

Barton Willmore on behalf of Andrew Cotton (Representor ID: R00375)

Examination into the St. Helens Local Plan

Matter 5

Matter 5 (Session 7): Housing Land Supply

Issue 1: Components of Housing Supply

Q1 Having regard to the Council's responses referred to above, will the up to date housing supply position be clearly shown in the Plan (base date of 31 March 2021)?

1. The Council has produced a trajectory which covers the period from 2021/22 to 2036/37. While my client has some reservations regarding the reliability of this in relation to Site 4HA which we reiterate can deliver more housing earlier in the plan period, the housing supply position is now shown based on the Draft Schedule of Modifications (SHBC010) and the Updated Employment and Housing Land Supply Information Document (SHBC007).

Q2 Having regard to Council's responses referred to above, will the components of the housing supply that will meet the housing requirement be clearly shown in the Plan?

2. As stated in my client's Matter 4 Hearing Statement, the scale of the Bold Forest Garden Suburb Allocation (4HA) is such that a specific policy relating to it would be beneficial for clarity. I will not rehearse these arguments here.
3. It should be noted that this does not amount to a formal objection as the allocations have been set out in Table 4.5 along with indicative capacities. However, for the reasons outlined at Matter 4, a specific policy relating to the Garden Suburb would be beneficial and add to the clarity of the plan regarding this component of the housing supply.
4. As stated in the response to Matter 4 and Q10 of this hearing statement, my client has concerns regarding the indicative trajectory for the delivery of the Bold Forest Garden Suburb Allocation (4HA) and fundamentally considers that it can deliver more housing in the early years on the plan period.

Q3 Is the small sites allowance of 93 dpa justified by compelling evidence (see paras 4.10 to 4.13 of SD025)?

5. No comments.

Q4 Should the supply shown within the Plan make an allowance for demolitions or are they accounted for within the net number of homes anticipated to be delivered from each site?

6. No comments.

Q5 Should empty homes be included as a component of supply?

7. No comments.

Q6 Does the Plan show sufficient flexibility in the supply to ensure that the housing requirement will be met over the Plan period (the Council's latest figures show a residual requirement of 7778 units and potential housing supply of 8384 units assuming a Plan period until 2037)?

8. Since the drafting of this question the Council's stated figures have change in this regard. As such, the answer to this question below will be based on the latest position set out in Annex 3 of the Draft Modifications Schedule (SHBC010). This states that the residual requirement for the plan period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2037 is 7,132, and the total supply of housing is 7,831.
9. Based on the above, the Council can demonstrate a surplus of 699 homes (9.8% above the residual requirement).
10. As stated in my client's response to question 14 of Matter 4, a surplus is necessary to ensure flexibility in delivery of homes.
11. It should be noted at this juncture that my client's land at Travers Farm can come forward early in the plan period, and that the Council's position with regards to the trajectory places on the delivery of Site 4HA has been overly conservative. This would ensure more flexibility and should be explored by the Council.
12. Given the contingencies and buffers built into the supply, including a 15% non-delivery reduction for SHLAA sites and an increase allowance for allocations of 20%, a 10% surplus of supply is a reasonable balance between offering flexibility and choice in the market and ensuring that the exceptional circumstances case for Green Belt release is robust.
13. These representations do not focus on the deliverability of other allocations or identified SHLAA sites within the trajectory. Should any of these be found to be undeliverable additional sites may be required to ensure that the circa 10% surplus remains intact.

Q7 Is the flexibility in housing supply provided by the Green Belt sites justified?

14. The Council's evidence on the urban capacity of the Borough to provide additional housing shows that

there is a significant shortfall when taken against the housing requirement. As such, the release of some Green Belt land to provide housing to bridge this gap is justified and exceptional circumstances are demonstrated. Further details on this can be seen in the answer to question 12 of Matter 4 in relation to Site 4HA and will not be rehearsed in full here.

15. The response from my client on question 14 of Matter 4 explicitly details the allocation of Green Belt sites in the context of ensuring a small surplus of housing supply taken against the residual requirement. These arguments will not be repeated in full. However, it is important to note that even with the allocation of the existing Green Belt sites the surplus is less than 10% based on the Council's figures.
16. As such, the flexibility afforded by all Green Belt sites is absolutely necessary to ensure a robust supply of homes through the plan period.
17. Indeed, if the Green Belt sites were removed from the supply, the Council would have a 1,321 home deficit in supply when taken against the residual requirement at Annex 3 of the Draft Main Modifications Schedule (SHBC010).
18. As stated in my client's response to Matter 4, and previous representations, the Travers Farm part of allocation 4HA can come forward early in the plan period in accordance with the delivery plan outlined in previous representations at Appendixes 1 and 2 of this Hearing Statement. This would offer more flexibility of supply starting from 3 years into the plan period.

Q8 Would greater certainty be provided within the Plan if SHLAA sites (or the larger sites) were to be allocated (see SHBC001 – PQ52)?

19. No comment.

Issue 2: The Housing Trajectory

Q9 Is the evidence that supports the Housing Trajectory (Figure 4.3 as amended by Appendix 1 to SD025) based on realistic assumptions?

20. No.
21. In the first instance Appendix 1 of SD025 needs to be amended to reflect the change in plan period. This means extending it to 2037. This will impact on the amount of development that can be expected within the plan period.
22. With specific reference to Site 4HA, the evidence that supports the projected delivery appears to have been informed by an assertion that a masterplanning process would take around 7 years to complete. This is stated within the Bold Forest Garden Suburb Position Statement (SD027) at paragraph 2.11.

