

Design & Access Statement

Land at Chapel Lane, Widnes

December 2024



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This Design and Access Statement (D&As) has been developed to support the Outline Planning Application for land east of Chapel Lane, Widnes. The scope and content of the document demonstrates the commitment of Taylor Wimpey to deliver a high quality sustainable development, based on a thorough process of contextual appreciation, design evolution, stakeholder and community engagement, embodying best practice in spatial planning and urban design.
2. A full appreciation of the Site and local context has been undertaken in order to inform this Outline Planning Application.
3. The proposal seeks to deliver a new high quality residential development of 350 homes and a Green and Blue Infrastructure network containing a series of open spaces, retained and new trees and hedgerows, terrestrial and wetland habitats, creating a new neighbourhood on the northern edge of Widnes.
4. In essence, the aim of these proposals in a post-Covid19 world will be to create homes in which people will be happy to spend time in for either living or working, set into a strong public realm and green environment in which they can interact with one another and the natural environment.
5. It is intended that this new neighbourhood will become a positive asset to the town and the wider borough in terms of design, layout and open space, creating an open and inclusive neighbourhood with a mix of community and recreational facilities for use by existing and new residents.
6. This application consists of not only this Statement but also the submitted application drawings and supporting documents, as listed in the covering letter submitted with the planning application.
7. The final proposals have emerged out of a thorough process of design development, review, testing, and revision, as described in this Statement. This iterative process has ensured that the final proposals included in this Design and Access Statement meets the requirements of the Local Plan Policies, the various stakeholders and wider community.
8. The development of the Site would result in a sympathetic, sustainable and high quality gateway into Widnes from the north west, with a strong Green Infrastructure network, offering improved linkages into and through the development, shared infrastructure, biodiversity, open spaces and community access.

The following table seeks to summarise the key issues considered in this Statement:

Element	Description/Approach Taken
Uses & Quantum	This application relates to a residential development on land on the northern edge of Widnes. The outline application proposes to deliver: • 350 homes in a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed properties, of which there will be 20% dedicated affordable housing in line with Policy CSR 12 of the Local Plan. • The development of a network of public open spaces, play area, ecological habitats and leisure paths/cycleways to create usable and interesting spaces for play, recreation and the personal study of the natural world by children and adults. These spaces will create a Green Infrastructure network, providing space for sustainable urban drainage as well as creating wildlife corridors through the Site and out into the surrounding countryside.
Layout	A parameters masterplan has been developed to illustrate the spatial arrangements for the Site and is supported by an illustrative masterplan/indicative layout illustrating the application of design principles as set-out in the parameters. The two drawings combine to demonstrate the ability of the Site to accommodate what is being applied for, whilst still achieving a sustainable and well considered proposal, which is integrated into the landscape and townscape in which it sits.
Scale	The scale of properties on the Site is defined in the Statement. Primarily the Site will be made up of 2 storey homes (circa 8m to ridge) with limited use of 2.5 storey properties (up to circa 10m to ridge) used in key locations as landmarks. Consideration of the visual impact on the surrounding landscape and heritage assets has been informed by the Landscape and Visual Assessment and Heritage study that accompanies this application.
Landscape & Open Space	A green infrastructure strategy has been prepared to establish the strategic framework for the provision of open space for the Site. This is based on the retention and enhancement of significant landscape features, the development of new wildlife habitats, the provision of amenity space and play opportunities. The landscape setting is also part of the intended character of the development which draws its inspiration from the character of the surrounding landscape.
Appearance	Matters of architectural design are reserved but any future reserved matters applications will utilise the local design related policies and design guidance to create architectural forms which will sit well in the context and local vernacular of the wider town.
Access	Approval is sought for access in this application. The proposals seeks to achieve access for all, based on best practice principles prioritising pedestrian, cycle and public transport access, while also accommodating efficient access for motor vehicles. A primary vehicular access is proposed off a junction from Chapel Lane in addition to a secondary emergency access. Footpath/cycleways will provide links to the surrounding neighbourhoods, the countryside and wider settlement adjoining to the Site.



Figure 01.01: Application Boundary Plan

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey by an experienced multidisciplinary consultant team. It relates to an Outline Planning Application for the land east of Chapel Lane on the northern fringes of the town of Widnes.
- 1.2 Outline Planning Application (with all matters other than access reserved) (to be determined by Halton Borough Council only) for the development of up to 350 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure works. Full details for Site access arrangements via a new junction and emergency access on Chapel Lane (to be determined by Knowsley Borough Council only) and a secondary emergency access via Sandy Lane (to be determined by Halton Borough Council).
- 1.3 The application Site is situated within the boundary of two separate allocations for residential development within the adopted Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan [DALP] (March 2022) under Policy RD1 (Residential Development Allocations). The allocations comprise two separate land parcels separated by Sandy Lane, (Site Ref. W4 to the west of Sandy Lane and Site Ref. W5 to the east). The allocations, when considered together, identify a capacity of 432 dwellings and can be delivered as one comprehensive development.'
- 1.4 This application relates to the proposed housing scheme as illustrated by the application boundary in Figure 01.01 opposite and covers an area of 14.92 hectares (including areas of Sandy Lane, Chapel Lane and Old Upton Lane within the red line).
- 1.5 The Site is currently made up of two compartments of grass cropping fields and paddocks separated by Sandy Lane a footpath and bridleway which runs between the fringes of Widnes and Cronton which is bordered by hedgerows and associated trees.
- 1.6 The Site is bounded by the existing urban fringes of Widnes to the south, the retained elements of Rose Farm and Chapel Lane to the west, a brook and open fields to

the north and a plantation of trees to the east.

Process

- 1.7 The process undertaken in developing the masterplan and preparing the Design and Access Statement (D&As) follows best practice, as set out in various guidance and policy documents. We have taken account of guidance within the Halton Borough Council Design of Residential Development SPD (adopted May 2012) and national design guidance in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Design Guide (NDG) and the National Model Design Code (NMDC).
- 1.8 In line with the above guidance this Statement details the contextual relationship of the Site with its surroundings and the design process undertaken to establish the Parameters and Illustrative Masterplan for the Site. The illustrative layout also demonstrates the Site's capacity, functionality and detail.

Scope and Content

- 1.9 This Design & Access Statement has been developed to support the Outline Planning Application for this Site at Chapel Lane, Widnes, hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. The scope and content of the document demonstrates the commitment of Taylor Wimpey to deliver a high quality sustainable development, based on a thorough process of contextual appreciation and design evolution.
- 1.10 The proposal seeks to deliver a high quality new residential neighbourhood including 350 homes on the northern edge of Widnes.
- 1.11 It is intended that this new neighbourhood will become a positive asset to the settlement in terms of design, layout and open space. The development will create an open and inclusive neighbourhood with a mix of facilities for use by existing and new residents.
- 1.12 The design has been developed to take account of a **post-pandemic world** in which working from home, walking, cycling and inhabiting ones immediate neighbourhood

becomes the '**New Normal**'. Whilst creating liveable and human neighbourhoods have been important for many years Covid19 has put that need into sharp relief (see Chapter 3 for more detail).

- 1.13 This Outline Planning Application comprises the following elements:
 - A principal Site access off Chapel Lane to the west.
 - Good pedestrian connectivity and permeability between the adjoining neighbourhoods, the countryside and Site.
 - 9.17 hectares (net) of the Site as residential development including 350 residential dwellings with associated access, servicing and green infrastructure.
 - A Green Infrastructure network covering 5.14 hectares or 36% of the Site which will include a variety of functions such as:
 - i Public Open Space,
 - ii Play Areas,
 - iii Retained and new native trees and hedgerows,
 - iv Retained and new wetland habitats,
 - v Retained and new meadow habitats,
 - vi Orchards,
 - vii A sustainable urban drainage network, and
 - viii Connections to the Public Right of Way network which runs through and across the Site.

2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

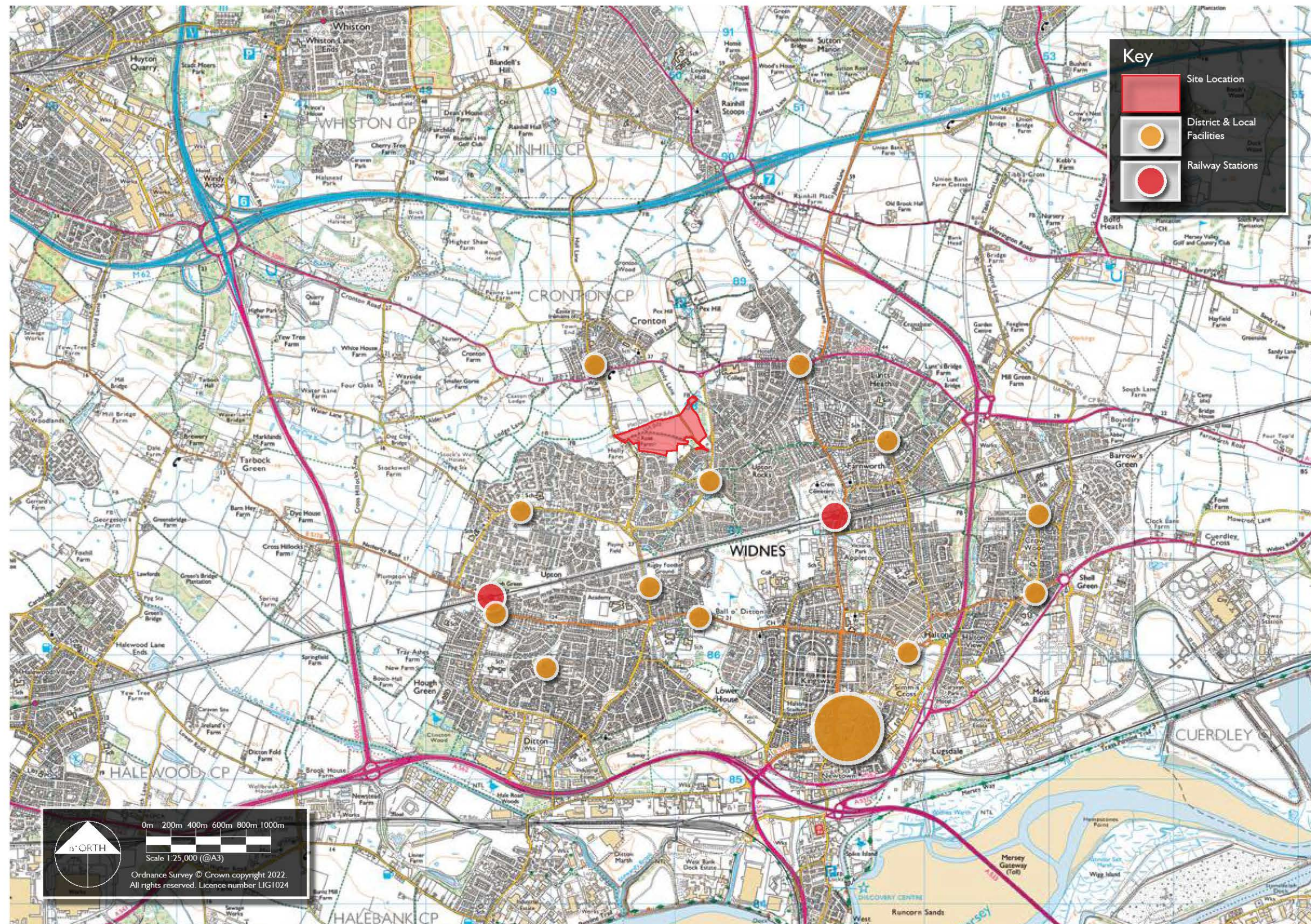


Figure 02.01: Sub-Regional Context

2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

Site CONTEXT

Sub-Regional Context

- 2.1 The Site is located on the northern fringes of the town of Widnes in the borough of Halton in North West England as illustrated in Figure 02:01.
- 2.2 Widnes is an industrial town which was historically in Lancashire but currently is located as part of Halton Borough Council, along with Runcorn in the county of Cheshire.
- 2.3 Prior to 1847 Widnes was a small settlement on the marshes bordering the Mersey. In that year a chemical plant was established on Spike Island and the town rapidly grew to become a major centre of the chemical industry.
- 2.4 The Site benefits from good transport links. Immediately adjoining Chapel Lane/Prescot Road, providing access into Widnes town centre, less than 2.0 miles to the south via the B5178 Leigh Avenue and the B5416 Kingsway.
- 2.5 Warrington is also directly accessible via the A5080/A562 which is around 6 miles east from the Site.
- 2.6 The A5080 which lies just a third of a mile to the north of the Site connects directly west to the M62 to Liverpool or east via the A557 to Warrington/Manchester.
- 2.7 The A557 also provides connections south to the new Mersey Gateway Bridge via the A553 and provides improved access from Widnes to Runcorn, with Manchester also accessed via the M56.
- 2.8 The nearest train station is located at Widnes, on Birchfield Road with Hough Green station lying on the same line less than 2 miles to the west. Both stations are located on the southern arm of the Liverpool to Manchester Line with trains to Liverpool Lime Street, Warrington Central, Manchester Piccadilly and on to Stockport, Sheffield, Nottingham and Norwich.
- 2.9 There is also a train station just over the river Mersey in Runcorn town centre with direct trains to Liverpool Lime

Street, Crewe, Chester, Birmingham New Street, London Euston and stations in between.

