



AshtonHale

# Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan

Representations to Issues and Options (Regulation 18) Consultation

On Behalf of Hayfield Homes

August 2025

# Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	The Site and Background to Representations.....	2
3.	Cheshire West and Chester: Local Plan Issues and Options (Regulation 18).....	5
4.	Issues and Options: Introduction.....	6
5.	Issues and Options: Vision .....	8
6.	Issues and Options: Objectives .....	10
7.	Issues and Options: Sustainable Development.....	17
8.	Issues and Options: Spatial Strategy.....	18
9.	Issues and Options: Northwich.....	28
10.	Issues and Options: Green Belt and Countryside .....	30
11.	Issues and Options: Transport and Accessibility .....	31
12.	Issues and Options: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions .....	32
13.	Issues and Options: Housing .....	33
14.	Issues and Options: Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geodiversity .....	35
15.	Issues and Options: Design and Sustainable Construction.....	36

## Appendices

Appendix I Site Location Plan

Appendix II Site Submission Documents

## Document Details

**Report title:** Planning Statement

**Prepared by:** CO'D/LM

**Status:** Final

For and on behalf of AshtonHale Limited

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cheshire West and Chester Council ('CWaC', 'the Council') is preparing a new Local Plan for the borough which will set out how development and growth will take place. The new plan will create a single local plan document that updates and replaces all policies in the current Local Plan (Part One) and Local Plan (Part Two). These representations have been prepared by AshtonHale Ltd ('AshtonHale') on behalf of Hayfield Homes in response to the Council's Regulation 18 Local Plan Issues and Options 2025 consultation.
- 1.2 These representations are of particular relevance to Hayfield Homes' interest at Land off Church Street, Higher Wincham ('the Site', 'Land off Church Street'). A plan showing the extent of this site is attached at **Appendix I**.
- 1.3 These representations made on behalf of Hayfield Homes intend to cover the following:
- Background to Hayfield Homes' interest in the Issues and Options consultation and its representations; and,
  - Responses to the questions posed within the 'Issues and Options (Regulation 18)' consultation document.

## 2. The Site and Background to Representations

- 2.1 Hayfield Homes is a multi-award-winning homebuilder. The company is part of a wider development group (Real Estate Capital Holdings) incorporating TERRA, an expert land and development partner and Living Space Housing, a specialist residential developer. Combined they have over 200 years of residential and commercial expertise.
- 2.2 Land off Church Street, Higher Wincham extends to c. 3.8 hectares and is located to the north-west of Church Street (B5391) immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of Higher Wincham, a village located c. 3km north of Northwich. The site is bounded by residential development to the southern and eastern boundaries. The western and northern boundary of the Site broadly follow the existing pattern of development in Higher Wincham. The site immediately north of the Site is densely wooded.
- 2.3 The Site was submitted as part of a wider parcel of land to the Call for Sites process undertaken alongside CWaC's Land Availability Assessment Stage One consultation exercise in March 2025. The representations submitted on behalf of Mr Richard Fryer, as landowner, are included at **Appendix II** of these representations for reference. The representations demonstrated the deliverability of 'Land north of B5391 Church Street, Wincham' which is well placed to contribute to the Council's economic, social and environmental objectives. The submission was supported by a Transport Note which demonstrated that safe and convenient access could be gained at Church Street.
- 2.4 The Site forms part of 'Site 1807 - Land north of B5391, Church Street, Higher Wincham' as referenced in the Land Availability Assessment (2025) that forms part of the consultation documentation. The only constraint noted against the wider site is that it currently forms part of the Green Belt.
- 2.5 Hayfield Homes' site is within a sustainable location, with access into Northwich, and the local services and facilities contained therein. The site provides a logical location for Green Belt release when assessed against the five purposes of the Green Belt (as set out in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF).

- **Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas:** the Site is located adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of Higher Wincham and is bounded to the south and east by residential development. There are permanent and defensible field boundaries surrounding the other boundaries of the Site which would prevent unrestricted sprawl. Development would complete the built frontage along this part of Church Street.
- **Prevent neighbouring towns from merging:** the Site would form a natural extension to the settlement boundary of Higher Wincham and would not result in the merging with the nearest settlement of Pickmere.
- **Safeguard the countryside from encroachment:** whilst the development of any greenfield site would result in 'encroachment', it is not considered that the Site strongly contributes to this purpose. The defensible boundaries referenced above would limit any additional development in the future, and the release of the Site would allow development around Wincham/Higher Wincham to be properly planned and managed.
- **Preserve the setting and character of historic towns:** Higher Wincham is not designated as a historic town, therefore the release of the Site from the Green Belt would not impact on this purpose.
- **Assist urban regeneration:** additional land outside of the settlement boundary would be required to meet identified development needs. An alteration of the Green Belt would therefore not prevent the recycling of derelict or other urban land.

2.6 Overall, the site makes a weak contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and therefore would be a suitable site for release from the Green Belt to assist in meeting the development requirements of Cheshire West and Chester. Indeed, the Site represents Grey Belt land as defined by the NPPF.

2.7 The site represents a highly sustainable, accessible, unconstrained and logical option for Green Belt release that could contribute to the strategic residential requirements of Cheshire West and Chester. Development and transport

infrastructure contains the site to the south and east, and it would represent an infill site, developing the existing gap in the built frontage on Church Street.

- 2.8 The remainder of these representations set out Hayfield Homes' view on the Issues and Options presented in the consultation document, in the context of the above.

### 3. Cheshire West and Chester: Local Plan Issues and Options (Regulation 18)

- 3.1 Cheshire West and Chester Council is preparing a new local plan for the borough, and as part of that process, comments are invited on the priorities and issues that the new Local Plan should address and how the new plan can influence this. The Council have published the 'Local Plan Issues and Options (Regulation 18)' document, dated July 2025, which sets out a number of questions to understand the public's views on the key planning issues and priorities facing the area.
- 3.2 Hayfield Homes has prepared these representations to provide observations on questions posed by the Council within the consultation document. We respectfully request that these representations are considered in the next stages of preparing the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.
- 3.3 Hayfield Homes has not commented on every question set out in the document, only those considered particularly relevant to their interests in Cheshire West and Chester ('CWaC'). The absence of comment to any other question should not be construed as Hayfield Homes agreeing with the approach and Hayfield Homes reserves the right to comment on those matters as the Plan progresses.

## 4. Issues and Options: Introduction

*Question IN 3: Do you have any comments or views on the proposed plan period for the new Local Plan?*

- 4.1 Hayfield Homes are supportive of the concept of shorter local plan periods which ensure that policies and supporting evidence within Development Plans are kept up-to-date and remain relevant. Policies in the plan should reflect current and short-term future growth in the area in order to better guide and inform planning proposals and planning decisions. A shorter plan period will allow for more frequent reviews and updates, ensuring that the policies and data reflect the changing economic, environmental and social positions of the borough.
- 4.2 By creating shorter plan period, the new Local Plan will further align with the Government's intentions at reducing local plan review periods. Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) local planning authorities must review local plans at least once every 5 years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community. Most plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every 5 years<sup>1</sup>. A shorter plan period will allow for more realistic targets to be set within the document, ensuring more accurate monitoring in the progress and success of the Local Plan policies.

*Question IN 6: Do you have any comments on what role Neighbourhood Plans should play in terms of meeting Cheshire West's development needs and other suggested policy approaches for the new Local Plan? This could include things like meeting housing needs, local connection tests, or design etc.*

- 4.3 It is recognised that Neighbourhood Plans can play a useful role in guiding development and design matters in certain locations however, their role in meeting broader development needs should be limited. Neighbourhood Plans should not be used to constrain housing delivery or introduce restrictive policies outside of the adopted Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans should be advisory in nature and confined to matters of local character, design preferences etc.

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<sup>1</sup> NPPG Paragraph: 062 Reference ID: 61-062-20190315

4.4 Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 044 Reference ID: 41-044-20190509) confirms that neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with strategic policies.

## 5. Issues and Options: Vision

*Question VI 1: Do you agree with the suggested approach towards the new Local Plan vision, as set out in VI 1 'Vision' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 5.1 Hayfield Homes recognises that to achieve sustainable visions of the Local Plan, spatial strategies must be established, such as the strategic identification of Northwich to meet development needs. Hayfield Homes supports the inclusion of Northwich within the spatial strategy, as it represents a strategically important area for both new development and regeneration.
- 5.2 In addition to the identification of key locations within the strategy, the Local Plan must also recognise areas outside of the locations identified which will be capable of delivering development that is not appropriate to provide within built-up areas. Areas located outside of the settlements identified, yet within sustainable locations, can be utilised to reduce spatial pressures of these areas. This would include Higher Wincham.

