



 HARROW ESTATES

# Ashfield Hall Farm Neston

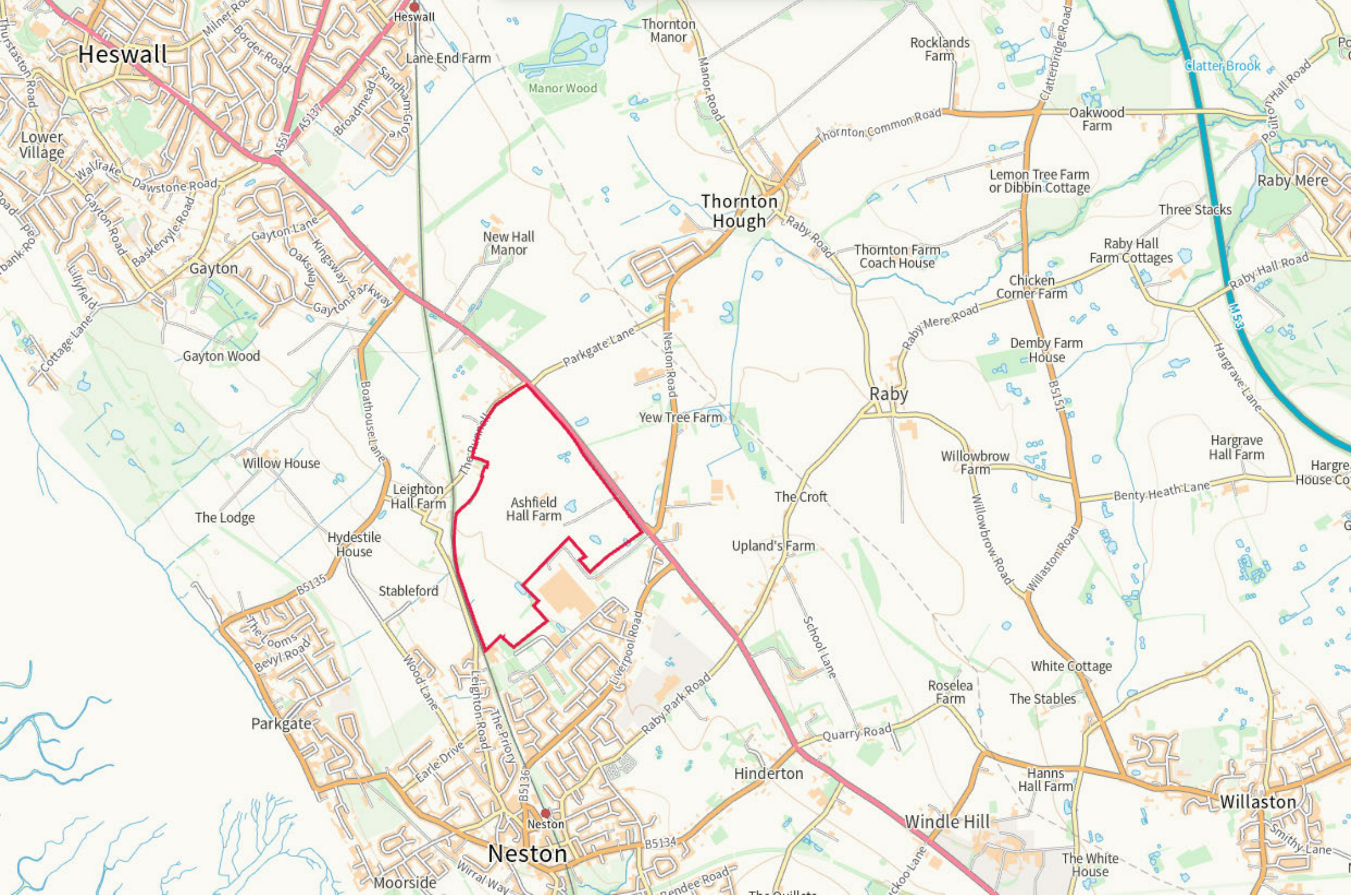
August 2025

 Barratt Redrow

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# Introduction

Harrow Estates' [<https://www.harrowestates.co.uk/>] role within the wider Barratt Redrow Group (as a FTSE 100; 5-star homebuilder) is centred around the promotion of large-scale strategic sites and the delivery of infrastructure as a Master Developer.