23. However, within the same document, at Table 2 which details an indicative work programme for masterplanning, the adoption of the masterplan is estimated for Summer 2023. This is significantly less time than the 7 years listed elsewhere in SD027 and at subsequently the trajectory in SD025 and subsequent updates in SHBC007.
24. As such, the trajectory should be reflected to reflect the more realistic programme at Table 2 of SD027. This would mean that the first 50 homes would be delivered in Winter 2025 with 75 homes in 2026 and 2027 and 100 homes per annum thereafter.
25. The evidence that supports the delivery rates is also not realistic relation of Site 4HA. The assumption of 60 homes per year on a strategic site with a number of developers operating is overly conservative.
26. Based on experience it is suggested that once the build is underway fully around 100 dwellings can be expected per annum on the Site. As such, 1,200 should be anticipated to be delivered within the plan period. This should be reflected in Figure 4.5 of the Plan.

Q10 In particular:

d. Are the assumptions about delivery from allocations robust (discussed under Matter 4)?

27. No. Please see above in relation to Site 4HA. Based on a more realistic lead in time and delivery rates, around 1,200 homes should be delivered in the plan period.

e. Are lead in times and build out rates realistic?

28. No. Based on experience it is suggested that once the build is underway fully around 100 dwellings can be expected per annum on the Site. As such, 1,200 should be anticipated to be delivered within the plan period.

Issue 3: Five Year Housing Land Supply

Q11 Is the use of a 5% buffer to calculate the housing land supply position appropriate?

29. The latest Housing Delivery Test results for 2020 show that St Helens delivered an adequate number of homes when taken against its' requirement. As such, a 5% buffer is appropriate.

Q12 Is the inclusion of 465 units from small sites in the 5-year supply justified?

30. No comment.

Q13 Generally, are the assumptions about the delivery from commitments, SHLAA sites and allocations within the 5-year supply realistic?

31. Please refer to early answers in relation to the Bold Forest Garden Suburb. It is estimated that 50 homes will be delivered within the first 5 years of the plan period. These should be added to the calculation at Annex 4 of the Draft Modifications Schedule (SHBC010)

Q14 Are lead in times and build out rates within the 5-year supply realistic?

32. Please refer to earlier comments on the lead in time for Site 4HA.

Q15 Are there any measures that the Council can take to provide more elbow room in terms of the 5-year supply?

33. The inclusion of 50 homes from Site 4HA in 2025/26 based on the rationale detailed above would result would make for a more robust housing land position in the first five years of the plan period.
34. It should also be noted that Travers Farm, which is the northernmost part of Site 4HA, is available to delivery immediately. Issuing planning permission for the development of this part of Site 4HA prior to a full masterplanning exercise would enable increased delivery in the first 5 years of the plan. This is covered in detail within representations on Matter 4 and in the masterplanning work at Appendix 1 and 2 of this Hearing Statement.

Q16 Will there be a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites on adoption of the LP?

35. Based on the figures set out by the Council in Appendix 4 of the Draft Schedule of Modifications (SHBC010) there will not be a demonstrable five year housing land supply upon adoption.
36. Early delivery on Site 4HA, particularly at Travers Farm, as outlined in illustrative masterplans prepared on behalf of my client and submitted as part of previous representations (also at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this Hearing Statement for convenience), offers to opportunity to help remediate that deficit.

Q17 Will Policy LPA05 as worded be effective in maintaining delivery through the Plan period?

37. It is considered that part 4 of Policy LP05 is too subjective in its wording when it states that a full or partial review of the Plan to allocate more sites, at such a time as the supply is "significantly below the required level".
38. Wording to ensure objectivity in terms of the point at which a review of the Plan is triggered is required.
39. Furthermore, a review is likely to take a significant amount of time to conclude and therefore in the time between the point that a potential shortfall has been identified and the adoption of a reviewed Plan, a significant amount of housing need will have not been met.

40. It is suggested that mechanisms to ensure the timely delivery of existing allocations, such as waiving the requirement for a masterplan of a whole allocation, is a way to speeding up delivery which does not have as long of a lead in time.
41. In relation to phasing, my client notes that the Council has actively sought to avoid any specific requirements for this to ensure flexibility and not add arbitrary time constraints to development. This approach is welcomed.

APPENDIX 1:

**DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT FOR LAND AT TRAVERS FARM / SOUTH OF
BOLD ROAD, ST HELENS**

LAND AT TRAVERS FARM, ST HELENS

**DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

NOVEMBER 2016

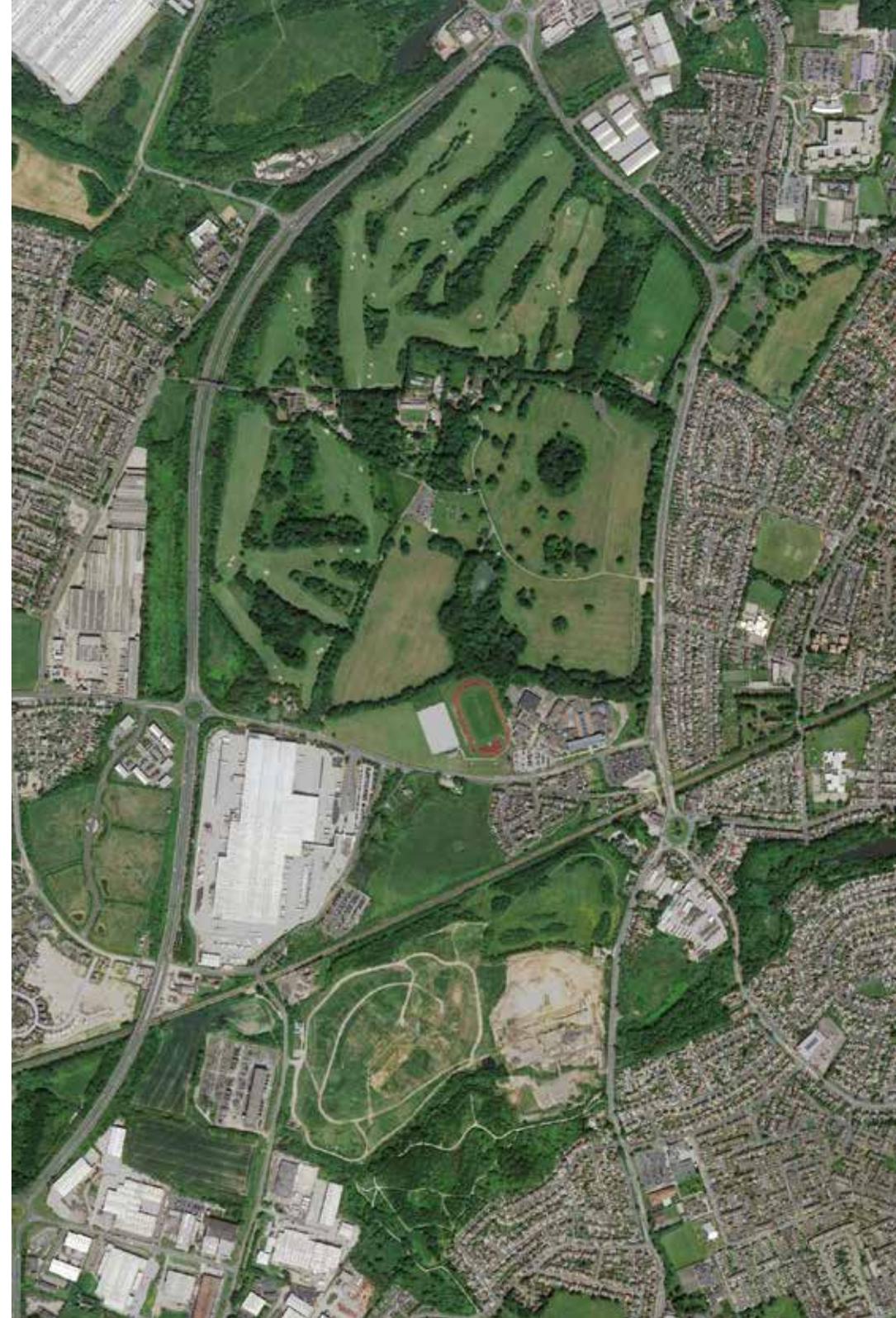
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONTENTS

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.

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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

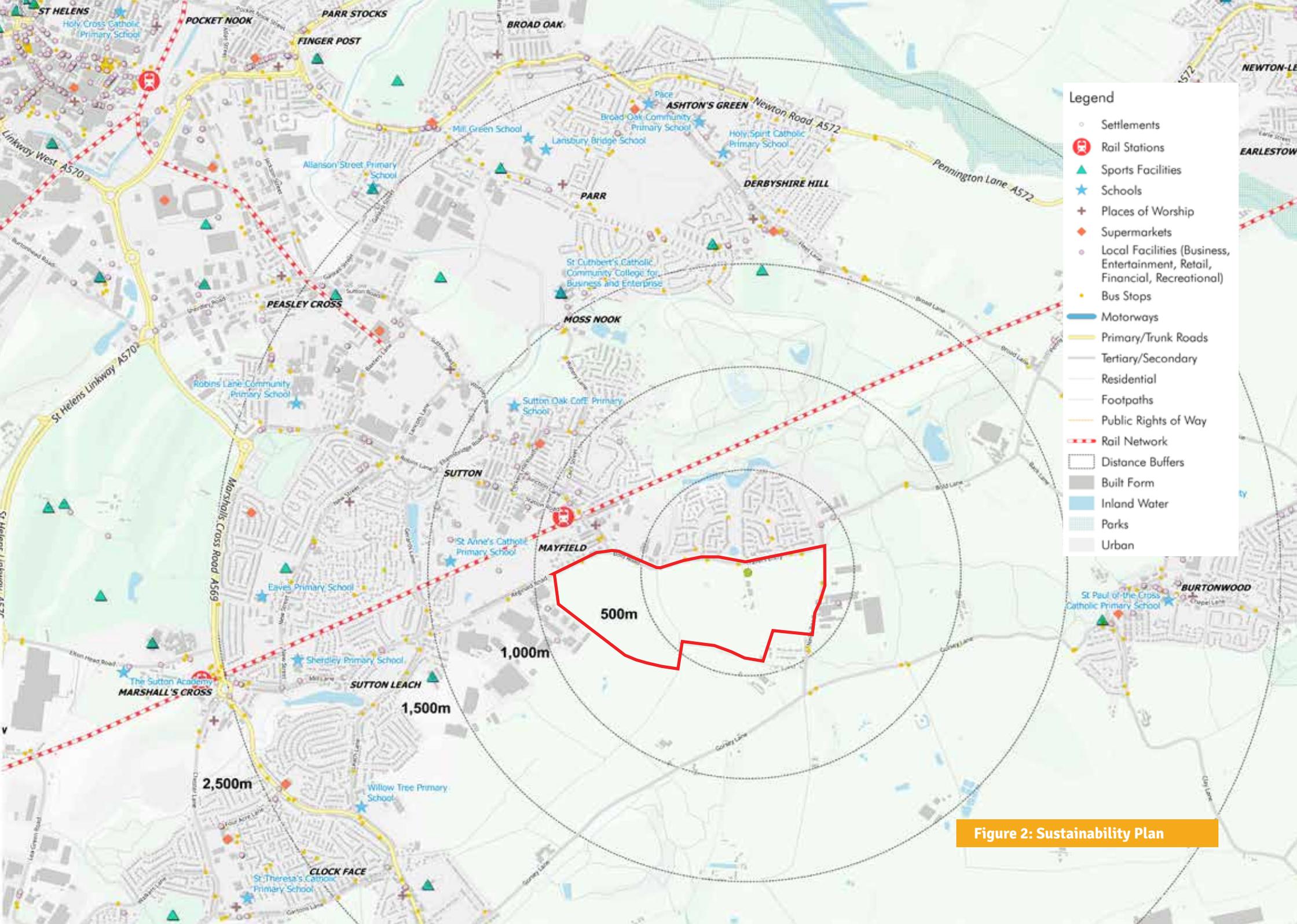
Existing footpaths run along Bold Road and Neills Road. The Site is bounded to the west and south by existing Public Right of Ways which form part of a wider network of routes identified as strategically important within the emerging Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan. Further pedestrian connections are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





