



Warrington Borough Council
Local Development Framework

Core Strategy Housing Requirement Paper
November 2010



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1 Introduction

1.1 This document is concerned with the quantity of land for housing development to be provided in the borough over the period up to 2026. It follows the Coalition Governments stated intention to abolish the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and sets out options for the future provision of land in the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy based on local evidence.

1.2 Whilst this paper focuses solely on housing, it should be read in conjunction with work produced on the Core Strategy to date. This includes the

- Borough Portrait (September 2007)
- Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper (February 2009)
 - Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Report (September 2009)
- Core Strategy Refined Vision Consultation (January 2010)
 - Core Strategy Refined Vision Consultation Report (July 2010)
- Refined Objectives and Options Report (July 2010)
 - Refined Objectives and Options Consultation Report (Nov 2010)

1.3 A similar paper, which is concerned with the quantity of land for employment to be provided in the Borough over the period to 2026, has also been produced. This paper is available from the Councils website⁽¹⁾ and should be read alongside this housing paper. Representations are welcomed on both papers.

The intention of this paper is to facilitate a debate with stakeholders about which Core Strategy Option, from a housing perspective, appears the most appropriate way forward for the Borough. Comments are therefore specifically being welcomed on

- **Whether all appropriate evidence has been identified;**
- **Whether this evidence has been interpreted correctly;**
- **Whether there is agreement for the three core assumptions / premises underpinning the options; and**
- **Which of the Strategy Options represents the best way forward.**

Interested parties have until 17.00 on Friday 17th December to submit comments. For further details on how to make a representation please see section 6 of this report, titled 'Consultation Arrangements'.

1 http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/ldf_latest_news/

2 Context

2.1 To date, Warrington's housing requirement has been determined by the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) process, and Regional Planning Guidance 13 (RPG13) formed the strategic base for the adoption of the Warrington Unitary Development Plan (UDP) in January 2006. This provided for a housing requirement of 380 dwellings per annum between 2003 and 2016.

2.2 The strategic framework of RPG13 directly led to the definition, for the first time, of detailed Green Belt boundaries throughout Warrington and brought about the refocusing of growth in Warrington from the continued outward expansion of the town, and intense development pressure on the edge of villages, to the regeneration of the town centre and older areas of the town.

2.3 This effectively completed the circle, as the origins of defining Warrington as a regional growth point and a priority for public investment through the New Towns programme can be traced to the Regional Strategy of the time.

2.4 In contrast to the situation in other regions, where RSS housing requirements have proved very contentious, controversial and unpopular, RSS for the North West was widely supported by LPAs and delivered what they asked for.

2.5 In Warrington specifically, UDP preparation moved from attracting tens of thousands of local objections to several areas of Safeguarded Land necessitated by assumptions that housing growth would continue at previous New Town rates, to the withdrawal of those objections and widespread support for the adoption of tight Green Belt boundaries around the edge of existing built-up areas following the issue of up-to-date guidance in RPG13 and a reduced housing requirement.

2.6 Work on the Core Strategy has to date set out a clear intention to protect the Borough's Green Belt over the entirety of the 15 year plan period. The detailed Green Belt was first established in 2006 and was to endure for 'as long as can be seen ahead', at least until 2026. The current vision for the Core Strategy, which has evolved over a series of consultations, identifies that

"The borough's Green Belt continues to define the limits of growth of the built up areas. The extent of the Green Belt is largely unaltered and any local alterations that have occurred have been fully justified"

2.7 With regards to the 'Countryside and its Constituent Settlements' building block, the vision makes reference to "a secure, long-term Green Belt" which "has ensured that settlements have not encroached onto open countryside".

2.8 At the national level, the Government state in their Coalition Agreement that they will publish and present to Parliament a simple and consolidated national planning framework covering all forms of development - announcements of which will be made in due course. However, the agreement also undertakes to ensure that the protection of Green Belt by local planning authorities is maintained, with the rapid abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies and their respective housing targets, which created top-down pressure to review Green Belt boundaries, in some areas serving to demonstrate this commitment.

2.9 Given this clear policy steer at the local and national level, it is not considered expedient to include a source of supply from Green Belt sites within the assessments set out in this paper. In any event the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) has not quantified such potential because assessment against previous targets has indicated that housing needs can be met from sites within existing settlements or the development opportunities afforded by sites outwith the Green Belt - an approach which has been endorsed by stakeholders in both the 2009 and draft 2010 SHLAA.

Core Assumption 1

No change to the Green Belt boundary over the plan period.

3 Intended abolition of RSS and Warrington's Baseline Housing Requirement

3.1 The Coalition Government intend to abolish all Regional Spatial Strategies. They will therefore play no part in a new system of 'open source planning' that it intends to introduce by the end of 2012.

