



Representations to Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

**Residential Allocation
Land at Hilltop Farm, Woodford**

**Park Land and Securities Ltd
June 2018**

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Planning and Environmental Advisers

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Land at Hilltop Farm Development Framework

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These representations to the Pre-submission Consultation Regulation 14 Woodford Neighbourhood Plan (NP) are submitted by HOW Planning on behalf of Park Land and Securities Ltd (PLSL) in relation to land at Hill Top Farm, Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport. The site is circa 50 ha and shown at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The land is proposed as part of the Woodford Opportunity Area (WOA) allocation within Draft Greater Manchester Strategic Framework (GMSF) Policy OA20. Policy OA20 indicates that the WOA should be allocated to deliver up to 2,400 new homes to build upon the success of the Woodford Garden Village through the delivery of further high quality sensitive residential led development and local facilities.
- 1.3 PLSL recognises the need for Green Belt release in Woodford and strongly welcomed the GMSF proposed allocation of the land within the WOA. Previous representations have been submitted to both the GMSF consultation and the Stockport Local Plan Issues and Options consultation setting out the case for the development of this site and a more detailed Development Framework (Appendix 1) was submitted to Stockport Council in February 2018.
- 1.4 PLSL has a number of fundamental concerns with the NP as currently drafted as it fails to recognise the draft GMSF Woodford allocation and the strategic potential of this location to provide the significant levels of new housing required in the Stockport district.
- 1.5 Furthermore, PLSL consider that the NP as drafted does not meet the Basic Conditions of Neighbourhood Plan preparation, in particular strategic policy contained in National policy and is premature in relation to the emerging Draft GMSF and Stockport Local Plan (SLP). The NP should not be a document that is ambiguous, prescriptive and overly restrictive; and should provide a level of clarity on how it will be applied and implemented. A NP provides an opportunity for the local community to guide development in their area and should not be restrictive in assisting the development of key sites in the area.
- 1.6 PLSL is willing to work with the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum and Stockport Council to deliver high quality, residential led development in this sustainable location, and to participate actively and positively in the formulation of appropriate Plans and policies at both the neighbourhood and District levels which can contribute effectively to the sustainable development needs of this area.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED ALLOCATION

GMSF ALLOCATION

- 2.1 The draft GMSF, consulted upon in October 2016, proposed to release sufficient Green Belt and brownfield sites in Stockport to accommodate around 19,300 new homes between 2015 and 2035.
- 2.2 The Land at Hill Top Farm formed part of the proposed draft GMSF Policy OA20 allocation for the Woodford Opportunity Area (WOA) for development to deliver up to 2,400 new homes.
- 2.3 Further to this consultation, the Greater Manchester Council's agreed that a revised version of the draft GMSF will be published for consultation in 2018. The brief from the Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, was to review Green Belt release and all authorities have revisited their evidence base in order to maximise brownfield opportunities, including revisiting previously developed land within the urban area and increasing densities to minimise need to release open land. As such, it remains uncertain which strategic allocations will be carried forward in the next version of the GMSF later in 2018.
- 2.4 Whilst a brownfield evidence base was published on the 20th March 2018 on a Greater Manchester map, it is clear that significant funding and work will be required to deliver the sites identified and it is not yet clear what the implications for Green Belt release will be.

NEED FOR GREEN BELT RELEASE IN WOODFORD

- 2.5 Paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that local plans should plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area and ensure that they are drafted to cover an appropriate time scale "preferably a 15-year time horizon". A key aim of local plans is to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary.
- 2.6 Whilst NPPF places an emphasis on maximising the potential of brownfield land, there is an identified shortfall in housing land within the existing Greater Manchester urban area, including in Stockport, to meet the objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) set out in the Greater Manchester: Strategic Housing Market Assessment, October 2016 (GM SHMA)¹.
- 2.7 The evidence that was prepared in support of the GMSF strategy makes it clear that exceptional circumstances exist that justify the need to review the Green Belt across the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) area. These include:

¹ Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment October 2016

- The GM SHLAA found that objectively assessed needs for housing cannot be met within the existing built-up area, where two thirds of the overall housing supply has been identified.
- It is more than 30 years since the Greater Manchester Structure Plan and subsequent Green Belt Local Plan last fully assessed Green Belt areas and defined Green Belt boundaries at the sub-regional level and review is timely and appropriate now.
- The tightly drawn urban boundaries in some locations.
- The opportunity to provide new sustainable neighbourhoods in locations at a scale, which can be linked to existing and/or potential transport networks; respond to market demand and have the necessary transformational potential.
- The opportunity to boost and maximise the city-region's economic potential by facilitating high quality housing and attracting high quality inward investment.
- The opportunity to ensure that Greater Manchester drives growth within the North of England and provides a suitable counterbalance to the strength of London and the South East.

2.8 The GM SHMA identifies that market signals indicate affordability within Stockport is the second most acute in the GMCA. The GM SHMA finds that Trafford and Stockport have the highest values or rates on several measures such as house prices, private rents, increases in house prices and private rents, affordability ratios and dwelling completions.

2.9 The 2016 draft GMSF proposed to redistribute the housing need throughout Greater Manchester. However, providing fewer homes in Stockport than the OAHN will have the likely effect of worsening affordability in the Borough because demand for housing in Stockport is already extremely high.

2.10 The Government's consultation on a standardised methodology² for assessing local housing need requires local authorities to increase the number of homes that are needed in the less affordable areas i.e. areas where the average house prices are more than 4 times average earnings. The data published alongside the consultation shows that the proposed methodology produces a baseline figure of 1,078 dpa for Stockport. It is notable that this is higher than the GM SHMA figure of 1,011 dpa, which Stockport was unable to meet.

² Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals, DCLG, 14th September 2017

- 2.11 Based upon analysis of the available evidence base PLSL consider that there remains compelling evidence to justify the need for release of Green Belt land and that the Stockport Local Plan needs to carry forward the Draft GMSF Policy 0A20 Woodford Opportunity Area (WOA) allocation.
- 2.12 Given that, even before taking into account the emerging Government requirement to take into account market signals, the Draft GMSF proposed to distribute a proportion of Stockport's OAHN elsewhere, even with newly identified urban capacity within Stockport Town Centre which will require significant public funding to prime delivery, clearly, the allocation of Green Belt land including this site remain an essential part of the strategy to meeting the future needs of the area.
- 2.13 The urban area cannot meet the future requirements of the Stockport area and this identified shortfall amongst other reasons amounts to exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release within Greater Manchester and Stockport. Thus, there is a requirement for release sites within the Green Belt that can provide sustainable communities.
- 2.14 Strategic sites are required to meet the significant housing needs of the area identified in the GMSF evidence base.

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 2.15 The Development Framework prepared by PLSL (included at Appendix 1) demonstrates how the proposed development will introduce new residential buildings, infrastructure and new landscaping within the boundaries of Woodford comprising a series of agricultural fields that border Chester Road, Church Lane and Moor Lane.
- 2.16 The allocation of strategic scale sites such as Land at Hilltop Farm in Woodford provides the opportunity for a range of housing types and tenures to be accommodated on site at a density and character that can respond to specific the needs of the area.
- 2.17 There are acute affordability issues in Stockport, meaning that many residents are not able to access housing in the area. Locating new market and affordable housing supply in the area will be crucial to addressing the issue and the site presents a logical sustainable extension to the village of Woodford.
- 2.18 The allocation of the site would provide a scale of development that can support the opportunity to provide a range of new facilities and services to augment provision at Woodford Garden Village and meet the needs of planned new residents to the benefit of those already existing in the area. It is anticipated that the exact type and mix of uses would be determined through discussions with Stockport Council, the local community and other interested parties.

- 2.19 The site is well contained by the existing roads and adjoining settlement along these roads, providing the opportunity to extend the village of Woodford without breaching the extent of the existing development limits and maintaining the gap with Handforth to the west.
- 2.20 The development could also significantly enhance the public transport provision through a range of measures to be agreed but could indicate an extended bus service, a rapid bus service and improvements to bus stops and cycle facilities in nearby stations.
- 2.21 The supporting technical documents demonstrate that the site has no constraints that prevent its delivery and have identified the defining factors and principles that have been incorporated into an illustrative masterplan. The illustrative masterplan shows how the site can deliver a well planned, rich and quality development that sensitively integrates with the existing character and landscape of Woodford. This exercise has robustly demonstrated that the site is capable of providing minimum of 1000 houses set around a new community hub.

3 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICY

THE BASIC CONDITIONS

- 3.1 The basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The basic conditions are:
- a. *having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan).*
 - b. *having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.*
 - c. *having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order. This applies only to Orders.*
 - d. *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.*
 - e. *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).*
 - f. *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.*
 - g. *prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order (or neighbourhood plan).*

NATIONAL POLICY

- 3.2 The Government's national planning guidance in the form of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are material considerations in plan making and decision taking. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. Paragraph 14 states:

"For Plan making this means:

local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;

Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:

- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

3.3 Paragraph 16 of the NPPF provides guidance on the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development in terms of Neighbourhood Plans. It states:

“The application of the presumption will have implications for how communities engage in neighbourhood planning. Critically, it will mean that neighbourhoods should:

- *develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development;*
- *plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan; and*
- *identify opportunities to use Neighbourhood Development Orders to enable developments that are consistent with their neighbourhood plan to proceed.”*

3.4 The NPPF also provides specific guidance to Qualifying Bodies (“QBs”), in this case Woodford Neighbourhood Forum, on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Paragraph 183 states:

“Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes and neighbourhood forums can use neighbourhood planning to:

set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications; and

grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order.”

3.5 Paragraph 184 of the NPPF continues:

“Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local

planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.”

- 3.6 It is clear in the Basic Conditions, the policy contained in the NPPF and in national Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”) that a Neighbourhood Plan must be aligned with national policy in the NPPF and the strategic policies of the GMSF and the SLP. For the reasons set out in detail in the following sections, PLSL consider that elements of the NP, as currently drafted, should be reviewed in the context of national and emerging local policy and ensure that the NP is underpinned by a robust evidence base.

4 DETAILED REPRESENTATIONS TO THE WOODFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 4.1 This section sets out PLSL's detailed representations to the NP and includes general overall comments on the plan and evidence base as well as detailed comments on the specific policies proposed.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE NP

Structure and Content

- 4.2 PLSL considers that the structure, length and nature of the NP makes it largely unclear and difficult to digest. This results in often important policies or principles becoming 'lost' in the extensive volume of text. This means that some policies have become imprecise, overly prescriptive, inconsistent and would be difficult to implement and interpret when material planning decisions are made. PPG in paragraph 40 states that:

*"A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared"*³.

- 4.3 Comments on the specific policies in the NP are included later in this representation; however, our broad comments on the plan as a whole include:
- i. Policies are often unclear and ambiguous in the plan. It should be clear how policies are applied, particularly in the context of future planning applications.
 - ii. There are a number of policies that cover the same issue. For clarity and consistency, the number of policies could be reduced and they should be made more precise in line with PPG.
 - iii. A number of policies refer to development being 'permitted' where it meets certain criteria, yet it is not within the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan Council to determine planning applications and as such we recommend that the word 'permitted' is replaced with 'supported'.

³ Planning Practice Guidance, CLG, Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 41-041-20140306

Alignment with National and Emerging Local Policy

- 4.4 As discussed, commentary on specific policies is contained below. However, it is important that all policies in the plan reflect the strategic direction of the emerging GMSF and SLP and the overarching NPPF. For clarity, PPG 074⁴ states that when assessing general conformity, the NP should consider the following:

“Whether the neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal supports and upholds the general principle that the strategic policy is concerned with.

The degree, if any, of conflict between the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal and the strategic policy.

Whether the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal provides an additional level of detail and/or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining that policy.

The rationale for the approach taken in the draft neighbourhood plan or Order and the evidence to justify that approach”.

- 4.5 PLSL consider that the NP should clearly demonstrate how and where policies align with strategic policy in the emerging GMSF, SLP and the NPPF.
- 4.6 The relationship between neighbourhood plans and strategic development needs is set out at NPPF paragraph 184, which states:

“The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.”

- 4.7 Although in theory a neighbourhood plan may come forward before an emerging Local Plan⁵, when a neighbourhood plan comes forward before the Local Plan, the local planning authority should discuss the Plan with the qualifying body, i.e. the Neighbourhood Forum, because it is

⁴ Planning Practice Guidance, CLG, Paragraph: 074 Reference ID: 41-074-20140306

⁵ Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20140306

“important to minimise any conflicts between the policies in the neighbourhood plan and those in the emerging Local Plan.”⁶

- 4.8 However, the NP is completely silent on the strategic policies in the emerging GMSF and SLP. PLSL considers that the NP is deliberately attempting to thwart the as yet unconfirmed strategic guidance for the area to be contained in a draft GMSF (expected in July 2018) and the SLP, the timescale for which follows behind GMSF. The approach taken by the draft Neighbourhood Plan in the allocation of residential site allocations is not justified as it not the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the alternatives.
- 4.9 The NP has prejudged and excluded all development in Woodford apart from affordable housing exception sites. However, the strategic housing requirement for either Stockport or Woodford is not known at this stage and therefore if the NP is to progress in advance of the GMSF or SLP it must provide sufficient flexibility to be able to accommodate the minimum requirement set out within those. It is therefore not a consultation or a genuine attempt to identify new sites for development.
- 4.10 As currently drafted, PLSL considers the NP to be premature to the determination of key strategic issues (such as the level of housing need, green belt boundaries and spatial distribution).

Evidence Base

- 4.11 In terms of the evidence required to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan, PPG Paragraph at 040⁷ states that:

“While there are prescribed documents that must be submitted with a neighbourhood plan or Order there is no ‘tick box’ list of evidence required for neighbourhood planning. Proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken. The evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies in the draft neighbourhood plan or the proposals in an Order.”

