

# CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER: ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF NORTHSTONE

LAND NORTH OF MANCHESTER ROAD, LOSTOCK GRALAM

## Signing off Sheet

**Client:** Northstone

**Project:** Lostock Gralam

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**Authorised for and on behalf NJL Consulting**

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# Contents

- 1. Introduction ..... 1
- 2. The Site and Site Context .....2
- 3. Response to the Issues and Options Consultation ..... 7
- 4. Conclusion ..... 24

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 These representations have been prepared by NJL Consulting on behalf of Northstone in response to the Draft Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Local Plan Issues & Options Consultation (2025). The representations provide specific responses to the relevant questions in the consultation in the context of Northstone’s site to the north of Manchester Road, Lostock Gramam.
- 1.2 Overall, Northstone are supportive of CWAC ambitions to create a meaningful update to their Local Plan to ensure the required levels of growth are maintained. It remains critical, however, that ambitious economic growth and housing need are fully aligned to deliver the most sustainable patterns of development, and we comment on the consultation on this basis.
- 1.3 These representations comment in relation to Northstones site in Lostock (ref. LOS01) as presented within the issues and options draft spatial strategy options, extract below, as well as wider commentary on policy proposals.

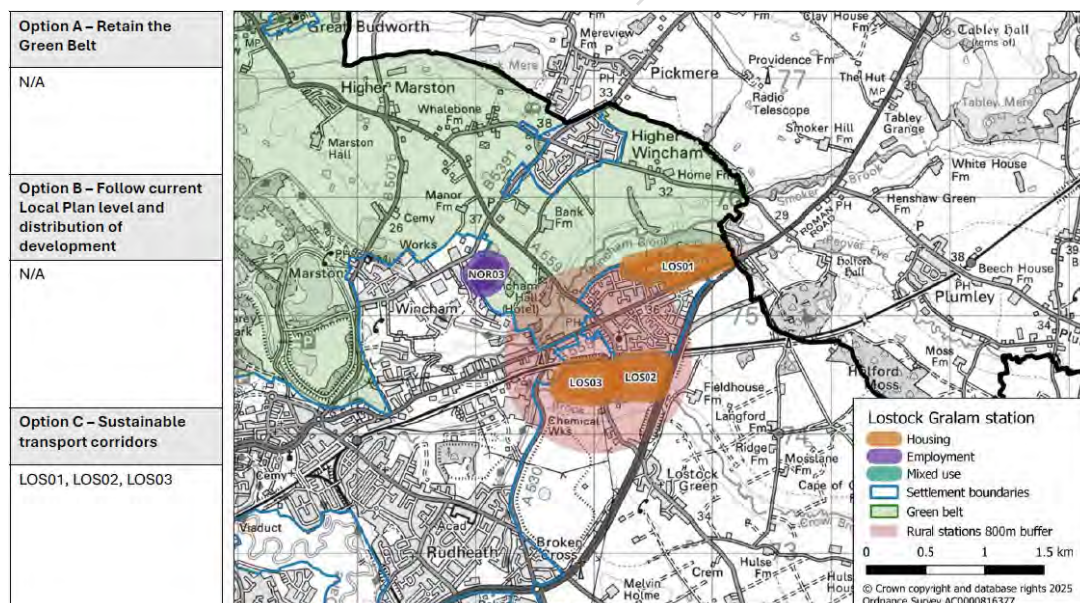


Figure 1: CWAC Issues and Options Spatial Strategy Options

- 1.4 The site was previously submitted to CWAC in the Call for Sites process under site references 2242 and 1380 and Northstone are therefore supportive of this site being identified as a potential option.

- 1.5 As a key stakeholder in the area, Northstone wish to engage positively with the emerging plan to help to ensure it is genuinely effective, deliverable and with the right sites in logical locations.
- 1.6 The representations are set out in the following sections:
- Site context, history, ownership information and potential benefits (Section 2);
  - Responses to the identified options (Sections 3 to 8); and
  - A summary of our response to the consultation (Section 9).
- 1.7 To support this representation, a vision document (Appendix 1) for the site has been submitted which details the site baseline conditions and development opportunity to detail how the site can feasibly come forward to support CWAC in their housing aspirations.

## 2. The Site and Site Context

- 2.1 This section of the representations outlines the site context, the current development status and progress, the promoter and developer behind the site and the ongoing technical work to support the forthcoming development proposals.

### Site and Development Context

- 2.2 The site is located north of Manchester Road (A559), in Lostock Gramam which is identified as part of the Northwich settlement area. The site, irregular in shape, measures approximately 19.35 hectares and currently comprises of agricultural fields and unused natural landscape. The site is currently classified as Green Belt under the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.
- 2.3 It is associated with the residential area of Lostock Gramam to the south, with Manchester Road (A559) forming the southern boundary and separating it from Cheshire Business Park. To the north are open fields and Wincham Brook, beyond which lies Higher Wincham. The western boundary adjoins open land leading to Hall Lane, while the eastern edge is defined by a dense tree belt, with agricultural land and Linnards Lane beyond.
- 2.4 An extract of the site location plan is provided below for context:



Figure 2: Red Line Boundary

2.5 Within the wider area, the site lies within the Shakerley ward of Lostock Gralam, Northwich, in a predominantly residential area to the west and southwest. It benefits from proximity to Cheshire Business Park, offering employment opportunities, and good access to local schools and services. The key characteristics of the site are identified within the accompanying Vision Document, and this confirms that there are no barriers to the delivery of this site for residential development.

2.6 The key designations are detailed below:

- Safeguarding: The site is located within designations defined by policy DM11 'Aerodromes' which seeks to protect the operational safety of Manchester Airport a statutory consultee to any planning application, as a matter of course. In addition, ENV9 'Minerals supply and safeguarding' marks the area for salt, and further north sand and gravel.
- HS2: To the southeastern corner of the site lies the HS2 safeguarded land for Phase 2b. This safeguarding is being reviewed following the abandonment of this arm of the route, but clarification will be sought from the LPA and consultees as required through the pre-application discussion.

### **Relevant Planning History**

2.7 From a review of the Council's online database, there appears to be only one previous application concerning the site related to the refurbishment of an existing overhead line at the Lostock Grid – Manchester Road (ref. 22/03928/OHL), which received no objections. In the immediate context, a 64-bed retirement facility (ref. 21/00692/S73) south of Manchester Road, adjacent to the site, was approved by the Council in 2021. The retirement facility - Celandine Court has now been built out. Furthermore, the housing to the southwest of the site follows the Reserved Matters application reference 14/00410/REM for 146 no. new homes.

2.8 Given the nature, scale, and date of the previous planning applications, it is not considered these have any bearing on the site beyond reaffirming the changing context of the surrounding area.

2.9 As part of the Local Plan review, the site was submitted as a potential residential development site under the Council's Call for Sites exercise. The Stage 1 assessment assumed a capacity of 384 no. dwellings at a density of 35 dph. This is notwithstanding the identified constraints of designated Green Belt land with irreplaceable habitat.

## **Development Potential**

- 2.10 The site is suitable for approximately 300 homes, allowing for the necessary access, infrastructure, drainage and open space. Primary access would be from a new junction off Manchester Road.
- 2.11 The site is in single ownership (NPL) which is critical to its delivery. Multiple or fractured ownerships, which require land assembly, can significantly delay development and thus impact on the ability for the council to accurately forecast when land may become available.
- 2.12 Northstone have an option to develop the site and are committed to delivering a high-quality scheme which complements their adjacent development. Development could come forward soon provided there is a favourable policy position. The fact that the site is controlled by Northstone as a willing, capable and proven developer means there is a realistic prospect of short-term delivery, subject to the necessary planning and associated permissions and as detailed below, progress towards an application is already in motion.

## **Pre-application Request**

- 2.13 Ahead of the formal launch of the CWAC Issues and Options Consultation, Northstone submitted a pre-application request for the site which requested feedback on the following development:
- Development of up to 300 homes.
  - Vehicular access off Manchester Road.
  - Delivery of a proportion of affordable housing to meet local needs.
  - Provision of high-quality green infrastructure.
  - Inclusion of dedicated high-quality play space.
  - Enhancements to biodiversity, including sustainable drainage features, integrated ponds, trees and the retention of existing woodland within Winnington Wood.
  - Commitment to sustainable design principles across all aspects of the development.

2.14 To support the request, the following documents were submitted and have been appended to this submission for context and background to the site:

#### Plans

- Site Location Plan.
- Illustrative masterplan.

#### Documents:

- Vision Document for the Site which includes baseline technical positions on:
  - Ecology
  - Arboriculture
  - Landscape Visual
  - Flooding and Drainage
  - Highways

2.15 At the time of this submission, Northstone are still awaiting a response to this pre-application request from CWAC. but will continue to progress the planning application process.

#### ***Other technical matters***

2.16 Other matters, including construction management, lighting, and utilities, for example would all be considered in a planning application. These matters are not considered to be constraints to the intended development and appropriate schemes will be developed to respond to site specifics.

#### **Summary**

2.17 Overall, there are no constraints which are likely to be a barrier to development. If there are any perceived constraints, these will be considered through appropriate technical assessment work and scheme design.

2.18 The following sections of these representations provides comments in relation to the specific questions of the Issues & Options document which are relevant to Northstone's site.

### 3. Issues and Options Consultation Response

#### Implementation

*(IN 1) Do you agree that this is the right evidence that we need to inform the new Local Plan? Is there further evidence that you think will be required?*

3.1 Northstone agree that the listed evidence base is appropriate, however the Green Belt Study should include a detailed parcel-by-parcel assessment of land around Lostock Gram, explicitly considering:

- The relative contribution of each parcel to Green Belt purposes (as set out in NPPF para 143).
- Accessibility to sustainable transport, particularly rail.
- Capacity to deliver housing without causing coalescence of settlements.
- Additional infrastructure capacity assessments should examine scope for targeted investment in road, rail, and utilities at Lostock Gram to support higher growth levels.

#### Spatial Strategy

*(SS 1) Is there any reason for the Council not to deliver the 1,914 dpa required?*

3.2 The Council should be planning for at least the 1,914 dpa as required under the Standard Method figures published in 2024. Any figure above this base level will ensure CWAC can address the shortfall in affordable housing provision and the need to sustain future economic growth in the borough.

3.3 Contextually, under the previous NPPF method, the annual housing target for Cheshire West and Chester was 532 dwellings annually. Under the standard method established within the new NPPF and updated figures published in March in line with affordability ratios, the annual housing target for the Council is 1,912 dwellings per year.

3.4 As the Council's strategic policies are more than five years old, paragraph 78 is also highly relevant: the Council needs to demonstrate a five-year supply against the standard method (taken from Planning Practice Guidance). Using the Council's latest land supply figure and published affordability, the 5-year calculation is as follows:

- Annual Requirement = 1,912
- 5-year Requirement = 9,560
- Plus 5% buffer = 10,038
- Deliverable Supply = 4,209
- Years Supply = **2.09 years**

3.5 The shortfall in supply is therefore chronic and needs to be addressed through emerging Local Plan.

3.6 In terms of the figure suggested through the policy, it is important to note how 'exceptional circumstances' need to be shown to justify an alternative approach to the standard method. Crucially as the PPG states (summarised below), it is only for a housing need figure which is lower than standard method for which 'exceptional' justification needs to be shown. A higher figure is not as rigorously tested.

3.7 The PPG states "*The standard method uses a formula to identify the **minimum number of homes** expected to be planned for. The standard method...identifies a minimum annual housing need figure. It does not produce a housing requirement figure.*" (NJL emphasis).

3.8 The PPG emphasises how the assessment of need must be carried out separately and prior to the determination of a housing requirement. Furthermore, the PPG refers to exceptional circumstances being required to justify housing need which is below the Standard Method minimum.

3.9 In contrast the PPG states how a range of circumstances may justify the determination of housing need which exceeds the standard method minimum, and that an assessment of need which establishes a figure which is higher than the standard method minimum will be considered sound if it "*adequately reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.*"

3.10 It is therefore important to consider whether any factors justify an increase in the standard method minimum when determining housing need but at the very least there is no reason as to why the Council should drop below the identified dwellings per year as set out.

***(SS 2) Should the Council consider a stepped housing requirement that plans for lower level deliver earlier in the plan period?***

3.11 The PPG states: *“A stepped housing requirement may be appropriate where there is to be a significant change in the level of housing requirement between previous policies and / or where strategic sites will have a phased delivery or are likely to be delivered later in the plan period. Strategic policy-makers will need to identify the stepped requirement in strategic housing policy, and to set out evidence to support this approach, and not to unnecessarily delay meeting identified development needs. Stepped requirements will need to ensure that planning housing requirements are met fully within the plan period. In reviewing and revising policies, strategic policy-makers should ensure there is not continued delay in meeting identified development needs.”*

3.12 CWAC reported in their latest Housing Monitoring Report (2024-2025) that in the last three years completions were as follows;

Year	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Total
Number of homes required	567	532	504	1,603
Net annual completions	1,401	1,366	1,215	3,982

3.13 It is clear that, as a Council, they have been performing well against their previous requirement and delivering homes significantly higher year on year. As such, the revised target of 1,914 as set out in SS 1 should not be a significant jump in what the Council can provide if suitable sites are proposed through the emerging Local Plan.

3.14 As set out through the following questions, whilst one spatial option is to deliver homes through larger strategic sites that could see slower or phased delivery whereby a stepped housing requirement could be suitable, we are of the view that this option should not be the preferred route. This would not allow for a distribution that suits identified needs throughout the borough.

3.15 As such, we would not suggest that the Council consider a stepped housing requirement and that it should be aspirational in its approach to setting their housing requirement at the identified level of 1,914 or higher to ensure and support early delivery of housing over the plan period.

**(SS 4) Do you agree with the approach as set out? If not, please suggest amends.**

- **Direct new development and allocating land toward previously developed sites in settlements first.**

- ***Where not sufficient, develop on the edge of existing settlements in locations with the best access to public transport and existing services and infrastructure. This may require release of Green Belt land.***

3.16 Given limited brownfield capacity, targeted Green Belt release around sustainable transport hubs such as Lostock Gralam is essential to meeting this target. Whilst reviewing previously developed land first aligns with the principle of sustainable development as does promoting development that is well distributed and ensures needs around Cheshire West are fully met. As such, both aims as above should be developed side by side to ensure a comprehensive approach to the Local Plan spatial strategy.

***(SS 5) Settlement Hierarchy - Do you agree with the suggested approach? If not, suggest amends.***

3.17 The proposed settlement hierarchy sets out the key settlements as Chester (City), Ellesmere Port (Main Town), Northwich (Main Town), Winsford (Main Town), Neston and Parkgate (Market Town) and Frodsham (Market Town). Each of these settlements will have individual place-based policies within the emerging Local Plan.

3.18 Additional settlements are also identified as able to meet the day-to-day needs of residents and those in surrounding areas. Beyond this, the hierarchy notes that smaller settlements could acceptably accommodate infill development and small previously developed sites.