3.2 From now on, local housing requirements will be set locally, by each individual LPA, in collaboration with adjoining Councils and the local community. LPAs are required to achieve this through completing work on their Core Strategies until the new planning system is in place.

3.3 The government has issued a Q&A document as transitional guidance. As regards housing numbers it gives the following advice:

Who will determine housing numbers in the absence of Regional Strategy targets?

Local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area, and identifying a long term supply of housing land without the burden of regional housing targets. Some authorities may decide to retain their existing housing targets that were set out in the revoked Regional Strategies. Others may decide to review their housing targets. We would expect that those authorities should quickly signal their intention to undertake an early review so that communities and land owners know where they stand.

Will we still need to justify the housing numbers in our plans?

Yes – it is important for the planning process to be transparent, and for people to be able to understand why decisions have been taken. Local authorities should continue to collect and use reliable information to justify their housing supply policies and defend them during the LDF examination process. They should do this in line with current policy in PPS3.

Can I replace Regional Strategy targets with “option 1 numbers”?

Yes, if that is the right thing to do for your area. Authorities may base revised housing targets on the level of provision submitted to the original Regional Spatial Strategy examination (Option 1 targets), supplemented by more recent information as appropriate. These figures are based on assessments undertaken by local authorities. However, any target selected may be tested during the examination process especially if challenged and authorities will need to be ready to defend them.

Do we still have to provide a 5 year land supply?

Yes. Although the overall ambition for housing growth may change, authorities should continue to identify enough viable land in their DPDs to meet that growth. Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments can help with this. Local planning authorities should continue to use their plans to identify sufficient sites and broad areas for development to deliver their housing ambitions for at least 15 years from the date the plan is adopted. Authorities should also have a five year land supply of deliverable sites. This too will need to reflect any changes to the overall local housing ambition.

3.4 The Conservative's Open Source Planning Green Paper offers further advice:

On the question of projected housing numbers, local planning authorities have already projected the number of houses they (as opposed to the regional authorities) believed would be necessary by 2026 for local needs – the so-called Option 1 numbers – and where they might most sustainably be developed. Unfortunately the present Government refused to believe that local authorities were capable of accurately gauging future local housing demand and, in many cases, interposed to impose significantly higher housing targets. We believe that the original, locally generated estimates are a reasonable assessment of housing need, including affordable housing. We therefore expect that these Option 1 numbers will be used by local authorities as the base-line

for the projections that they provide to neighbourhoods at the start of the collaborative planning process, and will be used as provisional housing numbers in their Local Development Frameworks until their new local plans are completed.

3.5 In Warrington the RSS requirement and the 'Option 1 number' are the same thing. The same is true for most if not all other north-west LPAs and this emphasises the collaborative nature of RSS for the North West. It is not open to the criticism that it included 'imposed central targets'. Irrespective of the abandonment of RSS, this requirement is enshrined in the Saved policies of the adopted UDP which continues to carry full weight. The aforementioned Q&A document makes this clear:

How does this affect adopted local plans / LDFs?

Adopted DPDs and saved policies will continue to provide the statutory planning framework.

In light of Coalition Government advice, the baseline housing requirement for Warrington is therefore evidently 380 dwellings per annum.

Given the extent of support across the region not only for the individual housing requirements, but also for the definition of regional priorities as the basis for distributing the housing requirement throughout the region, the regional and sub-regional distribution pattern established in RSS is also taken as part of the baseline for moving forward. A considerable number of other LPAs in the North West are also understood to be adopting this approach, and there is no reason to do otherwise.

Core Assumption 2

The regional distribution established in the Regional Spatial Strategy has been maintained.

4 More Recent Information / Evidence

4.1 The next question is how the baseline housing requirement can be supplemented by more recent information. The following factors need to be considered:

- The Mid Mersey Growth Point agenda;
- The RSS and RS2010 evidence base, including Panel Reports;
- The Warrington Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA);
- The Warrington Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA); and
- Infrastructure planning, including transport capacity.

4.2 PPS3 of course provides the primary point of reference for planning for housing, and paragraphs 32-33 sets out the matters to be taken into account in setting housing requirements. In addition to the SHMA, SHLAA, and Infrastructure issues referred to above, PPS3 makes reference to:

- Advice from the National Housing & Planning Advisory Unit⁽²⁾(NHPAU);
- The latest published household projections and the needs of the local economy, with regard to economic growth forecasts;
- The governments ambitions for affordable housing; and
- Sustainability appraisal.

4.3 PPS3 also requires ‘a strategic, evidence based approach that takes account of relevant local, sub-regional and national policies and strategies, achieved through widespread collaboration with stakeholders.’

