



## Land North of Pasture Lane, Rainford

### Development Framework

May 2021





# FOREWORD

This Development Framework has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Miller Homes to promote land north of Pasture Lane, Rainford (the Site) as a housing allocation within the emerging St Helens Local Plan. As a locally based developer, Miller Homes is committed to the delivery of a mix of high quality homes for local people, and with-it construction jobs for local workers and businesses over a 5-10 year period.

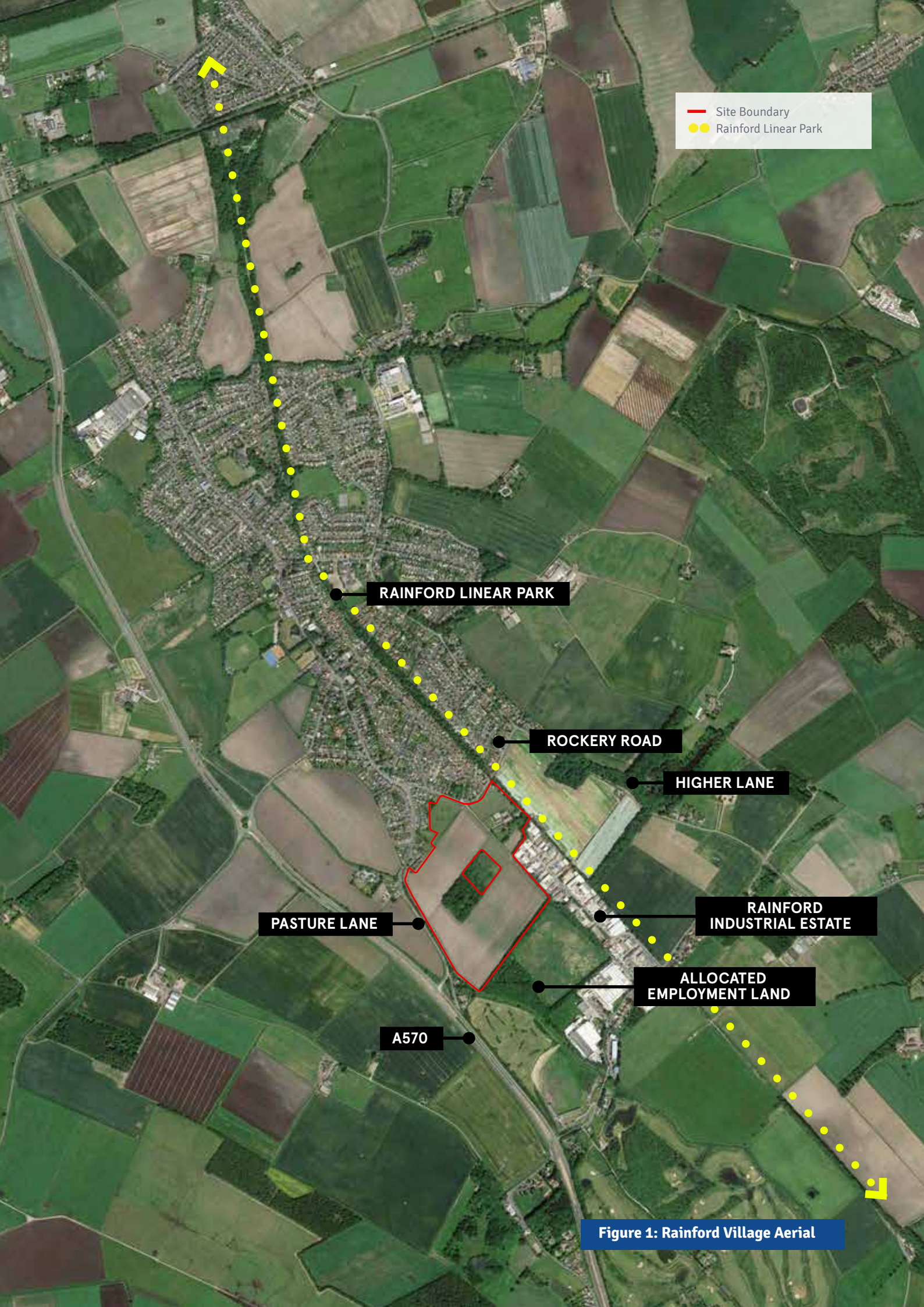
This framework highlights how the Site can provide for a sustainable extension to Rainford, boosting and securing housing delivery in response to local and Borough-wide needs, and enabling the delivery of a co-ordinated housing and employment strategy. It demonstrates how the Site occupies a sustainable and accessible location, with the potential to help strengthen local pedestrian and cycling routes. Moreover, initial technical investigations have demonstrated the suitability of the land for housing without resulting in an adverse effect on local ecology, trees/hedgerows and landscape. In addition, this framework demonstrates the potential of the Site to provide access to the adjoining proposed employment site, and with it, a wider delivery of highway and flood risk benefits.