3.19 We agree with the proposed settlement hierarchy however, in principle, no settlement should be excluded from development, provided that their character is protected by high-quality planning and design, they are situated on routes on which public transport can be made sustainable, and local facilities can be provided.

3.20 Such development could actually benefit the sustainability of some settlements and bring forward additional services and facilities depending on what is required from additional housing or economic development. As such, we agree that it is necessary for smaller settlements to accommodate some growth.

***(SS 6) Should all settlements have some level of development, regardless of identification within the settlement hierarchy?***

3.21 The population growth of CWAC cannot be addressed by larger settlements only with smaller settlements having their own demographic needs based on their specific housing market sub-area and past housing delivery.

- 3.22 As highlighted before, we recommend the emerging Local Plan aims for more than the minimum housing need figure but should use this as the starting point with the minimum need in each area must be met and exceeded.
- 3.23 Therefore, in terms of distribution, we recommend housing is distributed in a manner which ensures the minimum housing need specific to each sub area of the borough and smaller settlements with sustainable offer should be identified. It is notable that some settlements may have transport benefits, but not services (e.g. Acton Bridge and Hooton), so are less logical to look at them for more housing. Whilst other settlements (e.g. Lostock Gralam) do have more services and employment opportunities should be considered positively for more housing.

***(SS 9) Have circumstances since adoption of the adopted Local Plan, changed to justify Green Belt release?***

- 3.24 Green Belt release is critical in CWAC to provide the level of housing that has been identified at a minimum through the Standard Method calculation and allow for housing to be distributed effectively throughout the borough and not simply towards larger settlements that are not located within the Green Belt.
- 3.25 The NPPF sets out that in exceptional circumstance, such as in instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means, authorities should review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the policies in this Framework and propose alterations to meet these needs in full.
- 3.26 Given the scale of housing uplift and the large swathe of the borough currently located within the Green Belt, it is likely that additional land will be sought and CWAC will need to undertake their Green Belt review and additional housing needs evidence to support this.
- 3.27 In the context of Exceptional Circumstances, we consider the land north of Manchester Road, Lostock Gralam should be a priority location for growth as identified through the mapped options.
- 3.28 As detailed through our response to SS 6, smaller settlements which have appropriate transport connections and services should be able to accommodate the delivery of homes.

***(SS 11) Please select the most appropriate spatial option:***

- ***Option A - Retain the Green Belt***

- **Option B - Follow the current LP level and distribution of development**
- **Option C - Sustainable Transport corridors**
- **None of these**

**(SS 12) Alternative - Do you have any alternative spatial strategy options to suggest?**

3.29 We do not consider that any single option, as presented in the document, as the most appropriate spatial option and an alternative spatial option is detailed below.

3.30 From a review of all options, an alternative strategy could combine the strengths of Options B (distribution across the settlement hierarchy) and Option C (focus on sustainable transport corridors), while avoiding too much of a focus on a large urban extension only approach. By doing so it an alternative approach would:

- Prioritise brownfield and urban regeneration sites where available.
- Direct growth to main towns (Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford) but avoid an over reliance on a few very large urban extensions.
- Support medium-scale growth at rail-served villages and key service centres (e.g. Lostock Gralam, Cuddington & Sandiway, Helsby, Frodsham, Tarporley) through targeted Green Belt releases.
- Allow smaller, proportionate growth in Local Service Centres and rural settlements to sustain schools, shops, and services.

3.31 The benefits of an alternative proposition would be as follows:

- Deliverable: it would avoid an over-reliance on a few large, infrastructure-heavy urban extensions that could delay.
- Sustainable: it would support travel by train and bus, reduces car dependency, and strengthen smaller communities whereby development supports improved infrastructure.
- Balanced: by doing so it would allow growth to be distributed fairly across towns, villages, and the rural area.
- Defensible: it still allows for targeted Green Belt release where contributions to the Green Belt purposes to not strongly contribute.

3.32 Overall, the key to this approach would be to spread growth across multiple settlements which reduces risk and ensures flexibility if some sites don't come forward as planned.

***(SS 13) From those settlements identified in the Spatial Strategy options; should new housing/employment be allowed in other settlements? Specify type of development for example infill.***

3.33 Yes, there will be a need to allow for new housing and employment land in other settlements. Smaller settlements are appropriate locations for limited infill or extension developments for housing and in some circumstances for commercial development; particularly in rural areas where this would support rural and small-scale businesses.

3.34 This will contribute to meeting the overall housing needs of the plan period, as well as support the vitality of rural villages and towns.

***(SS 14) Is option A appropriate?***

3.35 Northstone do not agree with this option, as it whilst this in theory could meet the longer-term housing needs providing it is viable, it does not address short term acute housing needs in the borough. The fundamental aim of the NPPF requires sustainable development which in turn requires sustainable patterns of development that link to jobs and economic growth around peoples needs. Constraining release to only near the key centres (Chester and Northwich) is not feasible.

3.36 This option heavy relies on Large urban extensions as part of its strategy for over 55% of its housing requirement. These often require substantial upfront infrastructure investment (e.g. new highways, schools, GP capacity, utilities). The consultation document acknowledges significant pressures on transport networks, school places, and healthcare across the borough. These costs can:

- Delay delivery of housing, undermining the Council's five-year supply.
- Reduce viability for affordable housing and community facilities.
- Concentrate pressure on single locations rather than distributing growth sustainably.

3.37 This is particularly relevant to the proposed 11,000+ homes to the south/west of Winsford. The existing Local Plan, alongside the Winsford Neighbourhood Plan, allocated land to the south/east of Winsford for 1,000 new dwellings, to be known as

the Station Quarter. Of this allocation, just 215 homes have been approved, with the final homes still to be completed. As such, it is unlikely that Winsford would deliver the proposed additional large urban extension, as it is significantly behind in the delivery of Station Quarter and is unlikely to create a meaningful impact on housing numbers earlier in the plan period.

- 3.38 Focusing growth on a small number of large extensions risks creating an imbalanced settlement hierarchy, with an over-concentration of growth in a few towns, continued under-investment in smaller but sustainable settlements (such as smaller settlements like Lostock Gralam) and a lack of flexibility if one or more large extensions stall in delivery.
- 3.39 Further, it only addresses housing needs within the large settlements whereas the smaller settlements which still have specific housing requirements, do not see additional development. The strategy should support equal distribution to ensure suitable delivery with supporting facilities as needed. Option A is therefore inappropriate due to the poor distribution across the district and the over reliance on long-term strategic extensions.

***(SS 15) If not Option A - what changes could you suggest?***

- 3.40 Northstone suggest pursuing a combined approach with Option B and C as detailed in the following responses.

**(SS 16) Do you feel Option B is appropriate? For Housing Development, it includes:**

- **Large urban extensions around: Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford.**
- **Total Green Belt release of sites to deliver 11,000 homes.**
- **Relatively limited development in Cuddington and Sandiway, Farndon, Frodsham, Helsby, Kelsall, Malpas, Neston and Parkgate, Tarporley, Tarvin and Tattenhall of 3,000 homes in total**
- **2,500 homes across the rest of the rural area, including both Green Belt and non-Green Belt land.**

- 3.41 As detailed through our response to question SS 12 we consider a mixed approach of Option B and C would allow for the most beneficial spatial strategy.

***(SS 17) If not Option B - what changes could you suggest?***

3.42 Northstone suggest pursuing a combined approach with Option B and C as detailed in the following responses.

***(SS 18) Option C - Do you feel Option C is appropriate? For Housing Development, it includes:***

- ***A more distributed pattern of development***
- ***More modest urban extensions around Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford.***
- ***Smaller settlements with a rail station, such as Cuddington & Sandiway, Helsby, Frodsham and Neston and Parkgate would take a bigger role in accommodating development.***
- ***Total Green Belt release of sites to deliver 12,000 homes.***
- ***Potential for further development in rural area and in places along bus corridors including: Farndon, Malpas, Tarporley, Tarvin and Tattenhall.***
- ***Potential for enhanced role around rural rail stations including; Acton Bridge, Capenhurst, Delamere, Elton, Hooton, Lostock Gralam and Mouldsworth.***

***(SS 19) If not Option C - what changes could you suggest?***

3.43 Northstone support Option C, which focuses growth along key transport corridors. This approach is more consistent with national and local objectives on sustainability, climate, and infrastructure delivery and improves deliverability, and flexibility, ensuring housing needs are met throughout the plan period.

3.44 Growth at settlements served by strong transport infrastructure (e.g. Lostock Gralam, Cuddington & Sandiway, Helsby, Frodsham) is supported as it reduces car dependency and provides access to sustainable travel with Lostock Gralam benefiting from a railway station on the Mid-Cheshire Line, bus connections, and strategic access via the A556. This allows for the site to be well connected to jobs which link to economic growth.

3.45 Whilst Northstone support this approach, it is clear for a review of the published options maps that some settlements do need further consideration as to the level of housing they can provide when factoring in constraints and logical locations for development. One example is around Elton, as whilst it is acknowledged that there is a train station, it should be questioned whether it is appropriate to deliver housing adjacent to large

employment works (e.g. ELT02) or isolated within major roads (e.g. ELT04). Similarly, in areas around Hooton Station, it appears that housing options would appear isolated and aren't necessarily the most logical place for housing.

- 3.46 As detailed in the following response, whilst we're generally supportive of Option C as presented, however we advise on an alternative approach utilising the same principles but drawing in an element of Option B whereby the strategy establishes a greater distribution level but is also where it is most logical and appropriate.

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

- 3.47 Constraints should include only those with a direct and demonstrable impact on deliverability such as designated habitats, flood risk and heritage assets. A sites Green Belt designation itself should not be an automatic bar if the parcel makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes and can be well designed through masterplanning to deliver appropriate levels of housing alongside improved landscaping and open space.

***(SS 80) Which of the identified potential growth areas around Lostock Gralam station do you consider to be the most suitable?***

- 3.48 As detailed throughout this representation, Northstone are promoting their site north of Manchester Road which is identified under growth option ref. LOS01. As such, we are of the view that this is the most suitable site for development. Further, the Northwich Place Background Paper notes that Policy GBC3 of the Local Plan (Part Two) identified five key settlement gaps (KSGs), one of which is the Lostock Gralam and Northwich KSG. The paper notes that the western edge of Lostock Gralam is clearly defined by the settlement edge and therefore the alternative growth options identified around Lostock Gralam would have a distinct impact upon this settlement gap and would not align with fundamental aim of ensuring these settlements retain their distinct character.

- 3.49 From a technical perspective, not only does the supporting Vision Document, submitted alongside this representation detail the baseline conditions and appropriate development opportunity for the site, it presents the case that this site would be the most logical in terms of rounding of the settlement and complimenting the more recent employment development to the south of the site over Manchester Road. The indicative masterplan shown within the vision statement, shows how this site could accommodate an appropriate level of housing development alongside significant open space and landscaping provision in a sensitive and comprehensive approach.

3.50 Whilst it is acknowledged that this would require removal of Green Belt land, the site has clear defensible boundaries which round off the site and ensure no further land would be developed to the northern edge of Lostock Gralam. The southern growth options would need to consider their location adjacent to employment and chemical works as potential constraints to development.

***(SS 82) Are there any constraints, including infrastructure provision, that should be considered for the area around Lostock Gralam station when developing the new Local Plan?***

3.51 Northstone are supportive of any improvements to the sustainable transport links to Lostock Gralam Station to ensure both existing and future development can be well connected. Developing a strong pedestrian and cycle network around Lostock Gralam would ensure travel time is reduced for residents to reach the station.

3.52 Northstone will commit contributions through a future application towards any necessarily supporting infrastructure to ensure that the settlement can grow in a sustainable manner to assist in CWACs long term housing ambitions.

### **Green Belt and Countryside**

***(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.***

3.53 The approach to the Green Belt and Countryside is supported, insofar as the inclusion of policy and/or guidance around the approach development in these areas particularly around the new Green Belt policy proposition set out in the NPPF.

3.54 The Green Belt is an important part of the Labour Government's strategy to deliver 1.5 million homes in 5 years. The Green Belt should be carefully considered and should enable the delivery of land not just previously developed, but also greenfield sites that no longer serve the purposes of the Green Belt.

3.55 However, STRAT 9 is unnecessarily restrictive, and should be amended to reflect the approach within DM 19 and the NPPF, in order to enable appropriate development to meet identified housing need, and regenerate previously developed land.

3.56 The NPPF sets out clear requirements for land within the Green Belt and should be adhered to within any forthcoming policy.

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

- 3.57 The separation of the policies will enable a bespoke approach to the Green Belt, increasing protection and placing greater importance on the purposes of the Green Belt (particularly the prevention of urban sprawl, coalescence of settlements, and protection of historic character).
- 3.58 In turn, policy in relation to the countryside can be expanded to consider additional appropriate uses, and to place importance on the visual and ecological importance of the countryside.

**Housing**

***(HO 1) Do you agree with the suggested approach to mix, type and specialist housing in new developments? If not, suggest amends.***

- 3.59 It is key to combine the existing approach based on up-to-date evidence alongside market knowledge to deliver the best opportunities for housing mix.
- 3.60 Policies for older persons and specialist housing, including the optional technical housing standards, should be based on evidence of need and tested for viability.
- 3.61 Opportunities for sites for older persons housing / specialist housing could be identified in masterplans for strategic sites but there must be a mechanism to allow for alternative development where demand is not expressed. Site allocations should satisfy criteria such as proximity of sites to public transport, local services and facilities, health services and town centres.

***(HO 2) Should mix, type and specialist housing be delivered through a percentage policy approach?***

- 3.62 Northstone agree that a percentage approach should be given to provide guidance to what is expected and needed in the borough. However, this should be a flexible approach given changing needs throughout the plan period and allow for evidence to be provided at the time of submission of an application if any deviations from mix, type or specialist housing is required. At most, a percentage approach would need to enable a range of percentages (e.g. 5-10%) to account for individual site needs and constraints.
- 3.63 A flexible approach also requiring consideration against the Housing Needs Assessment (or any such later document) would enable sites to more accurately meet local market demands and respond to updated assessments in real time.

***(HO 4) Affordable Housing - Do you agree with the suggested approach? If not suggest amends.***

- 3.64 The policy as written suggest the intention to reflect the government's requirement for housing sites in the Green Belt to provide at least 50% affordable housing.
- 3.65 The amount of affordable housing a scheme can provide depends on the overall viability of a project and a flexible approach is needed to take account of the circumstances of individual schemes. The approach should be justified by up-to-date evidence of need and viability tested as deliverability should not be compromised by over ambitious requirements.
- 3.66 Identify the areas where affordable housing is most needed and take a flexible approach driven by lower thresholds where need is greatest

**Health and Wellbeing**

***(HW 2) Thoughts on threshold for HIA requirement?***

- 3.67 Northstone agree that housing developments should take every reasonable opportunity to promote and positively contribute to the health outcomes for the borough. The supporting PPG, healthy and safe communities, suggests the use of HIA can be beneficial "where there are expected to be significant impacts".
- 3.68 Planning policies and SPDs can introduce triggers that require an HIA to be submitted as part of a planning application where evidence demonstrates the development impacts can be expected to be significant on sensitive receptors. However, CWAC need to establish clear health needs and priorities on a borough wide basis and across the plan period to then then set out what defined local trigger may be required, whether that be on size of scheme, use of scheme or within certain locations.