*Question VI 2: should the vision include/establish a set of principles and priorities? Are these the right ones - do you have any other suggestions?*

- 5.3 The vision of the Local Plan should include a set of principles and priorities to allow for sustainable development to be established. Hayfield Homes broadly supports the draft visions as set out in section VI 1 'Visions' and welcomes the scope of the principles identified. However, it is considered by Hayfield Homes that additional principles should be included within the vision to allow for Cheshire West and Chester to be a desirable and attractive place to live, work and visit, and to allow for future policies to accurately address these visions. Hayfield Homes put forward the following principles to be considered at the next stage of the Local Plan process:

**Delivering Sustainable Growth:** *Ensure development is distributed appropriately across housing and employment land to meet the needs of communities and businesses, while delivering positive social outcomes and addressing environmental sustainability.*

**Meeting a Specific Housing Need:** *Meet identified housing needs by delivering a mix of affordable, high-quality, and energy-efficient homes, tailored to support diverse households and changing demographic demands.*

- 5.4 Ensuring that current and future housing and employment needs are met is a crucial objective and accords with Paragraphs 61 and 85 of the NPPF which seek to “boost the supply of homes” in accordance with the Government’s objectives and help to create conditions for economic growth and productivity.

*Question VI3: Do you agree with the approach of establishing concise visions for the key places identified in the new Local Plan? Or do you have an alternative suggestion?*

- 5.5 Providing established visions for major settlements such as Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford, Frodsham, and Neston/Parkgate allows the plan to reflect the distinct identities, opportunities, and challenges each area faces. This approach helps ensure that future development is not only sustainable and aligned with borough-wide principles but also grounded in the specific context of each place.
- 5.6 Northwich's capacity for development, combined with its connectivity advantages, positions it as an ideal location for future development. However, the new Local Plan should recognise the importance of smaller settlements in proximity to the ‘ley places’ identified. Smaller settlements on the periphery of the main towns should accommodate growth at a scale that is proportionate to their size and role, ensuring that development supports local services without overwhelming existing infrastructure or altering settlement character. In these cases, the considered release of Green Belt land may be justified where it delivers logical extensions that integrate seamlessly with the village and wider transport network.
- 5.7 This is the case for Hayfield Homes’s site interests at Land off Church Street, Higher Wincham. The site lies c. 3km north of Northwich, an approximate 5-minute drive. The site is strategically located in proximity to a number of shops and services, as well as located close to schools and colleges, making it a sustainable location for housing delivery.
- 5.8 To meet ambitious growth targets, the Council should actively consider the strategic release of Green Belt land, starting with land that can be defined as Grey Belt, in locations in the periphery of towns, enabling locations such as Northwich to emerge as a hub that drives economic vitality and sustainable development across the borough.

## 6. Issues and Options: Objectives

*Question OB 1: Please select the option which is the most appropriate approach for the new Local Plan:*

- *Option A - Take forward current Local Plan objectives*
- *Option B - Use the Sustainability Appraisal objectives*
- *Option C- Neither of these*

6.1 Hayfield Homes supports the objectives taken from the Local Plan Update 2023: Sustainability Appraisal Report which provide a comprehensive framework for bringing forward sustainable development. They support a balanced approach to environmental protection, social wellbeing, and economic growth, which are key considerations in the release of Green Belt land. Hayfield Homes believes that Land off Church Street complies with each of the relevant objectives outlined within Option 'B', as detailed below.

- *Protect air quality where it is of a high standard and to improve it elsewhere.*  
The site's proximity to Northwich, one of the borough's main towns, allows for sustainable travel options. Its location enables access to local services, reducing the need for long car journeys and helping to mitigate air quality impacts. Future development would incorporate measures to manage and minimise emissions during and after construction.
- *Reduce the emission of greenhouse gasses, in particular CO<sub>2</sub>.* By focusing development near an existing urban area, the site supports a more compact settlement pattern, helping reduce car dependency.
- *Reduce energy consumption, promote energy efficiency and increase the use of energy from renewable resources. Will it reduce energy consumption?*  
Development will be subject to modern building regulations and can exceed energy efficiency standards where feasible.
- *Optimise the re-use of previously developed land and buildings.* While not previously developed, the site represents infill land, located immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of Higher Wincham. Previously developed land in the borough is insufficient to meet all housing and

employment needs, and the Council should then look to Grey Belt land, and other Green Belt sites. The Site offers a logical, well-connected location for growth.

- Manage contaminated land effectively. Appropriate investigations and reports will be enclosed within any future planning application at the site to ensure that development is brought forward safely.
- Minimise the risk of flooding from all sources. Appropriate investigations and reports will be enclosed within any future planning application at the site to ensure that development is brought forward safely.
- Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place. A sensitive design approach will integrate the development into the existing Higher Wincham landscape setting, this could include aspects such as buffers and boundary planting.
- Preserve and enhance historic assets, sites, features, areas and settings of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance. The site is not in proximity to any conservation areas or listed buildings.
- Protect and enhance the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats. The site will deliver at least 10% BNG, as required nationally. Existing features such as hedgerows or mature trees will be retained and enhanced where possible.
- Provide sufficient high quality, well designed, sustainable housing solutions to meet the range of identified needs for market and affordable housing (including housing options for older people, students, Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show people and self and custom house building). If brought forward for residential use, the site could deliver an appropriate mix of housing types, tenures and sizes, including affordable housing, in line with identified local needs.

- Promote regeneration, particularly of deprived areas. Development will support the vitality of Northwich and Higher Wincham by increasing local population and thus footfall in the Town Centre.
- Create a safe environment to live in and reduce the fear of crime Design will follow Secured by Design principles.
- Enable environments that promote health and wellbeing. Future development at the site will deliver connections to local services and will support active lifestyles and mental wellbeing.
- Maintain and improve the vitality and viability of city, town and local centres. Residents or employees will use local shops and services in Higher Wincham and Northwich, helping to maintain its role as a key town centre and increasing footfall and economic activity.
- Protect and enhance community facilities and services. The site will integrate with the wider settlement to enhance community cohesion and access.
- Make the best use of existing transport infrastructure and ensure everyone has access to high quality and affordable public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure. The site is well-located to utilise existing roads and public transport links, and its development would support enhancements to walking, cycling, and bus networks. Its location in close proximity to Northwich reduces car dependency and supports sustainable movement patterns.

*Question OB 2: Do you have any alternative approaches options [sic] that you would like to suggest?*

- 6.2 An alternative approach to delivering appropriate growth within the borough would be to designate established residential areas yet also identify undeveloped sites with potential for expansion. For example, Land off Church Street represents an opportunity to deliver housing at a scale appropriate to the village's role in the hierarchy, close to local amenities and existing infrastructure. This approach ensures smaller settlements remain vibrant while avoiding excessive growth in less sustainable rural locations

6.3 While Green Belt policy rightly serves an important role, selective Green Belt review (where sites are Grey Belt and/or in proximity to urban areas, adjacent to existing developed land, and capable of being well-integrated) should be considered where it brings wider regeneration or strategic economic benefits. This is particularly pertinent in light of the Council's identification for 1,914 homes to be delivered annually.

*Question OB 3: Do you feel that the option of taking forward the current Local Plan objectives into the new Local Plan, as set out in Option A 'Take forward the current Local Plan objectives' above, is an appropriate approach?*

6.4 The Local Plan objectives as outlined in Option A relate well to Hayfield Homes' land interest off Church Road. As demonstrated below, the objectives largely relate to the characteristics and qualities of the land:

**Economic**

- SO2 Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to support sustainable communities. The site has the potential to contribute significantly to the local economy of Higher Wincham. If brought forward for residential use, it can promote local and competitive spending and can help support the borough's identified housing need.
- SO4 Provide and develop reliable, efficient transport networks that support sustainable growth and improve accessibility to jobs and services. Located in proximity to Northwich, the site benefits from connectivity to existing road and public transport infrastructure. Development would enable enhancements to sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling, and bus services, improving accessibility to jobs and services both within the town and the wider borough.
- SO5 Ensure all development is supported by the necessary provision of, or improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities in an effective and timely manner to make development sustainable and minimise its effect upon existing communities. The site can be integrated into existing infrastructure networks and offers opportunities for strategic infrastructure investment.