As set out within this document, a Concept Masterplan has been prepared which shows how the Site can be developed, taking into account constraints and opportunities, and the context of their surroundings.

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— Site Boundary  
● Rainford Linear Park

RAINFORD LINEAR PARK

ROCKERY ROAD

HIGHER LANE

PASTURE LANE

RAINFORD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

ALLOCATED EMPLOYMENT LAND

A570

Figure 1: Rainford Village Aerial





## VISION

The Site has the potential to accommodate in the region of 300 new dwellings, comprising of high-quality family homes and affordable housing. It is within walking distance of Rainford Village Centre, where a range of services and public transport opportunities ensure that it represents an inherently sustainable option for growth. The proposed development will be shaped by the retention of existing landscape features and new planting will be provided to establish a rich green infrastructure network in which new homes will sit. The development of the Site would support the delivery of infrastructure, including new sports pitch(es) and access into the adjoining employment site.



Figure 2: Illustrative Sketch

# SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

## SITE LOCATION

The Site is located to the south-east of Rainford, to the south of Rookery Road and north of Pasture Lane. The Site lies between existing residential development to the west, and Rainford Industrial Estate to the east. It occupies largely undeveloped land in agricultural use which falls to the south of the Rainford Linear Park.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

This Site extends to approximately 19.7ha and consists of four fields located south of Rookery Lane/Rainford Linear Park, and east of Pasture Lane.

The Site falls gradually in a north-south direction. It includes an existing woodland area which is not wholly included within the Site boundary.

Rookery Farm and its associated farm buildings are located within the most northern field of the Site.

The boundaries to the north, south and west are well defined by existing uses/landscape features.

The northern boundary is formed, in part, by Rainford Linear Park, Rookery Lane, and the Rainford Industrial Park.

To the west is existing residential development which is accessed from Pasture Lane.

To the south, Pasture Lane separates the Site from the A570 which provides a By-pass around Rainford for through traffic.

The eastern boundary is marked by a field boundary comprising mature trees and scrub planting. Beyond which is an open field and Rainford Industrial Park.

The field to the east has planning approval for an employment development. Whilst the permission have never been fully implemented, this field is now subject to a draft allocation for employment through the Preferred Options Local Plan (see Allocation Reference EA10). The development of this field for employment uses will further contain the Site from the surrounding countryside.





— Site Boundary  
● Rainford Linear Park

**RAINFORD LINEAR PARK**

**ROOKERY LANE**

**HIGHER LANE**

**PASTURE LANE**

**RAINFORD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE**

**ALLOCATED EMPLOYMENT LAND**

Church Road

**A570**

**Figure 3: Site Aerial**



# NEIGHBOURHOOD

Rainford contains a local shopping centre and acts as a service centre for the nearby settlement of Rainford Junction.

The settlement is considered by the Council to be a suitable location in which to deliver future development needs. The Council recognises the need for Rainford to grow within the Plan period due to the relatively little housing development which has taken place in recent years, owing to a lack of brownfield land and Green Belt constraint.

## FACILITIES

The Site is well related to the existing settlement and benefits from excellent access to daily and essential amenities. Figure 4 provides an overview of the various services and facilities which already exist within Rainford and which are located within 1.5km of the Site. The proximity of the Site to these amenities serves to reduce the reliance on the car for potential new residents.