***(HW 3) Should we review separation distances of windows between habitable rooms as set out in current Local Plan Part Two Policy DM 2 and include them in a policy in the new Local Plan?***

- 3.69 Northstone do not consider there a need to include a specific policy in relation to separation distances. This can be included within a supporting Supplementary Planning Document which can go into further details regarding contextual changes around the borough that may result in instances where distances may require shortening or lengthening.

***(HW 4) What is an appropriate quantity of outdoor amenity space to be provided in new development? What approach should we apply to apartments/flats?***

3.70 Northstone agree that private outdoor amenity space is essential within new developments and should be provided. As with HW 3, this is something that could be progressed in detail within an outdoor amenity and open space SPD, establishing thresholds, requirements and exceptions for outdoor amenity and open space within new developments. This may include garden sizes, POS thresholds and play requirements.

### **Open Space, Sport, Recreation and community facilities**

***(OS 1) Do you agree with the approach? If not suggest amends. Approach includes:***

- ***Major residential development to include provision of open space, sport and recreation in accordance with current policy DM35.***
- ***Contributions to be required for playing pitches based on additional demand.***
- ***Open space hierarchy to be on-site, off-site, financial contribution.***

3.71 Northstone support the overall thrust of this policy to ensure provision is made to sustain healthy and sustainable communities. However, protection must be balanced with meeting housing needs. Releasing carefully chosen Green Belt land at Lostock Gralam provides an opportunity to secure new and enhanced open space and recreation provision as part of a comprehensive development.

3.72 Policy DM35 provides a clear approach to the delivery of open space provision and allows for instances where it is not practicable to deliver on site. Following this approach through the emerging plan would provide a comprehensive approach however this needs to be supported by up-to-date evidence to ensure that a clear base position is provided to developers.

3.73 Policy DM35 should be reviewed however given it provides quanta for open space provision on the basis of the open space study that now needs to be updated. This may change the level of requirement for each typology depending on changed needs.

***(OS 2) Are the current thresholds for contributions suitable, or do you have any comments?***

3.74 Northstone consider that the thresholds set out in adopted Policy DM35 could be considered suitable however these need to be tested through a strategic viability assessment and

***(OS 3) Is the current evidence sufficient or does it need updating?***

3.75 Northstone would suggest that CWAC should update the Open Space Study given the previous assessment covers the period of 2016-2030. As the emerging plan extends beyond this period it should be critical to update. The quality and provision of open space studies can change significantly over time and therefore an update to this is key to ensure any onsite or offsite contributions are proportionally provided where need is greatest.

3.76 This approach is set out under NPPF Paragraph 103 whereby it is clearly set out that Planning policies should be based on robust and **up to date** (NJL Emphasis) assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from these assessments should then be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.

3.77 The Playing Pitch Strategy was updated in February 2025 and as such is considered appropriate to inform the emerging Local Plan.

**Green Infrastructure**

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

3.78 Northstone support the overall aim of biodiversity net gain and across their development sites seek to deliver 10% where feasible. However, any increase on 10% through local policy needs to be robustly evidenced and ensure it does not impact upon the viability of schemes that in turn may not be able to be delivered to support housing growth.

## 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 These representations, submitted on behalf of Northstone, comment primarily on the suitability of the suggested growth areas associated with their site north of Manchester Road, Lostock Gralam. General comments are provided specific to other key themes within the Issues & Options document.
- 4.2 In summary, we feel the emerging Plan must consider the following:
- Ensuring the housing distribution correlates with need and is not distributed unevenly.
  - The emerging Local Plan should look to provide more than the minimum housing need to ensure growth potential is maximised within CWAC.
  - Employment growth is met in full within each Local Authority area.
  - The two key themes of employment growth and housing are considered in conjunction to ensure economic growth is not restricted and that housing is provided to accommodate growth expected.
  - In consideration of the above, suitable housing allocations should be provided particular emphasis must be placed on providing more homes in Lostock Gralam due to the large housing need and suitability of the settlement to provide sustainable growth.
- 4.3 Therefore, the Council must ensure suitable housing sites are allocated to help meet the growth expected in this area of CWAC with the site detailed through this representation as one particular example.
- 4.4 Northstone's site has been suggested as a potential area for development by CWAC and we support this. As highlighted in this document and the previous representations submitted; there are no technical constraints to prevent delivery of the site, it is suitable for housing and is in line with the growth strategy of CWAC.
- 4.5 We trust this document is considered as part of the Local Plan preparation and we welcome the opportunity to discuss any of the content within this representation note (both in regard to the suggested growth areas, or general comments regarding the Issues & Options document) to help CWAC produce a sound Local Plan.

## Appendix 1 – Vision Document



# VISION STATEMENT

Land North of Manchester Road | Lostock Gralam

# Contents

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)

- Executive Summary
- 1.** Introduction
- 2.** Who are Northstone
- 3.** The Project Team
- 4.** The Site and Surrounding Area
- 5.** The Proposed Development
- 6.** Planning Policy Position
- 7.** Green Belt
- 8.** Housing Need in Cheshire West and Chester
- 9.** Technical Review
- 10.** Summary



# Executive Summary

This Vision Statement has been prepared on behalf of Northstone Development Ltd to support the case for residential-led development at the site referred to as Land North of Manchester Road, Lostock Gralam.

The bringing forwards of this site for residential led-development by Northstone will deliver a range of public benefits including;

## ***Affordable Homes***

Northstone will work with an affordable housing provider on this site to ensure that the mix and tenure align with the local demand. Northstone will engage with registered providers early in the process in relation to local demand, engaging with registered providers early in the process. In doing so, bringing forward this site will inevitably help provide much needed affordable housing across the Borough.

## ***Adaptable Homes***

All Northstone homes are purposefully designed to address local needs by offering adaptable layouts that cater to a variety of lifestyles – this includes open-plan living spaces and dedicated areas for home working.

Northstone have also committed to providing adaptability through space standards, with all new homes achieving M4(2) as standard. Thus, enabling longevity for the occupants should there be any adaptations required due to accessibility.

## ***High-quality Homes***

Northstone strives to meet, and wherever possible exceed building control standards, particularly around quality and efficiency. This ensures that the home designs, together with their quality materials and smart technology will deliver an accessible and sustainable home for future purchasers.

## ***Diverse Homes***

Through their developments, Northstone provides a wide variety of house types and sizes, ensuring that individuals, couples, and families of all shapes and sizes can find a home that suits them.

## ***High-quality Open Space***

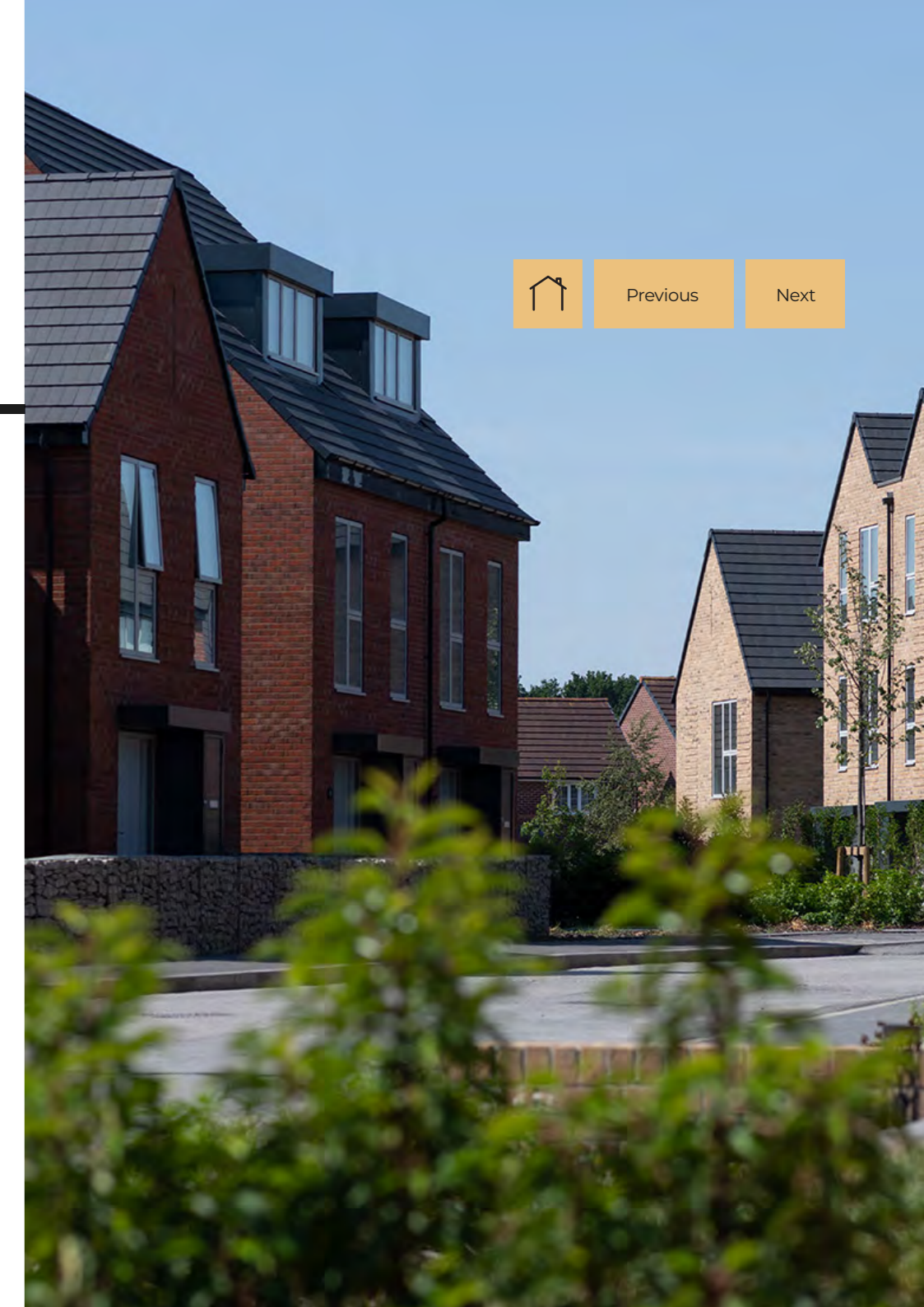
Northstone's design ethos, is applied to all of their sites, and is centred on creating spaces that foster a sense of community. Varied open public open spaces will be coupled with strategically placed benches and meeting points, ensuring individuals are brought together by creating opportunities for incidental meetings between neighbours. Northstone believe that feeling like you are part of the place you live, a feeling of belonging, is a key aspect to what gives a 'sense of place'.

For further information on Northstone Homes, please refer to Section 2, Who are Northstone, and Section 8, Housing Need in Cheshire West and Chester.



Previous

Next





# 1. Introduction



Previous

Next

This Vision Statement has been prepared on behalf of Northstone Development Ltd (referred to as 'Northstone' hereunder) to support the case for a residential development at the site referred to as Land North of Manchester Road, Lostock Gralam.

It brings together the background, rationale and technical evidence underpinning a residential development at the site, to illustrate how a Northstone scheme will respond positively to local housing needs, planning policy requirements and environmental considerations. In doing so, the document demonstrates how the emerging proposals will contribute to the creation of a high-quality and sustainable place for people to live, work, and thrive. This Vision Statement achieves this within the following sections:

## **Section 2: Who are Northstone**

Explains Northstone's heritage and company ethos, illustrating some of its recent developments.

## **Section 3: The Project Team**

Outlines the appointed multi-disciplinary team of specialised consultants who are working together to bring forward this site.

## **Section 4: The Site and Surrounding Area**

Provides a summary of the application site, the immediate area and its opportunities and constraints.

## **Section 5: The Proposed Development**

Details the emerging proposals for the site and associated community benefits.

## **Section 6: Planning Policy Position**

Provides an overview of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance.

## **Section 7: Green Belt**

Provides an initial assessment of the site's Green Belt designation against relevant policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Section 8: Housing Need in Cheshire West**

Outlines local housing needs, including market, affordable, and specialist housing to demonstrate how the proposals will help address these.

## **Section 9: Technical Review**

Overview of technical considerations of the site.

## **Section 10: Summary**

Summarises the case for bringing forward an attractive and sustainable residential development at this site.

## 2. Who are Northstone



Previous

Next

We are Northstone, a ***new homebuilder*** based in the North with a mission to create ***exceptional vibrant places*** and homes for modern life and ***family focused living*** today, tomorrow and for future generations

LOKE LANE

## A housebuilder with history

Started in 2018, Northstone is part of Peel Group and remains a family-owned business with strong values at its core. With its origins in the acquisition of redundant cotton mills over 40 years ago, Peel Group has evolved to become a nationally leading developer and investor in infrastructure, transport and real estate, primarily in the North of England. Peel Group's remarkable story has always focused on transforming places and people's lives, as is evident through the delivery of some of the most prominent urban regeneration projects in the UK, including MediaCityUK and Liverpool Waters, as well as the visionary Ocean Gateway project.

The company name, Northstone, references both the stone quarried from Peel Group's Lancashire heartland and the historic Peel Tower which inspired Peel's name and symbolises the company's ethos of determination, patience and perseverance. This humble stone went on to transform some of the UK's most recognisable streets and public areas, including Trafalgar Square in London.

Northstone is proud of its heritage and the strong foundation that being part of a wider banner provides. It continues the passion to enhance places and people's lives established through Peel Group but, being a new company, it strives for fresh approaches and innovative ideas to shape the future of the people living in the North of England.

The Northstone team has come together from many of the UK's largest property developers and has decades of expertise in place and home developments. What makes Northstone distinct is the team's shared desire and ability to elevate convention to create life-enhancing places and spaces.

The creativity and thoughtfulness Northstone brings to its design is unique. The places and homes it builds enhance how comfortably, smartly and responsibly people and communities can live and flourish for generations.

Developing both exceptional places and homes is of equal importance to Northstone, which believe that its through working together seamlessly, that people and communities can truly flourish.



Previous

Next

“We’re **proud** of our **heritage** and in Northstone we’ve combined its strong foundation, **determination** and passion to enhance places and people’s lives, with innovative and **sustainable** approaches to shape the future of **living** in the North of England”

Phil Wilson, Executive, Northstone

## Northstone Places

Northstone is passionate about developing exceptional places that integrate with existing communities to surround its sustainable homes.

Northstone creates pedestrian-led places that offer significantly more breathing space between homes than conventional designs, reduce neighbourhood traffic speeds and on-road parking, increase public spaces, connectivity, and community links, all while limiting vehicle fumes.

