



**Cheshire West and Chester Local
Plan – Issues and
Options 2025**

Regulation 18 Consultation Draft

On behalf of **Grosvenor's Eaton Estate**



GROSVENOR

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 These Representations are submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council (the “Council”) on behalf of Grosvenor’s Eaton Estate (“Grosvenor”), in response to the Council’s Regulation 18 Consultation on the Draft Local Plan which was published for consultation on 4th July 2025.

Grosvenor’s Eaton Estate

1.2 Grosvenor holds significant land interests in Cheshire West and Chester, and a passionate and long-term interest in the future success and sustainable growth of the borough. The Representations made reflect the general views of Grosvenor’s knowledge and experience of local planning issues and national policy requirements. This includes a longstanding interaction with the Council’s Local Plan making process, including previous representations to the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Conversation 2021.

1.3 Grosvenor advances a sustainably focused agenda for the long-term strategy and stewardship of its holding. Grosvenor is a values-led organisation which represents the Grosvenor family and shares a common purpose – to deliver lasting commercial, social and environmental benefit – addressing today’s needs while taking responsibility for those of future generations. This means working with communities to provide a wide number of benefits to residents and the economy in the rural area. The estate has managed the rural environment with the same quality and consideration with which it has cared for its built assets.

1.4 Grosvenor’s reputation for delivering sensitive and sustainable development is critical to the long-term success of Grosvenor’s Eaton Estate. The ethos of the estate is in harmony with the Council’s to drive towards the green agenda and tackling climate change. Grosvenor is supportive of the preparation of a Local Plan and considers that it is essential that the Council has an up to date Local Plan which is fit for purpose in tackling the climate change emergency. The estate offers a relatively unique opportunity for the Council to work with a landowner whose principal aim is aligned with the Council’s and is the long term stewardship of the land and the communities within it .

1.5 Grosvenor’s land in proximity to Chester extends to over 4,650 hectares and presents a unique opportunity to develop the urban, rural synergies to mutual benefit.

1.6 As part of these Representations, Grosvenor is promoting its land interests at Land to the East of Wrexham Road, Chester to bring forward a high-quality residential-led development of approximately 1,100–1,400 homes, alongside the potential for community infrastructure, a medical facility and enhanced green infrastructure. As we set out within these Representations, the site to

the East of Wrexham Road is located in a highly sustainable location and is considered to be a fantastic opportunity for housing allocation to the south of Chester.

- 1.7 Chester is identified as a key location for growth in the adopted Local Plan for Cheshire West and Chester and will continue to be an important location for development in the emerging Local Plan. In order to support the sustainable growth of Chester over the next plan period, the Council must identify suitable sites on the urban edge of the settlement which can accommodate sufficient development to meet the needs of its residents.
- 1.8 To support the promotion of the site at Wrexham Road, and to aid the Council in its consideration of the site for housing allocation, these Representations are accompanied by a suite of supporting documents which are included at Appendices 1-5. Those supporting documents include:
- Wrexham Road Promotional Masterplan Document (MCAU);
 - Green and Grey Belt Assessment (Turley);
 - Landscape and Heritage Appraisal (Turley);
 - Transport Paper (Astute); and
 - Primary Health Care Provision Needs Case (Stantec).
- 1.9 In addition to the above, Grosvenor has land interests in Waverton and Churton which are being promoted for allocation within these Representations. These smaller sites are considered to be excellent options for future development in the next plan period to support the vitality and viability of the borough's rural settlements. Waverton is identified as a Local Service Centre (LSC) in the adopted Local Plan and we consider that the Council should seek to allocate land for new development on the settlement edge of Waverton. Churton is not listed as a LSC but will nonetheless require an element of growth to meet its local needs. These Representations are accompanied by a number of Site Plans attached at Appendices 6-10.
- 1.10 The delivery of housing in sustainable locations is key to ensuring the soundness of the Local Plan and in properly addressing climate change. The Local Plan should focus on the delivery of sites which are well located to make best use of public transport, walking or cycling routes and deliver development which can achieve high quality design, capable of maximising energy efficiency, reuse of materials and use sustainable construction methods. In addition, it is necessary that the Local Plan supports local communities and directs an appropriate level of growth that enables those communities to thrive. Grosvenor's land interests provide opportunities to assist the Council to deliver that growth.

Local Plan Context

- 1.11 The purpose of the new Local Plan is to guide how the borough develops in the future. The Local Plan will set out where new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and services should go, and how the environment, heritage, and character of the borough will be protected.
- 1.12 The Issues and Options Local Plan is the first formal stage in preparing the new plan and outlines what the key challenges are, what options are available to respond to them, and invites views from residents, businesses, and organisations. Consultation on this document provides an opportunity to comment upon the approach that the Council should be taking to planning for the future of the borough.
- 1.13 Overall, Grosvenor welcomes the progress that has been made on the draft Local Plan and supports the Council's intention to prepare a new Plan. However, Grosvenor has a number of concerns which should be taken into consideration by the Council as it takes forward its Local Plan, particularly in relation to one of the Council's spatial options seeking Green Belt retention, the distribution of development among the potential areas of growth, and thematic policies.
- 1.14 We consider that the release of Green Belt is essential for the Council to achieve its increased housing requirement under the new Standard Method, whilst also ensuring a proportionate distribution of residential development in sustainable locations to support the needs of each settlement. The new housing requirement will comprise a tangible step change in the level of growth the borough will deliver over the next 15 years or more which will require positive plan making across the borough.
- 1.15 In summary, Grosvenor considers a new Local Plan is necessary and fundamental to the future success and prosperity of the borough into the next plan period. For the sustainable future development within the borough, Chester will clearly need to be one of the main focusses for development and a review of Green Belt land to support that development is essential; including at other sustainable settlements enveloped by the Green Belt. Accordingly, Grosvenor submits its land to the East of Wrexham Road as a suitable, available and developable development site, which is capable of delivering high quality and sustainable homes worthy of future generations and in keeping with the aspirations of the Council to tackle climate change and future proof the borough. We also propose the allocation of land at Waverton and Churton, which provide for a logical rounding off of development to support the role and functions of these rural service centres. Allocation of land to meet the needs of rural settlements within the Green Belt should be considered within the emerging Local Plan now such that the Green Belt review can be carried out comprehensively.