Harrow Estates, produced this document to capture the context of Ashfield Hall Farm Neston (NEP02), (the 'Site') and support the Site's suitability within Cheshire West and Chester's Reg 18 growth option scenarios as a mixed-use development prospect. This is following Harrow's prior submission of the Site in the Call for Sites consultation process in March 2024.

Located north of Neston, directly off the A540, the Site would provide for a logical expansion to the existing employment area to the south of the Site, while also being capable of contributing c.600-750 dwellings towards the Council's unmet housing need of 1,914 new homes each year. Harrow therefore believe the site is suitable for Green Belt release and should be allocated as a mixed-use designation in the Emerging Local Plan. We further explore the Site's Grey Belt potential.

Barratt Redrow's vision is to create a diverse triple-branded scheme utilising its Barratt, David Wilson, and Redrow housing mix to cater for a wider range of housing need. It could further comprise of both Private and Affordable dwellings of mixed-tenure, a local centre, primary school Site and a significant expansion to the existing employment area towards the north of Neston.

In addition to contributing towards meeting the local housing need, the scheme would also create significant employment opportunities within the borough. Development of this scale would generate a substantial increase in revenue for the council, through streams including Council Tax, and the Council will also benefit from CIL charges the Development would be liable for, in addition to the necessary S106 contributions associated with the Development.

# Site Setting

Situated to the north of the existing settlement of Neston, the Site is close to the Cheshire West and Chester LPA boundary. Adjoining Chester High Road (A540) to the east and the Borderlands railway line to the west, it is well contained and benefits from defined boundaries on each approach.

To the north of the Site lies The Runnel, a semi-rural street containing a ribbon of existing dwellings which could be considered to denote the far northern extent of Neston. The south of the Site presents a more urban setting with a proportion of the boundary being shared with Aldi's distribution centre, and the remainder abutting Clayhill Industrial Estate and wider employment offerings.

The Site is mainly arable land, with the existing farmstead (to be retained by the current landowners as further denoted) located in the middle. This comprises a number of residential dwellings, gardens, barns, and large agricultural sheds.



# Topography and Landscape

Throughout the Site there is a prominent field boundary pattern formed around the farmstead, which naturally guides the layout of any future development to incorporate much of the existing hedgerows and key landscape features.

The topography on Site is predominantly flat from the eastern boundary up until the middle of the Site, where it then begins to gently slope down towards the western boundary, with the southwest corner being the lowest point.

Whilst no formal Landscape Impact Assessment has been carried out as of yet, we will seek to sensitively and appropriately mitigate/minimise the effect which any forthcoming development may have on long-range views.

The Site's natural screening by mature vegetation and its topography, already limits outward looking views, both short and long.



# Natural Environment and Surroundings

Harrow has created a Constraints and Opportunities plan that has informed the creation of the Garden Village Concept Plan.

## Natural Environment





































- The Site is not affected by fluvial flood risk.
- The Site is affected by largely low to medium-risk pockets of pluvial flood risk which have been considered and accommodated within the Concept Plan.
- There are no TPO's on Site.
- The Site is classified as 'Urban Land' on Natural England's Regional Agricultural Land Map.
- The Site falls within National Character Area 59.
- According to the Cheshire West and Chester Landscape Strategy (2016) the Site falls within landscape character type 6, Enclosed Farmland, at a local level and Landscape Character Area 6a, Willaston.

## Heritage Constraints

- There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets on Site.
- There are no listed buildings within the Site boundary.
- The Site lies outside of the Neston conservation area.



# Constraints and Opportunities Plan

- KEY**
-  Site Boundary
  -  Proposed Site Access
  -  Proposed Ped/Cycle Access
  -  5m Contours
  -  Farm retained land - 12.08acres
  -  Proposed Employment B1/B2/B8
  -  Proposed Employment B1
  -  Proposed School
  -  Proposed Destination Play Area (NEAP)
  -  Proposed Local Equipped Play (LEAP)
  -  Existing Landscaping
  -  Indicative SuDS Location
  -  Potential Multi-functional Green Corridors
  -  Public Right of Way
  -  National Cycle Network
  -  Wirral Circular Trail
  -  Railway Line
  -  Noise from Railway Line
  -  Listed Building
  -  TPO
  -  Flood Zone 2
  -  Flood Zone 3
  -  Surface Water Flooding
  -  Low Voltage Power Lines
  -  Conservation Areas
  -  Local Centre
  -  Train Station
  -  Existing Bus Stops
  -  Industrial Area
  -  Public House
  -  Allotments
  -  Church
  -  Medical Centre
  -  Pharmacy
  -  Supermarket
  -  Play Area



