

BURROWS LANE
ST HELENS
MERSEYSIDE

DELIVERY STATEMENT
P17-0098_200 | MARCH 2019

Prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Redrow



PLANNING



DESIGN



ENVIRONMENT



ECONOMICS

“ THE CREATION OF HIGH QUALITY BUILDINGS AND PLACES IS FUNDAMENTAL TO WHAT THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS SHOULD ACHIEVE. GOOD DESIGN IS A KEY ASPECT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CREATES BETTER PLACES IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK AND HELPS MAKE DEVELOPMENT ACCEPTABLE TO COMMUNITIES.”

(PARA. 124, NPPF 2018).



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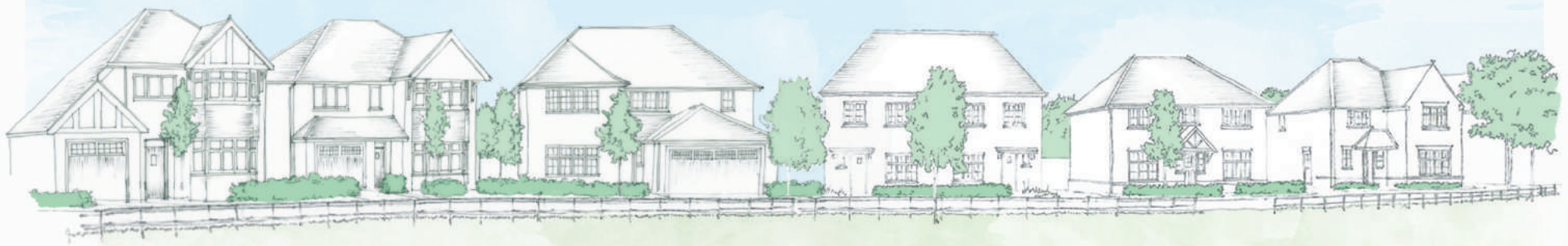
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VISION

The vision for the site is to develop a landscape led masterplan that complements the surrounding site context, including the opportunity to create an exceptional waterside setting, and a high-quality family and affordable community which will meet the needs of the Borough.

ILLUSTRATIVE 3D SKETCH

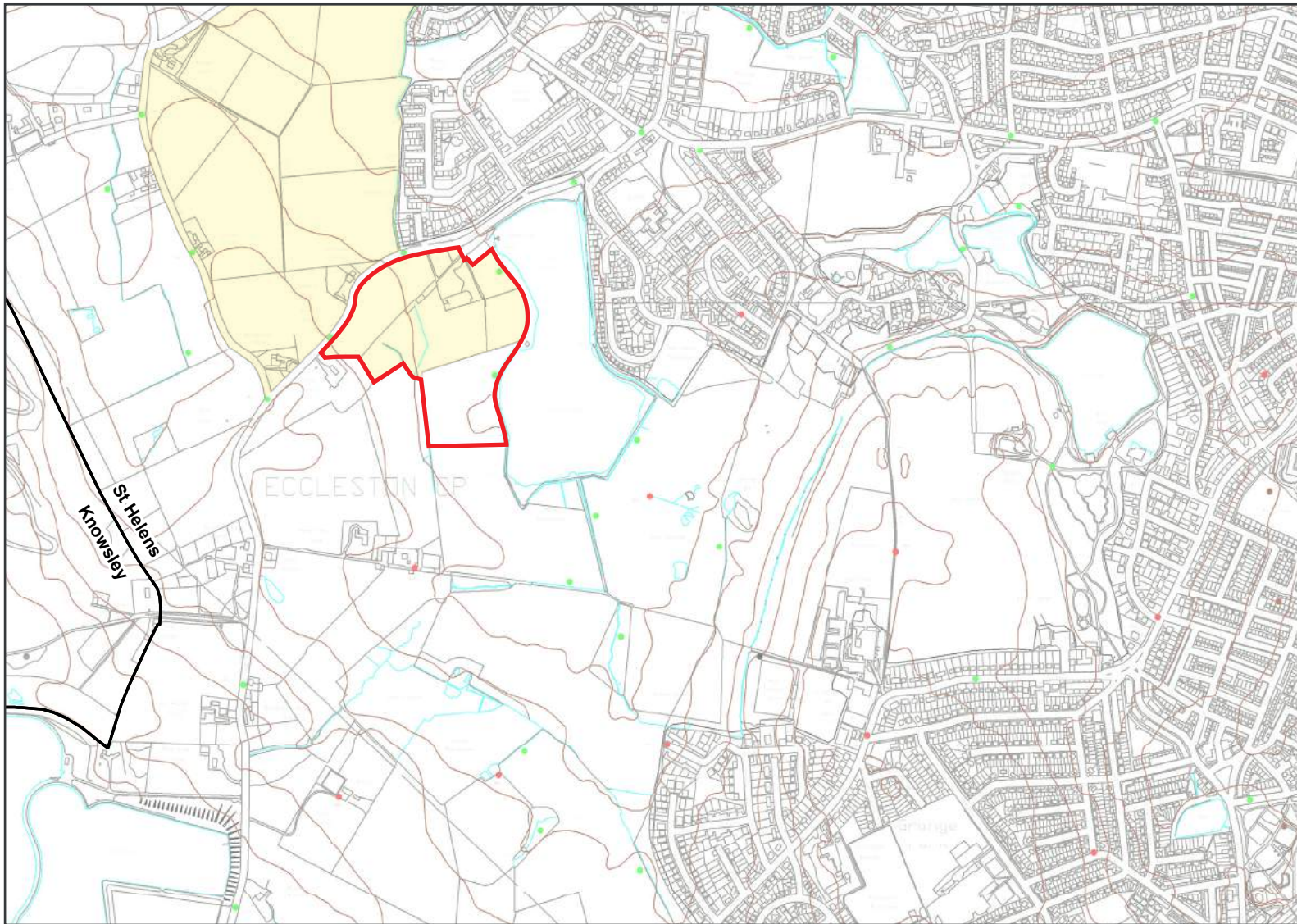
01 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 This Delivery Statement has been prepared on behalf of Redrow Homes to support the release of land located to the south of Burrows Lane, Eccleston, to deliver up to 210 new family and affordable homes during the next plan period.
- 1.1.2 The site extends to 11.45 hectares and is located to the south-west of the settlement of Eccleston, which is located approximately 3km to the west of St Helens.
- 1.1.3 The case for allocating this site for housing development as part of the emerging St Helens Local Plan is clearly presented within this Delivery Statement, including the exceptional circumstances that support the need to amend the Borough's Green Belt. Indeed, the Council had previously accepted that this site is suitable for release from the Green Belt in the future, by identifying the majority of it as safeguarded land in the preferred options consultation version of the emerging Local Plan. We outline the compelling reasons as to why the site should be reallocated during the next stages of the emerging local plan
- 1.1.4 The immediate allocation of this site for residential development will deliver open market and affordable housing of a type, quantity and quality that will make a significant contribution to the future growth needs of St Helens.