Structure of Representations

- 1.16 These Representations highlight Grosvenor's support for the Council in progressing its new Local Plan and will outline areas of concern that we feel the Council should address now to ensure that a sound Local plan can be progressed. As such, these Representations will be structured as follows:
- **Section 2** will provide Grosvenor's comments on the proposed plan period and on the Vision, Objectives, and Spatial Strategy set out in the Draft Local Plan. This section focuses on the Council's three spatial strategy options and our concerns in relation to the risk of a disproportionate distribution of development across the borough.
 - **Section 3** will then provide an analysis of the draft Local Plan's thematic policies.
 - **Section 4** seeks to introduce and promote Grosvenor's land interests at Wrexham Road, Chester, and its sites in Waverton and Churton, which are considered to be sustainable options for future development in the next plan period.
 - **Section 5** will provide concluding comments taking the commentary within the above sections in the round and will make recommendations, as appropriate.
- 1.17 These Representations will demonstrate that, in the context of a national housing crisis and the introduction of the Government's mandatory housing targets based on the Standard Method calculation for each local authority, there is a pressing need for housing which the Council should seek to maximise. The Local Plan should distribute new housing proportionate to support the growth of the borough's settlements in a sustainable manner.
- 1.18 Furthermore, these Representations seek to promote Grosvenor's land interests as strong candidates to accommodate future housing / mixed-use development in appropriate locations which will help to ensure the needs of the borough and strength of its settlements are supported.
- 1.19 In preparing these Representations, we have had regard to paragraph 36 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), which sets out the requirement for the Council's New Local Plan to be examined in order to assess whether the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound. For ease of reference, the tests of 'soundness' for a Local Plan, as prescribed by the NPPF, are that it be:
- a) **Positively Prepared** – *providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;*
 - b) **Justified** – *an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and*

based on proportionate evidence;

- c) **Effective** – *deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and*
- d) **Consistent with national policy** – *enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.*

1.20 Clearly, the above tests are to be applied in the examination of the Local Plan, which is some way off. The purpose of these Representations are, therefore, not to test for, or object to the Local Plan on the grounds of soundness, but to provide a constructive commentary in response to the Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Issues and Options document, with the purpose of aiding the ongoing production of a Local Plan so that it may be improved and, ultimately proved sound. The representations made reflect the views of Grosvenor, and our knowledge and experience of the Sites, the borough, national planning policy requirements and local planning issues.

2.0 Plan Period, Vision, Objectives and Strategy

- 2.1 This Section of the Representations provides Grosvenor's commentary on proposed plan period, and the Councils Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy, which will inform the policies of the new Local Plan.

Plan Period

- 2.2 The draft Local Plan confirms that, in line with national policy, the Local Plan should plan for a period of 15 years. However, specific dates are not yet provided at this stage. Notwithstanding, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) adopted by the Council envisages the Local Plan will be adopted by Summer / Autumn 2027; which would mean the plan would be adopted earlier in the planning year 2027/28. The Plan will at least need to plan to 2042/43 if the LDS is followed.

- 2.3 The proposed plan period aligns with paragraph 22 of the NPPF, which states:

Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure. Where larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take into account the likely timescale for delivery"

- 2.4 Whilst the Council's ambition of a 15-year plan period aligns with the minimum period under national policy, Grosvenor considers that the Council should reasonably seek a plan period in excess of the minimum requirement of 15 years. The borough comprises a vast area with a significant range of different settlements, socio-economic conditions and development needs across the borough which require a strategic and long terms approach to planning for.

- 2.5 By planning beyond the NPPF required minimum of 15 years (from adoption), the Council provides itself with the opportunity to identify and maintain an appropriate quantum and mix of sites (giving choice in terms of size and location) to provide a pipeline of sites capable of meeting a consistent trajectory in the short, medium and long term which is capable of meeting the increased housing requirement for Cheshire West and Chester under the Standard Method.

- 2.6 Given the housing crisis which the Country currently faces, the need for a robust, deliverable supply of housing sites is, therefore, paramount.

Vision

- 2.7 Grosvenor is broadly supportive of the overall Vision set out under VI1 of the draft Plan. However, whilst the Vision identifies four overarching principles (tackling climate change, promoting wellbeing, providing infrastructure and protecting character) we consider it should also include an element in relation to meeting the future growth needs for the borough (both housing and employment).
- 2.8 The Vision for the Plan should be aspirational in meeting the needs of the borough and the economic, social and environmental expectations of the Plan in meeting those needs. Fundamental to all of those aims will be meeting the Council's requirements in terms of housing delivery in the face of a national housing crisis. As such, the Council should seek to ensure that the current and future housing needs of the borough are met - including the need for market and affordable, family homes, and homes for older people and for first-time buyers to align with the Government's target to deliver 1.5 million new homes over the parliamentary period (and the significantly increased standard method housing need for Cheshire West and Chester published in December 2024).
- 2.9 Notwithstanding this, the second part of VI1 (Vision – places) seeks to include individual Visions for larger settlements within the borough. This is welcomed and should align with the overarching principles set out above and with the spatial strategy, once selected.