**Social**

- SO6 Promote mixed and balanced communities through the provision of a range of housing to meet market, affordable and specialist housing needs. If brought forward for housing, the site can deliver a range of homes to meet identified needs in Northwich and the wider area, including market, affordable, and potentially specialist housing. This will help address local affordability pressures.
- SO7 Support education and skills and ensure that deprived communities have access to services and employment. Proximity to employment areas and public transport links allows opportunities for skills and employment to be developed.
- SO8 Create stronger, safer and healthier communities by enabling access to leisure, recreational and community facilities and promoting walking and cycling. Future development at the site will deliver connections to local services and will support active lifestyles and mental wellbeing.

**Environmental**

- SO11 Ensure new development does not create an unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on the amenity and health of residents. Careful design will ensure protection of residential amenity, air quality, and noise levels.
- SO12 Ensure new development is of sustainable and high-quality design that respects heritage assets, local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape. The site is not in proximity to any conservation areas or listed buildings.
- SO13 Manage, expand and improve green infrastructure and waterways networks, recognising their importance in delivering local environmental, social, economic and health benefits The site will be brought forward to deliver sustainable development with access to green infrastructure and waterway networks.

- SO14 Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change by addressing flood risk and water management and support the development of new buildings and infrastructure that are resilient, resistant and adapted to the effects of climate change. Appropriate investigations and reports will be enclosed within any future planning application at the site to ensure that development is brought forward safely.
- SO15 Take action on climate change by promoting energy efficiency and energy generation from low carbon and renewable resources. The development will meet modern energy standards.
- SO16 Achieve sustainable waste management, using sustainable modes of transport and travel and the prudent use of our natural resources including water and mineral reserves. Construction and operation will follow best practices for waste minimisation and recycling.

6.5 We believe the current Local Plan objectives (Option A) remain broadly relevant but are not sufficiently flexible to respond to evolving planning challenges, particularly in light of updated national policy and increased housing and employment land requirements. For example, areas like Land off Church Street that are adjacent to existing villages may present sustainable opportunities for Green Belt release, which the existing objectives may not fully accommodate.

*Question OB 4: Do you think that objectives SO1, SO3, SO9, SO10 need to be amended if they are to be taken forward into the new Local Plan? Do you have any suggestions for how they should be amended?*

SO1 Develop the role of Chester as a sub-regional city, promote regeneration and development in the towns of Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford and enable appropriate levels of development in the key service centres to support sustainable rural communities.

6.6 SO1 should be updated to acknowledge the potential for sustainable growth in areas adjacent to towns, even if within current Green Belt boundaries, especially around key towns such as Northwich.

SO9 Support sustainable development and urban regeneration by supporting the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings and by locating the majority of development within and on the edge of the main urban areas and key service centres.

- 6.7 SO9 should be updated to recognise the limited availability of previously developed land, and support well-located edge-of-settlement sites, starting with Grey Belt and then other Green Belt sites.

SO10 Protect the environmental quality and character of Cheshire West and Chester through maintaining the general extent and character of the North Cheshire Green Belt and Cheshire countryside.

- 6.8 SO10 should allow for flexibility in Green Belt boundaries where robust evidence demonstrates that the release would deliver sustainable development outcomes without compromising the integrity of the wider Green Belt. It will be particularly important to consider Grey Belt land in this process.

*Question OB 5: Do you feel that the option of using the Sustainability Appraisal objectives in the new Local Plan, as set out in Option B 'Use the Sustainability Appraisal objectives' above, is an appropriate approach?*

- 6.9 Yes, Hayfield Homes believes that Option B offers a more robust and future-proofed approach to plan-making. The SA objectives provide clear criteria for assessing the long-term sustainability and resilience of proposed development sites.

*Question OB 6: If you do not feel this is an appropriate approach, are there any changes that you could suggest?*

- 6.10 While we support Option B, we suggest enhancements to better reflect spatial considerations and site-specific viability. For example, including objectives that recognise the role of edge-of-settlement Green Belt sites, and an emphasis of bringing forward sites with proximity to existing infrastructure and towns.
- 6.11 Additionally, Hayfield Homes believes that there is scope for the inclusion of an additional objective (or an amendment to an existing one) to reflect support for housing development to come forward to meet the identified need.

## 7. Issues and Options: Sustainable Development

*Question SD 1: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards sustainable development, as set out in SD 1 'Sustainable development' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 7.1 Yes, Hayfield Homes broadly agrees with the suggested policy approach towards sustainable development. The proposed criteria strike a strong balance between environmental responsibility, resilience to climate change, and social inclusion.
- 7.2 However, we recommend that the policy also explicitly recognises that sustainable development can occur on well-located Green Belt sites, particularly where they are in proximity to existing urban or commercial areas, such as the site Land off Church Street, Higher Wincham.
- 7.3 Sustainable development may, in some cases, include land currently within the Green Belt where clear evidence demonstrates that such development would meet long-term housing and climate objectives in a manner consistent with national and local sustainability principles.

*Question SD 3: Are there any other sustainable development issues or requirements that should be included in the new Local Plan?*

- 7.4 Yes, the Local Plan should include a specific sustainable development requirement around proximity to existing infrastructure and services. Developments located adjacent to existing built-up areas and near public transport, employment sites, utilities, and services should be prioritised, even if these lie within the current Green Belt. Grey Belt land will be important to consider in this respect. The Local Plan should prioritise development of sites that are well connected, therefore reducing the need for car travel and making efficient use of utilities.

## 8. Issues and Options: Spatial Strategy

*Question SS 1: Is there any reason for the Council not to plan for delivering a minimum of 1,914 new homes each year?*

- 8.1 The Council must plan to meet the Standard Method Requirement of 1,914 new homes per year in full as a minimum. In accordance with Paragraph 62 of the NPPF, *“To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice.”* There is no reason for the Council not to plan for delivering this minimum figure.
- 8.2 This figure represents a baseline figure for the Council to achieve and there is clear scope to exceed this number where justified.
- 8.3 If the Council do not feel that they can meet the Government’s housing targets within the current identified Local Plan settlements, the Council must look to bring forward Green Belt sites for development to achieve these targets. Green Belt sites, much like Land off Church Street, represent Grey Belt land, are in sustainable locations and offer the Council the opportunity to achieve these housing need figures. Paragraph 73 of the NPPF notes that that planning policies should identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing, with an appropriate buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market. The release of Green Belt land in sustainable locations are well-placed to support this objective and contribute to a more resilient and responsive housing land supply.
- 8.4 Land off Church Street offers a logical and justified opportunity for Green Belt release, closely related to Northwich and existing service provisions, public transport links, and proximity to centres of employment and amenities.

*Question SS 2: Do you think the Council should consider a stepped housing requirement that plans for a lower level of housing delivery earlier in the plan period?*

- 8.5 It is Hayfield Homes’ position that a stepped housing requirement should not be introduced within the emerging Local Plan due to the concerns about reducing the housing delivery across the borough in the short-term. In order to achieve the Government’s growth agenda, Cheshire West and Chester Council should

recognise the immediate need to deliver housing and accord with Paragraph 61 of the NPPF.

- 8.6 To support sustainable growth and meet local demand without delay, the Council should instead pursue a consistent and ambitious housing delivery trajectory from the outset of the plan period. This approach would also justify the early release of sustainable and deliverable Green Belt sites, such as the land off Church Street, for residential use. Unlocking such strategic sites early would support both housing delivery and economic development, aligning with the Council's wider growth ambitions.

*Question SS 4: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards the spatial strategy principles, as set out in SS 3 'Spatial strategy principles' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 8.7 Hayfield Homes broadly support the policy approach towards the spatial strategy principles, especially the recognition that where there are not enough planning permissions and opportunities for redevelopment within urban areas and towns, the approach will be to develop on the edge of existing settlements in locations with the best access to public transport and existing services and infrastructure, as the next best sustainable option. Depending on the settlement, this may require the release of Green Belt land.

- 8.8 Land off Church Street represents a prime example of how the release of Green Belt land within the Local Plan process can help achieve development in sustainable locations, with strong access to services and facilities. The Site represents a highly sustainable, accessible, unconstrained and logical option for Green Belt release that could contribute to the development requirements for Cheshire West and Chester. Roads, existing development and mature field boundaries contain the site on all sides, and it is immediately adjacent and 'in line' with the existing built form of Higher Wincham. The Site can be defined as Grey Belt land.