1.1.5 To support the vision, this Delivery Statement clearly articulates the opportunity presented by the site. In summary, it demonstrates that:

- There are exceptional circumstances that support an alteration to the Green Belt in the Borough; on the basis that there is insufficient urban land to meet need during the Plan Period, even with increased densities.
- There are strong grounds to remove the site from the Green Belt, when tested against the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"). The site represents a logical extension to south west of Eccleston which works with existing physical boundaries to the north and east, and will strengthen boundaries to the south and west through a robust landscape strategy.
- The site has access to a range of services and facilities in Eccleston, 1.4 km north of the site, with St Helens Town Centre 2.8 km to the east.
- There are no identified technical or environmental constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for development.
- The site is deliverable, achievable and available for housing development in accordance with guidance contained in the NPPF. A vision and masterplan for the site illustrates how the site can deliver a sympathetic, sustainable development that complements its suburban setting.
- The site will deliver an integrated landscape and open space solution that relates to the existing urban grain and responds to the key natural features and topography of the site; whilst also strengthening links to the existing open land to the south and west, improving accessibility to the Green Belt in line with paragraph 138 of the revised NPPF.





- KEY**
-  Site Boundary
 -  Draft Safeguarded Area



FIG1 - SITE LOCATION PLAN

02 Site And Surroundings

2.1 The Site

- 2.1.1 The proposed development site is illustrated by the red line boundary which extends to 11.6ha. It is located within the Green Belt to the south of Burrows Lane, Eccleston, which is approximately 3km west of St Helens.
- 2.1.2 The site comprises open fields with a mix of hedgerows and trees along the perimeter and field boundaries, with a denser area of tree cover in the north-east corner. The site is largely flat, lies within flood zone 1, and is not subject to any other landscape or environmental designations.

- 2.1.3 To the north the site is bound by the B5201 Burrows Lane, which will provide vehicular access to the development. To the east lies Eccleston Mere, which is designated as 'Other Open Space' within the adopted UDP (Policy ENV1) and is proposed as a Local Wildlife Site in the emerging plan. The Mere is used for recreational purposes and is jointly supervised by the Pilkington Sailing Club and the Pilkington Angling Association. Beyond the Mere lies residential development and a primary school, with Grange Park Golf Course to the south-east.

- 2.1.4 To the west and south of the site are open agricultural fields, with some buildings relating to Mere View Farm at the south west corner.
- 2.1.5 The site is sustainably located on the south-western edge of the settlement of Eccleston, which is home to a number of local facilities, as discussed below.





02 Site And Surroundings

2.2 Site Surroundings

2.2.1 Eccleston is a neighbourhood with a population of approximately 10,000, situated to the west of the larger built up area of St Helens, which is the Key Settlement of the borough. St Helens Town Centre is 2.8 km to the east.

2.2.2 The neighbourhood includes a number of day to day facilities with a pharmacy, Post Office and other unit shops within the Local Centre; as well as two primary schools, a secondary school, medical centre, pub and convenience store within the wider area; whilst St Helens Town Centre provides a higher order centre with a range of national multiples and employment uses. The Burrows Lane site is well related to existing local facilities, as explored in further detail in Section 8 of this Delivery Statement.

2.2.3 There are bus stops within 110m and 200m of the site with regular services to Eccleston and other higher order centres including Sutton Oak and St Helens. In addition, Eccleston Park train station is approximately 3km to the south, which links to Wigan and Liverpool. The site takes access from the B5201 Burrows Lane, which links up to the A58 and the national road network.

