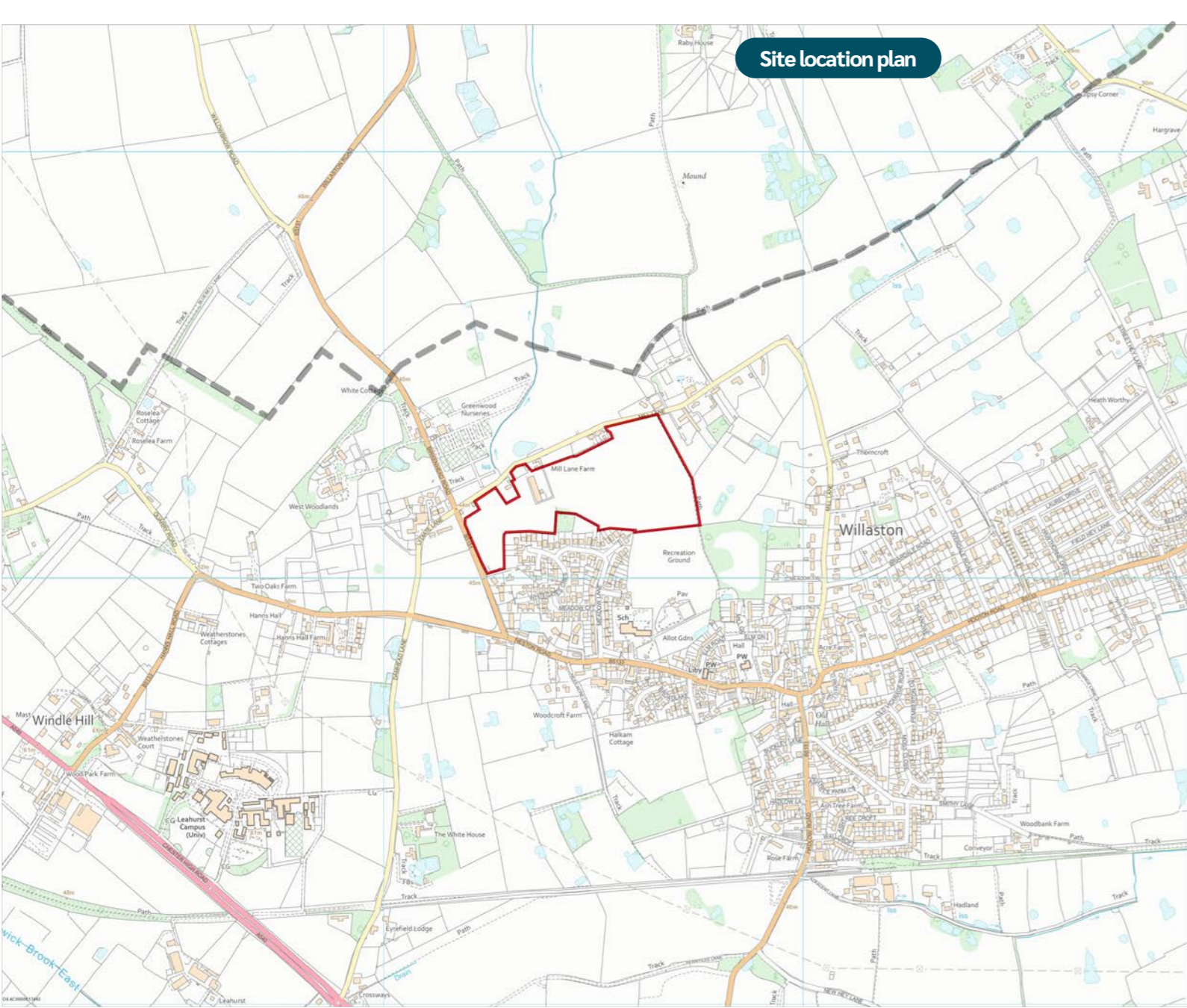


Land at Mill Lane, Willaston
Development Framework



Site location plan

Key

Application Site Boundary

District Boundary

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north

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Number/Figure
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 Scale
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 Date
 11/08/2025
 Checked
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Project
 Mill Lane, Willaston
 Drawing title
 Site Location
 Client
 Redrow North West



INTRODUCTION

This Development Framework document has been prepared to support Redrow's representations to the Council's consultation on the Regulation 18 Local Plan: Issues and Options 2025.

Redrow is a leading housebuilder dedicated to giving people a better way to live. For 50 years, Redrow have been creating high-quality homes and communities for our customers, building over 120,000 new homes nationwide. In Cheshire West and Chester, Redrow have been a key delivery partner for the Council, having built over 2,600 homes in the Borough since 2010, over 27.5% of which have been affordable dwellings across 10 sites.

Redrow is promoting a number of new sites for housing development through the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan, including the land at Mill Lane, Willaston. Redrow previously submitted the site to the Council's Call for sites consultation, which ran between January - March 2024. The Development Framework document has been updated to reflect the latest technical assessments and changes in national planning policy, including in relation to Green Belt policy.

A range of technical assessments have been undertaken to demonstrate that the site is suitable and deliverable. The Development Framework document reviews the site's context and presents an analysis of the opportunities and constraints.

The site is capable of delivering approximately 160 new homes. The masterplan demonstrates how the proposal can contribute to meeting identified development needs in a highly sustainable way, which respects the constraints of the site and takes advantage of its opportunities.

The vision is to create a high-quality development that would positively contribute to Willaston by providing aspirational homes for existing and new residents and affordable homes to those that have found it harder to get a foot on the housing ladder. With this investment, additional expenditure for local shops and Council Tax receipts will be collected which will assist in funding and improving local community services and facilities.



WILLASTON AND THE CASE FOR IT TO BE IDENTIFIED AS A KEY SERVICE CENTRE

Willaston is currently designated as a Local Service Centre under Policy R1 of the adopted Local Plan (Part 2).

Redrow consider that Willaston should be identified as a Key Service Centre and a growth area in the Local Plan.

Paragraph 82 of the Framework states:

“In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing.”

Paragraph 83 states:

“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.”

Policy SS4 of the Issues and Options consultation identifies that the following settlements have a level of facilities and services that mean they can meet the day-to-day needs of their residents and those living in surrounding areas: Cuddington and Sandiway; Farndon; Helsby; Kelsall; Malpas; Tarporley; Tarvin; and Tattenhall. We consider that this list should be expanded to include Willaston.

The basis for the settlements identified in Policy SS4, and for the exclusion of other settlements such as Willaston, is not clear. There does not appear to have been a detailed assessment of villages and settlements within the hierarchy, save for the Places Background Paper (January 2024) which only assessed settlements that were already identified as key service centres in the current Local Plan. It is not appropriate to simply carry over the settlement hierarchy from the current Local Plan, given the significant changes in national policy since the Part 1 Local Plan was adopted (including in relation to housing in the rural areas) and the significant change in local housing need, which has nearly doubled in comparison to the adopted housing requirement.

The Places Background Paper identifies population as one of the criteria for assessment, and states that the size of a settlement plays a part in its significance and in general terms the larger the population the more likely it is to have a range of services and facilities brought about by a larger demand. Willaston has a population of 2,470 residents (2021 Census). Willaston has a considerably larger population than other Local Service Centres, and a larger population than some Key Service Centres such as Tattenhall (2,293), Farndon (2,228) and Malpas (1,358).