*Question SS 5: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards the settlement hierarchy, as set out in SS 4 'Settlement hierarchy' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 8.9 Hayfield Homes generally agrees with the approach taken within the outlined Settlement Hierarchy, in that development should be centred in areas with strong

local infrastructure and services, such as locations identified within the consultation document i.e. Northwich. Northwich is described as a 'main town' and provides local infrastructure and services for its large population. However, Hayfield Homes stress that reliance solely on the settlements listed within SS 4 is unlikely to address the identified housing and employment land need. To enable the annual delivery of 1,914 new homes across CWaC, the Council should consider the release of Green Belt land in proximity to existing settlements and areas of development, where sites can be served by existing infrastructure provisions and services.

*Question SS 6: Should all settlements have some level of development, regardless of whether they are identified in the settlement hierarchy?*

- 8.10 Yes, all settlements should benefit from some level of development to remain sustainable. However, growth must be proportionate to each settlement's role, capacity, and infrastructure. In smaller villages, this may mean only modest infill or carefully planned extensions, while larger villages near main towns can accommodate slightly greater levels of development. This ensures that growth is distributed fairly, sustains local services, and avoids placing undue pressure on more remote rural communities.
- 8.11 A balanced distribution of growth helps to sustain rural communities, and ensures that services, facilities, and local economies remain viable. Even small-scale development in villages can help meet local housing needs, support local schools and shops, and maintain social cohesion.
- 8.12 In order to make development both sustainable and deliverable, priority should be given to settlements located near main towns. These villages are often better connected to transport networks and employment opportunities making them more suitable for accommodating growth in a way that reduces reliance on long-distance car travel. In such locations, the controlled release of Green Belt land can provide opportunities for carefully planned development. This approach allows growth to be directed to the most sustainable locations while also relieving pressure on smaller, more remote villages that may lack services and infrastructure.

*Question SS 9: Have circumstances changed since the adoption of the Local Plan (Part One), that would now justify Green Belt release?*

- 8.13 Since the adoption of Cheshire West and Chester's Local Plan (Part One) in January 2015, a number of circumstantial changes have occurred which now justify Green Belt release across the borough as part of an evidence-based spatial strategy.
- 8.14 Firstly, the revised National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024 provides clearer direction on the potential for local authorities to review Green Belt boundaries where fully evidenced and justified, particularly in the context of strategic planning and housing delivery.
- 8.15 The Government's reaffirmed ambition to deliver 300,000 homes per year at a national level, alongside changes to the standard method for calculating local housing need has placed greater pressure on local authorities to plan positively and realistically for future growth. Meeting this requirement will be extremely difficult without a strategic review of constrained land designations, including parts of the Green Belt that may no longer serve their original planning purpose. Cheshire West and Chester Council are expected to experience a significant uplift in their local housing delivery needs; since the introduction of the new standard method, Cheshire West and Chester Council will be required to deliver 1,914 homes annually- an increase from 532 homes annually under the previous standard method (259.8% increase).
- 8.16 In light of these evolving factors, it is appropriate for the Council to revisit the Green Belt strategy established under the previous Local Plan.

*Question SS 10: Are there any other considerations that we should take account of in relation to future Green Belt policy?*

- 8.17 Yes, there are several key considerations that should inform the future approach to Green Belt policy within the new Local Plan to ensure it remains fit for purpose and responsive to changing national and local circumstances.
- 8.18 Firstly, the introduction of the 'Grey Belt' concept in the December 2024 NPPF highlights the need for a more refined approach to Green Belt review. The NPPF identifies the concept of 'Grey Belt' land as previously developed or low-performing parcels within the Green Belt that may be more suitable for development without

compromising its overall function. This provides a valuable opportunity for Cheshire West and Chester Council to review existing Green Belt areas, particularly those adjacent to sustainable settlements such as Northwich, and identify underutilised land capable of supporting either residential or employment growth.

8.19 Grey Belt land is defined within the NPPF as;

*land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.*

8.20 It is our opinion that Hayfield Homes' land constitutes as Grey Belt land in accordance with the definition provided within the NPPF. The Site does not strongly contribute to purposes 'a', 'b', or 'd' defined within Paragraph 143 of the NPPF, as demonstrated in the representations at **Appendix II** and Section 2 of these representations. Footnote 7 does not apply to this Site.

8.21 While not previously developed, the Hayfield Homes' site is adjacent to the settlement boundary of Higher Wincham and makes a low contribution to the Green Belt purposes. In light of the Council's housing shortfall, the site's release should be justified under the grey belt provisions of the NPPF.

8.22 The Council should assess the quality, character, and function of individual Green Belt parcels, rather than treating the designation as a blanket constraint. Land that is previously developed, underused, or visually and functionally disconnected from the wider Green Belt may no longer contribute meaningfully to its core purposes and could be released without causing significant harm. This would allow for more strategic and sustainable growth, particularly adjacent to key service centres like Northwich, where infrastructure and transport links already exist.

8.23 Some areas of Green Belt have been overtaken by edge-of-settlement development or are no longer serving their intended role and may be better suited to development than to long-term protection.

- 8.24 Overall, the site makes a weak contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and therefore would be a suitable site for release from the Green Belt to assist in meeting the development requirements of Cheshire West and Chester.
- 8.25 Additionally, the Green Belt should be considered in the context of housing delivery pressures. The Council will be required to meet its housing need, calculated via the standard method<sup>2</sup>, that cannot be met solely within existing urban boundaries. If sustainable options are exhausted within non-Green Belt locations, the plan must be prepared to justify selective Green Belt release as a means of delivering the spatial strategy.
- 8.26 Where Green Belt land is considered for release, priority should be given to sites adjoining larger villages and main towns, where new development can be delivered at an appropriate scale, in step with local facilities and transport options.
- 8.27 *Question SS 11: Please select the option which is the most appropriate spatial strategy for Cheshire West and Chester:*
- *Option A - Retain the Green Belt*
  - *Option B - Follow current Local Plan level and distribution of development*
  - *Option C - Sustainable transport corridors*
  - *None of these*
- 8.28 Option C is the most appropriate spatial strategy for Cheshire West and Chester, as it allows for the delivery of housing and employment within strategic and accessible locations across the borough. Concentrating growth in these areas ensures new development is well connected to employment, education, and services, while reducing reliance on private cars and encouraging more sustainable patterns of movement. Hayfield Homes supports the approach outlined in Option C which suggests areas outside of Northwich could accommodate up to 500 homes and the development of greenfield land for employment expansion.
- 8.29 In the case of development outside of Northwich, Land off Church Street represents a key opportunity, The site is located adjacent to the settlement boundary of Higher

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<sup>2</sup> NPPF, Paragraph 62

Wincham, within a short distance to Northwich town centre and public transport connections. This strategic position means the site is highly accessible, supporting sustainable commuting patterns. Delivering housing along transport corridors not only reduces infrastructure costs but also helps create resilient communities with better access to services, in line with national policy. For these reasons, we fully support this vision and consider the Site an ideal example of how it can be delivered in practice.

- 8.30 In summary, Option C is supported, or an alternative option which recognises that growth should be established through active consideration of selective release of Green Belt land where it is adjacent to existing development, offers strong sustainability credentials, and helps deliver wider residential goals.

*Question SS 12: Do you have any alternative spatial strategy options that you would like to suggest?*

- 8.31 To further the strategy outlined in Option C, further emphasis should be given the release of Green Belt land along sustainable transport corridors. Taking forward this approach would allow strategically positioned sites to deliver required housing provisions across the borough.

*Question SS 14: Do you feel that Option A is an appropriate spatial strategy for the new Local Plan?*

- 8.32 Hayfield Homes recognise Option A's ambition to retain the Green Belt extent in line with Government Guidance that these boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances however, for the Plan to establish a deliverable strategy it is Hayfield Homes' opinion that these boundaries will require readjustment. In this context, a strict adherence to retaining all Green Belt boundaries risks overlooking sustainable, well-located opportunities for employment or housing that could contribute positively to local objectives.
- 8.33 While Option A promotes brownfield-first principles and development within non-Green Belt settlements, a targeted Green Belt release in locations such as Higher Wincham is likely to be essential to meeting housing needs in a sustainable way. This is particularly true given the ambitious growth requirements of the new Local Plan and the known limitations of land supply within existing urban boundaries.

*Question SS 15: If you do not feel that Option A is an appropriate spatial strategy option, are there any changes that you could suggest?*

- 8.34 Option A should be amended to allow for selective Green Belt release within sustainable locations. If Option A were to be brought forward, this would raise a risk to undermining economic growth and limiting land availability. An option should be developed which promotes planned Green Belt release, starting with the consideration of Grey Belt land, to meet identified housing needs.