Local Context

- 2.10 The Sites more detailed location and its association to the wider neighbourhood of Upton Rocks is illustrated over page in Figure 02:02.
- 2.11 The Site sits on relatively flat ground on the southern peripheries of a compartment of agricultural land, enclosed by the surrounding roads of Queensbury Way, Chapel Lane and Cronton Road. Sandy Lane dissects the fields in this wider parcel and also dissects the Site and is currently designated as a bridleway.
- 2.12 The Site adjoins the rear of properties which front onto Upton Grange to the south, along with a series of paddocks and woodlands associated with properties accessed off Cornerhouse Lane.
- 2.13 To the west the Site is bordered paddocks and the retained Gardens at Rose Farm before running along the road frontage to Chapel Lane.
- 2.14 The northern boundary runs along the watercourse which appears unnamed, although downstream,further to the west, it's named as Dog Clog Brook.

- 2.15 The eastern boundary runs along a hedgerow boundary which borders a triangular shaped area of regenerated woodland between the Site and Queensbury Way.
- 2.16 Much of Upton Rocks was developed as part of the original New Town with old historic holloways and field ponds being retained in linear open spaces through the residential neighbourhoods. This linked network of green spaces and associated public rights of way are illustrated in Figure 02:02 opposite. These routes form part of the wider of green infrastructure network which incorporates the wider avenues along Queensbury Way, hedgerows along Chapel Lane and the public right of way and watercourse associated with the Site before linking out to the wider countryside.
- 2.17 The footpath network across and round the Site provides a strong series of routes into the wider neighbourhood and out to the countryside. The routes combined with the road network means that this area of Widnes is highly permeable to pedestrians.
- 2.18 This permeability enables direct access to a wider area with bus stops, pubs, shops and schools being accessible within a 5 to 15 minute walk of the Site.



Chapel Lane looking north along Site frontage



Chapel Lane looking south along Site frontage

2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

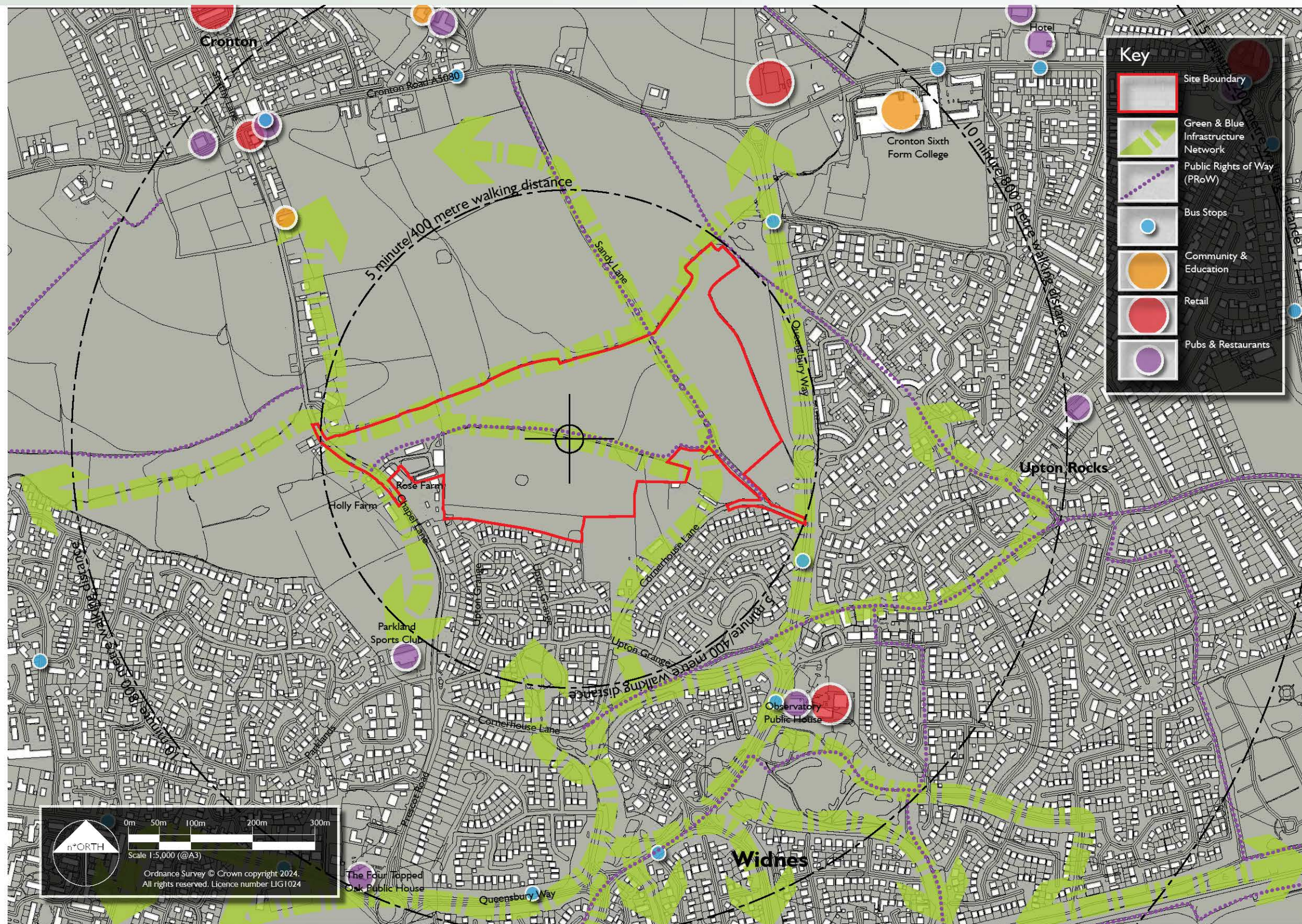


Figure 02.02: Local Context

2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

- 2.19 The nearest bus stops to the Site are on Queensbury Way providing routes between Cronton and Widnes Town Centre.
- 2.20 Cronton Sixth Form College is located to the north west of the Site on Cronton Lane/Road near Queensbury Way. Six primary schools are located within 1.5 miles of the Site with two in Cronton, one in Lunt's Heath, one in Farnworth and two in Hough Green. The local secondary school; Wade Deacon High School is located around a mile to the south on Birchfield Road and therefore the Site is well located to be served by a full range of educational provision.
- 2.21 In addition to the educational facilities the Site is also well served by sports pitches and clubs including Precot Road Playing Fields, Parklands Social Club and the Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club.

CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.22 Figure 02.03 over page illustrates the main physical characteristics of the Site and immediate context. This analysis contains inputs from the whole consultant team and has informed the evolution of both the parameters and illustrative masterplans.

- 2.23 The Site is made up of the following two allocations contained within the adopted Halton Borough Council Delivery and Allocations Local Plan, for 432 dwellings. Taylor Wimpey controls the majority of the overall allocations but not all, and this proposal is for up to 350 dwellings.
- 2.24 Site Ref W4 (Chapel Lane to Old Upton Lane) comprising of 14.26ha and a notional capacity of 299 units. Site W5 (Sandy Lane to Queensbury Way) comprising of 6.33ha and with a notional capacity of 133 units.
- 2.25 The Site is allocated via Policy RD1 in the Delivery and Allocations Plan, however there is no Site-specific policy relating to specific highway considerations for the Site.
- 2.26 The masterplan has evolved to take account of not just the physical Site, but also what emerged from discussions with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and comments received from the local community as part of the community consultation.

Topography

- 2.27 The Site falls from circa 38m A.O.D. to 31m A.O.D. east to west, as illustrated in Figure 02:03. Whilst 7m appears to be quite a change in level the Site falls over a distance of 500 metres making the slope across the Site very gentle.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.28 The Site and local area has good access to the surrounding countryside and neighbourhoods via the existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, streets and lanes, as described previously.
- 2.29 One Public Right of Way (W/16) runs east to west through the Site linking Sandy Lane with Chapel Lane and follows the course of a hedgerow for the most part. Sandy Lane has been downgraded from a vehicular route to a Bridleway and appears to be well used by pedestrians and cyclists travelling between Widnes and Cronton.
- 2.30 These routes connect the Site to the wider network as described earlier in this chapter.

Landscape & Visual

- 2.31 The LVIA study area includes housing areas on the northern edge of Widnes, parts of Cronton to the north and the farmland which separates the settlements. As the Site is well enclosed by existing urban areas to the south and east, there are more publicly accessible open views from the land to the north. As such the study area extends further north into the land which falls within the jurisdiction of Knowsley Council.



2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities



Figure 02.03: Constraints & Opportunities Plan

2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

- 2.32 To the south of the Site there are modern residential properties located on Upton Grange, and the cul-de-sacs leading off this route, as well as the residential area of Kennington Park. This housing comprises modern, brick, largely two-storey, detached houses. On the northern side of Old Upton Lane, there are a small number of older properties with large gardens/paddocks, as well as some woodland.
- 2.33 To the east, beyond Queensbury Way, lies the recently constructed Upton Rocks residential area which extends north to Cronton Sixth Form College. This housing area and the college now forms the edge of the Widnes urban area and defines the extent of the gap between Widnes and Cronton.
- 2.34 A single row of houses extends along the eastern side of Chapel Lane and these comprise a variety of house types, of different ages and finishes.
- 2.35 Similarly the houses on the southern edge of Cronton, which overlook Cronton Road, are variable in style with some traditional housing and newer properties, as well as single and two-storey housing.
- 2.36 The agricultural land between the settlements includes both pastoral and arable land uses. Field sizes are variable with some large scale fields which appear to have been the result of the amalgamation of several fields and which, in some cases, are subdivided with electric/wire fencing. There are also small scale fields divided by fragmented hedgerows. There is vegetation growing alongside the streams which flow through the areas and around the numerous field ponds. Plantation woodland in geometric blocks, as well as trees along the settlement edge, are frequent. Although there is vegetation along the urban edge, the fringe areas are a noticeable characteristic of the landscape.
- 2.37 Chapel Lane connects northwards from Widnes to Cronton. This is a minor road bordered by housing, mainly on its eastern side, with street lighting and a highway footpath on one side.
- 2.38 Cronton Road/A5080 runs on an east to west alignment, on the southern edge of Cronton. Where the main road passes through the settlement it is overlooked by houses, largely to the north, and there are highway footpaths on both sides and street lighting.
- 2.39 Cronton Road connects to Queensbury Way via a roundabout. Queensbury Way runs southwards from the roundabout, providing access to the Upton Rocks area of housing.
- 2.40 Sandy Lane is a minor country lane which is now closed off to traffic, providing pedestrian and cycle connections from Old Upton Lane, northwards to Cronton.
- 2.41 The landform is largely flat with a very gradual slope from higher land to the north-east, to lower areas to the south-west. Generally, the ground levels range between around 40m AOD and 25mAOD, but there is a localised high point at Pex Hill where the levels rise to 67m.
- 2.42 Pex Hill is a country park, nature reserve and forms part of the Mersey Forest. It consists of stunted oak woodland surrounded by heathland, with exposed sandstone faces which are the remnants of former quarrying activity. There are a number of public footpaths at Pex Hill, but views southwards from this higher land are generally enclosed by vegetation.
- 2.43 There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) running through the farmland and linking through the housing areas to the north of Widnes.
- 2.44 PRoW W/16 links from Chapel Lane, eastwards through the Site to Sandy Lane. This route is described further in relation to the Site description.
- 2.45 PRoW W/12 runs through the Upton Rocks housing area,



2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

crossing Queensbury Way to run through woodland. The footpath crosses Alder Brook and into land within the jurisdiction of Knowsley Council. For the purposes of this report, this section of the PRow is referred to as W/12 extension, as Knowsley do not show the path on their definitive map. The route is shown on OS mapping to run diagonally through the field but the signposted route, and the walked route, is around the edge of the field to link to Cronton Road.