# Our Vision

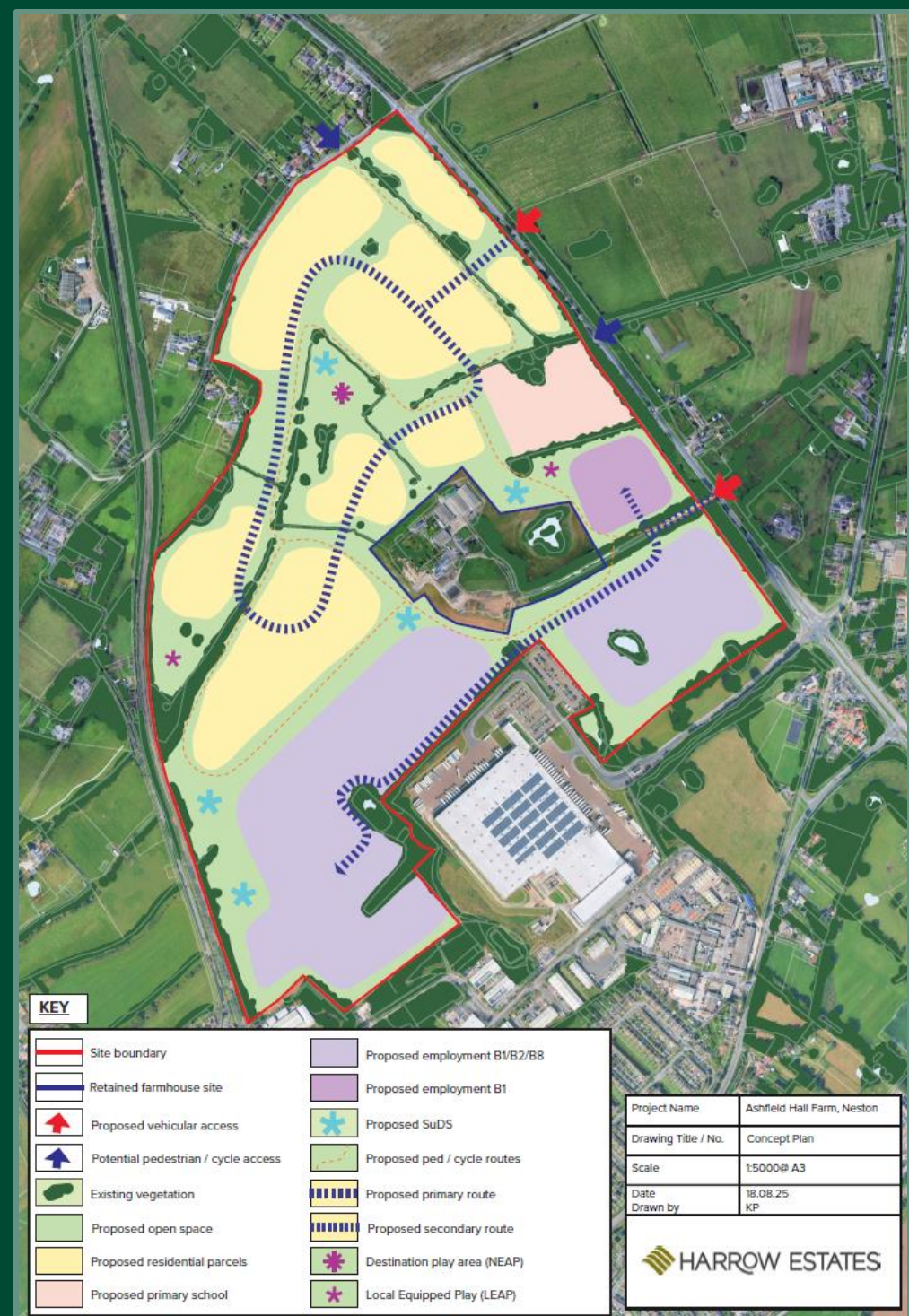
## The Indicative Concept Plan

The Site provides an exciting opportunity to deliver a high quality, sustainable, self-contained, landscape-led new Garden Village. The Site offers potential to create a network of multi-functional green infrastructure that can deliver Biodiversity Net Gain as well as provide for a wide range of placemaking and health and wellbeing benefits such as natural play and 'play on the way', walking and cycling routes, community orchards and attractive ponds and swales.

