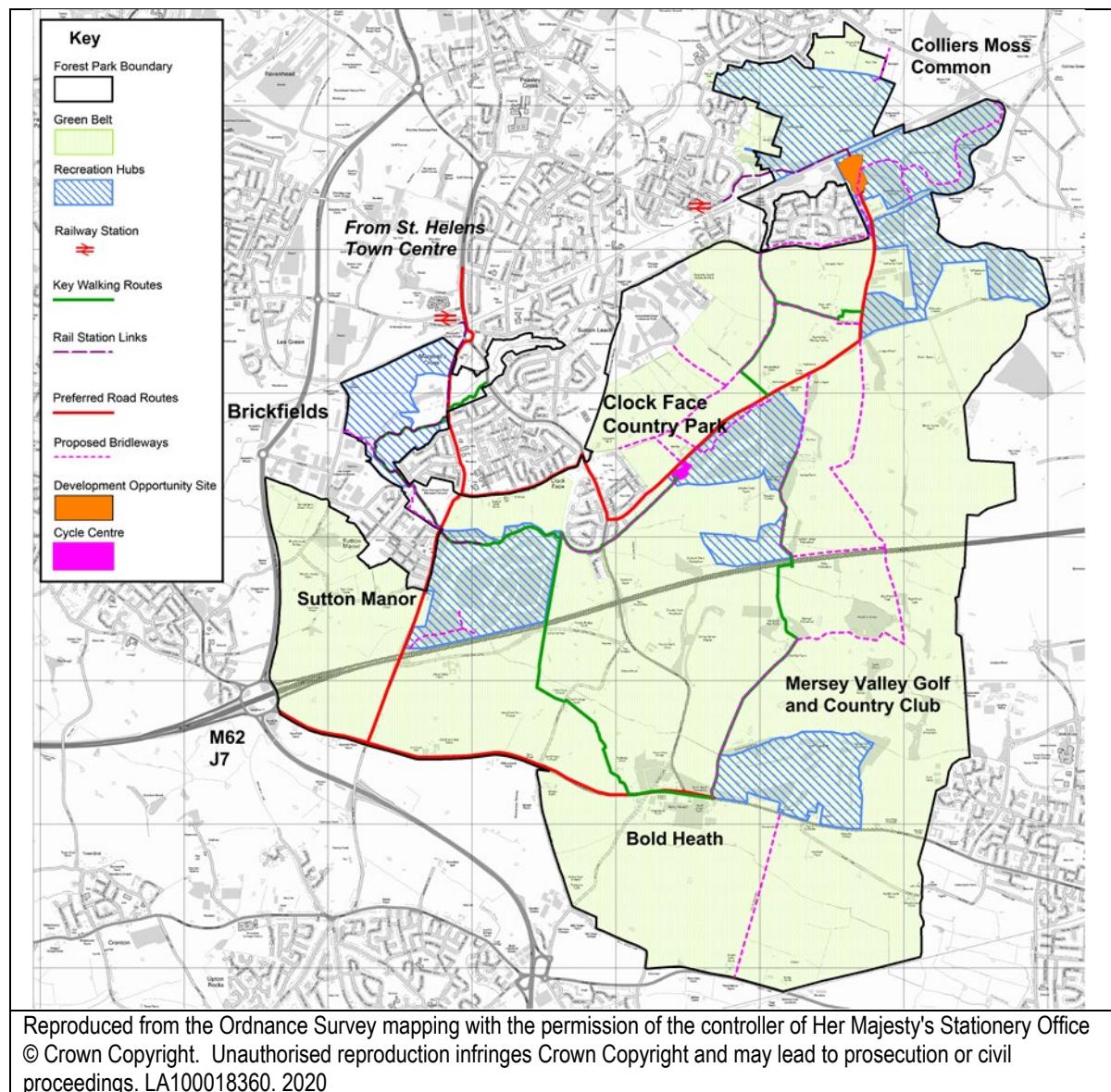
5. BOLD FOREST PARK AREA ACTION PLAN

Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan

5.1 The Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (AAP) was adopted in 2017. It is a statutory document that sets out the detailed policies and actions needed to develop and sustain the Forest Park and forms part of the Development Plan for the Borough.

5.2 The area covered by the AAP includes the entire BFGS site (4HA).

Figure 5: Bold Forest Park AAP (excerpt)



5.3 Whilst most of the AAP area will remain in the Green Belt upon adoption of the St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020-2035, the BFGS site (4HA) will not. However, it will still be subject to the policies and proposals contained therein and will be required to contribute to meeting the Vision for Bold Forest Park by having

regard to the Aims and Objectives previously set out the St Helens Core Strategy, as follows:

- 1) *“Create new economic opportunities through sustainable development within Bold Forest Park;*
- 2) *Create opportunities for tourism and leisure related business, supported by the natural economy;*
- 3) *Create an easily understood and accessible network of linked open spaces within Bold Forest Park and with surrounding areas;*
- 4) *Promote the provision and positive use of green space for the benefit of the local community and visitors; and*
- 5) *Enhance the natural environment through targeted delivery of green infrastructure programmes that improve and expand the biodiversity and landscape quality of the Bold Forest Park area.*

These can be supplemented by the additional aim of:

- 6) *Create quality outdoor space with opportunities for physical activities and positive use of green space to improve mental health and wellbeing of the local community and visitors.”*

5.4 The achievement of these Aims and Objectives will be delivered by the Policies set out in the AAP, which will remain extant following the adoption of the new Local Plan. Of particular note is Policy BFP SN1 (meeting the Strategic Land-use Needs of the Borough) which states that *“Development must:*

- a) *Contribute positively to the development of Bold Forest Park;*
- b) *Not result in the loss of critical infrastructure elements of the Forest Park or prevent their implementation; and*
- c) *Housing or employment development should include measures to enhance connectivity.”*

5.5 The development of the BFGS masterplan will need to have close regard to the AAP.

6. SITE OWNERSHIP

Call for Sites

6.1 The Local Plan preparation process has been informed by a number of Call for Sites (CfS) exercises. The aim of a CfS is to allow interested parties to suggest land or premises that could be suitable for development or allocation in the Local Plan. These exercises resulted in a number of landowners/agents coming forward to promote development interests on land that is part of the proposed Bold Forest Garden Suburb (i.e., site 4HA).

6.2 Land registry records show the BFGS comprises of some 14 parcels of land in separate ownership. Figure 6 shows these parcels and the following schedule (Table 1) sets out, the land ownership. A large field in use for arable farming – to the west of Travers' Farm – is not registered, however agents for the landowner have submitted representations as part of the LPSP consultation.

Table1: Known Ownership Information

Land Registry Title Number	Ownership Details ⁶	Size (Approx. hectares)
MS562275	Land being promoted by private landowner	3
MS506809	Land being promoted by St Helens Council	5.2
MS622440	Land being promoted by private landowner	0.35
MS644080	Land being promoted by private landowner	0.70
MS382798	Land being promoted by Taylor Wimpey	8.4
MS517465	Land being promoted by St Helens Council	19.5
MS610263	Land being promoted by private landowner	7.5
MS521459	Land being promoted by private landowner	30
MS586078	CMW Property & Machinery Ltd	6
MS256433	Land being promoted by St Helens Council	21
MS47046	Trustees for R. Shone	18
Unregistered	Although unregistered the land is being promoted through planning consultants Barton Wilmore working on behalf of the landowner.	14
MS535033	Land being promoted by private landowner	1.3
MS539626	Land being promoted through planning consultants Barton Wilmore working on behalf of the landowner.	13.4

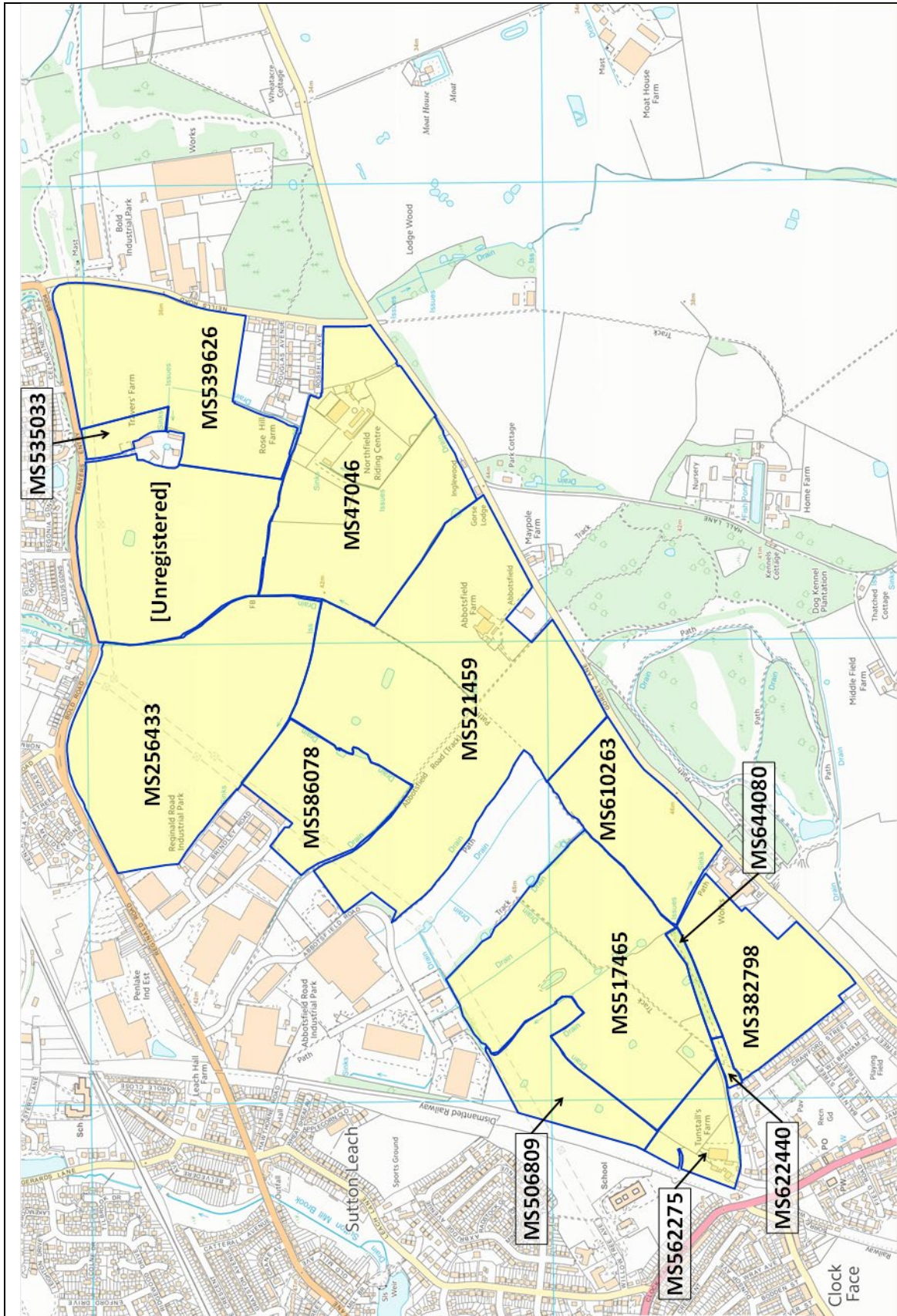
⁶ The ownership details given in Table 1 are from the publicly available database held by The Land Registry.