- 2.46 PRow CR/11/1 links from Chapel Lane, westwards through fields, towards Lodge Lane.
- 2.47 The Site is most clearly visible from PRow W/16 which passes through the Site and from Sandy Lane which runs alongside it.
- 2.48 Existing built form and vegetation enclose the Site to the south, east and parts of the western boundary and this limits the visibility of the Site from public viewpoints within these areas.
- 2.49 There is a fleeting view into the Site from a short section of Chapel Lane which generally has an urban character, due to the presence of housing along the majority of its route.
- 2.50 In views from the north the Site is partially screened by intervening buildings and vegetation. A layering of

vegetation provided by the hedgerows and trees growing alongside Sandy Lane and along Alder Brook filters public views of the western parts of the Site. The eastern parts of the Site are generally more visible from the north, due to the sparser vegetation along the northern boundary of this part of the Site and the lack of hedgerows growing alongside the eastern parts of Cronton Road. The Site is partially visible from PRow W/12 extension, from Cronton Road and from Mill Lane.

- 2.51 The flat landscape and presence of woodland, trees and hedgerows limits the visibility of the Site.
- 2.52 Overall, the relatively flat landscape and presence of built form, woodland, trees and hedgerows limits the visibility of the Site and there are comparatively few visual receptors. The visual envelope extends northwards but is otherwise well contained.
- 2.53 There are no designated heritage assets and there are no previously recorded non-designated heritage assets within the Site.
- 2.54 A number of hedgerows have been identified within the Site which qualify as important hedgerows under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations Act. This include the hedge

Archaeology & Heritage

along the northern boundary which comprises a parish boundary, and additional hedgerows within and bordering the Site which are shown on the tithe map. These are of low heritage value. Retention is recommended for the important hedgerows, however some level of alteration to enable access is generally acceptable.

- 2.55 Four modern outbuildings associated with Rose Farm are within the Site. These are not heritage assets.
- 2.56 A generally limited potential is identified for archaeological remains across the Site. The available evidence does not indicate a potential for remains of a value which would comprise a constraint to development of the Site.
- 2.57 Only one designated heritage asset has been identified as susceptible to potential effects as a result of the proposed development. This comprised the Grade II Listed Redmyre.
- 2.58 The above assessment identified that whilst the western edge of the Site does contribute to the significance of Redmyre, the remainder provides historic context which does not specifically add to the historic, evidential or architectural value of the Listed Building and thus makes no contribution to its significance.
- 2.59 Accordingly, a high capacity for change across the majority of the Site, with a low capacity for change in the far western



2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

edge. It is recommended that this is maintained as open green space in order to retain the views of Redmyre which enable its architectural quality to be appreciated and experienced.

Ecology

- 2.60 The Site predominantly comprises semi-improved, poor semi-improved and improved pasture divided by largely species-poor, defunct hedgerows, some of which include trees. One hedgerow was species-rich with trees, although defunct. Other features of note include three ponds and a brook along the northern boundary of the Site.
- 2.61 A number of buildings are also present within the Site. The Site has potential to support amphibians, water voles, bats, breeding birds (including barn owl) and wintering birds. Further surveys have been undertaken with respect to these species, the results of which are summarised below.
- 2.62 The further surveys have confirmed great crested newt, badger and water vole to be likely absent at the Site.
- 2.63 The surrounding environs and wider landscape are protected by a number of Local Wildlife Sites, one of which (Alder Brook) partly lies adjacent to the northern boundary. The Site also lies within a Natural England

Impact Risk Zone associated with the Mersey Estuary Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site.

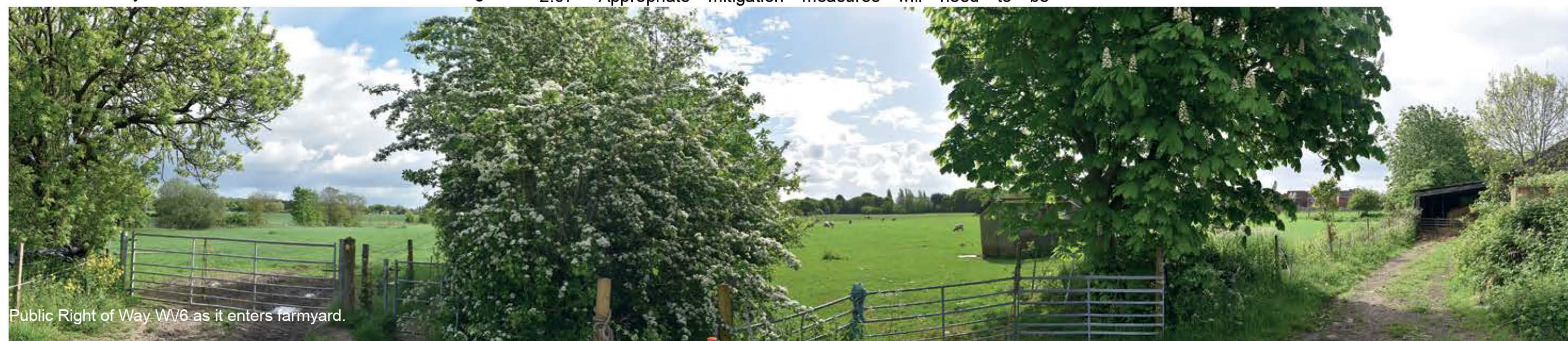
- 2.64 The wider landscape is characterised by arable fields to the north and west crossed by hedgerows and ditches with further ponds and an area of broadleaved woodland. To the east of the Site lies broadleaved semi-natural woodland, a pond/swamp, semi-improved and poor semi-improved grassland, beyond which lies residential development. To the south lie further small areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland and further residential development.
- 2.65 The development of the Site would primarily impact on grassland, whilst it is anticipated the development would retain the ponds, Alder Brook and the majority of the hedgerows and trees.
- 2.66 Buffers of greenspace will be required around retained ponds and between development areas and the woodland and Alder Brook. Retained grassland will need to be enhanced to compensate the loss of grassland within the Site and compensatory planting will need be provided to address loss of trees and short sections of hedgerow. This requirement is addressed in the landscape proposals.
- 2.67 Appropriate mitigation measures will need to be

implemented regarding invasive species present within the Site which will be dealt with as part of the initial groundworks on the site to ensure those species are removed.

- 2.68 Initial bat surveys undertaken in 2022 confirmed a bat roost in one of the buildings. Additional surveys undertaken in 2023 confirmed that there are no buildings or trees within the application site that were recorded to have developed suitable roosting features for bats. Appropriate mitigation measures with regards to bats are set out in the accompanying Ecological Appraisal.
- 2.69 Potential increased recreational pressure on statutory designated Sites will be addressed via opting-in to the mitigation measures set out within the Halton Recreational Management Interim Approach (2020).
- 2.70 Recommendations are also made in the supporting Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment Report to provide additional ecological enhancement within the Site.

Access & Accessibility

- 2.71 The location of the development promotes travel choice from the outset with links to existing residential areas and the established pedestrian routes.



2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

- 2.72 The Site is located in a sustainable location and in close proximity to nearby local facilities and services, with access achievable by active modes of travel as well as by public transport. There are strong existing pedestrian and cycle networks in the vicinity of the Site.
- 2.73 Vehicular access to the Site will be from Chapel Lane via a new priority junction. The junction has been demonstrated to be safe, fit for purpose and cater for the capacity of the development, with significant spare capacity and minimal queuing on Chapel Lane.
- 2.74 Emergency access points and additional active travel links will be provided via Sandy Lane and Chapel Lane and via existing PRowS.
- 2.75 The impact of the proposed development on the local highway is demonstrated to be minimal, with mostly imperceptible increases to delay and queuing on existing junctions. The effect of the development, in terms of highway capacity, is not significant and is therefore considered acceptable. The balance of highway capacity on the local road network and providing for local living and mobility (all modes including virtual) has been considered, and is policy compliant.
- 2.76 With the changing nature of travel, which has been accelerated by the Covid-19 events, accounting also for generational mindsets and the changing priorities reflected in policy, the potential to create sustainable travel habits for all residents from the outset is excellent. Therefore, delivery of this Site ought to see far fewer vehicular trips than forecasted, particularly given an overly robust traffic growth assessment has been undertaken. It is clear that an ongoing shift in the travel methods within the UK is underway and ongoing. The dominance of the car is gradually being eroded by the pressing need to shift travel patterns towards more sustainable means of travel.
- 2.77 The Site is well located for a residential development of this scale, with opportunities to connect to the existing active travel network and the local public transport network.

Flood & Drainage

- 2.78 We have reviewed all sources of flood risk both to and resulting from the proposed development, and identified the Site is at very low to low-medium flood risk from the reviewed sources.
- 2.79 The ground conditions of cohesive clays mean that the use of infiltration methods to disperse surface water is not practicable.
- 2.80 Storm water shall need to be contained within the proposed Site and attenuated before being discharged into the local watercourse (Dog Clog Brook) at the allowed greenfield run-off rate as set out in the Flood Risk Assessment thus ensuring existing properties downstream are not effected by flooding related to this Site.

Geoenvironmental

- 2.81 Historically, the Site is shown to be utilised as agricultural fields with several ponds and field boundaries present throughout. Sandy Lane (formerly known as Upton Lane) is present in the east, orientated roughly north-south, bisecting the Site. A public footpath is also present oriented roughly east-west from Chapel Lane to Sandy Lane.
- 2.82 No significant changes occurred on the Site until pre 1989 when Rose Farm is shown on mapping with associated farm buildings in the west, with all ponds now infilled with the exception of one located in the south.
- 2.83 Intrusive ground investigations were carried out across the Site and those findings are set out in full in the related technical report.
- 2.84 As would be expected there are some elevated levels of localised contamination within the farmyard area which can be contained and dealt with on Site, with the exception of those locations, topsoil and subsoil deposits on Site are considered suitable for re-use, subject to further chemical validation testing.
- 2.85 Further post-demolition investigations are required in the farmyard area in the west of the Site to confirm the findings

of this initial assessment as and when full and unrestricted access is available.

- 2.86 Elevated levels of CO₂ and Methane were found in areas of made ground and former pond locations where organic matter has been buried. The removal of this material as part of the Site work would remove these sources of contamination.

Noise

- 2.87 The impact of noise has been assessed for the land off Chapel Lane, Widnes. The assessment has included the measurement of road traffic noise levels from Chapel Lane and Queensbury Way at appropriate locations on the Site.
- 2.88 In order to protect the amenity of the new residents some noise mitigation measures for the development will be required including appropriate acoustic ventilation of the nearest habitable rooms to the Chapel Lane and Queensbury Way frontages.
- 2.89 In addition homes adjoining Chapel Lane and Queensbury Way will be set back from them with the homes orientated to face the roads. This arrangement will protect the rear gardens from excess noise levels with the properties incorporating noise mitigation measures, as touched on above and set out in more detail in the Noise Impact Assessment.

2.90 Air Quality

- 2.91 Dispersion modelling was undertaken in order to predict annual mean pollutant concentrations across the application Site and to predict impacts as a result of additional road vehicle exhaust emissions associated with the proposed development. Results were subsequently verified using local monitoring results provided by Halton Borough Council (HBC).
- 2.92 The dispersion modelling results indicated that annual mean pollutant concentrations across the application Site were below the relevant air quality objectives at proposed sensitive locations.

2.0 Site Context, Constraints & Opportunities

- 2.93 The Site is therefore considered suitable for the proposed end-use without the implementation of protective mitigation techniques to protect future amenity and complies with the HBC Local Plan and NPPF.

Trees & Hedgerows

- 2.94 Where possible, category A and B trees should be retained and any works within their RPAs should be undertaken in a sympathetic manner. Although C category trees should not be a constraint to development, it may be desirable to retain them as part of the wider landscape proposals. There is a high proportion of category A and B trees/groups throughout the Site.
- 2.95 The parameters and illustrative masterplans indicate how existing trees could be accommodated in any future Reserved Matters Planning Application, the final location of retained trees will be determined as part of the discussions during the development of the Reserved Matters detailed proposals.
- 2.96 Collectively the trees provide a high landscape value with several mature individual specimens along Chapel Lane and Sandy Lane providing particularly high amenity value.
- 2.97 The overall health and structural condition of the surveyed trees is good, with only minimal works recommended for health and safety purposes. Several dead trees were identified during the survey, the majority of these require no remedial work. Due to the location of these trees and the low occupancy rate of the Site, the trees pose minimal risk and it is acceptable to retain these trees for their ecological value. Should the land use of the Site change these trees may require removal.
- 2.98 Many of the trees surveyed appear to be historic boundary tree/hedges which have been left unmanaged and allowed to grow into maturity. The off Site trees are similar or were planted for screening purposes by private properties.
- 2.99 There are several early-mature to mature groups of trees along all the boundaries of the Site, which can provide good screening for future development. Any potential future development within the Site should retain this boundary vegetation where possible.
- 2.100 Natural colonisation to the east of the Site is establishing on what is disused agricultural land. These trees appear to be approximately 20 years old. Trees and shrubs within this area consist of pioneer species and look to be established. These trees and groups provide moderate visual amenity to the east from Queensbury Way and consideration to retain should be given with regards to any on Site development proposals. Any proposed development should be located outside the RPAs of the trees to be retained.
- 2.101 There is evidence of Ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) in several of the Ash trees surveyed. This disease is likely to advance over the whole of the Site and will result in the death of a significant proportion of the Ash trees.
- 2.102 Several trees along Old Upton Lane were noted to have deadwood overhanging the road. It has been recommended that this deadwood be removed. As these trees are under third party ownership the owner(s) should be informed of the tree's conditions.
- 2.103 Shading of buildings by trees can be a problem, particularly where there are rooms which require natural light. Proposed buildings should be designed to take account of existing trees, their ultimate size and density of foliage, and the effect that these will have on the availability of light.