- Legend**
- Settlements
 - 🚉 Rail Stations
 - ▲ Sports Facilities
 - ★ Schools
 - ✝ Places of Worship
 - 🛒 Supermarkets
 - 🏠 Local Facilities (Business, Entertainment, Retail, Financial, Recreational)
 - Bus Stops
 - 🛣 Motorways
 - 🛞 Primary/Trunk Roads
 - 🛞 Tertiary/Secondary
 - 🏠 Residential
 - 🚶 Footpaths
 - 🛤 Public Rights of Way
 - 🚉 Rail Network
 - 📏 Distance Buffers
 - 🏠 Built Form
 - 🌊 Inland Water
 - 🌳 Parks
 - 🏠 Urban

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.

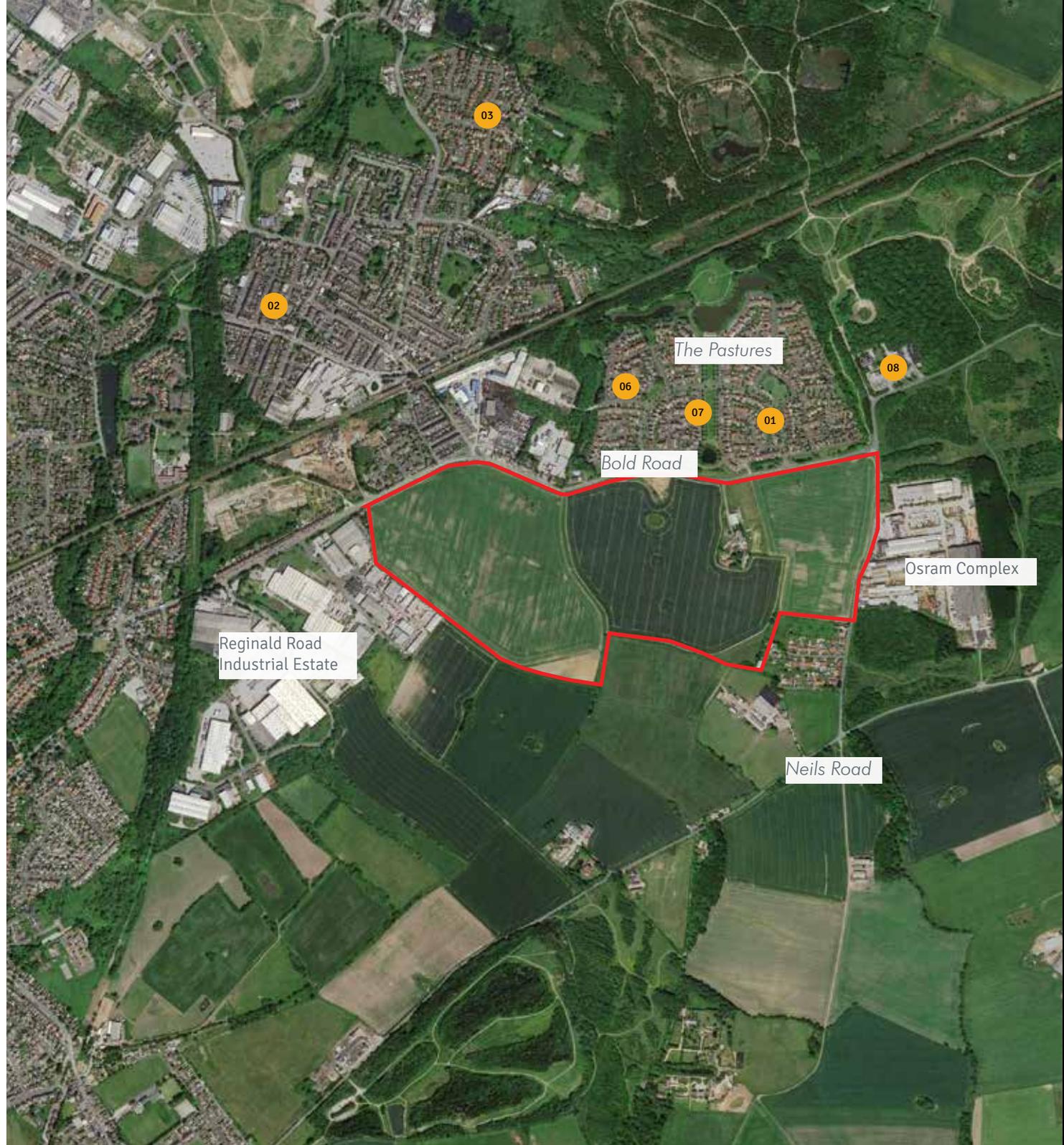
Purpose	Criteria and Definitions	Assessment	Overall Conclusion
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Would development of the Site lead to/constitute ribbon development?	No. The Site forms a very distinct parcel which is defined by definitive, permanent and defensible boundaries. The 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 PROWs 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.