Willaston is a highly sustainable location for growth. The village contains a range of local services and amenities, including:

- Primary school
- GP surgery
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy clinic
- Convenience store
- Café and sandwich shops
- Dog grooming salon
- Vehicle repair garages
- Florist
- Public house
- Village hall
- Sports facilities, including football pitches and tennis courts
- Local park and playground
- Allotments
- Two churches
- Two motor vehicles sales garages
- Railway station museum
- Community farm

The village is also extremely well served by public transport. Service provision is detailed under the highways and accessibility section of this Development Framework document. Whilst the Council has not published an up-to-date assessment of development needs, or the potential to support services, accessibility and local constraints across all of the settlements of the borough, it is clear that the scale of Willaston and its level of service provision is at least comparable, if not better, than a number of the other existing key service centres.

Notwithstanding that Willaston benefits from an excellent level of services, amenities and public transport, the settlement hierarchy should not be defined by existing service provision. National policy is clear that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Willaston needs housing in order for the settlement to grow and thrive.

Therefore, Willaston is a highly sustainable location for growth. It should be apportioned a level of housing which reflects its sustainability, the potential of new housing to support existing services, and allows the village to grow and thrive.



SITE ANALYSIS

The site is currently agricultural land, comprising a single field used for pasture. Two dilapidated agricultural buildings are located towards the centre of the site. The site is very flat, with a number of trees and hedgerows located around its perimeter. There is also a group of trees within the central part of the site.

The site adjoins the settlement of Willaston. The site is bordered by existing housing and sports pitches to the south, Birkenhead Road to the west, Mill Lane to the north (including a number of residential properties) and a public footpath with agricultural land beyond to the east. In addition, a large nursery operation (Greenwood Nursery) is located immediately to the north-west of the site, and a group of houses is located to the north-east of the site (off Mill Lane).

Taking into account the sites relationship with the adjoining settlement boundary to the south, and its high level of containment by existing roads and housing to the east and north, the site comprises a highly logical extension of the village.

Vehicular access would be taken from Birkenhead Road to the west. A connection would be provided to the existing footpath that runs along the eastern boundary of the site. This provides a direct and short route to the local primary school, park and sports facilities, as well as other amenities and services in the centre of the village.

A Welsh Water Pumping Station and associated access track from Birkenhead Road lies to the south of the site, outside of the red line boundary. A combined sewer runs through the central part of the site, and another sewer runs to the east. There is an electricity overhead line that runs through the north-west of the site. This would likely be diverted as part of the development proposals.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

There are no significant constraints to the site being developed. A summary of considerations relevant to the natural environment is set out below:

The site is located within Flood Zone 1.

The site is largely free from areas of medium and high surface water flood risk, as depicted by the Environment Agency's latest mapping. The small areas of medium and high risk can easily be avoided within the development, and this is accounted for in the proposed masterplan. The site is not subject to any local or national ecological or environmental designations.

At least part of the site comprises Grade 2 best and most versatile agricultural land, with the remainder classified as Grade 2 agricultural land. However, the loss of the site for agriculture would not be significant in agricultural terms, and meeting housing needs in the borough will require best and most versatile agricultural land to be allocated for housing.

An Ecological and Aborigicultural Appraisal for the site has been prepared by TEP. To inform this assessment, the following surveys have been undertaken:

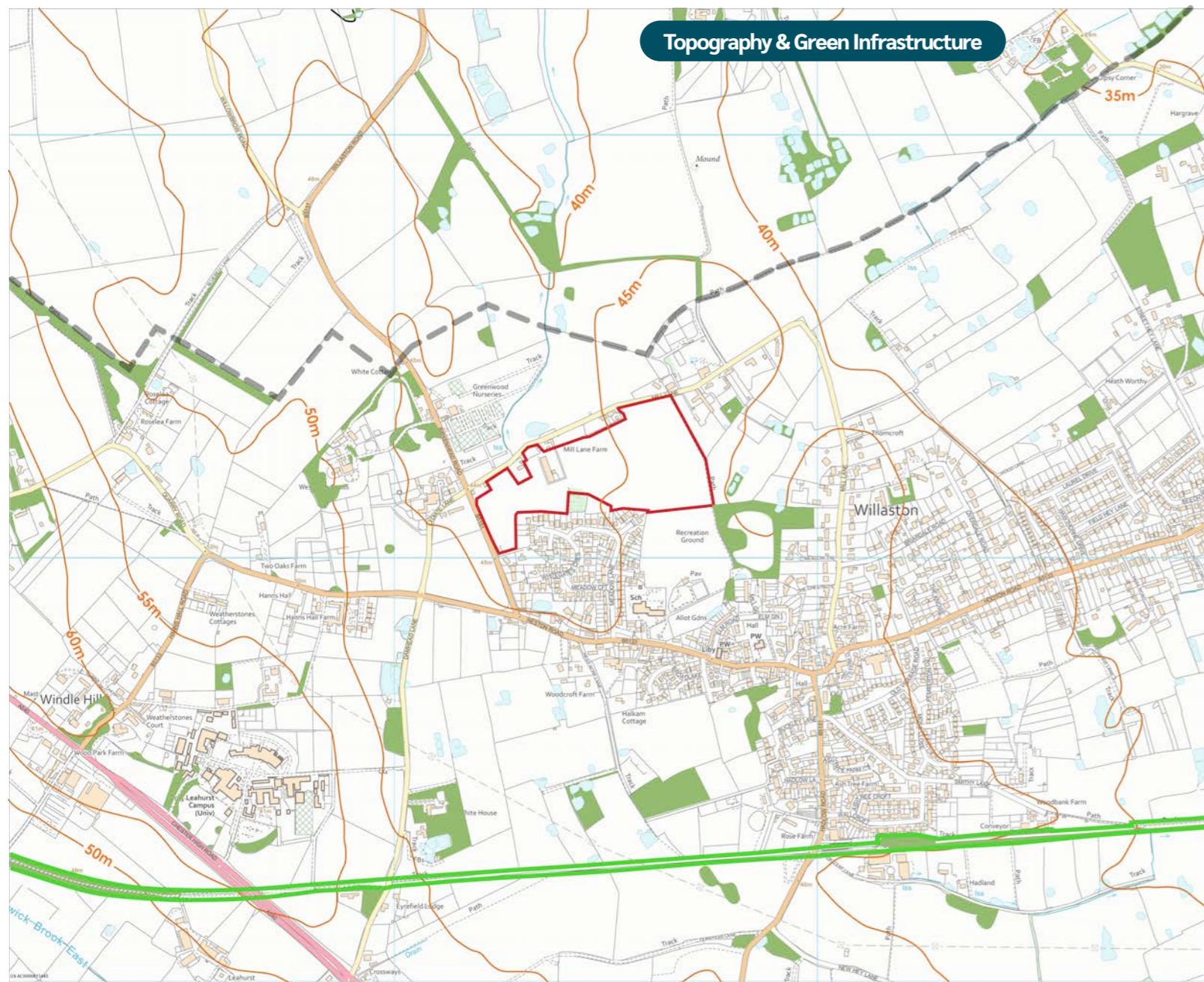
- Desk-based assessment
- Extended Phase 1 habitat survey
- Baseline and high-level preliminary post-development Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment; and
- Tree Survey to BS 5837:2012.

This evidence base allows a robust assessment of the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with development of the site. The evidence has informed the masterplan which demonstrates how nature conservation interests can be protected.



The assessment concludes that the proposed development would have no adverse residual effects on ecological features of value. The design and layout would increase the quality and resilience of the existing ecological network of grasslands and hedges. Loss of low ecological value grassland to development is of low adverse significance. Protected species can be conserved, and it is considered likely that 10% BNG can be achieved within the site, pending further masterplanning and detailed BNG assessment, having regard to the significant open space provision that is proposed.