Objectives

- 2.10 At this stage, the Local Plan does not indicate how much development will be apportioned to any particular area. However, it recognises that changes to national planning policy, including the need to revisit the role of Green Belt protection, introduction of Grey Belt; and a significant increase in the local housing need, may make it more challenging to deliver some objectives.
- 2.11 OB1 of the draft Plan sets out two alternative objectives for the new Local Plan which are:
- Option A – Take forward the current Local Plan objectives.
 - Option B – Use the Sustainability Appraisal objectives.
- 2.12 We consider, it is more suitable to take inspiration from the objectives of the current Local Plan, whilst also using the Sustainability Appraisal, in order to set out up-to-date objectives specific to the new Local Plan and address current and future issues within the borough. The Vision for the borough must be set in meeting the development needs of the borough.
- 2.13 Overall, the objectives based on the adopted Local Plan are still broadly relevant and we welcome

the Council's intention to alter S09 and S10 in relation to locating the majority of development within and on the edge of the main urban areas, such as Chester. However, as set out above, we consider that to provide for sustainable patterns of growth, the Local Plan must also seek to provide opportunities for growth in the lower order settlements to meet local needs. To achieve this, Grosvenor considers that the Local Plan must release sustainable sites from the Green Belt which will make an important contribution to meeting the Council's housing requirement whilst supporting the role and function of the borough's settlements, as we discuss further in these Representations.

Sustainable Development

- 2.14 The need to tackle the challenge of climate change and the Council's declaration of a Climate Change Emergency in May 2019 follows the national focus on Climate Change by central Government. The need for sustainable development is set out in national planning policy, alongside guidance on how local planning authorities and developers can work together to tackle the issue of climate change. The Council published its initial response to the Climate Emergency declaration in January 2020 including a range of actions to reach carbon neutrality by 2045 or sooner.
- 2.15 Draft Policy SD1 seeks to amend and expand on policy STRAT1 of the Local Plan Part One to make climate change mitigation requirements clearer. The proposed policy states that new developments must maximise opportunities to secure significant reductions in carbon emissions through low carbon design, embodied carbon and energy consumption, and maximise opportunities to generate energy from renewable sources. It also states that all new buildings should include solar panels unless it can be shown that this is impractical or not viable, and that strategic sites should be connected to a district heat network.
- 2.16 Whilst the Council's aspiration to mitigate the impacts of climate change and provide greater energy efficiency is admirable, and Grosvenor supports the move towards greater energy efficiency and carbon reduction via a nationally consistent set of standards and timetable, policies within the Local Plan should not set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond Building Regulations. As such, we suggest that Policy SD1 provides overarching ambitions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, but does not set specific requirements which are established in the latest Building Regulations and national policy. As such, we consider such matters are addressed at a national level to avoid different approaches and standards being used at the local level.
- 2.17 The draft Plan makes reference to the 'Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update' Written Ministerial Statement (13 December 2023) which seeks to constrain local authorities in

setting energy efficiency standards that go beyond current building regulations, and by directing local authorities, where they do set higher standards, to express these ‘as a percentage uplift of a dwelling’s Target Emissions Rate (TER) calculated using a specified version of the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP).’

- 2.18 Notwithstanding the above, Section 4 of these Representations demonstrates that Grosvenor’s land interests are sustainable locations for residential development and are capable of helping the Council meet its future housing requirement and can deliver development in a manner which mitigates against the impacts of climate change.
- 2.19 The purpose of these Representations is to assist the Council in delivering a sound Local Plan, which is robust in tackling the Climate Change Emergency through delivery of sustainable development at its Sites to meet the future needs of the borough. Indeed, as set out above, the principal aim of the estate is the long term stewardship of its land and the communities on it which will inevitably involve building sustainably for the future and tackling climate change.
- 2.20 Regarding the third part of Policy SD1; ‘Additional environmental and social requirements’, Grosvenor raises concerns with the first bullet point, which seeks to encourage the use of previously developed land and minimise development on greenfield land.
- 2.21 We do not consider the policy should ‘minimise’ development on greenfield land. As discussed later in this section of the Representations, development should be delivered in appropriate locations to meet the needs of residents, and development on previously developed land is subject to viability constraints and the challenges to meet housing needs, such as affordable housing.
- 2.22 Therefore, whilst Grosvenor welcomes the aspiration to utilise previously developed land wherever possible, minimising greenfield development is at odds with the spatial strategy which we say will inevitably require Green Belt release and development on greenfield land to ensure housing needs can be met. Sustainable development should, instead, come forward in the right locations to support the future needs of the borough. Grosvenor is concerned that a reliance on previously developed land will be insufficient to meet the housing needs of the borough (particularly in relation to affordable housing) and a brownfield first approach should not act as a barrier to sustainable greenfield or Grey Belt development.