6.3 The majority of private landowners have submitted a Call for Sites application form and a number have employed planning consultants to represent them. All private landowners were written to and invited to meet with St Helens Council at LPPO consultation stage. The purpose of these meetings was to confirm the nature and extent of ownership, aspirations and proposals in respect of land held, known constraints and existing or emerging developer interests. Many landowners took this opportunity to speak to officers and discuss the potential development of the site.

6.4 At LPSD consultation stage a number of landowners provided concept masterplans for their specific piece of land and for the site as a whole (Appendix B). These included pedestrian and vehicle linkages/connections throughout the site and how green and blue infrastructure could be accommodated for; together with draft housing layouts. Representations received during this period also set out in broad terms the availability, suitability and deliverability of the individual parcels of land for housing, demonstrating how these areas would be suitable for release from the Green Belt, and also providing an outline vision as to how the area could be developed over the Plan period.

6.5 Although all landowners and developers who provided a Call for Sites application and submitted representations fully support the proposed allocation of this site many stated that they considered the deliverability of their site could come forward much earlier than that identified in the Council's trajectory. Adding that they considered the indicative site capacity could yield many more units than the Council had suggested.

Figure 6: Land Parcels and Land Ownership



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7. TRANSPORT

Transport Review

7.1 Consultants WSP were commissioned to carry out a transport review⁷ of the proposed BFGS, which is intended to form part of the supporting evidence for the inclusion of the site in the Local Plan.

7.2 The Review is an initial element of the multi-stage masterplanning process that will be required prior to the site being developed. It is the intention that an SPD will be prepared following the adoption of the Local Plan, circa 2022/23, after a more detailed viability, infrastructure and development options assessment.

7.3 The Review consists of two key elements:

- a) examination of the likely trip generation, distribution and route assignments on the local highway network, based on a core and alternative scenario; and,
- b) preparation of a study report setting out the findings of a review of local transport infrastructure. It also identifies strategic network improvements and likely masterplanning design requirements.

7.4 Wider transport initiatives that could support development of the site are being considered, including the mass transit system currently being investigated by Warrington Council.

7.5 The Review concludes with a summary of findings and next steps that indicate that it is the first stage of a much more comprehensive assessment of the proposed BFGS from a transport perspective that should include consideration to the formation of a coherent vision and strategy for the BFGS. It adds that the vision should focus on sustainability and innovative thinking that will explore options for active travel links and public transport routes.

7.6 In its initial findings, the Review anticipates that there will be highways junctions that will experience impact in terms of traffic flow as a result of development but that there are opportunities to achieve a significant modal shift towards sustainable travel that would reduce the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network.

7.7 Highways England have provided initial comments on the Review and the Council will continue to engage with Highways England throughout the BFGS masterplanning process.

⁷ This document can be found on the Council's examination library page Ref: TRA005.

8. NEXT STEPS

Programme for Further Work

8.1 Work on the BFGS has been identified through a robust plan-led process, but is still in its early stages, and as such further work will continue beyond the adoption of the Plan. Due to the scale and proposed long-term phasing of the site, St Helens Council has identified the need to undertake a staged masterplanning approach to ensure a deliverable and high-quality development. The masterplan will be adopted as an SPD by the Council and will provide the detail on strategic requirements to enable and support the development, and set a framework for the determination of planning applications, enabling the co-ordinated delivery of infrastructure.

8.2 The Council recognise that a strategic housing development of this size needs to be properly planned through the Local Plan and subsequent masterplan and SPD. It is acknowledged that the delivery of the BFGS requires consideration of a range of delivery issues, including land ownership, investment sources, infrastructure delivery, management of the delivery process, and the promotion of community development, integration and stewardship. The Council have been realistic in its anticipated delivery of the site and have only factored in any development being built towards the end of the Plan period and beyond.

8.3 St Helens Council will therefore work actively with private landowners, developers and other stakeholders to continue to champion the scheme. Building on the Garden Suburb principles the Council intend to create a sustainable and integrated community site.

8.4 The BFGS is uniquely located in that it forms a major urban extension within the Bold Forest Park area, enabling significant access to substantial open spaces all within walking and cycling distances, building on the Government's emerging thinking of creating a greener 'net gain' rather than a 'net loss'. The BFGS will build further on these accesses by providing green corridors to promote ecology and biodiversity throughout the site, with the potential of connecting new bridleways to those existing within the Bold Forest Park.

8.5 The site offers an opportunity to deliver a large amount of high standard affordable housing, offering a mix of dwelling sizes and tenures. Along with dwellings built to Part M4(2) and Part 4(3) of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended), thus providing accessible and adaptable homes, together with at least 5% of all proposed new development to be built as bungalows.

8.6 Development of this site is expected to have wide benefits not just for the new residents of the BFGS but also the surrounding communities. Residents of the 'New Bold' estate to the north of the site will benefit from a potential local centre (new retail provision) and new community facilities (health centre). It is envisaged that the BFGS will provide the critical mass and scale to enable comprehensive master planning of community infrastructure for the surrounding area. In addition, due to its close proximity to significant employment uses (Bold Industrial Park to the north west and Omega strategic employment site to the south) the site will provide better links to employment opportunities to some of the most deprived areas of the Borough.

8.7 The Council consider that the BFGS will also be of strategic significance for the Liverpool City Region, and as such there will be funding opportunities, such as the Strategic Housing Infrastructure Local Funding (SHILF) to secure funding to help enable the delivery of the site. The Council have also recently entered into a strategic, long-term regeneration partnership with the English Cities Fund (ECF), although primarily working on plans to regenerate St Helens Town Centre, it is hoped that further opportunities across the Borough, such as the BFGS will also be explored.

8.8 St Helens Council have also begun discussions with Homes England and through the Liverpool City Region Housing Pipeline and SHILF it is envisaged that Homes England could assist and potentially lead on the masterplanning and delivery of the site.

8.9 Triggers for ensuring the delivery of both strategic and neighbourhood infrastructure will be established within a separate Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for the BFGS. The IDP will identify the timing, type and number of infrastructure projects required to support the development, as well as the main funding mechanisms and lead agencies responsible for their delivery.

8.10 Earmarking triggers in advance of commencing development is crucial to ensuring that the arising needs of the new residents will be met, and the measures needed to mitigate their cumulative impacts are delivered in a timely fashion. The appropriate thresholds and triggers will be agreed in discussion with delivery partners, which will also be set out in the masterplan and subsequent SPD for the site.

8.11 The Transport Review study is the first stage of this process providing supporting evidence to the SHBLP with further feasibility, visioning, infrastructure delivery planning and community engagement work to follow in order to inform a final masterplan.

8.12 Discussions are on-going with Highways England in terms of additional assessment work following on from the initial Transport Review Study. From the perspective of Highways England, the highway traffic impacts expected to be generated within the Plan period are of interest and further work should be undertaken to reflect this. It is also acknowledged that further work will be required to assess the predicted highway traffic impacts on the M62 Junctions 7 & 8.

Future Public Engagement

8.13 Moving forward the Council will (as part of the Masterplanning process for the site) hold extensive engagement events with local residents, landowners, developers and other stakeholders. The Council want to involve all local neighbourhoods and communities from an early stage to enable them a meaningful voice in the future development of the site.

Conclusion

8.14 This document outlines the rationale for the BFGS approach and explains why this site has been identified. The site is not only capable of being delivered in a

manner that is acceptable from a planning policy perspective, but in addition it presents a unique opportunity for transformational growth and regeneration.. Furthermore, it can be seen that the approach the Council has taken is consistent with National planning policy. The Council recognises that there will be challenges to bringing forward a development of this size forward and that it will require comprehensive masterplanning. However, through the work carried out so far the Council does not consider that there are any obstacles or ‘showstoppers’ that would hinder the BFGS from coming forward. The BFGS should therefore be seen as part of an ambitious initiative by the Council to meet the Borough’s housing needs in the medium to longer term and deliver a truly sustainable development offering benefits for the wider community.