Services facilities and employment opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Rainford Industrial Park (0km);
- Corpus Christi Catholic Primary

School (c.1km);

- Rainford C of E Primary School (c. 850m);
- Rainford Brook Lodge County Primary School (c. 1.4km);
- Rainford High Technology College (c. 1.4km);
- Two Pharmacies (c. 650m);
- A range of shops (c. 650m);
- Playing fields (1km), Tennis Courts (c. 750m) and a Golf Course (c. 1.2km);
- Employment locations (c. 150m); and
- Bus stops and public transport links (with 400m).

## RAINFORD LINEAR PARK

Access by foot or bicycle is further encouraged by the Sites location to the south of Rainford Linear Park; a pedestrian and cycle path which uses the route of a former railway line running through the middle of Rainford and providing a safe, car free route through the settlement from the Sites. The location of the Site, south of this route, provides the opportunity to link to this route, as well as the potential to provide wider links within the Site to connect to surrounding residential and employment areas.

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The use of non-car modes of transport is further encouraged by the readily available bus services which currently operate in close to the Site, along Higher Lane, Rookery Lane and Pasture Lane.

These services collectively provide for high quality, frequent and reliable sustainable transportation links to St Helens, Rainford Village Centre, and Rainford Junction Railway Station.

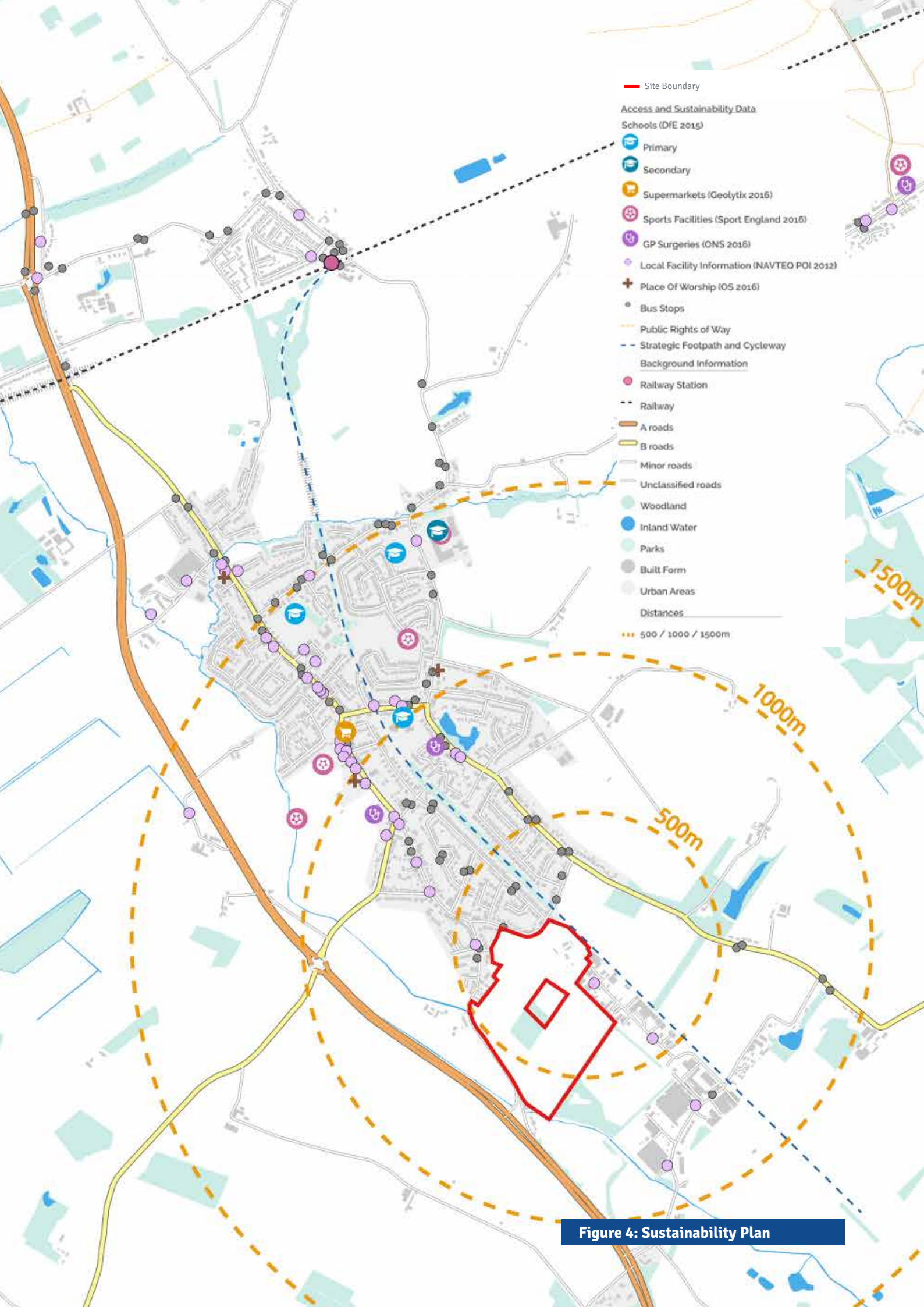
The availability and proximity of these services further reduces the reliance that new residents would have on the car in accessing wider services, facilities and employment opportunities which are not otherwise available in Rainford.