Residential Amenity

- 2.104 Those existing residents who back onto the Site on Upton Grange will be considered in the design and layout of the proposals with new homes backing onto them and rear gardens providing the correct overlooking distances to protect their residential amenity and completing the development blocks.
- 2.105 Those fronting onto the Site to the eastern on Chapel Lane will also be considered in the design. Landscape buffers

shall be used to create a stand-off from the sensitive boundaries and built form will be set back to ensure minimum overlooking distances are exceeded.

Wider Green Infrastructure Network

- 2.106 The Site has a number of existing landscape features within it or adjoining its boundaries and most of them are to be retained. This not only enhances the setting of the proposed development, but also protects and retains existing habitats and provides good green infrastructure connectivity through and around the Site to other areas of the wider neighbourhood and settlement.
- 2.107 Therefore, the proposed green infrastructure network shall incorporate these features, linking them together to create the potential for a wildlife and recreational corridors.



Looking north along Sandy Lane within the Site

3.0 Design Evolution



1: Initial sketch concept prior as Site constraints emerged



2: Emerging parameters as Site constraints were established



3: Exploration of spatial options



4: Exploration of spatial options



5: Fine tuning based on landscape and visual feedback



6: Fine tuning based on ecological and community feedback

Figure 03.01 Design Evolution

DESIGN EVOLUTION

Design: An Iterative Process

- 3.1 The final illustrative masterplan (Figure 05.01) is the product of a considered process of review and refinement over a period of many months. We have worked with fellow consultants, the Council, and local residents using virtual meeting platforms, social media, face to face meetings and exhibitions to understand the issues and concerns.
- 3.2 This process has resulted in a high quality design outcome that responds to the constraints and opportunities presented by the Site as well as local design guidance and the need to respond to the pandemic in design terms, the latter being set out below.
- 3.3 The images opposite (Figure 03.01) illustrate the evolution of the scheme from the initial ideas to the fine tuning of the final parameters. The images demonstrate how feedback received during the consultation process has been considered and has resulted in changes to the design to ensure it is robust and of a high design quality.
- 3.4 Other changes have been the result of the natural design process and factoring in of technical inputs and advice from different members of the design team and other consultants as the project has developed and their technical assessments have been concluded.
- 3.5 The main changes from the original proposals relate to the interface on the northern boundary of the Site and greater areas of green space within the development.
- 3.6 The following paragraphs set out the various processes and issues that we have identified and addressed during the design process.

Design During & After a Pandemic

- 3.7 A debate is ongoing as to how or even if new development is reacting to or can react to the needs of communities in a new post pandemic world.

- 3.8 Communities across the world talk of a 'New Normal' and in design terms we have attempted to determine what that means. Figure 03.02 over page graphically illustrates our thought processes which are described below.
- 3.9 A key aspect from the pandemic is the need to isolate for a period of time or remain in or close to home, whilst full lock down proved difficult for many the idea of achieving a better work/life balance post the most server restrictions has its benefits.
- 3.10 Employers in many spheres have equipped their staff to enable them to work from home in terms of laptops and access to the internet and have discovered that the need for large and costly offices in town and city centres aren't always required. In turn employees have discovered that working from home means that there is less commuting and more time spent with family.
- 3.11 To this end we have looked at how this shift in living needs to be accommodated in new neighbourhoods and have set out the various themes; Housing Design, Public Realm and Movement & Open Space that are affected in a residential neighbourhood. These themes expand depending on the type of development proposed.
- 3.12 Below these themes we've listed out elements that we need to include to make new neighbourhoods 'pandemic resistant', not in terms of the virus itself, but ensuring there is space to socially distance and also space for amenity use, if communities need to be contained during surges in infection rates. This also applies if similar restrictions would need to be enforced for future pandemics.
- 3.13 In terms of housing design the obvious requirement for residents is the ability to work from home in a good environment so space for a home office in either a bedroom or a purpose-designed office assists in this requirement. Enough private external space so as to be able to leave the home and enjoy the outside and fresh air is a must and can come in various forms including front and rear gardens.

- 3.14 Ensuring that gardens have good access to light with adequate top soiling so that if a resident wants to grow their own food they can.
- 3.15 Walking and cycling has always been at the top of the sustainability agenda and has never quite been taken up by the general public as a form of transport as would have been hoped. However, the pandemic appears to have changed that and whilst developers have been encouraged to provide cycle parking in the past, it is now imperative that there is enough space to accommodate secure cycle storage.

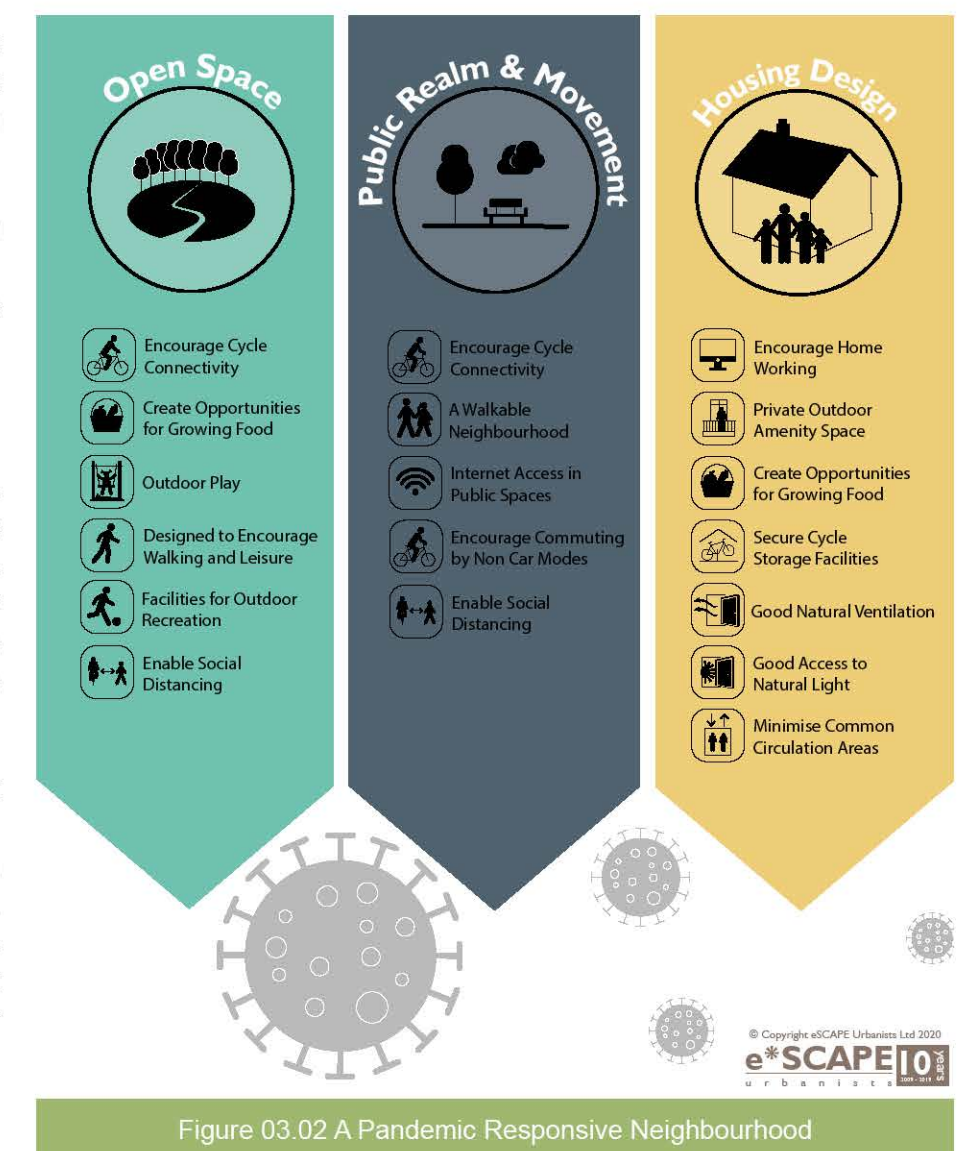


Figure 03.02 A Pandemic Responsive Neighbourhood

3.0 Design Evolution

- 3.16 Homes need to have good natural ventilation with opening window lights increasing ventilation within the home, especially important if a family is required/requested to stay within their property for long periods of time.
- 3.17 Ensuring that southern aspect homes are created where possible to allow good levels of natural light into the homes, especially the living room and other key habitable rooms.
- 3.18 Moving now to the theme of Public Realm and Movement any squares and streets need to have well connected footpaths and on-street cycleways through them, providing direct and safe access across the neighbourhood away from the more major roads and connecting jobs, shops, facilities and homes together. Shared spaces shall be developed which define footways from carriageways by a change in material, level, texture and/or colour to assist in ensuring all users are safe.
- 3.19 The ability to pick up good 4G and wifi signals outside of the home is important to home working and spending time away from the desk during working hours.
- 3.20 The open spaces will accommodate the movement of pedestrians and cyclists to and from home and within the green space to play areas etc. These routes will connect directly into the street pattern, encouraging their use and access to the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- 3.21 Play equipment is a requirement of any new development and play areas and other equipment must be located to encourage it's use as part of the general approach to health and well-being in the neighbourhood pandemic or not. Informal play and kickabout space is also encouraged to provide space for informal games, although that will depend in part on any public gathering restrictions in place.
- 3.22 These elements have all been considered in the evolution of the design and many have a positive effect in terms of the environment by encouraging less commuting and use of walking and bicycles as an alternative means of transport. The Site is also close to existing bus stops and train stations.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 3.23 Prior to the submission of the application, and to inform the preparation of the proposals the applicant submitted a pre-application enquiry to the local planning authority.
- 3.24 A subsequent meeting focused on access issues relating to options from Chapel Lane and/or Queensbury Way. All options were explored and the viable/deliverable access arrangements were taken forward in the application involving the use of Chapel Lane.

Public Consultation

- 3.25 The applicant has undertaken public consultation prior to the submission of the application, to obtain the views of the local community and to inform the development of the application proposals. The consultation period lasted for three weeks between Wednesday 28th September and Friday 21st October 2022.
- 3.26 Consultation letters and leaflets were distributed to the local MP for Halton, councillors, residents and businesses with a total of 1,510 leaflets issued with the following information provided:
 - Background information on the overall development concept;
 - The nature of the development proposed; and
 - A draft parameters masterplan.
- 3.27 The leaflet invited the views and comments of the local community to be submitted via the webSite, email, post or telephone.
- 3.28 A dedicated public consultation webSite was published and made available for residents to view and displayed information in respect of the purpose of the consultation, the Site and planning context, details of the proposals, a summary of the benefits of the proposals and details of how interested parties could share their views.

- 3.29 In addition to the above a Public Exhibition was held on Wednesday 5th October 2022 at the Parkland Sports Club which is located just south of the Site on the corner of Chapel Lane and Parklands. 226 residents attended the exhibition.

- 3.30 The responses received have been considered in the development of the applicant proposals and more detail on the consultation process can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Responding to the Stakeholders

- 3.31 The concerns of local councillors and residents have been addressed in the proposals and will be described in more detail in the following sections of this document. The key design issues raised by residents included:
 - Residential amenity of properties and rear gardens backing onto the Site from Upton Grange.
 - Provision of play areas.
 - Provision of green spaces.
 - Prevention of antisocial behaviour.
- 3.32 The involvement of all the stakeholders in the design development of the proposals has aided in the fine tuning of the current masterplan to make it robust and fit for purpose.