Table 2: Indicative Masterplanning Programme

Proposed Stages		Proposed Timescales
Stage 1a	Transport Review	Early 2020
Stage 1b	Position Statement for Local Plan Submission	Winter 2020
Stage 2	Visioning, Outline Infrastructure Capacity, Development Concept, Community Engagement, Infrastructure Assessment, Viability Assessment and Development Options Assessment	Winter 2021/22
Stage 3	Draft Masterplan, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Summer/Autumn 2022
Stage 4	Further community engagement on Stage 4 outputs Mid 2022	Winter 2022
Stage 5	Finalise Masterplan, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and adopt SPD	Summer 2023
Stage 6	Infrastructure Business Case Development and submission	2022/23 onwards (or earlier if feasible)

APPENDIX A: EVA CONSTRUCTION COST SHEETS FOR ALLOCATED SITE 4HA

4HA (was 3HA) **Bold Forest Garden Suburb, Bold**
PV renewables excluded

Site area	132.86 ha	
RoS %	33%	8.1.19
Net Dev area	996452 m2	
RoS Area	332148 m2	
Sales rate	10 per month	
No of dwellings	2988 Nr (30.0dph)	

	Mix Data			GFA/unit	Total GFA
1b-OM-terraced	2 P	7.00%	209 Nr	56 m2	11650 m2
2b bungalow-OM-Semi	4 P	5.00%	149 Nr	70 m2	10382 m2
2b-Aff-terraced	4 P	0.00%		70 m2	0 m2
2b-OM-terraced	4 P	0.00%		70 m2	0 m2
2b-OM-Semi	5 P	24.00%	718 Nr	70 m2	50028 m2
3b-OM-Detached	5 P	24.00%	717 Nr	84 m2	59950 m2
3b-OM-Semi	5 P	24.00%	717 Nr	84 m2	59950 m2
4b-OM-Detached	6 P	11.00%	329 Nr	111 m2	36678 m2
5b-OM-Detached	8 P	5.00%	149 Nr	139 m2	20764 m2
	14940 P		2988 Nr		249401 m2

Subs and Superstructures	£171,443,603	£57,377.38
External Works within curtilage costs	£15,337,933	£5,133.18
Road and footpath <u>works</u> beyond curtilage	£17,530,931	£5,867.11
Garages	£6,715,449	£2,247.47
Drainage costs	£14,999,193	£5,019.81
Inc Services costs	£11,052,037	£3,698.81
Public Open Space	£5,317,865	£1,779.74
Costs of play facilities	£0	£0.00
Preliminaries for 307 months	£22,564,974	£7,551.87
SUBTOTAL	£264,961,986	£88,675
Abnormals	£2,560,000	£856.76
Fees	£20,064,149	£6,714.91
Contingencies	£14,379,307	£4,812.35
Total	£301,965,442	£101,059

~~Abnormals~~

LAPS	2 No	£26,000	£52,000
LEAPS	1 No	£72,000	£72,000
NEAPS	1 No	£151,000	£151,000
Allotments	Item		£50,000
4 no on site bus stops	2 No	£30,000	£60,000
Provisional allowance for Enhancement of Lindsay St Play Area	Item		£100,000
Provisional allowance for Enhancement of and linkages to adjacent open space			£100,000
Provisional allowance for Site access			
S278 works	3 No	£50,000	£150,000
Provisional allowance for Highways improvements to Gorsey Lane and Reginald Road and other works			£1,500,000
Provisional allowance for Wider spine road			£150,000
Provisional allowance for Cycle/pedestrian links	Item		£75,000
Provisional allowance for Habitat loss mitigation	Item		£100,000
Total of abnormals			£2,560,000

ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020-2035
BOLD FOREST GARDEN SUBURB POSITION STATEMENT (OCTOBER 2020)

4HA (was 3HA) **Bold Forest Garden Suburb, Bold**
PV renewables included

Site area	132.86 ha	
PoS %	33%	8.1.19
Net Dev area	996452 m2	
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	14940 P		2988 Nr		249401 m2

Subs and Superstructures	£177,202,260	£59,304.64
External Works within curtilage costs	£15,337,933	£5,133.18
Road and footpath <u>works</u> beyond curtilage	£17,530,931	£5,867.11
Garages	£6,715,449	£2,247.47
Drainage costs	£14,999,193	£5,019.81
Inc Services costs	£11,052,037	£3,698.81
Public Open Space	£5,317,865	£1,779.74
Costs of play facilities	£0	£0.00
Preliminaries for 307 months	£22,564,974	£7,551.87
SUBTOTAL	£270,720,643	£90,603
Abnormals	£2,560,000	£856.76
Fees	£20,496,048	£6,859.45
Contingencies	£14,688,835	£4,915.94
Total	£308,465,526	£103,235

~~Abnormals~~

LAPS	2 No	£26,000	£52,000
LEAPS	1 No	£72,000	£72,000
NEAPS	1 No	£151,000	£151,000
Allotments	Item		£50,000
4 no on site bus stops	2 No	£30,000	£60,000
Provisional allowance for Enhancement of Lindsay St Play Area	Item		£100,000
Provisional allowance for Enhancement of and linkages to adjacent open space			£100,000
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Provisional allowance for Highways improvements to Gorsey Lane and Reginald Road and other works			£1,500,000
Provisional allowance for Wider spine road			£150,000
Provisional allowance for			
Cycle/pedestrian links	Item		£75,000
Provisional allowance for Habitat loss mitigation	Item		£100,000
Total of abnormals			£2,560,000

APPENDIX B – EXTRACTS FROM REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY SITE PROMOTERS AT LPSD STAGE

**Extract taken from submissions submitted by
Representor RO0375 in specific relation to the BFGS**

St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 - 2035

Submission Draft

Representations on Behalf of Andrew Cotton and Family

March 2019

LAND AT TRAVERS FARM, ST HELENS

**DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

NOVEMBER 2016

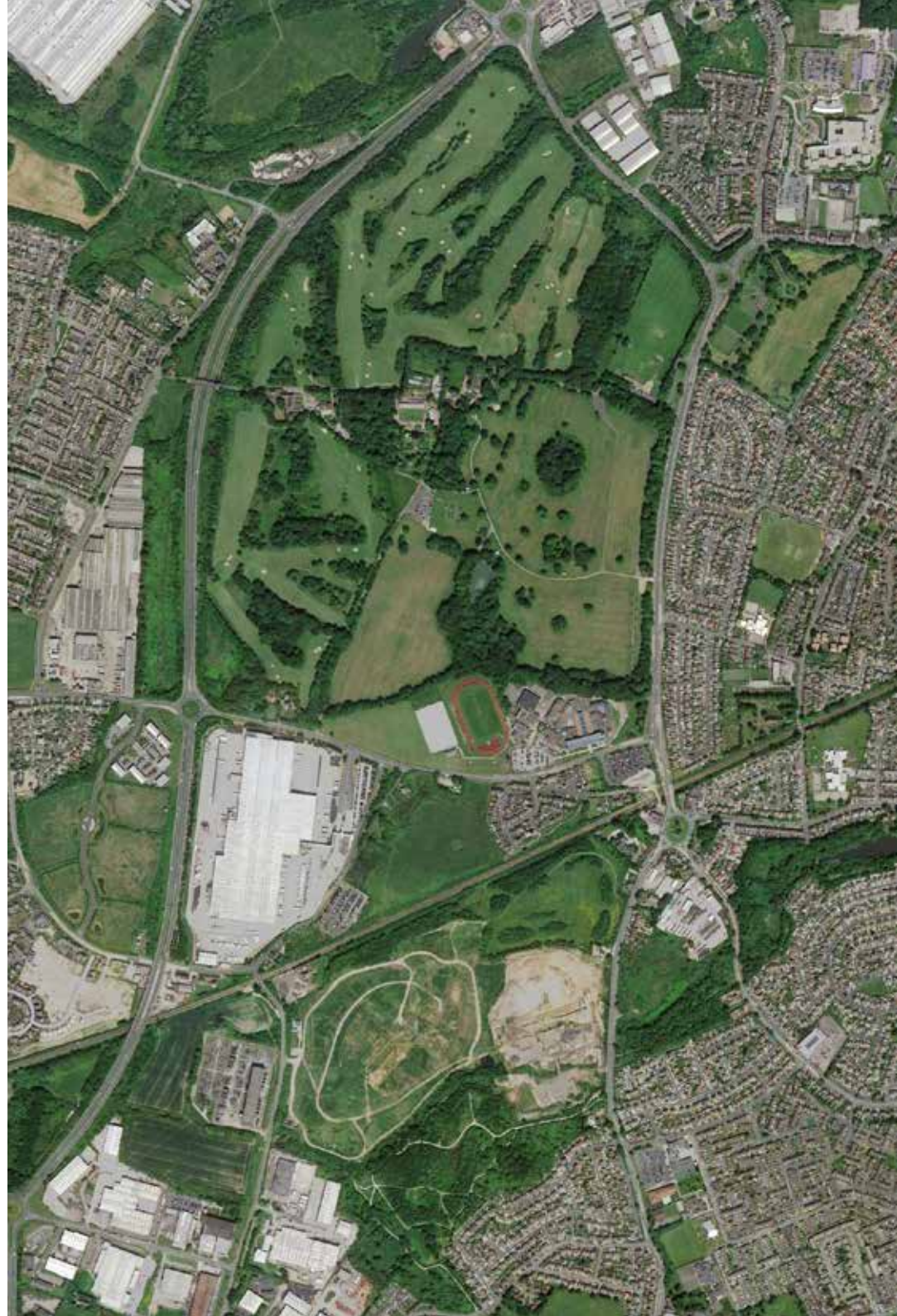
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONTENTS

This Development Framework has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Andrew Cotton, landowner at Travers Farm. It demonstrates that land south of Bold Road, and west of Neils Road, St Helens (the Site) represents a sustainable solution to deliver new housing to contribute to the future housing requirements of St Helens.

The Site comprises land at Travers Farm, which is safeguarded for residential development within the emerging St Helens Local Plan (2018-2033) and Council owned land which is allocated for residential development within the same Local Plan document.

This Development Framework has taken account of key technical and spatial considerations to inform the preparation of a Concept Masterplan that demonstrates the suitability of the Site to deliver a new homes in a highly sustainable location and within easy access of St Helens Junction Railway Station. The document sets clear and logical reasons to support the release of the Site from the Green Belt, whilst also clearly presenting the case for allocating the Site for development within the emerging St Helens Local Plan.

Vision.....	04
Introduction.....	06
Neighbourhood.....	08
Green Belt Assessment.....	10
Site Assessment.....	14
Concept Masteplan.....	16
Benefits and Conclusion.....	18





Bold Road

Neils Road





VISION

Our vision is to create a sustainable urban extension to the existing built up area, providing new, high quality homes alongside accessible public open space and new community infrastructure. The Site will provide a rich landscape framework accommodating greenways, footpaths and bridleway enhancements and include the potential for community facilities and formal public open space. Building upon the principles of a modern garden village, new homes will be designed in a layout that maximises the opportunity to integrate with the wider rural area.