The Mid Mersey Growth Point agenda

4.4 The Growth Point Programme was an initiative by the previous government to boost housing delivery by a factor of 20% above the RSS requirement over the period 2008-2017, supported by additional finance. Warrington, Halton and St Helens successfully established the Mid Mersey Growth Point under this programme⁽³⁾. For Warrington, this involves lifting the number of housing completions to 456 per annum over that period. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review the Coalition Government have announced that continued funding of the programme will have to be sought, in the form of bidding, from the Regional Growth Fund for which the Government have indicated Local Enterprise Partnerships will be the preferred bidders. Given housing is only one of a number of areas which the fund will cover, the scope of the fund is wide, continuation of the Programme within Mid Mersey is currently uncertain.

4.5 An option for the Core Strategy is to adopt this level of housing growth over the entire plan period. **This would give an annual average requirement of 456 dwellings per annum over the period 2006-2026.**

The RSS and RS2010 Evidence Base

4.6 A number of projections were carried out for the preparation of the Single Regional Strategy, prior to its abandonment. These form part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. Applying these projections to Warrington, using the established RSS regional distribution, gives the following numbers.

1. Based on ONS household growth forecasts (March 2010) 2006-2030 **gives an Annual Average requirement for Warrington of 480 dwellings**
2. For the same period, and based on the latest NHPAU advice **gives an Annual Average requirement for Warrington of 434 dwellings (lower range) and 492 (upper range)**

4.7 These projections have been made available alongside this document as supporting information.

² It was announced in June 2010 that the NHPAU is to close as part of the Government's plans to rationalise the number of advisory bodies and save costs. Access to their publications will however continue through CLG web pages.

³ further information on the Mid-Mersey programme is available from <http://www.mid-mersey.org.uk/>

Economic Growth Considerations

4.8 In April 2010, a draft sub-regional strategy for Cheshire & Warrington (Unleashing the Potential⁽⁴⁾) was published by the Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Commission with the buy-in of the three local authorities. Its purpose was to inform preparation of the Single Regional Strategy for the North West. It sets out the sub-region's aspirations for economic growth over the period between 2010 and 2030, and is interpreted as requiring the construction of an additional 71,000 dwellings in order to support economic growth. For the 2006-2030 period this equates to a sub-regional requirement of 85,410. Using the current RSS distribution, this produces **an Annual Average requirement for Warrington of 475 dwellings.**

4.9 Importantly the sub-regional strategy was also used as the basis upon which a bid was made by the existing sub-regional enterprise partnership to become one of the Governments new Local Enterprise Partnerships. Population and household growth was a core component of this bid which was subsequently given the green light by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills on the 28th October 2010.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

4.10 Warrington's initial Strategic Housing Market Assessment⁽⁵⁾ (SHMA) was completed in 2007. In order to assess the local housing market impacts of the subsequent financial and economic crisis, a review was carried out in 2009. The original SHMA made a number of assessments of future housing demand to 2021, the results of which (expressed as annualised figures) were:

- A Balanced Housing Market Assessment resulted in a figure of **1,313 dwellings p.a.** This assessment looked at the imbalance between supply and demand if the market was totally unconstrained by policy and local considerations, assuming all demand should be met. The Assessment took no account of future additions to the stock from new-build.
- An assessment of the annual net change in household numbers using the survey information produced a figure of **999 dwellings p.a.**
- An assessment based on the 2006 based DCLG household projections gave a figure of **730 dwellings p.a.**

4.11 These assessments took no account of the established pattern of distribution across the North West or in the sub-region. The BHM and trend assessments, in retrospect, were also undertaken at a time when the housing market was performing at an unsustainably high level that was to lead to financial crisis and the collapse of the market.

4.12 This notable change in market conditions led to a Review of the SHMA in 2009. As regards the Balanced Housing Market Assessment, it reported that the decline in the number of household moves taking place subsequent to the market downturn meant that it was no longer appropriate to assess the scale of housing demand in this way. The focus of the Review was housing needs assessment (affordability).

4 Available from <http://www.cwea.org.uk/unleashing-potential-cheshire-and-warrington>

5 Available from http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/ldf_evidence_base/

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

4.13 Warrington's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is the primary evidence base and monitoring report for all aspects of the Borough's housing land supply, the mechanism to identify and monitor current and future housing land availability that is updated each year.

4.14 Its primary role is to:

- Identify sites with potential for housing,
- Assess their suitability for housing,
- Identify any constraints to development, and
- Conclude whether suitable sites are deliverable and available for allocation if needed.

4.15 The 2010 draft SHLAA was issued for public consultation in October 2010. The draft report can be accessed from the Council's online consultation portal⁽⁶⁾. The 2010 SHLAA will be published in its final form in December 2010.