- Site boundary
- Ponds
- Public open space
- > Potential vehicle access
- > Potential emergency vehicle access
- - - Pedestrian Links
- - - Indicative main street
- New/ existing trees
- * Potential Drainage Pond
- Residential Development Block
- * Community Facilities
- * Existing Shops

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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APPENDIX 2:

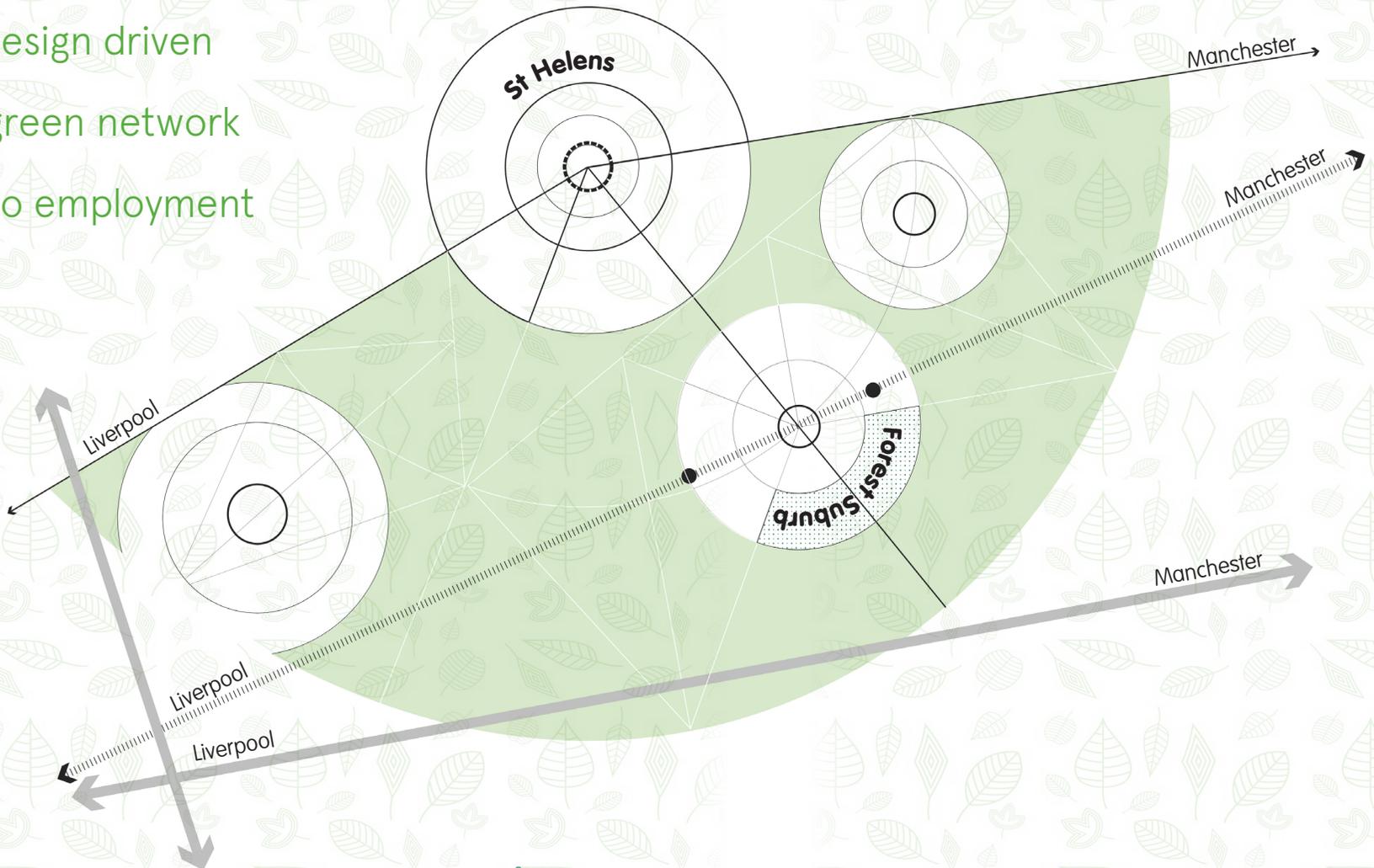
BOLD FOREST GARDEN SUBURB – OPPORTUNITY PLAN

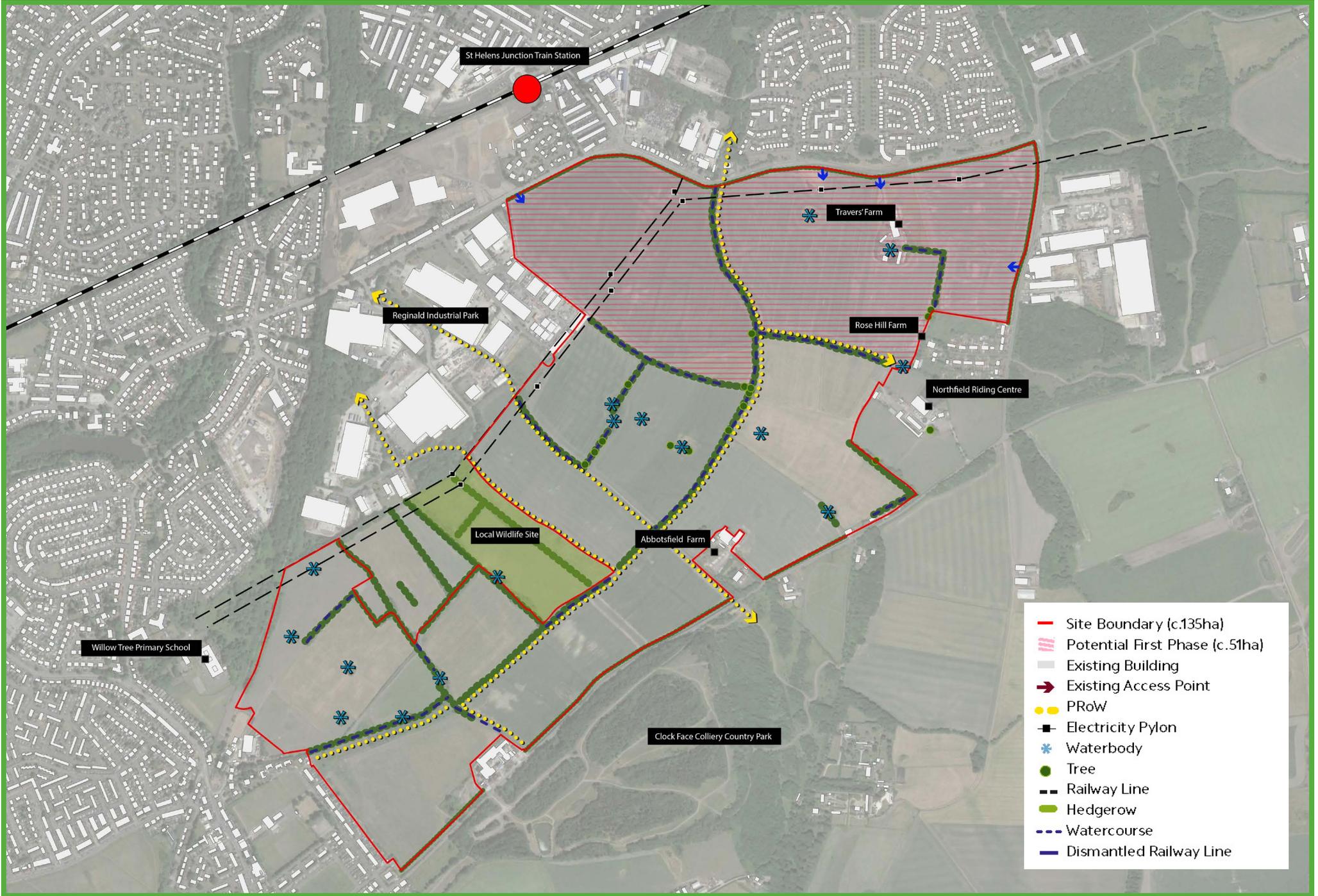
BOLD FOREST GARDEN SUBURB

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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