INTRODUCTION

LOCATION

The Site is located south of Bold Road, to the south east of St Helens. Neills Road is located to the east of the Site, and a new residential development accessed from The Pastures is located to the north of the Site. The Site is currently largely undeveloped, and is set within the Green Belt. The Site is also situated within the much wider Bold Forest Park action area, a wider strategy in this part of St Helens which seeks to promote access to the countryside and enhancement of certain green assets.

DESCRIPTION

The Site comprises a parcel of land approximately 50 hectares (ha) as outlined in Figure 1. The Site is largely flat in topography and is in use for arable farming.

The Site is formed by three fields located south of Bold Road and west of Neills Road. Inclusive within the Site boundary is Travers Farm and land within the ownership of St Helens Council.

Existing development frames the Site to the north, east, west and partially to the south. Open countryside extends to the south west.

The surrounding built up area provides for a mixture of uses. North and partially to the south of the Site are largely residential, with a relatively recent residential estate served by The Pastures located to the north, and older residential development located to the south east of the Site.

To the west lies the Reginald Road Industrial Estate and further residential dwellings fronting along Reginald Road. To the north west of the Site and north of Bold Road is a further employment area.

East of the Site is an area of employment land which is largely in industrial use. To the north east of the Site is the Bold

Business Centre. The built up complex of the Northfield Riding Centre is located near to the southern extremity of the Site.

Beyond existing development to the north and east is largely forested, accessible via a series of footpaths to the north east and south east of the Site. Approximately 500m to the south west of the corner of the Site is the Clock Face Country Park. This is an important local asset and one which the Council is keen to promote through the Bold Forest action proposals.

The northern and eastern site boundaries are defined by Bold Road and Neills Road respectively. An existing hedgerow runs along the entirety of the frontage along both roads, and is only disrupted by accesses into the fields and Travers Farm. Existing footpaths run along the Site frontage on Bold Road and Neills Road.

The southern boundary of the Site is defined by an existing hedgerow featuring intermittent trees.

The Site does not include land which is in the ownership of the dwelling located at the western end of Douglas Avenue, with this strip of land separating the south eastern part of the Site from existing residential properties on Douglas Avenue and Rosehill Avenue.

The southern extent of the Site boundary does not protrude any further south than the existing residential development. A Public Right of Way runs along the southern boundary of the Site.



The Pastures

Bold
Business
Centre

Bold Road

Reginald Road
Industrial Estate

Neils Road

Clock Face
Country Park

Figure 1: Aerial Location Plan

NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Site is located in a sustainable location at the urban edge of St Helens, the Principal Town within the Borough of St Helens.

FACILITIES

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

- Wades One Stop Convenience Store;
- Reginald Road Industrial Estate, and Bold Business Park;
- Bold Colliery Country Park, and Clock Face Country Park;
- Junction Inn Pub;
- Post Office, Junction Lane;
- Oak House Surgery, Junction Lane;
- Junction Lane Dental Surgery;
- Lloyds Pharmacy, Junction Lane;
- Co-op Foodstore, Peckers Hill Road;
- TSB Bank, Peckers Hill Road;
- St Cuthberts Community College; and
- Sutton Oak C of E Primary School.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Site has access to public transport in the form of multiple existing bus stops on Bold Road and Neill Road. Hourly connections are available to Newton Le Willows/Earlestown and St Helens via the 141 Bus Service. The 140 hourly bus service to Bold Heath and St Helens is also accessible at Helena Road.

The nearest railway station to the Site is St Helens Junction at c.1km from the Centre of the Site. This station provides direct access to Liverpool Lime Street, Warrington Bank Quay, Manchester Victoria, and Manchester Airport, with 3 services per hour to Liverpool Lime Street, and 1 services per hour to Warrington, Manchester Victoria and Manchester Airport.

WALKING AND CYCLING

Existing footpaths run along Bold Road and Neills Road. The Site is bounded to the west and south by existing Public Right of Ways which form part of a wider network of routes identified as strategically important within the emerging Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan. Further pedestrian connections are provided to forested areas to the north and east of the Site.

The proximity of these routes provides opportunity to connect to existing facilities and services which are accessible in St Helens to the north. They also link into

nearby recreational assets such as the Bold Forest Park and Clock Face Country Park.

The plan opposite (figure 2) demonstrates that a significant proportion of facilities and public transport opportunities are within a convenient and safe walking and cycling distance from the Site.



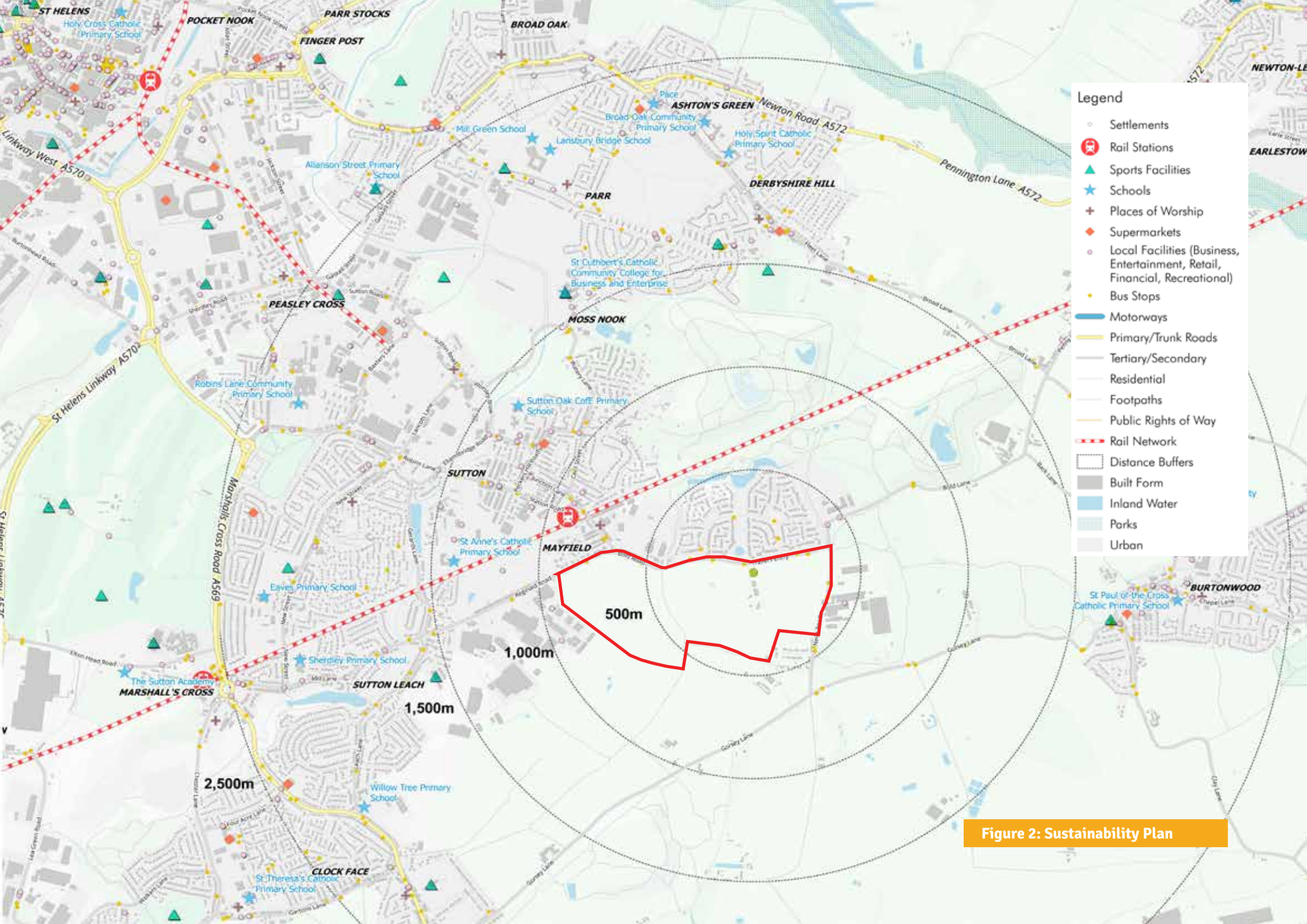


Figure 2: Sustainability Plan

GREENBELT ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW

The Council are currently progressing towards the publication of its preferred options for its new Local Plan. As part of this process, it is known that the Council are undertaking a review of the Green Belt with the view of accommodating some future housing and employment needs within this area.

The Council's supporting Green Belt assessment will assess land parcels identified within the Green Belt against the "five purposes" as defined by Paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

It is considered that the Site which is promoted within the document (together with the potential opportunity provided by the Council's land to the west) would provide for a logical and sustainable release from the Green Belt.

As set out within this Development Framework the Site would provide development within clearly defined boundaries, using prominent and permanent physical features, and lessen the pressure to develop elsewhere on sites which are more sensitive to development.

The Site is adjacent to the existing urban edge, with the wider area bordered by existing development on three sides. The Site therefore provides for a logical extension to

the existing settlement. The Sustainability Assessment sets out that the Site is located close to a number of facilities and services as well as being adjacent to several bus routes, a high quality rail route, and adjacent to several local opportunities for employment.

The development of the Site will provide for an attractive and sustainable development following on from the lead provided by the adjacent residential development to the north of Bold Road and will provide for an opportunity for the aims of the Bold Forest Area Action Plan to be achieved. The development will help to safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of existing local nearby services and facilities, and contribute to the full delivery of identified housing and employment needs for St Helens.

GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

Overall our Client's site performs well when judged against the five purposes of the Green Belt. In particular the assessment notes that the Site:

- Is well connected to existing built-up areas;
- Has well defined boundaries and a low potential for unrestricted urban sprawl;
- Will not result in the merging of two settlements;
- Does not impact the special character of historic settlements; and
- Provides an opportunity for a logical "rounding-off" of the existing settlement.

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

CONCLUSION OF GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

It is the accepted position of the Council, that in order for identified housing and employment needs to be delivered in full within the emerging Local Plan period, there will be a need for the development of Sites which are currently included within the Green Belt. Once published in December, the Preferred Options Local Plan will identify the Council's selected sites which will meet identified needs over the next plan period. This document will be supported by an assessment of Green Belt which will be used to identify the most suitable sites for release on which to deliver identified future development needs.