In summary, there are no insurmountable environmental constraints to development. The above considerations have been factored in to the masterplan which has been prepared for the site.





Topography & Green Infrastructure

- Key**
-  Application Site Boundary
 -  District Boundary
 -  Existing Woodland
 -  Contours
 -  Green Corridors

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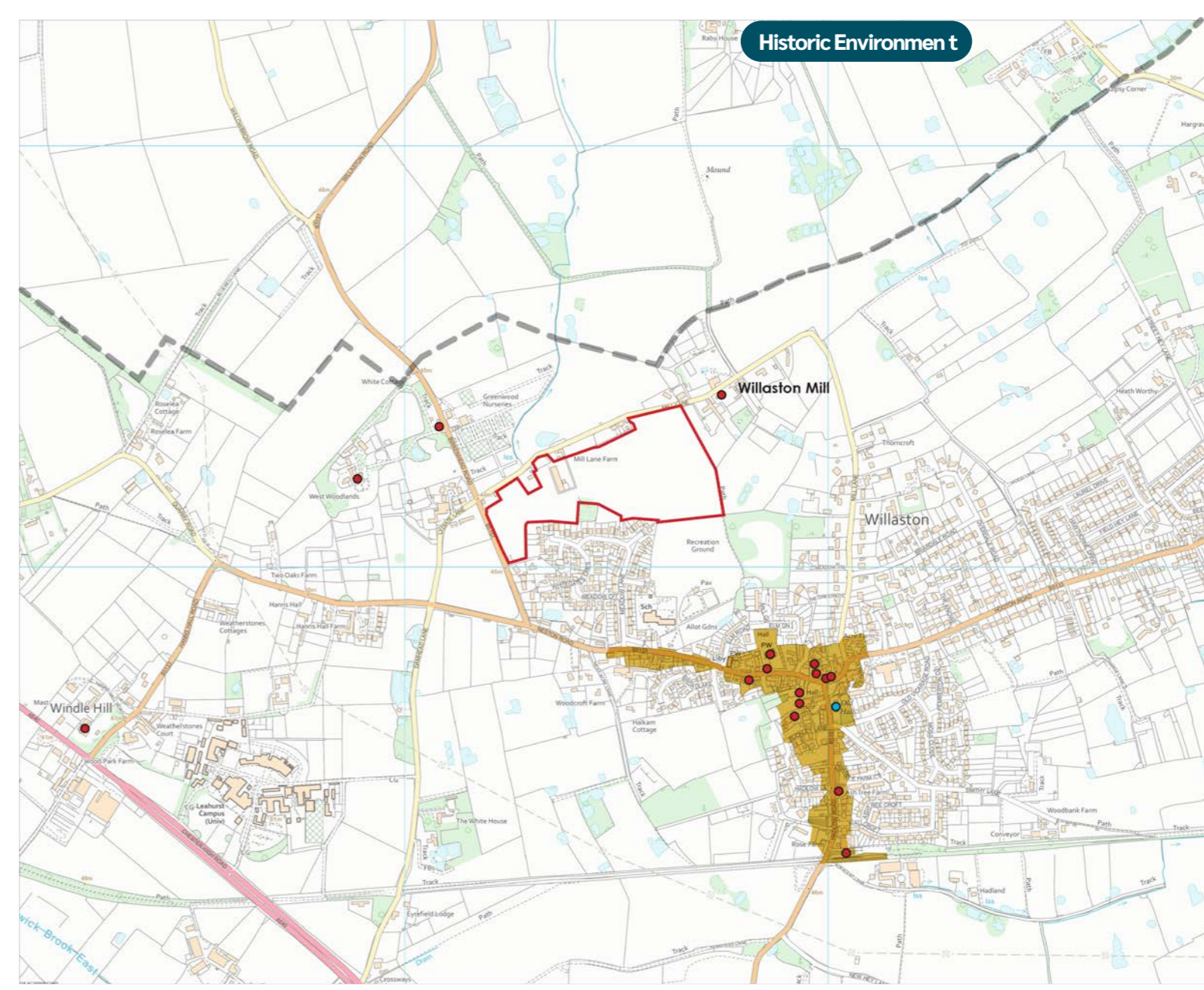
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

Project
Mill Lane, Willaston

Drawing Title
Topography & Green Infrastructure

Client
Redrow North West



Historic Environment

- Key**
-  Application Site Boundary.
 -  District Boundary
 -  Conservation Area
 -  Grade II Listed Building
 -  Grade II* Listed Building

Number/Figure
GLY0192 F4

Scale
1:10,000 @ A3

Date
11/08/2025

Checked
DC

Project
Mill Lane, Willaston

Drawing Title
Historic Environment

Client
Redrow North West



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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

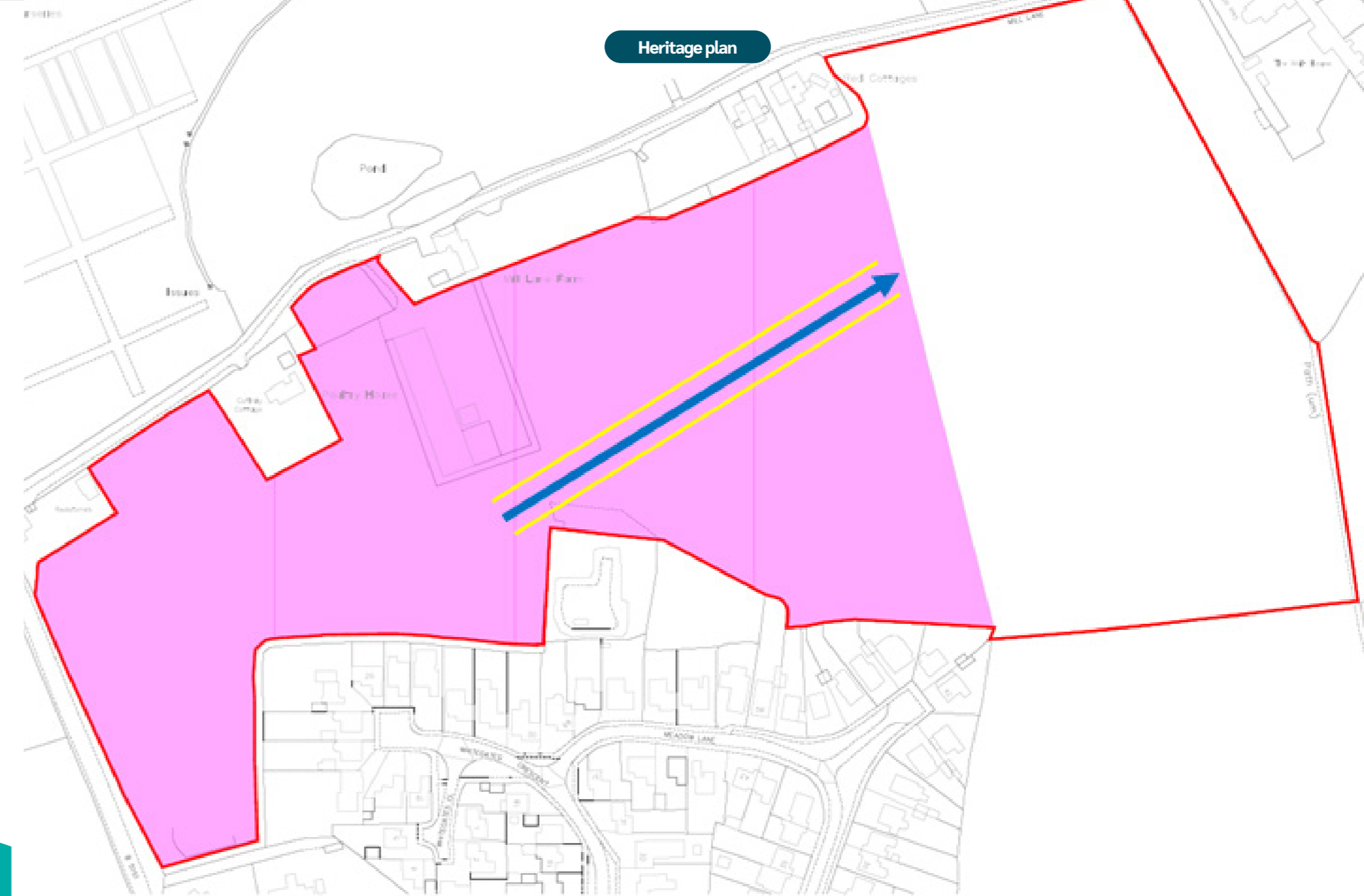
Pegasus Group have assessed the significance of the identified heritage assets, including whether the site forms part of the setting of the assets and if so, what contribution the Site makes to the significance of the assets. Pegasus have also undertaken an assessment of impact, taking account of the approximate anticipated footprint of development. The assessment undertaken is proportionate to the evidence base required to support a Local Plan allocation.