4.16 This information has been used to inform an assessment of the capacity of each of the previously identified three Strategy Options to deliver housing development over the plan period. The three strategy options for consideration are as follows:

1. **Prioritising development on inner Warrington brownfield sites**
2. **Prioritising development on inner Warrington brownfield sites with selective release of other sites**
3. **Promoting development on all suitable and available development sites**

4.17 The Strategy Options are set out in more detail in the Issues & Options consultation report of February 2009, subject to the amendments relating to Peel Hall Farm, Lymm and Culcheth reported in the Core Strategy Refined Objectives & Options report (paragraph 1.14) of July 2010.

4.18 Summary information from the assessment exercise is shown in Table 1. These findings can then be related to the different levels of need as variously reported within the preceding chapters of this paper, with a view to evaluating which option is the most appropriate way forward for the borough. It should be noted that the annualised averages set out under each of the options in table 1 are based on projected supply from 2010 to 2026. Importantly these figures take no account of the substantial historic oversupply from the previous RSS plan period of 2003 - 2021 i.e. the figures set out have not been adjusted to reflect that which has already been delivered. Within this period to 2010, 6,754 dwellings were completed, giving an average annual rate of delivery of 965. This exceeded the plan requirement by 4,095 dwellings which if carried forward into the Core Strategy period would equate to an additional committed supply of 256 units per annum within each of the options. No allowance has been made for demolitions or losses resulting from a change of use because historically these rates have been very low⁽⁷⁾. Importantly there are no planned clearances within the Borough envisaged during the Core Strategy period.

4.19 Further information on the assessment exercise, including the three individual assessments themselves, is included as appendix one to this paper. A series of maps which illustrate the spatial implications of the various options have also been produced as have detailed schedules itemising the sites considered in each option. Each of these is available separately as accompanying supporting documents / files.

Core Assumption 3

No carry-forward of oversupply from 2003 - 2021, RSS period 'over performance'

6 <http://warrington.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

7 Average rate between 2002-10 of 24 dwellings per annum as set out in the Council's draft 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

		Option 1			Option 2			Option 3		
		Plan Period Total	Annualised Average	Annualised Average inclusive of carry forward	Plan Period Total	Annualised Average	Annualised Average inclusive of carry forward	Plan Period Total	Annualised Average	Annualised Average inclusive of carry forward
a.	Base Position	4,388	274	530	4,388	274	530	5,384	337	593
b.	Base position + capacity from Warrington suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth	n/a	n/a	n/a	5,148	322	578	n/a	n/a	n/a
c.	(a+b) + capacity from 1 Strategic Site	n/a	n/a	n/a	5,913	370	626	6,149	384	640
d.	(a+b) + capacity from 2 Strategic Sites	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,678	417	673	6,914	432	688
e.	(a+b) + capacity from 3 Strategic Sites	n/a	n/a	n/a	7,443	465	721	7,679	480	736
f.	(a+b) + capacity from Strategic Sites (if relevant to option) + Suitable but constrained capacity	5,911	369	625	9,687	605	861	10,103	631	887
g.	Post 2026 Residual	7,141	n/a	n/a	3,365	n/a	n/a	2,949	n/a	n/a
	Total (f + g)	13,052	n/a	n/a	13,052	n/a	n/a	13,052	n/a	n/a

Table 1 - Summary of Findings from SHLAA Strategy Option Assessment

Table 1 Explanatory Notes
Row a. sets out the base position for each of the options i.e. the quantum of new housing from deliverable / developable sites which are located within the spatial priorities afforded by the option.
Row b. sets out, for the purposes of option 2, the baseline position (row a.) plus the potential supply from releasing sites in Warrington Suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth. It should be noted that the option 3 base position already includes Warrington Suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth
Row c. sets out, for the purposes of options 2 and 3, the baseline position (and for option 2 the baseline plus supply from Warrington suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth villages) plus the potential supply from releasing one Strategic Site.
Row d. sets out for the purposes of options 2 and 3, the baseline position (and for option 2 the baseline plus supply from Warrington suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth villages) plus the potential supply from releasing two Strategic Sites.
Row e. sets out for the purposes of options 2 and 3, the baseline position (and for option 2 the baseline plus supply from Warrington suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth villages) plus the potential supply from releasing three Strategic Sites.
Row f. sets out the the baseline position (and for option 2 the baseline plus supply from Warrington suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth villages) plus the potential supply from releasing three Strategic Sites (in options 2 and 3) plus the potential supply from sites deemed suitable but currently constrained which are located within the spatial priorities afforded by the option.
Row g. Sets out the residual supply that would be available post 2026 assuming the quantum of development set out in row f. for each of the options was delivered within the plan period.
The total shown (rows f. + g.) as the final row of the table equates to 13,052 for all options - representing the overall capacity of currently identified sites with potential to accommodate housing within the Borough.