- 4.12 The evidence that underpins the development of the NP includes the following technical studies:
- Woodford Landscape and Environment Study Part 1: Natural Features, WNF, 2015-2017
 - Neighbourhood Plan Housing Policy Advice, Aecom, July 2015
 - Movement Study, PBA, November 2015

⁶ Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 41-009-20140306

⁷ Planning Practice Guidance, CLG, Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 41-040-20140306

- Woodford Heritage and Character Assessment, Aecom, August 2016
- Protecting and Enhancing Woodford's Natural Environment, Cheshire Wildlife Trust, January 2018

4.13 PLSL consider that there are deficiencies in the technical evidence base used to prepare the NP and that additional work is required if the plan is to conform with Paragraph 040 of the PPG, namely that NPs should be based on robust evidence which support the choices made and the approach taken.

4.14 The NP refers extensively to the findings of the questionnaire surveys and resident opinion throughout the Plan. It is considered that this evidence carries little weight in relation to the technical aspects of the plan, particularly in relation to environmental policies and strategic housing need, and should be based on robust up-to-date evidence which can be tested by an Independent Examiner, as opposed to qualitative data, the validity of which is not assured.

Neighbourhood Plan Housing Policy Advice, Aecom, July 2015 - Housing Needs Assessment

4.15 PLSL has several fundamental concerns relating to this evidence base document. The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) dates back to July 2015 and this is already some 3 years out of date. The HNA bases its findings on the 2008 Greater Manchester SHMA⁸ and 2010 Update⁹ and assesses the need between 2011 and 2026 (which does not align with the NP duration of 2018 to 2033). It has not been updated to consider the more recent assessments undertaken and published by Stockport Council¹⁰ and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)¹¹, nor emerging government guidance on assessing housing need.¹² Furthermore, the forthcoming revision to GMSF will be supported by a revised evidence base, which the NP cannot take into account by attempting to run ahead of the strategic plan for the area.

4.16 As such PLSL consider that the evidence base and methodology for the HNA is out of date and the weight that should be afforded to it is limited. Before the draft NP is finalised and submitted, an up-to-date HNA should be undertaken and the draft NP reviewed accordingly. As set out elsewhere the NP should follow, rather seek to pre-empt, emerging strategic policy. Given these fundamental concerns regarding the HNA methodology being out of date, this representation does not go into specific detailed comments on the methodology utilised other than to object to any weight being given to an out of date HNA.

⁸ Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2008 (GVA Grimley and Deloitte, December 2008)

⁹ Greater Manchester SHMA Update Report 2010 (New Economy, May 2010)

¹⁰ Stockport 2015 HNA – Final Report, November 2015

¹¹ Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment October 2016

¹² Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals, DCLG, 14th September 2017

Woodford-Landscape-and-Environment-Report-Part-1-April-2018

4.17 PLSL's site is considered within this document under two separate character areas:

- Central Woodford, Area 5; and
- Central Woodford, Area 7

4.18 The document, produced on behalf of the WNF, does not follow a clearly stated methodology and the does not state who has undertaken the assessments and whether they are suitably qualified and competent.

4.19 PLSL also object to an evidence base document that supports a range of environmental policies within the plan, including ENV1 which seeks to protects views and vistas, yet does not properly cross reference view point locations on plan or photographs.

4.20 Having specific regard to the assessment of Area's 5 and 7. The report states that there are 'excellent' and 'spectacular' views of the distant Pennines from many locations. Such statements are highly subjective and should not form part of the NP evidence base.

4.21 PLSL note the Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment¹³ assesses the Woodford area as part of parcel SP-BA03 and it is judged to have a sense of urban encroachment as a result of the existing development/housing, new development and the transport infrastructure through this landscape.

4.22 Furthermore, PLSL's own studies of the area, undertaken by fully qualified Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment consultants (see Appendix 1), conclude that wider views to their site are limited by the surrounding landscape, vegetation and generally flat topography. Limited long distance views are available from the surrounding landscape due to the lack of highly elevated topography. Although development would be outside of the limits to development for Woodford, it is considered that while a change in the local landscape character would be noticeable due to the change from agricultural fields to the proposed development, the predicted change would be relatively small due to the limited extent of the views and the proximity of existing housing to the eastern, southern and western boundaries.

4.23 It is considered that the landscape mitigation offered would integrate the scheme into the local landscape and the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the landscape character of the area. Views of the development from the wider area are filtered and screened by

¹³ Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment, LUC, July 2016

the intervening buildings and surrounding mature hedgerow and tree boundaries and surrounding curtilage vegetation.

COMMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

4.24 The NP approach to its environmental policies and supporting text in Section 7.2 is overly onerous, does not comply with national guidance and is not based on any succinct or robust evidence. As such, it is difficult to come to an informed view on the NP proposals and any tangible evidence that has informed these highly prescriptive environmental policies.

4.25 Policy ENV1 lacks any robust justification to determine why the 'important local views' are identified for protection. As highlighted above the evidence base that justifies this approach is deficient, considered to be highly subjective and does not contain the justification for the specific viewpoints identified for special protection.

4.26 Policy ENV2 also lacks robust justification for the countryside and green spaces identified. It is also unclear whether the policy is seeking to designate these areas as Local Green Spaces (LGS) as the reference to 'green spaces' is ambiguous. To designate land as LGS the NP must ensure that it is able to demonstrate robust evidence to meet national policy requirements set out in NPPF. Paragraph 076 states that:

'Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.'

4.27 Further guidance is provided in paragraph 77 which sets out three tests that must be met for the designation of Local Green Spaces. Paragraph 77 states that:

'The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used: - Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; - Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreation value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and - Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.'

4.28 PLSL does not consider that robust evidence has been presented to justify designating vast tracts of land that collectively amount to the entire undeveloped area of Woodford as LGS.

COMMENTS ON DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- 4.29 Policies DEV1 and DEV2 reiterate NPPF policy on Green Belts and provide no additional local guidance and as such their inclusion in the NP is superfluous.
- 4.30 Policy DEV3, should demonstrate general conformity with the adopted development plan and emerging SLP. No justification is provided for seeking 50% affordable housing when the current adopted plan requires 40% affordable housing. Indeed, the evidence cited at paragraph 8.5.3 is contradictory stating that there does not appear to be a significant demand for affordable housing within the village. Moreover, the NP evidence base document: Housing Needs Assessment recommends that there is no requirement for a specific affordable housing policy in the NP.

5 SUMMARY

- 5.1 It is considered that the NP as drafted does not meet the Basic Conditions of Neighbourhood Plan preparation, and in particular policy contained in National policy and is premature in relation to the emerging strategic policies of the GMSF and SLP. The NP should not be a document that is ambiguous, prescriptive and overly restrictive; and should provide a level of clarity on how it will be applied and implemented. A NP provides an opportunity for the local community to guide development in their area and should not be restrictive in assisting the development of key sites in the area.
- 5.2 PLSL is willing to work with the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum and Stockport Council to deliver high quality, residential led development in this sustainable location, and to participate actively and positively in the formulation of appropriate Plans and policies at both the neighbourhood and District levels which can contribute effectively to the sustainable development needs of this area.

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APPENDIX 1: LAND AT HILLTOP FARM DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



Land at **Hilltop Farm, Woodford**

Development Statement

On Behalf of
Park Land and Securities

February 2018
Print Size A4

MASTERPLANNING



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1.0

1.1 Introduction

Stockport Council forms part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) which is currently going through the process of identifying sufficient land to meet the objectively assessed housing needs of all the Councils within the GMCA, via the production of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF).

The Draft GMSF, consulted upon in October 2016, proposed to release sufficient Green Belt and brownfield sites in Stockport to accommodate around 19,300 new homes between 2015 and 2035.

The Land at Hill Top Farm formed part of the proposed Draft Greater Manchester Strategic Framework (GMSF) Policy OA20 allocation for housing consulted on in October 2016 and is located within the administrative boundary of Stockport Council.

This Development Framework has been produced to demonstrate that the proposed housing and supporting facilities can be delivered. A comprehensive suite of technical studies has been prepared to understand how the site can be developed and how much development could be delivered, taking into account the site-specific opportunities and constraints.

Previous representations have been submitted to both the GMSF consultation and the Stockport Local Plan Issues and Options consultation setting out the case for the development of this site.



Figure 1 - Masterplan Study Area



Figure 2 - View across site

1.2 Site Location

The irregular sized site extends to approximately 50 ha and comprises a well contained parcel of undeveloped land on the western edge of the existing settlement of Woodford, shown in Fig 1.

The site itself shown in Fig 1 comprises pasture land, which is for the most part flat except for a slight undulation towards the western edge. The site is bound by the rear of existing properties along Chester Road and Moor Lane to the north and the east. Church Lane forms the western and southern boundary to the site. Residential properties also surround the site on the opposite side of Church Lane.

There are two public rights of way across the land, one runs north to south between Chester Road and Church Lane in the western part of the site. The second is in the eastern part of the site providing connection between Church Lane in the north-west to Moor Lane in the north west.

The site does not contain any designated heritage assets, listed buildings, registered parks or about any conservation area.

The site as well as the village of Woodford is currently designated as Green Belt and the Draft GMSF proposed to remove the site as part of a wider allocation of the adjacent area from the Green Belt in order to meet recognised housing needs.



2.0

2.1 Draft GMSF Policy OA20

Figure 3 shows the proposed draft GMSF policy OA20 allocation. The wording of Draft Policy OA20 is provided below for information as it forms the context within which this Development Framework has been produced.

The Woodford Opportunity Area comprises a gross area of some 238 hectares located close to the southern boundary of Stockport and Greater Manchester with Cheshire East. The scheme will seek to build on the success of the Woodford Garden Village development through the delivery of further high quality sensitive residential led development and local facilities. In total the scheme will deliver around 2,400 new homes.

The development of the area will need to:

1. Provide a range of housing including a range of sizes and tenures to meet defined local need.
2. Provide a significant proportion of housing for older people.
3. Deliver a suitable proportion of affordable housing across the site, phased to ensure that both market and affordable housing can be delivered at similar times within the development of the site.
4. Incorporate land to enable self-build plots to meet identified local demand and needs.
5. Be designed in order to minimise any adverse impacts on the Green Belt beyond the site, including through the use of significant landscaping, and ensure a reasonable buffer of land to be retained as Green Belt between new development and other existing/planned settlements.
6. Deliver or provide significant financial contributions towards significant improvements in the accessibility

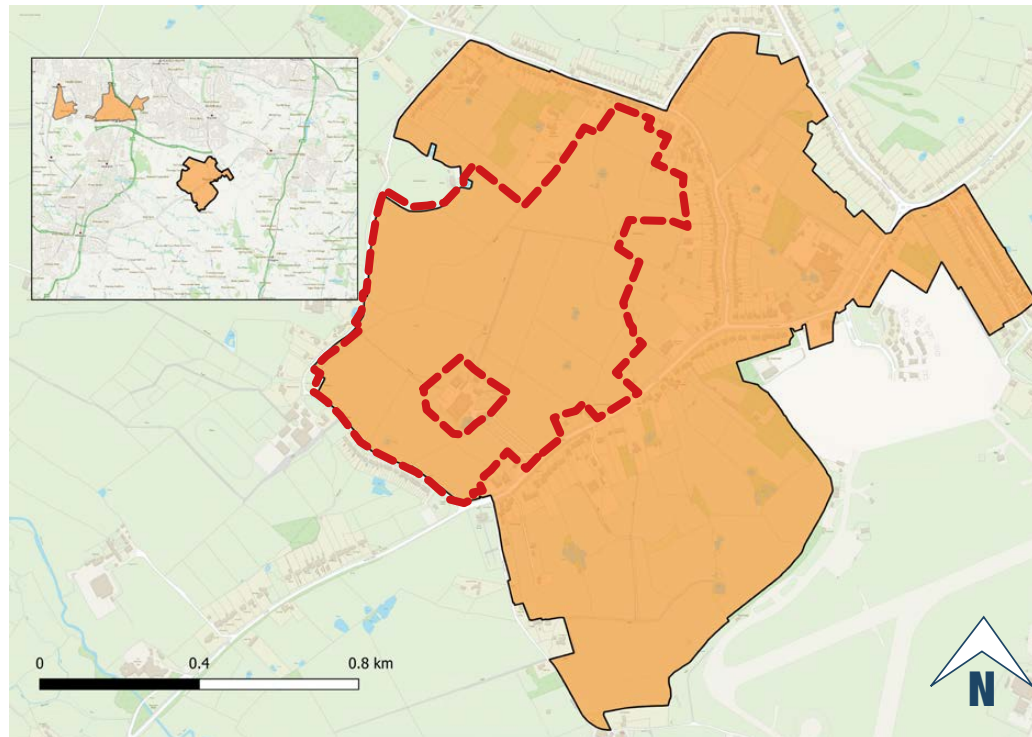


Figure 3 - Extract from GMSF Policy OA20

of the site by cycle, walking and by bus as well as to highway infrastructure. This shall include the provision of additional bus services serving Stockport, other key local destinations and rail stations to allow onward travel as well as a rapid service to Manchester Airport.

7. Incorporate a high standard of design across the full dwelling range, delivering a range of densities across the site.

8. Incorporate high levels of landscaping treatment with substantial areas of green and blue infrastructure.

9. Incorporate measures to ensure that the rate of runoff of surface water from the land is not increased and, ideally, is decreased.

10. Safeguard any protected species, including the retention of all existing ponds within the site where practicable.

11. Sensitive integrate the development with areas of priority habitat including the retention of existing deciduous woodland.

12. Retain, protect and where possible enhance all heritage assets within the site, as well as their settings, and ensure that the development sensitively integrates with the existing residential areas of Woodford.