2.2.4 Liverpool and Warrington are the largest sub regional centres in the vicinity. Liverpool is approximately 14 km to the west and Warrington is approximately 15 km to the south east.



03 Planning Policy

3.1 Planning Policy

3.1.1 There is a compelling case for removing the south of Burrows Lane, Eccleston site from the St Helen's Green Belt. The need to release the site from the Green Belt is justified by the current housing supply position, emerging housing requirements, exceptional circumstances that support alterations to the Green Belt and the fact that the site fails to adequately fulfil the Green Belt functions.

3.2 National Planning Policy

3.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was initially published in March 2012 and revised in July 2018, and again in Feb 2019 outlines the Government's core objectives for the planning system, which include the need for local authorities to boost their supply of housing. Releasing the Burrows Lane, Eccleston site from the Green Belt to facilitate new housing development would be consistent with the core objectives of the revised NPPF because:

- It would meet the three pillars of sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits (paragraph 8);
- It would be entirely consistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development- (paragraph 11);
- It would offer a sustainable location, in Eccleston, which is accessible to a range of sustainable transport modes, and a range of services and facilities (Paragraphs 102 – 108;

- It would significantly boost the supply of housing and provide a deliverable site that is available, suitable and viable (Paragraphs 59 and 67);
- It will provide a wide range of market and affordable housing of various types and tenures promoting mixed and inclusive communities (Paragraph 61&62); and
- There are exceptional circumstances that justify the removal of the site from the Green Belt in accordance with Chapter 13 (Paragraphs 135 and 136), whilst also taking account of sustainable patterns of development (Paragraph 138).
- It provides opportunities to improve accessibility to adjacent Green Belt land (paragraph 138).

3.2.2 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF outlines how the Green Belt serves five purposes, and we assess the contribution that the Burrows Lane, Eccleston site makes in relation to these five purposes later in this Section.

3.2.3 Paragraph 139 of the NPPF also outlines how when defining Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period, and that boundaries should be clearly defined, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

3.3 Local Planning Context

St Helens Development Plan

3.3.1 The Development Plan for St Helens comprises the Core Strategy (adopted October 2012) and the saved policies and proposals map from the 1998 St Helens Unitary Development Plan.

3.3.2 The site falls within the Green Belt on the adopted proposals map, but is not subject to any other designation. The proposals map also confirms that the site is located in close proximity to the defined edge of Eccleston. Eccleston Mere, to the immediate east of the site, is defined on the proposals map as 'Other Open Space'.

3.3.3 Policy CH 1 of the Core Strategy set a housing requirement of 13,680 dwellings between 2003 and 2027, which equates to 570 dwellings per annum.

3.3.4 Policy CSS 1 (Overall Spatial Strategy) directs the majority of new development (69%) towards the regional town of St Helens (defined as Spatial Areas 1 and 2) in the first 10 years of the plan. As shown in Figure 7.1 of the Core Strategy, Eccleston is located within the St Helens Core Area and is therefore in the settlement category which is the subject of the highest levels of growth.

3.3.5 Policy CH2 confirmed an affordable housing requirement of 30%.



03 Planning Policy

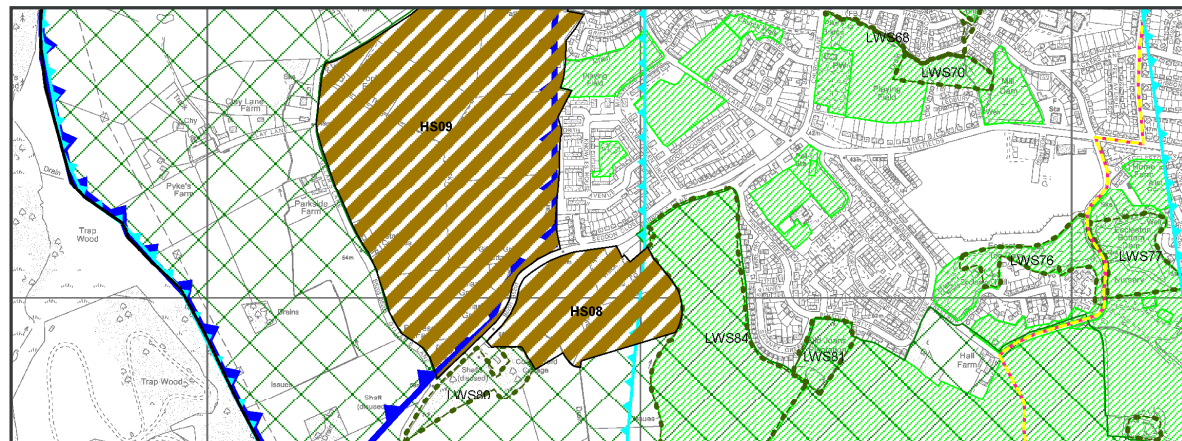
Emerging Local Plan

- 3.3.6 In December 2016, the Council consulted on the Preferred Options of the emerging St Helens Local Plan, covering the plan period 2018-2033.
- 3.3.7 As shown on the plan extract below, the majority of the Burrows Lane site was included as a safeguarded site (Ref:HS08) under Policy LPA06, with an indicative minimum site capacity of 131 dwellings.
- 3.3.8 Since then, the Council have published their Submission Draft of the Local Plan, covering the plan period 2020-2035. The Burrows Lane site has been removed as an allocation in the submission version of the Plan, as have numerous other sites, due to the Council's change in approach to their housing requirements and spatial strategy.