5 Next Steps

5.1 The intention of this paper is to facilitate a debate with stakeholders about which Core Strategy Option appears the most appropriate way forward for the Borough. When the consultation on this paper ends, the Council will consider the evidence presented within alongside responses to the consultation to help identify a preferred option for inclusion within a draft publication of the Core Strategy. It must be recognised however that in reaching a preferred option the following will also have to be taken into account:

- Reviewing how the options support the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy;
 - The Sustainable Community Strategy was published in its final form in March 2009.
- Considering how well the options address the key issues identified at the outset of the Core Strategy process;
- Measuring the options against what our vision is for Warrington in the future and associated objectives;
 - The vision and objectives are set out in previous reports.
- Assessing their environmental, social and economic impacts through Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.
 - This will ensure that the implications of each option are considered from a social, environmental and economic perspective, by assessing options against baseline evidence and sustainability objectives. More information is set out in the remainder of this section.
- Assessing the ability of Infrastructure to cope with the options, and the capacity of the different options to deliver infrastructure improvements;
 - Infrastructure planning is now a key element of the new planning system and must be addressed in the core strategy. More information is set out below.
- Considering their impacts on Neighbourhoods
 - This will facilitate engagement with local communities through the Neighbourhood Boards.
- Assessing their conformity with national policies, and impacts on neighbouring areas

5.2 The Council intends to publish a draft Core Strategy in Spring of 2011, within which it is envisaged a preferred rate of future housing growth will be set out. At this time the Council will undertake a six week period of statutory consultation. Prior to this however the Council intend to consult on the emerging work on an informal basis through a process of continuous engagement with key stakeholders.

6 Consultation Arrangements

6.1 The intention of this paper is to facilitate a debate with stakeholders about which Core Strategy Option, from a housing perspective, appears the most appropriate way forward for the Borough. Comments are therefore specifically being welcomed on the below questions:

Question 1

Has all relevant 'more recent information / evidence' been identified?

Question 2

Has all identified 'more recent information / evidence' been interpreted correctly?

Question 3

Do you agree with the three core assumptions / premises underpinning the options? i.e. that

1. **There will be no change to the Green Belt boundary over the plan period**
2. **The regional distribution established in the Regional Spatial Strategy should be maintained**
3. **No carry-forward of oversupply from 2003 - 2021, RSS period 'over performance'**

Question 4

Which of the Strategy Options represents the best way forward?

6.2 Interested parties have until 17.00 on Friday 17th December to submit comments on this paper. The preferred method of consultation is for comments to be submitted electronically online using the Council's online consultation portal which can be accessed via the following URL:

<http://warrington-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning>

6.3 Alternatively the Development Plans team can be contacted at the below postal address;

Development Plans Team, Environment and Regeneration, New Town House (ground floor), Buttermarket Street, Warrington, WA1 2NH

6.4 Or via email at: ldf@warrington.gov.uk

Further information on any aspect of this topic paper or the LDF can be obtained by contacting the Development Plans team on 01925 442795.

Appendix One - Capacity Assessment of Strategy Options

This appendix documents the approach taken and findings from an exploration of the quantum of new homes which could be delivered through each of the Council's Strategy Options. These are as follows

1. Option 1 – prioritising development on Inner Warrington brownfield sites
2. Option 2 – prioritising development on Inner Warrington brownfield sites with the selective release of other sites
3. Option 3 – promoting development on all suitable and available development sites

Further details on these Strategy Options are set out in the Council's 'Issues and Options' consultation paper which was published in February 2009, subject to a series of amendments relating to Peel Hall Farm, Lymm and Culcheth reported in the Core Strategy Refined Objectives & Options report (paragraph 1.14) of July 2010.

The Borough's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) aims to quantify the potential housing capacity within the Borough i.e. the total number of new homes that could be built on suitable and available sites within the 15 year plan period. The SHLAA is produced by Council officers, but with the buy-in of the development industry, and is updated on an annual basis. The most recent SHLAA, which has been used to inform this exercise, is the draft 2010 assessment which was published for consultation in October 2010. The draft report can be accessed from the Council's online consultation portal⁽⁸⁾. The 2010 SHLAA will be published in its final form in December 2010.

The draft 2010 SHLAA identifies that total capacity within Warrington is estimated to be 13,052. This consists of the following:

- **6,678 units** on sites currently defined as deliverable⁽⁹⁾ / developable⁽¹⁰⁾
- **6,374 units** from sites currently identified as being 'suitable but constrained', including
 - Arpley Meadows – 2,065
 - Peel Hall (and Peel Hall Playing Fields) – 1,550
 - Omega – 1,100

Because all sites included within the SHLAA are mapped, it is possible to analyse the assessment's findings from a spatial or geographic perspective and hence possible to explore how many new homes could potentially be delivered through each of the Council's emerging Core Strategy, Strategy Options.