13. Provide financial contributions to the necessary provision of education and health facilities and other infrastructure etc. as dictated by other policies in the development plan (in addition to the facilities and infrastructure being delivered by the redevelopment of the former BAE systems site).

2.1 The Need for Green Belt Release in Greater Manchester and Housing Need

Paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that local plans should plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area and ensure that they are drafted to cover an appropriate time scale “preferably a 15-year time horizon”. A key aim of local plans is to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary.

Whilst NPPF places an emphasis on maximising the potential of brownfield land, there is an identified shortfall in housing land within the existing Greater Manchester urban area, including in Stockport, to meet the objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) set out in the Greater Manchester: Strategic Housing Market Assessment, October 2016 (GM SHMA).

The evidence that was prepared in support of the GMSF strategy makes it clear that exceptional circumstances exist that justify the need to review the Green Belt across the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) area. These include:

- The GM SHLAA found that objectively assessed needs for housing cannot be met within the existing built-up area, where two thirds of the overall housing supply has been identified.
- It is more than 30 years since the Greater Manchester Structure Plan and subsequent Green Belt Local Plan last fully assessed Green Belt areas and defined Green Belt boundaries at the sub-regional level and review is timely and appropriate now.
- The tightly drawn urban boundaries in some locations.

- The opportunity to provide new sustainable neighbourhoods in locations at a scale, which can be linked to existing and/or potential transport networks; respond to market demand and have the necessary transformational potential.
- The opportunity to boost and maximise the city-region's economic potential by facilitating high quality housing and attracting high quality inward investment.
- The opportunity to ensure that Greater Manchester drives growth within the North of England and provides a suitable counterbalance to the strength of London and the South East.

The GM SHMA explains the approach to setting the housing requirements across GMCA has sought to meet the OAHN for each district within that district as far as possible, and where it is not possible to evenly redistribute the unmet need amongst the remaining districts. The OAHN for Stockport is identified as 1,011 dwellings per annum (dpa) (between 2015-2035). As one of four districts (Manchester, Oldham, Stockport and Trafford) that have not identified sufficient supply to meet their individual dwelling figures it is given a housing requirement that would leave a 5% buffer in their supply compared to that requirement. The Draft GMSF proposed housing requirement for Stockport is 965 dpa.

This approach has the effect of a redistribution of forecast demand from the four districts of Manchester, Oldham, Stockport and Trafford to the five districts of Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Salford and Wigan. Furthermore, the GM SHMA concluded that it was not necessary for an uplift to be applied

to deliver identified affordable housing needs.

The GM SHMA identifies that market signals indicate affordability within Stockport is the second most acute in the GMCA. The GM SHMA finds that Trafford and Stockport have the highest values or rates on several measures such as house prices, private rents, increases in house prices and private rents, affordability ratios and dwelling completions.

Providing fewer homes in Stockport than the OAHN will have the likely effect of worsening affordability in the Borough because demand for housing in Stockport is already extremely high.

The Government's consultation on a standardised methodology for assessing local housing need requires local authorities to increase the number of homes that are needed in the less affordable areas i.e. areas where the average house prices are more than 4 times average earnings. The data published alongside the consultation shows that the proposed methodology produces a baseline figure of 1,078 dpa for Stockport. It is notable that this is higher than the GM SHMA figure of 1,011 dpa.

The draft GMSF plans for economic growth across Greater Manchester to ensure that Greater Manchester drives growth within the North of England and provides a better counterbalance to the strength of London and the South East and has made an adjustment to the OAHN to reflect an increased level of economic growth.

Based upon analysis of the available evidence base it is considered that there is compelling evidence to justify the need for release of Green Belt land and that the Stockport Local Plan needs to carry forward the Draft GMSF Policy OA20

Woodford Opportunity Area (WOA) allocation. Given that, even before taking into account the emerging Government requirement to take into account market signals, the Draft GMSF proposes to distribute a proportion of Stockport's OAHN elsewhere, clearly, the allocation of Green Belt land including this site is essential to meeting the future needs of the area.

The urban area cannot meet the future requirements of the Stockport area and this identified shortfall amongst other reasons amounts to exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release within Greater Manchester and Stockport. Thus, there is a requirement for release sites within the Green Belt that can provide sustainable communities. Strategic sites are required to meet the significant housing needs of the area identified in the GMSF evidence base.

Given that urban capacity is a finite resource and the Green Belt boundaries are drawn closely to the existing urban boundaries, without Green Belt release, the allocation of sufficient sites within the existing urban area would lead to urban cramming and the loss of precious urban green space and recreational areas.



3.0

3.1 Location and Accessibility

The site is located to the south of the Stockport area within the village of Woodford. It is a sustainable location with high levels of connectivity to the A34, and is set to benefit from improved connectivity to the Airport and the M56 to the west and the A6 to the east with the opening of the A6-Manchester Airport Relief Road and shortly expected Poynton Relief Road both part of the South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) as shown in Fig 4.



Figure 4 - Local Highway Network

These transport improvements will provide excellent linkages to planned areas of economic growth around Manchester Airport and the new HS2 station, meaning that the site can provide much needed housing within close distance to these key economic drivers in the south of the conurbation.

The site is currently well served by bus services; bus stops are located to the south of the site on Chester Road. Two services per hour to Manchester City Centre operate along Chester Road.

The proposed allocation at Woodford Opportunity Area will build upon the existing Woodford Garden Village at the former aerodrome. The site is of a sufficient scale, which can be linked to existing and/or potential transport networks; respond to market demand and; have the necessary transformational potential to create a large community.

The allocation of the site offers the potential to build upon the Woodford Garden Village and improve the sustainability of the area through providing additional community facilities and services and support improvements to public transport provision.

3.2 Transport/Sustainable Location

A preliminary transport feasibility assessment has been carried out for the site, which underpins the findings outlined below. The feasibility report is in Appendix C.

The walking catchment is shown in Fig 5.

The site is located approximately 2km south of Bramhall town centre. It is only around 800m (10-minute walk) to the west of Woodford Garden Village (WGV), which is under construction and partly occupied. As part of WGV a package of sustainable transport and highway improvements will be delivered. Some of these improvements will directly benefit this site as well.

In terms of access on foot, the site will benefit from a range of existing community amenities and proposed committed amenities within WGV, which

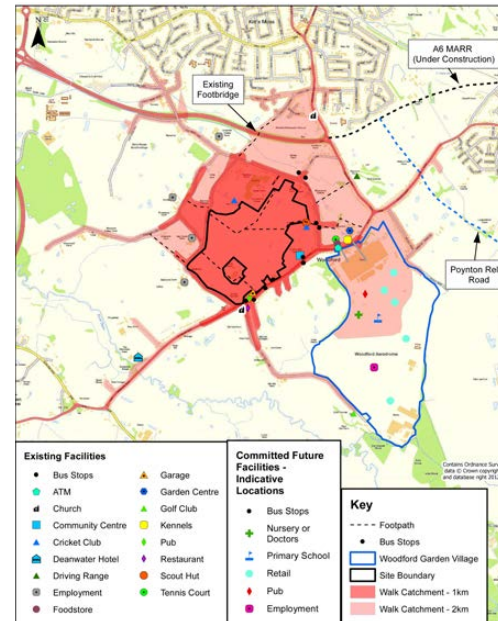


Figure 5 - 1KM/2KM Catchments

are all within a comfortable walking distance of the site. The amenities include retail uses, a primary school, employment, pub/restaurant, church, leisure uses, etc.

The development will also provide a community hub on-site. The existing footway network is of good quality, which will encourage access on foot to off-site amenities. The developer will provide enhancements to the existing footways and footpaths to ensure the site is fully integrated with the surrounding areas and facilities.

The local key destinations are within easy cycling distance of the site, this includes Bramhall, Poynton and parts of Wilmslow/Handforth as shown in Fig 6. The committed pedestrian/cycle related

improvements on Chester Road and traffic calming on Moor Lane and Church Lane, to be delivered by WGV, will further improve the accessibility of the site on foot and by cycle. Furthermore, the proposed pedestrian/cycle facilities to be delivered as part of the A6MARR (under construction) and Poynton Bypass (committed scheme) will also enhance the site's sustainable accessibility on a wider network basis. The developer will work closely with Stockport Council to devise further local cycle related improvements, where necessary.

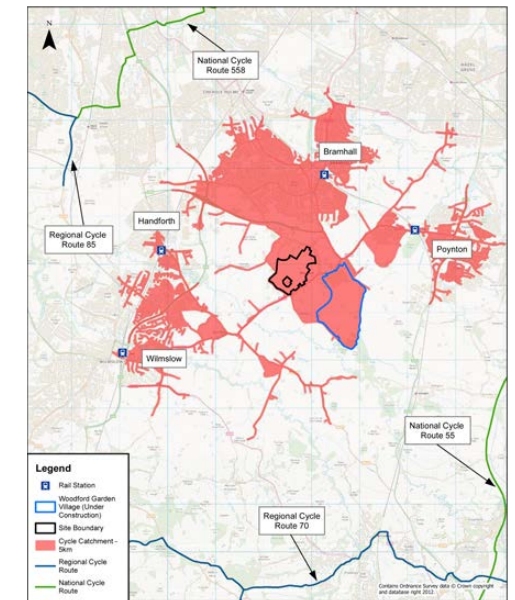


Figure 6 - 5KM Cycle Catchment

Presently, an hourly bus service (No. 42B) operates on Chester Road with bus stops in close proximity of the site.

The following educational facilities are within a 5km cycling catchment and some are also within walking distance of the site:

Queensgate Primary School
Moss Hey Primary School
Lostock Hall Primary School
Valley School
Bramhall High School
Pownall Green Primary School
Ladybrook Primary School
Vernon Primary School
Cheadle Hulme High School
Hazel Grove High School
Poynton High School and Performing Arts College

Also the following medical practices are within the cycling catchment of the site:

The Village Surgery
McIlvrde Medical Centre
Bramhall Health Centre
Priorslegh Medical Centre
Dean Lane Medical Centre

As part of the WGV proposals, the frequency of the 42B will increase to 30 minutes and the existing hourly 378 bus service will be diverted to serve WGV.

It is proposed to divert the 378 service into the site with improved frequency to potentially 30 minutes, to serve the proposed development as shown in Fig 7.

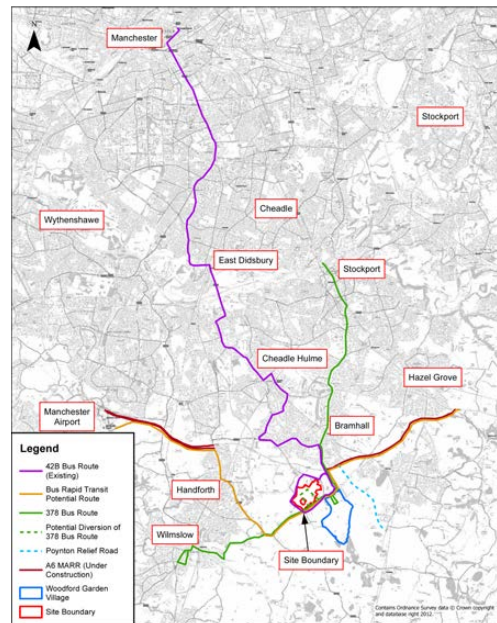


Figure 7 - Potential Public Transport Improvements

This will ensure future residents will have access to public transport, with bus stops circa 400m (5-minute walk) from their dwellings. These services (42B and 378) in combination will provide access to Bramhall, Stockport, Wilmslow, East Didsbury and Manchester.

One of the top priorities of Stockport Council is to start a bus rapid transit (BRT) scheme between Hazel Grove and Manchester Airport, via Woodford, as part of the SEMMM Strategy. With this scheme in place the site's accessibility will further improve significantly. The

developer will assist in the delivery of the BRT scheme through funding, where applicable.

The existing nearest bus stops to the site on Chester Road will be upgraded to quality bus corridor (QBC) standard. This will include the provision of shelters, seating, raised boarding areas, lighting and real time electronic information.

Given the above, it can be stated that the site will be highly accessible by bus.

The nearest rail station is Poynton, approximately 3km from the site, while Bramhall rail station is circa 3.5km from the site as shown in Fig 6. Both stations are within easy cycling distance, while Bramhall station would be accessible by bus as well. In combination, the two stations provide regular access to key destinations including Stockport, Manchester Piccadilly and Macclesfield.

The site will be supported by a comprehensive Travel Plan, which will positively encourage travel by sustainable modes.

Presently, the SEMMM Strategy is being refreshed and further sustainable improvements near the site may be informed by this Strategy, which will further improve the sustainability of the site.

With the proposed sustainable improvements, the site will clearly be highly accessible on foot, by cycle, bus and rail. Accordingly, future residents will have excellent accessibility to employment, education, healthcare, retail, and leisure facilities by sustainable travel modes.



4.0

4.1 The Green Belt

The site falls within the Stockport Green Belt and within close proximity to the Green Belt within Cheshire East. The Green Belt south of Manchester extends beyond Macclesfield, surrounding the smaller villages of Prestbury, Alderley Edge, Poynton and Wilmslow/Handforth. The village of Woodford sits between Handforth/Wilmslow and Poynton and south of Bramhall at the edge of the Greater Manchester conurbation. Woodford village is washed over and within the Green Belt with the apparent gap between the settlements to the east and west actually including a large amount of residential dwellings and the Woodford aerodrome site. The site falls west of the aerodrome site at the edge of Woodford village.

4.2 The Purposes of the Green Belt

As set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, the five core purposes of including land within the Green Belt are:

- 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.

When tested against the purposes of the Green Belt and when considered against the exceptional circumstances that exist, the site at Hilltop presents an excellent opportunity to support a sensitive residential development on the edge of existing and proposed urban areas.