Northstone's places embrace natural land features and promote the habitats in and around the area, in full support of the government's biodiversity net gain approach.

Northstone prides itself on being responsible. It uses smart thinking, materials and technology to help reduce the environmental impact of developments, promote sustainability and to protect and benefit the environment wherever possible.

Northstone works with local communities by utilising local employment, suppliers and materials as much as possible. It works with local education institutions to recruit and support their apprenticeship schemes, to embed positive community ties.

Northstone has challenged and elevated traditional property development principles in home building. Its exclusive designs have been informed by its vast experience and the 'wish-list' knowledge gained over the years from occupiers and homeowners.

## Northstone Homes

Its homes include evolved domestic features to enhance how comfortably, smartly and responsibly people can live, for example:

- **Higher floor-to-ceiling heights and larger energy-efficient windows:** more natural light.
- **Open plan living as standard:** easy and affordable to adapt to meet future needs.
- **Integrated storage:** creates uncluttered homes.
- **Good-sized garden stores instead of underused garages:** allows more useable space.
- **Lootilities:** combines a utility and toilet to utilise hallway and under-stairs space.
- **Entrance porches:** include easy utility meter access and space for home deliveries.
- **Waste limiting building specifications, intelligent heating systems, insulation and energy efficient windows and doors:** cheaper bills for future residents.

Northstone strives to meet, and wherever possible exceed building control standards, particularly around quality and efficiency. This ensures that the home designs, together with their quality materials and smart technology will deliver an accessible and sustainable home for future purchasers.



### *3. The Project Team*



Previous

Next



# The Project Team

Northstone has appointed a multi-disciplinary team of specialised consultants to bring forward the site for residential development. This ensures that the site's opportunities and constraints are addressed holistically from the earliest point in the design process, leveraging innovative strategies and robust solutions. The Project Team is, as follows:

## ***Planning: NJL Consulting***

NJL is a leading town planning consultancy based in Manchester that operates across the UK. The NJL team serve as the trusted partner for (largely) private sector clients on a wide range of commercial, residential and logistic developments from initial site appraisal.

## ***Transport: SLR***

SLR has recently acquired Vectos, and is leading the way on sustainable transport and low carbon solutions. Vectos focus on commercial and social value to bring developments forward positively and sustainably with clients. They assist with producing comprehensive transportation strategies that comprise traffic and junction design, sustainable travel solutions, and overall project coordination.

## ***Drainage: Ironside Farrar***

Ironside Farrar is a multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy offering a range of services, including drainage. In this context, they provide integrated solutions that address flood risk, surface water management, and sustainable drainage practices. Their approach ensures robust, compliant, and environmentally sound drainage strategies throughout the development lifecycle.

## ***Arboriculture: Treefellas***

Treefellas is a specialist consultancy focused on arboriculture with a team of tree surgeons and arborists. For arboriculture, they deliver expert advice and services including, comprehensive tree surveys, arboricultural impact assessments, and method statements.

## ***Ecology: Greengage***

Greengage is a specialist environmental and sustainability consultancy that focuses on integrating ecology and biodiversity considerations into all stages of development. They offer comprehensive ecological surveys, impact assessments, and biodiversity net gain strategies, ensuring projects align with environmental best practices. This holistic approach helps clients limit their ecological footprint while enhancing and protecting natural habitats.

## ***Landscape: Open (SLR)***

Open specialise in landscape architecture, urban design, and masterplanning, providing creative and sustainable solutions that balance aesthetic, environmental, and social considerations. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, Open (SLR) deliver high-quality, integrated landscapes that enhance the built environment while respecting ecological and community needs.



Previous

Next



## *4. The Site and Surrounding Area*



Previous

Next



# The Site

The site is an irregular land parcel, which comprises agricultural fields and unused natural landscape, extending to 36 ha. The site location plan is provided opposite.

The site is bound by:

- Residential development associated with the village of Lostock Gralam to the south west;
- Manchester Road ('A559') runs along the southern boundary, containing the land parcel, beyond which is Cheshire Business Park;
- Open fields and Wincham Brook to the north, with Higher Wincham situated beyond;
- Open land to the west, beyond which is Hall Lane; and
- A dense tree belt to the east, beyond which lies agricultural land intersected by Linnards Lane.



**Figure 4.1** Site Location Plan

# Planning History



Previous

Next

From a review of the Council's online database, there appears to be only one previous application concerning the site related to the refurbishment of an existing overhead line at the Lostock Grid – Manchester Road (ref. 22/03928/OHL), which received no objections.

In the immediate context, a 64-bed retirement facility (ref. 21/00692/S73) south of Manchester Road, adjacent to the site, was approved by the Council in 2021. The retirement facility - Celandine Court has now been built out.

Furthermore, the housing to the south west of the site follows the Reserved Matters application reference 14/00410/REM for 146 no. new homes.

Given the nature, scale, and date of the previous planning applications, it is not considered these have any bearing on the site beyond reaffirming the changing context of the surrounding area.

As part of the Local Plan review, the site was submitted as a potential residential development site under the Council's Call for Sites exercise. The Stage 1 assessment assumed a capacity of 384 no. dwellings at a density of 35 dph. This is notwithstanding the identified constraints of designated Green Belt land with irreplaceable habitat. Please refer to Sections 7 and 9 for further details.

## Site Designations

The site is designated as Green Belt land under the adopted Development Plan and consists of undeveloped greenfield land. It is identified within the Local Plan under Policy DM44 as an area for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

A salt mineral supply and safeguarding area covers the site. It is also located within the Manchester Airport Safeguarding Zone under Local Plan Policy DM11.

There are no listed buildings proximate to the site, nor is the site within or near to a Conservation Area. Notwithstanding this, the nearest heritage assets are Grade II listed Home Farmhouse c. 655m to the north and Scheduled Monument – former ash and calcium nitrate works c. 1.2km to the south east.

A review of the Flood Risk to the area via the Environment Agency’s flood risk map determined that the site is predominantly located within Flood Zone 1. While the northern boundary runs along Flood Zone 3, associated with Wincham Brook. The surface flood map shows small pockets at risk throughout the site but these are not seen as a barrier to a residential-led development at the site. Please see Section 9 for a drainage and flood risk technical summary.

It should be understood that the site is not subject to any international or national ecological designations. That said, the northern boundary borders Local Wildlife Sites, Wincham Brook Valley Wood, which marginally encroaches on the site, and Winnington and Peas Wood.

## The Surrounding Area

The wider setting of the site relates to the ward of Shakerley within the village of Lostock Gralam, Northwich. Lostock Gralam is bisected by the arterial road, Manchester Road (‘A559’) running through it. The surrounding area to the west and south west is largely residential. At the time of the 2021 Census, 77% of households within this ward lived in detached or semi-detached homes, exceeding the Cheshire West and Chester average of 66.9%. By contrast, the proportion of households in terraced and flatted accommodation is lower than the regional average.

A mix of sustainable uses are also present locally, with Cheshire Business Park lying to the south of Manchester Road, offering existing employment opportunities. In terms of local services, the nearest primary school is Lostock Gralam Church of England Primary School, located circa 1km to the south west. Further afield, Wincham Community Primary School is around 2.9km to the north west, approximately a 5 minute drive. The nearest secondary school, Rudheath Senior Academy, is roughly 3.5km to the south west, taking about 6 minutes by car. Most secondary schools and sixth form colleges are located south of Greenbank Train Station within Northwich, approximately a 14-minute drive or a 30-minute commute via train from Lostock Gralam to Greenbank.



Previous

Next

# Opportunities and Constraints

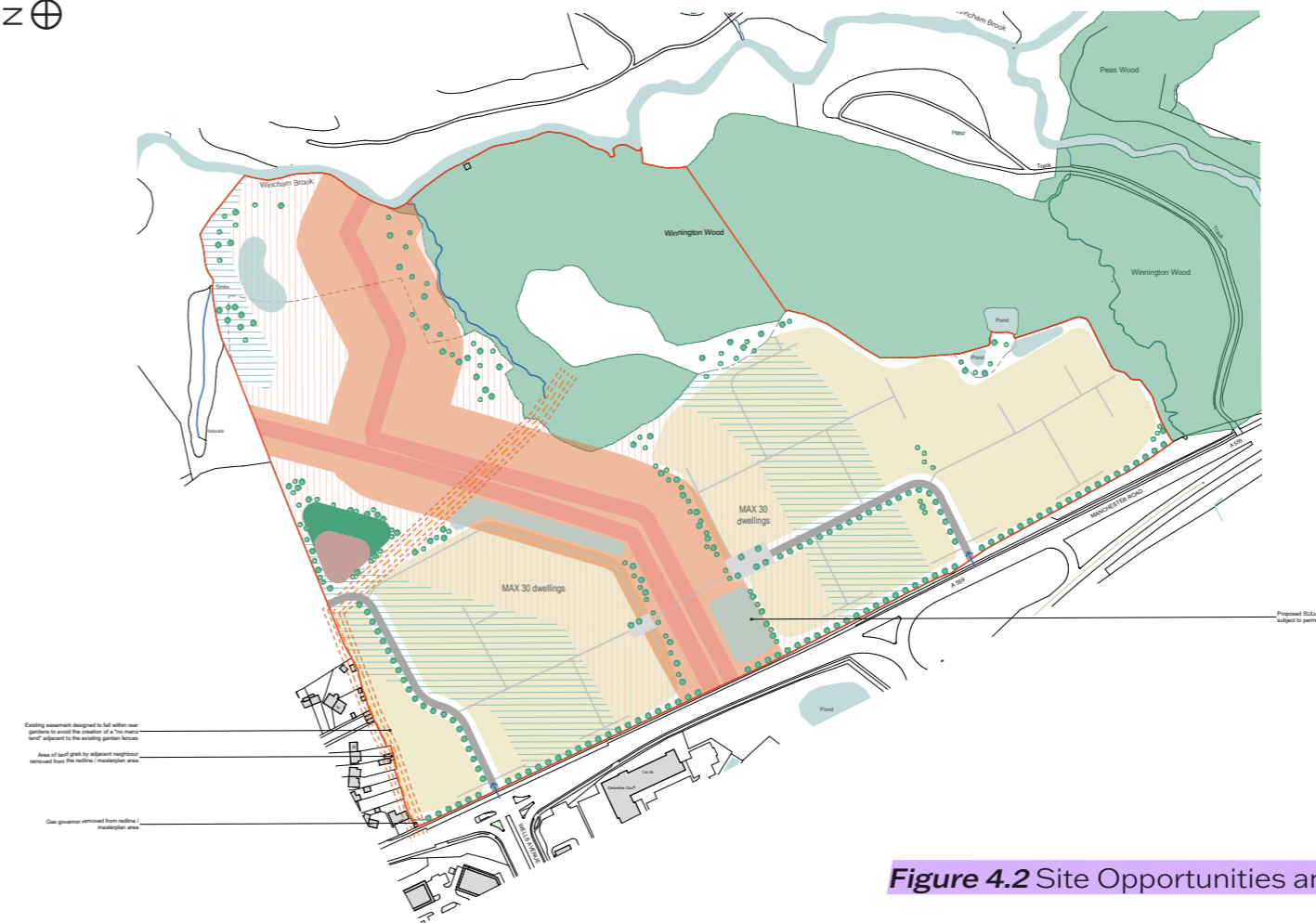
The site and surrounding area has been assessed, and identified opportunities and constraints are summarised below and highlighted on figure 4.2.

## Opportunities






- Delivery of up to 300 no. new high-quality diverse homes.
- Potential Grey Belt designation.
- Delivery of a major residential development at a time when the Council has a chronic shortfall in housing land supply.
- Delivery of high-quality affordable homes.
- Achievement of biodiversity net gain.
- Integration of sustainable drainage measures throughout the site.
- Sustainable design of homes that meet Building Regulation Standards for energy efficiency.
- Provision of varied public open space areas across the site.
- Connection and enhancement to existing footpaths along Manchester Road.

## Constraints

- Green Belt land designation.
- Noise constraints from the Manchester Road, A559 to the south of the site.
- Existing gas easement.
- Existing surface water easement to the south west corner of the site.
- Bordering Local Wildlife Sites, Wincham Brook Valley Wood and Winnington and Peas Wood.
- To the eastern corner of the site lies HS2 safeguarded land for Phase 2b, and, as such, the Council must consult HS2 ltd on any future application for this site.
- Wincham Brook to the north and associated flood risk.
- Existing tree and vegetation coverage to the north of the site. A section of this woodland is designated as Ancient Woodland - please refer to to Landscape Context Plan in Section 9.
- A salt mineral supply and safeguarding area covers the site.



### KEY Easements

-  Gas easement Level 1 - No works in this area other than essential road crossing
-  Gas easement Level 2 - No buildings or private roads
-  Gas easement Level 3 - Max 30 dwellings or 40dph in each zone, no bungalows
-  Gas easement Level 4 - No bungalows, all other works permissible
-  Surface water easement

### NOTES

- Items for further investigation:**
- Type of road permissible to cross the gas main and whether a link across is required
  - Any nearby public routes / land which a new footpath could link to, to allow the new residents access to the nearby countryside
  - What constitutes a unit as counting towards the 30 unit max within the Level 3 gas easement. e.g. only overlapping building footprints or if a section of garden in this zone would count towards the cap.
  - This scheme is in its early stages and is subject to the full standard suite of site investigation reports and input from relevant professionals. In particular, ecology, tree protection, viability of the proposed road network and access points, SUDs requirements and acoustic impact from the existing road.

**Figure 4.2** Site Opportunities and Constraints Sketch Plan

## *5. The Proposed Development*



Previous

Next



# Emerging Proposals

The emerging proposals anticipate that the development will provide:

- The delivery of 200 – 300no. new homes subject to confirmation of developable areas - 7.72 ha of the 19.35 ha redline area anticipated to for net residential development;
- Two primary road accesses off Manchester Road;
- Emergency access to traverse the site west to east, connecting the two development areas;
- Dedicated high-quality play space;
- Delivery of interconnected open space areas throughout the site;
- The provision of affordable housing;
- Potential for biodiversity net gain enhancement areas, integrating ponds and tree planting;
- Retention of trees associated with Winnington Wood and strengthening of ecological features at the site;
- Incorporation of sustainable urban drainage features; and
- Integration of sustainable design measures within all dwellings.