For each of the Strategy Options the quantum of development over which there are sufficient assurances can be delivered is set out as both a plan wide figure and average annualised rate. The annualised rate has been derived by dividing the plan wide figure by 16 (2010 – 2026). Both are expressed as a minimum figure which could be exceeded in each of the options through

- unlocking sites which remain 'in keeping' with the option but which are currently regarded as 'suitable but constrained'; and, or
- (for options two and three) changing the assumptions regarding the number and nature of sites to be released

It must be recognised that there are no assurances that the potential of 'suitable but constrained' sites can be realised. Where constraints were however considered to be insurmountable, such sites were removed from the SHLAA and hence any capacity from such sites is not included within the constrained capacities expressed in this paper. It must also be recognised that the extent to which the market (firm demand which will result in sales) and operational capacity (rate at which the development industry

8 <http://warrington.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

9 A site is which is available now, offers a suitable location for housing development and for which there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years from the adoption of the plan

10 A site in a sustainable location for housing with a reasonable prospect that it will be available for housing and could be developed at a specific point in time



can deliver) would support the simultaneous delivery of a number of large strategic sites is largely unknown. For each of the options it must therefore be logically acknowledged that assurances over the deliverability of any expressed figure will decrease as you move away from the expressed minimum.

Option 2 is concerned with the “selective release of other sites” and the supply from these potential sites also features in option 3. Work on the Core Strategy to date has identified that the key strategic sites to be considered for “selective release” are likely to include

- HCA owned land in the south of the Borough – comprising of land at Grappenhall Heys, Pewterspear Green and Appleton (1,237 dwellings)
- OMEGA – comprising of residential development being brought forward alongside employment development through a mixed use approach to the development of the site (1,100 dwellings)
- Peel Hall and Peel Hall Playing Fields – comprising of the release of this site for residential development (1,550 dwellings)

In addition to the above, option 2 could potentially also see the release of sites within the suburbs of Warrington Town or the larger villages of Lymm and Culcheth.

Two of the three strategic sites, Omega and Peel Hall, are currently considered by the SHLAA to be constrained. Given these two sites are currently being actively promoted by the landowners through the Core Strategy process, and that efforts to overcome the documented constraints remain ongoing, this paper has assumed for the purposes of option 2 and 3 that the constraints are capable of being overcome prior to their capacity being relied upon in order to demonstrate a 5 year supply.

It should be noted that it is not the purpose of this paper to prejudge the merits of any of the individual strategic sites and hence allocate any preference for their release. Instead this paper intends to explore the implications on the supply of new homes within the plan period in the event that one, a combination of any two or all three are brought forward simultaneously.

Owing to the scale and nature of the strategic sites being considered for selective release, it is necessary to distinguish between the gross site capacity and the number of new homes which can be delivered within the plan period. The latter has been derived via the application of stakeholder agreed completion / build rates, set out in the SHLAA, which are as follows:

- Lead in time of at least 12 months⁽¹¹⁾
- First full year on site – a maximum of 15 completions
- Second full year on site – A maximum of 30 completions
- Third full year on site onwards – A maximum of 60 completions in any one year on the assumption that there is more than one developer active on site

The above rates are acknowledged as cautious which are intended to reflect the move to better align build and sales rates which is characterising, and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, the way in which the development industry is operating. Employing these rates in relation to the three strategic sites considered by the options, with the assumption that more than one developer will be onsite from year 3 onwards, produces the following outputs⁽¹²⁾

- Release of one site – 765 dwellings
- Release of two sites (simultaneously) – 1,530 dwellings
- Release of three sites (simultaneously) – 2,295 dwellings

In the above scenarios no one individual site is anticipated to be completed within its entirety within the plan period. This however does not seem unreasonable, particularly when comparison is made against Chapelford UrbanVillage (c.2000 dwellings) which is only 55% complete ten years after securing the original outline consent. It must also be borne in mind that Chapelford was widely regarded as a market success with the bulk of the units delivered over a period in which annual housing completions, both locally as well as nationally, were at their highest for decades.