Local Plan Spatial Strategy

Housing Needs

- 2.23 Grosvenor welcomes the recognition at paragraph 5.2 of the draft Local Plan that strategic policies should be informed by local housing need conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance (NPPF, paragraph 64). The figure for Cheshire West and Chester is a minimum of 1,914 new homes each year, equating to 28,710 new homes over a 15-year plan period.
- 2.24 The Council's emerging Local Plan will, therefore, be required to plan for housing using the new Standard Method which represents a significant step-up from the adopted housing requirement of 1,100 units per annum set out in STRAT2 of the Local Plan Part One.
- 2.25 The increased housing requirement within the new Standard Method means that exceptional circumstances will, therefore, exist to justify altering Green Belt boundaries as part of the Local Plan preparation. We consider it will be inevitable that the Council will need to allocate Green Belt sites to meet its new housing requirement which is circa 75% increase from the previous Local Plan requirement upon which previous Green Belt Boundaries were established.
- 2.26 The Council suggests that the latest housing land monitoring data identifies undeveloped planning permissions for almost 6,000 homes, and the Land Availability Assessment (Stage One) evidence base document indicates that there is a supply of circa. 5,000 homes for sites on previously developed land, including undeveloped Local Plan allocations, within the main urban areas and Key Service Centres (KSC). However, the draft Local Plan acknowledges that this figure is likely to reduce once a detailed assessment of the constraints of these sites is carried out in Stage Two.
- 2.27 Whilst Grosvenor reserves further comments until the Stage Two Land Availability Assessment is undertaken, the Council will clearly need to identify additional sites to address its' housing supply shortfall so that it can meet its increased housing targets. Those sites should be located in the most suitable locations and be directed to support the sustainable growth of the borough's settlements. As such, the Local Plan spatial strategy (discussed further below) must consider an appropriate balance of development to ensure that housing needs are met and delivered in the right locations.
- 2.28 Furthermore, we consider that the Council will need to undertake a Grey Belt Assessment across the borough to identify the supply of potential Grey Belt Sites available to meet housing and employment needs.

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- 2.29 The Council will also need to undertake a housing needs assessment to further understand what homes are needed in the borough, and a viability assessment to determine if the Council's housing land supply is capable of addressing those needs (for example, delivery of affordable homes on previously developed land).
- 2.30 On the face of it, Grosvenor does not object to the housing requirement of 1,914 set out in SS1. However, we note that the Council must ensure that the latest standard method figure is used as a minimum and the Council should ensure that it has identified sufficient sites to accommodate residential development and support the vitality and viability of all of its settlements, LSC. We consider that growth should be disaggregated across the settlement hierarchy to ensure that LSC (including those within the Green Belt) are provided with the level of growth they need to maintain their role and function in that hierarchy.

Spatial Strategy Principles

- 2.31 SS3 of the draft Plan states that the spatial strategy will follow the principle of directing new development and allocating land, towards previously developed sites within settlements first, as they are the most sustainable locations with best access to services and facilities.
- 2.32 As discussed above, Grosvenor is supportive of the re-use of previously developed land, however we highlight that sustainable development should come forward where it is needed and capable of addressing housing needs to support the future needs of the borough as a whole. Grosvenor is concerned that an over reliance on brownfield land will be insufficient to meet the housing needs of the borough and should not act as a barrier to sustainable greenfield or Grey Belt development, which can also be located in sustainable locations with good access to services and facilities.
- 2.33 To address the increased housing requirement, it is highly likely that Green Belt release will be required to meet the borough's identified housing needs over the next plan period. This is considered an exceptional circumstance to Green Belt release as stipulated at paragraph 146 of the NPPF.
- 2.34 SS3 goes on to say that where there are not enough planning permissions and opportunities for redevelopment within urban areas and towns, the approach will be to develop on the edge of existing settlements in locations with the best access to public transport, existing services and infrastructure. The Council also suggest that this may require the release of Green Belt land which we are supportive of. However, it is worth noting that the degree of accessibility to public transport will vary across the borough and across the settlement hierarchy proportionate to the size and function of those settlements; we consider that development should be directed to settlements which perform best in relative to that function.

- 2.35 Set within this context, the Council will need to undertake a Green Belt Review to assess which sites may be appropriate for release to meet identified need for homes. This will need to be considered alongside the spatial strategy. As we come onto later in these Representations, Grosvenor seeks to promote a strong candidate for Green Belt release to the East of Wrexham Road on the edge of the settlement of Chester.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 2.36 Paragraph 5.7 of the draft Plan states the Council thinks the new Local Plan should retain a settlement hierarchy, but take a more place-based approach with separate policies for each settlement. This would update and replace the current approach which identifies the main settlements, KSC and LSC in Local Plan (Part One) policies STRAT 2 and STRAT 8, and Local Plan (Part Two) policies R 1 and DM 1.
- 2.37 We welcome the retention of a settlement hierarchy and a place-based approach for each settlement. However, this must be evidenced by a thorough review of the needs of each settlement and the ability of each settlement to deliver sustainable and proportionate development over the next plan period.
- 2.38 Grosvenor is broadly supportive of the main thrust of Policy SS4 of the draft Plan which proposes that the new Plan will set out a settlement hierarchy based on the status and role in providing local infrastructure and services for Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Winsford, Neston and Parkgate, and Frodsham.
- 2.39 Policy SS4 also highlights further settlements that have a level of facilities and services to meet the needs of residents and surrounding areas which include Cuddington and Sandiway, Farndon, Helsby, Kelsall, Malpas, Tarporley, Tarvin and Tattenhall.
- 2.40 Chester should remain at the top of the settlement hierarchy. However, we consider that Waverton (currently identified as a LSC) should also be considered in the settlements listed above in Policy SS4, as it is an important and sustainable location to accommodate new development and benefits from its proximity to local facilities, transport connections and employment opportunities.
- 2.41 Grosvenor, therefore, seeks the settlement boundary of Waverton (an LSC) to be expanded to include the original settlement to the south, taking into account the functional and social links between the older parts of Waverton and the area now included within the settlement boundary to the north.
- 2.42 Waverton should be allocated sufficient land to allow the organic growth of the village. Grosvenor has land interests in Waverton, described further in Section 4, which form logical infill and edge of

settlement opportunity sites capable of providing sustainable development to meet the future needs of the village. By directing a sustainable level of growth toward Waverton the Council will support this area as a strong and vibrant community, where young people want to live and work, and that they will have a strong economic role. As set out above, Waverton is washed over by the Green Belt and therefore it will be necessary for the Council to allocate development at Waverton to facilitate that growth.