## KEY FIGURES

Area (Ha)	Description
19.35	Masterplan (redline) area
7.72	Net residential development
0.62	Primary Road
0.24	Space dedicated to play
10.77	Remaining land (Open space, BNG, SuDS)

## KEY

- Masterplan boundary
- Existing trees
- Existing pond or proposed SuDS
- Emergency vehicle access
- Residential development
- Primary Road
- Secondary roads (tertiary not shown)
- Primary vehicular access
- Area for play - equipped
- Area for play - open
- Illustrative new tree planting

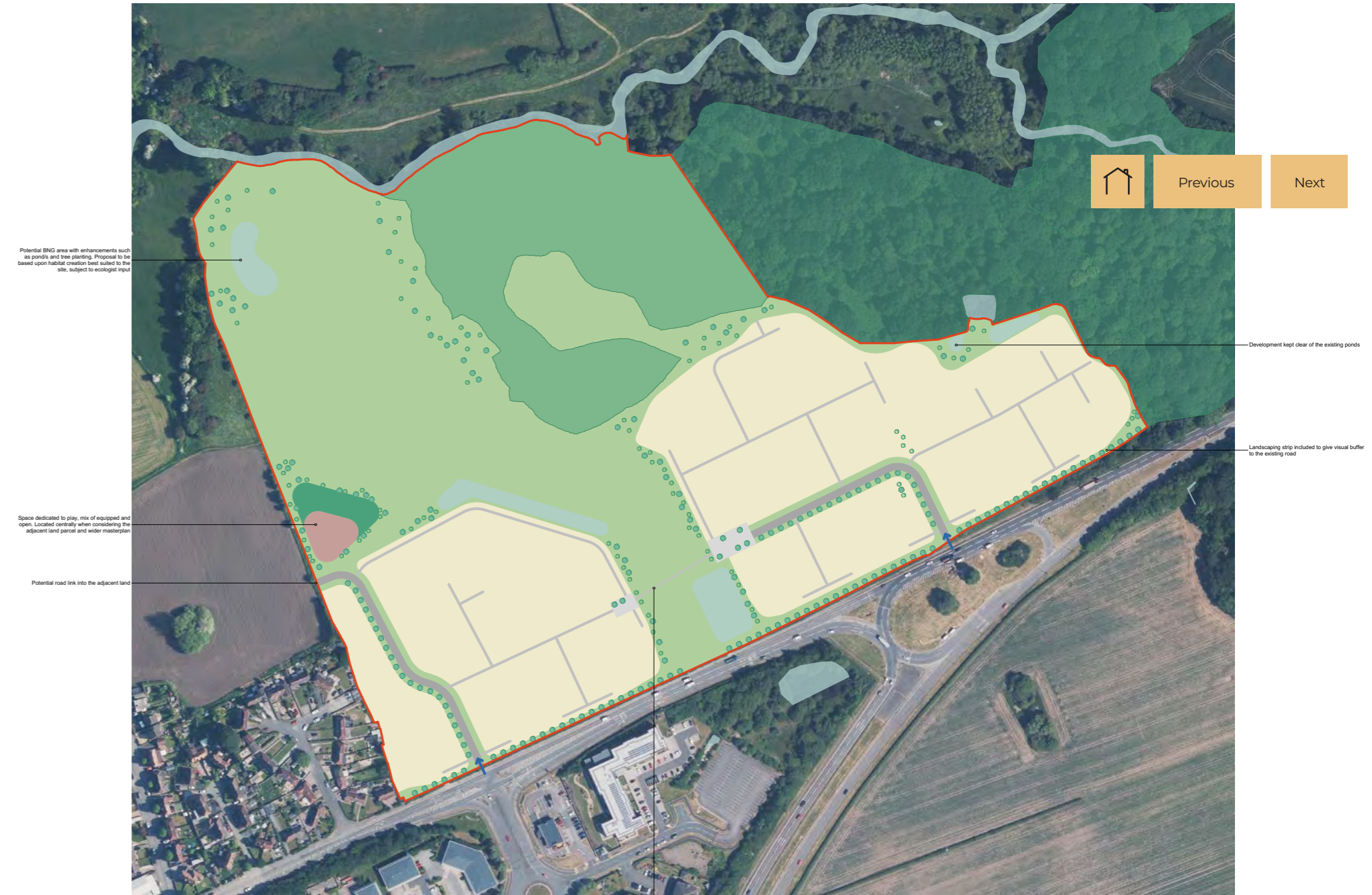


Figure 5.1. Emerging Proposal Overlay.

## 6. *Planning policy position*



Previous

Next



# Policy and Guidance



Previous

Next

## Emerging Local Plan

The Council Cabinet agreed in January 2024 to commit to preparing a Local Plan under the new national system for plan-making and support the development of a borough-wide design code to eventually be incorporated into the new Local Plan. Three draft evidence base documents were made available for comment between 26 January and 17 March 2024. The Council Cabinet then decided in January 2025 to begin preparation of an update to the Local Plan under the current plan-making system.

An updated Local Development Scheme was published detailing the next steps in the Local Plan preparation with the Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation in Summer 2025, Regulation 19 in Autumn 2026 and submission to the inspectorate in December 2026. Since the LDS publication, CWaC Cabinet will meet on the 11th June to review the emerging Local Plan Issues and Options report. The documents supporting this detail three spatial options, with option maps showing 'potential areas of growth' around settlements based on each of those three options.

The site has been identified as a location for release under Option C (Ref. LOS01) and as detailed on the Figure 6.1 opposite.

Northstone are fully supportive of the Council identifying this area for potential release as they are in full agreement that the site is located in a sustainable transport corridor and has the ability to support further housing in a suitable location to meet uplifted housing targets. Northstone will be promoting this site through Local Plan as the next stages of consultation arise.

## Local Policy and Guidance

The adopted Development Plan consists of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part One ('LP1') and Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Part Two ('LP2') along with other material considerations.

The Council are currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, which once adopted, will replace all policies in the LP1 and LP2. As part of updating the Local Plan, the Council undertook a Call for Sites exercise from 26th January to 17th March 2024.

The site was submitted as a potential development site, with the Stage 1 assessment assuming a capacity of 384 no. dwellings at a density of 35 dph. This is notwithstanding the identified constraints of designated Green Belt land with irreplaceable habitat. At the time of writing, it is understood that Stage 2 of the land availability assessment, which will focus on site suitability, availability and achievability has not been commenced.

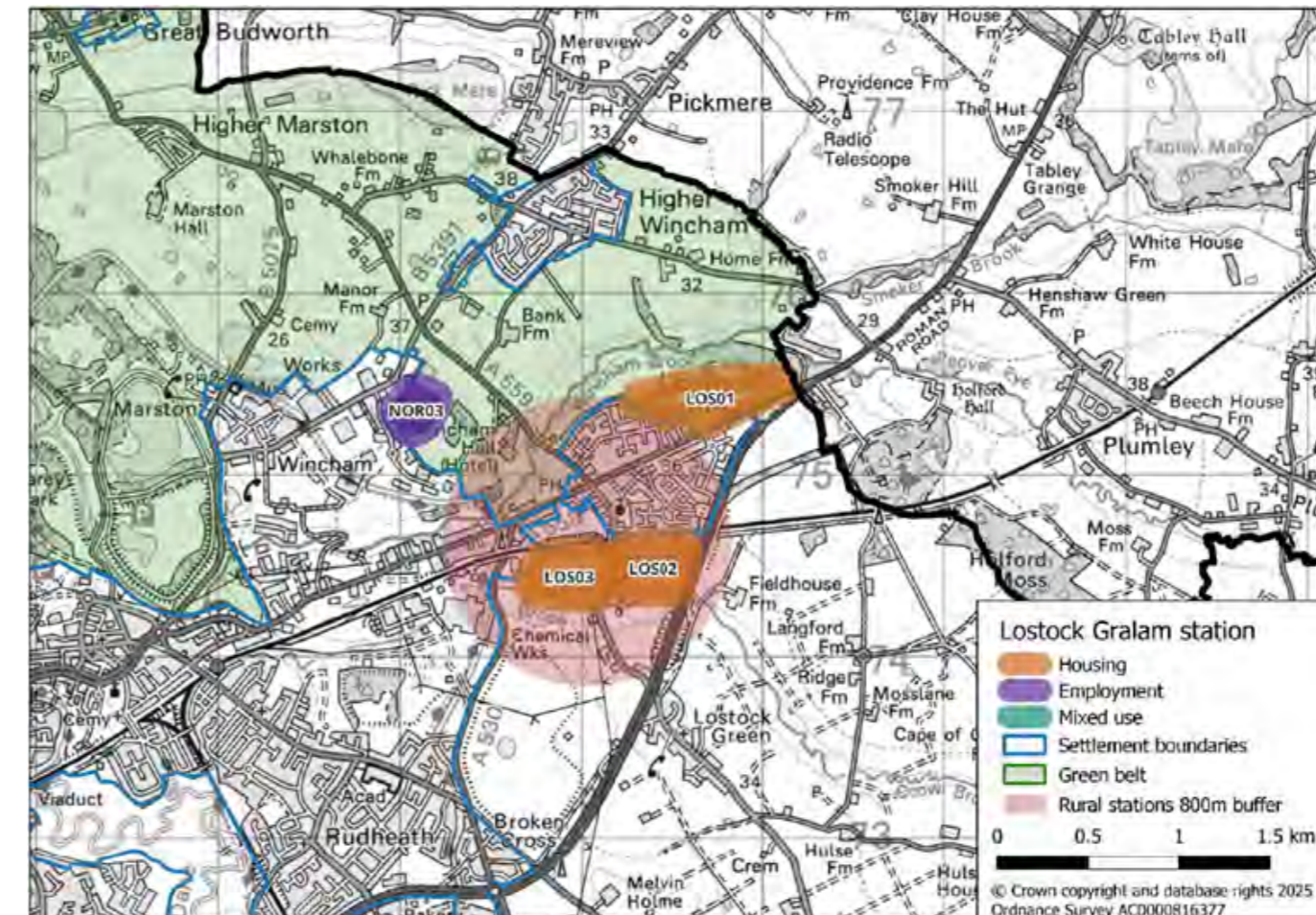


Figure 6.1  
Emerging Local Plan Issues and  
Options Consultation Appendix 1

### National Policy and Guidance

#### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') was first introduced in 2012 and was intended to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth. A revised Framework was recently published in December 2024, which marks the new Labour Government's first reforms to the Planning System in their term. The central aim of sustainable development remains at its core, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development where proposals are sustainable.

The focus is firmly on growth and the Government has set the ambitious target of delivering 1.5million homes in the next 5 years which equates to 370,000 new homes per year. In order to achieve this, the standard method for calculating housing need has been amended, and in most cases this has increased the annual requirement for local authorities. For Cheshire West and Chester the requirement has increased from 1,100 dwellings per annum under the old methodology, to 1,912 under the new methodology.

#### National Model Design Code

The Government published a National Model Design Code ('NMDC') for consultation in January 2021, which was later adopted in July 2021. This represented the next step in the Government's campaign to improve design standards through development.

It places impetus on local authorities to develop design codes, using the NMDC as the basis to ensure a consistent approach across the Country. It states, "design codes are important because they provide a framework for creating healthy, greener, environmentally responsive, sustainable and distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design" (Page 2).

The NMDC which sits alongside the NPPF and NDG to encourage local authorities to develop their own design policy framework and in the absence of a local regime, provides design guidance that can be used as material considerations in planning applications.

The Council needs to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply ('5YHLS') against the standard method (taken from Planning Practice Guidance). Using the Council's latest land supply figure and published affordability, the 5-year calculation is as follows:

- Annual requirement: 1,912
- 5-year requirement: 9,560
- Plus 5% buffer: 10,038
- Deliverable supply: 4,209
- Years supply: **2.09**

The shortfall in supply is chronic and, because of the timescale involved in preparing a new local plan, can only be addressed by allocating the most sustainable sites with strong links to existing infrastructure that have developer interest and can be delivered without delay, such as the site subject of this document. Northstone are fully supportive of the Council identifying this area for potential release as they are in full agreement that the site is located in a sustainable transport corridor and has the ability to support further housing in a suitable location to meet uplifted housing targets. Northstone will be promoting this site through Local Plan as the next stages of consultation arise.



## 7. Green Belt



Previous

Next



# Green Belt



Previous

Next

As outlined in Section 4, the site is located within the Green Belt.

The updated NPPF included radical changes to Green Belt policy and the introduction of classification of land as Grey Belt which relates to sites which do not strongly contribute to certain purposes of the Green Belt. This has created more opportunities for sustainable sites to be brought forward for development and not be considered inappropriate in certain circumstances, provided they meet the prescribed planning gain criteria.

Accordingly, any proposed development will be considered against National Planning Policy, currently contained within NPPF Paragraphs 153 to 159.

The Council has published a Green Belt study to support the Local Plan (Part One), however this only considers land directly adjacent to Chester city centre. The Council has not assessed land beyond these areas, contained within the North Cheshire Green Belt, including our site.

For the purposes of this Vision Document, we have taken the liberty of assessing the site against Paragraph 154 (iii) of the NPPF, which considers all five purposes. However, the NPPF (2024) applies a separate definition for grey belt, in which only purposes a, b and d are relevant and are shaded in the following table for clarity.

Having undertaken an initial assessment of the site in Green Belt terms, we are of the view that this land should be considered as Grey Belt under the new definition set out in the NPPF. Northstone would seek to discuss this and agree the approach with the Council through future engagement.

Green Belt Purpose	Initial Assessment	Initial Conclusion & Contribution
<b>(a) To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Green Belt parcel directly adjoins an existing housing development site to the south and west.</li> <li>The site is bound to the north and north east by existing strong and natural defensible features that would check further development and prevent further growth beyond Wincham Brook, and Winnington &amp; Peas Wood.</li> <li>Manchester Road, Cheshire Business Park and existing residential properties are located to the south west which prevents further sprawl of the settlement.</li> </ul> <p>It is therefore clear that the site has strong, permanent, defensible boundaries on all sides and development of the site would form a natural infill to the existing area.</p>	Weak
<b>(b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Green Belt parcel here is a small parcel which does not extend to any neighbouring towns.</li> <li>Lostock Gralam is a village and the closest nearby settlement is Wincham, which is also a village. It is important to note that under the NPPG, published in February 2025, makes it very clear that this purpose of the Green Belt only relates to towns, not villages. Therefore, this criteria does not apply here.</li> </ul>	Weak
(c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is well related to the existing urban area and benefits from strong existing boundaries in all directions.</li> <li>Notwithstanding the above, a limited amount of encroachment into the countryside is inevitable.</li> </ul>	Moderate
<b>(d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no historic towns or conservation areas proximate to the site.</li> </ul>	Weak
(e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The supply of deliverable brownfield sites was not sufficient, and, as such, Green Belt release was required to meet the Borough's housing and employment needs over the Plan Period. Subject to the Council providing updated evidence, it's possible that additional Green Belt sites need to be released as part of the Local Plan review.</li> </ul>	Neutral

## 8. Housing Need in Cheshire West and Chester



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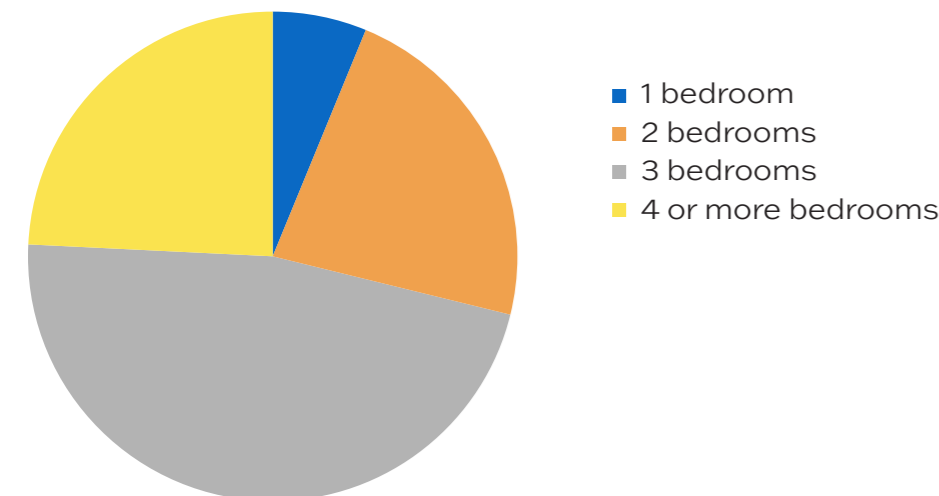
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# Market Housing Need

Beyond overall housing need, the Housing Market Report published by Cheshire West and Chester (dated 2022/23) presents an analysis on housing stock and sales per ward. Overall, the proportion of properties is heavily tilted towards family homes of 3 and 4+ bedrooms, as shown in below. This is reflected in the number of housing sales for the ward of Shakerley, where the site is located. Please refer to the table opposite.