11 This could be reduced if a site was allocated in advance

12 Assuming the market is not affected by increased choice / competition

Appendix One - Capacity Assessment of Strategy Options

Option 1 - Prioritise development on Inner Warrington Brownfield sites

Evidence contained in the Council's SHLAA shows that pursuing option one could deliver at least **4,388 dwellings** between now and 2026. This equates to **an average rate of around 274 dwellings per year**. This is a minimum figure which could be increased by upto 1,523 dwellings if 'suitable but constrained' previously developed sites within Inner Warrington are able to contribute to housing delivery within the plan period.

a.	Current Commitments and Inner Warrington deliverable (Brownfield) sites:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,220 dwellings remaining to be delivered, and deemed to be deliverable, on committed sites (sites with benefit of planning approval) within Inner Warrington 1,308 dwellings remaining to be delivered, and deemed to be deliverable, on committed sites (sites with benefit of planning approval) out with Inner Warrington 860 dwellings on sites within Inner Warrington which do not yet benefit from planning approval but which are nevertheless considered deliverable / developable within the plan period.
	Total = 4,388 dwellings
b.	Capacity of Inner Warrington 'Suitable but Constrained' (Brownfield) sites:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,523 dwellings on sites within Inner Warrington which are deemed to be suitable but which are currently constrained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 765 of these dwellings (50%) are from Arpley Meadows⁽¹³⁾ which faces significant challenges to unlock
	Total = 1,523 dwellings
c.	Maximum total capacity (a + b)
	Cumulative Grand Total = 5,911

Table 2 - Quantitative Assessment of Strategy Option 1

If option 1 was pursued a residual supply of between 4,940⁽¹⁴⁾ and 7,141⁽¹⁵⁾ units would be available, which represents a stable supply of housing sites that could be delivered after the 15 year Core Strategy period.

Minimum Grand Total	Minimum Annualised Average	Maximum Grand Total	Minimum Annualised Average
4,388	274	5,911	369

Table 3 - Key Outputs from Strategy Option 1 Assessment

- 13 Arpley Meadows is estimated to have a gross capacity of 2,065 but employing the same assumptions as those used for the three strategic sites within this paper would result in a maximum of 765 dwellings being realised within the plan period
- 14 Represents additional deliverable or developable sites out with Inner Warrington (including both greenfield and previously developed land) inclusive of Omega, Peel Hall and HCA land in the South and on greenfield sites within Inner Warrington but that do not yet benefit from planning permission
- 15 Represents additional deliverable or developable sites out with Inner Warrington (including both greenfield and previously developed land) inclusive of Omega, Peel Hall and HCA land in the South and on greenfield sites within Inner Warrington but that do not yet benefit from planning permission plus suitable but constrained supply on greenfield sites within Inner Warrington, the residual capacity from Arpley Meadows (1,300 dwellings) and suitable but constrained supply on both greenfield and previously developed land outside of Inner Warrington

Appendix One - Capacity Assessment of Strategy Options



Option 2 - Prioritise development on Inner Warrington Brownfield sites with selective release of other sites

Evidence contained in the Council's SHLAA shows that pursuing option 2 could deliver at least **4,388 dwellings** between now and 2026. This equates to **an average rate of around 274 dwellings per year**. This is a minimum figure which could be increased by up to

- 760 units from the release of deliverable / developable sites within Warrington suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth

and further still by

- 765 units providing one of the strategic sites identified for selective release is released; or
- 1,530 units providing two of the strategic sites identified for selective release are released; or
- 2,295 units providing all three of the strategic sites identified for selective release are released.

This minimum figure could be increased further still by upto 1,523 if previously developed but constrained sites within Inner Warrington are able to contribute to housing delivery within the plan period or by upto 2,244 if previously developed but constrained sites within Inner Warrington plus suitable but constrained sites within Warrington Suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth are able to contribute to housing delivery within the plan period.

a.	Current commitments and Inner Warrington deliverable sites	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,220 dwellings remaining to be delivered, and deemed to be deliverable, on committed sites (sites with benefit of planning approval) within Inner Warrington • 1,308 dwellings remaining to be delivered, and deemed to be deliverable, on committed sites (sites with benefit of planning approval) out with Inner Warrington • 860 dwellings on sites within Inner Warrington which do not yet benefit from planning approval but which are nevertheless considered deliverable / developable within the plan period. 	
		Total = 4,388 dwellings
b.	Contribution from releasing sites within Warrington suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth	
		Warrington Suburbs 708
		Lymm 19
		Culcheth 33
		Cumulative Total (a + b) = 5,148
c.	Contribution from releasing one strategic site	
		765
		Cumulative Total (a + b + c) = 5,913
d.	Contribution from releasing two strategic sites	
		1,530
		Cumulative Total (a + b + d) = 6,678
e.	Contribution from releasing three strategic sites	

Appendix One - Capacity Assessment of Strategy Options

	2,295
	Cumulative Total (a + b + e) = 7,443
f.	Contribution from Inner Warrington 'Suitable but Constrained' Brownfield sites and 'Suitable but Constrained' sites (Brownfield and Greenfield) within Warrington Suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,523 dwellings on sites within Inner Warrington which are deemed to be suitable but which are currently constrained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 765 of these dwellings (50%) are from Arpley Meadows⁽¹⁶⁾ which faces significant challenges to unlock • 721 dwellings from 'Suitable but Constrained' sites within Warrington suburbs and the villages of Lymm and Culcheth
	2,244
g.	Maximum Total Capacity (a + b + e + f)
	9,687

Table 4 - Quantitative Assessment of Strategy Option 2

If option 2 was pursued between 4,171 and 9,442 new homes could be delivered within the plan period. This would leave a residual supply of between 1,885⁽¹⁷⁾ and 3,365⁽¹⁸⁾ units and which represents a stable supply of housing sites that could be delivered after the 15 year Core Strategy period.

