



## **Representations to Warrington Borough Councils Preferred Development Option (Regulation 18) Consultation Document**

**Land at Tanyard Farm, Lymm**

**Bellway Homes Limited (Manchester Division)  
September 2017**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 HOW Planning LLP has been instructed by Bellway Homes Limited (Manchester Division) (“Bellway Homes”) to prepare and submit representations in response to Warrington Borough Council's (WBC) consultation on the Preferred Development Option (Regulation 18) Consultation Document.
- 1.2 This Statement has been prepared to promote land at Tanyard Farm, Lymm (“the site”) for Green Belt release and a housing allocation by Bellway Homes. The representations supplement the earlier representations made by Emery Planning on behalf of the landowner, Majornet Ltd to the Regulation 18 consultation in December 2016. Emery Planning continue to promote part of the site for Green Belt release and housing allocation on behalf of Majornet Ltd and these representations should be read in conjunction with Emery Planning’s representations relating to the site. The site comprises greenfield land on the western portion and brownfield land on the eastern portion. On behalf of Bellway Homes, HOW’s representations relate to the brownfield land and Emery Planning representations on behalf of the Majornet Ltd relate to the greenfield land. A Site Location Plan attached at **Appendix 1** identifies the overall site boundaries including the extent of land promoted by Bellway Homes in red and land promoted by Majornet Ltd in blue. A comprehensive masterplan has been prepared for the overall site which is appended to both HOW’s and Emery Planning’s representations at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.3 This Statement demonstrates that the removal of the site from the Green Belt and its allocation for housing is acceptable and provides:
- A description of the site and its surroundings including a review of the site's sustainability credentials;
  - An overview of planning policy and guidance and a response to the current consultation.
  - The case for the release of the site from the Green Belt including a review of planning policy. In particular the Statement demonstrates that the site does not perform the purposes and functions of the Green Belt as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
  - Analysis of the economic, social and environmental benefits that the proposed housing scheme will deliver including a review of key technical considerations;
  - An assessment of the site's deliverability;
  - A Vision for the development for the site.

## **2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

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2.1 This Chapter discusses the site's location, characteristics and sustainability credentials. It provides a brief description of the site's current status and physical attributes.

### **SITE LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS**

2.2 The overall site extends to 8 hectares and the eastern portion of the site which constitutes brownfield land extends to 4.36 hectares. The site is located to the south of Rush Green Road, behind Sainsbury's and to the north of the Bridgewater Canal immediately adjacent to the settlements of Lymm and Rushgreen. It is located outside of the settlement boundaries of both of these settlements and is within the Green Belt.

2.3 The site is surrounded by established housing to its immediate north and in the general surrounding area. Rushgreen Road fronts onto the northern boundary as does Sainsbury's, beyond which there is residential development off Reddish Crescent. There is some housing along the north eastern corner of the site as well as open countryside. A planted line of trees, hedgerows and fields comprise the eastern boundary, beyond this is Oughtrington Community Primary School and the wider residential area of Rushgreen, Lymm. The southern boundary of the site adjoins the Bridgewater Canal. To the west of the brownfield land is the greenfield land promoted by Emery Planning on behalf of Majornet Ltd. Beyond the overall site to the west is the residential area of Lymm.

2.4 Access to the site is from Rushgreen Road and comprises a satisfactory width access road, 6m junction radii and achievable viability splays of 2.4m x 90m to the right and 2.4m and 76m to the left. The existing access was granted planning permission by the Council in 2003. The access was then assessed through the Transport Statement prepared by SCP for the most recent planning application proposing employment development at the site (LPA reference: 2014/24228). The sites planning history is discussed in further detail below.

2.5 The site does not contain any designated heritage assets such as scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefield or conservation areas. The nearest listed building is along Rushgreen Road to the north of the site and is known as Tanyard Farmhouse at 88 Rushgreen Road. It is a Grade II listed building (listing ID: 1227387) and was first listed on 14 June 1984. The proposed residential development at the site will not affect the setting of any of these listed buildings.

## **A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION**

- 2.6 The site is located within the administrative area of Warrington Borough Council, within the ward of Lymm North and with the Lymm Civil Parish. The site is located 500 metres to the north east of the centre of Lymm. It has good accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists and is well connected to public transport links. A range of services can be accessed in Lymm including pubs and bars, restaurants, estate agents, dentists, convenience shops, bakery, hairdressers, opticians, pharmacies, takeaways and schools.
- 2.7 There are several schools within the vicinity of the site, including Oughtrington Community Primary School 650 metres to the east of the site, Ravenbank Community Primary School 1.3km to the south of the site and Lymm High School 2.2km to the south of the site.
- 2.8 Bus stops are located on the northern boundary of the site along Rushgreen Road. These stops provide at least two services an hour between Altrincham and Warrington. Glazebrook Train Station is located approximately 6.7km north of the site with services to Manchester, Warrington and Liverpool being provided.
- 2.9 Access to the strategic highway network is available with connections to the A56 to the south and the A57 to the north. These roads link directly to the M6 which provides onward travel to the north and south of England.

## **SITE HISTORY**

- 2.10 The site historically accommodated a horticultural nursery / garden centre, however for several years it has been wholly utilised for commercial purposes and now comprises unsightly buildings and structures.
- 2.11 An outline planning application was submitted in August 2014 for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a replacement building (B1 / B8 / D2 Use Class) with associated works to include car parking (Reference: 2014/24228). The replacement building amounted to over 2,000 sqm floorspace and associated large car park for 56 vehicles as well as the retention of existing commercial building on the site. Planning permission was granted in December 2014. The grant of this planning permission established that there are no technical constraints to the redevelopment of the brownfield portion of the site, with regards to contaminated land, highways, drainage and flooding.
- 2.12 It is accepted in the Committee Report that the site comprises a mixture of poor quality buildings and uses, including light industrial (B1), gym (D2) and storage (B8). It also states that '*there are no buildings of aesthetic merit or particular rural character that are worthy of retention*'.

2.13 Much of the brownfield element of the site also benefits from the grant of planning permission or a certificate of lawfulness for commercial use, including the following:

- Reference: 2012/20834 - Certificate of lawful use or development re: buildings / polytunnels / glasshouses (lawfulness of the buildings only rather than uses). The application was approved in December 2012.
- Reference: 2012/20833 - Retrospective change of use of redundant horticultural building to storage of vehicles. The application was approved in March 2013.
- Reference: 2012/20832 - Retrospective change of use of redundant horticultural building to storage and distribution of stone / marble tiles. The application was approved in March 2013.
- Reference: 2012/20831 - Retrospective change of use of horticultural building to mixed use consisting of storage, gym and dog training facility. The application was approved in March 2013.
- Reference: 2010/17069 - Certificate of lawful use or development for 1) Builders-yard, hardstanding and building; 2) B1/B8 industrial units x3; 3) Caravan storage; 4) Horticultural building with ancillary retail. This was approved in April 2011.
- Reference: 2003/00375 - Application for a proposed new vehicular access road was approved in June 2003.

#### **SUMMARY**

2.14 In summary, the site is situated in a sustainable location and is well related to established housing. It constitutes part brownfield, part greenfield land and is situated in an accessible location well connected to the strategic road network, being accessible by a range of non-car modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

### 3 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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3.1 This Chapter demonstrates that land at Tanyard Farm on the brownfield portion of the site, complies with relevant national and local policies which are relevant to the removal of the site from the Green Belt and of the land for housing. Furthermore, this Chapter comments on the Preferred Development Option document currently out for consultation and the evidence base which supports this.

#### NATIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and is a key part of the Government's reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible. It vastly simplifies the number of planning policy pages previously found in Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The overall emphasis of the NPPF is to reiterate the Government's key objectives of facilitating economic growth, securing sustainable development and boosting housing delivery.

3.3 Central to the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is the golden thread for both plan making and decision taking.

3.4 The NPPF highlights that there are three interrelated dimensions to 'sustainable development':

- **Economic** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation;
- **Social** - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and,
- **Environmental** - continuing to protect and enhance the nature, built and historic environment.

3.5 Taken together, these dimensions of sustainable development can contribute towards "positive growth" for this and future generations.

3.6 The NPPF is clear that these roles should not be considered in isolation, because they are mutually dependant. This is reiterated in Paragraph 8 which states that economic, social and environmental gains "should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system."

3.7 Releasing the site from the Green Belt to facilitate new housing development would accord with the guidance contained in the NPPF because:

- Paragraph 7 - It would constitute sustainable development and deliver economic, social and environmental benefits which are set out in Chapter 6 of this Statement;
- Paragraph 14 - It would be entirely consistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- Paragraph 29-41 – The site is situated in a sustainable location in Lymm, which is accessible by a range of sustainable modes of transport and has access to a range of services and facilities. It would boost the supply of housing and provide a deliverable housing site that is available, achievable and viable as demonstrated in Chapter 7 of this Statement;
- Paragraph 83 & 84 - There are exceptional circumstances which justify alteration to the Green Belt in accordance with Chapter 9 of the NPPF. These exceptional circumstances are set out in Chapter 4 of this Statement; and
- Paragraph 113 - It does not entail the development of more valued and important landscapes in accordance with the NPPF.

#### **DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

3.8 WBC adopted its Local Plan Core Strategy on 21 July 2014. This document sets out the overarching strategic policies for guiding the location and level of development in the Borough up to 2027. It sets an overall housing target of 10,500 net new homes between 2006 and 2027 which equates to an annual housing target of 500 dwellings between 2006 and 2027.<sup>1</sup>

3.9 Upon adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy, a High Court Challenge was made against the adoption of parts of the Core Strategy. The challenge was heard on 3 and 4 February 2015 with a judgement given on 19 February 2015. Mr Justice Stewart ruled that parts of the Core Strategy relating to the housing target of 10,500 new homes between 2006 and 2027 as well as reference to 1,100 homes at the Omega Strategy Proposal should be overturned.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Local Plan Core Strategy – Adopted July 2014, Appendix 2: Summary of Housing Land Availability Position, page 165

<sup>2</sup> High Court Decision: Satnam Millennium Limited and Warrington Borough Council Order (Case No: CO/4055/2014), Appendix Warrington Borough Council Local Core Plan Strategy Extracts Underlined Wording to be quashed, page 2

- 3.10 The Council has now formally commenced a review of the Local Plan Core Strategy in order to set a new and up to date housing requirement for the number of new homes that will need to be delivered in Borough over the Plan period (between 2014 and 2037).
- 3.11 The Local Plan Core Strategy Review is underpinned by an evidence base which forms the basis for understanding the future needs of the Borough, including various analyses of the Borough's housing land supply. We comment on this further below.