The site does not include any designated or non-designated heritage assets. Within 1km of the site there is one Grade II* Listed Building, 15 Grade II Listed Buildings, and the Willaston Conservation Area. The Grade II Listed Willaston Mill is located circa 100m to the east of the Site, and has been identified as having the potential to be sensitive to the development proposals.

The site contributes to the significance of Willaston Mill through setting, and the addition of this buffer would help to minimise harm to the Listed Building, through change to its setting. Public access within this landscape buffer would also allow for publicly accessible views of the Mill in this location, which were not possible in this location previously, with the Site representing private farmland. These would allow the local topographic situation of the Mill which relates to its historic function to be understood.

Longer distanced views of the Mill were also identified within the Site and the road to its west, extending from the Site's western extent with unbroken views of the 5-stage tower to the north-east. It is anticipated that a view corridor through an aligned road could be implemented within the scheme, which would retain the longer distanced visibility of the structure, in combination with the landscape buffer, which ensures that the building's relationship with the topography of the landscape continues to be understood. The plan overleaf shows the potential area with viewshed corridor, orientated from south-west to north-east providing continued views of Willaston Mill through the site.

Taking the anticipated footprint of development and the proposed mitigation measures into account, it is anticipated that residential development could be delivered within the site causing only less than substantial harm at the low end of that spectrum. This harm would fall to be considered in the planning balance, and therefore weighed against the very significant range of social and economic benefits outlined elsewhere within this Development Framework.



LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The site is not covered by any specific landscape designations, and it does not fall within a 'valued landscape' for the purpose of paragraph 187(a) of the Framework.

The site adjoins the settlement of Willaston to the south, and the proposed development would be set against the backdrop of existing housing. The site is generally flat and is generally not visible from the wider landscape. The site is also well contained by existing roads and houses to the east and north. The existing agricultural buildings within the site are dilapidated and are a negative feature in the landscape.

The site features existing hedgerows and mature trees around the site's perimeters. These would be retained as part of the proposed development and strengthened through new planting. Within the main body of the site itself there are few notable landscape features, but the small number of trees and hedgerows that do exist would also be largely retained. In addition, there would be opportunities for new hedgerow creation and historic field boundary restoration within the proposed area of open space to the east.

A public footpath runs along the site's eastern boundary. The area immediately to the west of the footpath would comprise an extensive area of ecological and recreational open space, including new planting and landscaping adjacent to the new residential development. The public footpath would therefore be retained within an area of extensive greenspace which provides an attractive route to users.

Potential visual impacts would largely be limited to private views from the dwellings that border the site, views from the adjacent roads where existing housing development can also be seen, and views from the adjacent public footpath which runs along the site's eastern boundary. Potential impacts can be mitigated through appropriate design and landscaping provision.

A Landscape Framework Plan is provided overleaf. This highlights where existing landscape features will be retained, the proposed areas of open space and structural planting, and the significant area of recreational and ecological open space that is proposed to the east of the site. The strategy shown in the Landscape Framework Plan has been taken forward in the masterplan for the site. The overall approach to the proposed development would be landscaped and would accord with the Council's Landscape Strategy.

Overall, the site is highly enclosed with existing development on three sides. Trees and hedgerows would be largely retained and supplemented through new planting, and a significant area of open space would be provided adjacent to the existing footpath to the east. Any impacts of the proposed development would be limited and localised. The site is suitable for accommodating development in landscape and visual terms.



- Key**
-  Application Site Boundary
 -  Existing vegetation cover
 -  Existing public right of way
 -  Existing waterbodies & watercourse
 -  Sensitive residential edges
 -  Views towards Willaston Mill
- Proposed Framework**
-  Pedestrian-cycle movement & connections
 -  Vehicular connections
 -  Nodal points & gateway features
 -  Connection of existing built form
 -  Open spaces with structural planting
 -  Hedgerow creation and historic field boundary restoration

Number/Figure: **GLY0192 F6**
 Scale: 1:2,500 @ A3
 Date: 11/08/2025
 Checked: DC

Project: Mill Lane, Willaston
 Drawing Title: Landscape Framework
 Client: Redrow North West



GREEN BELT

The exceptional circumstances for the release of the site from the Green Belt are both strategic, taking into account the borough-wide need for housing, and local, taking into account the significant range of local benefits of releasing this site for development.

There is a significant need for new housing across Cheshire West and Chester. Under the Government's standard method, the local housing need in the borough is 1,928 dwellings per annum. The Issues and Options consultation sets out three options for growth, and under Options B & C - the only options which comply with the requirement in national planning policy to meet local housing need in full – the Council's stated position is that between 11,000 and 12,000 need to be delivered on sites which are currently in the Green Belt.

Paragraph 148 of the Framework states that where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider grey belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations. This document reviews the site against national guidance in relation to assessing the Green Belt to identify grey belt land, and clearly demonstrates that the site meets the Framework's definition of grey belt. The site does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 of the Framework. As such, it is suitable for release from the Green Belt to meet development needs.

We consider that the site comprises 'Grey Belt' for the purposes of the Framework, and as such the development of the site for housing would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, subject to the Framework's 'Golden Rules' being met. We assess the proposed development against the provisions of paragraph 155 of the Framework below with reference to the recently published National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on 'grey belt' (paragraphs 64-001 to 012). In particular, paragraph 64-005 of the PPG sets out considerations for informing judgements on the contribution that assessment areas make to Green Belt purposes a, b, and d.

Green Belt Purpose (a) – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

The PPG is very clear that villages, such as Willaston, should not be considered large built-up areas. The site is therefore not adjacent to a large built-up area. The nearest large built-up area would be Ellesmere Port, which is over 2km to the east of the site and not relevant for the purpose of assessing this site.

In any event, the site is also largely enclosed by existing development to three sides, with the existing village to the south, Birkenhead Road to the west and Mill Lane and existing residential properties to the north.

In addition, a large nursery operation (Greenwood Nursery) is located immediately to the north-west of the site, and a group of houses is located to the north-east of the site (off Mill Lane). The site is well contained by existing development, and its development for housing would not result in an incongruous pattern of development.