	Grand Total	Annualised Average
Option Minimum	4,388	274
Above + Warrington Suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth	5,148	322
Above + 1 Strategic Site	5,913	370
Above + 1 further Strategic Site (2 in total)	6,678	417
Above + 1 further Strategic Site (3 in total)	7,443	465
Above + Suitable but Constrained (Maximum)	9,687	605

Table 5 - Key Outputs from Strategy Option 2 Assessment

- 16 Arpley Meadows is estimated to have a gross capacity of 2,065 but employing the same assumptions as those used for the three strategic sites within this paper would result in a maximum of 765 dwellings being realised within the plan period
- 17 Represents deliverable and developable supply from greenfield sites within Inner warrington alongside deliverable and developable supply from out with Central Warrington, the suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth plus the residual capacity from Farrell Street South, Peel Hall, Omega and HCA land in the south
- 18 Represents deliverable and developable supply from greenfield sites within Inner warrington alongside deliverable and developable supply from out with Central Warrington, the suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth plus the residual capacity from Farrell Street South, Peel Hall, Omega and HCA land in the south plus suitable but constrained greenfield supply from Inner Warrington and suitable but constrained supply (brownfield and greenfield) out with Central Warrington, the suburbs, Lymm and Culcheth plus the residual capacity from Arpley Meadows (1,300 dwellings)



Option 3 - Promote development on all suitable and available sites

Evidence contained in the Council's SHLAA shows that pursuing option 3 could deliver at least **5,384 dwellings** between now and 2026. This equates to **an average rate of around 337 dwellings per year**. This is a minimum figure which could be increased by up to

- 765 units providing one of the strategic sites identified for selective release is released
- 1,530 units providing two of the strategic sites identified for selective release are released
- 2,295 units providing all three of the strategic sites identified for selective release are released

This minimum figure could be increased further still by upto 2,424 dwellings if suitable but currently constrained sites within the Borough are able to contribute to housing delivery within the plan period.

a.	Current commitments and Inner Warrington deliverable sites	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,528 units remain on committed sites (sites with benefit of planning approval) which are anticipated to be deliverable • 1,856 units are considered deliverable on sites not yet committed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes HCA South Warrington land (1,237 units) to avoid double counting. 	
		Total = 5,384
b.	Contribution from releasing one strategic site	
		765
		Cumulative Total (a + b) = 6,149
c.	Contribution from releasing two strategic sites	
		1,530
		Cumulative Total (a + c) = 6,914
d.	Contribution from releasing three strategic sites	
		2,295
		Cumulative Total (a + d) = 7,679
e.	Contribution from 'Suitable but Constrained' sites across the Borough	
	In addition to current commitments and the Borough's deliverable supply of sites, the 2009 SHLAA identifies that there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,424 dwellings on sites within the Borough which are deemed to be suitable but which are currently constrained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 765 of these dwellings (32%) are from Arpley Meadows⁽¹⁹⁾ which faces significant challenges to unlock 	
		2,424
f.	Maximum Total Capacity (a + d + e)	
		10,103

Table 6 - Quantitative Assessment of Strategy Option 3

19 Arpley Meadows is estimated to have a gross capacity of 2,065 but employing the same assumptions as those used for the three strategic sites within this paper would result in a maximum of 765 dwellings being realised within the plan period

Appendix One - Capacity Assessment of Strategy Options

If option 3 was pursued between 5,384 and 10,103 new homes could be delivered within the plan period. This would leave a residual supply of between 1,649⁽²⁰⁾ and 2,949⁽²¹⁾.

	Grand Total	Annualised Average
Option Minimum	5,384	337
Above + 1 Strategic Site	6,149	384
Above + 1 further Strategic Site (2 in total)	6,914	432
Above + 1 further Strategic Site (3 in total)	7,679	480
Above + Suitable but Constrained (Maximum)	10,103	631

Table 7 - Key Outputs from Strategy Option 3 Assessment

20 Represents the residual supply from Farrell Street, Omega, Peel Hall and HCA land in the South

21 Represents the residual supply from Farrell Street, Omega, Peel Hall and HCA land in the South plus the residual capacity from Arpley Meadows (1,300 dwellings)



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