- 3.3.9 Policy LPA05 of the Submission Draft outlines a minimum housing requirement of 9,234 net additional dwellings between 2016 -2035, which equates to an annual average of at least 486 dwellings per annum. This represents a decrease from the previous target contained in the preferred options draft, which was 570 dwellings per annum.
- 3.3.10 Policy LPC02 confirms that the affordable housing target will remain at 30% on greenfield sites, with a 10% requirement on brownfield sites.
- 3.3.11 Policy LPA02 confirms that this will require the release of Green Belt land both for development within the emerging plan period (2020-2035) and beyond, through safeguarded land; on the basis that there is insufficient land within the existing urban area to meet

their development needs going forward. As such the Council have accepted that exceptional circumstances exist for Green Belt release, which we examine in more detail in the next section.

- 3.3.12 The plan then proposes to remove 10 housing allocations (under Policy LPA05) and 8 safeguarded housing land sites (under Policy LPA06) from the Green Belt, with the safeguarded sites protected from permanent forms of development for the duration of the plan period.
- 3.3.13 As we explain in detail in our accompanying Representations, there is a compelling need for the Council to allocate more sites in the Plan, given the fact they should be pursuing a higher housing requirement figure (570 dwellings per annum) and concerns regarding their housing land supply. The following sections briefly summarise the current housing requirement position.



PREFERRED OPTIONS PROPOSALS MAP

Key

 Safeguarded Housing Land

 Green Belt

 Open Space and Outdoor Sports & Recreation Facilities

Parks and Gardens (PG), Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces (NSN), Amenity Greenspace (AG), Provision for Children and Young People (including Equipped Play Areas) (CYP), Allotments (A), Cemeteries and Churchyards (C), Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities (including Playing Fields, Golf Courses, Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts and Sailing Spaces) (OSR)

Main Policies

LPA06

LPA02, LPA06

LPC05

03 Planning Policy

3.4 Demonstrating the exceptional circumstances for green belt release

3.4.1 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF confirms that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. As noted in the previous section, the council have commenced a local plan review and we summarise the position on housing need below.

Housing Need

3.4.2 The main exceptional circumstance which justifies the release of Green Belt land in the Borough comes from the need to accommodate the Borough's projected needs over the new plan period up to 2035, and to consider growth patterns in the wider Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area and Liverpool City Region.



3.4.3 The Submission Version of the Local Plan indicates a housing requirement of 486 dwellings per annum. The Council have arrived at this figure using the government's standardised housing methodology, which calculates a OAN of 468 dwellings per annum. The Council have then turned this in to an 'economic led figure', using a modest uplift of just 18dpa (3.8%) to the standardised 468dpa figure to arrive at the 486 dwellings per annum target.

3.4.4 Our accompanying Representations outline in detail our concerns with the reduced 486 dwellings per annum figure. We have undertaken detailed analysis which reveals indications that the housing ladder remains out of reach for substantial parts of the local population in St Helens, as well as high internal migration figures and job numbers in St Helens being on a relatively strong upward trajectory over the last three years. All of these considerations point towards a compelling case for a higher housing requirement figure.

3.4.5 In light of the above, the Council should continue to pursue the 570 dpa figure to ensure that housing and economic aspirations are fully aligned, to allow St Helens to compete within the wider Liverpool City Region and the Cheshire and Warrington LEP Area. The 570 dpa figure represents a genuinely economically led housing requirement figure, based on a 451dpa figure from the Mid-Mersey 2016 SHMA, which has then being uplifted by 119 to stabilise and increase population and promote housing choice.

3.4.6 The emerging Local Plan must consider the implications of not releasing sufficient land from the Green Belt, and the harm that will occur from failing to meet the identified needs in the Borough; such as slower economic growth, a lack of labour force mobility, affordability issues, disruption to commuting patterns and the delivery of housing choice.