The site is a group of agricultural fields surrounded by an existing road network that runs close or adjacent to the site boundaries. The site is well contained visually within a landscape that is already heavily influenced by both residential and industrial development.

4.3 Existing Green Belt Studies

The Stockport Green Belt is considered within Greater Manchester's Green Belt Assessment carried out by LUC in July 2016. This study is strategic in nature and narrows the focus down to areas where Green Belt release is considered strategically likely to lead to land becoming available for sustainable development. The study utilises a methodology which identifies parcels of land and then seeks to judge each parcel against the purposes of Green Belt, scoring these in terms of how much they contribute.

The assessment did not consider all land within the Green Belt and the level of assessment applied to the areas that are considered varies depending on the strategic view taken of the land.

The site falls within an area of land identified as SP-BA03.

4.4 Greater Manchester GB Assessment Parcel SP-BA03

This parcel of land shown in Fig 8 is large in comparison to the majority of other land groups that are assessed within the study. The site falls within this area alongside the whole of the village of Woodford and the Woodford Garden Village.

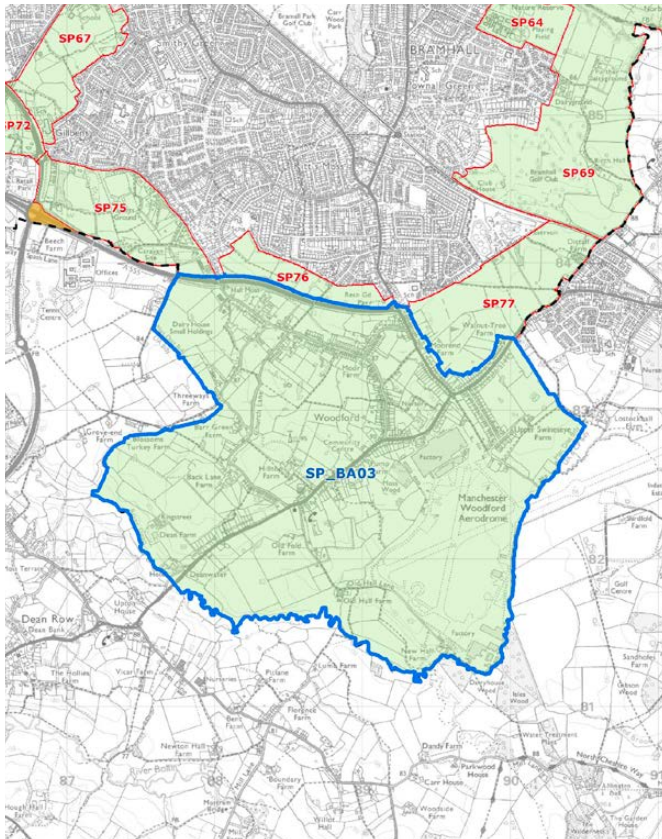


Figure 8 - Extract from Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment

As the parcel is deemed not to adjoin the existing settlement edge it is only partially considered against the review criteria and the purposes of Green Belt.

The parcel is not considered to be of critical importance in defining the settlement gap between Handforth and Poynton as it is acknowledged that much of the gap is already developed, containing the village of Woodford. It is noted however that the current Green Belt performs the function of preventing the merging of Woodford with the surrounding settlement edge. (purpose 2 to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another)

The parcel is judged to have a sense of urban encroachment as a result of the existing development/housing, new development and the transport infrastructure through this landscape. (purpose 3 safeguarding the countryside from encroachment)

The parcel is judged to make little or no contribution to the historic settings of surrounding settlements and considers that visual connection between these areas are also unlikely. (purpose 4 preserve the setting and special character of historic towns)

4.5 Woodford Garden Village (WGV)

The former site of the Woodford Aerodrome and manufacturing plant has planning permission for upto 775 dwellings, C2 extra care, commercial floorspace (upto 8361 sqm), a public house, 4000 sqm of retail floorspace, a primary school and community floorspace. The illustrative masterplan is shown in Fig 11. This site is also in Green Belt and is included within Stockport's LDF site allocations plan with planning permissions granted for the masterplan through a combination of separate applications. Construction of part of this site has began and some dwellings are occupied.

The proposals represent a significant expansion of the village of Woodford and substantial development within the Green Belt. This is justified as major development that will have no greater impact on the Green Belt than the forms of development that were found on the site previously.

The WGV proposals will significantly change the Woodford area and form a new settlement edge for the village to the east of the site.



Figure 9 - Woodford Garden Village

4.6 North Cheshire Garden Village (Handforth)

To the west of the site an allocation for housing has been made under the name North Cheshire Garden Village. This is located on land west of the A34 and south of the A55 with an eastern site boundary that appears to broadly follow metropolitan boundary line between Cheshire East and Stockport.

The consequence of this is that the gap between Handforth and the existing properties that make up Woodford village will be reduced. However, the masterplanning of this area is at early stage so it is not possible to assess where the extent of the built development will be in relation to the site.

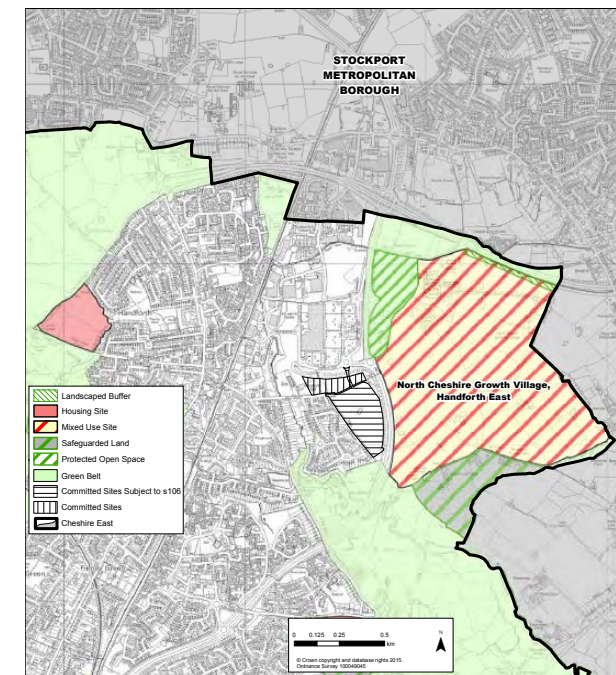


Figure 10 - Extract from The Cheshire East Local Plan (Fig 15.38) Handforth Town Map

4.7 Assessment of the site against green belt purposes 1 to 5

The Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment (GMGBA) was commissioned with the purpose of providing an understanding of how the land in the Greater Manchester Green Belt performs against the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The GMGBA provides a high level assessment of Green Belt performance. The site is considered as part of a wider parcel of land (SP_BA03) and this high level assessment concluded that the wider parcel makes either a moderate or weak contribution against the relevant purposes of the Green Belt and the conclusions are provided in the following table.

As the GMGBA assessment related to a significantly wider area, we have also undertaken a site specific assessment of how this smaller area performs against the five Green Belt purposes.

NPPF Green Belt Purpose	GMGBA Assessment of Parcel SP_BA03	Land at Hill Top Farm Assessment			
1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	This purpose is considered not applicable as the parcel is a Broad Area which is not adjacent to the urban edge as it is separated by intervening parcels. As the parcel does not lie adjacent to the urban edge, it was not considered further in terms of the role it plays in checking the unrestricted sprawl of the large built up area.	The development of the site would be contained from the wider Green Belt through provision of significant landscape buffers utilising the existing topography and boundaries of the site along Church Lane.			
2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Moderate rating. The parcel lies between Barmhall to the north, Ponyton to the east and Handforth to the west. The parcel only lies directly between Handforth and Poynton however much of the gap between these settlements consists of land which is outside of the Green Belt. As such the parcel forms part of a gap between the settlements of Handforth and Poynton but it is not of critical importance to the separation of the two settlements or of critical importance to the separation of Bramhall from these settlements either. Whilst Woodford is not being considered as a settlement under Purpose 2 within this assessment it is noted that the Green Belt is performing a role preventing the merging of this settlement with Bramhall in particular.	The site is contained by the surrounding road network which along the rest of its length is lined by existing residential properties. Development of this site would be within the existing limits of development and therefore retain existing gap. Development of the site would ensure that the gap between Woodford and the planned extension of Handforth to the east (within the authority of Cheshire East), is maintained and this can be reinforced by enhancing the strong boundaries created through both new developments. Through strengthening of existing boundary features and the retention of a gap, the development of the site would not lead to coalescence of Handforth and Woodford. Furthermore, the pattern of development in the wider area is characterised of settlements being separated by small gaps, such as the gaps between Bramhall and Handforth and Bramhall and Heald Green. Viewed in this context, the expansion of Woodford as a larger village would not be an untypical feature of development at the edge of the Greater Manchester urban area. NPPF is also clear that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. In this regard, together with the nearby Woodford Garden Village, the site is of a sufficient scale to create a sustainable community.	3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Moderate rating. There is a sense of urban encroachment within the parcel as a result the settlement of Woodford, which includes rows of houses located along the A5102, A5149 and Moor Lane, and a garden centre. Additionally, the Manchester Woodford Aerodrome is located in this area. It is noted that a new housing development is currently being built on the site of an old factory located within Woodford. However, the parcel still displays some of the characteristics of the countryside and is generally rural in character, despite these urbanising influences. Neighbouring urban development has a limited visual influence on the rural character of the parcel, although it is noted that the A555 that bounds the areas to the north is currently undergoing upgrading works.	As set out in the visual impact section of this document, the topography of the surrounding area and the existing boundaries of Church Lane, Chester Road and Moor Lane would limit the sense of encroachment upon the countryside. Furthermore, when defining boundaries, local planning authorities should use physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. In this regard Chester Road, Church Lane and the existing mature hedgerow and trees along the sites boundary provide a strong defensible boundary to an extended Woodford. Additionally, the surrounding topography means that long range views into the site are minimal. As such the visual impact of development would be minimal and capable of being mitigated with additional landscaping as necessary.
			4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Weak rating Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlements of Bramhall, Cheadle Hulme & Bramhall Green, Davenport & Heaviley (Stockport) and Edgeley (Stockport). In practice, this area has a limited role in the physical setting of Bramhall, though there is little intervisibility and is considered unlikely to be important to its visual setting or historic significance. This is largely due to the areas low-lying topography and the visual screening provided by intervening urban development, the A555 dual carriageway, and trees etc. Additionally, the conservation areas located outside Greater Manchester in Wilmslow and Handforth (Hawthorn Lane CA, St Bartholomew's (Wilmslow) CA and Bollin Hill CA Wilmslow and Styal CA) are of a small size and visually	As with the wider parcel, the site has no visual or physical relationship with the closest historic settlement of Bramhall and consequently does not contribute to the setting or significance given the intervening visual screening provided by other development, roads and trees.

Table 2 - Site Green Belt Assessment

	separate from this area. This area makes little or no contribution to the settings of these conservation areas.	
5.to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Green Belt has the potential to make a strategic contribution to urban regeneration by restricting the land available for development and encouraging developers to seek out and recycle derelict / urban sites. It is difficult to distinguish the extent to which each Green Belt parcels delivers against this purpose and therefore the study did not undertake a parcel by parcel assessment of the contribution made in relation to Purpose 5.	Compelling evidence exists to justify the need for release of Green Belt land and it is difficult to evaluate the contribution that individual areas make to this Green Belt purpose.

Table 2 - Site Green Belt Assessment

The village of Woodford is already undergoing significant change through the development of the Woodford Garden Village. The existing settlement edge will change as will the potential extent of developed area, as visually the area will change from a largely open airfield to a combination of residential and commercial development within landscape and recreational areas. With this development in place the Hilltop Farm site will appear as a balancing expansion to the village to the north of the Chester Road and round off development up to the defensible boundaries of the surrounding local road network and existing properties.

The Green Belt assessment carried out to date suggest that the washed over village and aerodrome site at Woodford are already viewed as an exception to the normal considerations of Green Belt with a great deal of varied development already present across the area. With regard to a wider area, the GMSF review concludes that development within the site would not lead to coalescence of settlement with the gaps north to Bramhall, east to Poynton and west to Handforth largely protected through the continued openness of countryside between the parcel and the settlement edges.

In a similar vein the parcel and the proposal site are not considered to have an influence over the historic setting of nearby towns and villages. It is acknowledged that development would lead to urban encroachment but that the existing parcel itself already displays urban encroachment across its area.