Clearly, preference should be given to those sites which no longer meet the five purposes for inclusion within the Green Belt as defined at Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, and which can provide for a new defensible boundary which is consistent with Paragraph 85.

The assessment which we have undertaken, demonstrates that the Site is an appropriate location for a new housing led development and can be achieved without conflicting with the purpose or function of the Green Belt.

We welcome further discussions with the Council regarding the assessment of the Site, and its potential for inclusion as an allocation within the emerging Local Plan.

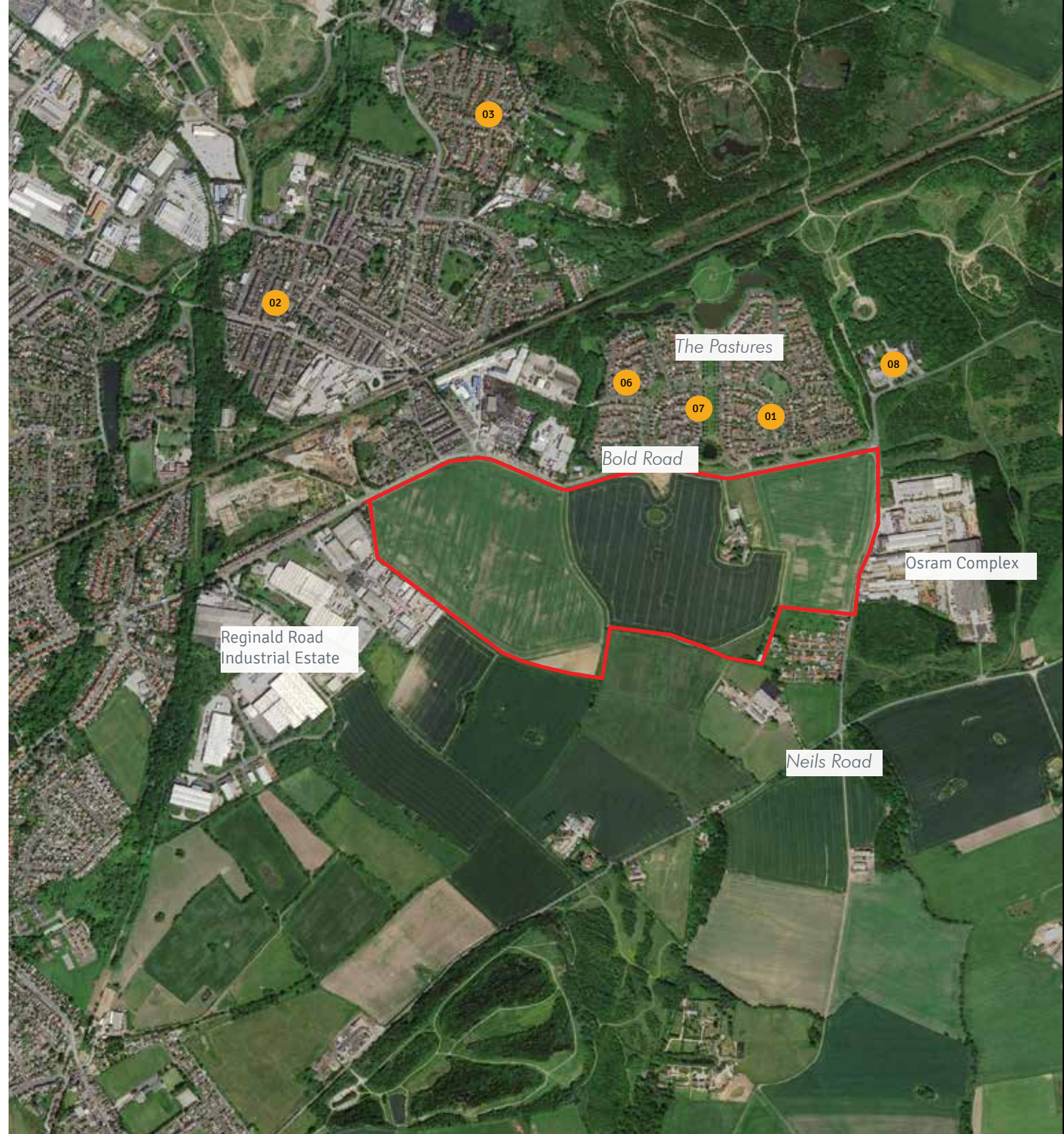
Purpose	Criteria and Definitions	Assessment	Overall Conclusion
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Would development of the Site lead to/constitute ribbon development?	No. The Site forms a very distinct parcel which is defined by definitive, permanent and defensible boundaries. The Site offers a logical and distinct infill/rounding off between existing development located to the north, east, west and partially to the south.	No unrestricted sprawl.
	Would development result in an isolated development Site not connected to existing boundaries?	No. The Site is located adjacent the settlement boundary. There is existing development immediately to the north, east and partially to the south. To the west a single field separate the Site from further development. This land is not in the control of our client however, is known to be in the control of the Council – delivery of the wider site may therefore be possible.	
	Would development of the Site effectively 'round off' the settlement pattern?	Yes. The development would round off the settlement infilling an existing largely undeveloped area which is located between existing development to the north, east, west and partially to the south.	
	Do natural and physical features (major road, river etc) provide a good existing barrier between the existing urban area and undeveloped land, which if breached may set a precedent for unrestricted sprawl?	Development already exists to the south of Bold Road/Reginald Road. This road is does not therefore provide for a clear barrier and distinct barrier to development in this part of St Helens. A new boundary adopting the development line provided by existing development to the south of this road could be strengthened through the release of this Site from the Green Belt.	
2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Do natural features and infrastructure provide a good physical barrier or boundary to the Site that would ensure that development was contained?	The development would infill an area of countryside which is not considered to fulfil an active Green Belt function. Development currently exists beyond Bold Road/Reginald Road/Niels Road to the south and or west thus breaking this physical boundary. The Site would restore a strong boundary using existing development as a prominent and definitive boundary to the Green Belt which is reinforced by the presence of the Public Right of Way in this location.	Development of the site would not result in the merging of settlements
	Would development of the Site lead to physical connection of 2 or more settlements?	No. Release of this Site would lessen the pressure to develop other sites adjoining the St Helens urban area which fulfil a more prominent role within the Green Belt.	
	Would the development of the site help preserve the physical separation of settlements across the Borough.	Yes. The Council acknowledges the need at Eastham to preserve the separation of development from Storeton (to the west) and Ellesmere Port (to the south east). Development of the Site will make a significant contribution to meeting the housing needs of Eastham and maintaining it's viability as a local centre; thus alleviating pressure elsewhere to develop sites towards Storeton and Ellesmere Port.	
	Does the Site provide access to the countryside – footpaths, bridleways across the land, or is it a designated park/greenspace?	Whilst PROW's run along the Site's southern and western boundary no footpaths run through the centre of the Site which is promoted through the Development Framework. The Site is in use for Agriculture.	
	Does the Site include national or local nature conservation designated areas?	None known.	
	Does the Site include areas of woodland, trees or hedgerows that are protected (protected ancient woodland) or significant unprotected tree/hedge cover?	None identified within the Site. Existing trees/hedgerows along Site boundaries and within the Site will be retained where possible. New planting within the Site will offset any loss which cannot be avoided.	
	Does the Site include any best and most versatile; grade 1, 2 or 3a (where known) agricultural land?	Unknown. The Site is indicatively shown on MAGIC Map as being Grade 3. However, it is worth noting that the majority of undeveloped land located within St Helens is Grade 2 or 3.	
	Does the Site contain buildings?	The Site contained an existing farm. These are not noted for historical merit.	
4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	St Helens is not a town noted for its historical significance. The Site would not impact on the setting of any other historic town.		
5. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict/ urban land.	N/A	There is an accepted need for a review of the Green Belt within St Helens Borough in order to ensure that the full development needs of the Plan can be delivered in full.	Development of the site would not have an impact on regeneration within the Borough.

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

The Site lies on the fringe of the built up part of St Helens. To the west of the Site lies an existing industrial estate. This includes several warehouse type buildings of a range of sizes and heights, typically of up to 10m. Similarly, the Osram Complex to the east of the site includes 2 and 3 storey buildings, including an office building and warehousing.

To the north west of the Site along Bold Road are several residential properties. These vary in character and include post-war terraces, semi-detached houses and some more modern housing estates with detached houses. The character is therefore very varied.

The Pastures is a more modern housing estates built on an old colliery site. This is a less dense housing estate with a range of semi and detached dwellings, built on a strong road hierarchy. Homes are set back from the main road by a large landscaped area which includes footpaths, and a boulevard form the principle internal access road through the estate. Local services and shops can be found close to Bold Road which provides the potential to locate additional community services adjacent to these shops and within the Site. A large central landscaped spine provides a symmetry to the overall layout and the scheme which includes a range of 2 and 3 storey houses, with some apartment elements to the key focal points.





SITE ASSESSMENT

This section presents our initial Site investigation that future development proposals should consider.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Two small ponds are located within Site. One is located within the north of the western field, and one in the south western corner of the western field.

A hedgerow and a small watercourse flows within the Site along part of the boundary between the central field and the eastern most field.

A short hedgerow runs north-south along the boundary separating the central field and western field. This boundary is also defined by an existing watercourse/ drainage ditch, and a Public Right of Way.

ECOLOGY

Given the Site's agricultural use, it is considered to have relatively low ecological value, and limited suitable habitats for protected species. Notwithstanding, 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

Site and surrounding area is largely flat.

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.

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

VEHICLE ACCESS

The Site benefits from the ability to deliver vehicle access from the north and east of the Site. Specifically: Reginald Road, Bold Road, Travers Entry and/ or Neills Road.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

A Public Right of Way bisects the Site, providing pedestrian and cycle access to the wider countryside, including the nearby Collier Moss Common Nature Reserve to the north, and Clock Face Colliery Country Park to the south. A further PRoW runs along part of the southern boundary of the Site.