3.0 Design Evolution



Figure 03.03 Final Parameters Masterplan

4.0 Parameters



Figure 04.01: Parameters Masterplan

PARAMETERS

4.1 Now that the design has evolved through the process described previously a meaningful parameters masterplan has developed, as illustrated in Figure 04:01 opposite, which explores the connections, spatial relationships and uses of the Site. Due to the response to the Site and local context the concept is instantly strong, dynamic and mature, thus grounded.

4.2 Whilst we are only applying in outline for residential development a parameters masterplan has been developed for the Site that is the subject of this application to ensure a cohesive and well connected neighbourhood is created as part of the wider settlement.

Green & Blue Infrastructure

4.3 The green infrastructure network as illustrated in Figure 04:02 over page creates a green mesh which overlays the development parcels and retains the particular character related to the area and specifically existing Site features such as the watercourses, field ponds, trees and hedgerows. This includes the ability of the vegetation to soften and provide a buffer and separation from the open countryside and create a mature setting for the development.

4.4 The green infrastructure covers some 5.14 hectares/36% of the whole Site area and will accommodate play areas, informal kickabout areas and new ecological habitats. The green infrastructure network will ensure the retention of the majority of the existing vegetation.

4.5 Set within the green infrastructure network will be the Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS). Consisting of new ponds, swales and water meadow style inundation zones which will have the capacity to hold and safely disperse storm water collected from the Site. Wildlife habitats and corridors will be an integral element of the green infrastructure network.

Scale & Mass

4.6 The character of the neighbourhood that is to be created lends itself principally to 2 storey development, based on the local context and designed to reflect the human scale of built form found in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

4.7 Up to 2.5 storey elements will only be used as header buildings in squares and at junctions and/or within gateway locations to create announcements of arrival.

Quantum & Mix of Uses

4.8 The location of this Site for residential use is sustainably located on the edge of Upton Rocks, Widnes, within easy reach of local facilities by walking, cycling, bus or motor vehicle.

4.9 The wider Site is 14.31 hectares in total and will include a balanced mix of residential development and green infrastructure. It is proposed that the homes will be set within a strong open space network as illustrated in Figure 04:01.

4.10 The density of housing adjoining Upton Grange is intended to be similar to the existing density located to the south, thus ensuring the development integrates with the existing suburban neighbourhood. It is intended that those densities will increase around the proposed squares and mews before dropping again to the eastern, western and northern fringes to create a more sub-urban/rural fringe edge. The northern fringe is proposed to have densities of development of no more than 25 homes/hectare to ensure a soft transition to open countryside

4.11 The Site can comfortably accommodate up to 350 homes which equates to a gross density of 25 homes/ha. The development parcel takes up 9.17 hectares/64% of the Site area.

Gateways & Nodes

4.12 A series of gateways and focal points/nodes have been identified within the Site. These are either in primary gateway locations, announcing arrival into the Site or within the heart of the Site using existing features or creating focal features and reference points within the development.

4.13 The internal nodes are focussed on creating areas of public realm in the form of shared surface spaces (Squares & Mews) or utilising landscape elements (Greens), in this case the existing ponds, trees and hedgerows are used to create a setting and backdrop in the Greens.

Sympathetic Boundaries & Treatments

4.14 The development will be outward facing and respect existing residential areas and overlook the public rights of way, retaining landscape features such as the native hedgerows and trees thus preserving the character and setting of the area.

The Emerging Movement Hierarchy

4.15 Overlaying the green infrastructure network and mix of uses is a finer grain network of movement routes including avenues, streets, lanes, shared drives, footpaths and footpath/cycleways, adding to the proposals permeability as illustrated in Figure 04:01

4.16 The primary element is the avenue which would act as the main route into and through the Site. This route provides an unfolding story to the Site as one travels along its sweeping length through the heart of the Site.

4.17 The housing on the avenue should provide a clearly defined street frontage based around 2 storey residential units with some 2.5 storey landmark elements in key locations.

4.18 Amenity footpaths and footpath/cycleways run throughout the green infrastructure network and provide connections between development parcels and out to the surrounding neighbourhoods and wider footpath network via Sandy

4.0 Parameters



Figure 04.02: Green Infrastructure Network

Lane.

- 4.19 Running from the avenue would be a series of streets and lanes which form the vehicle network, based around traditional streets and lanes, fronted and enclosed by 2 storey properties with landmarks created by 2.5 storey properties at corners and as header buildings.
- 4.20 Areas of public realm in the form of shared space squares and mews will be created at key junctions and points in the layout.
- 4.21 The final element in the hierarchy is the shared drive which provides access to the homes on the perimeter of the development parcels overlooking the green spaces. The drives take the form of simple shared space lanes proving access to a small number of homes.
- 4.22 These lanes form part of the interface between the homes and green spaces and shall be integrated into the layout with careful soft landscape treatments.
- 4.23 As setout earlier in this Statement the housing allocation in this location covers a wider area than this planning application. That wider allocation boundary is illustrated on the constraints and opportunities plan in Figure 02.03.
- 4.24 Figure 04.01 and 04.03 both illustrate an access point into the allocated land to the south of the Site between the Site and Old Upton Lane. This access comes directly off the main Site avenue and has the potential to provide a direct connection to this parcel. Additional pedestrian/ cycle routes would also be accommodated through the GI areas which directly abut the Site boundary and would accommodate direct access to the existing PRow.
- 4.25 In addition, the allocated land to the east of this application, adjoining Queensbury Way, has direct access from Queensbury Way. The proposed street hierarchy within this application has been designed in such a way as to allow connections to the streets from the adjoining Site if the added permeability is considered desirable by the authorities's highway and design teams.

4.0 Parameters



Figure 04.03: Movement & Public Realm Hierarchy

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 05.01: Illustrative Masterplan/Indicative Layout

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

5.1 The Illustrative Masterplan/Indicative Layout in Figure 05.01 opposite builds on the framework set by the Parameters Masterplan, described previously, adding a further level of detail in terms of house types, plot sizes, car parking, street widths and landscape strategy. It is supported by a number of additional plans which have been submitted as part of this Outline Planning Application and is described in the following narrative and design principles over page.

5.2 As an outline application the layout demonstrates the soundness of the parameters adopted and illustrates an appropriate scale and density of development for the Site, taking into account the constraints outlined previously.

Character

5.3 Rather than creating character areas on the Site the character has been defined by the nature of the street hierarchy. Therefore each street character will be differentiated in terms of street widths, surface materials, enclosure, density of homes, landscape treatments, planting species and boundary details. This approach to character will create a unique development and aid in the Sites legibility.

Layout

5.4 An suburban block structure is proposed with houses facing onto the street providing natural surveillance and active frontages. In this arrangement, private gardens are located to the rear providing security, privacy, and good separation between units. It also avoids the front of properties overlooking the rear of buildings.

5.5 The blocks are large enough to accommodate good sized rear gardens which provide opportunities for property extensions, alteration and conservatories. Around the edges, properties front onto the open spaces and rural fringe offering passive surveillance and a positive interface with the amenity spaces and wider rural landscape.

5.6 A green corridor is shown through the centre of the Site following the existing retained PRow, hedgerow and watercourse. This breaks up the development parcels and creates a physical connection with the wider countryside. It also enhances on-Site biodiversity by creating a safe green corridor for the movement of wildlife and provides visual relief to the built form, helping to reduce the perceived scale and density of the development.

5.7 Any potential for unacceptable overlooking or overshadowing has been minimised with good standards of amenity provided for future occupants. The configuration and size of development blocks has been designed to enable minimum back to back distances of 21m to be achieved if not exceeded. Front to front distances are

set at circa 18m generally and where greater enclosure is needed or a pinch point is desirable buildings may step forward to a minimum separation distance of 12 metres.

5.8 The layout enables homes towards the rural northern boundaries to be orientated towards the open countryside, maximising views and presenting a positive finished edge to Upton Rocks from these directions.

5.9 The layout proposes a setback of a minimum of 15 metres between the main river watercourse on the northern boundary and the first row of properties, which increases to a 20m width in the parcels to the north east of Sandy lane. This allows for a buffer of open space to be introduced along this rural interface, providing a softer green edge to



5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

the watercourse, retaining the existing planting and trees, as well as adding additional new planting in this location.

- 5.10 As illustrated in the layout the block form starts off with a more formalised grid to the south which then softens and becomes more organic responding to the existing Site features further to the north.

Use and Quantum

- 5.11 The application boundary covers an area of 14.31 hectares (excluding Sandy Lane/Chapel Lane/Old Upton Lane Improvements, with 9.17 hectares (net) or 64% of the Site will be developed for residential use and includes 350 residential dwellings with associated access, servicing

and green infrastructure.

- 5.12 The proposed homes will include a mix of 1 to 4 bed properties all of which will meet Nationally Described Space Standards to meet local needs.

- 5.13 With the remainder being used as part of the Green Infrastructure network covering 5.14 hectares or 36% of the Site which will include a variety of functions such as:

- Public Open Space,
- Play Areas,
- Retained and new native trees and hedgerows,
- Retained and new wetland habitats,

- Retained and new meadow habitats,
- Orchards, and
- A sustainable urban drainage network.

Access

- 5.14 As illustrated in the illustrative masterplan in Figure 05.01 and the street and public realm hierarchy in Figure 04.03 previously the street and public realm layout creates a strong and permeable neighbourhood. This encourages residents and visitor to walk and cycle through and around the development and on out to the surrounding neighbourhoods and countryside, in line with the needs and requirements that have emerged during the pandemic.

- 5.15 Vehicles are accommodated in the layout with parking designed to be integral to the streetscape whilst not overwhelming it. Various parking solutions have been applied to ensure a high quality streetscape is created.

- 5.16 Vehicle speeds are kept low through the use of shared spaces and road geometry thus removing the need for artificial speed bumps etc.

- 5.17 The proposed street hierarchy is clear and logical comprising a series of inter-connected avenues, streets, lanes and shared drives. The arrangement of streets and other routes within the Site is designed to ensure good connectivity with the surrounding street network, provide logical and efficient routes through the development and ensure a layout which is clear and legible.

- 5.18 The street pattern creates an organic grid pattern with gently curving streets and lanes providing access to the internal blocks. The organic nature of the routes reflects the topography and character of the Site. This organic form can clearly be seen in Figure 05.01. The hierarchy is set out below.

The Avenue

- 5.19 The Avenue is at the top of the route hierarchy and provides the access into the heart and through the Site from Chapel Lane. It is traditional in form with a bitmac



carriageway and a footpath to the northern side and a footpath/cycleway to the south side. This is the widest street in the hierarchy.

Streets & Lanes

- 5.20 Streets and Lanes are secondary in the route hierarchy and provide the main accesses into the heart of the residential areas to each side of the Avenue. They are again traditional in form with a bitmac carriageway and pavements.
- 5.21 The built form is set back enough from the road, allowing sufficient room for the planting of shrubs, grasses and street trees within gardens. The street (5.5m) is slightly wider than the lane (4.8m) and the planting will differ slightly in terms of species mix and maximum size.

Squares

- 5.22 Squares are located at key junctions along the Avenue and is designed as a shared surface space enclosed by the surrounding homes creating focal points in the layout. Tree and shrub planting, along with boundary walls will be used to further enclose these spaces. There will also be definition between the carriageway and footways to ensure that any pedestrian not wishing to walk across the space have areas where they will feel safe.

Mews

- 5.23 The Mews straddle some of the secondary access routes and has a shared space feel with the carriageways, pedestrian zones and green spaces defined within the space as a whole rather than by a traditional carriageway and footpath arrangement, similar to the square in that respect.
- 5.24 The scale of the space has a more domestic feel, as the built form encloses and overlooks the Mews with tree planting incorporating smaller growing species. Use of small unit paved surfaces reinforces the character of these spaces. Traditional high upstand kerbs and raised pavements are also avoided to create a more seamless shared space with the space between carriageway and

pedestrian safety zones demarcated by a small upstand kerb and change in colour or paving material.

- 5.25 Mews are intended to contain car parking, but this needs to be designed into the space as part of the streetscene and so bays are set in groups of four or less and broken up with trees, hedges and shrub planting.

Shared Drives

- 5.26 These are the last element in the hierarchy of routes. They are domestic in nature, designed as a simple shared surface route which provides access to only a small number of properties along its length (maximum of five properties). Shared drives are associated with the development edge and interface with the open spaces, often sitting alongside pedestrian/cycleways.

Pedestrian & Cycle Routes

- 5.27 A network of pedestrian and cycle routes is illustrated providing a choice of routes through and out of the Site, increasing permeability and encouraging walking. Where possible paths are directed to pass balancing ponds and other landscape features to provide points of interest along the routes. Completed circuits through and around the edges of the Site are created by linking footpaths with shared-surface lanes where appropriate. Wherever possible, footpaths follow likely desire lines.