A summary of the bus services easily accessible to the Site is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 : Local Bus Services

Route Number	Nearest Stop		Details	Frequency
<b>38</b> (Arriva)	Pasture Lane (Wellfield/ Hopgood Crescent)	Rainford Village Centre Rainford Junction Railway Station St Helens Bus Station	2 minutes (Rainford village centre) 10 minutes (Rainford Railway Station) 19 minutes (St Helens Bus Station)	30 minutes
<b>152</b> (Huyton Travel)	Higher Lane	St Helens Ormskirk Bus Station Edge Hill University	20 minutes (St Helens Bus Station) 20 minutes (Ormskirk Bus Station) 18 minutes (Edge Hill University)	2 hours
<b>157</b> (Cumfybus)	Rookery Drive/Derby Drive	Rainford Village Centre Rainford Junction Railway Station Ashton-in-Makerfield	2 minutes (Rainford Village Centre) 16 minutes (Rainford Railway Station) 42 minutes (Ashton-in-Makerfield Town Centre)	15 minutes





**Figure 4: Sustainability Plan**



### TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Rainford is a predominately residential settlement, with a diverse range of house types largely built between the 18th and 20th Century.

The traditional settlement pattern of Rainford is mostly linear and focused along either side of Church Road. This 'historic core' dates back to the 18th Century and features two conservation areas, a mixed development grain and a varied collection of historic buildings built using local materials and architectural styles.

Development ranges from relatively simple and narrow terraced properties in the Rookery Lane/Church Road area to large detached houses on generous plots around the All Saints Church. Other notable characteristics include stone boundary walls and use of red brick in the conservation area close to the Site.

Later stages of residential growth throughout the 19th and 20th Century have resulted in settlement expansion either side of the 'historic core'. This has promoted varying levels of departure from Rainford's 'traditional character'. Typically, this includes progressively more uniformity within the street scene with formal building lines and regular setbacks from the street.

To the north-west of the Site is the southern Conservation Area. Houses include small terraces with front gardens and stone boundary walls. Some front gardens have been given over to vehicular access. Most properties have small porch entrances and date plaques. Adjacent to the Conservation Area is modern infill development comprising detached, semi-detached and bungalow properties built in the 1980's.

Residential development overlooking Rookery Road comprises modern house types built between 1950-1990.