The proposals will not place development any further west than houses already located along Church Lane, and although there will be some encroachment into the countryside as a result of the proposed development, the gap between properties in Woodford and properties within the new Cheshire Village will remain as proposed. An opportunity exists within the site to create woodland planting along the north western boundaries to increase the

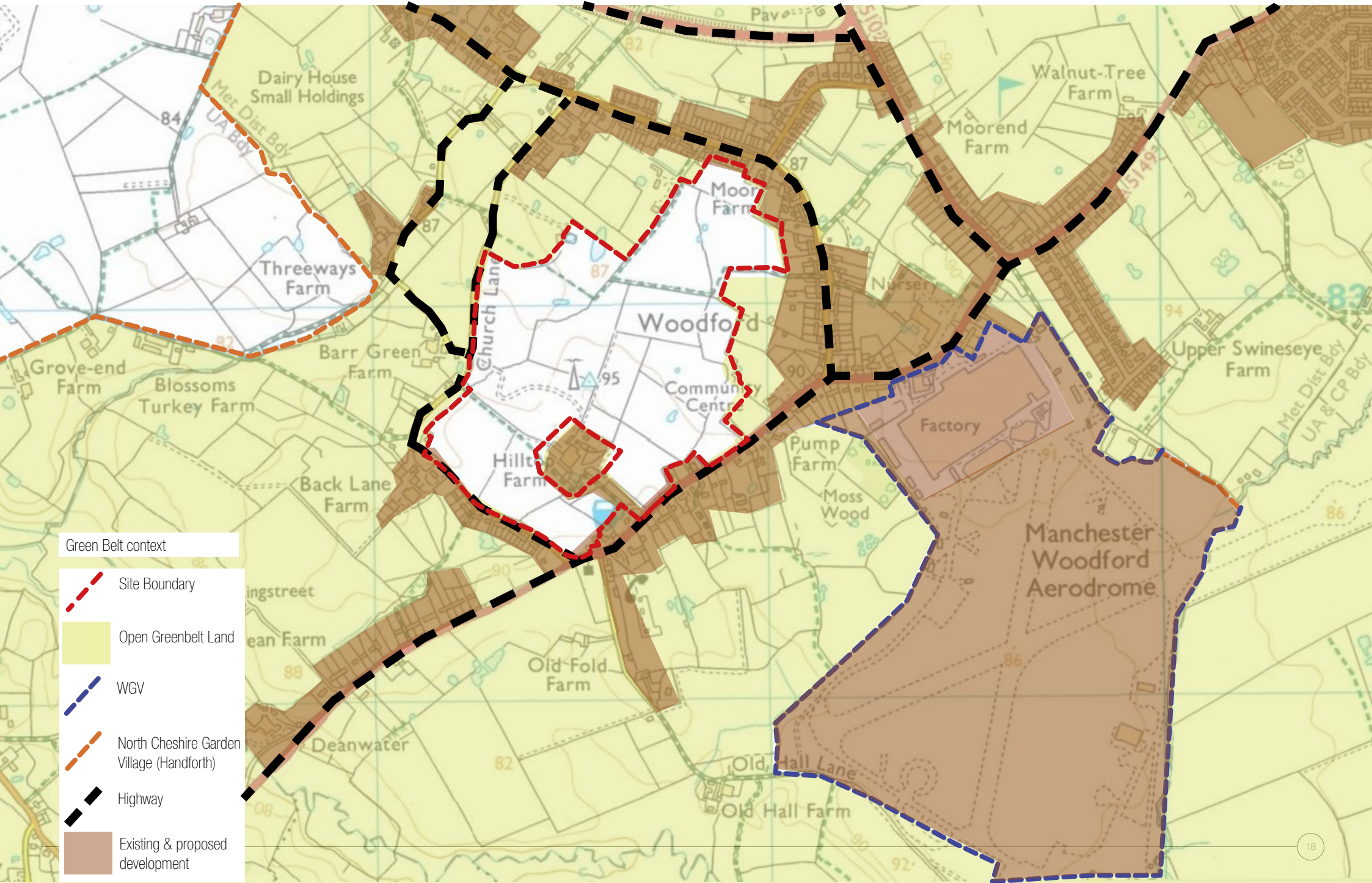
visual separation between settlements and to offer a further level of defensible boundary.

The impact on the Green Belt will be restricted to within the parcel of land considered within the GMSF parcel SP-BA03. This was not considered to have a strong contribution to the existing Green Belt due to its extensive existing developed areas. The boundaries of the proposal site are constrained within a framework of existing settlement and development and the existing highway network leading to a potential development site that offers very strong defensible boundaries for the future as can be seen in Fig 11.

The gaps between settlements to the north and east will be protected with no encroachment or merging of urban areas. To the west, development would be no closer to the new boundary of the North Cheshire Garden Village allocation than the existing built form.

As seen in section 5, visually the LVIA demonstrates that the proposal site is very well contained within both existing development along road routes and also within a landscape where topography and vegetation quickly reduce long distance views.

Figure 11 - Green Belt Context



4.7 Conclusion

In conclusion when tested against Paragraph 80 of the NPPF and the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, the site:

1. Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – the site is well contained by roads and the existing village and would form a logical extension with defensible boundaries. The site borders the existing settlement edge and offers an element of urban infill as well as a balance to the large development at Woodford Garden Village;
2. Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns – the development of the site would maintain the functions, separation and context of the wider Green Belt. It would not reduce the existing separation distances between Bramhall and Poynton and would place development no closer to the west towards Handforth than is already the case with existing development along local access roads. The western edges of the development site offer the opportunity to further define a permanent, potentially wooded boundary to the remaining gap.
3. Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside – the site is a self-contained field group that is afforded clear physical and visual enclosure from the wider Green Belt. The development would lead to some encroachment but this is held within a very defensible boundary of existing housing and roads and within a landscape that is well contained with limited visual connections across field groups.
4. Will not impact on the special character of historic towns – the proposals will not have any effect on the neighbouring villages of Bramhall, Poynton or Handforth. The village of Woodford will undergo change but this is already underway through the development of the aerodrome site with the character of this village being re-drawn through this process.
5. Will not discourage urban regeneration – the Local Plan evidence base suggests that sites for development are not readily available and, consequently, Green Belt release will be required over the life of the Plan Period.



5.0

5.1 Introduction to Visual Analysis and Landscape

A full Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) has been undertaken by TPM Landscape and is included at Appendix B. The LVIA considers the baseline for both landscape and visual amenity and will seek to identify the sensitivity of each before considering the change that proposed development may introduce. Both the landscape and visual impact of the proposed residential development will be assessed and a strategy of mitigation planting or other methods will be explored where relevant to reduce identified impacts.

The landscape and visual appraisal was undertaken in November 2017 when trees have lost the majority of their leaves. This represents the 'worst case scenario', where visibility is greatest, given the lack of screening by trees and vegetation with leaves.

The local roads were driven and public footpath networks explored to determine the receptors to be appraised and the extents of the visual envelope. The visual envelope is generally contained by the predominantly flat topography and intervening layers of mature hedgerow, and residential development, particularly to the north, east, south and south west. The study area is illustrated in the adjacent figure.

The proposal site is not subject to any national landscape designations such as National Park or AONB.

The site is located within land designated as Green Belt.

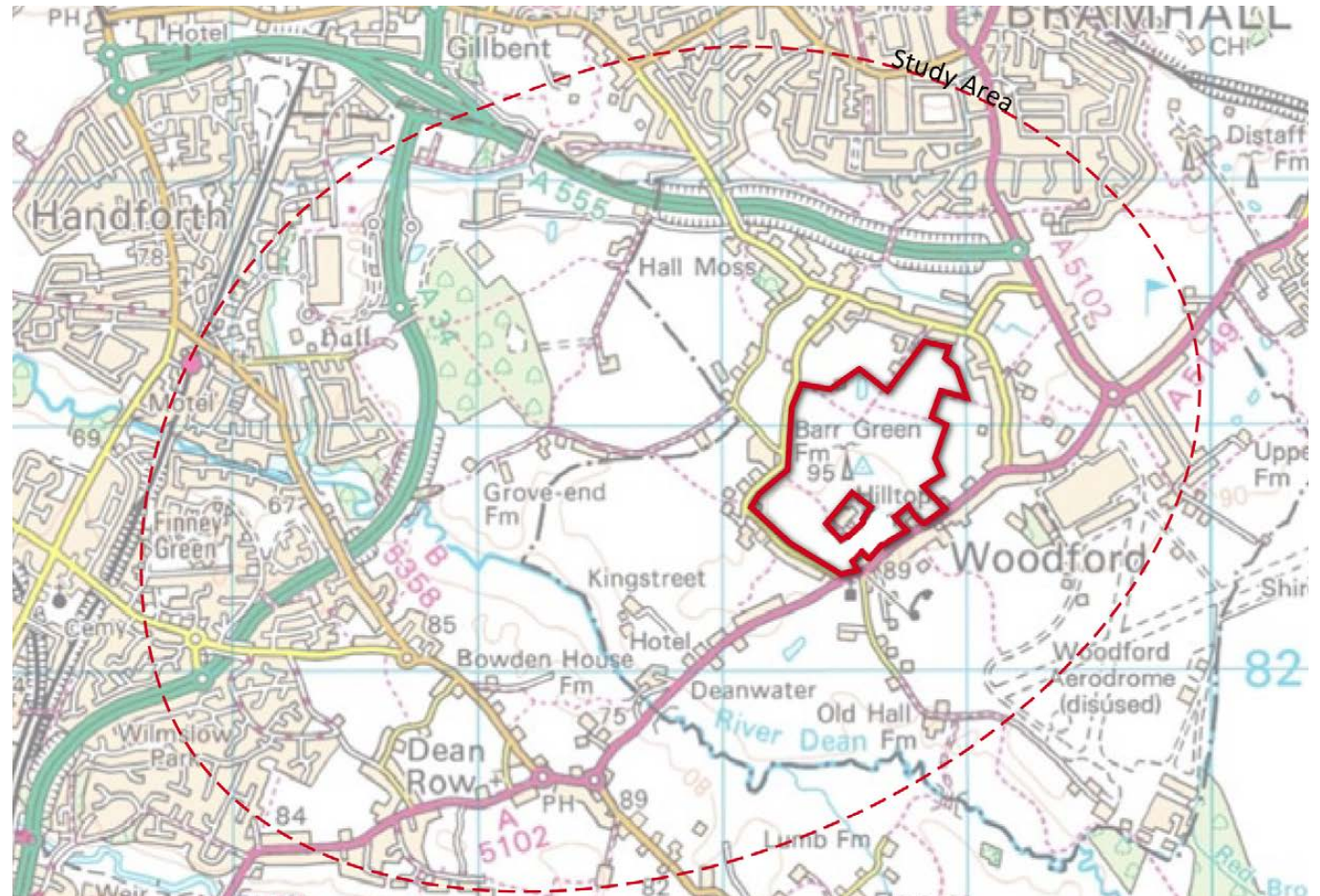


Figure 12 - Study Area

5.2 Visual Analysis

The proposed development has been considered from eleven representative viewpoint locations. The study area is contained to approximately 1km where views of or towards the proposals site are assessed as possible. The edge of settlement location and the generally flat nature of the topography restricts the visual envelope, and views are generally substantially filtered by layers of field trees, woodland and hedgerows. Elevated long distance views from the southeast are possible but are always in the context of existing settlement across and within a well vegetated landscape.

Mid to Long Distance Views

The proposal site is well contained locally, sitting within a field system that is almost entirely surrounded by mature hedgerow and trees. Mid to long distance views are generally not possible as a result of a combination of generally flat topography and intervening residential built form. Where views are available, the proposed development is viewed in context with the existing built form of Woodford.

Residential Properties

There are residential properties adjacent to the proposal site to the east, south and west and a small number of individual properties to the north but the majority of the neighbouring settlement areas are not visible from the site being screened by a combination of flat topography and mature vegetation. Although a landscape with substantial housing areas, these are not typically visible in many views and the experience is one where housing and settlement appear within a well vegetated agricultural setting. Through the retention of existing vegetation, the proposal site will be similarly viewed, with new planting strengthening the

landscape and well vegetated setting. Locations close to the proposals will potentially experience visual change and mitigation planting and layout will have an influence in reducing these effects. Away from the immediate site boundaries impacts over residential properties are very low with few receptors affected to any degree.

Footpaths Users

A number of footpaths cross the proposal site and run through the study area. Other pedestrian routes associated with the surrounding highway network were also assessed. Of the footpath routes assessed, six routes were identified as experiencing moderate effects or above. This reflects the number of footpaths located within the site and directly adjacent to it. Mitigation planting and layout and arrangement of units will help to reduce these impacts over time.

Vehicle Users

Receptors travelling by road travel alongside the proposal site along Chester Road, Church Lane and Moor Lane, with more routes through the study area connecting the settlements locally and also offering connections to the wider open countryside to the south, north and west. Visual effects are evident for stretches of the adjacent roads where boundary vegetation enables views into the site. Mitigation planting will seek to restrict views and enhance the existing vegetation, particularly along the boundaries of Church Lane and Chester Road.

Mitigation Measures

Following mitigation measures the expected visual effects will reduce with many of the views being unaffected. All of the available views of the proposed development are from within 1km of the application site and all of the identified impacts are local in nature with minimal potential to affect the wider appreciation of the surrounding countryside. The development

proposals will be visible, particularly along Church Lane, but through good design, the retention of existing vegetation and the development of a strong landscape framework the change will appear as housing within an established landscape setting in common with residential housing throughout this area.



Figure 13- Photograph View Location Plan



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5.3 Visual Sensitivity Summary

There are some high sensitivity residential receptors at the boundaries to the proposal site, although views towards the site are typically only possible from upper floor windows where the sensitivity is judged to be lower. Generally the surrounding settlement is notable by its ability to quickly recede from the visual experience due to the gently undulating topography and the woodland and tree cover present throughout these residential areas.

There are views from a number of public rights of way where the sensitivity is assessed as medium. However, views are often limited to medium distance as a combined result of the undulating topography, vegetation and built

form throughout the landscape. Longer distance views are available from higher points in the landscape towards the southeast of the study area, however this is at a distance of approximately 3.5km away and views of the proposed site are seen in combination with existing built form and surrounding vegetation and it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme would be noticeable in the wider context of the view. The highway network borders the site on four sides but the influence of the proposal site is limited to these falling behind a combination of screening factors, including residential built form, hedgerows and hedgerow trees, for the majority of the road length. Outside of these immediate locations, views of the site are not possible,

blocked by topography, vegetation and by buildings.

5.4 Landscape Character

The wider landscape is described at National level through NCA61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain, assessed as low/high sensitivity for this type of development. At a more local level but still covering the wider landscape within which the study area falls the Stockport Landscape Character Assessment, contained within the Stockport UDP (2006), also considers the landscape of the study area with the most relevant landscape character area being: A. Woodford. The overall sensitivity for the type of development proposed is assessed as low-medium for this landscape character area.