**Figure 8.1** Property size in Cheshire West and Chester\*



\*Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) census 2021 data

	Detached homes	Semi-detached homes	Terraced	Flats & Maisonettes
Sales	19	29	5	0

From a review of recent Officers' Reports (application references 23/02279/REM, 22/03736/FUL, and 23/03377/FUL), in line with Policy SOC3 of LP1, the Council encourages developments to take account of the needs of the particular area and especially the provision of small family homes to assist households into home ownership and for older people who may wish to downsize.

Prior to the Housing Market Report (dated 2022/23), the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Council was undertaken in 2013, which is now over 10 years old, and so is not considered to contain relevant and up-to-date information in the bringing forward of this site for residential development.

# Affordable Housing Need

The Local Plan sets a target of 6,600 affordable homes to be completed by 2030 (based upon 30% of 22,000 net additional dwellings and 100% affordable housing on relevant rural exception schemes). As of the 1st April 2023, 4,843 affordable dwellings had been completed between 2010-2023, representing 73% of the total plan requirement. This leaves a remaining 1,757 dwellings (27% of the total requirement) to be completed by 2030.

Across the plan period, 25% of the total gross annual housing completions have delivered affordable units. This should be considered in the context of the increased overall housing requirement under the new methodology, underpinning the need for additional housing sites that can deliver the required affordable housing provision.

In terms of affordable housing tenure split, from a review of recent Officers' Reports on major residential schemes, Strategic Housing has confirmed the preferred split is normally 70:30 rented to intermediate housing (which includes shared ownership units).

# Northstone Homes

All Northstone homes are purposefully designed to address local needs by offering adaptable layouts that cater to a variety of lifestyles—this includes open-plan living spaces and dedicated areas for home working. Through their developments, Northstone provides a wide variety of house types and sizes, ensuring that individuals, couples, and families of all shapes and sizes can find a home that suits them. Northstone have also committed to providing adaptability through space standards, with all new homes achieving M4(2) as standard. Thus, enabling longevity for the occupants should there be any adaptations required due to accessibility. In addition, on-site affordable housing helps foster inclusive communities and helps first-time buyers get onto the property ladder. This approach reflects Northstone's commitment to meeting the changing living patterns while supporting local housing requirements.

An example of Northstone's commitment to deliver adaptable properties that meet local demand is the Jacob's Place home. Jacob's Place is an adapted property designed to cater for families with disability needs. It is a bespoke adapted home that provides a fully wheelchair accessible ground floor environment, including additional ground floor bedroom and wet room for a family with such specialist requirements. Jacob's Place properties delivered across existing Northstone developments to date have been well received by local Registered Providers and local planning authorities, who by delivering these as affordable properties, ensure the home remains meeting these more bespoke needs in perpetuity.

In addition to bespoke adaptable homes, Northstone house types can be utilised for specific needs such as 'care in the community' users, with house types such as the Five63 (1 Bed Ground Floor Maisonette), Six94 (2 Bed Bungalow) and Seven05 (2Bed Ground Floor Maisonette) being M4(3)a compliant. This allows specific needs of different groups to be accommodated within a Northstone development.



Previous

Next

Northstone understands the need to allow **flexibility** in the layout of a home. Northstone homes are **adaptable**, ensuring **each home can be reconfigured** to the requirement of the residents. New homes on the site will be delivered to allow for this flexibility.

# Northstone Homes

## **Affordable Homes and Partnerships**

Regarding affordable homes, Northstone will work with an affordable housing provider on this site to ensure that the mix and tenure align with local demand. Northstone will engage with registered providers early in the process. In this context, it is Northstone's view that the bringing forward of this site will inevitably help address the affordable housing need within the Borough.

Across their sites historically, Northstone have been able to build partnerships with Registered Providers such as Torus, Bolton at Home and Great Places delivering s106 and additionality homes alongside Open Market Sale and Private Rental to deliver true multi-tenure developments as well as delivering some sites as 100% affordable.



Properties are **intelligently designed** and well-constructed. Northstone are not afraid of trialling new technologies and construction techniques in conjunction with Torus. The specification provided offers a number of **attractive features** for customers. 'Jacobs Place' properties offer specialist accommodation for families with specific needs and are well received by colleagues and customers alike.

**Registered Provider 1**

We have worked across a number of projects with Northstone which have included a range of property types and tenures, including a number of **specialist adapted houses** for families requiring facilities for disabled family members. The working relationship has been very positive, Northstone are **very responsive**, and the process feels like a genuine partnership approach.

**Registered Provider 2**

## 9. *Technical Review*



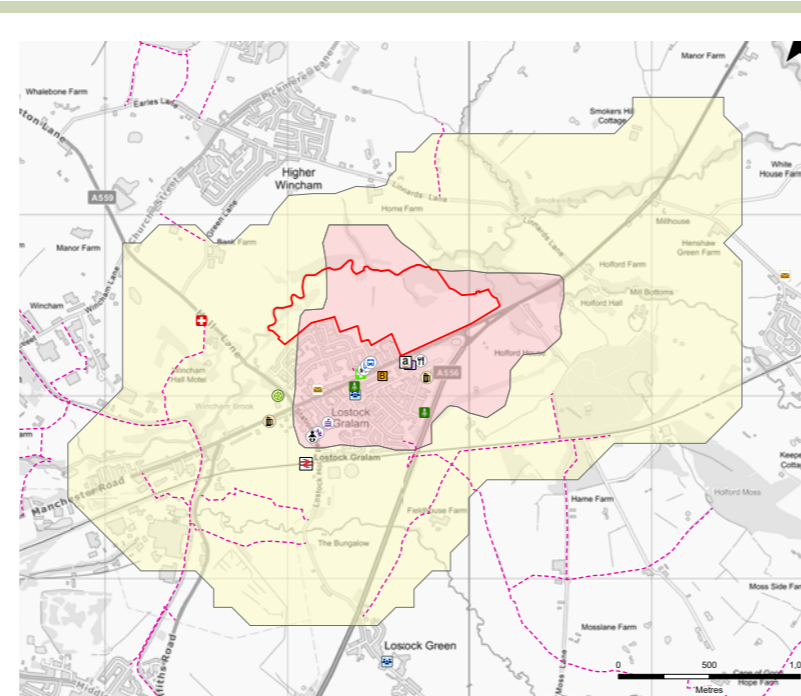
# Transport

From a transport perspective, the site at Manchester Road, Lostock Gralam, is in a sustainable and accessible location that complies with both national and local policy guidance on accessibility by non-car modes, aligning with the vision-led approach as set out in the NPPF. Vehicle access can be accommodated without adversely impacting the operation of the highway network and the site also benefits from strong connections to local services and strategic transport infrastructure.

Residents will benefit from a 15-minute walkable neighbourhood, with numerous amenities including convenience stores, a post office, a pharmacy, schools, a public house, and healthcare services within a short walking distance. This reduces reliance on private vehicles and supports healthy, active lifestyles. Employment opportunities at Cheshire Business Park are also within walking distance, enabling residents to live and work locally without the need to drive. Additionally, nearby bus services provide convenient access to Warrington, Knutsford, Chester, Manchester, and Stockport by public transport.

## Key

- Site Boundary
- Bus Stop
- Railway Station
- Public Right of Way (PRoW)
- Amenities:**
  - Amazon Locker
  - Business Park
  - Cafe
  - Community Centre
  - Convenience Store / Supermarket
  - Health Centre
  - Football Club
  - Nursery
  - Park
  - Public House
  - Place of Worship
  - Post Office
  - Pharmacy
  - Primary School
  - Veterinary Practice
- Walking Catchment:**
  - 0m - 1000m
  - 1000m - 2000m



**Figure 9.1**  
Site Opportunities and Constraints Sketch Plan

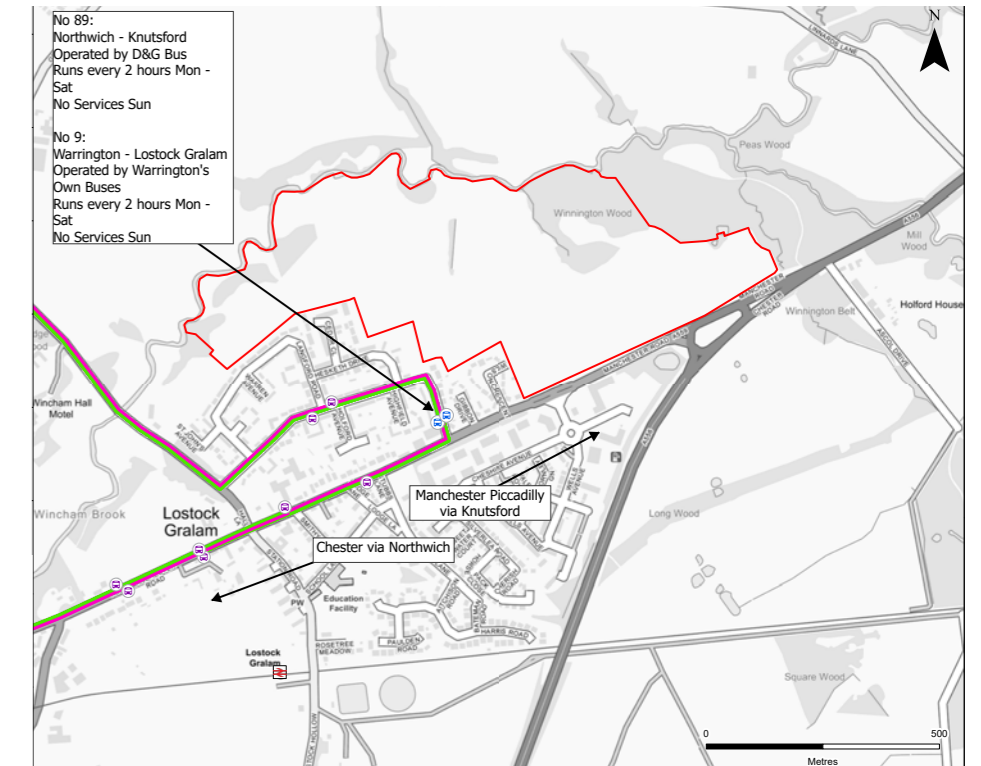
# Transport

Feasibility work has identified two appropriate access points to the site, one opposite the existing Cheshire Business Park signal junction and another opposite the A559/A556 gyratory. Both access points are deliverable, can be constructed to highway standards, and will support connections to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.

In conclusion, the site is well located in relation to existing infrastructure and services and is deliverable with no significant constraints. It can be brought forward promptly following allocation and offers a genuine opportunity to support residential development. The development aligns with the Government's NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development and satisfies the criteria for a viable, achievable, and accessible scheme in both planning and transport terms.

## Key

- Site Boundary
- Key Bus Stops Nearest Site
- Additional Bus Stops Along Route
- Railway Station
- Bus Service Numbers**
  - 89



**Figure 9.2.** Transport Sketch Plan

Greengage Environmental Ltd (Greengage) has produced an Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Plan ('ECOP') (Document ref: 553101km04Mar25FV01\_ECOP, April 2025), to inform the potential development of the site. The ECOP will be submitted as part of the pre-application advice request to the Council.

## **Assessment**

Based on the results of this ECOP assessment, several potential ecological receptors have been identified to be present within the site. Receptors assessed as 'High' risk are Ancient Woodland, Priority habitats, designated sites (statutory and non-statutory sites), badger, bats (roosting and foraging and/or commuting), birds and great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. Those with a 'Medium' risk were invertebrates, reptiles, and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species such as hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and common toad *Bufo bufo*. Only hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* was identified as being of 'Low' risk.

With regard to high risk receptors, it should be understood that Northstone does not intend to remove any part of the Ancient Woodland as part of the residential development of this site. Additionally, in relation to reptiles and GCN, there are no plans to disturb or lose any of the ponds on site. Receptors that are likely to be present adjacent to the site and associated with Wincham Brook are riparian mammals (including otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole *Arvicola amphibius*), and aquatics (including fish and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*)

As a result of the ECOP, it is recommended that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ('PEA') survey is undertaken, including a UK Habitat Classification survey and condition assessment survey (to inform BNG), to confirm the habitats and protected species present on the site and the degree of further survey needed to inform an appropriate and proportionate mitigation and compensation strategy. The PEA would also identify the potential for the proposed development to impact upon designated sites, including the potential requirement for a Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment (sHRA) due to the site lying within 10km of Rostherne Mere Ramsar.