Therefore, the site makes no contribution to purpose (a).

Green Belt Purpose (b) – Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The PPG is very clear that this purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages. Willaston is a village and not a town.

Policy SS4 of the draft Local Plan identifies Ellesmere Port as a 'main town' and Neston and Parkgate as a 'market town'. Birkenhead is also a town, albeit located in the borough of Wirral. Willaston falls between Ellesmere Port and Neston, and also within the line between the southern edge of Birkenhead and the southern edge of Neston (albeit it must be noted that the village does not sit directly between Neston and Birkenhead). Furthermore, the gap between Ellesmere Port and Neston is extensive (circa 5km). Ellesmere Port is also contained by the M53 to its west, and Neston is contained by the A540 to its east.

The site does not form a gap, or part of a gap, between neighbouring towns. The extent of the Green Belt is shown overleaf. There is no intervisibility between the site and Ellesmere Port, Birkenhead or Neston. Furthermore, the site is relates well to Willaston and is extremely well contained by existing built development. Therefore, even if it were to be deemed that Willaston falls within a gap between towns such that purpose (b) is relevant, the development of the site would not make any perceptible contribution to the merging of these towns.

Therefore, the site makes no contribution to visual separation, and it makes no contribution to purpose (b).

Green Belt purpose (d) – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
The PPG states that this purpose relates to historic towns, not villages. Willaston is a village and not a town.

Therefore, having regard to the guidance in the PPG, the site makes no contribution to purpose (d).



HIGHWAYS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Vehicular access point

A safe and suitable vehicular access point can be achieved from Birkenhead Road. The indicative access drawing overleaf provides one option for a simple priority T-junction, with adequate visibility lines provided. The site access arrangements have been prepared on the basis of the site delivering circa 160 dwellings, which is considered to be acceptable from a highways perspective.

Walking

When considering all trip-purposes the National Travel Survey states that 82% of journeys under one mile are made by pedestrians.

In order to consider the pedestrian accessibility of the site, the 1km and 2km walking isodistances from the boundary of the site have been assessed utilising GIS mapping software. The software shows the 1km (blue area) and 2km (orange area) as well as the streets and footpaths utilised to assess the 1km isochrone, showing the routes within 100m (grey), 300m (blue), 500m (green), 1km (red) and 2km (brown). The output is shown overleaf.

Willaston contains a range of local services and amenities, including a primary school, GP surgery, convenience store, public house, village hall and sports facilities. As the isochrone plan demonstrates, all of Willaston's services and amenities fall within a reasonable walking distance of the site.

Cycling

Cycling is commonly accepted as accommodating longer-distance travel than walking, including longer distance commuting trips. The regularly quoted typical cycling distance is around 5 km, however for some this distance is frequently exceeded, with daily cycle round trips of 20km or more being quite common.

Cycling is an increasingly popular mode of transport, particularly for commuting and leisure pursuits. The Covid-19 pandemic saw a significant rise in the use of cycles by all age groups and the popularity of cycling continues to increase.

One of the contributing factors to the current popularity is the increase in availability and reduction in price of e-bikes. E-bikes provide opportunity for people of a much broader physical range to access cycling and utilise it for commuting, leisure, health and sightseeing purposes. The range of electric bikes can be considerable, with power-assistance for a typical rider on a typical e-bike being in the region of up to 100km of range (for a circa 500w battery). That will be lower for some city and folding electric bikes, which often have smaller batteries to save weight.

In order to consider the immediate accessibility of the site, the 5km (grey) and 10km (yellow) isodistances have been assessed. These are shown overleaf.

It can be seen from the cycle isodistance plan that Willaston, Eastham Village, Burton, Ness, Little Neston, Neston, Clay Hill, Raby and Thornton Hough are all within the 5km cycle isodistance.

The longer distance, or e-bike, cycle shows that Heswall, Bromborough, Bebington, Ellesmere Port, Burton, Puddington, Deeside Industrial Estate, New Farry and Egerton Park are within the 10km isodistance.

The Wirral Way cycle route runs to the south of Willaston. The Wirral Way is part of National Cycle Route 56, which is signed from Chester to Wallasey. Route 56 connects Neston (and beyond) to the west to Ellesmere Port (via Heath Lane). Connections to the south include Connah's Quay (via Route 568), Capenhurst (via Route 56) and to the north to Heswall (via Route 89).

Public transport

The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Neston Road. The closest bus stop is located to the east of Birkenhead Road and is provided with a flag pole only. There is no hardstanding for the bus stop. The bus stop is located around 185m from the boundary of the site and around 400m from the site centroid.

Additional bus stops are available to the east of Meadow Lane. The bus stops to the east of Meadow Lane are located around 400m from the boundary of the site and 600m from the site centroid. An alternative route to the bus stops is via footpath FP29. The route via FP29 is around 800m to the boundary of the site.

The centroid of the site sits at around 600m from the nearest bus routes from existing main bus stops. There may be potential to provide additional, or improved, bus stops close to the junction of Neston Road/ Birkenhead Road to reduce the walking distance to the bus stops.

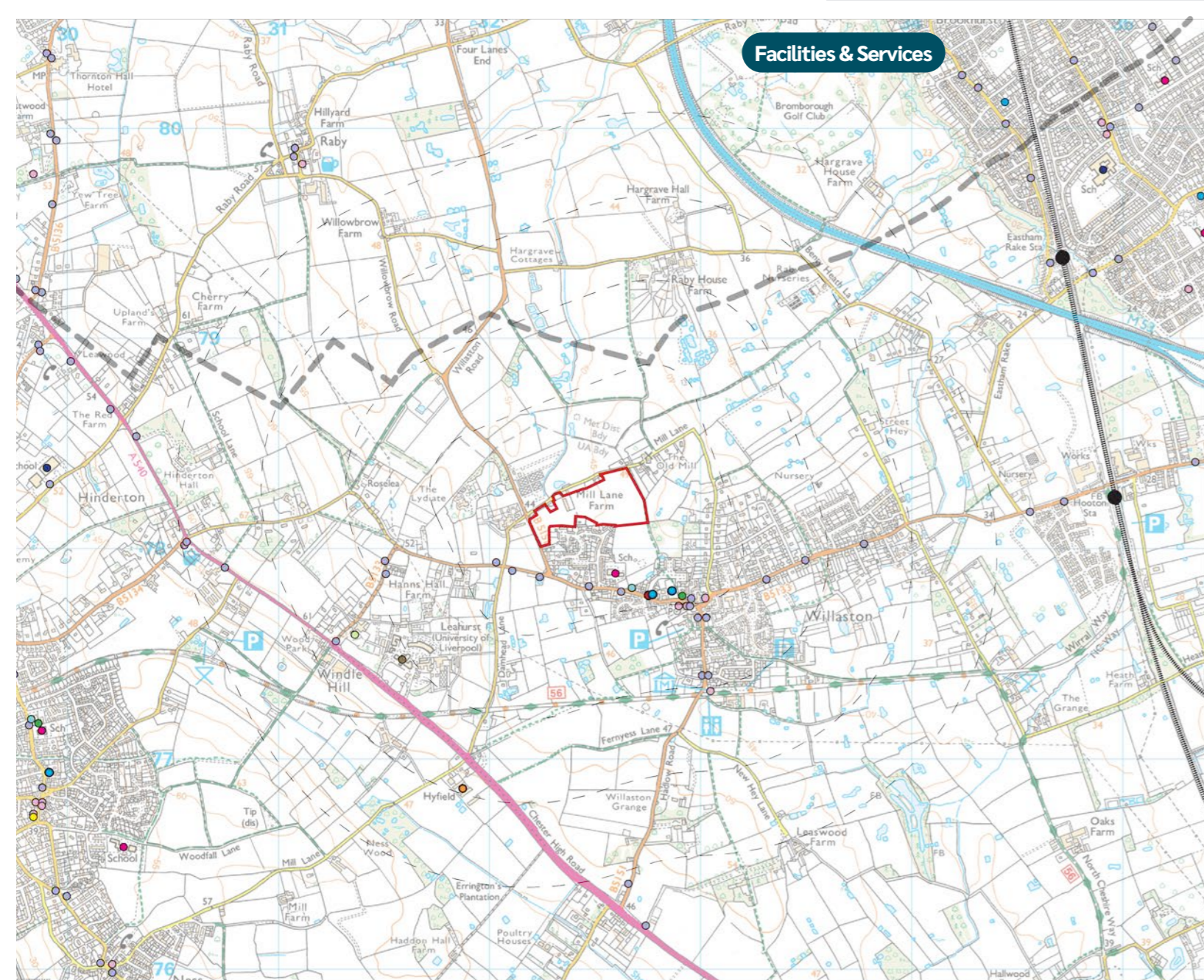
In an eastbound direction, the bus stops are served by Routes 22 and 23. In a westbound direction the bus stops are served by Routes 22, 23 and 359:

- Route 22 operates between West Kirby and Chester, via Gransby, Pensby, Heswall, Neston, Little Neston, Two Mills, Mollington and destinations along the route.
- Route 23 operates between Neston and Ellesmere Port, via Little Neston, Hooton, Little Sutton, Great Sutton and Whitby (opposite Cheshire College).
- Route 359 provides a connection between Neston (opposite the high school) and Ellesmere Port. The service operates as a school service to the high school. The service operates for school drop-off and pick-up times.

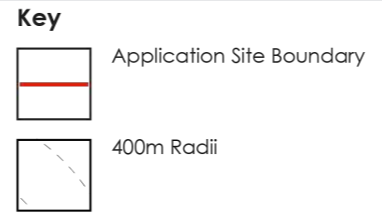
The nearest railway station to the site is located at Hooton. Hooton railway station is accessible by cycle, bus (Route 23), as a car passenger or by car. Hooton Station has a 24-hour car park which operates daily at a cost of £1.50. From the station there are regular direct services to Liverpool, Birkenhead, Chester and Ellesmere Port.

Therefore, the site comprises a highly accessible and sustainable location.





Facilities & Services

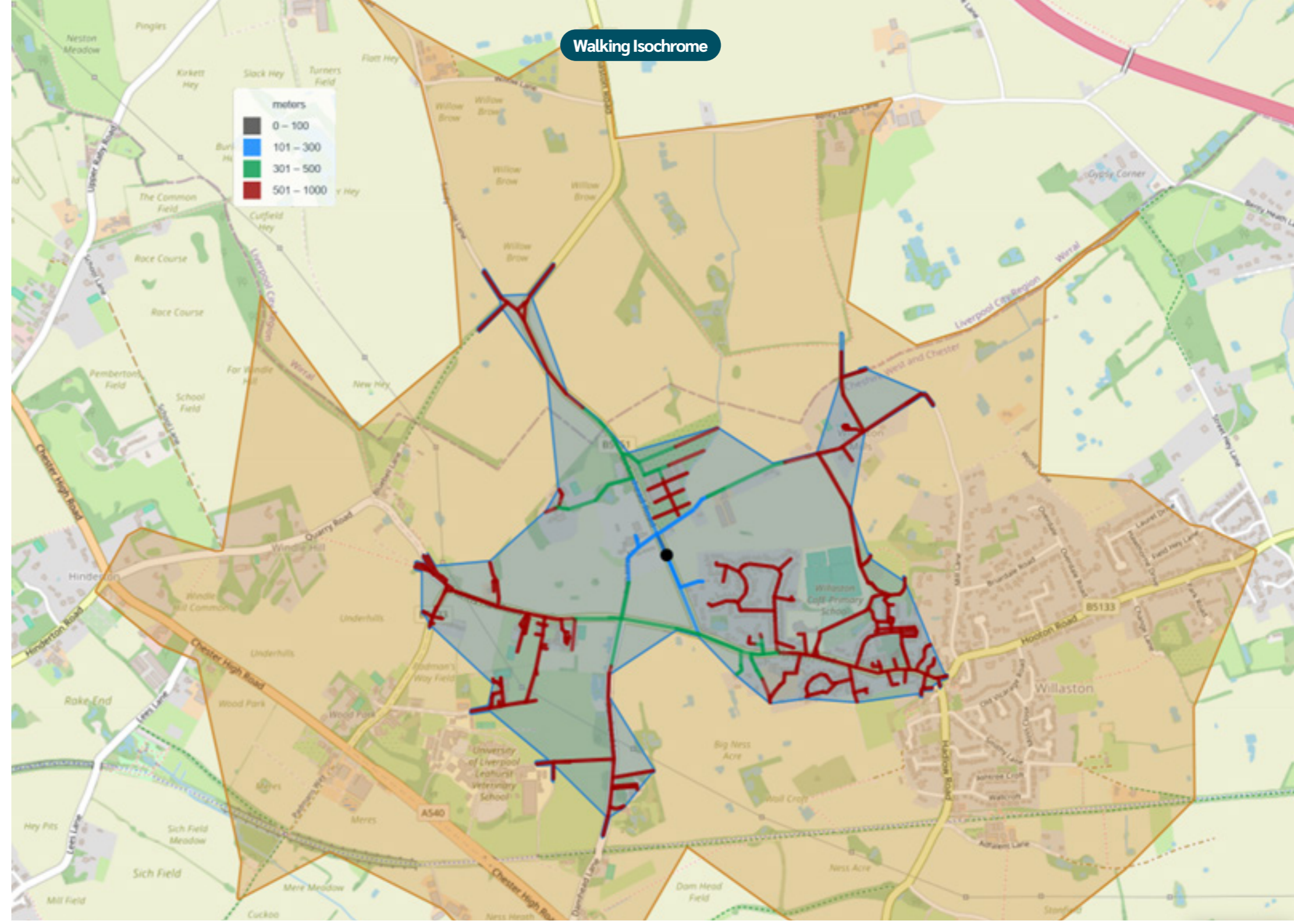


Facilities & Services

- Library
- Place of Worship
- Post Office
- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- Sports and Leisure Centre
- Extra Care Accommodation
- GP Surgery
- Pharmacy
- Bus Stop
- Business / Industrial
- Café / Takeaway / Pub
- Parking
- Retail
- University of Liverpool Campus
- Railway Station

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Project
 Mill Lane, Willaston
 Drawing Title
 Facilities & Services
 Client
 Redrow North West