UTILITIES

High voltage electricity pylons run parallel to Bold Road through the very north part of the Site, and pylons bisect the western most field in a north-east direction.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

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 design response (see Development Concept).

Considerations

- Integration of existing trees and hedgerows within the Site.
- Integration existing ponds.
- Reginald Road Industrial.
- Future development potential.
- Existing high voltage pylons bisecting the Site.

Opportunities

- Provide pedestrian/ cycle connections.
- Provide subtle references to the materiality featured within the wider settlement.
- Contribute to the surrounding landscape character and strengthen the local green infrastructure.
- Provide pedestrian links through the Site, and connect to the wider network of PRoW



Figure 3: Site Assessment Plan

CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

The sensitive development of the Site will allow for a high quality residential environment for future residents, whilst significantly improving the local housing offer through the provision of approximately 850 open market and affordable homes.

The opportunities and constraints previously presented have informed an appropriate design response to the Site. This is illustrated by the Concept Masterplan opposite and has the following elements:

DEVELOPMENT AREA

The development parameters are heavily influenced by the retention of existing landscape features whilst also ensuring efficient use of land.

RETAINED LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Existing landscape features will be retained 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.

OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Green spaces and new planting throughout the proposed development will provide attractive, functional and accessible places for leisure and recreation. These spaces will vary in appearance, scale and use, from incidental green spaces containing existing landscape features to a more sizable areas of open space adjacent to and integrating with the existing woodland.

SUDS

While the form and final location of SuDS is subject to more detailed Site investigation, it is likely to include swales and attenuation ponds located in response to Site topography.

VEHICLE ACCESS, CIRCULATION AND SPACE SEQUENCE

Vehicle access to the Site will be delivered from Neills Road, Travers' Entry, and Reginald Road. Internally, a simple Estate Road will provide vehicle connectivity across the Site and a sequence of public spaces will be connected by the Estate Road. These spaces will range in form and function with a mix of hard surface materials and planted landscape features.

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE CONNECTIVITY

The proposed development will provide effective pedestrian and cycle connectivity across the Site and to the surrounding settlement. This will include connections to the existing residential neighbourhood to the north.

New paths, capable of accommodating pedestrians and cyclists, will be provided through a network of open space and the proposed residential streets. Shared surfaces, changes in horizontal alignment, construction and materials will all help to encourage walking and cycling rather than car use for local travel.

CHARACTER

The proposed development will reflect the character, scale and density of properties within the local townscape. Moreover, perimeter blocks and a legible network of streets will provide an attractive environment connecting the site with the surrounding environment.





Figure 4: Concept Masterplan

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;
- The proposed development will provide for increased expenditure in the local economy which will support the continued vitality and vibrancy of existing nearby services and facilities.

Social Role

- The Site has the potential to deliver a high-quality new residential led development delivering approximately 850 dwellings and new community facilities. These will make a valuable contribution towards meeting the full objectively assessed development needs of St Helens;
- The Site provides the opportunity to deliver new housing, serving as a logical extension to the existing settlement, at a density of c.27dph-30dph;

- Housing provided on the Site will be well-integrated with its surroundings, in particular existing housing predominantly to the north and east, and employment to the north west;
- The Site occupies a sustainable location for development, with easy access to a range of services within walking distance of the Site;
- The Site has potential to secure safe and sufficient vehicular access, without unacceptable impact on the local highway network;
- The Site is well served by existing bus routes, and is nearby to a high quality rail link offering sustainable links to the nearby cities of Liverpool and Manchester;
- There is an opportunity to create integrated pedestrian and cycle linkages as part of the Site's development, consistent with local emerging strategies, encouraging alternative modes or transport to private car, contributing towards a low-carbon economy, and providing improved access to nearby sources of recreation.

Environmental Role

- The Site has the potential to accommodate a residential led development with having an adverse impact on 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 interests, and provides an opportunity to develop and enhance the Bold Forest Park; and
- The proposed development will retain existing landscape features, including mature trees and hedgerows, 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.

It is accepted by the Council that there is a need for release within the Green Belt to ensure that future development needs can be delivered in full. As such, this Document demonstrates that the Site does not meet the purposes of including land within the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, and provides for new defensible boundaries which are consistent with Paragraph 85.

In conclusion, the site is available and offers a suitable location to help the Council meet its future development needs.

Next Steps

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

We understand that the Council is looking to allocate part of the Site for housing growth, with the remainder of the Site safeguard for future housing growth. We look forward to working with the Council to progress the proposals for the Site and welcome any feedback and/or the opportunity to meet and discuss.

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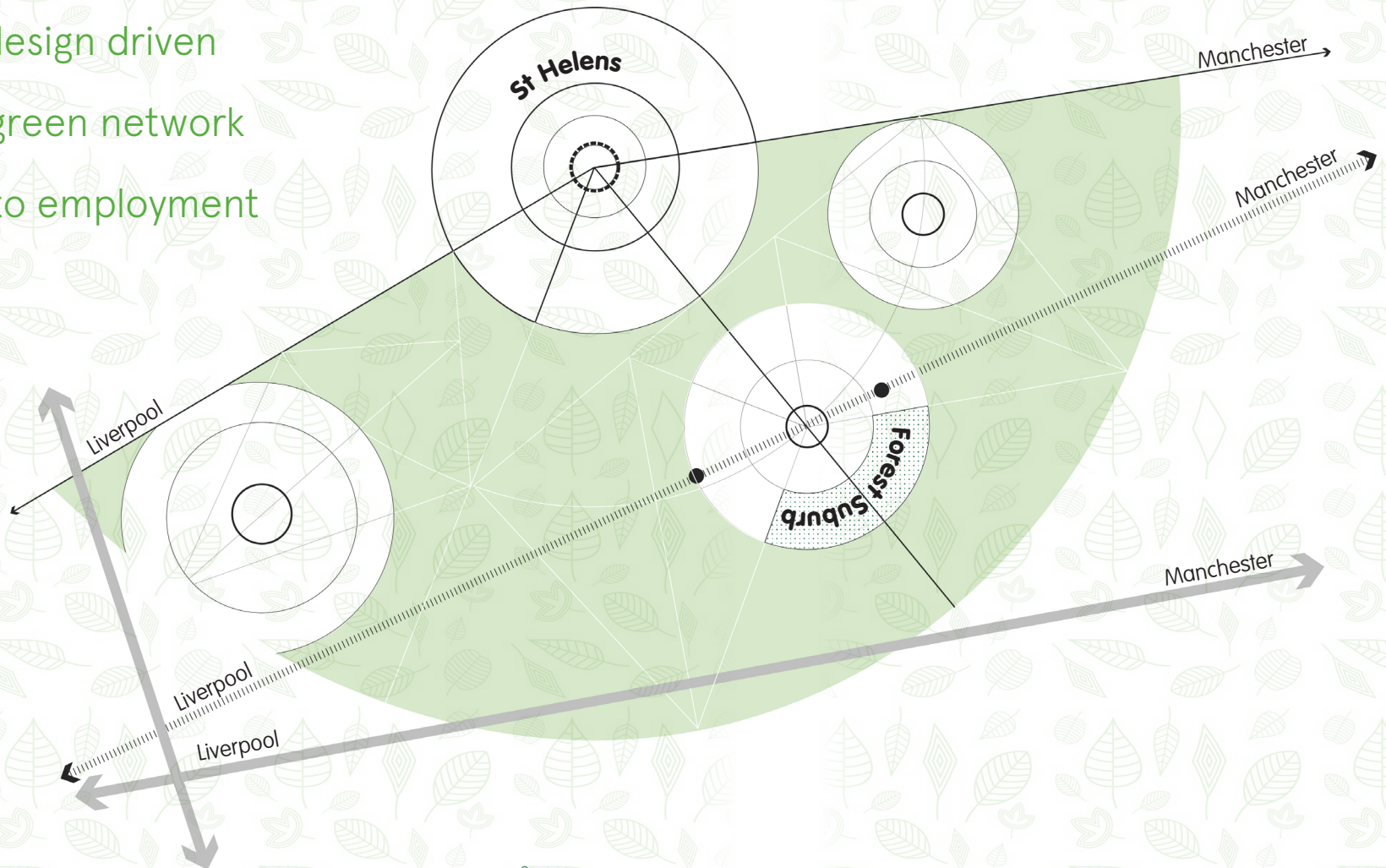
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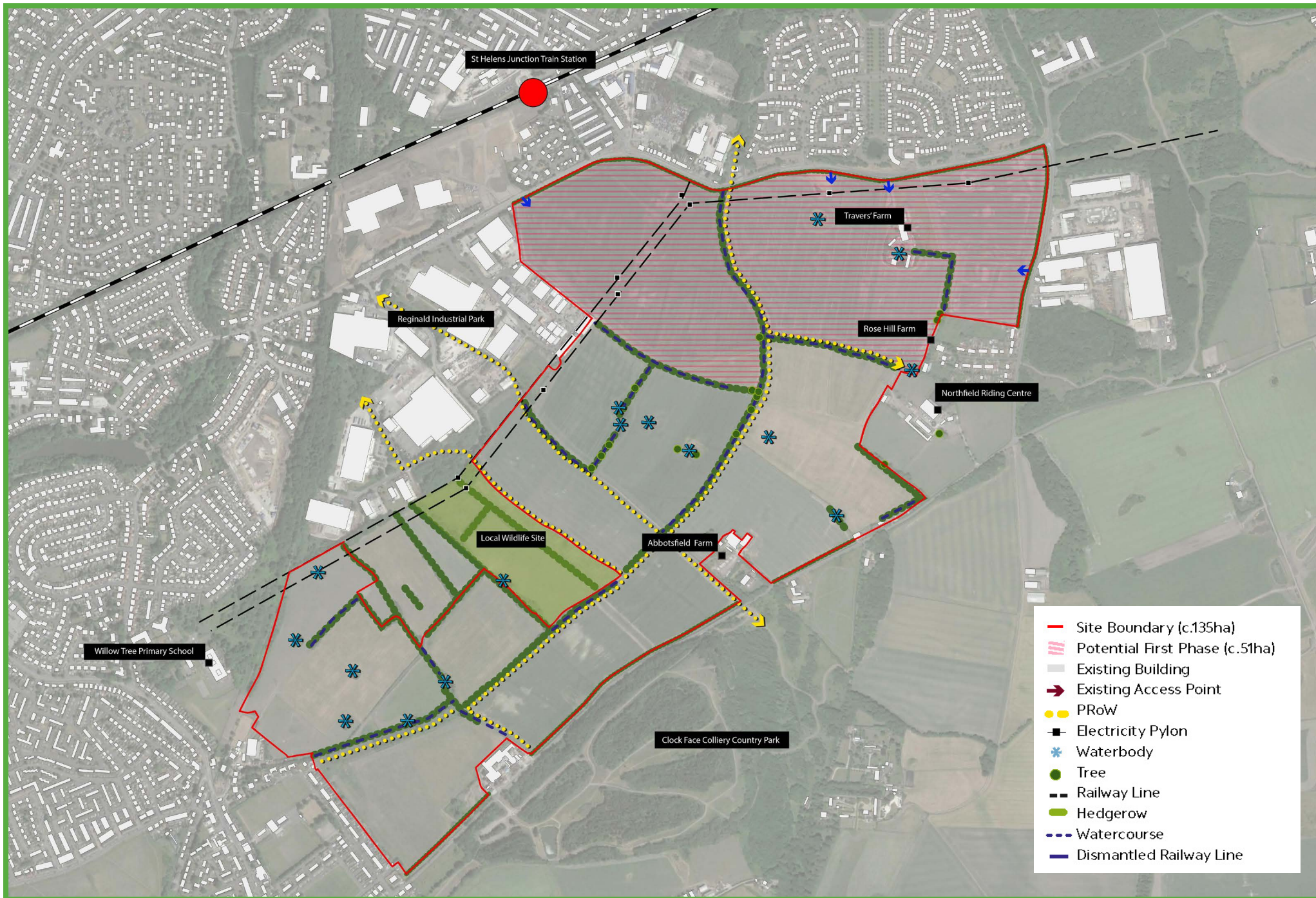
BOLD FOREST GARDEN SUBURB