- 2.43 Overall, the strategic approach set out within the Part One Local Plan is supported in terms of its hierarchical approach to the distribution of development towards the largest and most sustainable settlements; with lower order settlements providing growth that is consistent with the role and function of those settlements. Accordingly, Grosvenor would support the review of the Local Plan taking a similar approach to the setting out of strategic policies, subject to regard being had to the uplift to the Council's housing requirement and the latest aspirations and needs of each settlement.

Spatial Strategy Options

- 2.44 The draft Local Plan sets out three initial options for growth, which are as follows:

- 1. Option A – Retain the Green Belt**
- 2. Option B – Follow current Local Plan level and distribution of development**
- 3. Option C – Sustainable transport corridors**

- 2.45 Draft Policy SS5 sets out that each of these options are capable of accommodating at least 29,000 new homes and 149 hectares of employment land.

- 2.46 Grosvenor does not consider that Option A is a suitable spatial strategy that can ensure the increased housing requirement for Cheshire West and Chester can be achieved, or that new development will be distributed in a sustainable manner to support the role and function of each settlement.

- 2.47 Option A seeks to retain the existing Green Belt and there does not appear to be any sufficient up-to-date evidence to confirm that the Council has enough deliverable land to achieve its housing requirements in the context of the mandatory housing targets which have been re-introduced based on the Standard Method Calculation.

- 2.48 Map 5.1 of the draft Local Plan shows the extent of the Green Belt which would be retained under Option A. This covers 42% of the borough and surrounds the northern settlements of Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich, Neston and Parkgate and Frodsham – 5 of the 6 largest settlements

as identified in Policy SS4. As such, these important settlements are clearly constrained by the Green Belt and we question whether Option A is a realistic approach to ensure a proportionate level of development over the next plan period to support the growth needs of these settlements.

- 2.49 Option A suggests that housing development will primarily be located to the south of Northwich (c. 5,000 homes), south/west of Winsford (11,000 homes) and growth around other places not in the Green Belt. Firstly, as mentioned above, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that these sites can accommodate the Council's housing requirement. Notwithstanding this, the approach of Option A will not deliver a proportionate level of growth as the strategy is not based on where development is needed and only directs new housing towards sites located outside of the Green Belt.
- 2.50 For these reasons, it is considered that a blended approach between Options B and C should be progressed by the Council, as both of these options will consider the release of Green Belt in the most sustainable locations.
- 2.51 It is welcomed by Grosvenor that Option B would focus housing development around Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford which are the largest settlements and will need sufficient new development over the next plan period to support growth.
- 2.52 We also welcome that 2,500 homes across rural areas, including Green Belt land will be expected to accommodate new development
- 2.53 However, the Council should carefully review its settlement hierarchy to ensure it plans for proportionate growth for each of its settlements, including Waverton which is identified as a LCS in the adopted Local Plan.
- 2.54 Option C seeks to see new homes focused in and around settlements on the railway network and on main bus route corridors. Whilst we do not object to a blended approach to the spatial strategy using Option C to focus development in sustainable locations, this should not preclude development from coming forward in smaller settlements, which do not benefit from a train station. New development in some rural locations and smaller settlements is considered appropriate to help support the needs of its residents.
- 2.55 Option C also does not take into consideration the improvements to local facilities and transport infrastructure, which can be delivered by future development, either on-site or via financial contributions which can enhance the sustainability and the role and function of smaller settlements.
- 2.56 SS5 also states that the Examiner's report into the Local Plan (Part One) concluded that additional release of Green Belt land around Chester would have a significant adverse effect on the purposes

of including land within the Green Belt and that the amended Green Belt boundary would not need to be altered at the end of the plan period (2030).

- 2.57 This should be removed from SS5 as it is no longer relevant in the context of the increased housing requirements for Cheshire West and Chester and the Government's softer approach to Green Belt / Grey Belt development set out in national policy. As stipulated earlier in these Representations and in the draft Plan itself, the Council's mandatory housing target has almost doubled, and the national context in relation to Green Belt release has shifted significantly. As such, the statement that the current Green Belt would not need altering beyond 2030 is considered inaccurate and out of date.
- 2.58 Whilst the three options are only indicative at this stage and Grosvenor expects further evidence to be provided by the Council in terms of land availability, suitability, and viability evidence for each option, it is considered that the Council's strategy should focus on delivering proportionate and balanced growth across each settlement to ensure its development needs are met, which will include the release of Green Belt land and focusing on more sustainable options in terms of accessibility and local facilities.
- 2.59 As set out in Section 4 of these Representations, Grosvenor's land to the East of Wrexham Road in Chester is considered to be strong candidate for a strategic housing allocation in the new Local Plan, which will support the distinctive role of Chester into the next plan period. Grosvenor's land interests in Waverton and Churton also offer opportunities for smaller housing allocations, which will support these smaller settlements and help to achieve a proportionate level of growth across the borough.