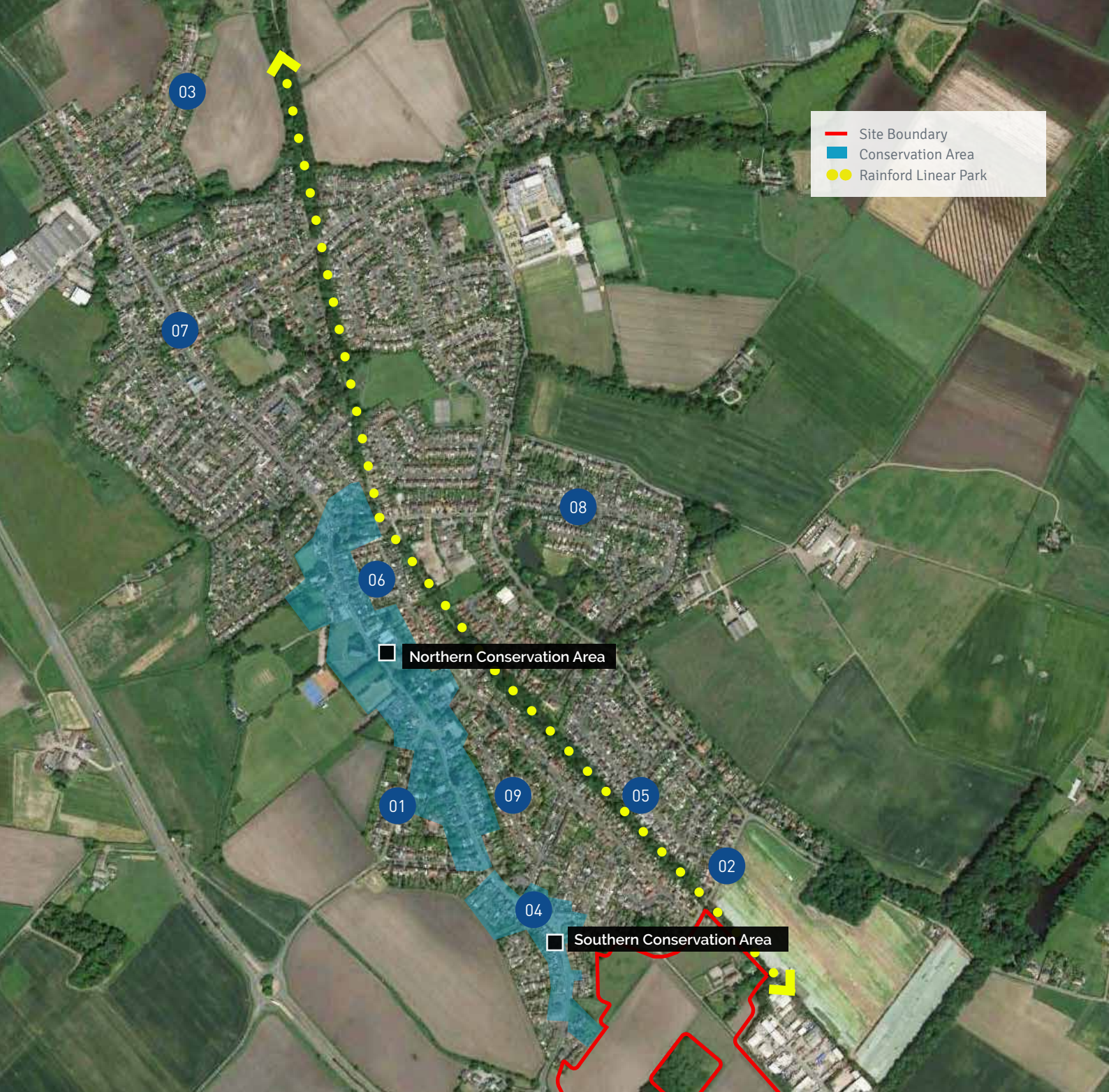
Development further north predominantly comprises suburban residential areas built throughout the 1980's.



Figure 5: Townscape Analysis









# OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

This section articulates the initial Site investigations that future development proposals should consider.

## LANDSCAPE VISUAL APPRAISAL

Tyler Grange LLP has undertaken a desktop visual appraisal of the Site.

The appraisal concludes that existing boundary vegetation, and development located adjacent to the Site, is likely to result in the visual envelope of the proposed development being limited to its immediate surroundings. Where more distant visibility towards the Site is potentially possible, such as along the A570 Rainford Bypass, views are likely to become largely obscured by intervening vegetation.

## ECOLOGY

A Phase One Habitat Survey across the Site has been undertaken by Ascerta.

In terms of habitats, the Site is generally of low ecological value, comprising mainly arable land, with smaller areas of improved grassland. These could be lost as part of any development with minimal need for compensation.

Habitats of value include hedgerow and woodland areas. The intention would be for these to be retained as part of any development. Hedgerow replacement or enhancement will be provided where any loss is required/incurred.

The scrub and tall ruderal area in the centre of the Site is not of high value and could be easily mitigated for by adding in features such as a wildflower area or improving connectivity between the on-site woodlands and areas of off-site woodland.

There is a damp area within the scrub area. Whilst formerly marked as a pond on OS maps, it has been dry for a while judging by the extent of the vegetation cover. That said, a pond could potentially be provided as an ecological enhancement.