Public Right of Way

- 5.28 PRoW (W/16) runs east to west through the Site, as described previously. The proposed on Site paths will connect into this PRoW in key locations to provide improved access to the surrounding settlement and countryside.

Parking

- 5.29 Car parking can determine both the look and feel of streets and plays a key role in the overall quality and appeal of a development. The way cars are accommodated has implications on the visual amenity of streets, the level of street activity, interaction between residents, accessibility and ease of use, pedestrian safety and security. The level

of parking provision can also affect the choices people make in how they travel.

- 5.30 To that end parking will be an integrated element in the design of the layout with a mix of on-street, frontage, side and garaged parking. The illustrative layout indicates how that mix of solutions could be employed on the Site.
- 5.31 All parking is provided close to, and visible from, people's homes offering security and convenience.
- 5.32 Parking will be provided in accordance with guidance set out in Manual for Streets (DfT & DCLG, 2007) and Car Parking: "What Works Where" (English Partnerships, 2006).
- 5.33 The development provides an average of 2 spaces per dwelling. This is considered to be an appropriate level of provision in light of the Site's location.
- 5.34 In terms of parking numbers, the scheme provides off-street parking in line with adopted policy.

"There isn't a single best solution. A combination of on plot, off plot, and on street is the best solution, according to location, topography and the market."

(Parking: What Works Where, 2006)

Over-arching Landscape Design Principles

- 5.35 The landscape masterplan illustrated in Figure 05.03 over page provides a robust green space network based around existing valued Site features. Public areas are designed to be multi-functional open spaces to bring communities together and boost health and wellbeing. Multi-functional benefits would include space for recreation, areas for ecological enhancement, visual amenity and protection of existing landscape features.
- 5.36 Existing vegetation will be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals; and will become a key feature of the open space network, retaining wildlife habitat value, and providing an established landscape character.

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan



- 5.37 Biodiversity is a key component to the landscape scheme. A wide number of flowering, fruiting and berrying plants will be included to provide foraging potential for birds, invertebrates and mammals. Native species used whenever possible.
- 5.38 The landscape scheme is designed to provide clear delineation between private curtilage and public realm to provide clarity over management responsibilities. Incidental open spaces are avoided where possible. Small open spaces are designed to be useable as informal local areas for play for the benefit of the community.
- 5.39 The palettes of trees, hedgerows and shrubs will be selected according to their presence on Site, the surrounding area and within the region. These are supplemented by ornamental trees and cultivars chosen for their accent and suitability to planting situations.
- 5.40 Tried and tested simple, yet effective landscape design will ensure that the landscape areas can be easily maintained to ensure they mature well and look good in the long term. Public realm landscape treatments will be carefully selected, designed, and specified to avoid onerous, challenging or excessively costly landscape management.

Landscape Character Areas

- 5.41 Four landscape character areas are proposed within the residential areas of the Site to create a logical change in character through the development. The character areas are illustrated in Figure 05.02 over page and designed to integrate the development into the surrounding area, and to enhance legibility and sense of place throughout the scheme.
- 5.42 The character areas take their cue from their location within the scheme and from the areas they adjoin. The landscape treatments in each character area will include different species and planting styles as set out below.

Green Spine

- 5.43 This character area covers homes that have a direct visual relationship with the main vehicular route through the

scheme and the areas of adjacent open space. Selected species will have strong ornamental form in response to the rhythm of the building layout, creating a comparatively contemporary and formal landscape character. Where space allows, avenue tree planting within the roadside verges will frame views along the road corridor.

- 5.44 Typical species will include:

Trees

- *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine'
- *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Lane Roberts'
- *Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire'



5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

OVERARCHING LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- The masterplan provides a robust green space network based around existing valued site features.
- Public areas are designed to be multi-functional open spaces to bring communities together and boost health and wellbeing. Multi-functional benefits would include space for recreation, areas for ecological enhancement, visual amenity and protection of existing landscape features.
- Existing vegetation will be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals; and will become a key feature of the open space network, retaining wildlife habitat value, and providing an established landscape character.
- Biodiversity is a key component to the landscape scheme. A wide number of flowering, fruiting and berrying plants will be included to provide foraging potential for birds, invertebrates and mammals.
- Native species used whenever possible.
- The landscape scheme is designed to provide clear delineation between private curtilage and public realm to provide clarity over management responsibilities. Incidental open spaces are avoided where possible. Small open spaces are designed to be useable as informal local areas for play for the benefit of the community.
- The palettes of trees, hedgerows and shrubs will be selected according to their presence on site, the surrounding area and within the region. These are supplemented by ornamental trees and cultivars chosen for their accent and suitability to planting situations.
- Tried and tested simple, yet effective landscape design will ensure that the landscape areas can be easily maintained to ensure they mature well and look good in the long term. Public realm landscape treatments will be carefully selected, designed, and specified to avoid onerous, challenging or excessively costly landscape management.

GREENS:

- A series of greens will be located throughout the scheme, focused around existing and new landscape features.
- Brook Green**
This space will contain the main SuDS basin. Alongside the basin will be wildflower meadow grassland and native tree planting with a large open central area of mown grass for informal recreation, kick-about games and picnicking. A timber trim trail will be included alongside the public footpath to south of the space.
- Pond's Green**
This is an enclosed residential green with a retained field pond providing an attractive focal point. The landscape treatment will be a simple mix of longer meadow grass, short cut amenity grass and tree planting. Homes are orientated to overlook the green on all sides. Informal play in the form of a LAP with a simple natural play features will be provided along with places to sit and relax.
- Ledge Green**
This space is enclosed by existing woodland, hedges and trees, with Alder Brook and the public footpath along the northern boundary. The space will contain a small community orchard set within wildflower meadow grassland and meandering north cut grass pathways.
- Wood Green**
This is a woodland edge glade with wildflower meadow grassland and scattered native blossom tree planting. Additional tree planting along the northern site boundary will help enclose the space further and screen views of the development. A bound gravel footpath will run through the space linking to the public footpath to the north.

SITE ENTRANCE:

- The site entrance will create an attractive arrival space off Chapel Lane. The space will include a naturalistic SuDS pond with wildflower meadow grassland and native tree planting. The entrance will be framed by existing trees and hedges and where existing vegetation is to be removed to facilitate access, new compensatory hedges and tree planting will be provided, along with estate rail fencing to create a rural character.

SUDS:

- A SuDS system including ponds, basins, swales, filter drains/strips and ditches will be designed to take the form of multifunctional naturalistic interventions that provide ecological, recreational, amenity, visual and educational benefits; in addition to their role in surface water management and so enhance environmental, social and economic sustainability.

FOCAL SQUARES & MEWS:

- These focal spaces will feature a change in surface material to become distinctive landmark nodes within the housing areas. A high quality palette of materials will reflect a more formal, contemporary character within these spaces.
- Landscape treatments will include feature fastigate tree planting within the hard landscaping and planted areas, aligned to frame views along streets, and structural hedgerow planting to clearly demarcate plot boundaries. The planting scheme will present a striking change in texture and form to mark these key spaces.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD:

- A Community Orchard will be delivered in partnership with The Big Halton Forest project. Orchard fruit trees will include the following local varieties and all trees will be sourced locally.
- Further informal supplementary natural play elements in the form of boulders, stepping logs and 'tallen trees' will be provided alongside the north-eastern footpath through Wood Green and along the footpath route along the northern boundary to enhance the play value of the landscape in these areas- linking to the main play area at the centre of the site. Where possible suitable felled trees from other parts of the site will be utilised to create these natural play elements.

PLAY PROVISION:

- The site will offer a variety of accessible play spaces that provide for a wide range of inclusive recreational and play opportunities for people of all ages, integrating formal and natural play and features. A central woodland-themed LEAP will be situated in the most accessible location at Brook Green, ensuring a 400m walking distance catchment for the whole site (Fields in Trust Standards).
- A supplementary trim trail will also run parallel to ProW W/16 at Brook Green and will be set within the existing and newly planted trees. It will comprise a linear arrangement of simple timber balancing and agility equipment for use by the whole community.

CHARACTER AREAS

Rural Edge

The rural edge will have a comparatively informal feel influenced by the retained existing vegetation within green spaces which the new housing will overlook. Low areas, native feel shrub, tree, and hedgerow species will create an edge-of-settlement countryside character to integrate the site with the surrounding landscape.

Typical species will include:

Trees

- Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'
- Liquidambar styraciflua 'Lane Roberts'
- Tilia cordata 'Greenspire'

Plants

- Carex oshimensis 'Ice Dance'
- Hebe pinguifolia 'Sutherlandii'
- Mahonia eurybracteata 'Soft Cares'
- Pitoporum tenuifolium 'Golf Ball'

Hedges

- Osmanthus x barkwoodii
- Prunus lusitanica 'Angustifolia'
- Taxus baccata

Garden Square

This character area covers homes that have a direct visual relationship with the main vehicular route through the scheme and the areas of adjacent open space. Selected species will have strong ornamental form in response to the rhythm of the building layout, creating a comparatively contemporary and formal landscape character. Where space allows, avenue tree planting within the roadside verges will frame views along the road corridor.

Typical species will include:

Trees

- Acer campestre 'Streetwise'
- Amelanchier x grandiflora 'Robin Hill'
- Betula ulula var. jacquemontii

Plants

- Geranium macrorrhizum 'White Ness'
- Potentilla fruticosa 'Abbotswood'
- Rosa rugosa 'Alba'
- Viburnum opulus 'Compactum'

Hedges

- Carpinus betulus
- Eucalyptus 'Ivey'
- Viburnum tinus 'Eve Price'

WOODLAND EDGE

These character areas will have a naturalistic feel, influenced by the surrounding trees and woodland. English woodland inspired shrub planting and native tree and hedge species will create a wooded edge character and integrate the site with the surrounding landscape.

Typical species will include:

Trees

- Betula pendula
- Malus 'Evereste'
- Sorbus aucuparia 'Cardinal Royal'

Plants

- Euonymus alatus 'Compactus'
- Hydrangea quercifolia
- Sarcococca hookeriana var. digyna 'Purple Stem'
- Pinus mugo 'Gnom'

Hedges

- Fagus sylvatica
- Ilex aquifolium
- Osmanthus x barkwoodii

GARDENSQUE CORE

The landscaping within these character areas responds to the more densely spaced built form within the core of the development areas. Species choices to front garden plots in these core areas will evoke the typical character of English gardens. A mix of flowering and fruiting shrub, ground cover and herbaceous species characteristic of traditional gardens will be included.

Typical species will include:

Trees

- Malus baccata 'Street Parade'
- Prunus 'Snow Goose'
- Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer'

Plants

- Choysa x dewitteana 'White Dazzler'
- Geranium 'Rozanne'
- Hydrangea paniculate 'Little Lime'
- Rosa white flower carpet

Hedges

- Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote'
- Ligustrum ovalifolium
- Rosmarinus officinalis 'Miss Jessopp's Upright'

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RANDALL THORP

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
MASTERPLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
EXPERT WITNESSES

CHAPEL LANE, WIDNESS

Landscape Strategy Masterplan

Dwg No: S26B-19D Date: 13.06.22
Drawn By: LS/DA Checker: JF
Rev No: MD: (00-12-21) Rev checker:
DM Status: Checked Project Status:

Figure 05.03: Landscape Strategy Masterplan

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

Plants • <i>Carex oshimensis</i> 'Ice Dance' • <i>Hebe pinguifolia</i> 'Sutherlandii' • <i>Mahonia eurybracteata</i> 'Soft Caress' • <i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i> 'Golf Ball' 5.45 Hedges • <i>Osmanthus x burkwoodii</i> • <i>Prunus lusitanica</i> 'Angustifolia' • <i>Taxus baccata</i>	Woodland Edge 5.49 These character areas will have a naturalistic feel, influenced by the surrounding trees and woodland. English woodland inspired shrub planting and native tree and hedge species will create a wooded edge character and integrate the Site with the surrounding landscape. 5.50 Typical species will include: Trees • <i>Betula pendula</i> • <i>Malus</i> 'Evereste' • <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> 'Cardinal Royal'	• <i>Prunus</i> 'Snow Goose' • <i>Pyrus calleryana</i> 'Chanticleer' Plants • <i>Choisya x dewitteana</i> 'White Dazzler' • <i>Geranium</i> 'Rozanne' • <i>Hydrangea paniculate</i> 'Little Lime' • <i>Rosa</i> white flower carpet Hedges • <i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> 'Hidcote' • <i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i> • <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> 'Miss Jessopp's Upright'
Rural Edge 5.46 The rural edge will have a comparatively informal feel influenced by the retained existing vegetation within green spaces which the new housing will overlook. 5.47 Lawn areas, native-feel shrub, tree, and hedgerow species will create an edge-of-settlement countryside character to integrate the Site with the surrounding landscape.	Plants • <i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'Compactus' • <i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i> • <i>Sarcococca hookeriana</i> var. <i>digyna</i> 'Purple Stem' • <i>Pinus mugo</i> 'Gnom'	5.53 These focal spaces will feature a change in surface material to become distinctive landmark nodes within the housing areas. A high-quality palette of materials will reflect a more formal, contemporary character within these spaces. Landscape treatments will include feature fastigate tree planting within the hard landscaping and planted areas, aligned to frame views along streets, and structural hedgerow planting to clearly demarcate plot boundaries. The planting scheme will present a striking change in texture and form to mark these key spaces.
5.48 Typical species will include: Trees • <i>Acer campestre</i> 'Streetwise' • <i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Robin Hill' • <i>Betula utilis</i> var. <i>jacquemontii</i>	Hedges • <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> • <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> • <i>Osmanthus x burkwoodii</i> Gardenesque Core	Focal Squares & Mews
Plants • <i>Geranium macrorrhizum</i> 'White Ness' • <i>Potentilla fruticosa</i> 'Abbotswood' • <i>Rosa rugosa</i> 'Alba' • <i>Viburnum opulus</i> 'Compactum'	5.51 The landscaping within these character areas responds to the more densely spaced built form within the core of the development areas. Species choices to front garden plots in these core areas will evoke the typical character of English gardens. A mix of flowering and fruiting shrub, ground cover and herbaceous species characteristic of traditional gardens will be included.	5.54 A series of greens will be located throughout the scheme, focused around existing and new landscape features as illustrated in the landscape strategy masterplan in Figure 05.03 over page.
Hedges • <i>Carpinus betulus</i> • <i>Escallonia</i> 'Iveyi' • <i>Viburnum tinus</i> 'Eve Price'	5.52 Typical species will include: Trees • <i>Malus baccata</i> 'Street Parade'	Greens Brook Green 5.55 This space will contain the main SuDS basin. Alongside the basin will be wildflower meadow grassland and native tree planting with a large open central area of mown grass for informal recreation, kick-about games and picnicking. A timber trim trail will be included alongside the public

5.0 Illustrative Masterplan

footpath to south of the space.

Pool's Green

- 5.56 This is an enclosed residential green with a retained field pond providing an attractive focal point. The landscape treatment will be a simple mix of longer meadow grass, short cut amenity grass and tree planting. Homes are orientated to overlook the green on all sides. Informal play in the form of a LAP with a simple natural play features will be provided along with places to sit and relax.

Circus Green

- 5.57 This is a focal green space at the heart of the scheme at the intersection of the main movement routes. The green will have a parkland character and will include the main play space.

Lodge Green

- 5.58 This space is enclosed by existing woodland, hedges and trees, with Alder Brook and the public footpath along the northern boundary. The space will contain a small community orchard set within wildflower meadow grassland.

Wood Green

- 5.59 This is a woodland edge glade with woodland tree planting, wildflower meadow grassland and scattered native blossom tree planting within the open areas. Additional tree planting along the northern Site boundary with help enclose the space further and screen views of the development. A bound gravel footpath will run through the space linking to the public footpath to the north.



Site Entrance

- 5.60 The Site entrance will create an attractive arrival space off Chapel Lane which allows for the retention of the existing established roadside hedgerow. The space will include a naturalistic SuDS pond with wildflower meadow grassland and native tree planting. The entrance will be framed by estate rail fencing and further tree planting.

Play Provision

- 5.61 The Site will offer a variety of accessible play spaces that provide for a wide range of inclusive recreational and play opportunities for people of all ages integrating formal and natural play and features. A central LEAP will be situated in the most accessible location at Circus Green, ensuring a 400m walking distance catchment for the whole Site (Fields in Trust Standards).
- 5.62 A supplementary trim trail will run parallel to PRow W/16 at Brook Green and will be set within the existing and newly planted trees. It will comprise a linear arrangement of simple timber balancing and agility equipment for use by the whole community.
- 5.63 Further informal supplementary natural play elements in the form of boulders, stepping logs and 'fallen trees' will be provided alongside the north-eastern footpath through Wood Green and along the Sandy Lane greenway to enhance the play value of the landscape in these areas - linking to the main play area at the centre of the Site. Where possible the felled trees from other parts of the Site will be utilised to create these natural play elements.

Community Orchard

- 5.64 A Community Orchard will be delivered in partnership with The Big Halton Forest project. Orchard fruit trees will include the following local varieties and all trees will be sourced locally.
- 5.65 Additional fruiting hedgerows and trees will be planted throughout the open spaces across the Site. A range of edible species will provide informal foraging opportunities.

- 5.66 Retained vegetation along Site boundaries provides mature setting to development and ecological benefits

Drainage & Surface Water Management

- 5.67 The SuDS is part of the Blue and Green Infrastructure network and has six Site specific objectives:
- To efficiently drain the Site whilst not causing flooding down stream;
 - To create suitable habitat for amphibians, invertebrates, birds, mammals, native aquatic and marginal plant life;
 - Create ecological corridors across the Site to enable wildlife to move more freely and native plants to spread and colonise the wider area;
 - Create an aesthetically pleasing setting for development,
 - Promote the Site as a sustainable place to live and work; and
 - Use SuDS features at property boundaries as part of the approach to Secured by Design.
- 5.68 SuDS aims to deal with water at source by a combination of methods, depending on a Sites' permeability, the typical methods are set-out below:
- Percolation at source if possible; use of porous pavements, French drains and unlined swales to allow as much surface water as possible to percolate into the ground at its 'point of contact'.
 - Retention of water on-Site and allowing natural percolation to occur which has a much slower release rate into the surrounding watercourses.
 - Slow release of water via balancing ponds - where the possibility of percolation is restricted by underlying clays and other impermeable surfaces pools are constructed to retain storm water surges on Site, and, through controlled release of the water (via weirs or brake pipes) water is released (at greenfield rates) into the surrounding watercourses.
 - Removal of pollutants and silts using filter beds and marginal aquatic vegetation to catch silt particles

and draw in chemicals, hydrocarbons and organic compounds washed into the system from surrounding roadways.

- 5.69 A SuDS system including ponds, basins, swales, filter drains/strips and ditches will be designed to take the form of multifunctional naturalistic interventions that provide ecological, recreational, amenity, visual and educational benefits; in addition to their role in surface water management and so enhance environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- 5.70 Therefore, SuDS will be developed as a key integral element in the detailed design of the proposals and will contribute to the character, landscape and design quality of the proposals.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.71 A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation and strategy has been prepared at this Site using Natural England's Biodiversity Metric 3.1. The assessment has been completed by a suitably experienced ecologist in line with current guidance and has included a habitat condition assessment and strategic significance assessment.
- 5.72 The assessment has been undertaken based on the information currently available, taking into account the habitat retention and potential enhancement within the Site, the BNG calculations are set out in detail in that assessment which accompanies this Outline Planning Application.

6.0 Conclusion



Figure 06.01: Illustrative Masterplan/Indicative Layout

Conclusion

- 6.1 This Design and Access Statement has been produced by eSCAPE Urbanists Ltd on behalf of Taylor Wimpey (UK) Ltd, in support of a full application for 350 residential dwellings on the land east of Chapel Lane, Widnes.
- 6.2 This document explains how the current proposals have emerged from analysis of the Site and its context, outlining the design process followed and the technical considerations that have informed the final layout.
- 6.3 To that end we have included a Building for a Healthy Life Assessment (BHL) as part of this conclusion.

What is Building for a Healthy Life?

- 6.4 Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the latest edition and new name for Building for Life 12 (BfL12), it has been revised in collaboration with NHS England and is about 'Putting Health into Place'.
- 6.5 In essence it looks to encourage designers and developers to engage with the local planning authority and communities to create well designed healthy neighbourhoods and homes that promote walking and cycling, active use of open spaces, development of community orchards and allotments with good and direct access to the wider neighbourhoods, villages and towns in which they're located, without having to get into a car.
- 6.6 BfL12 was redesigned in 2012 to reflect the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Government's commitment to build more and better homes. BfL12 comprised 12 questions arranged under three broad topics: Integrating into the neighbourhood; Creating a place and Street and Home.
- 6.7 BHL has re-prioritised and rewritten the 12 questions reflecting the greater emphasis on healthier and more active lifestyles. The 'questions' are now termed as 'considerations'; as good design is not about a quick response to a question but requires more time, analysis and thought.

- 6.8 The 12 considerations capture the areas of design and placemaking that need the most attention as part of the iterative process of design and relate to both the National Planning Policy Framework and National Design Guide.

- 6.9 Creating healthy, walkable and cycleable neighbourhoods is even more critical in this post pandemic world, as set out earlier in this Statement and in the related character area design code.

- 6.10 The reworking of the considerations and renaming of the three headings under which the considerations sit are set out below:

Integrated Neighbourhoods

Natural connections

Walking, cycling & public transport

Facilities & services

Homes for everyone

Distinctive Places

Making the most of what's there

A memorable character

Well defined streets & spaces

Easy to find your way around

Streets for All

Healthy streets

Cycle & car parking

Green & blue infrastructure

Back of pavement, front of home

- 6.11 Whilst BHL is emphasised as being a design process structure, rather than a scoring system it does aid in assessing how well the design process has worked through the appreciation of the Site and context and applied the layers of urbanism to create a design that is well resolved and a place in which people will really want to live.

- 6.12 The assessment of the design process is based on a simple 'traffic light' system (red, amber and green). The more 'greens' that are achieved, the better a development is likely to be. A red light gives warning that a particular aspect of a proposed development needs to be reconsidered. A proposed development might not achieve 12 'greens' for a variety of reasons but where possible, reds should always be avoided.

- 6.13 BHL, combined with the use of the Halton Borough Council Design of Residential Development SPD and national guidance in the form of the National Design Guide (NDG) and National Model Design Code (NMDC) have all been an important influence on the preparation of this planning application.

- 6.14 A summary BHL review is included over page as part of the conclusion to this Design and Access Statement.

Integrated Neighbourhoods

No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light	No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light
1	Natural Connections: Create places that are well integrated into the Site and their wider natural and built surroundings. Avoid creating isolated and disconnected places that are not easy places to move through and around.	The Chapel Lane development is located on the north western fringes of Widnes with frontage onto Chapel Lane to the west. The other three sides of the Site currently border open fields to the north, a young plantation woodland to the east and the existing fringes of Widnes to the south. The Site is dissected by Sandy Lane which runs north south between Widnes and Cronton and is designated as a bridleway. A Public Right of Way also connects Sandy Lane to Chapel Lane through the Site This proposed new neighbourhood is part of a wider well connected network of hierarchical routes for all forms of transport which creates a strong circulatory system adding to the sustainability and safety of this and adjoining neighbourhoods. In addition this Site is well connected via adjoining proposed developments and beyond to the surrounding neighbourhoods and wider Widnes as illustrated in this D&As. The street and public realm network is a crucial element in the neighbourhood providing a variety and choice of routes for moving around and through the neighbourhood. Routes are direct ensuring people can make efficient journeys. Direct, well designed and legible routes make walking and cycling more attractive and with increased activity comes a greater perception of safety. This proposed route network links directly with the existing PRoWs and bridelways The proposed neighbourhood has a fine-grain route network where streets are connected one to the other. The street network is organic in form with lower densities to the northern fringes to allowing the homes to interact more with the natural and rural environment and provide a feathered edge to rural interface. Chapel Lane has a number of native hedgerows which border and run through the Site and will be retained within areas of green space, creating wildlife corridors around the Site.		2	Walking, cycling & public transport: Short trips of up to three miles can be easily made on foot or bicycle if the right infrastructure is in place, helping improve public health and air quality whilst also reducing local congestion and carbon emissions.	Walking and cycling is a key element in ensuring this neighbourhood is sustainable, indeed walkable and cycleable neighbourhoods have been at the forefront of post pandemic urban design, as touched on in this Statement. The aim of the movement network across the neighbourhood is to ensure that walking and cycling is the preferred choice for short journeys of 5km or less between the Site and surrounding areas. The proposed network is direct and associated with anticipated desire lines and Public Rights of Way and is designed to be attractive and safe with good overlooking from the surrounding development parcels. In addition to the dedicated walking and cycling routes through the green infrastructure network the avenues shall also incorporate dedicated cycleways which are separated from other vehicles. The streets, lanes and shared drives incorporate shared space principles within them or include areas of public realm with pedestrians prioritised and vehicles drive at slow speeds. Access to public transport is a key requirement and provision of routes to access public transport has been a part of proposals with easy access to existing services within a 5 to 10 minute walk.. The network of footpaths and cycleways across the Site provide direct links between Widnes and surrounding villages with access to schools, shops and other services.	