Adopting the above principles and having full regard for the matters contained within the Constraints and Opportunities Plan, the Indicative Concept Plan seeks to mitigate the identified impacts and takes advantage of the opportunities, such as the Site's natural features, field boundary patterns and topography.

The Concept Plan acknowledges the surrounding uses beyond the Site boundary and aims to compliment these in locating residential, commercial, and landscape features. For instance, the land for employment uses is located adjacent to the existing distribution centre on the southern boundary, and residential uses run south from the northern boundary towards the retained farmstead.

The school Site has been considered and located along the frontage of Chester High Road, making it is easily accessible to both existing residents of Neston in addition to the potential residents of the Garden Village. This location also ensures timing of delivery can be achieved in the early phases of development, should that be required.





# Connectivity

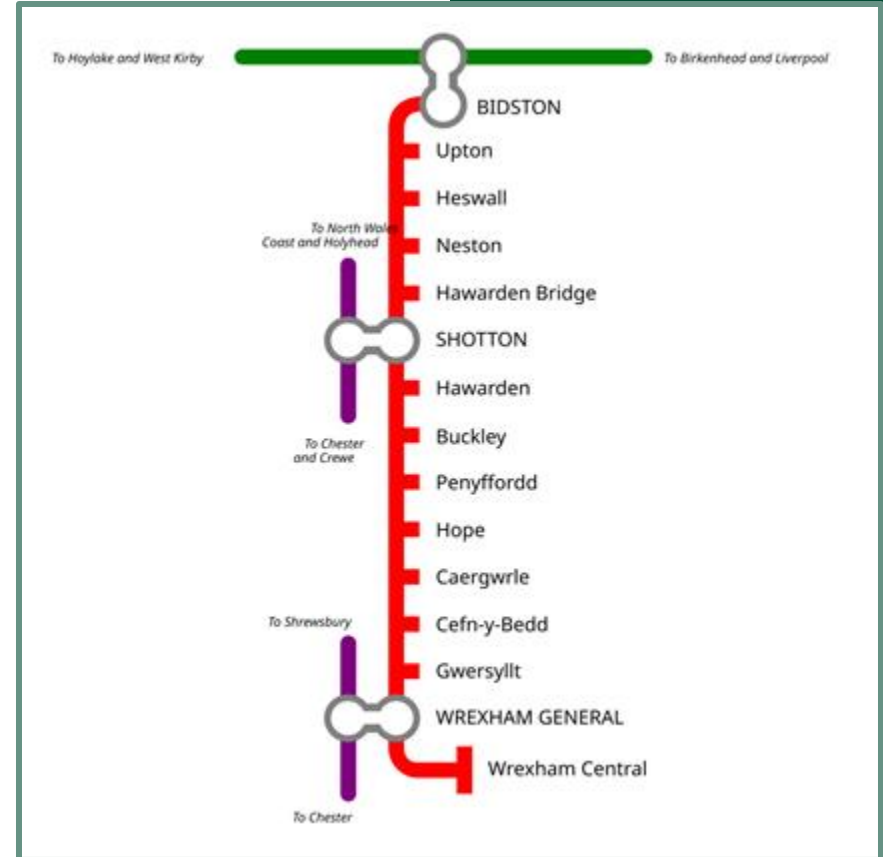
## Road Networks

The Site benefits from direct access onto the A540 which provides a route north towards the Wirral and Liverpool and south straight through to Chester. The nearest motorway junction for the M53 can be accessed within approximately 4 miles and offers direct connections to the A55 and M56.

## Rail Services

Both Neston and Heswall stations are along the Borderlands line which connects Wrexham to Bidston via a regular service departing every 45 minutes. Bidston provides a direct line into Liverpool City Centre where national services can be accessed from Liverpool Lime Street. Similarly, Shotton and Wrexham General offer frequent services to larger stations such as Chester and Crewe, where national services can be accessed, providing links to popular commuter destinations such as Manchester, Birmingham and London.

