

Warrington Local Plan EiP

Matter 6e: Main Development Area: Thelwall Heys

On behalf of Taylor Wimpey (Respondent Ref Number: 1427)

Date: 01 August 2022 | Pegasus Ref: P20-3147 / R0013v1 / PL

Author: ST/RD





Document Management.

Version	Date	Author	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for revision
V1	01 August 2022	RD	ST	

1. Matter 6e – Main Development Area: Thelwall Heys

1.1. Our position on Thelwall Heys is set out in our representations in response to Policy MD5 – Thelwall Heys (UPS VLP 1427).

1.2. Below we raise comments on pertinent matters in direct response to the questions.

Q1. What is the background to the Main Development Area and how was it identified?

1.3. Thelwall Heys was not included as an allocation in the Preferred Development Option (PDO). During the consultation, the site was put forward as an allocation by Liberty Properties who have an interest in the site¹.

1.4. Thelwall Heys was also not included as an allocation in the first Regulation 19 WLP (PVL P1). During the consultation, the site was put forward again effectively as an extension to the Garden Suburb which was identified as an allocation at that time².

1.5. The Council's consideration of the allocation is documented in Development Options and Site Assessment Technical Report (September 2021) (O1). It is set out in that document, that the Council considered the allocation following the first Regulation 19 WLP consultation owing to the responses that smaller sites should be considered which can be delivered early in the plan period³. It should therefore be noted that the most recent representations did not endorse a small, stand-alone allocation at Thelwall Heys, rather an extension to the Garden Suburb.

1.6. It would appear that the Council have reverted back to the first proposal put forward by Liberty Properties at the time of the consultation the Preferred Development Options although this is not made clear in the Development Options and Site Assessment Technical Report (September 2021).

1.7. This is an important point to make, as it has not been document that the Council have given any consideration to the fact that a relatively small allocation at Thelwall Heys, which is separated from the South East Warrington Urban Extension and South East Warrington Employment Area, does not provide scope for a Mass Transit Route for this part of Warrington, which is clearly set out as a policy objective in the adopted Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). This is a matter which should have been given due consideration in the assessment of the options at Thelwall Heys.

Q2. What is the basis for the scale of development proposed and is this justified?

¹ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/pdo_1112_redacted.pdf

² chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-11/lpr_0031_redacted.pdf

³ O1, para 4.16 to 4.18

- 1.8. The policy requires a minimum of 300 dwellings on the site at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) with the requirement for the development proposals to be in accordance with the Heritage Impact Assessment for Thelwall Heys; including the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures (parts 1, 5 and 24).
- 1.9. The Development Statement submitted with the representations at the time of the Preferred Development Option endorsed a range of densities on the site from 10dph to 40dph and an overall capacity of 310 homes⁴.
- 1.10. However, the Heritage Impact Assessment for Thelwall Heys (August 2021) (**HIA3**), was prepared after the Development Framework and includes a series of measures to maximise enhancements and mitigate harm.
- 1.11. On the basis that the capacity of the site was established in the Development Statement, and account still needs to be given to the enhancement and mitigation measures set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment for Thelwall Heys (August 2021), it is not considered that the scale of the development has been justified.

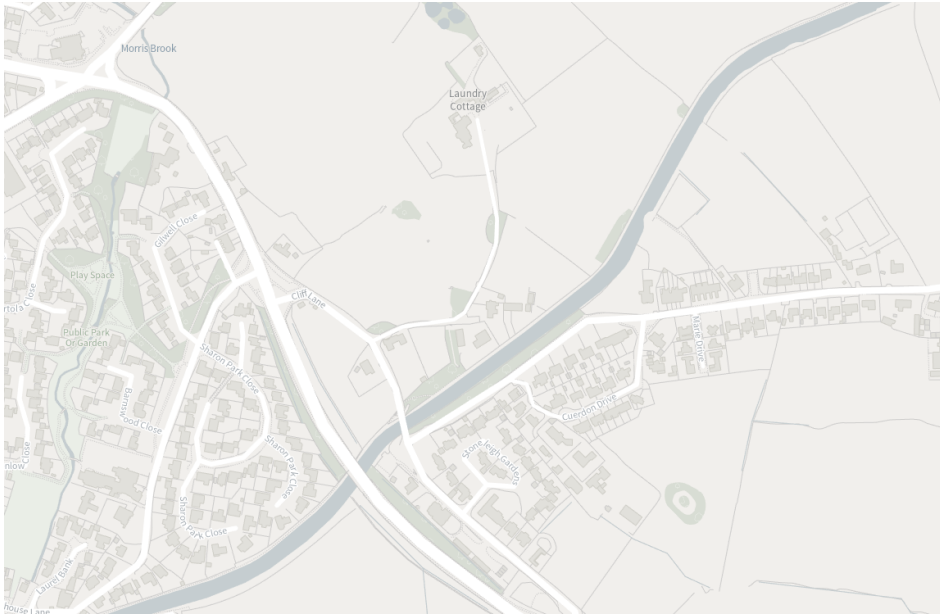
Q3. What are the conclusions of the Green Belt Assessment in relation to the contribution of the land in question to the purposes of the Green Belt and the potential to alter the Green Belt in this location?