Local Landscape Character

The proposed development will have a direct effect on the urban fringe farmland character area, removing a small proportion of this from open farmland and changing this to settlement. For the other character areas any change to the landscape will be indirect through changes to views or visual amenity and, although this is considered as part of the potential landscape effects it necessarily carries less weight than a direct change to land use or form or the loss of landscape features or elements.

Character Area 1: Urban Settlement

The proposed development will not lead to the loss of any part of this landscape. Views from Chester Road and Church Lane would include the change over the proposal site but generally well screened by intervening hedgerow and mature hedgerow tree vegetation. The proposals have the potential to add to the woodland cover of the landscape and strengthen boundaries along Church Lane and Chester Road. The change will be Low.

Character Area 2: Urban Fringe Farmland

The proposed development will directly affect this character area, with loss of a part of this area. It will change the nature of it from agricultural fields to mixed residential. Following mitigation measures it is considered that the impact on this landscape

character area will be reduced as the proposed development becomes assimilated in the landscape and screening and other landscape planting develop to reduce visual impacts. Retention of the existing vegetation structure will also minimise the effects of the proposals and form a landscape structure within which the proposals can be set. The change is assessed as Medium reducing to Low-Medium following mitigation.

Character Area 3: Woodford Aerodrome

The proposed development site is adjacent to the site of the former Woodford Aerodrome. This site is currently subject to a new development - 'Woodford Garden Village', which will comprise new residential and mixed use built form. The proposed development will not have any direct effect on Woodford Aerodrome landscape character area.

At a local level, this study has assessed the study area as including:

- Low landscape sensitivity over Urban Settlement, Low-Medium Sensitivity for Woodford Aerodrome and Medium Sensitivity for Urban Fringe.
- Low Landscape Value for the Urban Settlement and Woodford Aerodrome and Moderate for the Urban Fringe Farmland.
- Low to Ordinary Landscape Quality.

The change to the study area is considered across all three character areas with the proposal site falling within Area 2 - Urban Fringe Farmland. The effect over this character area is assessed as Moderate reducing to Slight-Moderate through the introduction and maturation of mitigation measures. The other character areas, remote from the proposal site, are assessed as experiencing Slight effects, also reducing over time through the

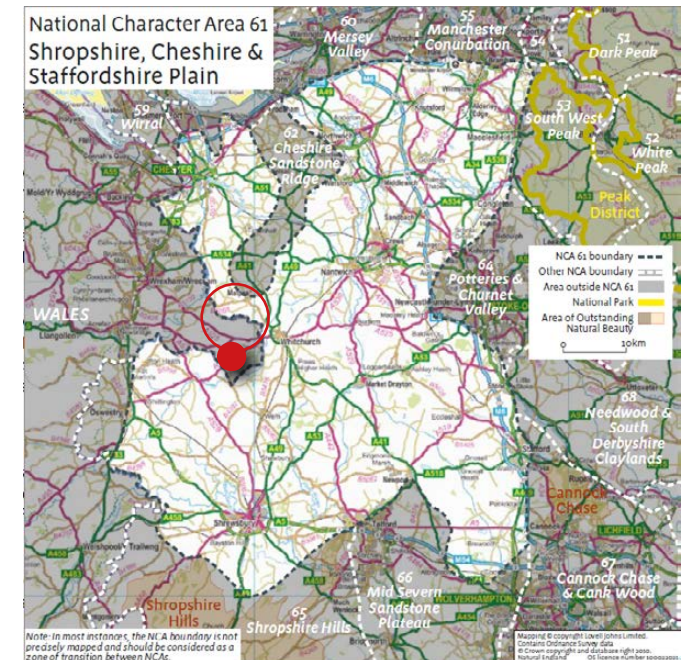


Figure 14 - Extract from National Landscape Character Area Assessment

introduction of mitigation measures.

The character areas are illustrated on the following page.

- 1 Character Area 1 - Urban Settlement
- 2 Character Area 2 - Urban Fringe Farmland
- 3 Character Area 3 - Woodford Aerodrome

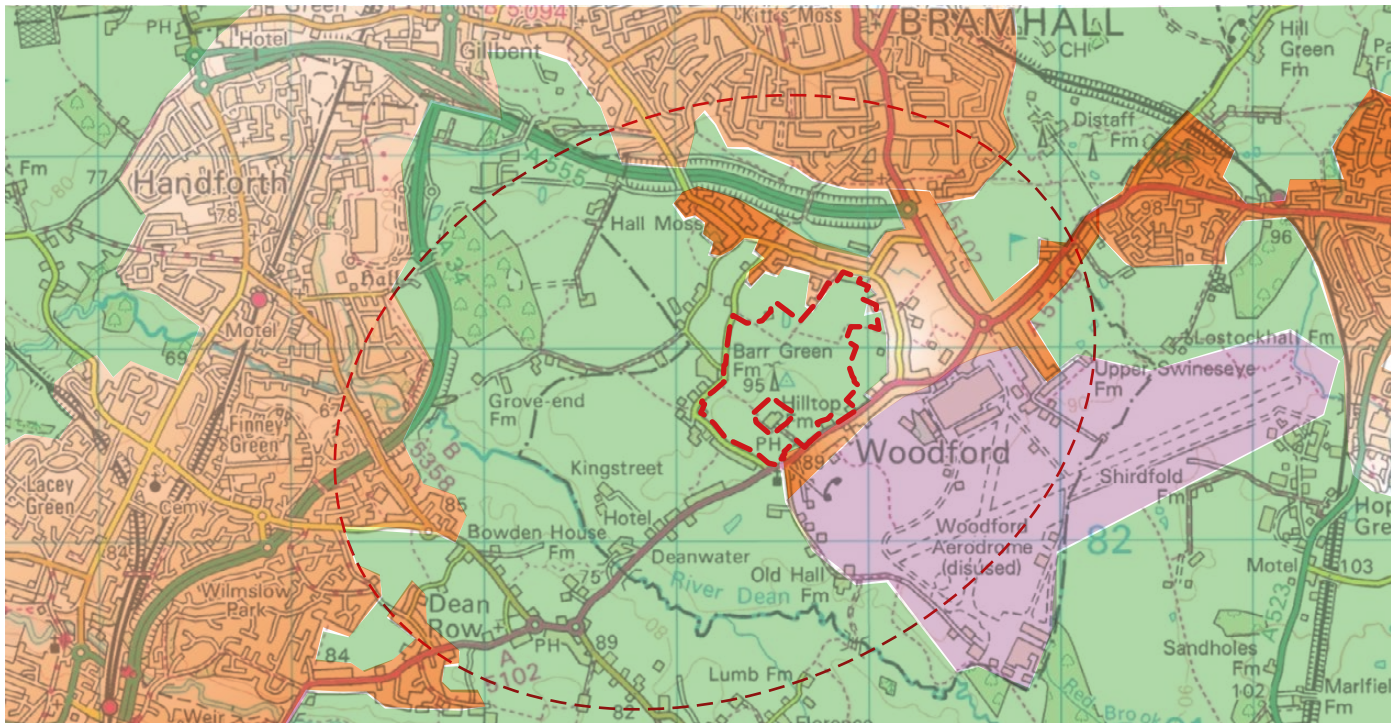


Figure 15 - Local Character Appraisal

Masterplan Prompts

The proposed development should seek to retain and protect those features that are typical of the receiving landscapes such as mature hedgerows and trees. It should also look to ensure that generous landscape buffers are included to the edges of the proposed development, to help integrate the proposed development into both the existing settlement and surrounding rural fringe farmland

Opportunities that promote access to the countryside and links to the existing PROW network and that looks to protect and enhance those features and elements identified as important such as well vegetated boundaries, should be promoted in the layout design.

5.5 Conclusion

The proposed development will introduce new residential buildings, infrastructure and new landscaping within an existing edge of settlement site. The site lies within a series of agricultural fields that border Chester Road, Church Lane and Moor Lane. The site is located within land designated as Green Belt. The site is not subject to any other landscape designations.

Although the development is outside of the limits to development for Woodford, it is considered that while a change in the local landscape character would be noticeable due to the change from agricultural fields to the proposed development, the predicted change would be relatively small due to the limited extent of the views and the proximity of existing housing to the eastern, southern and western boundaries.

It is considered that the landscape mitigation offered would integrate the scheme into the local landscape and the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the landscape character of the area. Views of the development from the wider area are filtered and screened by the intervening buildings and surrounding mature hedgerow and tree boundaries and surrounding curtilage vegetation.

In terms of the impact on neighbouring residents, the location of the development is sufficiently separated from existing dwellings, with generous buffers provided to the edges of the proposed development along all boundaries, and it is considered that the proposed dwellings would be far enough apart to meet any visual privacy requirements. The site has adequate area to meet the amenity of the occupants and it is not considered that the application will have any significant impact upon the privacy and amenity of neighbouring residents.

The generally contained nature of the local landscape means that the proposal site forms only a small part of a wider local and

regional character area. No landscape receptors are assessed as experiencing substantial effects post mitigation. Several visual receptors will experience visual effects above moderate, following mitigation. This reflects the proximity of the receptors (pedestrian and residential), and the change in the view from open agricultural fields to residential development. The nature of the change will begin as adverse but over time this would be expected to become more neutral as the new residential area becomes integrated into the existing patterns of both settlement and landscape.

Wider views to the proposal site are limited by the surrounding landscape, vegetation and generally flat topography. Limited long distance views are available from the surrounding landscape due to the lack of highly elevated topography. The surrounding footpath network, beyond the immediate vicinity of the site, is generally unaffected. Particularly due to the built form and mature hedgerows and trees that surround the site, which restricts local views towards the site. Overall, the key aspects of the viewing experience from the surrounding area will remain unchanged and no loss of quality or value associated with the visual experience of the area are expected to occur as a result of the proposed development.



6.0

6.0 Technical Considerations

6.1 Ecology & Trees

TEP have undertaken a desktop appraisal of the site in relation to ecology and tree constraints. The site comprises pastureland, which is relatively flat in topography to the south and east and raises up in the northwest.

The site is not located within any designated ecological areas. There have been no European Protected Species licence applications issued by Natural England on the site or in the close proximity.

The site is well bound by trees and hedgerows, a number of hedgerows and trees also bisect the site, all of which will be integrated into the layout. There are no Tree Preservation Orders that affect the site, the closest protected trees are to the rear of the public house to the south west of the site.

Further representations will be supported by a Phase 1 Ecological Assessment and a full suite of the protected species surveys which will be undertaken when the survey season opens. Furthermore, all ecological features would be protected by suitable standoff distances and enhancement measures as necessary.

The layout has been designed to provide a link of green spaces for potential amphibians, all trees and hedgerows have been integrated into the layout to facilitate feeding and roosting for bats and birds alike.

Subject to further surveys and the implementation of best practice mitigation measures, it is not considered that any ecological constraints

would prevent the proposed development coming forward.

There is a 'Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat' (Extract from Priority Habitats Inventory) to the north of the site boundary, the proposals will have no adverse impact on these recognised habitats.

Development of the site for housing will not result in significant harm to the natural environment, the land is currently used for agriculture, as such nitrogen based fertilisers and pesticides are employed as part of modern day farming practice – all of which lie on the land and drain into the waterbodies on site.

The proposals include vast swathes of green space, some of which will be managed recreational space for the proposed and existing communities to utilise and others will be left as wild meadows which will be unmanaged and species rich in flora and fauna.

6.2 Ground conditions

Integra has prepared a Summary of Geo-Environmental and Drainage Liabilities Statement and Geo-Environmental Constraints Plan (Appendix #). The key findings regarding ground conditions are summarised here.

Drift Geology

BGS maps show the majority of the site is underlain with glacial till, typically consisting of low permeability sandy, clay with an area to the west underlain by glaciofluvial deposits typically consisting of sand and gravels, which are in turn underlain by the glacial till.

Solid Geology

BGS maps show the majority of the site is underlain with the Wilmslow Sandstone Formation with an area to the west underlain by the Chester Pebble Bed Formation split by a fault.

Site Changes / History

A large sand pit was excavated in the western site section in circa 1930's and was later recorded as a refuse tip from the 1970s and a recorded landfill from 1985 to the early 1990s together with onsite earthworks activities. There are pits and ponds which have existed on site since the early maps and consequently there is a risk of further unrecorded features.

Contamination/Remediation

No widespread remedial measures are foreseen based on the information obtained, however there may be localised sources of contamination associated with the historic landfills and imported material and consequently a 600mm clean cover system may be required across some of the soft landscaping areas / private gardens.

There is a low to moderate ground gas risk across the majority of the site, increasing to a moderate to high ground gas risk associated with the on-site landfills.

Given the identified slopes across the site, a detailed assessment of the risk of slope stability along with an earthworks design is recommended to determine the suitability of the ground for inform in more detail the proposed development. The risk of contamination is low and the underlying aquifers are not considered to be highly sensitive.

6.3 Topography

The site is located within a lowland area of topography. The surrounding topography is generally flat, with a very slight rise towards the north. Although elevated land rises approximately 3.5km to the east and southeast, views towards the site are limited due to distance and intervening vegetation and built form.

The existing vegetated boundaries should be retained with opportunities to develop these further as both visual boundaries and habitats explored.

6.4 Vehicular Access and Potential Off-Site Traffic Impacts

WYG has produced a Preliminary Transport Feasibility Assessment (Appendix C) which is summarised below:

The site is extremely well located with excellent connectivity to the A34 and to Manchester Airport and the M56 to the west and the A6 to the east, arising from the opening of the A6MARR in 2018. The committed Poynton Bypass will further improve the connectivity of the site to the strategic road network including the A523 to Macclesfield.