Integrated Neighbourhoods

No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light	No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light
3	Facilities & services: Places that offer social, leisure and recreational opportunities a short walk or cycle from their home.	As setout in this Statement the Site lies within a 5 to 10 minute walk of a variety of facilities including primary schools, shops, doctors surgery. This permeability enables direct access to a wider area with bus stops, pubs, shops and schools being accessible within a 5 to 15 minute walk of the Site. The nearest bus stops to the Site are on Queensbury Way providing routes between Cronton and Widnes Town Centre. Cronton Sixth Form College is located to the north west of the Site on Cronton Lane/Road near Queensbury Way. Six primary schools are located within 1.5 miles of the Site with two in Cronton, one in Lunt's Heath, one in Farnworth and two in Hough Green. The local secondary school; Wade Deacon High School is located around a mile to the south on Birchfield Road and therefore the Site is well located to be served by a full range of educational provision. In addition to the educational facilities the Site is also well served by sports pitches and clubs including Precot Road Playing Fields, Parklands Social Club and the Jaguar Land Rover Sports and Social Club.		4	Homes for everyone: A range of homes that meet local needs.	There is a range of private and affordable homes providing a good choice on this Site for couples, young and growing families as well as older people looking to downsize and gain better access to local facilities. The mix, location and level of affordable provision is fully compliant with Policy CSR 12 of the Local Plan with 20% dedicated affordable housing. All homes have access to private or communal rear gardens of a good size for the size of home/apartment/maisonette they are associated with and are not directly overlooked or fully over-shaded.	

Distinctive Places

No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light	No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light
5	Making the most of what's there: Understand & respond.	The opportunities to retain existing landscape features and create new connections have been used to inform the development of the proposals and are illustrated in this Statement. Existing trees, hedgerows, wetlands and the rights of way have all been retained wherever possible to inform the structure and layout of the proposed new neighbourhood. The retained features also contribute to the softening of the development when viewed from the north, with the built form set back from the northern boundary behind the retained trees and hedgerows adjacent to the watercourse. These existing features, when complemented with new native planting provide a buffer to reduce the impact of the development on the wider rural landscape. The proposals create a series of interconnected green spaces which not only provide space for recreation by residents and visitors but also create or retain a series of ecological habitats which are interconnected via the retained hedgerows and trees which surround or run through the proposed development. The proposed SuDS management train intercepts water at source from the roofs and pavements and directs the collected water into a series of detention basins adjacent to the northern boundary before discharging at greenfield run-off rates into the watercourse thus not contributing to issues of flooding down stream.		6	A memorable character: Create places that are memorable.	The proposed layout, the spaces within that layout, the architecture and landscape work hand in hand to create a cohesive neighbourhood which is unique to the Site and wider local area. The landscape proposals for the Site incorporate four distinct character areas utilising a mix of native and ornamental species depending on the location of the character area. An avenue runs through the heart of the development and is emphasised with good sized avenue trees. Hedges are used to front the garden boundaries and garden trees add variety to the streetscenes and meet the requirements of the NPPF in terms of tree lined streets. The planting palette deliberately overlaps with the palette proposed for residential open spaces to provide some continuity, and similar considerations concerning year round interest, compact form and bee-friendly species have influenced the selection. There will be tree and shrub planting within the public realm areas which will be predominantly native species. Area for recreation will be managed as amenity grassland with short mown grass. Other grass areas within the development will be sown as wildflower grassland and managed with a less frequent mowing regime. A community orchard is also proposed within the open spaces.	

Distinctive Places

No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light	No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light
7	Well defined streets and spaces: Create a network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and/or structural landscaping, taking care to ensure that front doors and principal façades of buildings face streets and public spaces.	The public realm incorporates the streets, squares and mews in which the community and visitors will interact. The street hierarchy is described in greater detail earlier in this Statement creating a legible and permeable network through the neighbourhood and out to the surrounding areas. The proposed public realm and built form work hand in hand and the enclosure of the public spaces is part of how well they perform and feel to the users. The Avenue is at the top of the route hierarchy and provides the access into the heart of the neighbourhood with Streets being the secondary in the route hierarchy and provide the main accesses into the heart of the neighbourhood to each side of the Avenue. Lanes are tertiary routes and provide local access to the fringes of the neighbourhood. The public realm includes Greens, Squares and Mews which straddle or sit next to the avenue creating shared spaces with the carriageways, pedestrian zones and green spaces defined within the space as a whole rather than by a traditional carriageway and footpath arrangement. Green Lanes (Shared Drives) are domestic in nature, designed as a simple shared surface route which provides access to only a small number of properties associated with the development edge and interface with the open spaces. Pedestrian & Cycle routes provide a choice of routes through and out of the Site, increasing permeability and encouraging walking and cycling.		8	Easy to find your way around: Use legible features to help people find their way around a place.	As illustrated and described in this Statement the street network is well connected throughout the hierarchy, one to another. The street and public realm layout creates a strong and permeable neighbourhood. This encourages residents and visitor to walk and cycle through and around the development and on out to the surrounding neighbourhoods and countryside, in line with the needs and requirements that have emerged during the pandemic. Vehicles can be accommodated in the layout with parking designed to be integral to the streetscape whilst not overwhelming it. Various parking solutions can be applied to ensure a high quality streetscape is created. Vehicle speeds are kept low through the use of shared spaces and road geometry thus removing the need for artificial speed bumps etc. The proposed street hierarchy is clear and logical comprising a series of inter-connected avenues, streets, lanes and shared drives. The arrangement of streets and other routes within the Site is designed to ensure good connectivity with the surrounding street network, provide logical and efficient routes through the development and ensure a layout which is clear and legible. The street pattern creates an organic grid pattern with gently curving streets and lanes providing access to the internal blocks. The organic nature of the routes reflects the topography and character of the Site. The proposals have taken account of adjoining Sites which are part of the wider housing allocation with access provided to those boundaries to ensure the remaining parcels are deliverable.	

Streets for All

No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light	No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light
9	Healthy streets: Streets are different to roads. Streets are places where the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles is balanced alongside the need for people to move along and cross streets with ease. Activity in the street is an essential part of a successful public realm.	Walking and cycling has never quite been taken up by the general public as a form of transport, however, the pandemic appears to have brought about a shift and it is thus that Chapel Lane has enough space to accommodate a comprehensive and balanced approach to all modes of movement. The streets and spaces are well connected having footpaths and cycleways within them, providing direct and safe access across the neighbourhood away from the more major roads connecting jobs, shops, facilities and homes together. The Site is well located to exploit the public transport network encouraging residents to walk to the local bus stop and leaving the car at home. Trees and other vegetation are being retained on Site along with the planting of new trees and shrubs which aids in filtering small particulate pollution, recycling carbon dioxide and aiding mental health and wellbeing.		10	Cycle & car parking: Well-designed developments will make it more attractive for people to choose to walk or cycle for short trips helping to improve levels of physical activity, air quality, local congestion and the quality of the street scene. Well -designed streets will also provide sufficient and well-integrated car parking.	As this is an outline application the form and location of parking is indicative. However, it is acknowledged that cycling not only needs to be designed into the movement strategy for the Site, but also accommodated in terms of parking, both in the public realm and private curtilage of the homes. Cycle parking within the private curtilage of homes will be within garden sheds/stores in rear gardens or within car ports in the form of cycle stands at floor level or vertical wall stands. Car ownership and use are two separate issues. Many nations with low car usage still have a high level of car ownership. Car parking has been designed and integrated into the neighbourhood. Creative integration of cars into the streetscape and private curtilage of properties is required with a mix of solutions including garaged, side and bay parking. Frontage parking will not dominate the layout and a balanced approach with a mix of parking solutions will be explored at the reserved matters application stage.	

Streets for All

No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light	No	Consideration	Answer	Traffic Light
11	Green & blue infrastructure: Creative surface water management such as rills, brooks and ponds enrich the public realm and help improve a sense of wellbeing and offer an interaction with nature. As the richest habitat for a range of flora and fauna, they are also a key play in achieving the net gain in biodiversity sought by the 2020 Environment Bill.	The greenspace network will provide natural green corridors for the movement of wildlife across the Site and will be laid out to enhance opportunities for wildlife wherever possible. The ecological value of existing trees and hedgerows will be protected wherever practical. Any removal of existing trees and hedgerows required to facilitate the fundamental Site services and allow safe public access will be compensated for by new planting or alternative habitat development. The development will incorporate a sustainable drainage strategy across the Site. The surface water drainage strategy will be complemented by measures to reduce water consumption within the development. The development will aim to help future proof the existing water infrastructure by considering carefully water use in the development. Water saving behaviour will be encouraged by incorporating appropriate measures such as low flushing toilets and aerated taps and the provision of rain-water butts which contribute to reducing consumption from the mains for watering gardens. Foul drainage will feed into the established sewerage infrastructure which will be extended as necessary to accommodate the scheme.		12	Back of pavement, front of home: Garden cities, towns and suburbs used hedges to define public and private spaces, helping to create characterful and biodiverse places. The space between the back of pavement and the face of buildings has a significant impact on the quality of place. Clear demarcations between public and private spaces can encourage people to personalise the front of their homes whilst also offering opportunities to integrate level changes, utility boxes and waste storage.	The demarcation between the public realm and semi-private front gardens has been created through the use of hedgerows as set-out in the landscape strategy. The rear gardens are clearly defined as private space by using high brick walls and fences as the boundary treatments. Service, meter cupboards and electric charging points are designed into the elevations of the homes so they do not spoil the primary views of the homes from the street. There are no 'dead areas' of external space with the Site as the development blocks are outwards facing and turned to overlook all public spaces.	

6.15 The proposed development of 350 new homes will provide significant benefits to Widnes and the Borough as a whole, providing much needed housing in a suitable and sustainable location and in a timely fashion, supporting the Council's Local Plan. This will be a high quality development that respects the local character and successfully integrates existing landscape features into the new development.

6.16 In summary, the development comprises the following elements:

- A principle Site access off Chapel Lane to the west.
- Good pedestrian connectivity and permeability between the adjoining neighbourhoods, the countryside and Site.
- 9.17 hectares (net) or 64% of the Site as residential development including 350 residential dwellings with associated access, servicing and green infrastructure.
- A Green Infrastructure network covering 5.14 hectares or 36% of the Site which will include a variety of functions such as:
 - i Public Open Space,
 - ii Play Areas,
 - iii Retained and new native trees and hedgerows,
 - iv Retained and new wetland habitats,
 - v Retained and new meadow habitats,
 - vi Orchards,
 - vii A sustainable urban drainage network, and
 - viii Connections to the Public Right of Way network which runs through and across the Site.

6.9 The final proposals have emerged out of a thorough process of design development, review, testing, and revision, as described in this Statement. This iterative process has ensured that the final proposals included in this Design and Access Statement meets the requirements of the Local Plan Policies, the various stakeholders and wider community.

6.10 The development of the Site would result in a sympathetic, sustainable and high quality gateway into Widnes from the north west, with a strong Green Infrastructure network, offering improved linkages into and through the development, shared infrastructure, biodiversity, open spaces and community access.

A Place with Character

6.11 The Chapel Lane neighbourhood, as described in this Statement and as illustrated here and in the supporting drawing pack creates a high quality environment in which residents will be able to live and enjoy the surrounding green spaces.

6.12 The Building for a Healthy Life considerations, as set out here in the conclusion to this Statement, demonstrate a thorough design process has been undertaken in order to arrive at the outline proposals for Chapel Lane. Working corroboratively within a multidisciplinary design team the scheme has benefited from an iterative process of design review and refinement.

6.13 The BHL process has been redesigned to take more account of health and wellbeing which includes considerations around design for a post-pandemic world.

6.14 The scheme has achieved green traffic lights for all aspects of the development creating a place with character and space within homes, gardens and public open spaces for people to enjoy in close proximity to their homes, thus enhancing their mental wellbeing and encouraging walking and cycling to improve their physical health.

6.15 Chapel Lane creates an exciting and unique neighbourhood set within a wider framework of neighbourhoods and open spaces that provides an outward facing and finished edge to Widnes, as well as a gateway into the town from the north west approaches.

“The development of the Site would result in a sympathetic, sustainable and high quality gateway into Widnes from the north west, with a strong Green Infrastructure network, offering improved linkages into and through the development, shared infrastructure, biodiversity, open spaces and community access. “