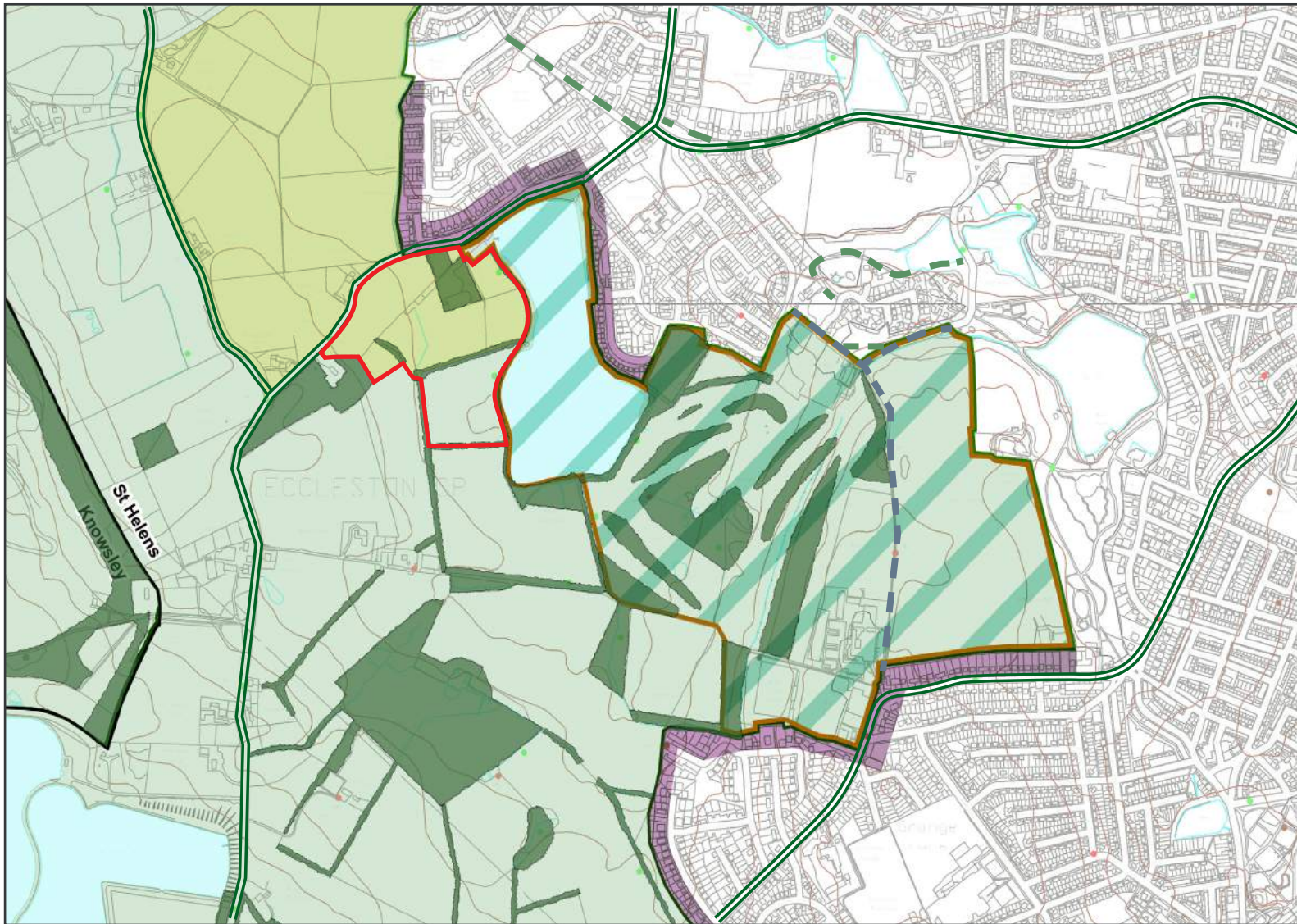
03 Planning Policy

Housing Supply and Insufficient Land

- 3.4.7 The Council have not confirmed their 5-year housing land supply position within the Submission Plan, however their latest evidence base (the 2017 SHLAA) indicates a 2.7 year supply based on the previous 570 dpa requirement and a 5.3 year supply based on an OAN figure of 451 dpa.
- 3.4.8 The housing land supply position has clearly moved on since then and a 2018 base date can now be used to calculate supply. As part of our detailed Representations, we have outlined our analysis of the five year housing land supply position as summarised.
- 3.4.9 In summary, the Council have a five year housing land supply of between 3.01 and 5.18 years against their suggested target of 486 dwellings per annum and their own claimed supply.

- 3.4.10 We consider that the Council should be pursuing a housing requirement figure of 570 dwellings per annum, which equates to a housing land supply of between 2.84-4.58 years, based on our own assessment of the Councils supply.
- 3.4.11 Our analysis had clearly established that there is not enough land within St Helens urban areas to meet the future development requirements of the emerging Local Plan. There are also chronic issues with historic under-delivery against adopted housing requirements. Therefore, more land needs to be allocated to meet emerging housing requirements, including highly suitable green belt release sites such as Burrows Lane.





- KEY**
- Site Boundary
 - Green Belt
 - Water Bodies
 - Safeguarded Sites
 - Woodland Belt
 - Public Open Space
 - Weak Urban Edge
 - Primary Route
 - Public Right Of Way
 - Bridleway



GREEN BELT PLAN

04 Green Belt

4.1 The Purposes of the Green Belt

4.1.1 The Purposes of the Green Belt

4.1.2 In order to establish the suitability of the South of Burrows Lane, Eccleston site for release from the Green Belt, it is important to assess the site against the five purposes of the Green Belt. Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

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

4.1.3 It is clear that the development of this site would fail to fulfil these five purposes as it:

Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

4.1.4 Burrows Lane and Eccleston Mere provide strong physical boundaries which restrict sprawl to the north and east. Although the western boundary is not quite as well defined, there is some existing mature planting and there are opportunities to reinstate hedgerow and associated infrastructure planting; whilst the southern boundary retains a mature established hedgerow. As such development of the Burrows Lane site would not constitute unrestricted sprawl, on the basis that existing physical features along its boundaries can be reinforced and enhanced, rounding off the urban area to the south-west of Eccleston.