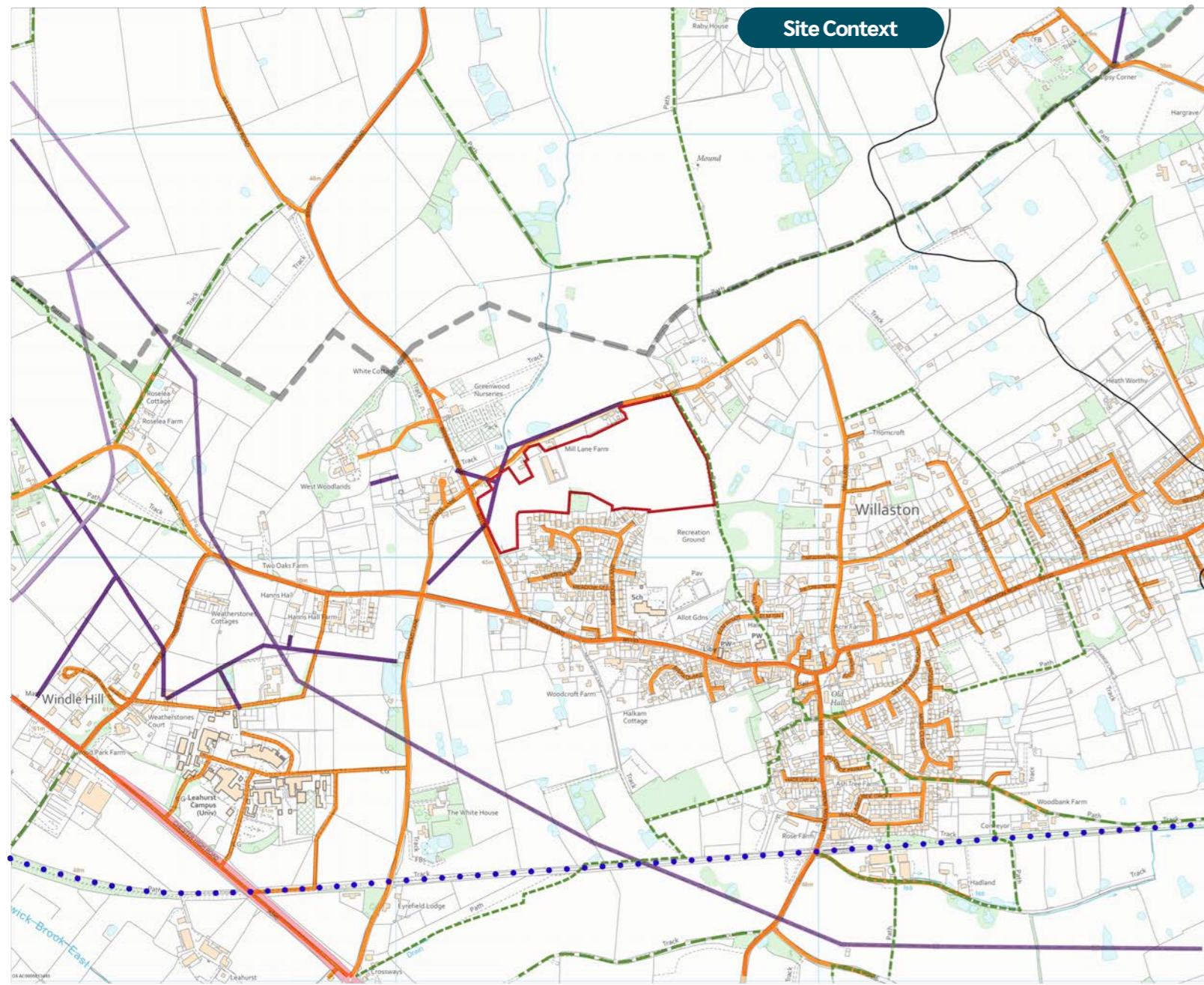


Walking Isochrone



north
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Site Context

- Key**
- Application Site Boundary
 - District Boundary
 - Road Network
 - Public Footpath
 - Public Bridleway
 - National Cycle Route
 - National Grid Overhead Line
 - High Voltage Overhead Line
 - National Grid Cable

Number/Figure
GLY0192 F2

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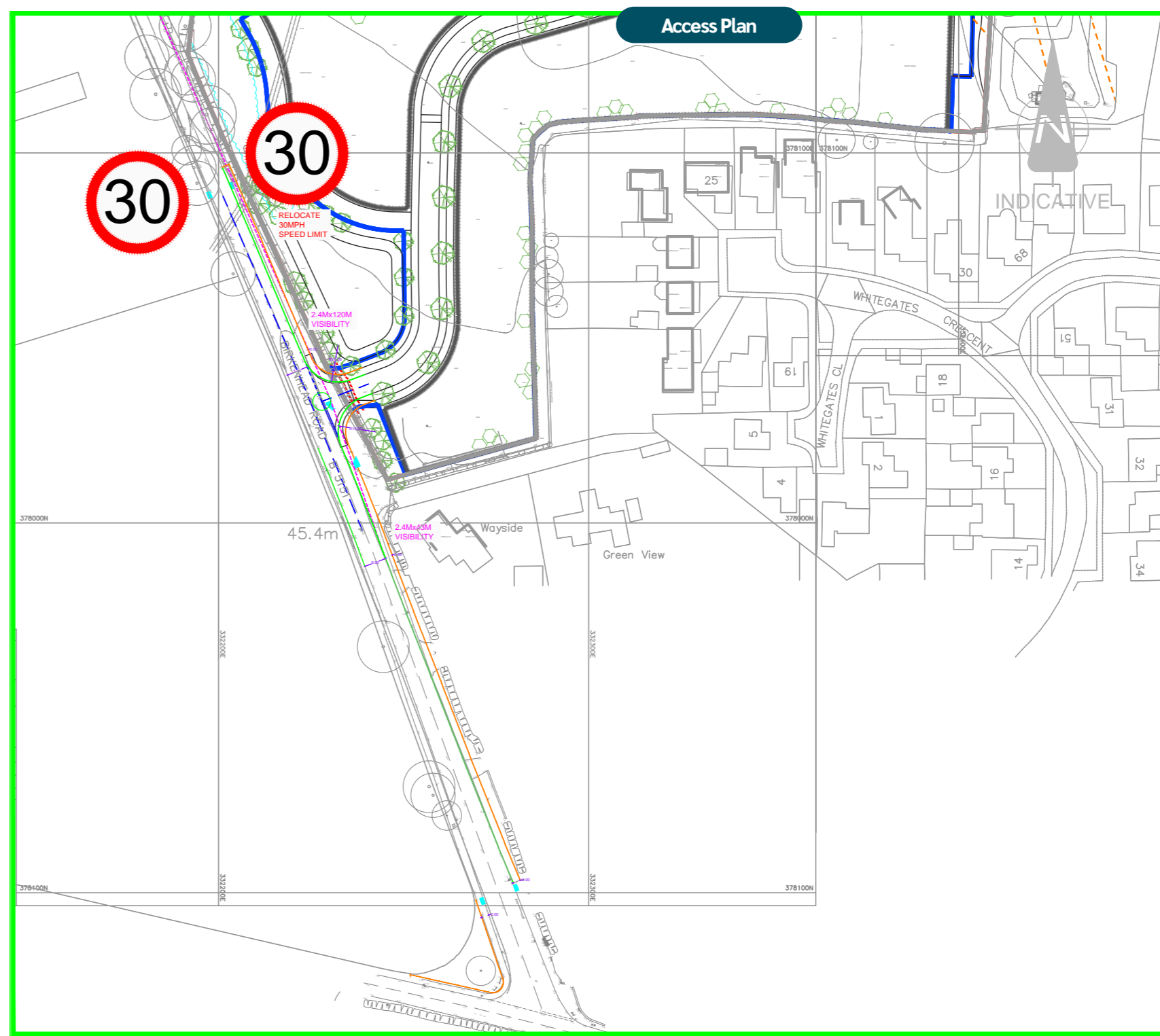
Date
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DC

Project
Mill Lane, Willaston

Drawing Title
Site Context

Client
Redrow North West



Access Plan

Drawing subject to confirmation of adopted highway boundary and confirmation of highway edge extents



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http://www.devplanning.co.uk

CLIENT:

PROJECT:
**MILL LANE
WILLASTON**

TITLE:
**PRELIMINARY SITE ACCESS
LAYOUT PLAN**

SCALE @ A3: NTS	APPROVED: DRS	DATE: 17/08/2025
PROJECT No: 2025463	DRAWING No: DPL SK005	REV: -

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THE MASTERPLAN

The masterplan shows how the site could deliver approximately 160 new homes as part of a high-quality, locally distinctive development. The key principles underpinning the masterplan are discussed overleaf.