A preliminary highway site access design has been carried out to demonstrate that a safe and

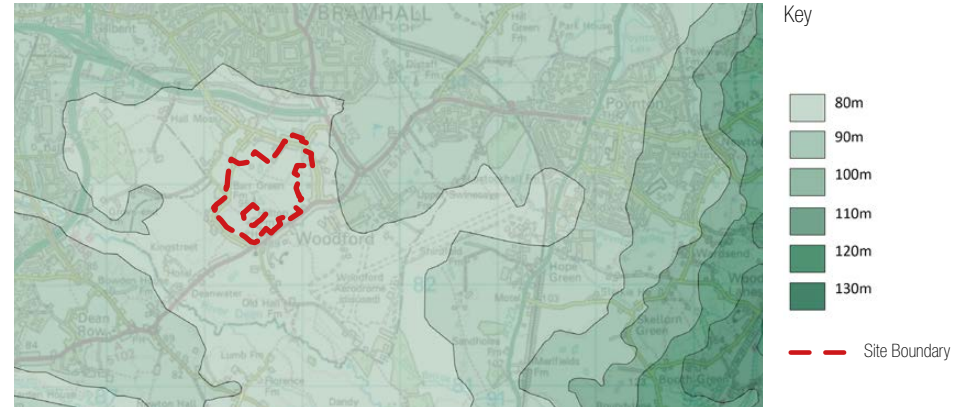


Figure 16 - Topography

suitable vehicular site access strategy can be devised to access the site (see Appendix C).

It is likely that two site access junctions off Chester Road will be required to serve the site. The format of the access junctions will be determined through detailed assessments. However, the preliminary design has confirmed that a number of junction formats are possible, including a signalised junction, a priority junction and a roundabout as shown in fig 17.

In terms of the likely impact of the development on the local highway network, initial indications are that no major off-site junction improvements would be required. The nearest key junction to the site is the Woodford Road/Chester Road roundabout, which is likely to experience the greatest impact from the development traffic. This junction is forecast to benefit from a significant reduction in traffic due to the A6MARR. Notwithstanding this, if the junction requires mitigation, initial indications are that there is scope to improve the junction, within the adopted highway, for example by converting the roundabout into a signalised junction. Overall it is considered that any potential significant or severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network are likely to be capable of suitable mitigation.

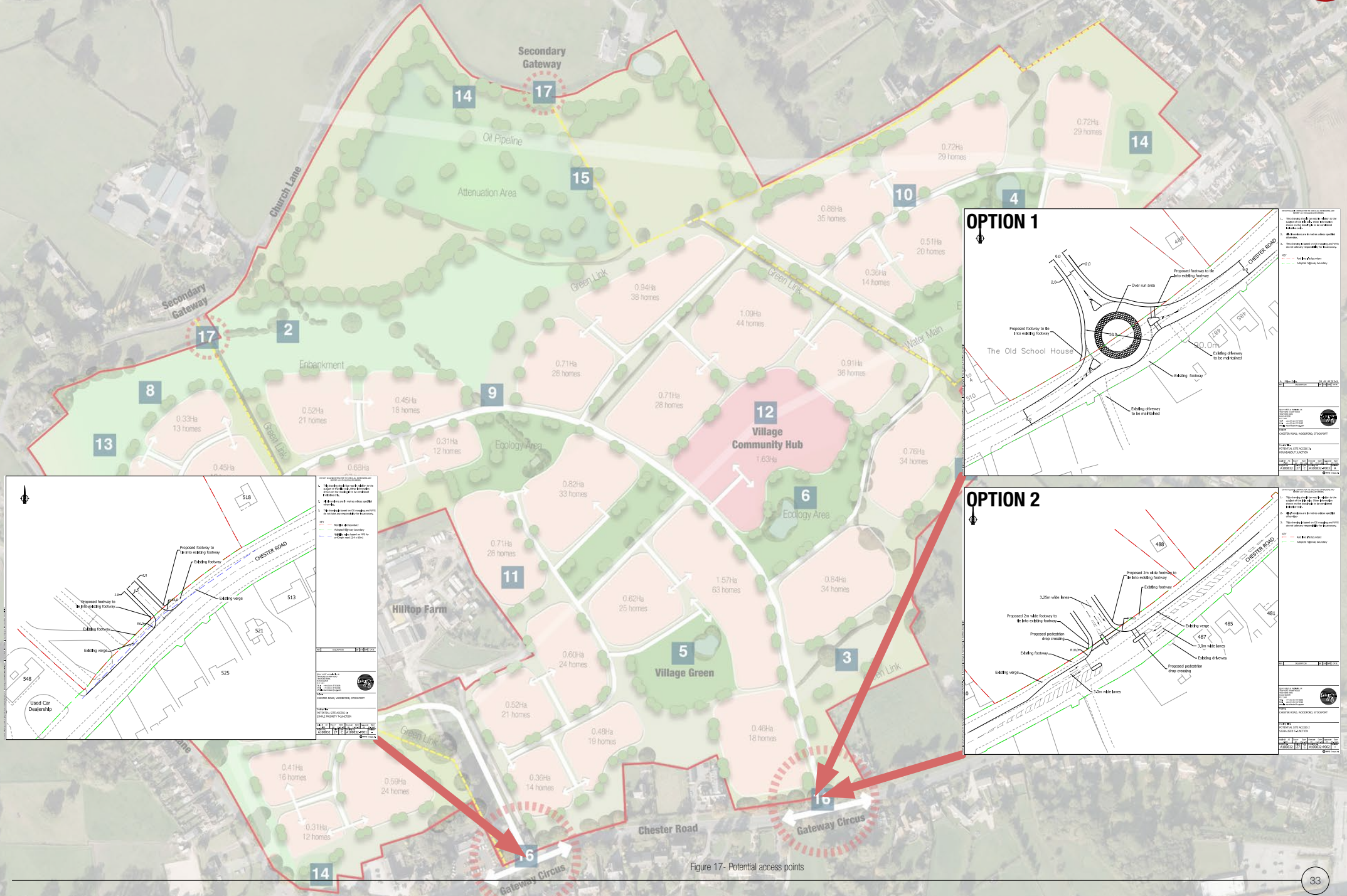


Figure 17- Potential access points

6.5 Flood Risk and Drainage

Integra has prepared a Summary of Geo-Environmental and Drainage Liabilities Statement and Ge-Environmental Constraints Plan (Appendix D). The key findings regarding flood risk and drainage are summarised here.

Flood Risk

The proposal site is within Flood Zone 1. The nearest Flood zone areas are to the south, associated with the River Dean as shown in Fig 18. The Environment Agency Long Term Flood Risk Map shows isolated areas of the site as having a High Risk of surface water flooding. This means that annually the site has a chance of flooding of greater than 3.3%. The maximum depth of flooding modelled on site from surface water is between 300-900mm with no discernible flow, effectively shallow ponding in low points of the site due to the impermeable nature of the superficial geology. This corresponds with ponding observed during a site walkover. The surface water flooding risk will be mitigated in the development by the careful design of development levels and the introduction of a positive drainage scheme, controlling the surface water run-off and protecting both the development and off site receptors from surface water flows in extreme events.

The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 with no risk of flooding in extreme rainfall events. Development is considered appropriate in Table 3 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change guidance given the more vulnerable classification of the residential development.

Drainage Strategy

We have engaged with UU with regards to the drainage and have had positive correspondence. Drainage would be managed on site and potentially in combination with attenuation ponds within landscape areas towards the lower end of the site in the north. Due to the impermeable nature of the glacial till noted on the BGS maps, along with the existing surface water ponding across the site, it is anticipated that infiltration drainage will not be suitable for the site. It is therefore proposed to discharge post development surface water flows to adjacent watercourses and or public sewers (subject to detailed design). Post development surface water flows will be restricted to existing greenfield rates. Surface water attenuation ponds will be used to store storm water on site in extreme rainfall events.

Proposed foul flows are to discharge to the adjacent combined and foul public sewers using a combination of gravity and pumped systems. In line with the above noted design principles, a schematic drainage assessment has been undertaken for the full post-development site.

Foul and Surface Water Discharge

A Pre-Development Enquiry has been lodged with United Utilities by Consultant Engineers in November 2017.

United Utilities were approached to advise on:

- Post-development foul discharge from the site to adopted sewer.
- Post-development surface water discharge to adopted sewer.

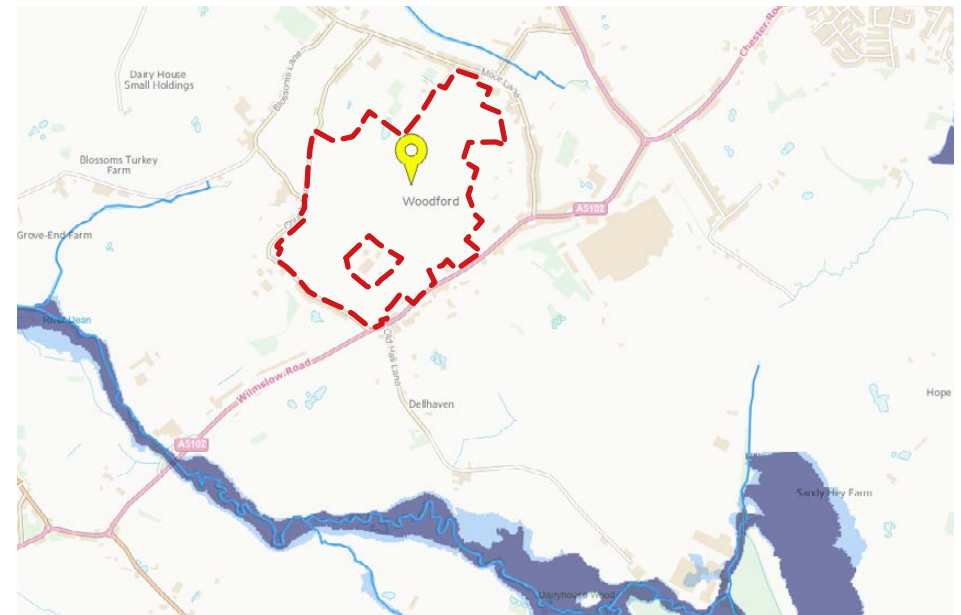


Figure 18 - Extract from Environment Agency Flood Zone Maps

Site Boundary

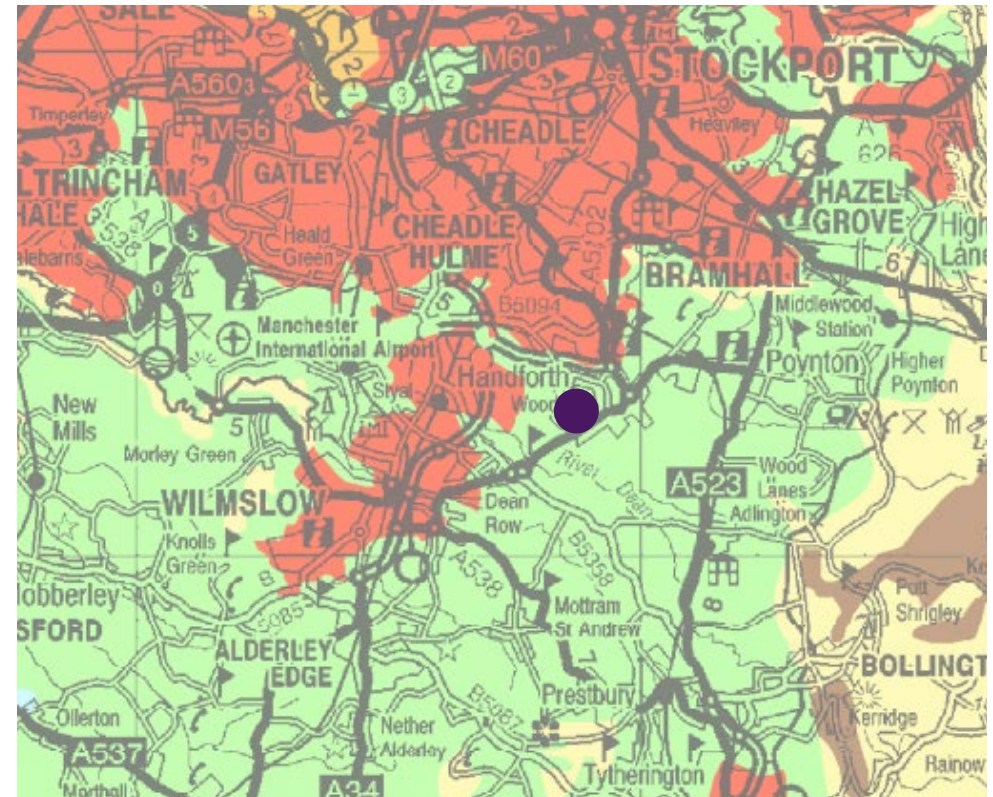
Development Engineers at United Utilities have confirmed that foul water will be able to drain to the public / combined foul sewer network on Chester Road at an unrestricted rate without the requirement for any upgrading or offsite works.

United Utilities have also confirmed that the post development surface water will be permitted to discharge from the site at a rate of 60 litres per second to the adopted network. United Utilities did not identify any further constraints in terms of existing adopted sewer connections points with reference to either foul or surface water site flows.

To conclude United Utilities have confirmed that the site can drain both surface and foul water without the requirement for additional works or third party land.

6.6 Agricultural Land

As shown in Fig 19. The Natural England Regional Land Classification identifies that the site exists on Grade 3 agricultural land which is rated as 'Good to Moderate'. As such, there is no agricultural land of significant value within the site that would prevent it coming forward for development.



● The Site

Grade	Description
1	Excellent
2	Very Good
3	Good to Moderate
4	Poor
5	Very Poor

Figure 19 - Extract from Agricultural Land Classification Map



7.0



The development of this site has been guided by a simple and robust vision, which has evolved through the design process.