Neston Station  Heswall Station  
c. 1 Kilometre  c. 2 Kilometres 



# Connectivity

## Bus Routes

The Site is situated within close-proximity to multiple bus stops along the existing 487 bus route, which is Ness Gardens and Parkgate to Liverpool. The nearest stops to the Site, both within an approximate 500 metre radius are Red Gates and Chester High Road. The service runs Monday-Saturday every 30 minutes providing frequent and reliable transport. The existing service can be utilised by residents to access key amenities within Neston or as a method of sustainable transport for commuters, or those seeking leisure trips to Liverpool or destinations along the way.

Delivery of the Site could provide the necessary contributions to enhance the existing bus service and re-introduce a regular route, to utilise the existing stops adjacent to the Site, Parkgate Lane and Five Lane Ends, with scope for these to serve both the residential and employment areas of the Development. Additionally, there may be further scope to bring the route within the Site, creating new stops along the strategic spine road to actively promote the use of sustainable travel amongst the residents and make this easily accessible.

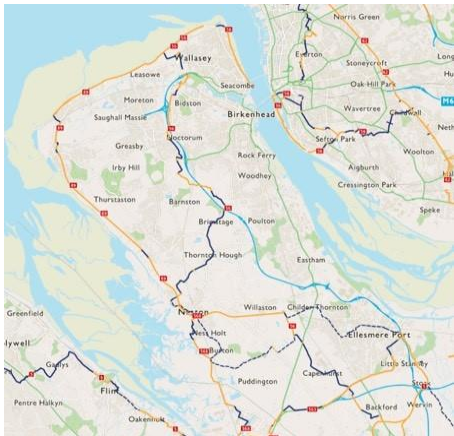


# Connectivity

## Active Travel

Neston Town Council encourage Active Travel and look to support initiatives whereby this can be made easier and safer where 'possible and practicable'. As a result of this, Neston is already well connected to both Chester and the Wirral through Active Travel routes and encompasses a vast range of both walking and cycling trails at both a leisurely and strategic level.

Delivery of the Site would allow for essential enhancements to be made to the existing footpath along Chester High Road with scope for an additional cycle lane to be incorporated. The restoration of the existing route will feed into the Development where Active Travel will be prioritised through the delivery of pedestrian walkways and cycle lanes along the strategic spine road, putting Active Travel at the forefront of the new community.



Examples of Active Travel trails accessible from Neston:

Route	Distance (Miles)
Sustrans National Cycle Route - 56	44.2
Wirral Circular Trail	37
Neston Circular Ride	25
Wirral Way	12.2

(Sustrans Route 56)

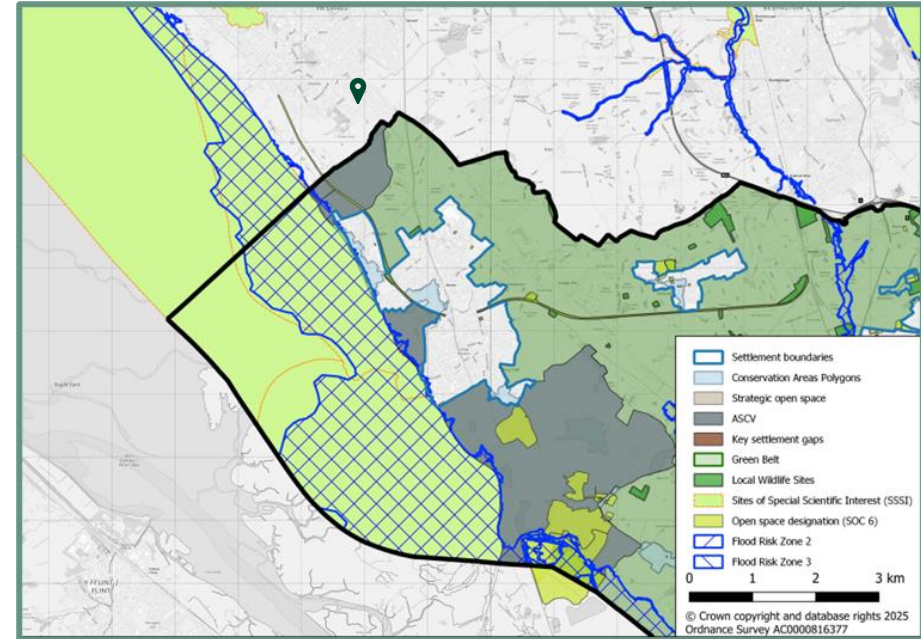
# Green Belt and Grey Belt Policy

The Site is currently designated as Green Belt in the adopted Local Plan and makes up part of the 42% of Green Belt within the Chester West and Chester Borough.