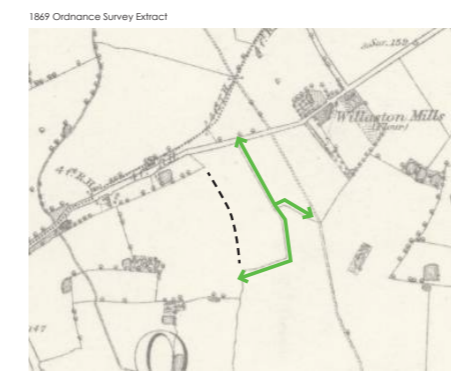


Key

- Application site boundary. Total site area: 9.591ha
- Existing trees & hedgerows to be retained and reinforced at the site boundaries.
- Existing hedgerow to be removed for highways access only.
- Proposed development parcels.
- Proposed highways, shared surface lanes and private drives.
- Proposed LEAP with minimum 20m offset to dwellings.
- Proposed open space and street tree planting.
- Proposed garden tree planting, respecting the relationship with existing dwellings.
- Proposed mown footpaths.
- Proposed surfaced open space footpaths.
- Proposed species-rich native hedgerows defining the development edge and restoring historic field boundaries to the east.
- Proposed buffer planting incorporating native trees & scrub.
- Proposed species-rich meadow grassland.

Landscape Restoration

Within the wider site, the proposed landscape strategy will restore historic field boundaries shown on the 1869 Ordnance Survey, reinstating a component of the historic agricultural landscape. In turn, this will create a network of publicly accessible meadows that respects the open setting of the existing public right of way and extends the existing recreational access to the south.



Landscape Strategy

- 1 A distinctive gateway will define the site access from Bikenhead Road, defined by parkland tree planting and a new woodland planting. Sustainable drainage will be permanently wet, reflecting the prevalence of field ponds in the local landscape.
- 2 A tree-lined street will define the primary movement route into site, aiding legibility and creating a green and attractive place to live.
- 3 Dwellings fronting Mill Lane will be low-density detached units, with the building line set back behind existing frontages on the lane. A new hedgerow and trees will be planted along the currently open site boundary, softening views of the development.
- 4 A nodal green will define the heart of the site, providing a verdant setting that allows for the retention of all existing trees, alongside a focal village square.
- 5 Edge to edge connectivity will be secured, providing pedestrian links from Mill Lane to the proposed open space and existing public right of way to the west and southwest.

A Distinctive Place

The proposed masterplan strives to create a distinctive place, with a series of nodal spaces reflective of a village character, with regular connections to the surrounding area. Views of Willaston Mill along the primary lane will also contribute to place.



A Place for People & Wildlife

The site makes a commitment to 48% of its area as green and blue infrastructure, securing extensive biodiversity enhancement. This will secure a meaningful extension to existing recreational land within the settlement, integrating the scheme into the settlement and becoming a valuable recreational resource.



Respecting Local Landmarks

The proposed masterplan takes account of Willaston Mill, retaining open land to the east of the site to safeguard views from the south, along with using built-form to frame a clear view corridor towards the mill from within the site.



Context-led Design

The proposed masterplan sets out a landscape-led approach that considers the landscape and visual setting of the site. This approach will extend into the design of the built-form, harnessing a palette of contextually appropriate scale, massing and materiality that responds positively to the character of the area.



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Paragraph 85 of the Framework states:

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.”

During the build period, construction related jobs and indirect jobs would be created. This would benefit local contractors and suppliers. The proposed development would provide homes for the district’s workforce, and once occupied the residents of the proposed scheme would spend money within Willaston and other parts of the borough.

Based on 160 dwellings, the economic benefits can be summarised as follows:

- During the construction phase, the proposed development would result in 180 person-years of direct employment, and a further 224 person-years indirect and induced employment (further jobs supported in the wider economy in house building supply chains and by spending amongst direct and supply chain employees on goods and services).
- During occupation of the dwellings, there would be an increase in resident expenditure of approximately £4.5 million per annum, a significant proportion of which would be spent in local shops, services and amenities.
- Increased Council tax in the order of £322,000 per annum once the dwellings are occupied.
- The provision of new housing also contributes towards providing flexibility in the local labour market. It is essential that sufficient housing is provided in order for the local economy and housing market to function effectively and to avoid substantial increases in unsustainable commuting patterns.

The proposed development would therefore deliver a range of significant economic benefits during the construction stage and then throughout the lifetime of the proposed development. It would also help to sustain important local services in Willaston.



SUMMARY

There is a significant need for new housing across Cheshire West and Chester. Under the Government's standard method, the local housing need in the borough is 1,928 dwellings per annum. The Issues and Options consultation sets out three options for growth, and under Options B & C - the only options which comply with the requirement in national planning policy to meet local housing need in full – the Council's stated position is that between 11,000 and 12,000 need to be delivered on sites which are currently in the Green Belt.

Paragraph 148 of the Framework states that where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider grey belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations. This document reviews the site against national guidance in relation to assessing the Green Belt to identify grey belt land, and clearly demonstrates that the site meets the Framework's definition of grey belt. The site does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 of the Framework. As such, it is suitable for release from the Green Belt to meet development needs.

A range of technical assessments have been undertaken to demonstrate that the site is suitable and deliverable. The Development Framework document reviews the site's context and presents an analysis of the opportunities and constraints.

The site is capable of delivering approximately 160 new homes. The masterplan demonstrates how the proposal can contribute to meeting identified development needs in a highly sustainable way, which respects the constraints of the site and takes advantage of its opportunities.

The vision is to create a high-quality development that would positively contribute to Willaston by providing aspirational homes for existing and new residents and affordable homes to those that have found it harder to get a foot on the housing ladder. With this investment, additional expenditure for local shops and Council Tax receipts will be collected which will assist in funding and improving local community services and facilities.

The exceptional circumstances for the release of the site from the Green Belt are both strategic, taking into account the borough-wide need for housing, and local, taking into account the significant range of local benefits of releasing this site for development. These benefits include:

- The delivery of market housing in a sustainable location, which would contribute to meeting the Council's housing requirement and the achievement of a five-year housing land supply.
- The delivery of affordable housing to meet very substantial levels of local need.
- The provision of a significant new area of recreational and ecological open space to the east of the development, to be used by both existing and new residents, and other open space within the site.
- Economic benefits, including the creation of new jobs during the construction phase of the development, and increased expenditure in Willaston and wider local area by new residents in local businesses and services during the lifetime of the development.
- Providing for a level of growth in Willaston which will maintain and enhance the vitality of the settlement, through supporting exiting local services and amenities.
- Delivery of a 10% net gain in biodiversity on site.

In summary, the site is suitable for development, and it is deliverable. It should be allocated to in the Local Plan to meet the overall housing requirement, and to meet local needs in the sustainable settlement of Willaston.



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