Will not cause neighbouring towns to merge into one another

4.1.5 The development of this site would not close the existing gap between the settlements, but would maintain the existing gap of 700m that currently exists between Carmel College and Pinfold Drive.

4.1.6 Furthermore, both Eccleston and Eccleston Park form neighbourhoods within the wider built up area of St Helens and are not towns in themselves, which would arguably reduce the impact of any coalescence anyway.

04 Green Belt

Will not cause unacceptable encroachment into the countryside

- 4.1.7 As with all Green Belt sites, the development of this site will inevitably cause a level of encroachment. However, we would reiterate that Burrows Lane and Eccleston Mere provide strong boundaries preventing encroachment to the north and east respectively. There are also opportunities for a robust landscape and Green Infrastructure strategy, which complements the existing local landscape character, in order to establish defensible boundaries to the south and west to prevent further encroachment.
- 4.1.8 Accordingly, the site currently serves little function as countryside and its loss would not be unacceptable.

Will not impact on the special character of historic towns

- 4.1.9 According to the NPPF interpretation, St Helen's does not contain any historic towns, therefore this purpose of the Green Belt is not explicitly applicable to the Borough, and the Council fully accept this.
- 4.1.10 At the local level, the site is not located within or near any Conservation Areas. Additionally, the nearest listed building is located over 600m away from the site. As such, this site fails to fulfil the Green Belt purpose of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

Will not discourage urban regeneration

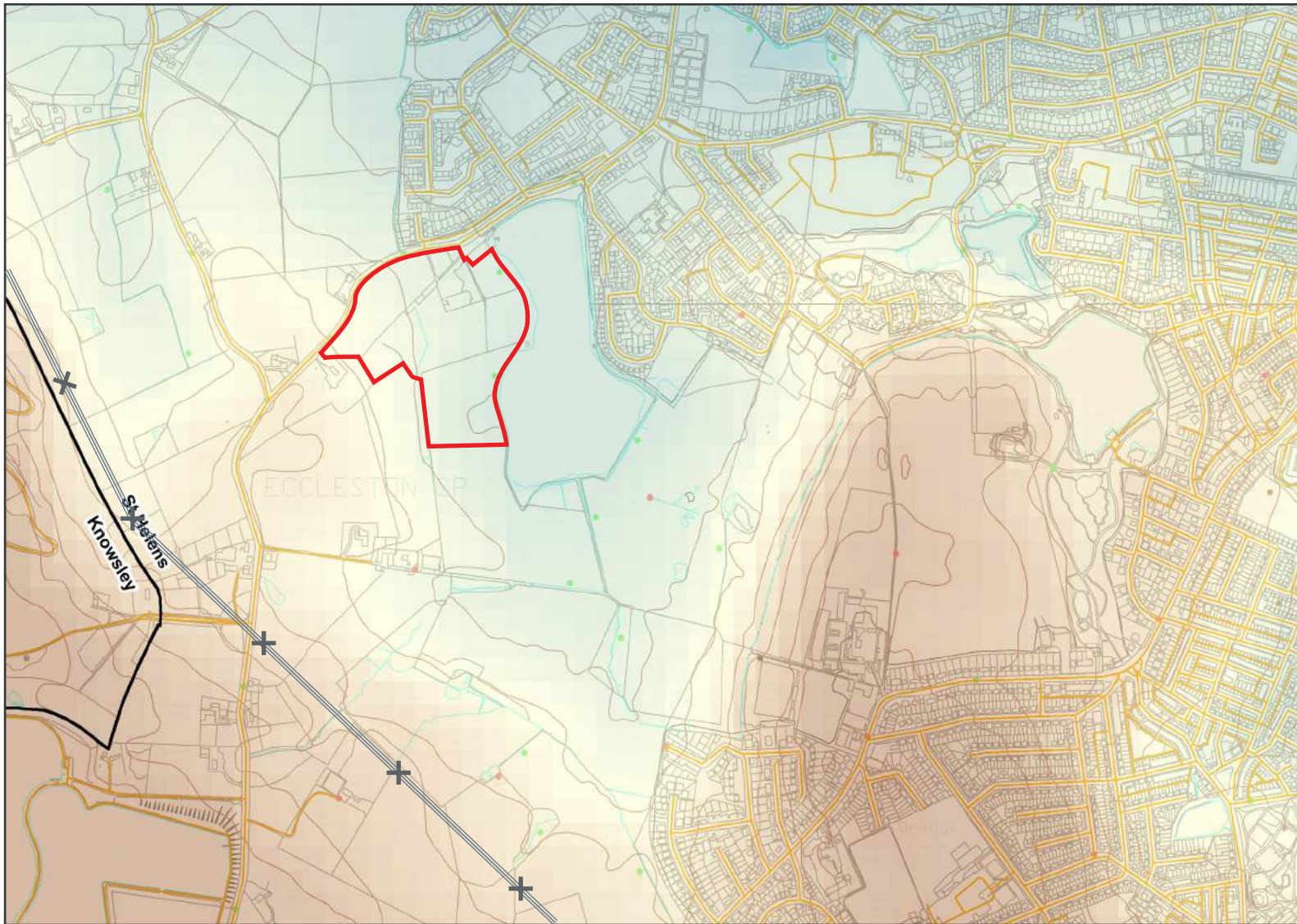
- 4.1.11 As noted, it is clear from the Council's evidence that there is insufficient brownfield land available to meet the emerging housing needs of the Borough. The release of this site from the Green Belt would therefore not prejudice or discourage brownfield sites coming forward, but would instead compliment these brownfield sites to ensure that sufficient housing land is available. As such, the land south of Burrows Lane does not fulfil this purpose.