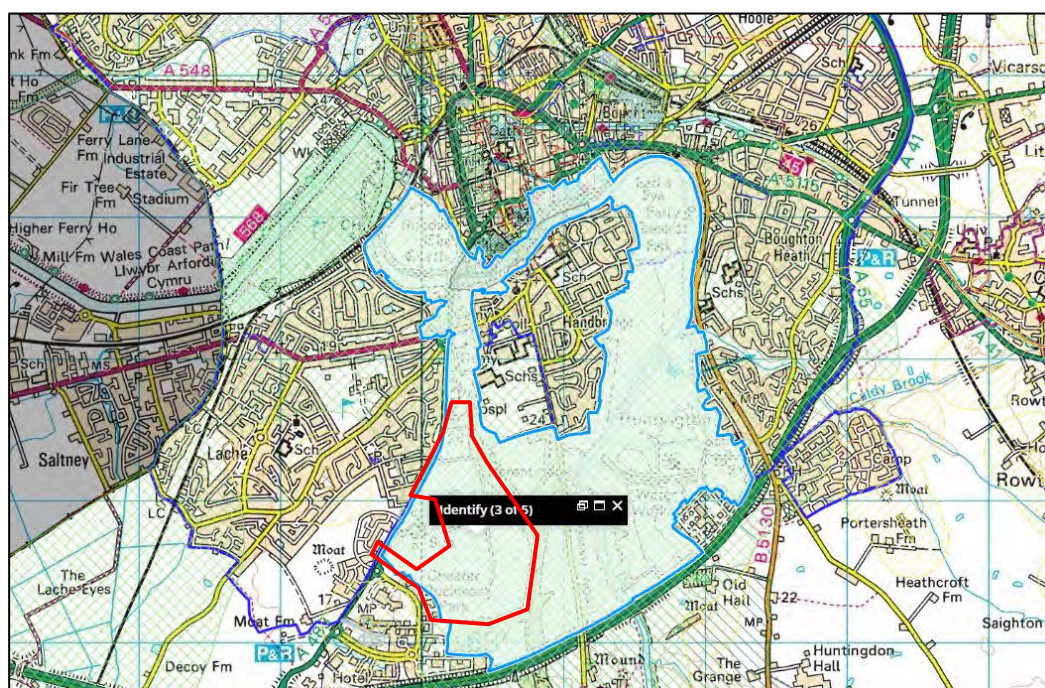
Potential growth areas

- 2.60 Grosvenor welcomes the Council's recognition at paragraph 5.8 of the draft Plan that it may be necessary to identify new areas or broad locations for development (including Green Belt) if not enough land can be identified within settlements. Indeed, we say it is inevitable.
- 2.61 A series of maps are provided showing potential growth areas on the edge of settlements and identifies which growth areas align with each of the three spatial strategy options.
- 2.62 Appendix B of the draft Plan provides a summary table of the potential growth areas. In identifying these sites, the Council has considered sites submitted through previous call for sites exercises, undeveloped Local Plan allocations, and a desktop review of existing information.
- 2.63 Sites have been excluded as potential growth areas, which are subject to constraints that would act as potential 'showstoppers' to restrict future development, including: Local Green Spaces;

designated habitats sites; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets; key settlement gaps; Areas of Special County Value; strategic open space; areas of flood risk; and significant hazard zones.

- 2.64 We do not agree that sites should be discounted, which are subject to the above designations, as they are not considered to be showstoppers to preclude development. Instead, the Council should undertake a thorough review of site constraints (and merits) on a site-by-site basis to ensure that the most appropriate and sustainably located sites can be considered for future development / allocation.
- 2.65 For example, Grosvenor's land to the East of Wrexham Road (identified in red in Figure 1 below) has been discounted as a potential growth area in Chester as it is identified within an area of *Strategic Open Space* on the adopted Local Plan Policies Map.
- 2.66 However, as shown on the Local Plan Policies Map extract below, the local Strategic Open Space designation covers most of the undeveloped area on the settlement edge of Chester, which is amongst the lowest value area of Green Belt surrounding Chester. The existing Strategic Open Space designation must be balanced with wider policy considerations and we do not consider that future development within this area should be discounted on the basis of a previous designation from the former Local Plan, which has not been reviewed by the Council. Indeed, for the reasons set out below, we consider that the previous designation is based on a dated evidence base and that Grosvenor's Site to the East of Wrexham Road, can be developed without undermining the purposes of the Strategic Open Space.

Figure 1: Strategic Open Space in Chester Local Plan Part Two)