*Question SS 16: Do you feel that Option B is an appropriate spatial strategy for the new Local Plan?*

- 8.35 Yes, Option B allows for planned growth in line with current distribution patterns, yet with targeted Green Belt release where it supports sustainable development.

*Question SS 18: Do you feel that Option C is an appropriate spatial strategy for the new Local Plan?*

- 8.36 Yes, Option C is the most appropriate spatial strategy, however this option should actively consider the selective release of Green Belt land where it is adjacent to existing development, offers strong sustainability credentials, and helps deliver wider residential goal, as is the case with the Hayfield Homes' site in Higher Wincham.

*Question SS 21: What information should we take into account when assessing sites for allocation in the new Local Plan?*

- 8.37 In the preparation of the new Local Plan, CWaC should consider the potential for sites to contribute towards the strategic objectives of sustainable settlement growth, along with further technical considerations.
- 8.38 Hayfield Homes' site is within a sustainable location, with access into Northwich, and the local services and facilities contained therein. The site provides a logical location for Green Belt release when assessed against the five purposes of the Green Belt (as set out in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF).

- **Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas:** the Site is located adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of Higher Wincham and is bounded to the south and east by residential development. There are permanent and defensible field boundaries surrounding the other boundaries of the Site which would

prevent unrestricted sprawl. Development would complete the built frontage along this part of Church Street.

- **Prevent neighbouring towns from merging:** the Site would form a natural extension to the settlement boundary of Higher Wincham and would not result in the merging with the nearest settlement of Pickmere.
- **Safeguard the countryside from encroachment:** whilst the development of any greenfield site would result in 'encroachment', it is not considered that the Site strongly contributes to this purpose. The defensible boundaries referenced above would limit any additional development in the future, and the release of the Site would allow development around Wincham/Higher Wincham to be properly planned and managed.
- **Preserve the setting and character of historic towns:** Higher Wincham is not designated as a historic town, therefore the release of the Site from the Green Belt would not impact on this purpose.
- **Assist urban regeneration:** additional land outside of the settlement boundary would be required to meet identified development needs. An alteration of the Green Belt would therefore not prevent the recycling of derelict or other urban land.

8.39 Overall, the site makes a weak contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and therefore would be a suitable site for release from the Green Belt to assist in meeting the development requirements of Cheshire West and Chester. Indeed, the Site represents Grey Belt land.

8.40 The Plan should prioritise land that is deliverable within the plan period. Sites in proximity to existing settlements with reach of services and infrastructure should be favoured, even when they lie within the Green Belt. Where land within the Green Belt can be defined as Grey Belt land, no longer contributes to the purposes defined in the NPPF, or where development can be accommodated with minimal harm to openness, such sites should be considered for Green Belt release. This is particularly appropriate where development can contribute to housing need, such as Cheshire West's target of delivering 1,914 homes.

*Question SS 29: Which of the identified potential growth areas around Northwich do you consider to be the most suitable?*

- 8.41 Out of the growth options identified, area NOR02 appears to be in the most sustainable and logical location. It is the Hayfield Homes' opinion however, that either this should be extended, or a further growth area should be identified to the north, at Higher Wincham, to encapsulate the Land off Church Street.

## 9. Issues and Options: Northwich

*Question NO 1: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards Northwich, as set out in NO 1 'Northwich 'above? If not, please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 9.1 Hayfield Homes broadly support the policy approach towards Northwich including the emphasis on town centre regeneration, infrastructure improvements, and the allocation of Wincham Urban Village. Hayfield Homes, however, recommend that the policy be amended to provide greater flexibility for sustainable growth on well-located Green Belt sites adjacent to existing development outside of the town centre.
- 9.2 This growth will be important in supporting the regeneration of the Northwich Town Centre Development Framework and in the delivery of housing and employment opportunities. This is especially important in light of increasing development pressures, limited brownfield capacity, and the need to meet higher levels of housing and employment need in a sustainable manner.
- 9.3 Hayfield Homes also supports the Council's intention to identify key sites and allocations in and around Northwich as part of the plan-making process. In this context, Land off Church Street represents a logical and sustainable opportunity for growth, well-suited to contribute to the delivery of the Plan's strategic objectives.

*Question NO 2: Do you have any comments on the suggested key allocations/sites?*

- 9.4 Hayfield Homes support the suggested key sites, especially growth surrounding Northwich Town Centre and Wincham Urban Village. The delivery of housing and employment development within these locations make logical sense due to the existing built environment of these locations and their proximity to existing infrastructure and services.
- 9.5 While the objectives are broadly supported, we would encourage further emphasis is placed on the role that releasing Green Belt land can make in meeting strategic housing and employment goals. Over reliance on development in allocations such as Wincham Urban Village and Northwich Town Centre may result in needs not being met. Sites outside of these allocations should also be considered, especially where they offer logical extensions to settlements adjacent to Northwich.

9.6 Hayfield Homes' site offers a sustainable, well-connected and accessible location for housing or commercial use. This site will help meet local needs, support town centre regeneration through increased footfall, and its release from the Green Belt would not undermine Green Belt objectives.

## 10. Issues and Options: Green Belt and Countryside

*Question GB 1: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards Green Belt and countryside, as set out in GB 1 'Green Belt and countryside' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended.*

- 10.1 Hayfield Homes support the policy approach towards the Green Belt and Countryside as set out in GB 1. Policies provided in the emerging Local Plan should reflect the most recent guidance relating to the Green Belt in the NPPF, including reference to Grey Belt land and provide reference to the anticipated Green Belt review evidence.
- 10.2 In regard to wording of the policy the Local Plan should include reference to Paragraph 148 of the NPPF, which notes:

*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. However, when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should determine whether a site's location is appropriate with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.*

*Question GB 2: Should there be a separate policy for countryside and Green Belt areas?*

- 10.3 Yes, the Local Plan should include separate policies for countryside and Green Belt areas, as they serve distinct planning functions and are subject to different national policy frameworks and local considerations. Maintaining two distinct policies will also improve clarity for applicants, decision-makers, and communities, especially as the new Local Plan will be a single document.

## 11. Issues and Options: Transport and Accessibility

*Question TA 1: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards transport and accessibility, as set out above in TA 1 'Transport and accessibility'? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 11.1 Hayfield Homes support the view that new development will be encouraged in sustainable locations with access to services and facilities. Land off Church Street represents a sustainable location which is well connected by active travel and public transport.

## 12. Issues and Options: Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

*Question ID 1: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards infrastructure and developer contributions, as set out above in ID 1 'Infrastructure and developer contributions'? If not please suggest how it could be amended.*

- 12.1 In circumstances where developer contributions are sought, the obligation needs to allow for the consideration of viability.
- 12.2 In line with the requirements of Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), planning obligations must be:
- Necessary to make the application acceptable in planning terms;
  - Directly related to the development; and
  - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

## 13. Issues and Options: Housing

*Question HO 1: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards mix and type and specialist housing in new developments, as set out in HO 1 'Mix and type of housing in new developments and specialist housing' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 13.1 Hayfield Homes broadly supports the suggested policy approach towards housing mix and type of housing as set out within HO 1 yet believe this could be strengthened to allow for greater flexibility on a site-by-site basis, particularly in strategic or edge-of-settlement locations that could accommodate a broader range of uses.
- 13.2 In this context, Land off Church Street represents a credible opportunity for sustainable residential development, including specialist or supported housing. The site is located on the edge of the existing settlement boundary and is adjacent to established employment uses. Its proximity to Northwich and local services, transport connections, and retail facilities enhances its suitability for a broader housing mix, particularly for older people or those needing access to services without reliance on the car.
- 13.3 We recommend that Policy HO 1 be amended to explicitly acknowledge that specialist and mixed-tenure housing opportunities may also be appropriately located on sustainable edge-of-settlement sites. This would help ensure the policy remains responsive to local context and land availability and supports inclusive, place-based growth.
- 13.4 Such flexibility would align with the NPPF's objectives around meeting diverse housing needs, making effective use of land, and planning positively for mixed-use developments that create healthy, inclusive, and vibrant communities.

*Question HO 4: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach towards delivering affordable housing, as set out in HO 2 'Delivering affordable housing' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 13.5 While the overall intention of Policy HO2 to secure the delivery of affordable housing is supported, the policy approach should be more flexible, particularly in relation to edge-of-settlement or Green Belt release sites that are being promoted

for development in the Local Plan. It should be recognised by CWaC in the development of the Local Plan that the delivery of housing on undeveloped land can incur unexpected costs, including Green Belt mitigation measures. Policy HO2 should therefore allow for site specific viability considerations to come forward as part of any application submission.