## **Biodiversity net gain**

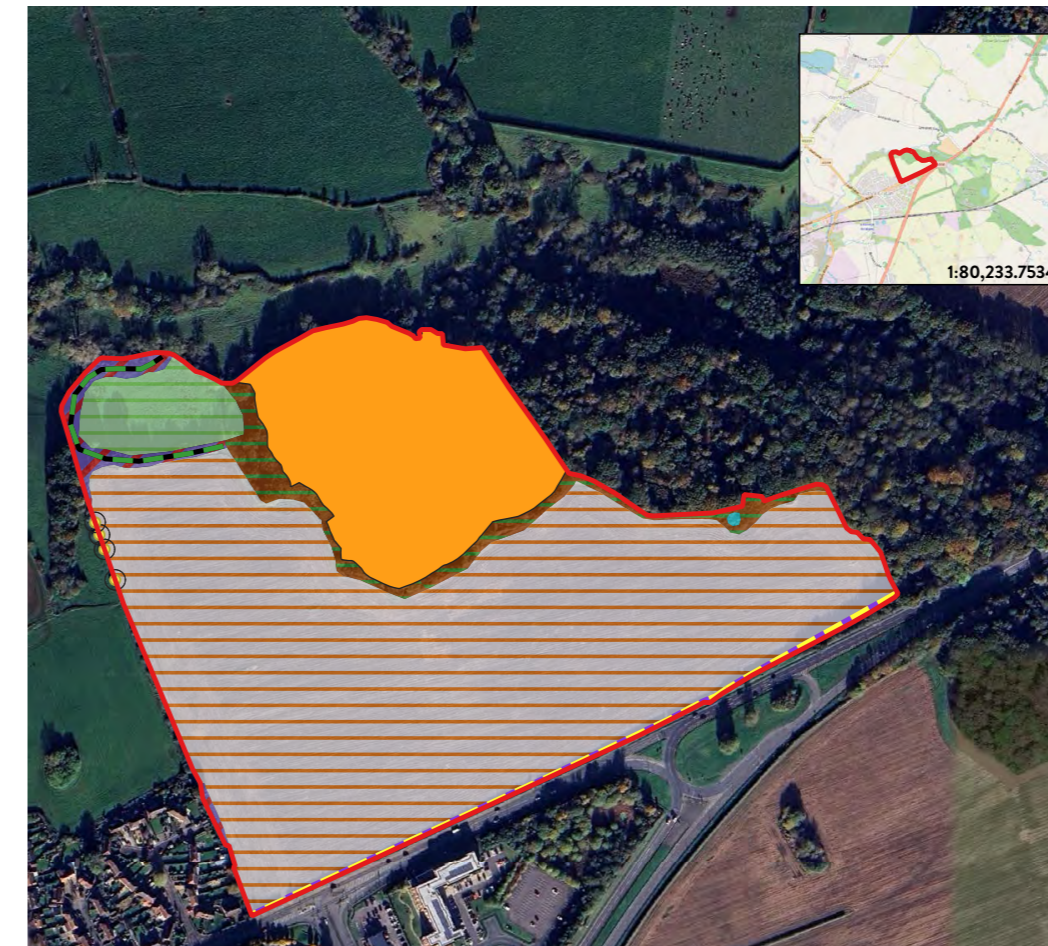
A high-level baseline BNG calculation, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric ('SBM'), has been undertaken for the ECOP to provide an estimate of the Biodiversity Unit ('BU') value for the site. This high-level assessment has used a precautionary approach with regards to assigning habitat types and their conditions and, in addition to other data sources, was informed by a high-level baselining assessment using aerial imagery. This high-level baseline was considered to be 47.92 Habitat Units (HU), and 4.50 Hedgerow units (HeU).

It is recommended that a Design Stage BNGA is undertaken following the PEA, to assess any change in BU of the site baseline, based on the outline design of the proposed development. Through the recommendations set out within this document it is considered that an appropriate level of BNG can be delivered, either on site or in combination with off-site compensation, providing that valuable habitats within the site are retained and enhanced where possible.

## Recommendations

Where possible these recommendations will influence the design of the development and be incorporated into the detail of the development (and to work towards maximising BNG delivery on the site via the design):

- Proposals should include a minimum 15m buffer to avoid impacts on Ancient Woodland, along with enhancement measures, where feasible;
- Retention, protection, and enhancement of existing Priority Habitats (lowland mixed deciduous woodland) where possible;
- Retention, protection, and enhancement of existing habitats of value to help achieve a biodiversity net gain;
- Replacement of habitats with the same habitats, or habitats of a higher distinctiveness within the soft landscape planting;
- Inclusion of grassland and wildflower meadows with refugia opportunities;
- Waterbodies and SuDs should be provided within the proposal;
- Soft landscaping on the site should be dominated by native planting and tree species, with consideration to climate resilience, wherever possible;
- Integration of wildlife boxes into the development design where necessary;
- A sensitive lighting design scheme close to the woodland edge to avoid light spill.



## Key

Red line boundary

## INDIVIDUAL TREES

Medium Rural Tree

## HEDGEROWS

Line of trees

Native hedgerow

Native hedgerow with trees

## HABITATS

Cereal crops

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Mixed scrub

Other neutral grassland

Ponds (non-priority habitat)

Ancient Woodland

Figure 9.3 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Plan

# Trees

A tree survey was carried out in accordance with BS 5837:2012 at the site by Treefellas in March 2025. This formed the basis of the Arboricultural Report, which is enclosed as part of the pre-application submission to the Council.

The Survey recorded 17 individual trees, 12 tree groups, 3 woodlands and 1 hedgerow.

An area of Ancient Woodland is present at the site and within 15.0m of its boundaries. This is located to the north of the site (within the site boundaries) and extends out of the site to the east.

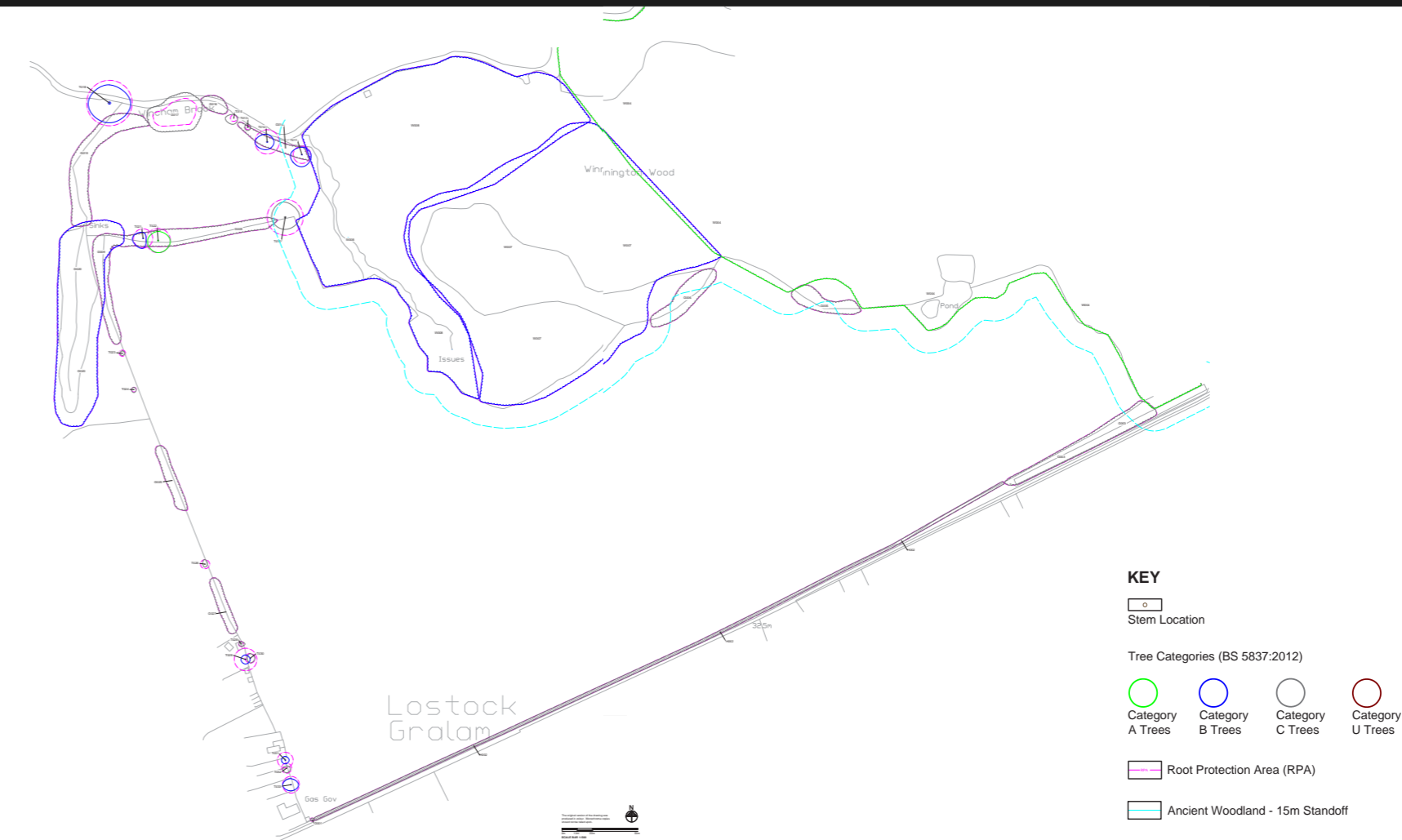
Areas of Ancient Woodland should have a 15m standoff or buffer zone which will remain unaffected by development works. This is to protect areas of natural woodland from damage and tree loss within these protected areas.

Trees within the woodland groups W004, W007 and W008 are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). These groups contained the most significant trees recorded within the Survey and collectively make up a large proportion of Winnington Woods. Trees growing at the edge of these woodland groups were

generally smaller woodland edge species, with the majority of larger trees slightly set back from the site boundary.

The majority of trees on site were classified as category C, and, as such, do not pose a significant constraint on the development potential of the site.

Notwithstanding the above, it should be understood that as this is a preliminary survey, no specific impacts from proposed development have been assessed. The Arboricultural Report submitted with any future planning application will inform the scheme design.



**GENERAL NOTES**

- Refer to associated arboricultural report produced by Treefellas Arboriculture.
- Based on an Ordnance Survey map baselayer.
- Do not scale from this drawing, check all dimensions on site.
- Please report any discrepancies or omissions to Treefellas Arboriculture.
- Where information has been provided by a third party, Treefellas Arboriculture cannot accept any liability for its content or accuracy.
- All rights reserved.

Figure 9.3. Trees Sketch Plan

# Landscape

[Previous](#)[Next](#)

An initial preliminary landscape review was undertaken to identify the most sensitive parts of the site in landscape and visual terms, informed by a desktop review, and a site review in April 2025.

## ***Landscape Planning and Character***

### Designations

The site is not within a nationally recognised landscape designation and there are no landscape designations within immediate surroundings.

Northern parts of the site and areas adjacent to the northern boundary are characterised by woodland and form part of Winnington and Peas Wood Local Wildlife Site ('LWS') and the Wincham Brook Valley and Mill Wood LWS. The Plumley Lime Beds Nature Reserve and SSSI lies approximately 500m to the south-east of the site.

There are no PRow in the immediate vicinity of the site, and a limited network in the wider context around the site.

### Green Belt

The site is located within the Green Belt - North Cheshire Green Belt Designation. Please refer to Figure 9.4 – Landscape Context Plan.

A detailed Green Belt review will form part of the Landscape and Visual Assessment for any future planning application.

### Landscape Character Assessment

The Site is located within National Character Area ('NCA') 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain. This NCA is “an expanse of flat or gently undulating, lush, pastoral farmland” On a local level, the site is located within two Landscape Character Areas ('LCAs'), LCA 10c: Lostock Plain and LCA 14a: Northwich Salt Heritage Landscape.

The Site, located on the edge of two LCAs, is not fully representative of either but shares key features such as flat plain-like topography, irregular field patterns, nucleated villages (e.g. Lostock Gralam and Lostock Green), and a mix of grassland, marsh, scrub, and woodland.

## ***Site Features and Context***

### Topography

As illustrated in Figure 9.4, the Site is predominantly “flat and vey slightly undulating”. That said, the Site slopes gently, then steeply, along the northern edge down to the Wincham Brook corridor, falling from 30m to 20m AOD. It also slopes eastward, following the Brook as it wraps around the north and extends south along the eastern boundary. The landform in the wider context around the Site, is representative of the LCA descriptions with the land to the north.

### Land use and Landscape Condition

With specific regard to landscape features, the site is bounded:

- To the south: by a tall well-managed hedgerow, beyond which is the A559.
- To the south-west: by rear garden associated with residential development and intermittent sections of hedgerow, and some occasional mature trees.
- To the north: by dense unmanaged hedgerow vegetation on the steep slopes along the Wincham Brook corridor.

### Aesthetic and Perceptual features

Due to localised variations in topography within the site, and mature vegetation along the boundaries, the site has a well-defined sense of enclosure. Though the eastern part of the site forms part of the 'open' edge of Lostock Gralam, the surrounding highway network, including the roundabout and traffic lights to the south, form a gateway like feature, marking the transition from the countryside to the developed area.

### Green Belt

As per Paragraph 148(f) of the NPPF, a key consideration which affects the potential functionality of the Green Belt in the locality of the site is the presence of clear, physical boundaries around the site. The site benefits from key 'physical features' within the landscape that would constitute strong edge conditions/boundaries that would restrict and contain development.

Though the site is free from existing development, the perception of openness within the site is reduced by the intensity of surrounding urban uses (including lighting and traffic noise) along the southern and western edges.

# Landscape



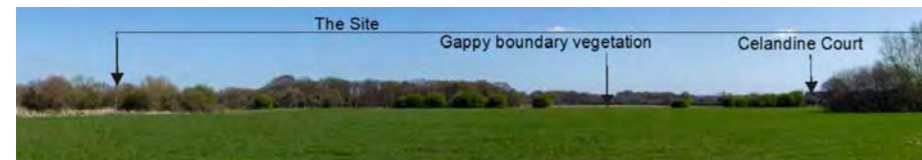
Previous

Next

Landform and mature vegetation along the boundaries results in a pronounced sense of visual and perceptual enclosure, with few filtered visual connections with the open countryside to the north and east, and south-east, thereby establishing a baseline level of limited openness within the site.

## Views and Visual Receptors

The site's western edge is relatively open where there is limited boundary vegetation (Plate 1), allowing views from nearby residential properties. Celandine Court, south of the A559, is a block of up to three-storey apartments with open views from its north-facing side (Plate 2). Tall hedgerows along Manchester Road screen views for road users and visitors to nearby commercial properties (Plates 2 and 3).



**Plate 1:** View 2: From Townshend Play Area looking East.



**Plate 2:** View 1: From edge of Manchester Road, looking N. East.

Therefore, the key visual receptors would include residential receptors within Lostock Gram to the west and south; residential receptors within isolated farmsteads in the surrounding landscape to the north, including on Linnards Lane (Plate 4) and Green Lane; road users travelling on the A559 / A556 and minor roads in the immediate vicinity of the site; and receptors within Cheshire Business Park (Plate 3) to the south.



**Plate 3:** View 1: From edge of Manchester Road, looking N. West.



**Plate 4:** View 3: From Linnards Lane, looking South.



**Plate 5:** View 4: From Hall Lane (A559) Looking East.

Owing to the relatively flat topography within the surrounding area, and this combined with the surrounding vegetated context (hedgerows and blocks of woodland) and built context results in a limited localised visibility of the site, thereby limiting the visual influence to the immediate vicinity of the site.

Overall, the site has a well-defined sense of enclosure on all sides owing to strong boundary features associated with development and vegetation along the site edges.

# Landscape

## Landscape Strategy

In order to integrate new development into the local landscape, visual and Green Belt context, appropriate mitigation measures and careful consideration to the positioning and density of development within this site will be important in the masterplanning process.