Enhanced Pedestrian/ Cycle Connections to Nearby Recreation Areas

Gorsey Lane

Woodland Walk

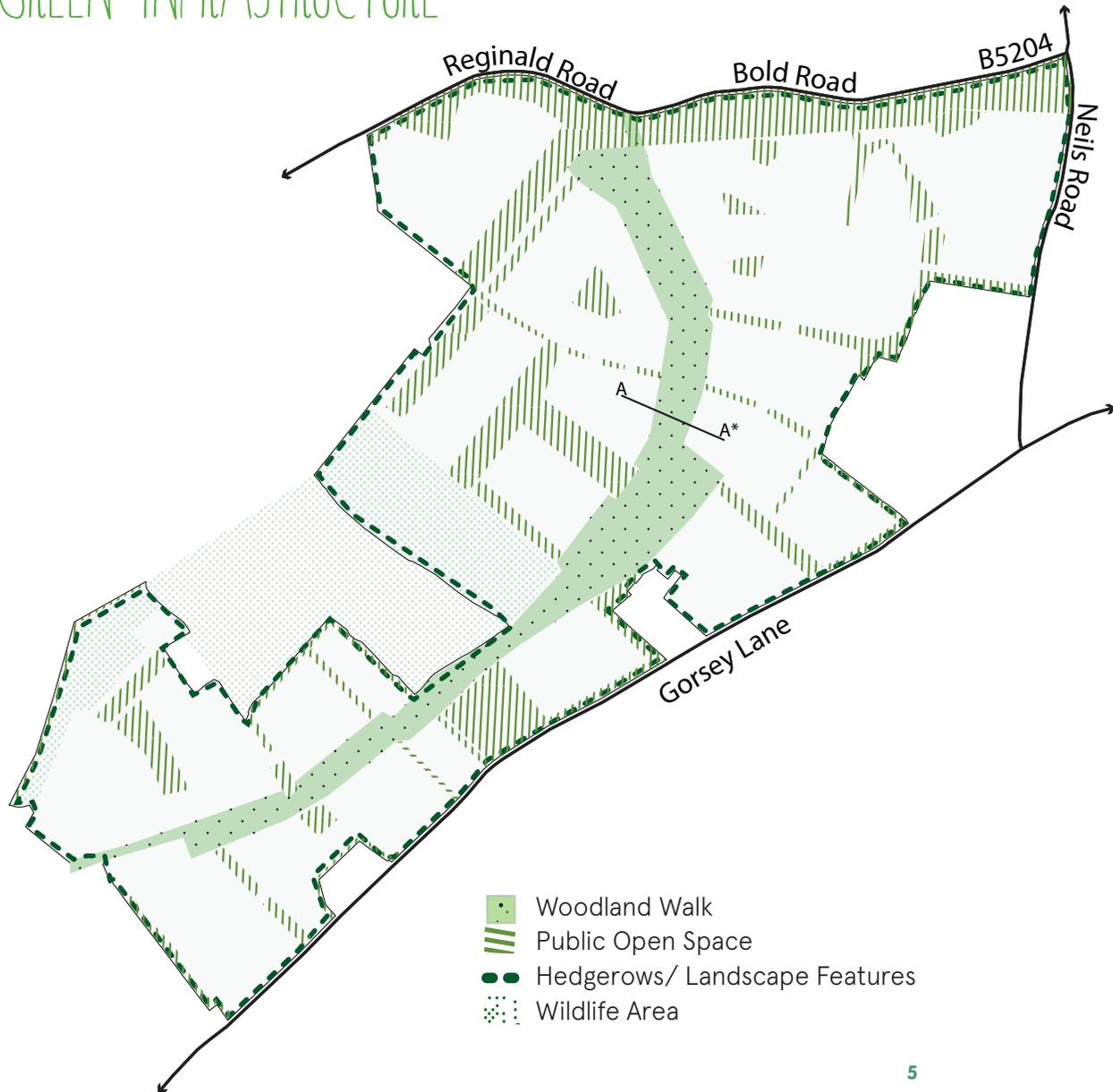
Childrens Play

Clock Face Colliery Country Park

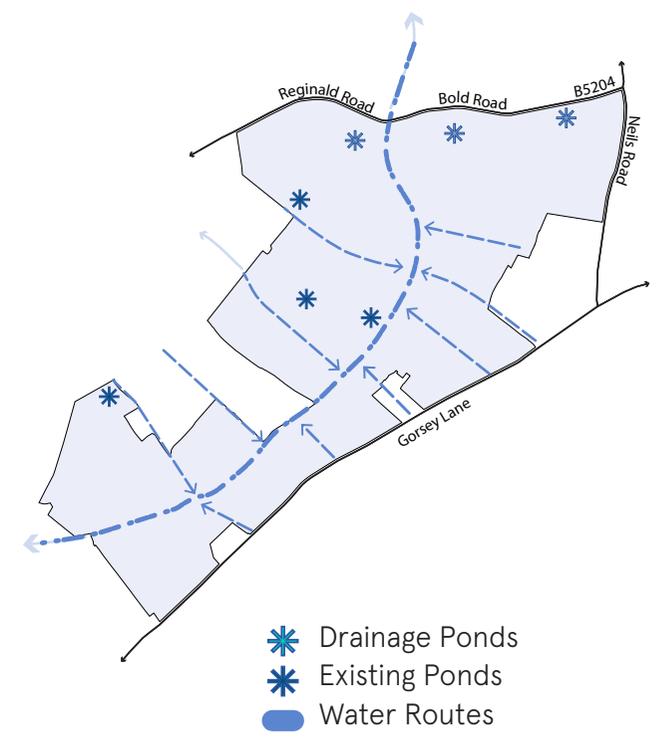
Retained/ Enhanced Landscape Features

AN EMERGING MASTERPLAN

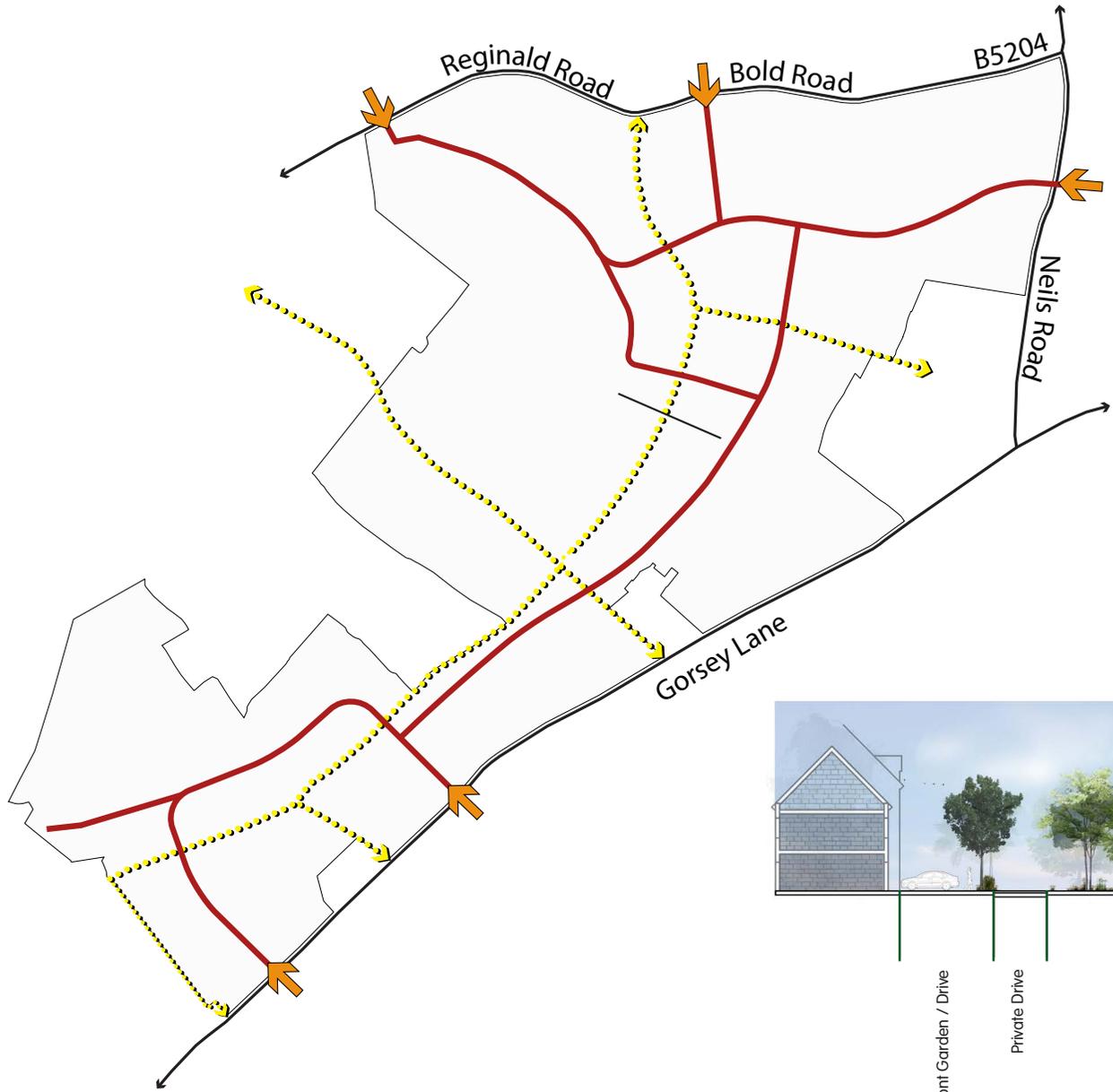