04 Green Belt

4.2 Conclusion on Green Belt Release

- 4.2.1 Whilst it is acknowledged that there should be an emphasis on the development of brownfield land, simply put, there is insufficient brownfield land available to adequately meet the emerging development requirements of St Helens. This represents a clear exceptional circumstance for Green Belt release, which the Council fully acknowledge, and are seeking to address through allocations in the latest version of the emerging Local Plan Submission Version.
- 4.2.2 Given that the Burrows Lane site does not fulfil the five purposes for including land in the Green Belt and is a sustainable and deliverable site, it is recommended that it be released from the Green Belt and allocated immediately for housing purposes in the emerging St Helens Local Plan.





- KEY**
-  Site Boundary
 -  District Boundary
 - DTM (meters above ordnance datum)
 -  High - 80
 -  Low - 30
 -  Local Roads
 -  Pylons & Transmission Cables



EXAMPLES OF LOCAL CHARACTER

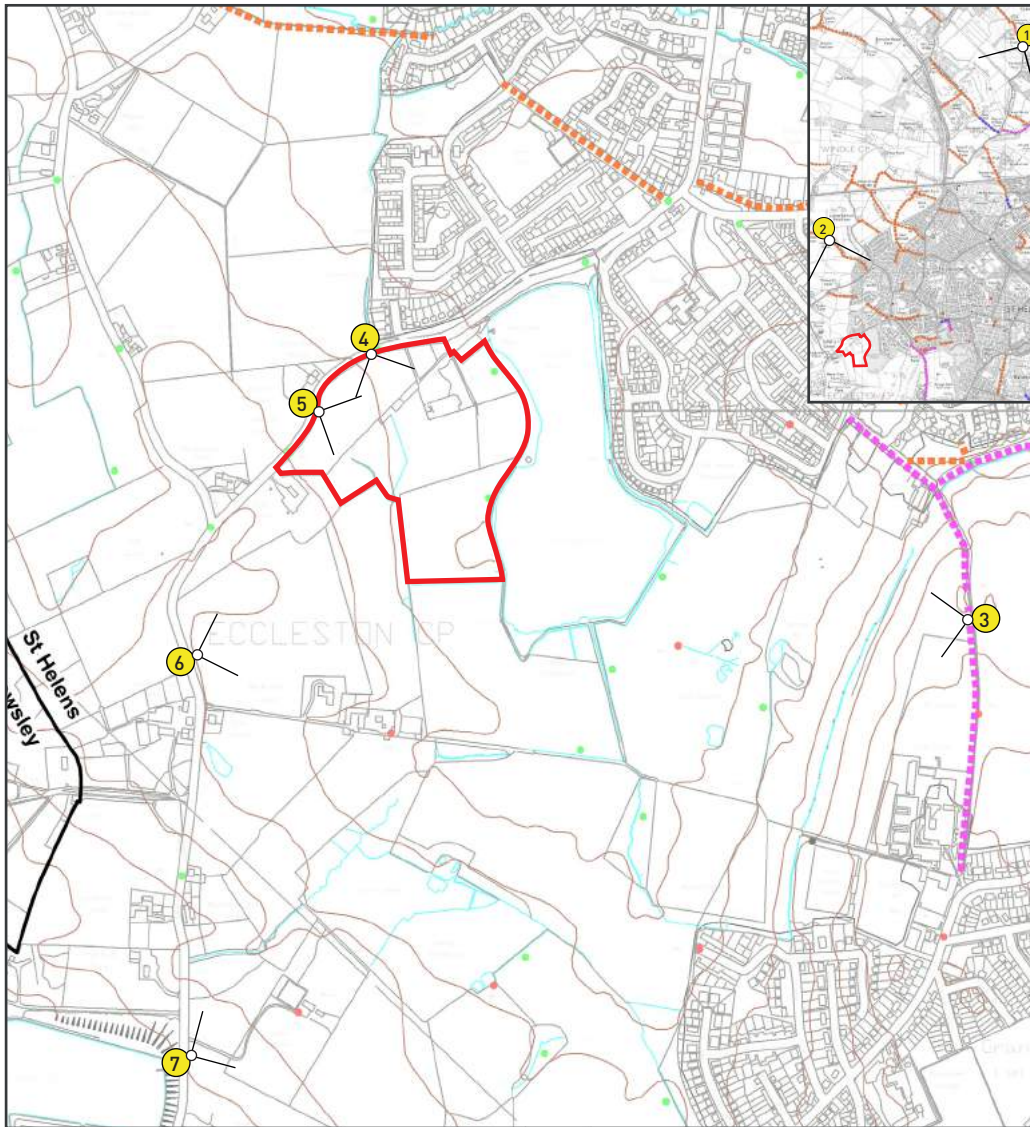
05 Landscape And Visual Analysis

5.1 Landscape Features and Character

- 5.1.1 The site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 56: Lancashire Coal Measures. In terms of key characteristics, the assessments notes that there is: a fragmented landscape pattern; a soft but varied topography; limited woodland cover across most of the area but with new community woodlands; isolated pockets of agriculture within the urban fabric; a strong cultural and industrial heritage; and a significant influence of transport and utilities infrastructure.
- 5.1.2 Some of these elements are apparent across the site and in the local context, including pockets of agriculture, varied topography, industrial remnants, and the influence of transport and utilities. Woodland cover is also very apparent here.