The buildings and trees have yet to be assessed for bat roost potential. However, it is likely that any bat roosts will be of common species such as pipistrelle or brown long eared bats and thus can easily be mitigated for within any development.

The Rainford Brook forms the southern boundary and is a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Measures to protect the Brook during and after construction will be required. This could include implementation of a CEMP and potentially providing an 8 to 10m buffer strip along the Brook.

There are no other Local Wildlife Sites in the vicinity that could be adversely impacted by housing on the Site.

## TREES AND LANDSCAPING

As part of any development, existing tree and hedgerow cover will be retained wherever possible. Where removal is required (such as to secure vehicular access), mitigation planting will be provided, and which provide the opportunity for a net gain in biodiversity.

The layout for the Site will have regard to root protection areas, and any planning application will be supported by an arboricultural survey and arboricultural impact assessment.

Development on the Site will provide the opportunity for new landscaping within and at the perimeter of the Site where appropriate, and to integrate the Site with its surrounds. This will also take account of the conclusions of the landscape and visual assessment to be submitted as part of any planning application to help shape the layout and landscape strategy for the Site.

## FLOOD RISK

A comprehensive flood modelling exercise has been commissioned by Miller Homes, undertaken by Waterco. This has indicated a larger area of land within the Site which could be available for beneficial use than that currently identified on the Environment Agency flood mapping.

As a result of the modelling work, there is now the potential to extend the developable area up to the edge of the blue shaded areas shown on the Figure 6, subject to ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency.

## DRAINAGE

As part of the aforementioned flood modelling work, potential drainage options for the Site have also been explored. Initial investigations have demonstrated the potential to improve the culverted watercourse running along Pasture Lane at the southern edge of the Site, within the Site boundary. This is something which Miller Homes is continuing to actively explore given the considerable benefits it would provide not only to the Site, but locally in respect of alleviating flooding on Pasture Lane.









## GROUND CONDITIONS

Historic mapping indicates that the Site has not been subject to previous development in exception to Rookery Farm. Moreover, the Site does not lie within an area affected by historical or current coal mining, and there are no recorded historic or registered landfill sites. There are no significant contamination sources identified within the surrounding area and the Site is therefore considered suitable for residential development.

## RAINFORD LINEAR PARK

Rainford Linear Park is a c.3km green link running through Rainford and past the Site. The route, which marks the northern most boundary, provides pedestrian and cycle access to the wider settlement and surrounding countryside.

## HIGHWAYS AND ACCESS

An initial assessment of the local highway network (capacity), and proposed Site access points, has been commissioned by Miller Homes. This initial work has demonstrated that the main points of access into the Site will be secured from Pasture Lane.

Pedestrian access to the Site can be achieved from the surrounding highway network, including points on Rookery Lane, Pasture Lane and Higher Lane, and Rainford Linear Park. There are also opportunities to deliver pedestrian and cycle linkages to existing PRoWs and Rainford Linear Park, enhancing links between the Site, employment areas and the settlement.

The Site has the potential to create a new access into the adjoining employment site.

## HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

Rainford Conservation Area is situated directly adjacent to the south-western boundary of the Site and two listed buildings are located adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site.

Barton Willmore's heritage team has undertaken an assessment of the site development potential with regards to the nearby Rainford Conservation Area.

The proposed development will not be visible from Church Lane, within the conservation area, but will appear in long-distance views towards the conservation area from the southwest and southeast.

Whilst the Site forms part of the wider rural setting of Rainford Conservation Area, it has not been identified to make any notable contribution to its significance, nor is it considered to be integral to the sense of rural, open countryside within the wider landscape. Much of the land surrounding

the conservation areas, has been developed throughout the 20th century and the development of the Site, would continue the residential expansion of Rainford to the south of the existing settlement, maintain the historic linear pattern of expansion. The remaining open, rural landscape which surrounds the conservation area, and is identified within the CAA, will be unaffected by the proposals, as such the proposals are not considered to materially change the contribution that the setting makes as a whole to the significance of the conservation area, or our ability to appreciate said significance.

## UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Utilities and infrastructure connections such as gas, electricity, broadband and water are available within the direct vicinity of the Site. Any utilities found within the Site should be retained in situ and suitable easements applied.