**BARTON
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VISION: BOLD GARDEN FOREST SUBURB

- Highly accessible location with key strategic links
- Sustainable principles at its heart
- Landscape and design driven
- Fully integrated green network
- Close proximity to employment





Potential Development Area (c.83ha)
Potential Residential Development:
(2900@35dph)

-  Potential Vehicle Access Point
-  Primary Movement Route
-  Pedestrian/ Cycle Route



St Helen's Junction
Train Station

Retained Ponds

B5204

Dismantled Railway Line with
Opportunities for Pedestrian
and Cycle Connections

Local Wildlife Site

Local Shops

Drainage/
Wetland Area

Wheatacre
Wood

Tree Lined
Estate Road

Neills Road

Gorsey Lane

Enhanced Pedestrian/
Cycle Connections to
Nearby Recreation Areas

Woodland Walk

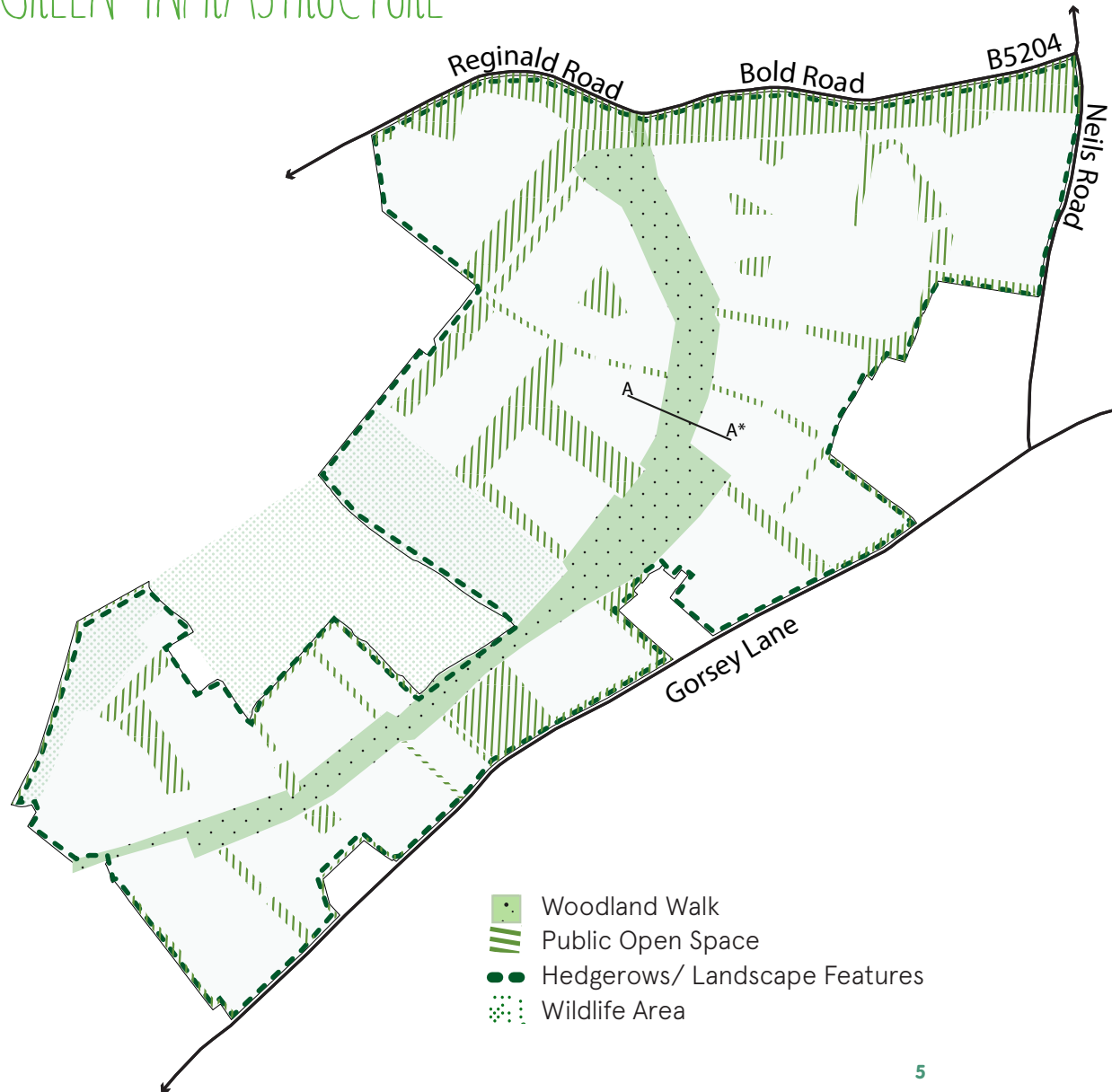
Childrens Play

Clock Face Colliery
Country Park

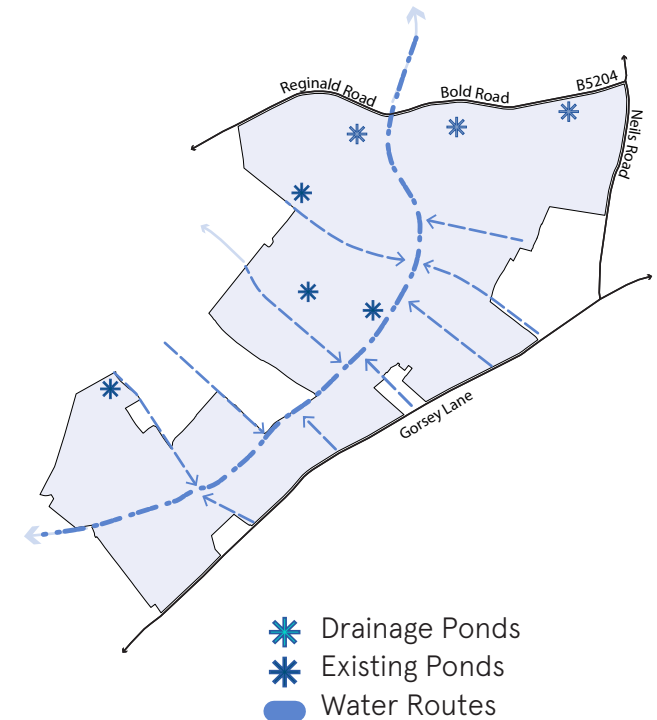
Retained/ Enhanced
Landscape Features

AN EMERGING MASTERPLAN

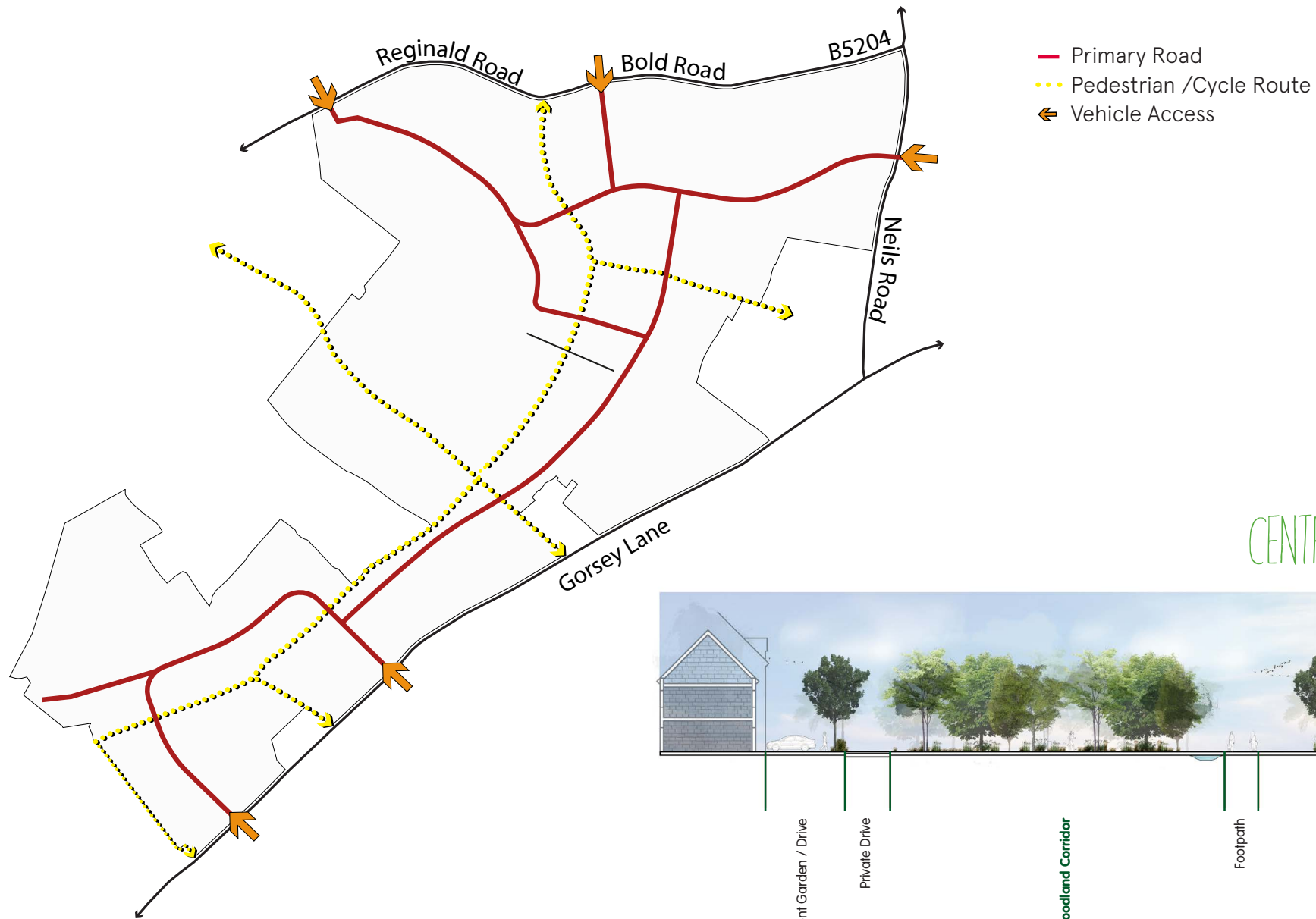
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



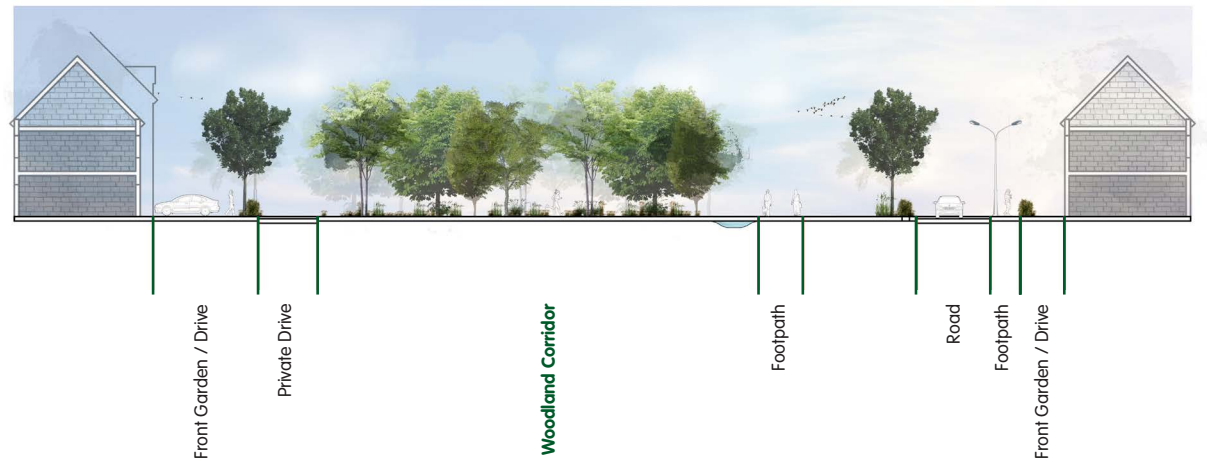
BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE: DRAINAGE



MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE



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**Extract taken from submissions submitted by
Representor RO1154 in specific relation to the BFGS**



Key

- Site boundary
- Indicative building frontages
- Potential housing areas
- Existing Public Right of Way
- Proposed pedestrian routes
- Proposed cycle routes
- Proposed controlled toucan crossing
- Proposed pedestrian refuge island
- Proposed public open space
- Retained existing trees
- Proposed indicative trees
- Proposed highway access
- Controlled access point (emergency / bus only)
- Primary road network (suitable for bus route)
- Minor vehicular route

Potential play mound evoking the 'Dream' at the end of the long vista, and incorporating sculpture to mark the entrance to Clock Face



Taylor Wimpey
Gorsey Lane, St Helens

Illustrative Masterplan
Scale: 1:2000 @ A3

**Extract taken from submissions submitted by
Representor RO2407 in specific relation to the BFGS**

Mr & Mrs B Grace
Abbotsfield Farm
Gorse Lane
Bold
St Helens
WA9 4SF

Jonathan Clarke
Development Plans Manager

Place Services
Town Hall Annexe
Victoria Square