This vision is to create a unique design led solution which responds to the needs and characteristics of the area incorporating the following;

- *To develop in the region of 1500 new high quality family homes*
- *To create an attractive local community hub which could include education and health provisions*
- *To provide a high quality sustainable residential neighbourhood which maintains and enhances the key existing landscape features, integrating the site into the wider development area.*
 - *To create a well-informed attractive neighbourhood, not overly dominated by the car.*
- *To provide sensitive and robust solutions to the interfaces between existing and proposed dwellings.*
- *To develop high quality family housing which diversifies the local offer, providing a range of homes.*



7.2 Design Development

A primary route runs through the site on a loop, both entering and exiting from Chester Road (south) at two points.

The primary route is interconnected by secondary routes, which will be slightly smaller residential streets, creating a quieter more pedestrian friendly approach.

Tertiary routes extend from the secondary routes. These will be narrower block paved roads leading to groups of dwellings. The roads will be slower and quieter as there will be limited through traffic. with the emphasis on pedestrian priority.

Attenuation ponds will be located throughout the site with a large area in the northern quarter, where existing ponding is present, and this will become a landscape and ecological feature within the site.

Public open space areas will be overlooked by housing and access routes wherever possible to ensure natural surveillance is a part of the design for these spaces.



Figure 20- Proposed Footpath Layout



Figure 21- Proposed vehicular movement Layout

7.3 Illustrative Landscape Masterplan

The masterplan has been developed around a framework of access and permeability for pedestrians and other users such as cyclists, and a large open amenity landscape network. This network offers multiple benefits to the proposals providing:

- Mitigation planting in the form of trees, woodland and hedgerow providing visual separation and containment for the new development areas;
- Landscape corridors and a linked network within which both the existing public rights of way and new footpath links can run;
- An appropriate setting for both new and proposed ponds and water bodies providing a connected network of landscaped space between these enabling the creation of ecological corridors;
- The creation of a varied and extensive network of open recreational spaces with varied character ranging from open fields and meadows to woodland and treed parkland spaces.

The design seeks to retain the village character of Woodford and be sympathetic to its surroundings. Separation between other development areas outside of Woodford will be maintained and connections to the existing village and proposed new garden village are created through physical road and footpath links.

The density and character of development within the site will be designed to pick up on the local vernacular and appear as an appropriate extension to the new Woodford settlement.



Figure 22- Illustrative Landscape Masterplan

7.4 Character Areas

The masterplan layout has naturally divided into distinct character areas which work together to create a cohesive development that fits in well with the village of Woodford.

A combination of existing trees and hedgerow boundaries form a natural separation within the layout forming distinct areas within the plan. This is further enhanced by the substantial proposed landscaping and tree planting proposed throughout the layout and designed to form a landscaped framework within which the residential areas of development sit.

Tying these areas together are a hierarchy of road networks beginning with a primary spine road that runs through the site on a loop, entering and exiting from Chester Road to the south. Off this the development areas are serviced via a network of interconnected secondary routes. A further layer of tertiary routes provide direct access to properties along narrower roads with pedestrian priority.

A comprehensive network of new footpaths run throughout the site providing: direct access for residents to the existing PROW network to the east, north and west; access to and through the proposed landscaped amenity areas within the layout including children's play areas; a circular route around the site; and links to the existing settlement and services to the east and south (Moor Lane and Chester Road).

Both the architectural detailing of the buildings and the approach to landscaping will be designed to create distinct character areas within the development and provide a degree of orientation and place making. Junctions and node points will be designed to provide a visual and physical focus around which feature buildings can be set.



Figure 23- Illustrative Character Masterplan



Public Open Space / Ecology Areas

Throughout the centre of the development are a series of areas of public open space that are based on existing ecological areas of wet ground or ponds. These areas will include children's play where appropriate. The parks will be accessible via the footpath network and overlooked by both road connections and surrounding properties.

The children's play areas may include formal (equipment) and informal play. Other opportunities for play and recreation will be possible throughout the landscape amenity areas provided within the layout.

These spaces also include an area identified as a village green, which would be slightly more formal in nature, and publicly accessible. Being located adjacent to residential housing and the proposed village community hub, it is ideally situated for community use.

An area to the north of the site, which is intended as an attenuation area, is included within the POS/Ecology area character type. This space will also be publicly accessible, with naturalistic planted areas throughout. The attenuation area itself will have a shallow grade, enabling maximum publicly accessible areas throughout the seasons.

View 1





Green Links

The entrance to the development off Chester Road will be tree lined with green links running throughout the proposed development enabling access along existing footpath routes to the north, east, south and west of the site, and connecting to secondary routeways created by new footpath routes.

The routes will be also tree lined with a generous width allowing for the provision of pedestrian footways and space for landscaping and tree growth.

View 2





Natural Green Space

To the edges of the development, generous buffer areas have been proposed, through which footpath routes are located, forming a circular route around the whole development site and connections out to the wider countryside and other parts of the village.

These green spaces will be generally naturalised, with numerous opportunities to provide areas of rest, play and enjoyment of the naturalised spaces.

Opportunities for play and recreation will be possible throughout these landscaped areas.

They will be accessible for those residing within the site, and also accessible to adjacent residents and footpath users. The naturalised character of these spaces will provide opportunities for education relating to flora and fauna, with the potential for information boards to reflect the surrounding landscape.

View 3





Woodland

To the west of the proposal site the residential development faces onto a new area of landscape designed as a buffer between the existing site boundary and the proposed housing. This linear park space will include a new footpath through it and new woodland planting to provide additional screening and a woodland setting and character for this part of the development.

Recreational opportunities including informal play such as trim trails, will be located throughout the woodland, adjacent to the proposed footpath routes.

The woodland belt will also form an additional string of defensible boundary to the remaining Green Belt gap to the west.

View 4





7.5 Masterplan Development and Design Objectives

Through the NPPF the Government is committed to delivering sustainable development and encourages local planning authorities to promote economic development to improve the well-being of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development and create new opportunities for people living in those communities.

This masterplan has been prepared in accordance with the following development and Urban Design objectives that accord with the principles that are in Draft GMSF Policy OA20.

7.6 Development Objectives

1. To create an attractive walk-able residential neighbourhood using design guidance set out in Manual for Streets.(OA20.6)
2. To create an attractive green gateway to the development, linking with the surrounding land uses. (OA20.8, OA20.10, OA20.11)
3. To create a sense of place which includes character areas with reference to the local architectural language.(OA20.7)
4. To provide a mix of dwelling types that will satisfy local need and enhance the profile of the area as a whole.(OA20.1, OA20.2, OA20.3)
5. To provide a local centre to act as a focus for and to provide services for both the development and the wider area.(OA20.13)
6. To provide sensitive and robust solutions to the interfaces between existing and proposed buildings/uses including a significant landscape buffer to the western boundary. (OA20.5, OA20.11, OA20.12)
7. To provide new and improved existing pedestrian links. (OA20.6)
8. To create a well-informed attractive neighbourhood, not dominated by the car and improve public transport provision. (OA20.6)

7.7 Urban Design Objectives

1. To create sustainable patterns of development which exploit and improve accessibility to public transport.
2. Encourage good design that will create places with distinctive character, pleasant to use and human in scale & to make efficient use of available land.
3. Promote character by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape.
4. Promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public spaces.
5. Promote accessibility and local permeability by creating routes that are attractive, safe and work effectively for all users.
6. Promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, gateways and focal points.
7. Promote diversity and choice through a range of housing typologies.

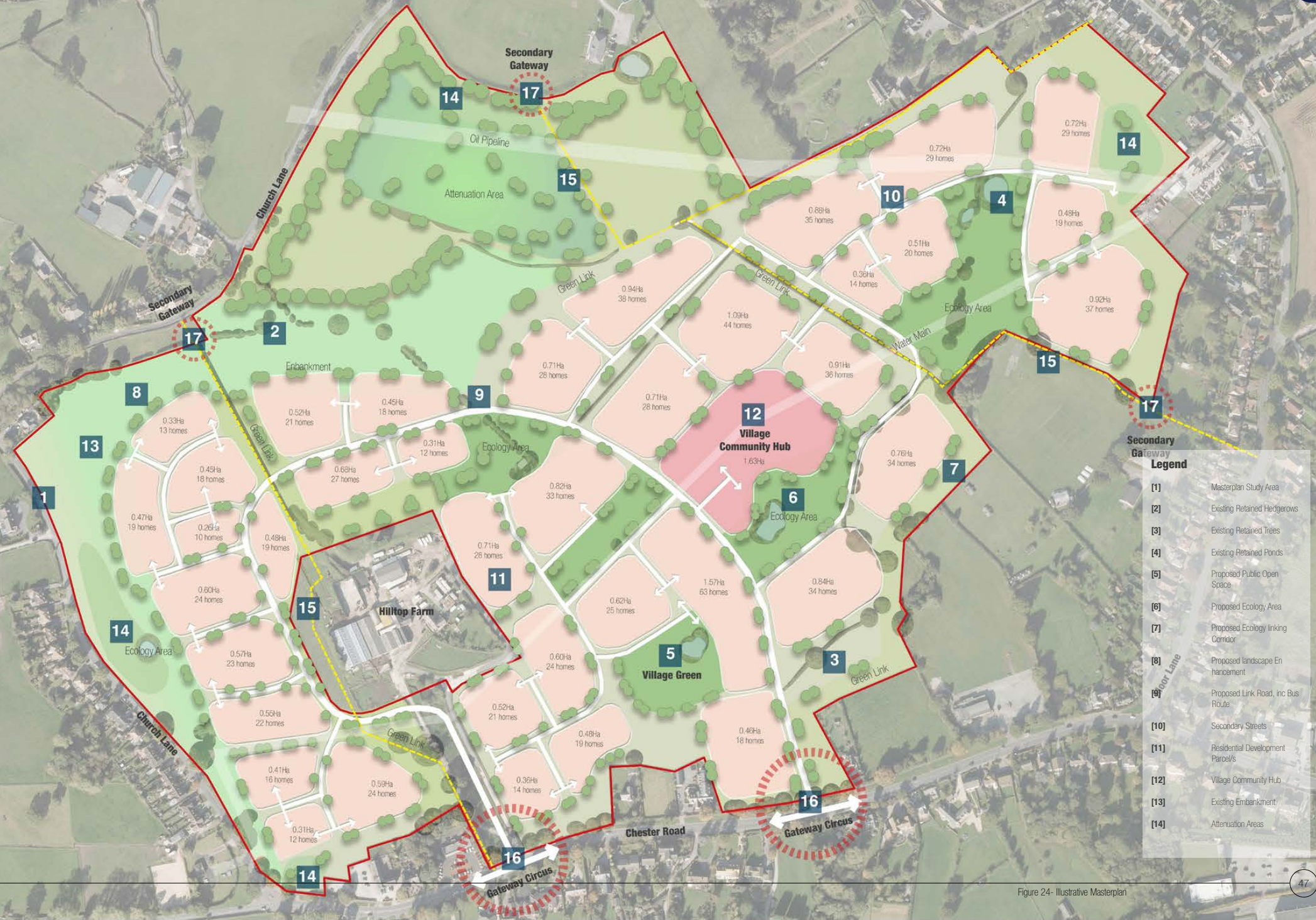


Figure 24- Illustrative Masterplan



8.0

8.0 Key benefits

The allocation of strategic scale sites such as Land at Hilltop Farm Woodford provides the opportunity for a range of housing types and tenures to be accommodated on site at a density and character that can respond to specific the needs of the area.

There are acute affordability issues in Stockport, meaning that many residents are not able to access housing in the area. Locating new market and affordable housing supply in the area will be crucial to addressing the issue and the site presents a logical sustainable extension to the village of Woodford.

The allocation of the site would provide a scale of development that can support the opportunity to provide a range of new facilities and services to augment provision at Woodford Garden Village and meet the needs of planned new residents to the benefit of those already existing in the area. The exact type and mix of uses would be determined through discussions with Stockport Council, the local community and other interested parties.

The site is well contained by the existing roads and adjoining settlement along these roads, providing the opportunity to extend the village of Woodford without breaching the extent of the existing development limits and maintaining the gap with Handforth to the west.

The development could also significantly enhance the public transport provision through a range of measures to be agreed but could indicate an extended bus service, a rapid bus

service and improvements to bus stops and cycle facilities in nearby stations.

The supporting technical documents have demonstrated that the site has no constraints that prevent its delivery and have identified the defining factors and principles that have been incorporated into the masterplan. The illustrated masterplan shows how the site can deliver a well planned, rich and quality development that sensitively integrates with the existing character and landscape of Woodford. This exercise has robustly demonstrated that the site is capable of providing minimum of 1000 houses set around a new community hub.



9.0

9.0 Conclusions

At circa 50 hectares the Land at Hill Top Farm site forms a significant part of the proposed Woodford Opportunity Area allocation. The site is suitable, deliverable and available with willing and motivated landowners who are committed to bringing forward development on the site.

The proposal site offers an excellent location for further expansion of housing development to the south of Manchester with a site that is well connected to the existing network and services of the area; that is well contained within the landscape; and a site that can relate well to the proposed neighbouring development to the south and its location within the Green Belt.

The site is capable of providing a minimum of 1000 houses set within a new neighbourhood that responds to the urban fringe location and focuses around a new community hub that could provide a range of new facilities and services to Woodford.

The document has robustly demonstrated that there are no technical constraints and the development will result in significant benefits to the area of Woodford, Stockport and Greater Manchester as a whole.

Park Land and Securities would be willing to work jointly with the Council to build on the masterplan prepared for this Development Statement to develop a detailed masterplan to provide planning guidance for the development of the site to inform the detailed development of an allocation at the site.

Appendix A	The Masterplan
Appendix B	LVIA
Appendix C	Transport
Appendix D	Engineering

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