### **EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS**

#### **Housing Needs in WBC**

- 3.12 Housing need in Warrington is addressed in the Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Addendum for Warrington (May 2017). This identifies a housing need of 955 dwellings per annum 2015-2037, which is considerably higher than the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy target of 500 dwellings per year 2006-2027. It also considers housing need implications arising from job growth for Warrington, and provides a revised housing need of 1,113 dwellings per annum over the 20-year Plan period. This is clearly considerably higher than the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy target of 500 dwellings per year 2006-2027.
- 3.13 Based on the figure of 1,113 dwellings per annum for the period 2017-2037, the estimated housing need in the Borough is approximately 22,260 dwellings. This figure represents the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) in the Borough.
- 3.14 The Department for Communities and Local Government recently launched a consultation on 14 September on a new standardised way of assessing housing demand at Local Authority Level. This technical review seeks to rebase housing growth projections, centred around projections from the Officer for National Statistics. The proposed approach includes the following three steps:
- Setting the baseline - using the annual average household growth over a ten year period as the demographic baseline.
  - Market adjustment - to increase the number of homes in less affordable area, where average house prices are more than four times' average earnings, using the workplace based median house price to median earnings ratio. Then applying a sliding scale formula to the increase to ensure that delivery is higher in areas where significant affordability issues.
  - Capping the level of increase - applying a cap upon any level of increase depending on the status of the Local Plan.

- 3.15 It is proposed for this three step methodology to provide the objectively assessed need for local housing as a starting point for the preparation of Local Plans. Accompanying the consultation is data publishing the housing need for each Local Planning Authority using the proposed formula. Proposed figures for Warrington, however have not been produced as the Plan has not been adopted. It will be possible for Local Planning Authorities to plan for a higher number than set out by the proposed method.

### **Housing Supply in WBC**

- 3.16 The Urban Capacity Assessment Update published in July 2017 confirms a total urban capacity for 15,429 homes, based upon the findings from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) published in July 2017.
- 3.17 Whilst WBC has identified an urban capacity of 15,429 dwellings, this is not sufficient to meet the housing need of 22,260 dwellings as required by the SHMA. Furthermore, a review of some of the SHLAA sites brings into question the deliverability of those which have been deemed 'suitable'. Due to environmental matters and land assembly issues we consider that some sites in WBC's urban capacity figure are not deliverable and as such will not come forward for development. This includes issues surrounding contamination, ownership disputes, hazardous installations, access or ecological issues. As such it is likely that Warrington's urban capacity is overstated as a result of potential deliverability issues, which further reinforces the need for Green Belt release and in particular this site's immediate release from the Green Belt.
- 3.18 Despite maximising the capacity of the existing urban area, it is apparent that if Warrington is to meet the development needs arising from its growth aspirations, it can only do so through the release of Green Belt land to provide for at least 8,791 homes.

### **Warrington's Urban Capacity**

- 3.19 As part of the Local Plan Review, Mickledore were commissioned to review alternative forecasts for housing and employment land and also review historical housing completions. It is noted in the Review of Economic Forecasts and Housing Numbers prepared by Mickledore (October 2016) that DCLG record an average number of housing completions in Warrington of 627 units per annum between 2003-2016 although WBC record an average of 840 units per annum over the same period due to different data sources<sup>3</sup>. The Annual Monitoring Report ("AMR") 2015/2016 provides an update on key performance indicators in Warrington during the period 1st April 2015

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<sup>3</sup> Review of Economic Forecasts and Housing Numbers (October 2016), Long term housing completions by different Local Authorities in the area, page 3

to the 31st March 2016. The report indicates that 595 net new homes were completed in Warrington, which is considerably less than the 687 completions during 2014/15<sup>4</sup>.

- 3.20 Furthermore, the AMR states that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a deliverable five year housing land supply<sup>5</sup>.

### **Green Belt Assessment**

- 3.21 In response to the findings of the 2017 SHLAA and SHMA, which indicate that WBC is not currently able to identify sufficient urban capacity land to meet its housing need, WBC published a Green Belt Assessment (Additional Site Assessments of Call for Sites Responses and SHLAA Green Belt Sites) in July 2017. The document provides an assessment of parcels of Green Belt in the Borough against the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF, in order to enable WBC to consider whether there are 'exceptional circumstances' to justify altering Green Belt boundaries and enable existing Green Belt land to contribute to Warrington's housing land supply.
- 3.22 The site at Tanyard Farm is identified in the Green Belt Review as part of a larger site under site reference LY16. The site was considered to make a 'moderate' contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt in the original Green Belt Report (October 2016), however an Addendum has been published following the Regulation 18 Consultation and the site is now considered to make a weak contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and states that:

*"The parcel makes a moderate contribution to two purposes, a weak contribution to one purpose, and no contribution to two purposes. In line with the methodology, the parcel has been judged to make a weak contribution. There is existing encroachment within the parcel and the parcel has a limited connection with the countryside along a durable boundary thus it makes a moderate contribution to safeguarding from encroachment. The parcel makes a moderate contribution to assisting in urban regeneration and a weak contributions to preserving the historic town"*<sup>6</sup>

- 3.23 In relation to purpose 3 'to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment', the assessment states:

*"The parcel is well connected to the settlement on three sides along its northern, western and eastern boundaries. These predominantly consist of garden boundaries which would not be durable enough to prevent encroachment into the parcel. The parcel is connected to the countryside on one side. This consists of the Bridgewater Canal, which is durable enough to prevent encroachment beyond the parcel if the parcel was developed. The existing land use mainly consists of open countryside with moderate vegetation. There is also a mix of*

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<sup>4</sup> Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016, Key Messages, page 2

<sup>5</sup> Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016, Identified Deliverable Supply of Housing Land, page 11

<sup>6</sup> Green Belt Assessment – Addendum following Regulation 18 Consultation – June 2017, Reference LY16

*greenhouses used for agriculture and warehouses, with hedgerows separating the parcel into several sections. There is one residential property in the south western corner of the parcel and another in the north. The parcel supports some long line views looking south and overall supports a strong to moderate degree of openness. Overall the parcel makes a moderate contributions to safeguarding from encroachment due to the existing levels of built form and its durable boundary with the countryside."*<sup>7</sup>.

- 3.24 In relation to purpose 5 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land', the assessment states:

*"The Mid Mersey Housing Market Area has 2.08% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a moderate contribution to this purpose"*<sup>8</sup>.

- 3.25 Overall, the Council are considering the site for Green Belt release in order to accommodate future housing requirements.

#### **PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT OPTION (REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT)**

- 3.26 The Councils Local Plan Preferred Development Option sets out the proposed approach to meeting Warrington's need for new homes and jobs between now and 2037. We comment on the Preferred Development Option document as follows:

#### **Development Need**

- 3.27 The Preferred Development Option proposes a housing target of 1,113 homes per annum over the 20 year Plan period as well as an overall employment land target of 381 hectares. A detailed assessment of urban capacity in its SHLAA and Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) has been undertaken by the Council as well as identifying the significant additional capacity that can be delivered through regeneration plans. As part of this process the Council has confirmed a total urban capacity for 15,429 homes.

- 3.28 The following requirements have been identified in the table below <sup>9</sup>:

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<sup>7</sup> Green Belt Assessment – Addendum following Regulation 18 Consultation – June 2017, Reference LY16

<sup>8</sup> Green Belt Assessment – Addendum following Regulation 18 Consultation – June 2017, Reference LY16

<sup>9</sup> Preferred Development Option - Consultation (July 2017), Table 1: Housing Land Requirements, page 14

	955 p.a.	1,113 p.a.	1,332 p.a.
Housing Target 2017 to 2037	19,100	22,260	26,640
Flexibility at 5%	955	1,113	1,332
Backlog (from 2015 against OAN)	847	847	847
Total Requirement	20,902	24,220	28,819
Total Capacity within urban area	15,429	15,429	15,429
Green Belt requirement	5,473	8,791	13,390

3.29 This table identifies a total requirements of 24,220 homes based on an annual requirement of 1,113 per annum over a 20 year Plan period. It specifies a total capacity within the urban area of 15,429 dwellings which leaves a requirement to be located in the Green Belt of 8,791 dwellings. This is made clear in paragraph 4.17 of the Preferred Development Option:

*"Despite maximising the capacity of the existing urban area, it is apparent that if Warrington is to meet the development needs arising from its growth aspirations, it can only do so through the release of Green Belt land to provide for 8,791 homes and 251 ha of employment land."<sup>10</sup>*

### Strategic Objectives

3.30 The Preferred Development Option Consultation document sets out the strategic objectives for the Local Plan, which includes:

*"To facilitate the sensitive release of Green Belt land to meet Warrington's long term housing and employment needs, whilst ensuring the revised Green Belt boundaries maintain the permanence of Warrington's Green Belt in the long term."<sup>11</sup>*

3.31 This strategic objective is supported by Bellway.

### Defining High Level Spatial Options

3.32 The Preferred Development Option - Consultation (July 2017) states the three options were considered for the spatial distribution of new development:

- **Option 1:** Green Belt release only in proximity to the main Warrington urban area;
- **Option 2** - Majority of Green Belt release adjacent to main urban area with incremental growth in outlying settlements; and
- **Option 3** - Settlement extension in one or more settlement with remainder of growth adjacent to the main urban area.

<sup>10</sup> Preferred Development Option - Consultation (July 2017), paragraph 4.17, page 15

<sup>11</sup> Preferred Development Option - Consultation (July 2017), Table 5 - Local Plan Strategic Objectives, page 18

3.33 The consultation document confirms at paragraph 4.50 that the difference in the above options is their approach to the allocation of Green Belt land for housing. It has been confirmed that Option 2, focusing Green Belt release adjacent to the main urban area of Warrington, with incremental growth in the outlying settlements, is the preferred option.

3.34 This approach, is generally supported by Bellway as it recognises the need for some Green Belt release in outlying settlements, such as Lymm, to contribute to longer term sustainability of local services and local businesses. Whilst option 2 is generally supported by Bellway, some of the outlying settlements, such as Lymm, have the ability to accommodate a higher level of development than identified in the Preferred Option document.

### **Main Development Locations**

3.35 The Preferred Development Option Consultation document establishes that the outlying settlements would be capable of accommodating a minimum of 1,000 dwellings, which then leaves approximately 8,000 dwellings to be accommodated adjacent to the main urban area in order to meet the housing requirement. The following options have been considered for accommodating the 8,000 homes:

- **Option 1** - A Garden City Suburb to the south east of the Warrington main urban area of approximately 8,000 homes
- **Option 2** - A Garden City Suburb of approximately 6,000 homes and an urban extension to the south west of Warrington of up to 2,000 homes
- **Option 3** - A Garden City Suburb of approximately 6,000 homes and an urban extension to the west of Warrington of up to 2,500 homes;
- **Option 4** - A Garden City Suburb of approximately 4,000 homes and an urban extension to the south west of Warrington of up to 2,000 homes and urban extension to west of Warrington of up to 2,500 homes; and
- **Option 5** - A more dispersed pattern of Green Belt release adjacent to the main urban area.

3.36 The Council have assessed option 2 to be the most appropriate option and this conclusion is met through a detailed assessment. We comment on each option as follows:

### ***Option 1 - A Garden City Suburb for 8,000 homes***

3.37 WBC regard the option to have a Garden City Suburb to the south east of Warrington as having potential to perform positively against the majority of the Plan objectives and the ability to maintain

the permanence of the Green Belt at a strategic level through managed Green Belt release. However WBC's concerns with the option of having a development of this scale in a single location raises issues about deliverability and the impacts on the character of this part of Warrington.