St. Helens
WA10 1HP

Date: 8th May 2019

Dear Mr Clarke,

Site 4HA Bold Forest Garden Suburb – land at Abbotsfield Farm

As landowners of the central section of proposed allocation 4HA, we support the Local Plan's proposed allocation of our land and confirm that our land is available, suitable and deliverable for housing development. The extent of our land ownership is shown on the map overleaf.

We question why the Council consider that only 480 dwellings will be delivered by 2035 when housing could be delivered more quickly than this. Our land is available for development immediately and we suggest that table 4.5 on page 41 of the Submission Local Plan should be updated to reflect all of the Garden Suburb site 4HA being developed within the Plan period. We have made formal representations to the Inspector to this effect.

We trust that all landowners will be treated equally and there will be no preferential treatment of any parcels, including any in public ownership. Transparency over this issue will be vital to demonstrate fairness and probity.

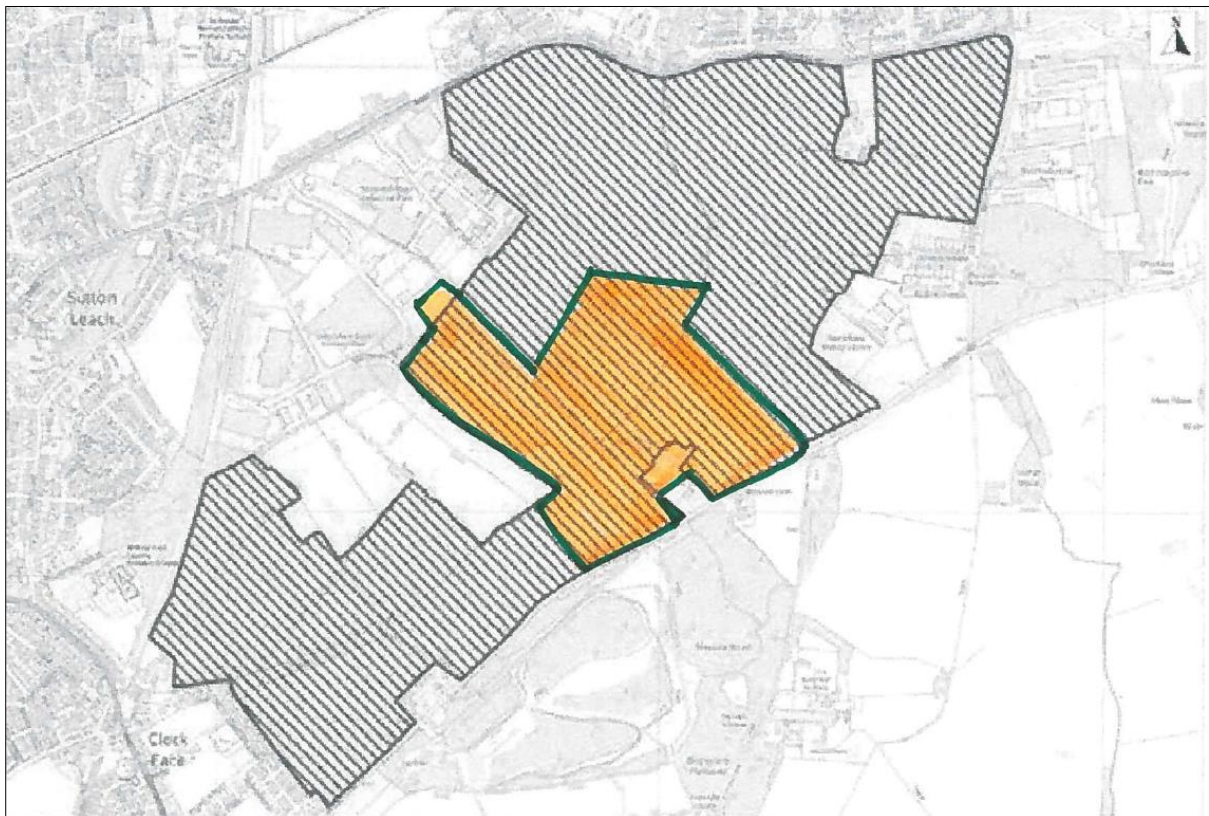
To assist delivery of the Garden Suburb, we consider it vital that the Development Requirements for the site set out in Appendix 5 to the Local Plan should be clear on the equalization of timing, housing density, type of housing and developer contributions (pages 233-234 of the Plan). We have made representations to the Inspector to this effect as per the attached form.

We welcome the requirement in part 2 of Policy LPA05.1 Strategic Housing Sites that a comprehensive masterplan must form part of any planning application for development. We ask that the Council involve us in any discussions about the masterplan at an early stage of its preparation.

We live and farm at Abbotsfield Farm in the midst of site 4HA, and therefore all plans will have a direct impact on where we live as well as our farming enterprise. We wear three hats, namely as residents, as an active business and as promoters of development. For these reasons we wish to be very closely involved in all further work relating to the Bold Forest Garden Suburb and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Extent of our landownership outlined in green, overlain on the proposed allocation site 4HA



Extent of our landownership outlined in green, overlain on the Green Belt Parcels South Map