## ADJOINING EMPLOYMENT LAND

Miller Homes is working closely with the adjoining landowners, English Land, to help ensure the deliverability of the adjoining employment land to the east of the Site. There is an agreement in principle on the location and positioning of the link road off Pasture Lane, through our Client's Site, which will serve as the primary access to the Site and a potential further access to the adjoining employment land.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

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

### Considerations

- Relationship with existing residential and employment uses surrounding Site.
- Relationship with Rainford Conservation Area which adjoins the south-western boundary.
- Relationship with Listed Buildings close to the northern Site boundary.
- Retention and integration of existing landscape features within the Site.
- The location and context of Rainford Brook which is considered a Priority Habitat.
- The location of Flood Zone 3.
- The highway network and suitable access to the Site.

- Connectivity to existing PRoW(s) and Rainford Linear Park.

### Opportunities

- To help address the housing needs of the district.
- Provide effective pedestrian and cycle connectivity across the Site and to the surrounding settlement, including connectivity to the Rainford Linear Park.
- Strengthen the local landscape character by delivering a robust green infrastructure network across the Site.
- Provide a degree of separation between the proposed development and Rainford Conservation Area.
- Respond to and complement the character of the Conservation Area by drawing on built form references and landscape characteristics.
- Provision of aspirational and affordable homes.
- Strengthen the local green infrastructure by creating and enhancing usable green corridors which benefit the biodiversity of the area, including potential enhancement to existing facilities.
- Provision of enhanced public open space including sport pitch(es).
- Enhance habitat diversity and linkages through enhancements to existing landscape features and the provision of new landscape features.
- Enhance greenfield run-off top address flooding issues on Pasture Lane.
- Help facilitate the release of the adjacent employment site, and alleviate pressure on Mill Lane/Rainford Bypass Junction.





- Site Boundary
- Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Existing Landscape Features
- - - Enhanced Cycle/ Pedestrian Route
- Rainford Linear Park
- ▲ Potential Vehicle Access
- ▨ Flood Zone 3
- ▨ Stone Wall
- Historic Approved Planning Permission (P/2006/1115)
- Historic Approved Planning Permission (P/2012/0043)
- Protected Trees
- ★ Pond
- Rainford Brook

**Figure 6: Opportunities and Considerations**



# CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

The development of the Site will allow for a high-quality residential environment, whilst significantly improving the local housing offer through the provision of approximately 300 new homes.

Tyler Grange LLP has undertaken an assessment of the Site and the local landscape character. Their landscape design recommendations, alongside the opportunities and considerations previously presented have informed an appropriate design rationale for the proposed development. This is shown by the Illustrative Masterplan opposite and has the following elements:

## **RAINFORD CONSERVATION AREA**

Development will be designed to protect and enhance the setting of the Rainford Conservation Area. This will include lower density development integrated with areas of public open space. Moreover, the proposed dwellings will be designed to subtly reflect the architectural style and materiality of development across the Conservation Area.

## **RAINFORD LINEAR PARK**

Development will include areas of public open space and lower density development adjacent to Rainford Linear Park.

## **BOUNDARY PLANTING**

To reinforce the Green Belt boundary, the vegetation along the eastern boundary will be retained and enhanced with additional woodland planting.

## **PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY**

An existing farm track runs directly to the south of Rockey Farm, providing an east-west movement route which connects Rockey Lane with Mill Lane. This route will be retained and enhanced for pedestrian and cycle use.

The existing PRoW and Rainford Linear Park have been retained and enhanced, and new pedestrian and cycle routes will provide car free connections to these routes.

## **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Existing landscape features will be retained and incorporated into a green infrastructure network which will help create a setting and identity for the new development, whilst providing increased biodiversity, recreation opportunities and landscape visual mitigation.

## **RECREATION**

Land to the south of the proposed residential development lies within Flood Zone 3 and has the potential to deliver new sports pitches.

## **SUDS**

While the form and final location of SuDS will be subject to more detailed Site investigations, it is likely to include attenuation ponds located in response to the Site's topography. Moreover, initial investigations have demonstrated the potential to improve the culverted watercourse running along Pasture Lane at the southern edge of the Site.

## **VEHICLE ACCESS**

Vehicle access to the Site will be provided from Pasture Lane. Additional secondary points and or emergence access can also be provided Rockey Lane and Hopgood Crescent.