- 3.38 Bellway object to option 1 being the preferred option for similar reasons to WBC on matters relating to deliverability and the impacts this size of development would have on this area of Warrington.

***Option 2 - A Garden City Suburb for 6,000 homes and Urban Extension for 2,000 homes***

- 3.39 The second option to have a Garden City Suburb of approximately 6,000 homes and an urban extension to the south west of Warrington of up to 2,000 homes is the preferred option of WBC. The Council consider that this option has the potential to perform positively against the majority of plan objectives and will have the ability to provide infrastructure to support the Garden City and South West extensions themselves and the town as a whole. The Council consider that by providing a second development location, the South West extension provides benefits in terms of broadening the supply base of new homes, although accepts that it could impact on the character of the wider area.

- 3.40 Whilst Bellway broadly accept this approach as the preferred option, more homes should be allocated in the outlying settlements to compensate for the time it will take to deliver the necessary infrastructure required to support the Garden City Suburb. It is clear that WBC require housing now, so smaller sites should be released from the Green Belt in the outlying settlements, such as Lymm, in order to deliver housing in the immediate future.

- 3.41 In summary, it is Bellway's view that the Council should look to rely more heavily on the delivery of smaller edge of settlement sites within outlying settlements to deliver its short term housing requirements, as opposed to the Garden City Suburb, which will require the delivery of complex infrastructure to fulfil its delivery requirements of 6,000 homes within the Plan period. This will enable the Council to guarantee that its short term housing aspirations can be delivered without the need for the delivery of any additional infrastructure.

***Option 3 - A Garden City Suburb for 6,000 homes and Urban Extension for 2,500 homes***

- 3.42 Option 3 is similar to option 2 in terms of the Garden City Suburb however the urban extension is located to the west rather than the south west and increases the number of houses from 2,000 to 2,500.
- 3.43 The Council's assessment acknowledges that this option could have significant impacts on the strategic and local importance of the Green Belt and also refers to the deliverability of the site

being a concern as this is to be provided over a number of individual sites, which could impact the required primary school and health facilities.

- 3.44 Bellway support the Council's decision to not accept this as the preferred option due to the issues relating to school capacity and deliverability.

***Option 4 - A Garden City Suburb for 4,000 homes and Urban Extension to the South West of Warrington for 2,000 homes and an urban extension to the West of Warrington for 2,500 homes***

- 3.45 This option would include three separate urban extensions including a Garden City Suburb of approximately 4,000 homes, an urban extension to the south west of Warrington of up to 2,000 homes and an urban extension to the west of Warrington of up to 2,500 homes.
- 3.46 WBC comment that the smaller Garden City suburb could provide potential benefits in terms of reducing the impact on the character of the wider south east Warrington area and also reducing infrastructure requirements.
- 3.47 As noted under option 3, there are serious concerns over the provision of schools and their capacity to accommodate 2,500 homes as part of an urban extension to the west of Warrington alongside deliverability. For these reasons, Bellway support the Council's decision to not accept this as a preferred option.

***Option 5 - Green Belt release adjacent to Main Urban Area***

- 3.48 Option 5 proposes to have a more dispersed pattern of Green Belt release adjacent to the urban area which would likely have a reduced risk with regards to infrastructure, however we agree with WBC that this raises concerns about the deliverability of the infrastructure required to support growth and the risk that development of this kind would exacerbate existing congestion and infrastructure constraints in the Warrington urban area.
- 3.49 Given the concerns with regards to infrastructure, Bellway support the Council's decision to not accept this as a preferred option.

***Outlying Settlements***

- 3.50 The Council has not identified specific development sites for the individual settlements at this stage of the Plan making process. It is stated that the allocation of individual sites will be identified in the submission version of the Local Plan.

3.51 Table 22 (Outlying Settlements - Indicative Green Belt Capacity)<sup>12</sup> does define an approximate number of homes the Council considered can be accommodated by each of the outlying settlements as follows:

Settlement	Indicative Green Belt Capacity
Lymm	500
Culcheth	300
Burtonwood	150
Winwick	90
Croft	60
Glazebury	50
Hollins Green	40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,190</b>

3.52 It is noted that Lymm is considered to accommodate 500 units for incremental growth and release from the Green Belt. The document also states that in order to deliver the level of development as outlined in the table above, it will be necessary to expand existing primary schools in Lymm, Culcheth and Burton wood as well as provide additional primary care capacity.

3.53 The indicative figure of 500 homes in Lymm is supported by Bellway Homes. However, given the opportunities in Lymm and its sustainability credentials as outlined in the 'Settlement Profiles Outlying Settlements' document (July 2017), Bellway Homes would support the provision of a higher Green Belt capacity. In particular, should more homes be accommodated, this could allow for a new primary school or doctors surgery to be developed which would benefit both new and existing residents.

3.54 It is understood that the final numbers assigned to Lymm will depend on the detailed assessment of potential development sites which is ongoing.

3.55 For reasons elsewhere in this document, the site at Tanyard Farm should be allocated for housing and released from the Green Belt to positively contribute to the housing requirements in Lymm and the Borough. The site would be suitable for development from a technical perspective and also has the benefit of being partially a previously developed site which is encouraged for effective reuse in one of the core planning objectives of the NPPF.

**SUMMARY**

3.56 This Chapter has assessed the Council's evidence base and concludes there is an annual housing need of 1,113 dwellings per annum and that WBC is not able to demonstrate a five year

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<sup>12</sup> Preferred Development Option - Consultation (July 2017), Table 22 - Outlying Settlements - Indicative Green Belt Capacity, page 46

supply of housing land supply. Despite maximising the capacity of the existing urban area, it is apparent that if Warrington is to meet the development needs arising from its growth aspirations, it can only do so through the release of Green Belt land to provide 8,791 homes, in order to meet its housing requirements over the Plan period and to produce a plan that is flexible in accordance with the NPPF.

- 3.57 The spatial distribution set out in the Preferred Option document is broadly supported by Bellway Homes. Bellway consider that the outlying settlements such as Lymm have the ability to deliver higher levels of housing than proposed in the Preferred Option document. A greater level of housing in the outlying settlements will positively contribute to the ongoing sustainability of these settlements as well as release land from the Green belt which would make an immediate and positive contribution to the Councils housing requirements in the first five years of the plan. There is an over reliance on the larger sites to deliver a significant proportion of Warrington's housing requirements and smaller sites on the edge of outlying settlements are required to deliver housing early in the Plan period.

## **4 THE CASE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE SITE FROM THE GREEN BELT**

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- 4.1 There are exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release in Warrington through WBC's Local Plan Review. To assist the Council in meeting its housing requirement, there is also a detailed case in support of the removal of land at Tanyard Farm from the Green Belt and allocation for housing.

### **DEMONSTRATING EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR GREEN BELT RELEASE**

- 4.2 The exceptional circumstances which support an alteration to Warrington's Green Belt through WBC's Local Plan Review include:

#### **1. Warrington's Housing Need**

- 4.3 The adopted Core Strategy provided a housing target of 500 dwellings per year. The evidence base for the Local Plan Review indicates that WBC has an OAN of 1,113 dwellings per annum, which equates to 22,260 dwellings over the Plan Period 2017-2037. This OAN target is substantially larger than the Core Strategy target.
- 4.4 The Borough's housing target should only be less than the OAN figure as a result of land supply, constraints and sustainability appraisals. The target may be higher if it takes into account unmet needs from other areas. It is clear that to meet its OAN, WBC will need to release land from the Green Belt because its urban capacity falls significantly short of its housing requirement.

#### **2. Affordable Housing Need**

- 4.5 The need to deliver 288 affordable homes per annum in the Borough is established in the 2017 SHMA. The 2015/2016 AMR indicates that there is a chronic lack of new affordable homes, with a shortfall against the requirement of 288 homes of 58 in 2014/15 and 119 in 2014/15. The delivery of sites which are viable, deliverable and available, such as the site at Tanyard Farm, can significantly contribute to the identified affordable housing needs of the Borough.

#### **3. Insufficient Land**

- 4.6 WBC cannot currently demonstrate a five-year land supply. Furthermore, WBC has stated that despite maximising the capacity of the existing urban area, it is apparent that if Warrington is to meet the development needs arising from its growth aspirations, it can only do so through the release of Green Belt land to provide 8,791 homes. The 8,791 dwelling figure does not take into account unmet housing needs from other areas, or the likelihood that some of the sites identified in the SHLAA will not come forward for development due to lack of deliverability.

### THE FIVE PURPOSES OF THE GREEN BELT

- 4.7 It is clear, that there are exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release in Warrington in order to ensure that the amount of new homes required are delivered across the Plan period. Bellway Homes and its professional team has assessed the site against the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF.
- 4.8 The site represents a logical and appropriate option for Green Belt release to meet the future housing needs of the Borough. In accordance with Paragraph 80 of the NPPF the site:
1. **Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas** – as noted in the 2016 Green Belt Assessment and the Green Belt Assessment Addendum (June 2017), the site is not adjacent to the Warrington urban area and therefore does not contribute to this purpose. We agree with the Assessment that applies 'no contribution' to this purpose;
  2. **Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns** – maintaining the functions, separation and context of the wider Green Belt in Warrington will be maintained as the site is both physically and visually contained with limited visibility across the wider open countryside by virtue of the existing boundary treatment. As such we agree with the Council's Assessment which states that the site has no contribution to this purpose of the Green Belt as it does not contribute to preventing towns from merging;
  3. **Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside** – the site is a self-contained land parcel with durable boundaries that is afforded clear physical enclosure from the wider Green Belt and would prevent encroachment into the countryside due to the existing residential dwellings that surrounds its boundaries and the Bridgewater Canal on its southern boundary. The development of the site would create a new strengthened long term Green Belt boundary and would align with the established residential area of Lymm. Furthermore the removal of unsightly buildings at the site which currently impact on the openness of the Green Belt will assist with this function. As such we disagree that the site would make a 'moderate contribution' and suggest that the site would make a weak contribution to this purpose;
  4. **Will not impact on the special character of historic towns** – as noted in the 2016 Green Belt Assessment, Lymm is a historic town however the site does not cross an important viewpoint of the Parish Church. The development of the site would also not impact upon the character of any listed buildings. The 2016 Green Belt Assessment states that the western edge of the parcel is located within the 250m buffer area around Lymm Conservation Area. As such it is concluded that the site would make a weak contribution to this purpose; and

**5. Will not discourage urban regeneration** - WBC's Local Plan evidence base confirms that the supply of deliverable brownfield sites is becoming exhausted and, consequently, Green Belt release will be required over the life of the Plan Period to meet the Borough's housing needs. Warrington's urban capacity is not sufficient to meet the Borough's housing need and therefore, Green Belt release is required in addition to the urban sites coming forward for housing. The site will not prevent urban regeneration and as such it has a weak contribution to this purpose.