The following broad design parameters would:

- Reinforce and restore the existing vegetation along the site edges. Opportunities to strengthen the relatively open north-western edge of the site with an appropriate planted edge;
- Maintain appropriate buffers along the interface with the Ancient Woodland wrapping along the north and east, thereby creating opportunity for a strong green blue infrastructure corridor and areas for physical and visual amenity;
- Provide opportunities for a strong green and blue infrastructure framework, as part of the open space strategy;

- Deliver opportunities for informal paths set within proposed greenways, taking into account the lack of PRow access around the site. This would provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancements within the site and manage access into the Ancient Woodland and LWS;
- Create opportunities, along informal paths and within open spaces, for framing existing visual connections with the countryside;
- Ensure an appropriate design response in terms of massing and density, keeping in mind sensitive receptors within adjacent development; and
- Integrate the development within its landscape and visual context, thereby minimising adverse landscape and visual effects.

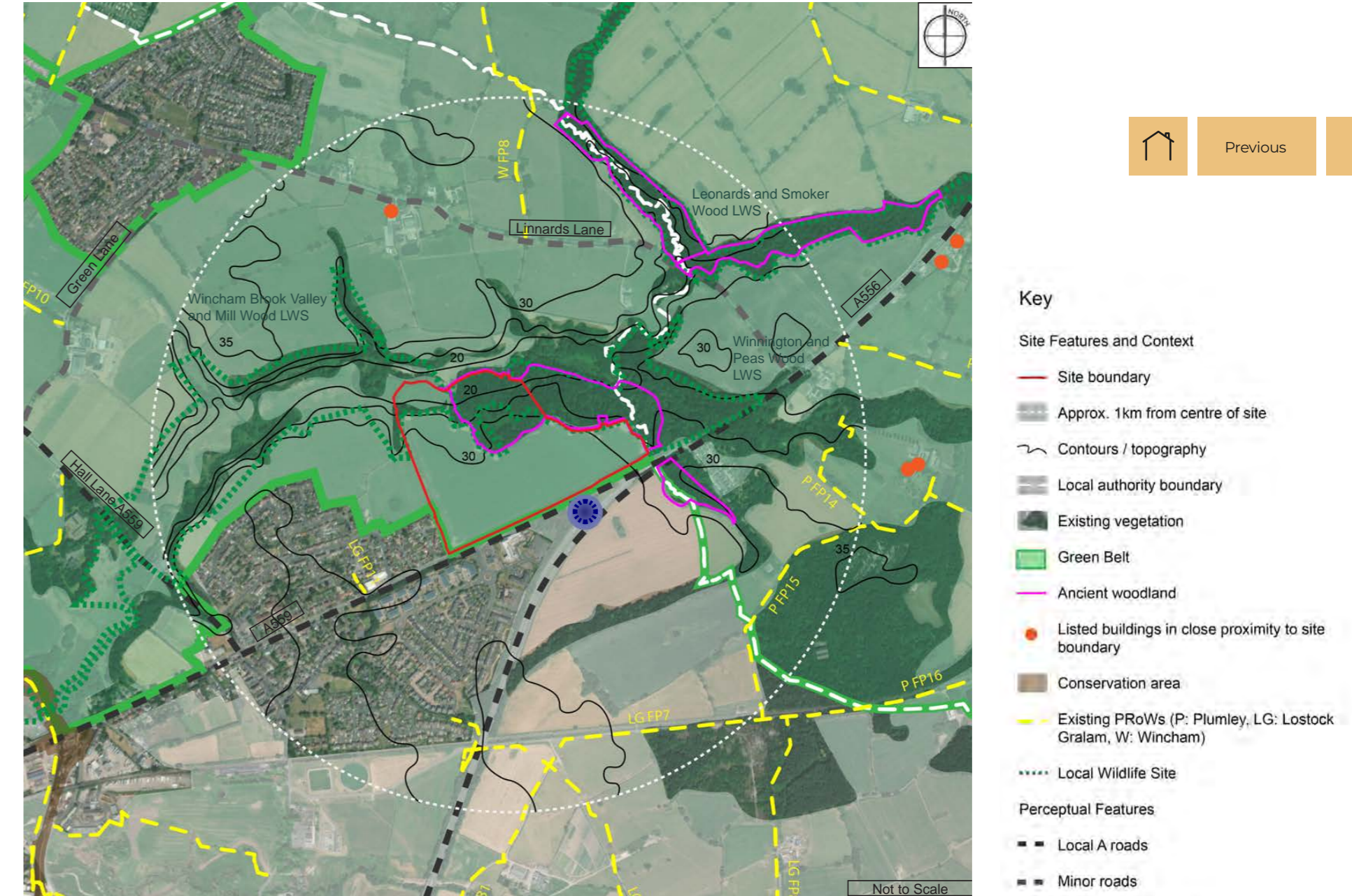


Figure 9.4. Site features and Context Diagram

**Key**

**Site Features and Context**

- Site boundary
- Approx. 1km from centre of site
- ~ Contours / topography
- Local authority boundary
- Existing vegetation
- Green Belt
- Ancient woodland
- Listed buildings in close proximity to site boundary
- Conservation area
- Existing PRow (P: Plumley, LG: Lostock Grlam, W: Wincham)
- Local Wildlife Site

**Perceptual Features**

- Local A roads
- Minor roads
- Existing development
- Gateway feature

# Flood Risk and Drainage

Townsend Water Engineering have provided high level comments on Flood Risk and Drainage for the proposed residential development at the site.

## Existing Drainage

The existing site is a field, therefore, it is believed to drain to ground, and ultimately to the main river to the North-East.

There is a watercourse running from the middle of the site and flowing into the main river Wincham Brook which is on the north boundary. To the East is more of Winnington Wood and a further watercourse.

## NPPF Vulnerability

The proposed development would be classified as a more vulnerable development as its use is residential. The development parcels are located in Flood Zone 1. The site is at a low risk of surface water flooding and the developable areas are situated outside of the surface water flooding areas. Therefore, with regard to the flood risk and flood zone compatibility table from the NPPF Technical Guide, a sequential test is not required. However, as the site is over 1ha, a flood risk assessment will be required and will accompany the planning application

## Flood Risk

### Fluvial

As above, the site is wholly covered by Flood Zone 1, an area at low risk of fluvial flooding (1 in 1000 (0.1%) annual probability of flooding). Please see the Environment Agency (EA) flood map in figure 9.5 below.

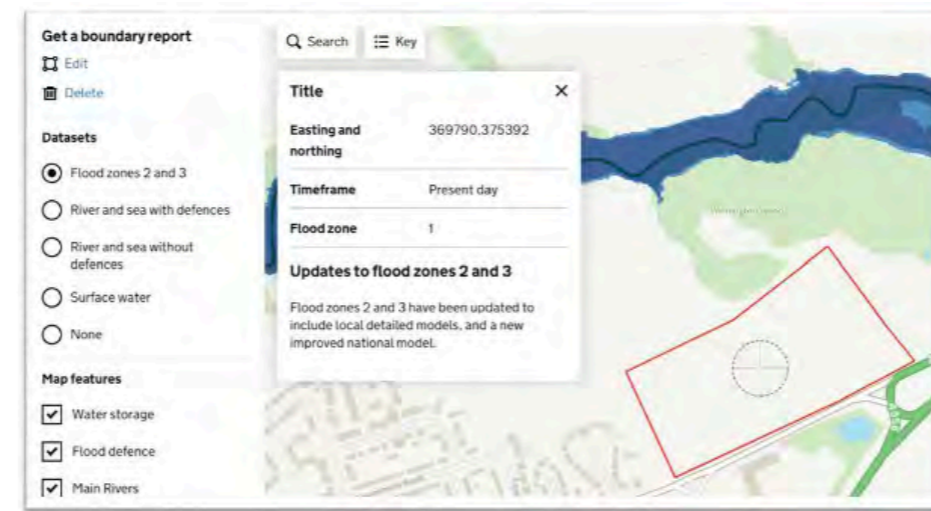


Figure 9.5. EA Flood Zone Map

## Surface Water

There is a low surface water flood risk at the site. There is a small area of higher risk surface water flooding shown within the red line boundary, however, no dwellings are proposed in this area. Please see figure 9.6 and figure 9.7 below.

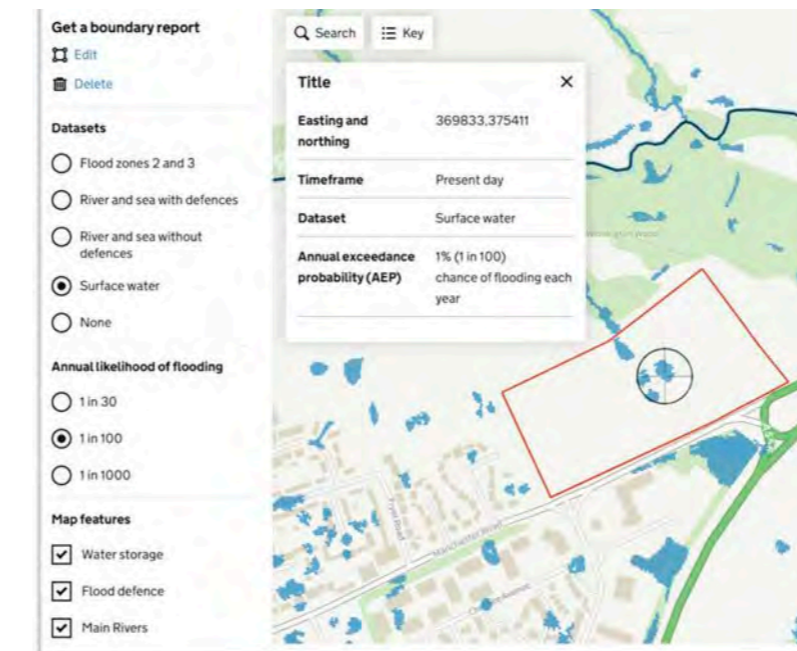


Figure 9.6. EA Surface Water Flood Risk Map 1 in 100 Year AEP

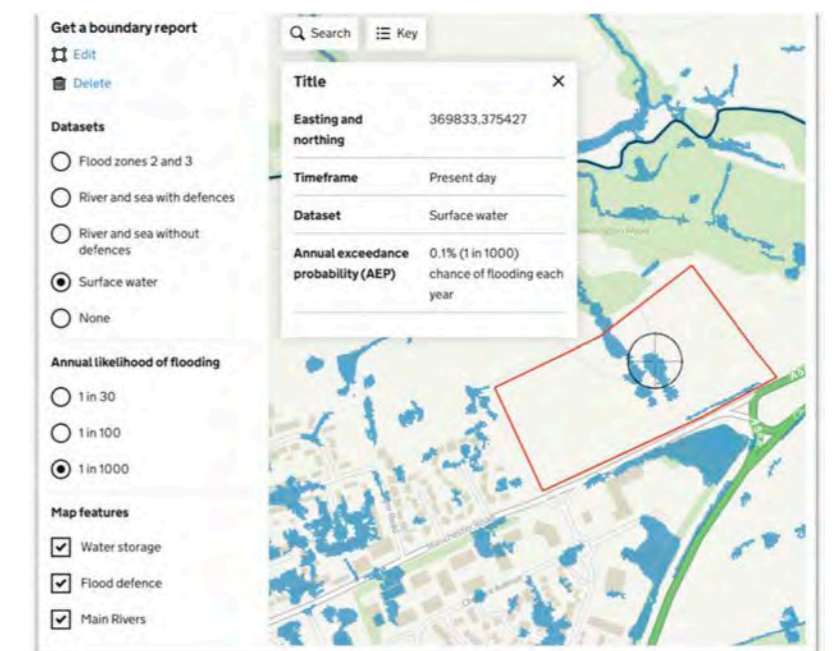


Figure 9.7. EA Surface Water Flood Risk Map 1 in 1000 Year AEP

# Flood Risk and Drainage

Please see a draft of the surface water flooding over the site layout in figure 9.8 below.



**Figure 9.8.** Draft Surface Water Flooding Map over Site Plan

## Reservoir and Groundwater Flooding

As confirmed by the Environment Agency flood maps, the site is unlikely to be at flood risk from reservoir flooding or groundwater flooding.

## Sewer Flood Risk

There is a 450mm diameter surface water sewer on the Western boundary of the site. Please see figure 9.9 below. As this is a public sewer it will require a 3m easement on either side of the sewer.



**Figure 9.9.** Sewer Map

## ***Drainage***

Following the hierarchy of surface water discharge, the development should first look to drain to soakaway. If this is not feasible, then the site should drain to a watercourse. If there is no watercourse in the vicinity of the development, the site should drain to either a highway drain or a public surface water sewer and finally, if there is nowhere else, then the site should drain to a combined sewer. A summary of each is provided, as follows:

## Soakaway

On the Soilsmap website, soil conditions at the site are described as “slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils” with impeded drainage. Therefore, infiltration is unlikely to be suitable at the site.

## Discharging to Watercourse

There is a watercourse in the North of the site. According to the Constraints Plan (ref. 306080), the watercourse is lower than both development areas, and therefore the site can drain via gravity.

The watercourse is the likely point of connection for the surface water drainage.

## Greenfield rates

The greenfield rate has been calculated by using UK SUDS. The discharge is based on l/s/ha, as there is not a detailed layout to calculate the greenfield runoff rates.

Return Period (yrs)	Discharge (l/s/ha)
1 in 2	5.2
1 in 30	9.4
1 in 100	11.5

**Figure 9.10.** Greenfield Discharges

The site will discharge at a 1 in 2 year greenfield runoff rate of 5.2l/s/ha; 1 in 30 year discharge of 9.4l/s/ha and a 1 in 100 year discharge of 11.5l/s/ha.

The drainage will attenuate up to and including the 1 in 100 year event plus climate change of 45% in likely an attenuation pond.

## 9. Summary



Previous

Next



# Summary

The Vision Document sets out Northstone's origins, ethos, and values, as well as introducing the technical consultant team responsible for bringing the site forward. It provides a comprehensive overview of the site context, details relevant policy requirements, and addresses technical considerations to ensure that any future development at this site appropriately addresses technical matters. In doing so, it maximises the site's potential and supports a robust delivery strategy to overcome constraints.

Northstone is a homebuilder with a strong design ethos that places people at the heart of the development. Northstone is a new, innovative developer with an experienced team. This unique combination allows bringing forwards of exciting but credible developments that will enhance the lives of the communities that will come to call them home. Northstone's approach directly reflects the Government's call for good design through development and will create beautiful places to live.

Overall, the Vision Document has demonstrated the need to bring forward Land North of Manchester Road, Lostock Gralam to help meet Cheshire West and Chester's increased housing requirements and local housing needs. It details how Northstone's proposals will unlock the site's potential, aligning with policy objectives while delivering much needed, high-quality and adaptable homes.



# NJL Consulting

Planning+Development

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