- 1.12. We note that this allocation falls within a General Area Parcel 9 located east of the A50 and west of the M6 that ranks 'moderate' and therefore higher than General Area 10 that relates to the former Garden Suburb Area that ranked as 'weak'.
- 1.13. That said, we do not take any particular issue with Arup's assessment of this Green Belt Parcel WR35 in document GB5 (plan 17) and its overall weak contribution.

Q4. What would be the effect of developing the site on the purposes of the Green Belt?

- 1.14. Notwithstanding our response above, there are other consequences associated with the development of this site because not only will parcel WR35 have to be released from the Green Belt but so will Parcel WR34 located to the immediate north as indicated on the Submitted Proposals Map (**SD2**).
- 1.15. We note that the Council/Arup make no reference to this in document ref: GB3 (page 15) where the following is stated:
- 'The new Green Belt boundary would be defined by the Bridgewater Canal and Cliff Lane to the south, All Saints Drive to the east and the Trans Pennine Trail to the north which represent recognisable and permanent boundaries.'*
- 1.16. We seriously question if Cliff Lane can be regarded as a durable boundary noting the fact that there is existing built form / homes located on the southern side of Cliff Lane and between the Bridgewater Canal.

⁴ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfindmkaj/https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/pdo_1112_redacted.pdf



1.17. Furthermore, to the immediate south of the canal, there is also relatively large residential area/village which is currently washed over by Green Belt but will become more integrated to the new urban form created on the Thelwall Heys site so there will be further pressure to release additional Green Belt land on this site of the A50 by virtue of this proposal (see aerial image below).



Q5. Are there exceptional circumstances to alter the Green Belt in this particular case? If so, what are they?

1.18. We accept there are exceptional circumstances to release Green Belt for housing delivery in Warrington but this should result in other sustainable outcomes. Unlike the proposals for the Garden Suburb, Thelwall Heys will not make a physical or financial contribution to the delivery of infrastructure that could Mass Transport infrastructure in South Warrington as

advocated by the adopted LTP4 and therefore the exceptional circumstances / benefits associated with the Thelwall Heys proposals are not as strong as the former Garden Suburb proposals.

Q6. What is the approach towards Green Belt compensatory improvements? Is this sufficiently clear?

- 1.19. No clear details are provided in this regard. We reserve the right to comment at the examination.

Q7. What is the background to the specific policy requirements in Policy MD5? Are they justified and consistent with national policy? Do they provide clear and effective guidance on constraints and suitable mitigation?

- 1.20. No comment at this stage but we reserve the right to comment at the examination.

Q8. Does Policy MD5 identify all appropriate and necessary infrastructure requirements? How will these be provided and funded? Is this sufficiently clear?

- 1.21. No comment at this stage but we reserve the right to comment at the examination.

Q9. Are there potential adverse effects not covered above, if so, what are they and how would they be addressed and mitigated? N.B. The Council's response should address key issues raised in representations

- 1.22. As noted above, another adverse effect of the Council opting for the Thelwall Heys allocation alongside the South East Warrington Urban Extension and South East Warrington Employment Area, is the inability of this allocation to deliver a Mass Transit Route for this part of Warrington, which is clearly set out as a policy objective in the adopted Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4).

Q10. Is the development proposed viable and deliverable as anticipated within the plan period? What is the situation in relation to land ownership and developer interest?

- 1.23. No comment at this stage but we reserve the right to comment at the examination.

Q11. How is it intended to bring the site forward for development? What mechanisms will there be to ensure a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to development, ensuring that infrastructure requirements are provided?

- 1.24. No comment at this stage but we reserve the right to comment at the examination.

Q12. Are any main modifications necessary for soundness?

- 1.25. The Thelwall Heys allocation (and the South East Warrington Urban Extension and South East Warrington Employment Area) should be removed.

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