#### **LOCAL PLAN INSPECTOR REPORT 1998**

- 4.9 It should be noted that the Local Plan Inspector's Report for the Warrington Local Plan in 1998 assessed both the brownfield and greenfield components of the wider site at Tanyard Farm as part of 'Area of Search 15' (reference: PINSM/Q0640/429/1). It was recommended by the Inspector that the wider site should be released from the Green Belt and 'safeguarded' for future development needs. This recommendation was on the basis of the limited contribution the land makes to the main purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The Inspector's comments and recommendations for the wider site and specifically the comments relating to the assessment that the land makes a limited contribution to the main purposes of the Green Belt, are very relevant and should be taken into consideration by the Council in the preparation of Warrington's new Local Plan.
- 4.10 It has been demonstrated that as per previous comments from the Inspector, the wider site makes a limited contribution to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and should be released to make a positive contribution towards future housing needs.

#### **PROPOSED ALTERATION OF THE GREEN BELT**

- 4.11 This Statement has highlighted that there is a large deficiency of housing land supply in the Borough of Warrington. The site at Tanyard Farm presents a highly sustainable solution which would make a positive contribution to the Borough's housing needs in line with Government guidance and the NPPF. The site will perform a positive economic, social and environmental role in accordance with the overarching pillars of sustainable development, and could deliver the type, quality and quantity of new homes that will support the growth of Warrington over this Plan Period. The site has no ownership, covenant or lease constraints and is wholly available, suitable and deliverable in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- 4.12 In terms of the purposes of the Green Belt, it has been demonstrated that the site represents a logical and appropriate option for Green Belt release which would make a positive contribution towards the future housing needs of the Borough.

4.13 As such, this Statement proposes the removal of the overall site at Tanyard Farm from the Green Belt. The boundaries of the site to be removed are illustrated on the Plan attached at **Appendix 3** of this Statement.

#### **SUMMARY**

4.14 This Chapter has demonstrated there are exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt through this Plan making process. This Chapter also sets out Bellway's assessment of the site's contribution to the Green Belt against Paragraph 80 of the NPPF and the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt. In summary, our assessment concludes that the site:

1. **Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – no contribution;**
2. **Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns – no contribution;**
3. **Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside – weak contribution;**
4. **Will not impact on the special character of historic towns – weak contribution; and**
5. **Will not discourage urban regeneration – weak contribution.**

4.15 Overall, HOW agrees with the Council's view that the site makes a weak contribution to the Green Belt.

## **5 VISION FOR THE SITE**

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5.1 The site at Tanyard Farm, on the brownfield portion of the site, will deliver an attractive housing development as part of a wider site, with a distinctive character that offers a choice of high quality new homes to meet the Borough's needs.

5.2 Bellway Homes' vision of the site seeks to achieve the following goals:

- Delivery of quality new family homes which make best use of the land;
- Create a choice of housing with a mix of house types, tenures and sizes to meet identified local needs;
- Respect the character of the site and the setting adjacent to the Green Belt;
- Provide high quality, accessible, green space for the benefit of existing and future residents;
- Provide an ecological enhancement area that retains and protects existing mature trees as well as the existing pond;
- Facilitate cycle and pedestrian links to community facilities and the Bridgewater Canal;
- Invest in the community with the creation of additional direct and indirect employment both during construction and after the development;
- Create a safe and desirable place to live with a safe and attractive environment that builds upon the strength of the local community;
- Provide high quality design which will complement and enhance the existing environment and create a good standard of amenity and living environment; and
- Protect existing residential amenity.

### **SITE CONSIDERATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

5.3 The development vision derives from a careful analysis of the site's characteristics, its context and the opportunities and considerations which arise and have been outlined earlier in this Statement.

5.4 The site has an existing access point off Rushgreen Road on the northern boundary which is considered to provide suitable vehicle access to the site.

- 5.5 An existing public right of way runs along the southern boundary of the site along the Canal. The National Cycle Route 62, which connects Fleetwood in Lancashire to Selby in North Yorkshire, also runs to the north of the site and forms part of the Trans Pennine Trail. The Trans Pennine Trail is a recreational and transport route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. There is an opportunity to extend the existing pedestrian and cycle network to the site and also provide linkages to the Bridgewater Canal.
- 5.6 The existing Sainsbury's store to the north, the distinct vegetation and hedgerows long the eastern and western boundaries and the Canal along the southern boundary have the potential to become a clearly defined, defensible Green Belt boundary between Lymm and the wider countryside whilst also including the site as part of the residential area of Lymm.
- 5.7 A robust site analysis has been carried out to determine the principle considerations and opportunities that will underpin the development vision. The key consideration and opportunities presented by the site include:
- The need to complement the character of the surrounding area through appropriate development densities, street scenes and housing types;
  - Safeguarding the existing landscape structure and connecting the established vegetation with new on site green corridors with multifunctional use;
  - The need to provide an attractive infill to the residential area of Lymm and an appropriate Green Belt boundary to the wider area;
  - Enhance the connectivity between the site and its surroundings in order to promote sustainable local movement networks for both pedestrians and cyclists; and
  - Furthermore, the need to retain the public right of way to the south of the site.
- 5.8 There is the potential to develop a high quality, characterful residential scheme with a coherent landscape structure which conserves the natural assets as well as creating a framework for recreation and extending the existing pedestrian and cycle network as well as enhancing an ecological area.
- 5.9 A masterplan for the overall site taking in both the brownfield and greenfield parcels has been prepared which is attached at **Appendix 2**. The masterplan illustrates how both land parcels could come forward in a comprehensive and masterplanned manner in order to positively contribute towards Lymm's and the wider Boroughs housing requirements.

5.10 On the brownfield part of the site, a high quality residential scheme is proposed which could deliver the following key features:

- Delivery of 100 market housing and affordable housing;
- Removal of unsightly buildings and structures, replacing them with high quality dwellings and a comprehensive landscape scheme;
- Provision of an ecological enhancement area which that retains and protects existing mature trees as well as the existing pond alongside provisions for new planting to provide an attractive area for a diversity of habitats and vegetation
- Provision of a high quality, centralised public open space including a LEAP;
- An increase in greenspace as a result of providing large front and rear gardens at each property as well as providing public open space. In addition, the amount of hardstanding would also significantly reduce which will positively contribute to the effective reuse of this previously developed land;
- Enhanced landscaping within the site, especially along the site's boundaries;
- New pedestrian and cycle links to connect the proposed green spaces with the wider footpath network within the site and the surrounding area, including the Bridgewater Canal;
- Retention of views into and out of the site.

5.11 The overall masterplan demonstrates that the site is capable of delivering a high quality scheme comprising 210 houses (with 100 on the brownfield component) which will complement its setting and deliver a range of attractive benefits.

## **6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

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- 6.1 The site at Tanyard Farm, Lymm represents a sustainable solution to the Borough's housing needs in line with Government guidance and the NPPF. The overarching policy objective of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 6 of the NPPF highlights that the policies in Paragraphs 18-219, when taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice.
- 6.2 The NPPF at Paragraph 7 indicates that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. An assessment of the site against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF is provided below. The site's sustainable location and accessibility is also considered.

### **LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

- 6.3 The site is located to the north east of Lymm Village, which provides extensive services and facilities including but not limited to: a bank, a post office, bars, public houses, convenience stores, Places of Worship, restaurants, a library, a community centre, coffee shops, a florist, a bakery, a beauty salon and a barber shop. In addition there is a Sainsbury's supermarket located on the northern boundary of the site.
- 6.4 Extensive employment opportunities are available in Warrington to the west of the site, which can be accessed via public transport from bus stops on Rush Green Road which adjoin the site.
- 6.5 The site has good access to the public transport network via bus stops located just beyond the northern boundary of the site along Rushgreen Road, which provide at least two services an hour between Altrincham and Warrington. Glazebrook Train Station is located approximately 6.7km north of the site with services to Manchester, Warrington and Liverpool being provided.
- 6.6 Access to the strategic highway network is available with connections to the A56 to the south and the A57 to the north. These roads link directly to the M6 which provides onward travel to the north and south of England.
- 6.7 An existing public right of way runs along the southern boundary of the site along the Canal. The National Cycle Route 62, which connects Fleetwood in Lancashire to Selby in North Yorkshire, also runs to the north of the site and forms part of the Trans Pennine Trail. The Trans Pennine Trail is a recreational and transport route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- 6.8 In accordance with the NPPF, the site is sustainably located and offers residents with opportunities to use sustainable modes of transport to access services, facilities and employment opportunities across Warrington, Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- 6.9 Oughtrington Community Primary School is located 700m to the east of the site. A number of other schools are located in Lymm and can be accessed on foot or by public transport from the site, including Ravenbank Community Primary School, Cherry Tree Primary School, Statham Community Primary School, Lymm High School, Bramble Lodge Day Nursery, Oughtrington Pre School, Rainbow Day Nursery, St Mary's Pre-school, Statham Little Foxes Pre-school and Willowtree Nursery School.
- 6.10 The nearest pharmacies, Lloyds Pharmacy and Boots Pharmacy, are located 850m to the south west of the site in Lymm Village neighbourhood centre. Brookfield GP Surgery is located 1km west of the site and Lakeside GP Surgery is located 1.6km to the south west, both of which are currently accepting new patients. Dental Care with Jill Cooper is located 500m to the east of the site and is currently accepting patients up to the age of 18 on the NHS.
- 6.11 A Sustainability Plan has been prepared by Croft Transport Solutions and is provided at **Appendix 4**.
- 6.12 The area surrounding the site is home to a number of locations for sport and recreation. Heatley Flash is a local fishing spot located 1.5km east of the site. Lymm Leisure Centre is located 2.4km south of the site, Sandy Lane playing field is located 1km east, and there are a number of recreational facilities in Lymm including Lymm Lawn Tennis Club, Lymm Dam, Lymm Rugby Football Club, Ridgeway-Grundy Memorial Park, and the Lower Dam in the centre of Lymm Village.

### **ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

- 6.13 Development at the brownfield portion of the site, in Bellway's interests, will contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. In particular, the delivery of 100 homes will bring:
- A significant amount of new investment into the local area through the construction process;
  - Circa £158,467 of Council Tax per annum in perpetuity following the scheme's completion (Band D);
  - Significant additional spending annually in the local economy from the site's new residents. This could support full time and part time jobs locally;
  - It is anticipated the proposed development will take around 2-3 years to be constructed (assuming a development rate of 35 units per year);

- The potential to provide apprenticeships and training opportunities with Bellway Homes and its suppliers for residents in the local area. This will help meet with the Council's economic development aspirations;
- Contribution to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy via the provision of much needed additional homes in the Borough.