Despite the Sites Green Belt designation, it's contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt have been reviewed and a case to demonstrate it does not significantly contribute towards purposes A, B or D can be considered against the Grey Belt definition.

In the NPPF, the definition of Grey Belt is:

*'For the purpose of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute towards any of the purposes of (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143.'*



### Purpose A: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- The Site would form a logical extension to the northern extent of Neston and would not present unrestricted sprawl. As already established, Ashfield Hall Farm is well enclosed by existing development to the north (the Runnel) and to the south (Aldi distribution centre and Clayhill Industrial Estate) and has well defined, permanent boundaries to the east and west in the form of the A540 and the railway line.

### Purpose B: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- Ashfield Hall Farm as a Site is not responsible for the prevention of ensuring neighbouring towns do not merge into one another. Heswall, located to the north of the Site is the key settlement to consider in this respect and is important to recognise there is in fact a physical boundary separating the two towns by form of the railway line. Heswall will continue to remain separated from Neston, should any development be delivered on Site. Additionally, Parkgate to the west of Neston would not be impacted in this respect, and there would be no reason to suggest development would lead to Neston merging with any other settlement.

### Purpose D: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- This purpose does not apply directly to Neston. The Site does not contain any heritage assets, and none are located in close enough proximity to be materially impacted by development on Site, meaning the Site does not contribute to this purpose even at a local level of analysis.

### B: Demonstrable Need

- There is an immediate demonstrable unmet housing in Cheshire West and Chester and there is currently an inadequate 5-year Housing Land Supply of only 1.89 years (as at 1 April 2025).

### C: Sustainable Location

- The Site's sustainable location has been demonstrated in the connectivity section of this submission. It is accessible via sustainable modes of transport and the proposed development would aim to prioritise active travel on Site and encourage further use of sustainable transport by making this readily accessible to residents. The surrounding area benefits from good pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, with a good number of amenities and employment opportunities located nearby. Additionally, there are means of public transport within an acceptable walking distance of the Site, including Neston train station.

### D: Golden Rules

- A commitment to meet the affordable housing requirement of the Golden Rules could be made in addition to any development providing an appropriate provision of accessible areas for open space on Site. Improvements to local infrastructure can also be included within the development proposals.

# Case Studies

## Woodford Garden Village

Located in Stockport, Woodford Garden Village was a historic airfield Site. The history of the Site has been captured through the retention of the runway as linear parks, forming part of the well-connected network of multi-functional green spaces and corridors, which include footpaths, cycle paths, biodiversity rich drainage swales and play areas.

- 920 homes, including affordable homes
- 60 extra care units
- Primary school
- Public House
- Proposed local centre
- Green corridors and green streets
- 50ha+ of public open space
- 19 areas of play
- Sports pitches
- Efficient transport links



## Ledsham Garden Village

Situated in Ellesmere Port, approximately 6 miles from the Site, Ledsham Garden Village is an excellent example of how new homes can be integrated into a wide expanse of both natural and formal open space. Ledsham comprises a diverse mix of private and affordable homes to meet a wide range of housing needs within the Cheshire West and Chester LPA.

- 2000 homes
- Provision for:
- Primary school
  - Community Hall
  - Shop
  - Allotments
  - Community orchard
  - Meadow Parkland
- 150 acres of public open space
  - Efficient transport links
  - Investments of more than £12.5 million for transport improvements



# Summary

In consultation with the Local Planning Authority and Key Stakeholders, Harrow Estates will promote the Site for a mixed-use, landscape led residential development through the New Local Plan for Cheshire West and Chester, for between c.600-750 dwellings, including Affordable Homes.

Our submission demonstrates that Ashfield Hall Farm does not significantly contribute to the principal purposes and objectives of the Green Belt. The Site also satisfies Grey Belt criteria B,C and D of paragraph 155 of the NPPF.

The Site is situated in a sustainable location on the edge of Neston, with good access to public transport and the surrounding road and cycle networks.

The Site is readily available and deliverable, should it be allocated for development.



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