## **CIRCULATION AND SPACE SEQUENCE**

Internally, a simple estate road and an arrangement of public spaces will provide vehicle connectivity through the proposed development. The spaces provided will range in form and function with a mix of hard surface materials and planted landscape features. Beyond the estate road, individual houses will be access via shared surfaces and private drives to meet modern design standards.

## **RAINFORD CHARACTER**









More generally, the proposed development will reflect the character, scale and density of properties within the wider settlement. Moreover, perimeter blocks and a legible network of streets will provide an attractive environment connecting with the surrounding environment.

The design and layout will be progressed through local dialogue, informed by technical work, to ensure the schemes integrate into the surrounding landscape and character of the area.







-  Indicative Built Form
-  Existing/ Proposed Landscape Features
-  Enhanced Cycle/ Pedestrian Route
-  Potential Vehicle Access
-  Potential Secondary Emergency Vehicle Access
-  Potential Pedestrian Access
-  Potential Play Area
-  Potential SuDS

- Site Area: c.19.7ha.
- Residential Development Area: c.7-10ha.
- Number of dwellings: c.300.
- Infrastructure: Delivery of vehicle access road from Pasture Lane to serve the Site and adjoining employment site.
- Green Infrastructure: Comprising public open space, sport pitch(es), SuDS and tree planting.
- Refurbishment of the existing farmhouse.
- Pedestrian and cycle connection to Rainford Linear Park, surrounding PRowS and Rookery Lane.

POTENTIAL SPORTS PITCH(ES)

RETAINED FARMHOUSE

RAINFORD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

EMPLOYMENT LAND (PROPOSED ALLOCATION)

PASTURE LANE

RAINFORD LINEAR PARK

ROOKERY LANE

VEHICLE ACCESS

**Figure 7: Illustrative Masterplan**



# BENEFITS AND CONCLUSION

## ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The Site is available and suitable for development, having regard to the following benefits:

### ECONOMIC ROLE

- The proposed development will provide increased expenditure and fiscal benefits in terms of job creation, and additional monies to the Local Authority through a higher Council Tax banding.
- Development will provide increased expenditure in the local community which will help support the continued vitality of Rainford's services, facilities and businesses.
- As a local developer, Miller Homes will create employment opportunities during construction for the local workforce, as well as continued commitment to apprenticeships.

### SOCIAL ROLE

- The Site has the potential to deliver a high-quality residential development of approximately 300 new homes. This will include policy compliant affordable housing provision, and a range of different house types, sizes and tenures.
- The Site will support the delivery of objectively assessed housing needs in St Helens.
- The Site provides the opportunity to deliver a new development which integrates well into its existing urban surroundings, complementing proposed residential development to the north of Rainford Linear Park (to be delivered by Miller Homes).
- The Site is inherently sustainable being within walking distance of Rainford Village Centre and existing sources of employment.
- The proposed development will provide integrated and improved pedestrian linkages within the south of Rainford, enabling the wider community to access Rainford Linear Park and sources of employment by foot without having to use roadside footpaths. This will help encourage the use of non-car modes of transport for new residents as well as the existing wider community.
- The Site benefits from excellent access to bus services, in turn providing access to the wider settlement, St Helens, and further beyond via Rainford Junction Railway Station and St Helens Bus Station.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ROLE

- The location of the Site, close to existing and proposed sources of employment positively responds to the requirements of the NPPF to provide for a coordinated strategic approach to meet housing and employment needs, whilst helping to reduce the need to travel from the Site via unsustainable modes of transport.
- The Site maximises the opportunity to connect with the wider footpath network, thereby encouraging travel by sustainable transport modes.
- The Site is well served by existing bus routes, providing an alternative means of accessing wider facilities, services and sources of employment to the car.
- Development will be set within a strong landscape framework which will assist in absorbing the proposed development into the wider landscape character, alongside ecological enhancements, and tree planting.
- The proposed development can provide a network of SuDS and drainage enhancements that will help to alleviate flooding issues on Pasture Lane.
- Development of the Site could 'unlock' the adjoining employment site and deliver improvements to the local highway network.







**CONCLUSION**

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

Our Client is committed to delivering 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 would welcome the opportunity discuss this opportunity further with the Council.



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