### **SOCIAL BENEFITS**

6.14 A key objective of the social role of sustainable development is to support a strong, vibrant and healthy community. The allocation of the brownfield portion land in Bellway's interests, for housing and the development of 100 dwellings will provide:

- A sustainable development with good access to shops, services and transport links;
- New residents that could enhance the skills base available to employers in the local area and potentially benefit local business productivity;
- A range of open market housing comprising various types to meet the needs of the wider Lymm area;
- Affordable housing of the range and type to meet the identified need, as required by the Borough's 2017 SHMA, which identified a lack of new affordable homes across the Borough as a whole;
- The Redevelopment of a partial brownfield site which will remove unsightly and ugly structures and replace with high quality dwellings and a comprehensive landscape scheme, which will improve the overall environment for the benefit of new and existing residents;
- Landscape enhancements, public open space and ecological enhancements that integrates with the wider area. Furthermore a network of diverse green corridors will be created throughout the site that link into the existing public rights of way to the south of the site along the Canal.
- Specifically, delivering housing at the site would contribute to WBC's housing land supply. In line with paragraph 47 of the NPPF, the Local Authority should seek to 'boost significantly the supply of housing'. The site provides an opportunity to develop a sustainably located site which will contribute to meeting the Borough's housing land supply, particularly over the next five years. It is evident that the Council are not able to maintain a five year housing land supply at present and also require additional Green Belt sites to be identified for housing allocation as part of their Local Plan Review.

- 6.15 As demonstrated there are significant social benefits that will be delivered by the any future development at the site in accordance with the social dimension of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.16 Initial assessment of the key environmental and technical considerations have been undertaken by a team of professional consultants to underpin the deliverability of the brownfield site moving forward. If Officer's would like to see these assessments they can be sent upon request. More detailed assessments will be undertaken if the site is removed from the Green Belt and prior to the submission of a detailed planning application. The key considerations for the brownfield site are as follows:

#### **Transport and Access**

- 6.17 Rushgreen Road runs along the northern boundary of the site and provides access into the site. Rushgreen Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and has a carriageway width of approximately 7.0 metres. It is lit and benefits from a footway on the southern side of the site. There are also a number of residential dwellings that are located on Rushgreen Road that take their access straight from the road as does Sainsbury's on the northern boundary of the site.
- 6.18 The vehicular to the site will remain largely as existing but will ensure that new footways connections are provided between the site and Rush Green Road and that suitable visibility splays are provided onto Rush Green Road. These are 2.4 metres by 43 metres and meet with the guidance contained within Manual for Streets.
- 6.19 It is not considered that there are any significant highways or access constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for development. A Transport Statement will be provided with any future planning applications to demonstrate this. This document will include a detailed traffic impact analysis that will consider the net impact of any proposals which will be the difference between what the site could generate if developed for residential use and what the site does or could generate with the existing or consented commercial uses on the site.

#### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

- 6.20 The site lies within LCA 3C: Lymm which is characterised as having a, "Strong feeling of high landscape quality". In the context of the site however, the landscape character is assessed to diminish quality due to the on-site uses, presence of incongruent features, and the influence of urbanisation. The site is a brownfield site that comprises a mixture of overgrown scrubby vegetation and buildings of poor quality and no aesthetic value. The character of the site is assessed to be much more influenced by urbanisation and not consistent with the more intact

landscape characteristics evident within the wider countryside in the green belt further towards the south east.

- 6.21 The site is visually contained by surrounding boundary vegetation and topography. Any views beyond the immediate locality are obscured by intervening vegetation and development. It is evident that due to the visual context of the site and surrounding landscape, there are relatively few receptors that are likely to be impacted on and there is a limited visual relationship between the site and the wider Green Belt, despite the site's location on the settlement edge. There are opportunities to utilise and enhance the screening provided by the framework of green infrastructure already present within the site's boundary to develop the site sensitively in a way which does not impact upon the perceived openness of the wider Green Belt landscape. Where incongruent vegetation would benefit from replacement with more suitable species, this could be managed sensitively so as to retain visual screening in the short-term whilst new vegetation establishes, retaining the degree to which the site feels separated from the wider Green Belt, and assisting new development to assimilate into the existing settlement edge.
- 6.22 There are opportunities to significantly improve the landscape character and visual amenity of this site. As laid out in this document, the proposed development will include enhanced landscape boundaries, retention and enhancement of existing mature trees, public open space and enhancements to the local pedestrian and cycle network.
- 6.23 There are opportunities to significantly improve the landscape character and visual amenity of this site. As laid out in this document, the proposed development will include enhanced landscape boundaries, retention and enhancement of existing mature trees, public open space and enhancements to the local pedestrian and cycle network.
- 6.24 Overall, there are no significant landscape or visual constraints that would preclude the development of the site, subject to appropriate massing, design, layout and design measures at the planning application stage. Photo viewpoints taken of the site can be found at **Appendix 5**.

### **Ecology**

- 6.25 The site is located within the Impact Zone of the Rixton Clay Pits Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located 2.4km to the north of the site and is 2.4km south west of the Rixton Clay Pits Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Rixton Clay Local Nature Reserve. Woolston Eyes SSSI is located 1.9km to the west and Dunham Park SSSI is located 4.5km east. Given the distance between the site and these ecological areas, it is not considered that they will be adversely affected by the proposals subject to suitable standoff distances and enhancement measures as necessary.

- 6.26 The boundaries of the site comprise some vegetation of trees and hedgerows. A large overgrown pond is located in an area of young woodland to the south of the site and beyond the southern boundary lies the Bridgewater Canal. Any future planning application would be supported by a Phase 1 Ecological Assessment and any relevant protected species surveys, in particular with respect to badgers, nesting birds, amphibians, bats, and water vole. Furthermore, all ecological features would be protected by suitable standoff distances and enhancement measures as necessary.
- 6.27 Ecological surveys of the site have been carried out in 2012 and 2015 with these baseline surveys being updated in 2017 where necessary. The main part of the site predominantly consists of bare ground and hardstanding with a range of buildings and piles of debris. There is little ecological value in these areas and non-native invasive species Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam are widespread.
- 6.28 Surveys in 2017 concluded that none of the buildings or trees which may be lost support roosting bats. Surveys in 2012 and 2015 confirmed the presence of common amphibians breeding in the pond to the south, but great crested newt were absent. Surveys in 2017 confirmed that none of the waterbodies on site are suitable for water vole. A main badger sett was identified in part of the site in 2017.
- 6.29 The habitats present in the southwestern corner of the site include semi-natural broad leaved woodland, swamp and the large overgrown pond and represent the most ecologically valuable habitats on site. Himalayan balsam is present throughout this area and large stands of Japanese Knotweed are located north and south of the pond.
- 6.30 The south western part of the site is to be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals. The pond will be re-profiled to reduce shading and to increase the ponds suitability for amphibians and invertebrates. The non-native invasive species will be eradicated and these areas reseeded with wildflower grassland and scrub planting. The northern part of the ecological enhancement area will have hardstanding and refuse tips removed and replaced by grassland and tree planting to provide an increased area. A LEAP will also be created in this area. The badger sett location will be protected and shielded from view by selective planting and fencing. Bat and bird boxes will be hung on retained trees around the pond to offer additional roosting and nesting opportunities.
- 6.31 There are not therefore considered to be any constraints to the development with respect to ecology. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposals in the ecological enhancement area represent a significant ecological benefit compared to the habitats that exist on site at present.

### **Ground Conditions**

6.32 There are no active or historic landfills located on the site within the area, according to the Environment Agency's Landfill Map. The nearest landfill to the site is 'Land Behind Boarded Barn Farm' which is a historic landfill located approximately 1.2km north east of the site along Birch Brook Road. According to the Coal Authority's mapping service the site is not located within the Coal Mining Reporting Area, there are no records of mining activity or previously worked areas on the site or within the area. The current uses on the site include light industrial, a gym and storage. There may be some localised risks of contamination present on the site from the existing or previous uses on the site. A Phase I desk based study will be conducted to identify any potential contamination risks. Should this identify any potential contamination, a suite of Phase II intrusive investigations will be agreed with the Council and undertaken. Any remediation works will be undertaken in accordance with best practice Environment Agency guidance.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

6.33 The Environment Agency Flood Map indicates the site lies within Flood Zone 1 which means there is less than a 0.1% (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year and it is therefore deemed to be at the lowest risk of flooding.

6.34 A culverted watercourse, designated as a main river, runs at shallow depth to the opposite side of Rushgreen Road in an east to west direction becoming an open watercourse to the west of the site entrance and then continuing in a northerly direction. At the point the system becomes an open watercourse there is an incoming stone culvert from the south side of Rushgreen Road and from within the overall site ownership. This system has been identified within the site from historic mapping.

6.35 Connection of surface water flows via the entrance to the development into the system in Rushgreen Road is prevented by the shallow depth of the culvert in conjunction with the presence of services. It is therefore proposed to connect development flows into the stone culvert at the north west corner of the site. Flows will be limited to existing runoff rates.

6.36 Attenuation will be provided within a pipe system adopted under a Section 104 Agreement by United Utilities to contain flows, at minimum, up to the 1 in 30 year event. Flows overall will be contained on site up to the 1 in 100 year event plus 30% allowance for climate change.

### **Air Quality and Noise**

6.37 WBC has declared two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) although the site is not located within or in close proximity to these.

6.38 The construction and future occupation of the site will consider the impacts of the proposals on the local air quality in the District however it is not considered that air quality impacts would preclude the development of the site.

6.39 The main source of existing noise would be that emanating from the highways network along Rushgreen Road and from the residential properties surrounding the site. Subject to appropriate building envelope design and layout of the development, it is not envisaged the existing noise environment would preclude the proposed development coming forward. Suitable mitigation measures could be implemented during the construction phase to minimise noise impacts on the surrounding sensitive receptors.

### **SUMMARY**

6.40 In summary, development of the brownfield site for housing would constitute sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF when taken as a whole. Housing development at the site would deliver significant and positive economic, social and environmental benefits which should be afforded significant weight in considering the site for removal from the Green Belt and allocation for housing. Importantly, development at the site will deliver the type, quality and quantity of new homes that will support the growth of Warrington Borough over the Plan period and is suitably and sustainably located to access public transport and local facilities.

6.41 The delivery of new homes on the brownfield portion of the site, at Tanyard Farm, would make a positive contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough. A full assessment of the site constraints is continuing to be undertaken to determine and illustrate that delivery of housing at the site is achievable and deliverable. A professional team of technical experts has been appointed to underpin the relevant assessments and support the delivery of the site moving forward.

## **7 DELIVERABILITY**

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7.1 The NPPF aims to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes and boost significantly the supply of housing. It requires Local Planning Authorities to use their evidence base to ensure that the Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the market area. It is essential that Local Authorities identify deliverable sites in the right location to ensure that the Council meets its identified housing targets. An assessment of the sites deliverability has been undertaken against the tests set out at footnote 11 of paragraph 47 of the NPPF.

7.2 To be considered deliverable, sites should:

### **BE AVAILABLE**

7.3 A site is considered available where there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems. The brownfield site is within the control of a major house builder as Bellway Homes has secured legal agreements with the landowners of the site. There are no external factors that would render the site unavailable and there are no land ownership issues that would prevent the site from being brought forward immediately for development.

7.4 If the site were to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing, Bellway Homes aspiration is to develop the site immediately to deliver sufficient homes to meet the WBC's aspirations for Lymm. This in turn would contribute considerably to the Borough's 5 year housing land supply and deliver highly anticipated new homes early in the Plan Period. This commitment to delivery is demonstrated by Bellway Homes track record of the efficient delivery of high quality housing schemes across the Warrington and the North West.