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- 2.67 Local Plan Part Two Policy CH1 identifies the Strategic Open Space shown above. The Strategic Open Space designation was informed by the study 'Chester: The Future of an Historic City' (June 1994) and supported by the Chester City Centre and Approaches Characterisation Study (2012)
- 2.68 The 'Chester: The Future of an Historic City' document was published by Building Design Partnership in 1994 and is now over 30 years' old. This assessment is now significantly out-of-date because it fails to account for changes to the character of the city over the past 30 years including, critically, the enclosure of Grosvenor's land at Wrexham Road on all sides by development as outlined above.
- 2.69 At the time of the Examination of the adopted Local Plan, this study was noted as being aged, but was considered to provide an evidenced basis to identify the landscaped approaches to the City that help to define its distinctive countryside setting. Clearly, since this document was published in 1994, matters have moved on and the built context of the area has undergone significant change, particularly in relation to Grosvenor's site and the development opposite to the west Wrexham Road which was released from the Green Belt in the current Local Plan under Policy STRAT3 of the Local Plan Part One).
- 2.70 The Chester City Centre and Approaches Characterisation Study was published in 2012. This document only assesses those areas within the City Centre and major routes into the city centre, which are within the built-up area. The Study does not consider areas that lay beyond these, which includes those areas designated as Strategic Open Space by the Council in the Part Two Local Plan. The 2012 Study, therefore, does not provide an update from the conclusions of the 1994 report.
- 2.71 The Strategic Open Space designation, in essence, comprises a legacy from Policy ENV15 of the former Chester District Local Plan and there is no evidence or explanation provided by the Council to justify on what basis this designation was renewed by the Part 2 Local Plan.
- 2.72 On the basis of the above, Grosvenor's site at Wrexham Road should not be discounted as a potential growth are because of its historic Strategic Open Space designation.
- 2.73 In support of the promotion of the site at Wrexham Road, Turley have prepared an Initial Landscape and Heritage Appraisal (ILHA) for Grosvenor's site, which is enclosed as Appendix 3 of these Representations.
- 2.74 The ILHA provides an initial understanding of landscape and heritage considerations associated with future development of land to the East of Wrexham Road.
- 2.75 The appraisal describes the site as intensively managed urban fringe farmland, enclosed by

development, woodland and road infrastructure, with limited visibility beyond its setting. Although historically part of the Grosvenor's Eaton Estate, the site is physically and visually separated from Duke's Drive and the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden (RPG) by substantial woodland, with only filtered views. Its' contribution to the RPG is limited, and with sensitive design, development can safeguard heritage and strengthen green infrastructure.

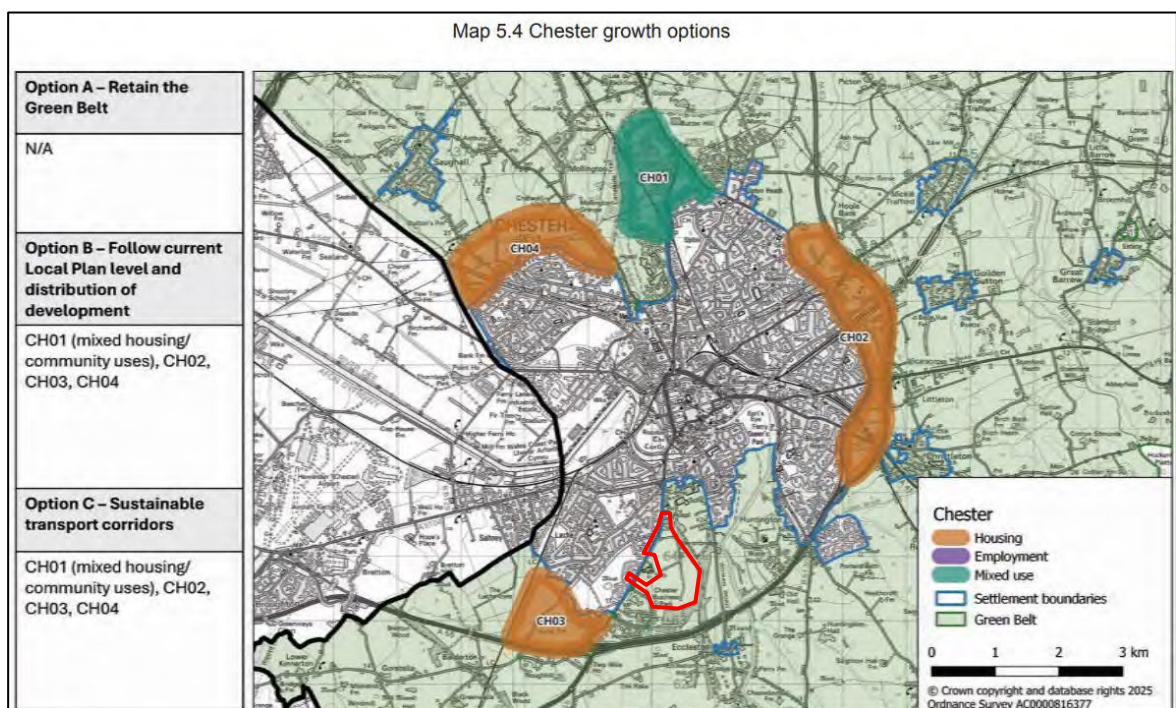
- 2.76 The ILHA concludes that Grosvenor's site, in landscape terms, comprises relatively ordinary agricultural arable fields with limited scenic, recreational, or perceptual value. It lacks public access and is visually and functionally disconnected from the more sensitive and valued parts of the CH1 designation. Duke's Drive corridor, which lies to the east of the Site and is within the Eaton Hall RPG, does meet the criteria of a locally valued landscape, offering public access, mature woodland, and a strong relationship with the River Dee corridor. Dense vegetation along Duke's Drive forms a strong visual and physical boundary, providing effective separation between the Site and this more sensitive landscape.
- 2.77 As such, the Site makes a limited contribution to the overall value and function of the CH1 area.
- 2.78 On the basis of the above, it is necessary for the Council to revisit its approach to the designation of land to the East of Wrexham Road as a Strategic Open Space for Chester. The historical and landscape qualities of the Duke's Drive woodland to the south of Chester are acknowledged by Grosvenor, however, the protection afforded to Grosvenor's agricultural land to the west of this is unfounded.
- 2.79 Furthermore, we enclose Grosvenor's Wrexham Road Promotional Masterplan Document at Appendix 1 of these Representations. That document demonstrates that a development at the Site can maintain a significant buffer to the Duke's Drive and main any important characteristics of the Strategic Open Space which exist at this part of the designation.
- 2.80 In light of the above, we urge the Council as part of its new Local Plan to revisit this policy and the evidence base, which it has historically been based on and remove the Strategic Open Space designation from the land. For the avoidance of doubt, it is our view that the land is not subject to any landscape character, historical or ecological designation, which would warrant its further protection.
- 2.81 It is the role of the new Local Plan to re-assess local designations as the Council considers its housing needs and sustainability locations that are suitable for development and housing allocation. As such, in order to meet the housing requirement over the next plan period, the Council must fully assess potential sites for future growth, which can meet housing needs, rather than relying on a strategy that discounts suitable development in sustainable locations.