*Question HO 6: Do you agree with the suggested policy approach for residential development proposals, as set out in HO 3 'Proposals for residential development' above? If not please suggest how it could be amended?*

- 13.6 Hayfield Homes is supportive of the approach however, note that where reference is given to development within the Green Belt, this should be supported by text outlining the principles of the Green Belt to aid sustainable development across the borough.

*Question HO 8: Within this policy approach (or elsewhere) should the new Local Plan set out more detail on what development is appropriate in the Green Belt, with respect to, for example, house extensions; what is small scale/subordinate (not increasing size of a dwelling by more than 30%) etc?*

- 13.7 The emerging Local Plan should ensure that it sets out a clear criteria on what constitutes as appropriate Green Belt development in line with the 2024 version of the NPPF. Clearer definitions would provide greater clarity for applicants and decision makers. It is also important that the Plan recognise that in order to achieve sustainable development in well-connected locations, Green Belt release will be appropriate. This would support wider regeneration and growth objectives and align with emerging evidence around employment and housing land needs. Therefore, while detailed Green Belt guidance is welcomed, this should be balanced with a criteria-based policy that also facilitates strategic and sustainable Green Belt release where exceptional circumstances are demonstrable.

## 14. Issues and Options: Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geodiversity

*Question GI 3: Should new Local Plan policy go above the 10% mandatory biodiversity net gain set nationally?*

- 14.1 The Local Plan should not seek to exceed the 10% mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement set out nationally. The 10% threshold, as introduced by the Environment Act 2021 represents a balanced and evidence-based standard that has been subject to national consultation, viability testing, and wide stakeholder engagement. Requiring a higher percentage locally could risk undermining development viability, and introduce delivery challenges

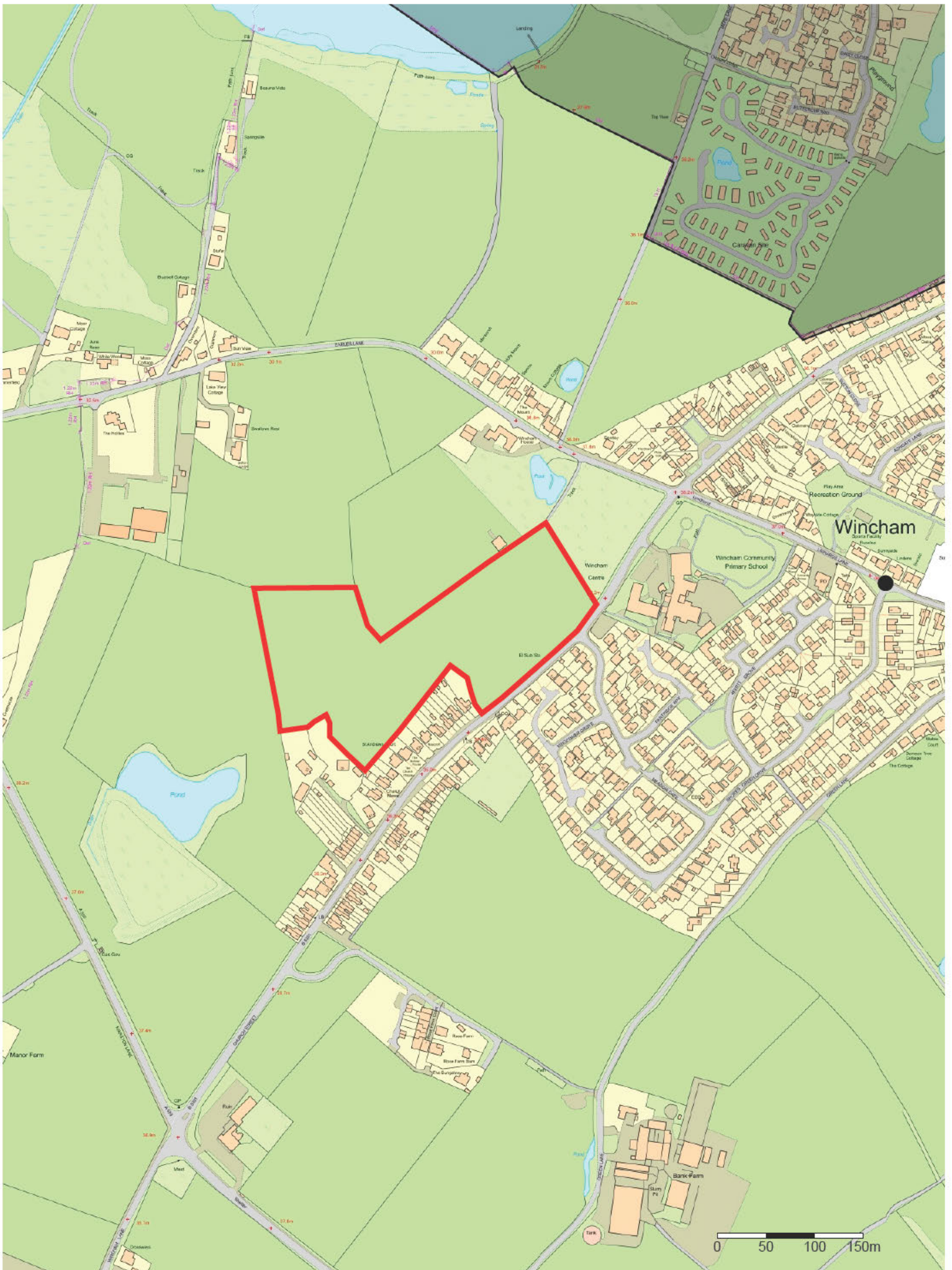
## 15. Issues and Options: Design and Sustainable Construction

*Question DS 2: If the Council produces a borough-wide Design Code, should this form part of the new Local Plan?*

- 15.1 A borough-wide Design Code should not form part of the new Local Plan. While high-quality design is critical to sustainable development, a single, overarching Design Code applied across the entire borough risks being too generic or inflexible, to the wide variation in local character across Cheshire West and Chester. Instead, the Local Plan should reference the role of design codes as supplementary guidance, allowing them to evolve over time without requiring formal plan review.

# Appendix I

## Site Location Plan



21/8/2025



# Appendix II

## Site Submission Documents



AshtonHale

Planning Policy Team  
Cheshire West and Chester Council

Submitted via the Consultation Portal

15<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear Sir / Madam

**Consultation on Land Availability Assessment and Call for Sites: Representations on Behalf of Mr Richard Fryer**

These representations are submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council ("CWaC") by AshtonHale on behalf of Mr Richard Fryer of Home Farm, Linnards Lane, Wincham ("Mr Fryer") in relation to their land interests in Higher Wincham. A Site Location Plan is appended to this letter which identifies two sites:

- **Site A:** Land to North of B5391, Church Street, Higher Wincham
- **Site B:** Land to North of Linnards Lane, Higher Wincham

These representations seek to bring together all available information on the sites and how they could be brought forward for sustainable development.

**Site A: Land to North of B5391, Church Street**

The Site extends to c. 8 hectares and is located to the north of Church Street and south of Earles Lane, Wincham. The Site is bounded by residential and agricultural buildings to the east and west. To the north of Earles Lane there are a number of residential properties and agricultural fields. Beyond Church Street to the east and north-east is the main (predominantly residential) built form of Higher Wincham. The Site is not identified in the Draft Land Availability Assessment Map, however it is immediately adjacent to sites 722 (Wincham House) and the western parcel of 1377 (Wincham Estate (A)) which have been identified as possible residential sites.

The Site represents a highly sustainable, accessible, unconstrained and logical option for Green Belt release that could contribute to the development requirements for Cheshire West and Chester. Roads, existing development and mature field boundaries contain the site on all sides and it is immediately adjacent to the existing built form of Higher Wincham.

On this basis, we wish to work closely with Cheshire West and Chester Council and other stakeholders throughout the process to develop an appropriate masterplan for a residential / residential-led mixed-use proposal for the site which reflects the vision and objectives for the Local Plan.

## **Site Deliverability**

The NPPF (December 2023) and Government's growth agenda seek to ensure that sufficient land is available in the most appropriate locations to increase employment and housing land supply, support growth and boost home ownership. The site is available, suitable and achievable and is ideally positioned to deliver a residential or residential-led mixed-use development.

In accordance with the NPPF, to be considered deliverable, sites should:

- **Be Available Now:** A site is considered available where there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems;
- **Be Suitable:** A site is considered suitable for development if it offers a suitable location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities; and
- **Be Achievable:** A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site within five years. This is a judgement about the economic viability of a site and the capacity of the developer to compete and sell housing over a certain period considering market factors, cost factors and delivery factors.