### **BE SUITABLE**

7.5 A site is considered suitable for housing development if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation sustainable, mixed communities; and

7.6 The brownfield site is suitable for housing development because it:

- Offers a suitable location for development and can be brought forward immediately following any allocation;
- Would form a natural extension to the established Lymm residential area;
- Could utilise existing infrastructure surrounding the site and there are no utilities or drainage or infrastructure constraints preventing the site coming forward for development;

- Has no identified environmental constraints that would prevent the site coming forward for residential development;
- Can deliver satisfactory vehicular access from Rushgreen Road. In addition, existing bus stops are located close to the site;
- Is situated within a local highway network that has the capacity to accommodate the development;
- Will deliver new open space for use by residents and the local community; which could link with existing recreation networks and informal open space in the surrounding area;
- Will deliver an enhanced ecological area for the benefit of local wildlife and residents; and
- Is partially brownfield and is sustainably located and is close local services and facilities.

7.7 The site is therefore considered to be suitable in accordance with the requirements as set out in the NPPF.

#### **BE ACHIEVABLE**

7.8 A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site within five years. This is a judgement about the economic viability of a site and the capacity of the developer to compete and sell housing over a certain period taking into account market factors, cost factors and delivery factors.

7.9 The delivery of new homes in this location would make a positive contribution towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough. A full assessment of the site constraints has been undertaken which illustrates that delivery of the entire site is achievable and deliverable, and a professional team of technical experts has been appointed to underpin this assessment and support the delivery of the site moving forward. Where any potential constraints are identified, Bellway Homes has considered the necessary mitigation measures and required investment in order to overcome any deliverability barriers.

7.10 Bellway Homes has reviewed the economic viability of the proposals in terms of the land value, attractiveness of the locality, level of potential market demand and projected rate of sales in the Lymm ward and the Warrington Borough. These considerations have been analysed alongside cost factors associated with the site, including site preparation costs and site constraints.

7.11 Bellway Homes can therefore confirm that the site is economically viable and therefore achievable in accordance with the NPPF.

### **SUMMARY**

- 7.12 This Chapter has demonstrated that the site is deliverable, available, suitable and achievable for development and that is under the control of an experienced house builder that can demonstrate an excellent track record in delivering new housing across the UK. Bellway Homes is fully committed to bringing forward the site for residential development.

## 8 SUMMARY

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- 8.1 This Development Statement has demonstrated that WBC has not identified enough additional units to be released from the Green Belt in order to meet its annual housing need. Furthermore, WBC is not able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. It is therefore apparent WBC needs to release land from the Green Belt in order to meet housing need over the Plan period and to produce a Plan that is flexible in accordance with the NPPF.
- 8.2 Furthermore, paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that once the general extent of the Green Belt has been approved, it should only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances' through the plan making process. It has been demonstrated that the exceptional circumstances which support the alteration to the Green Belt in Warrington include the housing requirement, insufficient land and affordable housing.
- 8.3 As such the site at Tanyard Farm presents an exceptional opportunity to contribute towards meeting the future housing needs in Warrington Borough. This Development Statement demonstrates the case for allocating the site for housing development during the Plan period and sets out the exceptional circumstances that support an alteration to the Warrington Green Belt. The development of the brownfield part of the site could deliver 100 new homes of the type, quantity and quality of open market and affordable housing that will contribute to meeting the future growth needs of the Borough, without undermining the core purposes of the Green Belt.
- 8.4 In summary, this Development Statement has illustrated that the site at Tanyard Farm would:
- Positively contribute to the increase in identified need for new housing in the Borough over the life of the Plan Period, based on WBC's Local Plan Review evidence base and any subsequent uplift in this figure to account for affordability issues;
  - Create a range and mix of housing types that will make a positive contribution to the Borough's housing requirements by providing a mix of types and tenures of dwellings, including new affordable homes;
  - Be available, suitable, achievable and viable for housing development in accordance with national planning policy;
  - Generate growth and provide significant benefits to the local economy including the creation of new jobs, construction spend and investment generated by new residents;
  - Deliver an overall development vision for the site that provides a well-designed and sympathetic development in a sustainable location in Lymm; and

- Sensitively integrate with its surrounding landscape features, delivering a strengthened Green Belt boundary to the east and south of the site.
- 8.5 The overall masterplan demonstrates that the site is capable of delivering a high quality scheme comprising 210 houses (with 100 on the brownfield component) which will complement its setting and deliver a range of attractive benefits.
- 8.6 The site at Tanyard Farm can support WBC in planning for its future development needs and achieving long term sustainable development. The site is appropriate for Green Belt release and allocation as a residential development site as one that is well contained, has physical and defensible boundaries, and will not impact on the core purposes of the Green Belt. The site forms a logical extension to the residential area and can demonstrate the exceptional circumstances that exist to justify an alteration to the Green Belt in the Borough.
- 8.7 We have undertaken our own assessment of the site's contribution to the Green Belt and can conclude that it makes a weak contribution as it:
- Will not result in unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – no contribution;
  - Will not cause the merger of neighbouring towns – no contribution;
  - Will not create unacceptable encroachment into the countryside – weak contribution;
  - Will not impact on the special character of historic towns – weak contribution; and
  - Will not discourage urban regeneration – weak contribution.
- 8.8 It is clear WBC needs further Green Belt release to accommodate its housing needs as it is not possible to locate all of its housing in the existing urban areas and greenfield sites outside of the Green Belt. This Development Statement establishes and reinforces the need to release sites from the Green Belt. The site at Tanyard Farm can deliver housing within the next 5 years and should be released now.

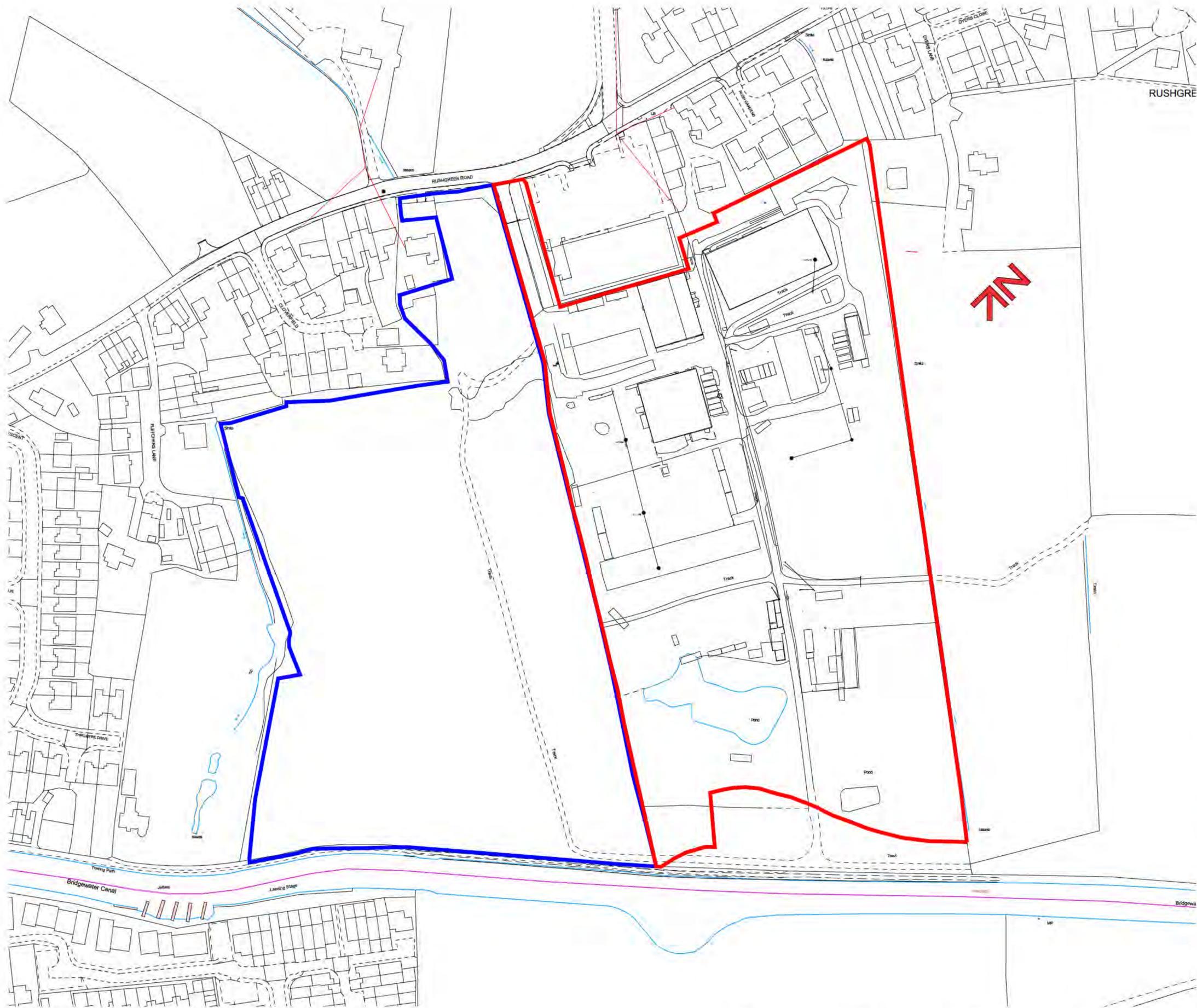
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## APPENDIX 1: SITE LOCATION PLAN

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general notes:  
 do not scale the drawing.  
 all dimensions to be checked on site prior to commencement of work and any discrepancy shall be immediately reported and resolved prior to work commencing.  
 this drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant drawings and specifications relating to the job whether or not indicated on the drawing.  
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-  Bellway Homes Land
-  Majornet Land



Rev.	Date	By	Description

Client:

**Bellway Homes  
 Manchester**

 **mck associates limited**  
 architecture | building surveying | urban design

burnaby villa • 48 watling street road • fulwood • preston • pr2 8bp  
 tel: 01772 774510 fax: 01772 774511 email mck@mckassociates.co.uk

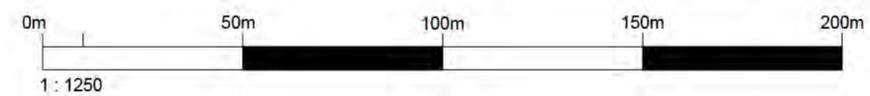
Project:

**Rush Green Road  
 Lymm**

Drawing Title:

**Location Plan**

Drawn: CT	Checked:	Scale: 1:1250	Date: SEPT 2017
Job No: 15-145	Drawing No: LP01	Rev:	



A2

PLANNING

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**APPENDIX 2: PROPOSED MASTERPLAN**

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Key

-  Site boundary
-  Primary route
-  Secondary route
-  Pedestrian/Cycle footpath
-  Pedestrian/Cycle footpath within ecological area
-  Proposed development platform
-  Proposed vegetation
-  Existing pond
-  Existing properties
-  Trim Trail Activities
-  Potential focal/landmark building locations
-  POS

