



**Warrington Borough Council
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment**

2012

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Capacity of Strategic Locations

3.67 A number of specific sites included within previous years assessments have now been identified by the emerging Local Plan Core Strategy as 'Strategic Locations' within Policies CS7 and CS9.

3.68 Appleton Cross (Site Ref. 308), Grappenhall Heys (Site Ref. 1646), Peel Hall (and Peel Hall Playing Fields) (Site Refs. 1506 and 1649) and Pewterspear Green (Site Ref. 1650) have been identified, by Policy CS9, as Strategic Locations which could accommodate housing growth in the longer term to avoid the need to release Green Belt land for development. The Core Strategy makes clear however that the CS9 strategic locations will only be released for housing development "*should monitoring indicate that additional housing supply is necessary in the longer term to maintain delivery and meet housing needs*"

3.69 Omega (Site Ref. 2135) has been identified, by Policy CS7, as a Strategic Location, primarily to meet the borough's future requirements for economic growth purposes but could, as part of a mixed use and sustainable approach to development, include an element of housing.

3.70 Given the approach to the above sites within the Council's emerging Local Plan Core Strategy, it is considered logical for the SHLAA to consider these sites in isolation from all others within the SHLAA. This approach will ensure that the capacity of these sites is quantified separately and this alongside their exclusion from the 5, 10 and 15 year assessments will help to indicate the likely reliance on these sites in doing so supporting emerging policy that they are not required within the plan period to contribute to meeting the plan's housing requirement.

3.71 In previous years assessments land at **Appleton Cross, Grappenhall Heys and Pewterspear Green** has been concluded as being suitable, available and achievable.

3.72 Appleton Cross, Grappenhall Heys and Pewterspear Green constitute residual phases of New Town led suburban development. As such the deliverability of these sites has previously been robustly tested through detailed master planning with these master plans subsequently having progressed to actual partial implementation. In this regard it must also be noted that these residual phases have previously benefited from New Town planning consents.

3.73 The development of these locations was at the time voluntarily halted (by the then English Partnerships) to enable housing growth to instead be pursued on previously developed as opposed to greenfield land in order to support regeneration. It was always however envisaged that the residual phases of these locations would be developed at some point in the future with signs on the land clearly indicating that the sites are reserved for future development. The timing of the release of these sites is now a matter for the development plan.

3.74 The estimated capacities assigned to each of these sites draws on information from the previous master plans and New Town consents. It should be noted that these have however been relied upon in an indicative capacity as opposed to constituting an exact blueprint of how these sites would be developed if released for development now. Collectively these sites have an estimated capacity of 1,237 dwellings on the following basis:

- Appleton Cross - 400 units
- Grappenhall Heys - 573 units
- Pewterspear Green - 264 units

3.75 Each of these sites is in single ownership and in the control of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The HCA have used successive SHLAAs to promote these sites as suitable, available and achievable and there is no evidence to suggest the contrary may be true. With regards to deliverability in the implementation sense, the HCA's excellent track record of delivery (in both the national and local context) should also act to provide significant assurances. It is only the voluntary holding back of these sites that has prevented their development to date.

3.76 The strategic infrastructure necessary to support development of these sites is largely in place with much having been front loaded in advance of the earlier phases of development. United Utilities have however identified, through the IDP process, with regards to water and waste water infrastructure, that the location of these greenfield sites on the fringe of existing infrastructure networks is such that there are likely to be capacity issues. In this regard UU have commented that these sites may require

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a long lead in time in order to ensure the required infrastructure is identified, funding is secured and a solution is implemented prior to the commencement of any development. Whilst suitable, available and achievable it is therefore unlikely that the sites could contribute to supply, in the event they were required to, until the medium term (year 6 onwards).

3.77 Peel Hall is estimated as being potentially able to accommodate up to 1,550 dwellings, a capacity derived through the application of indicative densities. Some indicative master plans for the site have also been prepared by the landowner. The site has not previously benefited from planning permission for residential development but was subject to a number of applications in the 1990s, one of which was refused and two of which were withdrawn.

3.78 The SHLAA (TPS032) details that the Peel Hall site is subject to a number of potential constraints as follows:

- A legacy of underground coal mining in this locality raises issues regarding ground stability.
- The west of the site is largely landlocked from a vehicular perspective and access into the site from the east would appear dependant on access across the existing Peel Hall playing fields being secured.
- The ability of the local road network immediately surrounding the site to adequately and safely accommodate the increase in traffic remains unknown.
- The M62 which constitutes the sites northern boundary is subject to an air quality management area along its length which encroaches into the north of the site.
- Similarly a Health and Safety Executive buffer associated with a pipeline which runs adjacent and parallel to the M62 also encroaches into the north of the site.

3.79 The developer has consistently made representations to the SHLAA and Local Plan Core Strategy to assert that the site is suitable, available and achievable and as such is deliverable. These representations have included the submission of evidence to address specific documented constraints inclusive of the following:

- The Coal authority has been consulted.
- The HCA have put on record their willingness to dispose of Peel Hall playing fields should the adjacent land be allocated for development or secure planning permission.
- An access strategy for the site has been prepared by the developer.
- Preliminary transport modelling has been undertaken using the Council's Multi Modal Transport Model.
- Preliminary design work has indicated that the air quality management and pipeline buffers would influence the design approach as opposed to precluding development of the entirety of the site.

3.80 This evidence has not yet been tested. The Council consider that it would only be appropriate to test this information, through discussion and consultation with the relevant agencies, through the process of preparing a further Local Plan should the need to do so arise throughout the plan period (which is not presently envisaged).

3.81 Similar to the other CS9 sites United Utilities have identified, through the IDP process, with regards to water and waste water infrastructure, that the location of this greenfield site on the fringe of existing infrastructure network is such that there are likely to be capacity issues. In this regard UU have commented that this site may require a long lead in time in order to ensure the required infrastructure is identified, funding is secured and a solution is implemented prior to the commencement of any development.

3.82 Omega is a large site within the North West of the Borough of strategic importance to Warrington and the wider sub-region. The primary purpose of the site is to meet economic and employment land aspirations however current thinking is that a more mixed use approach may represent a more sustainable prospect. Work remains ongoing to explore the exact land use mix at the site but the owners, the HCA, have indicated that the site could accommodate up to 1,100 new homes. Policy CS2 sets out a criteria based approach which proposals for housing, if forthcoming, would have to satisfy. The site is considered to offer a suitable location for housing development provided it is of a scale which supports the delivery of the necessary physical and social infrastructure to ensure the development would be sustainable from a residential perspective. The site is evidently available but its achievability is subject to further viability work and further exploration of the traffic implications of housing on the site, alongside the wider land use mix.

3.83 Collectively the Strategic Locations have an estimated capacity of 3,887 units. This represents a significant source of additional supply which could, if necessary, be drawn upon. No allowance is made within any of the assessments within this SHLAA for capacity from these sites.

3.84 As drafted the Core Strategy does not identify a preference for the phased release of any of the Strategic Locations identified in polices CS7 and CS9. This is deliberate and reflects the intention to source land from these sites through a further local plan as and when required by the triggers already set out within the Core Strategy. The SHLAA will however continue to review and update information for these sites, alongside others, with the assessment and information which underpins it subsequently being used to inform the site allocation process if required within the Core Strategy period.