### An Available Site

The land does not have any ownership or legal impediments, and our clients are committed to bringing the site forward for development. As such the site would be available to be developed early in the plan period.

### A Suitable Site

The site is in a sustainable location, with access on foot into Higher Wincham, and the local services and facilities contained therein. Nearby bus stops on Church Street provide access to and from Northwich, Knutsford and Warrington. Northwich train station 3.5km to the south from the Site, which is frequented by services between Manchester and Chester. Church Street, turning into Pickmere Lane, also links to Junction 19 of the M6 to the north-east, and to the south-west onto the A559 to Junction 11 of the M56, providing excellent private transport links to the strategic road network.

Our assessment of Site A against the five purposes of the Green Belt (as cited at Paragraph 143 of the NPPF) is set out below:

- **Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas** - the Site is located adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of Higher Wincham. The Site is bounded and constrained by the main built form of Higher Wincham to the east and Earles Lane to the north. There are permanent and defensible field boundaries surrounding the Site which would prevent any sprawl of the Site and complete the built frontage along this part of Church Street. **Weak Contribution.**
- **Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another** - the Site would form a natural extension to the settlement boundary of Higher Wincham and would not result in the merging with the nearest settlement of Pickmere. **No contribution.**

- **Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment** - whilst the development of any greenfield site would result in 'encroachment', it is not considered that the Site strongly contributes to this purpose. The defensible boundaries referenced above would limit any additional development in the future, and the release of the Site would allow development around Wincham/Higher Wincham to be properly planned and managed. **Weak contribution.**
- **Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns** - Higher Wincham is not designated as a historic town, therefore the release of the Site from the Green Belt would not impact on this purpose. **No contribution.**
- **Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land** -The map accompanying the Draft Land Availability Assessment shows that there are limited to no opportunities for development within the main built form of Higher Wincham. As such, additional land outside of the settlement boundary would be required to meet identified development needs. An alteration of the Green Belt would therefore not prevent the recycling of derelict or other urban land. **Weak contribution.**

Overall, the Site makes a weak contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt, and therefore would be a suitable site for release from the Green Belt to assist in meeting the development requirements of Cheshire West and Chester.

#### An Achievable Site

A residential / mixed-use development would likely be the most viable option for this site and there is a realistic prospect that such proposals can be delivered.

In terms of potential technical constraints, a Transport Note (ref: 4351) has been prepared by Eddisons and is submitted with these representations. The Note and accompanying drawing demonstrate that vehicular access into the site can be provided for can be provided off the B5391 Church Street to the south and Earles Lane to the north, and the proposed vehicular accesses will provide safe and convenient access into the site for residential land-uses and accords with the relevant highway design standards. As such, there are no material highways or transport reasons which would prevent the allocation or delivery of this site as a residential development.

In summary, there are no known technical constraints that would prevent the site coming forward in a short timescale.

#### **Site B: Land to North of Linnards Lane**

Land to the North of Linnards Lane extends to c. 3.2 hectares. Vehicular access into the site is currently provided via an unadopted agricultural track from Linnards Lane, approximately 255 metres south of the main parcel of land.

The Site is not identified in the Draft Land Availability Assessment Map, however it is immediately adjacent to the southern and eastern parcels of 1377 (Wincham Estate (A)) which have been identified as possible residential sites. As such, it represents part of a wider strategic opportunity for residential development in this location and on this basis, we wish to work closely with Cheshire West and Chester Council and other landowners throughout the process to develop an appropriate masterplan for a residential / residential-led mixed-use proposal for the wider site.

## Summary

In summary, this letter demonstrates that the removal of Site A from the Green Belt and its allocation for residential or residential-led mixed-use development within the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan would make a valuable contribution towards the Council's development land supply whilst still protecting the purpose and functions of the Green Belt. The site is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary and is a logical location to deliver sustainable development with access to a range of existing services and facilities in Higher Wincham. Whilst adjacent to other sites being promoted for development, it has been demonstrated that Site A is also deliverable independently as it is available, suitable and achievable.

This letter has also presented Site B as an available site for development, which is immediately adjacent to the larger Wincham Estate landholding and could form part of a larger allocation for residential development.

Mr Fryer's key objective is to ensure that the land's full potential is recognised and identified as part of a wider strategic development opportunity in the emerging Local Plan. The scale of the overall land holding independently and when coupled with other sites being promoted in the vicinity, the accessible locations and the willingness of the landowner offers potential opportunities to deliver positive economic, social and environmental benefits to Higher Wincham and the wider area, which should be afforded significant weight in the plan making process.

Mr Fryer welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Council and key stakeholders as the review progresses, in order to ensure that the maximum benefits are derived from the sites for Cheshire West and Chester Council and the local community.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. We would be grateful if you could confirm safe receipt of these representations.

Yours sincerely,



**Louisa Fielden**

Associate Director  
AshtonHale Ltd



Enc.

Site Location Plan  
Transport Note



13/3/2024

Land at Wincham



Mr Richard Fryer

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1:6625

## **POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE, LAND TO NORTH OF B5391 CHURCH STREET, WINCHAM, CWAC – TRANSPORT ACCESS NOTE – MARCH 2024**

### **Introduction**

Eddisons has been instructed by Ashton Hale to advise on the traffic and transport issues relating to a potential residential development on land to the north of the B5391 Church Street in the Wincham area of Cheshire West and Cheshire.

This note will consider the potential access options for the development of the site for residential purposes.

### **Existing Site**

The site is bound to the south by the B5391 Church Street and to the north by Earles Lane.

To the south, the site has around 150 metres off direct frontage onto the B5391 Church Street, the boundary of the site abuts the extent of adopted highway, with a verge located between the site and edge of carriageway.

The B5391 Church Street is subject to a 30mph speed limit along the frontage of the site. Given the available frontage and visibility requirements based on the existing on the speed limit it is concluded that vehicular access into the site for residential development can be provided off the B5391 Church Street.

To the north, the site has approximately 275 metres of direct frontage onto Earles Lane, the boundary of the site abuts the extent of adopted highway. Earles Lane is subject to a 30mph speed limit along the frontage of the site.

### **Potential Access Arrangements**

Given the available frontage and visibility requirements based on the existing on the speed limit it is concluded that vehicular access into the site for residential development can be provided off Earles Lane.

However, given the standard of Earles Lane it is recommended that primary access be provided off the B5391 Church Street with secondary access potential provided off Earles Lane.

It is proposed that the primary vehicular access point into the site will be provided off the B5391 Church Street. The vehicular access junction will be a standard priority-controlled junction which will have a carriageway width of 5.5 metres with 2 metre footways and 6 metre corner radii. The B5391 is subject to a 30mph speed limit along the frontage of the site. Based on Table 7.1 in Manual for Streets, visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres are required in each direction and these can be achieved within the extent of adopted highway.

A secondary access can be provided off Earles Lane, this access will be a priority controlled arrangement which will a carriageway width of 5.5 metres with 2 metre footways and 6 metre corner radii. The Earles Lane is subject to a 30mph speed limit along the frontage of the site and therefore visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres are required in each direction and these can be achieved within the extent of adopted highway.

Based on the above, two vehicular access options into the site have been provided and these are displayed in **Drawing 4351\_F01**. These access arrangements have been designed to accord with the relevant highway design standards and will provide safe and convenient access to the development site.

## Summary

The above Transport Note has considered the access options in relation to the land to the north of the B5391 Church Street in the Wincham area of Cheshire West and Chester and the following can be concluded;

- Vehicular access into the site to the north of the B5391 Church Street can be provided off the B5391 Church Street to the south and Earls Lane to the north.
- These vehicular accesses will provide safe and convenient access into the site and accord with the relevant highway design standards.

As such, there are no material highways or transport reasons which would prevent the allocation or delivery of this site as a residential led development.

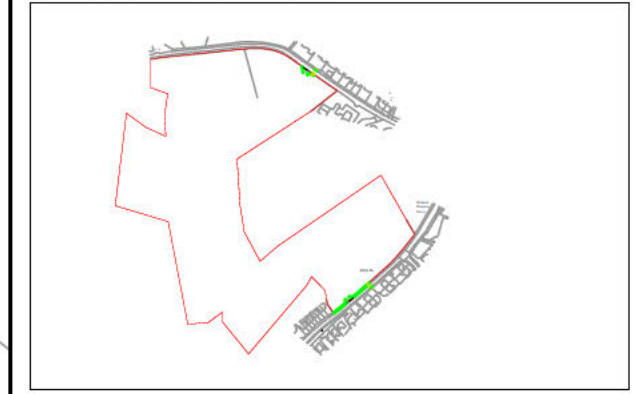
# DRAWINGS



**NOTES**  
 THIS IS NOT A CONSTRUCTION DRAWING AND IS FOR INDICATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.  
 THE DRAWING WILL BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE FOLLOWING LOCAL AUTHORITY REVIEW AND CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC HIGHWAY AND THIRD PARTY LAND BOUNDARIES.