Example Residential Development



Visualisation 1

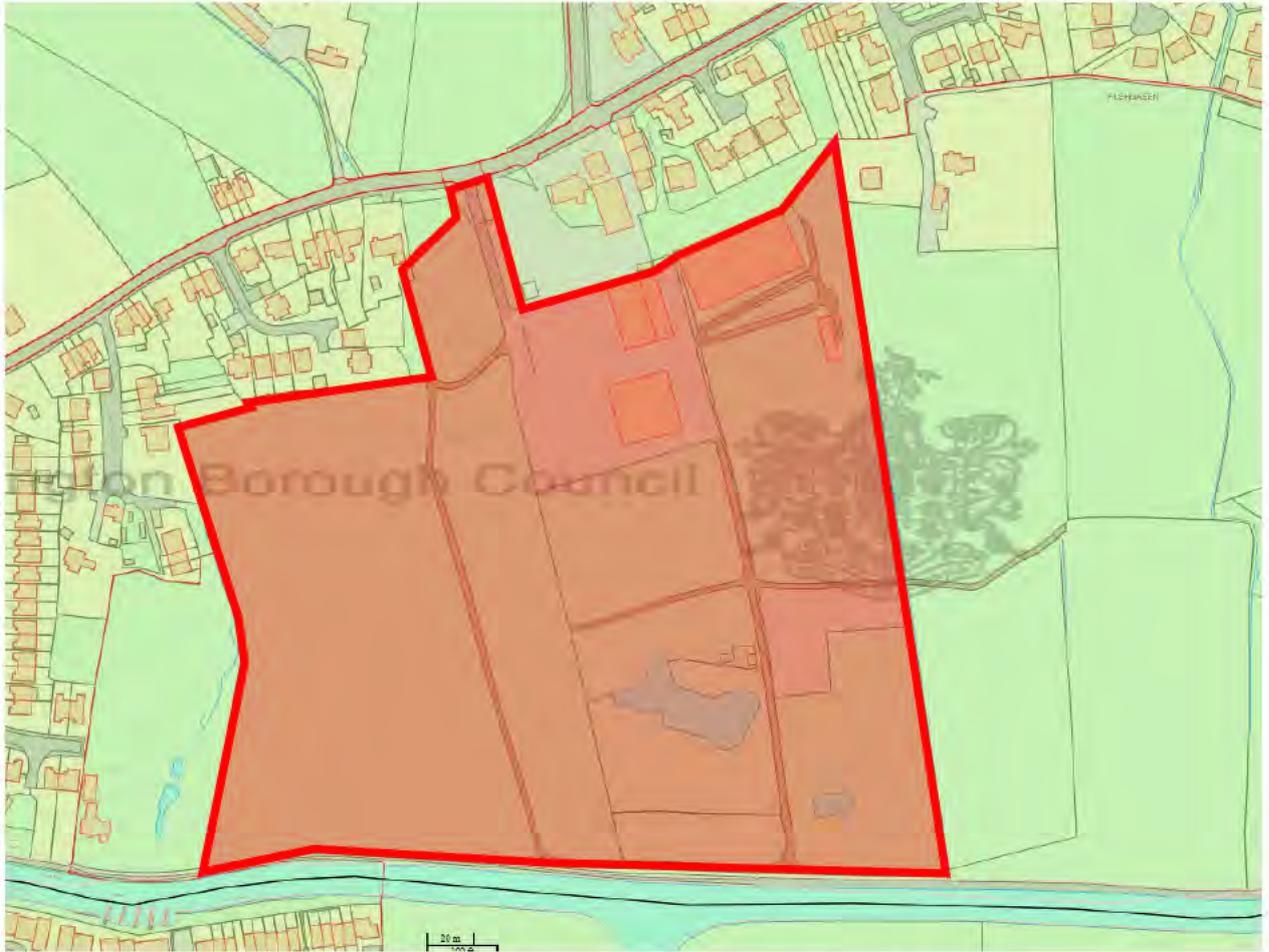


Visualisation 2

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## **APPENDIX 3: GREEN BELT RELEASE PLAN**

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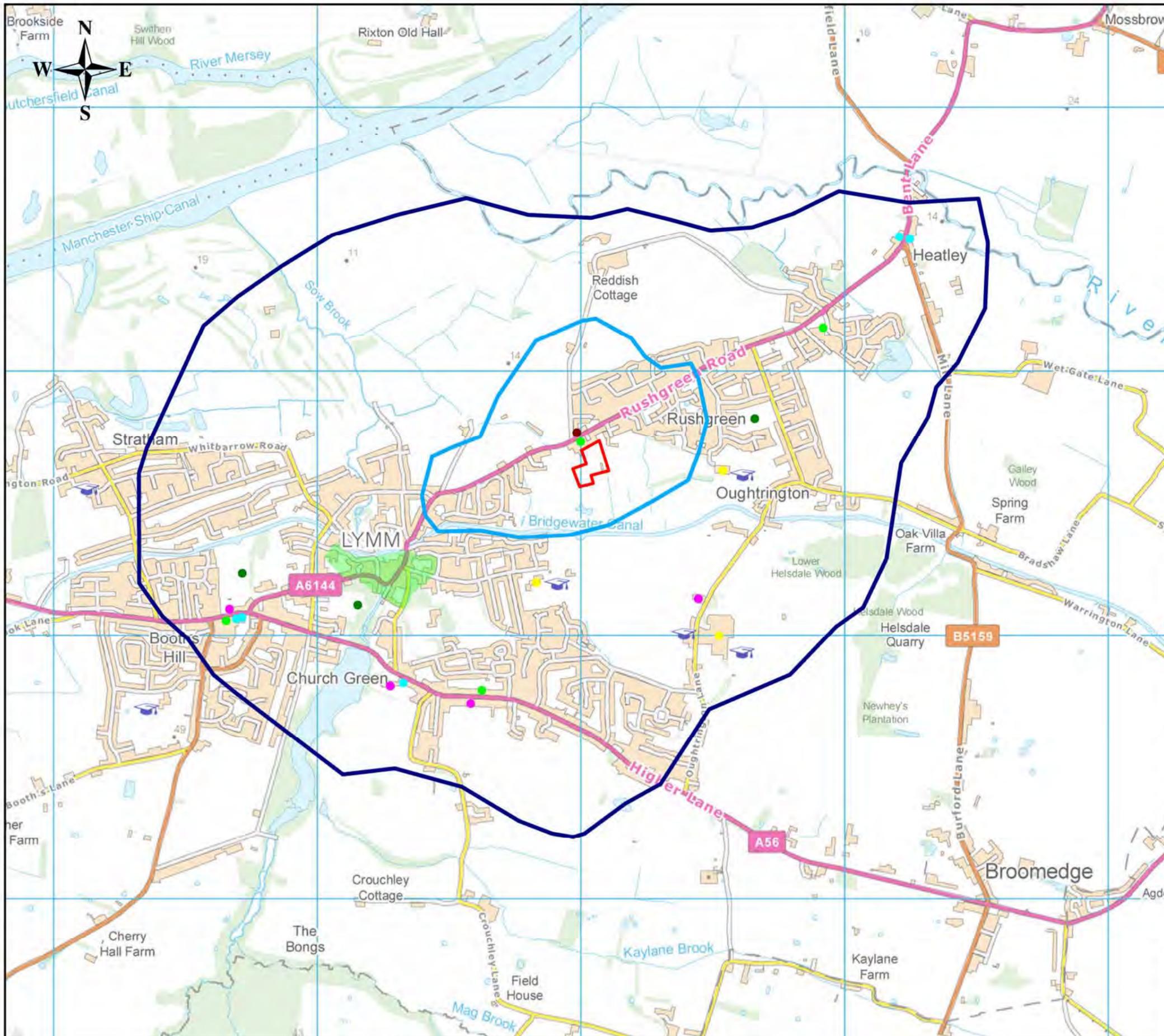


*Map showing the area of land recommended for removal from the Green Belt*

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## APPENDIX 4: SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

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**NOTES** PLAN 3

- Site Location
- 800m Pedestrian Catchment
- 2km Pedestrian Catchment
- Bus Stops within 400m
- Education
- Retail
- Lymm Village Centre
- Community Facilities
- Cafe/Takeaway/Public House
- Leisure/Sport

REV.	DETAILS	DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE	

CLIENT:  
**BELLWAY HOMES**

PROJECT:  
**PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT  
TANYARD FARM, LYMM**

DRAWING TITLE:  
**800M & 2KM PEDESTRIAN  
CATCHMENT WITH AMENITIES**

SCALE: **1:15000 @ A3**

DRAWN: SM	CHECKED: PJW	DATE: 29.06.17
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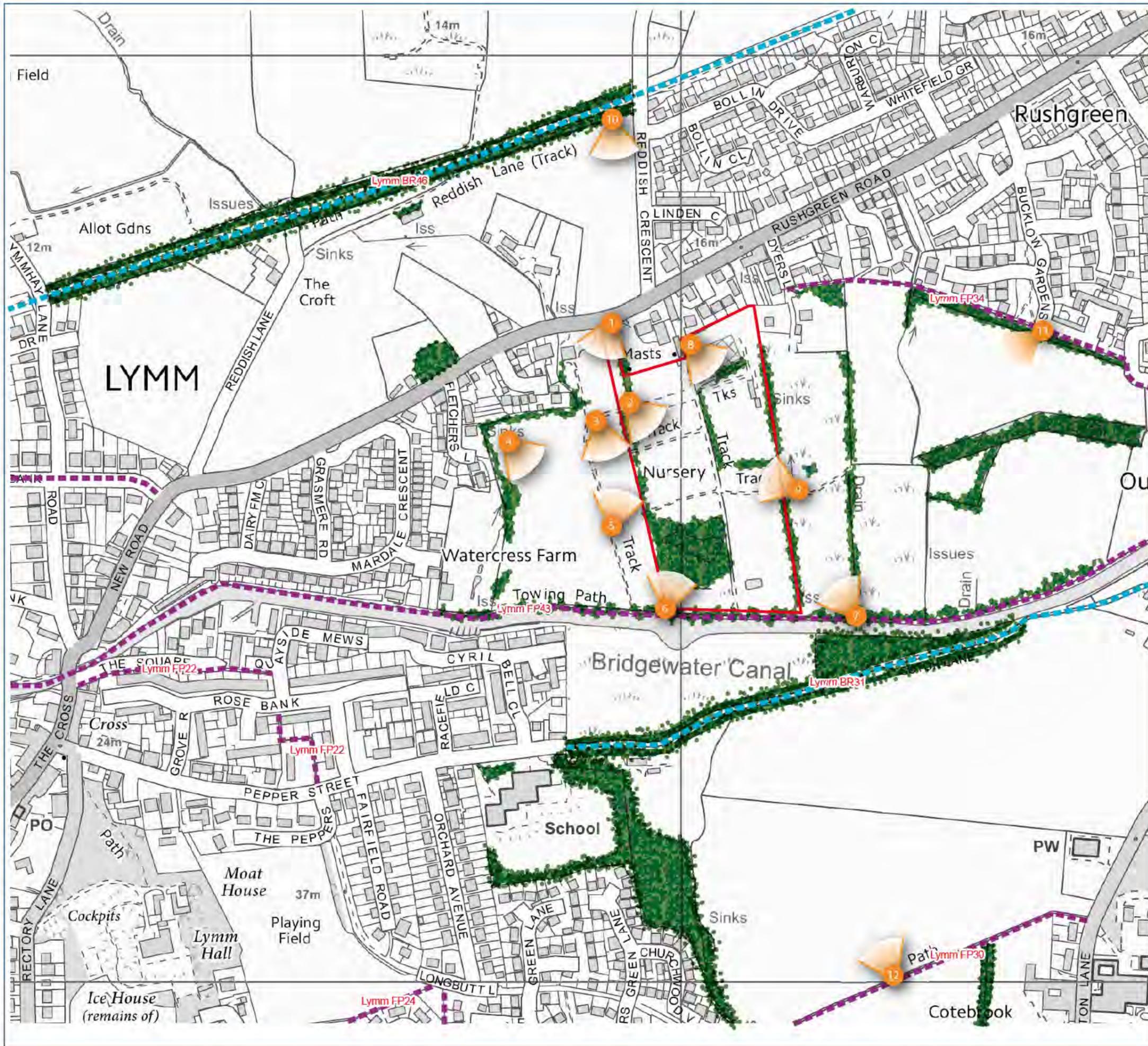
9 Jordan Street, Manchester, M15 4PY  
 Email: info@crofts.co.uk  
 Tel: 0161 667 3746  
 Web: www.crofts.co.uk