- 5.1.3 In the more localised study, the St. Helen's Landscape Character Assessment (2006), the site and area to the north are identified as being in a Landscape Character Type called "Intimate Farmed Valley".
- 5.1.4 The assessment notes the undulating (arable) agricultural landscape of the area, the influence of urban elements including pylons that serve to weaken landscape character, busy road networks and some geometric blocks of woodland planting.










5.2 Visual Amenity

- 5.2.1 Notwithstanding the relatively large scale of the site, views of it from the wider area are generally limited. This is due to several factors, including: the presence of the extensive urban areas to the south and east; the rising wooded topography across Knowsley Park to the west, and the gently undulating but low-lying landscape to the north and north-east in combination with woodland blocks in the vicinity of the site.
- 5.2.2 From the higher lying ridgeline to the north/north-east, just south of the village of Crank, there is a long-distance view looking towards the site. From this localised higher area, it is difficult to identify the site, set within the folds and wooded undulations of the landscape, where the urban areas are visible in part, see view 1. Closer to the site, again to the north, from the public footpath adjacent to Hilton's Farm, again the site is not visible, set behind local undulations in the landscape and vegetation cover, see view 2. From both these more distant locations the overall visual composition of the landscape is rural.

KEY

-  Site boundary
-  Representative viewpoints
-  Public footpath
-  Public bridleway
-  Byway open to all traffic



LANDSCAPE VIEWPOINTS

05 Landscape And Visual Analysis



VIEW 1



VIEW 2

05 Landscape And Visual Analysis



VIEW 3



VIEW 4



VIEW 5

Views from adjacent to the site

- 5.2.3 To the east of the site, from the brideway that runs across Grange Park Golf Course, there are filtered and glimpsed views from the higher parts of the golf course to the northern sections of the site, see view 3.
- 5.2.4 There are a series of views from Burrows Lane looking across the site, the composition of which varies significantly. View 4 is from the northern end of the site, looking across the lower lying land adjacent to Eccleston Mere. The view is generally enclosed by the blocks of mature woodland on site, with the pylon lines evident. View 5, a bit further south, also illustrates the generally enclosed and lower lying character of this part of the site, where the urban edge of Eccleston is visible in part, but Eccleston Mere is not visible, screened by surrounding vegetation.
- 5.2.5 Further to the south, the visual composition changes. Where the topography is flatter before falling down towards Eccleston Mere, there is a long-distance view across the site to the north where there is a gap between the woodland blocks on site and the rising urban edge of St. Helens, see view 6. These longer distance views can be seen through several gaps in the boundary hedgerow vegetation along Burrows Lane to a point where Sales Wood begins to curtail them, see view 7.

05 Landscape And Visual Analysis













VIEW 6

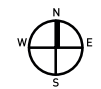


VIEW 7

05 Landscape And Visual Analysis



-  Site boundary
-  Mature vegetation blocks/belts; screening and directing views
-  Visually evident isolated elements of development
-  Partially evident urban form
-  Lower lying and/or visually discrete areas of land
-  Very long distance panoramas across site
-  Views across parts of site
-  Short distance filtered views into site from private locations
-  Contours
-  Safeguarded land



LANDSCAPE PLAN

05 Landscape And Visual Analysis

5.3 Landscape and Visual Analysis

5.3.1 The following is a summary of the analysis of the site in landscape and visual terms:

- The site sits within a gently sloping valley that is consistent with the wider undulating topography of the area;
- It generally has very evident 'connectivity' with the adjacent urban areas;
- This in combination with the prevalent vegetation patterns creates a series of localised 'wooded horizons' that casts influence over the inter-visibility across the landscape and urban edge;
- The combinations of the urban edges, ribbon development, lower lying undulations and wooded horizons serves to limit the overall visibility of the site in the wider landscape;
- There are a number of short distance views from the site boundaries or areas close to it, and these vary significantly in composition, dependent upon location and aspect;
- The character of the site is very heavily influenced by the urban fringe, with the urban edges, other elements of isolated built form, utilities (pylons and reservoir embankments); highways infrastructure, and recreational land uses all combining to reinforce this;
- This urban fringe character starts to dilute further along Burrows Lane to the west and south;
- The western 'flank' of the site offers longer distance views northwards to the wider open countryside (albeit we note this land is also safeguarded in the Draft Local Plan);
- In contrast the north-eastern section adjacent to Eccleston Mere is lower lying and more enclosed; and
- Views from the west across open countryside are influenced by large woodland areas, existing farm buildings, pylons and the urban edge of St Helens in the background.