— INDICATIVE SITE BOUNDARY  
 — DENOTES NEW KERBS

LOCAL AUTHORITY: CHESHIRE WEST COUNCIL  
 TOTAL AREA OF SITE: 8.8Ha



SITE LAYOUT NTS

REV	DETAILS	DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE
-	-	-	-	-

CLIENT:  
**RICHARD FRYER**

PROJECT:  
**LAND AT WINCHAM, CWaC**

DRAWING TITLE:  
**PROPOSED SITE ACCESS PLAN**

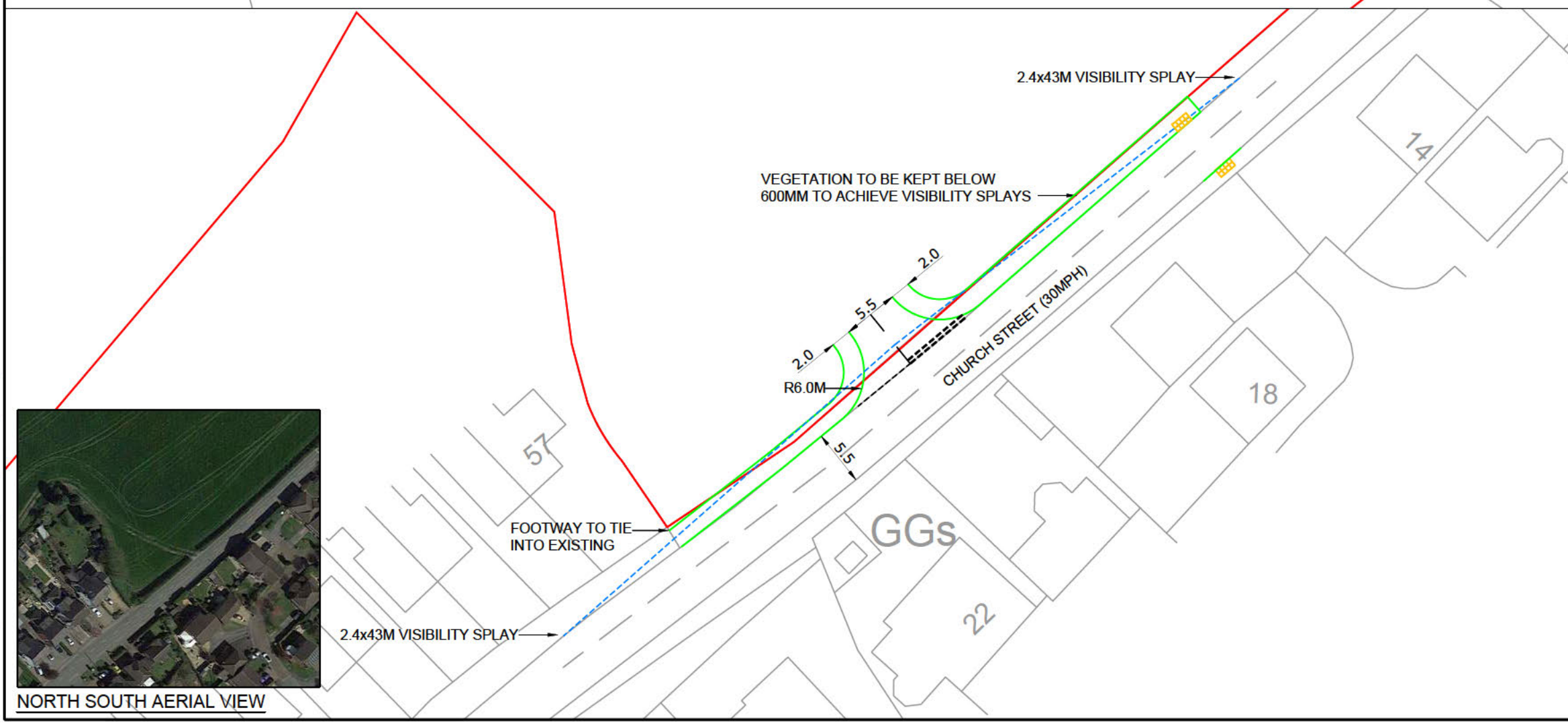
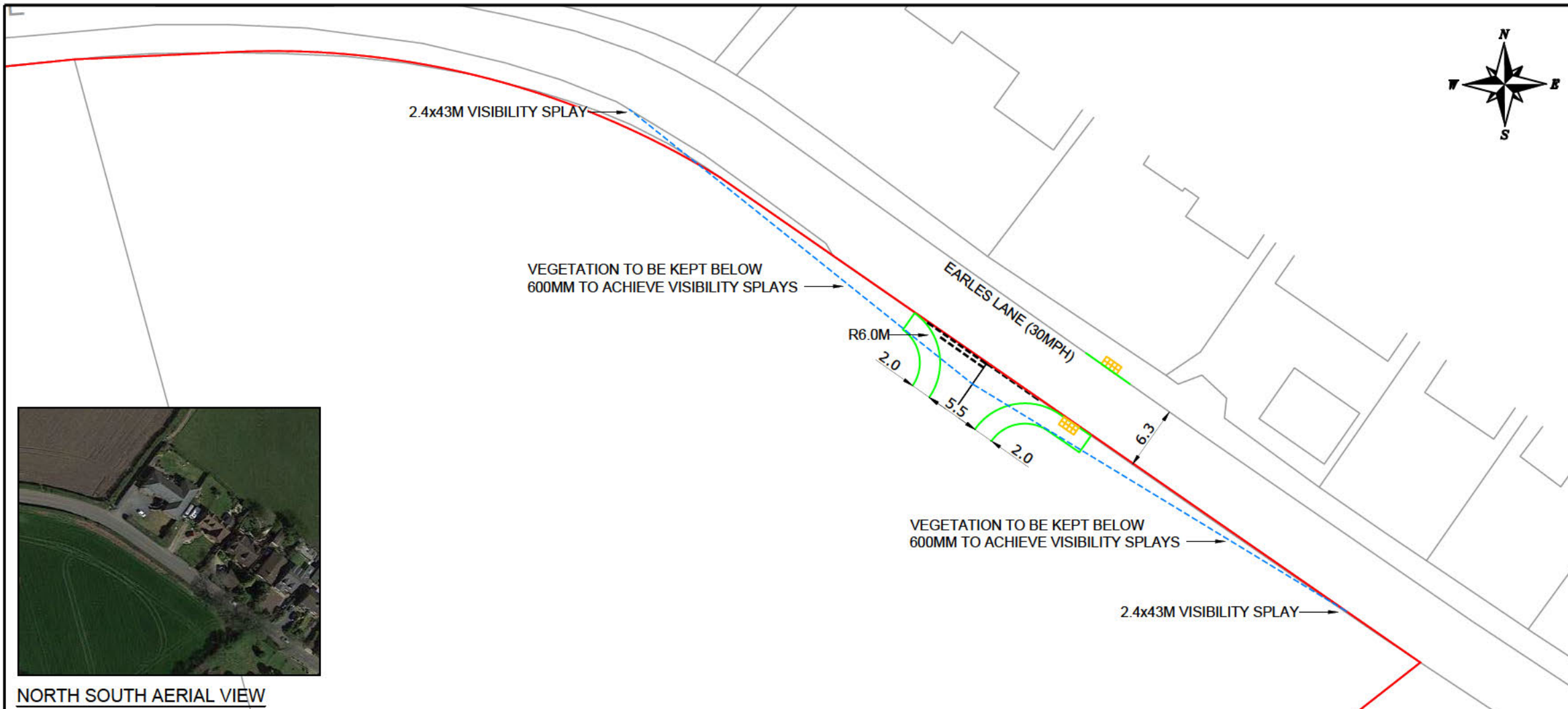
SCALES:  
**1:500 @ A3**

DRAWN: **LB**    CHECKED: **TSB**    DATE: **MAR 23**

Eddisons  
 340 Deansgate  
 Manchester  
 M3 4LY

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