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE: DRAINAGE

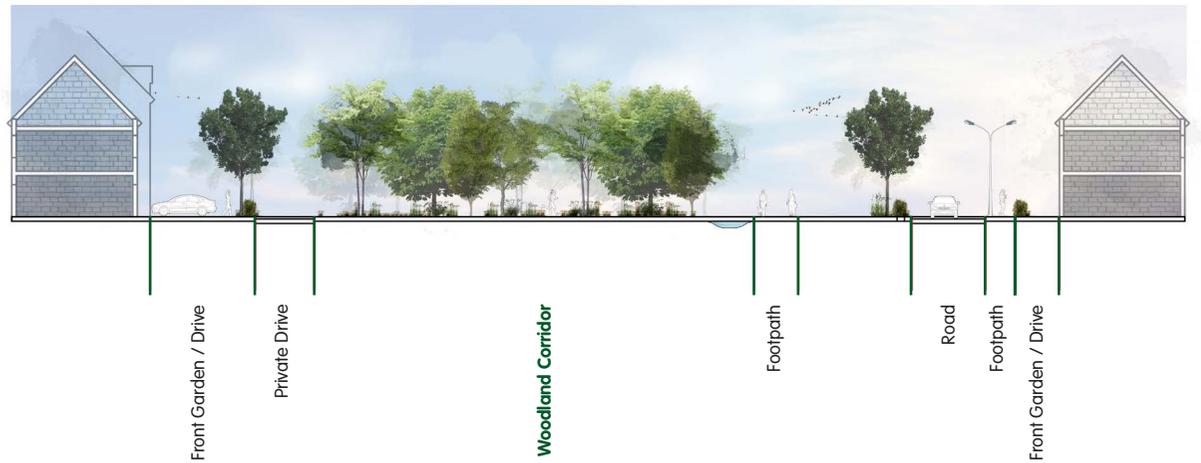


MOVEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE



- Primary Road
- ⋯ Pedestrian /Cycle Route
- ↔ Vehicle Access

CENTRAL GREEN ROUTE





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