DRAWING NUMBER: **1855-03**      REVISION: .

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## **APPENDIX 5: COMBINED PHOTO VIEWPOINTS**

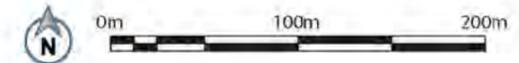
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-  Approximate Area of Consideration
-  Photoviewpoint Location
-  Principal Trees and Hedgerows Restricting Visibility
-  Public Footpath
-  Bridleway

**Photoviewpoint Locations**

- 1 - View south from Rushgreen Road along the existing entrance.
- 2 - View from the internal track within the area of consideration.
- 3 - View from the west, to illustrate the existing context of the area of consideration, from the adjoining land and the rear of properties off Rushgreen Road.
- 4 - View from the west, to illustrate the existing context of the area of consideration, from the adjoining land and the rear of properties off Rushgreen Road.
- 5 - View from the land adjoining the area of consideration to the south-west.
- 6 - View from Public Right of Way (Ref: Tow Path Lymm FP 43) to the south of the area of consideration.
- 7 - View from Public Right of Way (Ref: Tow Path Lymm FP 43) to the south-east of the area of consideration.
- 8 - View from the north of the area of consideration and the boundary with the new Sainsburys Supermarket.
- 9 - View from the adjoining track to the east of the area of consideration.
- 10 - View from Reddish Lane, part of the Trans Pennine Trail Bridle Way (Ref: Lymm BR 46). Looking south towards the area of consideration.
- 11 - View from Public Right of Way (Ref: Lymm FP 34), looking west towards the area of consideration.
- 12 - View from Public Right of Way (Ref: Lymm FP 30) between Longbutt Lane and St. Peter's Church. Looking north towards the area of consideration.



Project	Tanyard Farm, Lymm
Drawing Title	Photoviewpoint Locations
Scale	As Shown (Approximate)
Drawing No.	10990/P01
Date	June 2017
Checked	JB/AC



Photoviewpoint 1: View from Rushgreen Road



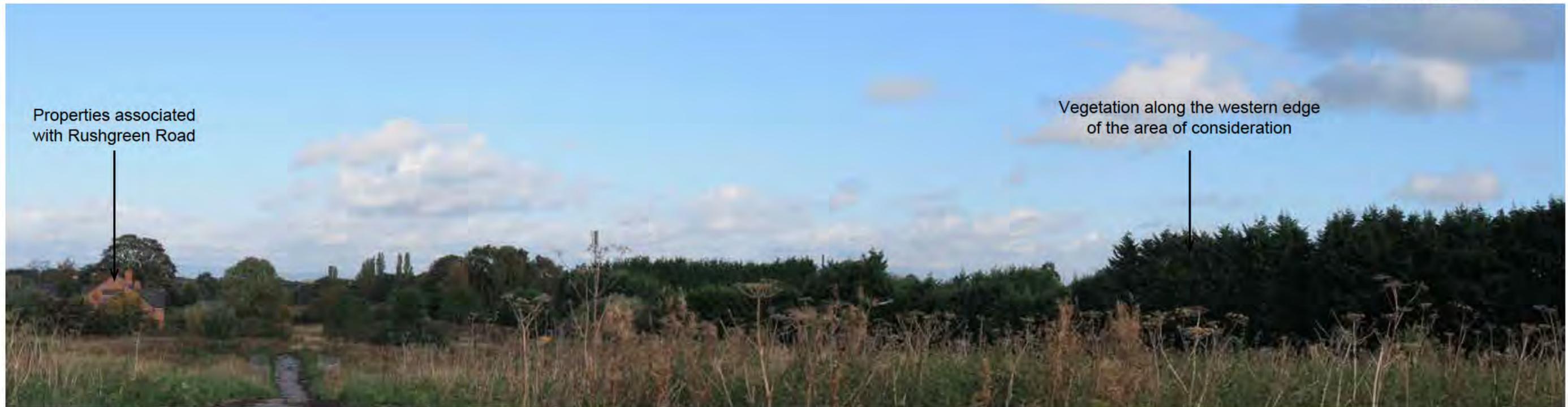
Photoviewpoint 2: View from the track just within the area of consideration



Photoviewpoint 3: View from the west, to illustrate the existing context of the area of consideration, from the properties off Rushgreen Road



Photoviewpoint 4: View from the west, to illustrate the existing context of the area of consideration, from the properties off Rushgreen Road



Photoviewpoint 5: View from land adjoining the area of consideration to the south-west.



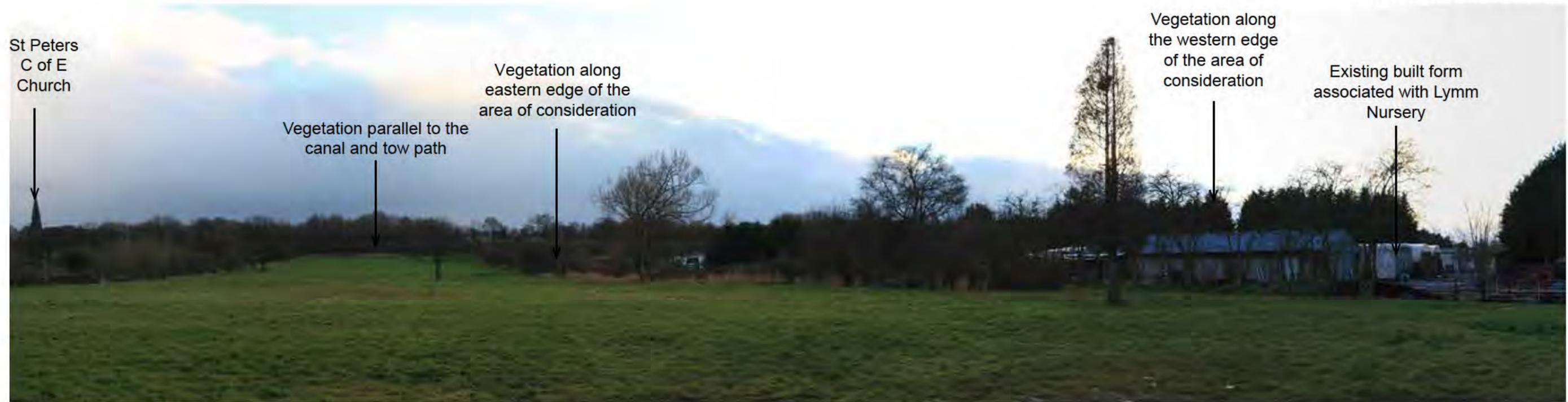
Photoviewpoint 6: View from Public Right of Way, Tow Path (ref: Lymm FP 43) to the south of the area of consideration.



Photoviewpoint 7: View from Public Right of Way, Tow Path (ref: Lymm FP 43) to the south-east of the area of consideration.



Photoviewpoint 8: View from the north and the boundary of the new Sainsbury's store.



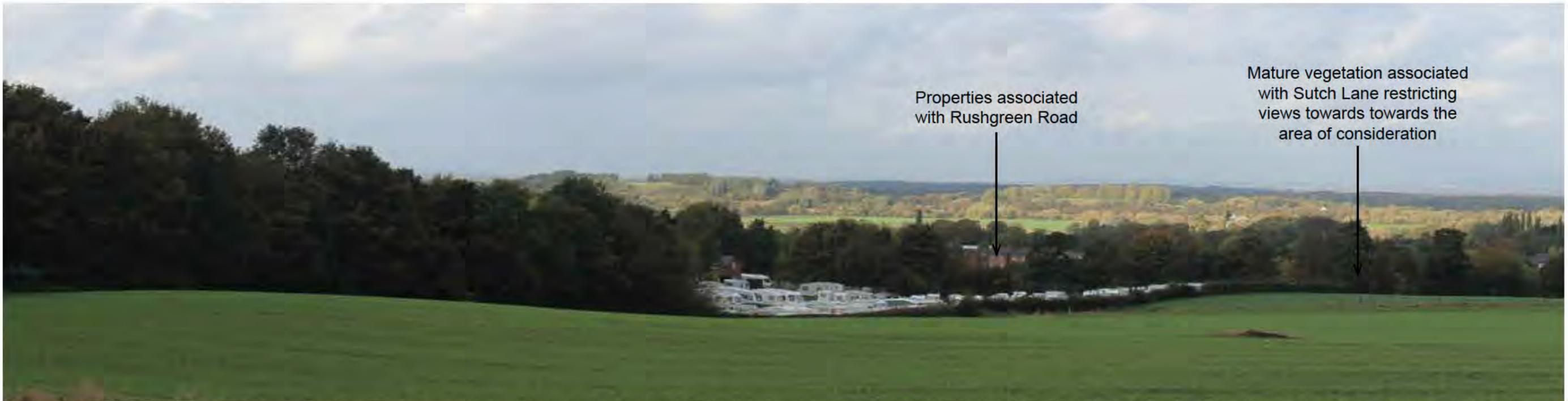
Photoviewpoint 9: View from an adjoining track to the east of the area of consideration.



Photoviewpoint 10: View om Reddish Lane, part of the Trans Pennine Trail, Public Right of Way (ref: LymmBR46) looking south toward the area of consideration



Photoviewpoint 11: View from Public Right of Way (ref: LymmFP34) looking west toward the area of consideration.



Photoviewpoint 12: View from Public Right of Way (ref: LymmFP30) between Longbutt Lane and St Peter's Church of England, looking north towards the area of consideration.

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