2.82 We, therefore, request that the Council considers Grosvenor’s site at Wrexham Road in Chester as a potential growth area, rather than discounting it due to its current and outdated Strategic Open Space designation.

2.83 The Local Plan is clear that the potential growth areas identified in Appendix B will be subject to additional technical work to look in more detail at the constraints, infrastructure capacity and deliverability of all of the potential growth areas. We highlight that these Representations are supported by a suite of supporting technical documents (Appendices 1-5) to assist the Council in its assessment of the suitability of Grosvenor’s site at Wrexham Road for future development.

2.84 Map 5.4 of the draft Plan shows the Council’s potential growth options for Chester and we have highlighted Grosvenor’s site at Wrexham Road in red.

Figure 2: Chester Growth Options



2.85 Four potential growth areas have been identified (CH01, CH02, CH03 and CH04). As shown in Figure 2 above, as Chester is so heavily constrained by the Green Belt there is no option to pursue Spatial Strategy Option A (retention of Green Belt), as we have discussed above.

2.86 As Chester is at the top of the settlement hierarchy, this adds further weight to the fact that Option A is not a suitable strategy, as it will not direct any new development to this important settlement.

2.87 The same goes for Frodsham, Helsby, Neston and Parkgate, Acton Bridge station, Delamere

station, Capenhurst station, Elton station, Hooton station, Lostock Gralam station, and Mouldsworth station. Of the 21 settlement maps identified in the draft Plan, over half of them do not include any potential growth areas and so would not result in Green Belt release; further demonstrating the Green Belt constraints that the Council faces.

- 2.88 In summary, this section of the draft Plan highlights that the retention of Green Belt (i.e. Option A) will mean that potential growth areas cannot be identified in some of the most important settlements in the borough, such as Chester.
- 2.89 Furthermore, we raise significant concerns with the Council's approach to identifying potential growth areas around each settlement, which discounts what the Council considers to be 'showstoppers' such as Strategic Open Space. We consider that the Council should assess each site on its own merits as to whether it can be identified as a potential growth area in the new Local Plan. We consider that the land to the East of Wrexham Road is a suitable site for future allocation which the Council should consider to accommodate circa. 1,100-1,400 new homes and other local benefits, including community infrastructure, medical facility, and green infrastructure.

Chester

- 2.90 The Council recognises that Chester is the borough's largest settlement in terms of population (and dwellings) and is the main centre for offices, employment, culture, retail, leisure, higher education and tourism with a rail station serving London, Manchester, Merseyside and North Wales. As such, it is considered that the largest proportion of housing development should be directed towards this part of the borough. However, as we have noted above, new development in Chester is heavily constrained by the Green Belt and by the Strategic Open Space designation.
- 2.91 Policy STRAT 3 of the Local Plan Part One sets out that Chester is the key economic driver for the borough and will deliver at least 5,200 new dwellings through the plan period; circa ¼ of the borough's development. Circa 1,300 of those dwellings were to be provided through Green Belt release at Chester at land to the west of Wrexham Road (located directly opposite Grosvenor's site to the East of Wrexham Road).
- 2.92 It is Grosvenor's view that the land to the south-east of Chester remains the most logical area for strategic growth to meet the future needs of the city and wider borough. Delivery of homes at the primary service centres within the borough adjacent to existing homes, jobs, facilities and existing transport nodes is a fundamental principle of the planning system and key to reducing unsustainable patterns of travel.
- 2.93 The development to the west of Wrexham Road is well advanced, delivering a modern housing

estate. The scale of that development is likely to deliver development for Chester throughout the remainder of the current plan period. That development then leaves land within Grosvenor's ownership, to the East of Wrexham Road, which is well contained and characterised by Duke's Wood to the east, Chester Business Park to the south (with the A55 beyond) and King's School to the north. This land, previously proposed for development within the Part One Local Plan, provides a primary site for the Council to seek to deliver the homes and jobs that Chester needs into the future through the review of the Green Belt (via a review of STRAT9 or its superseding policy). The land is highly contained and serves a limited function in Green Belt terms.

- 2.94 The development of Grosvenor's land would be developed in accordance with Grosvenor's overarching principles of long-term stewardship and sustainability. The development of the site would provide a different development offer to the ongoing development to the west of Wrexham Road and would focus on other uses and a more sustainable vision; including assisting the Council with its aspirations for conservation and environment for passive design, green energy and zero-carbon transport.
- 2.95 For the reasons set out further in Section 4 of these representations, Grosvenor's land at Wrexham Road should be allocated for residential development under Policy CH1 of the emerging Local Plan.

3.0 Thematic Policies

3.1 This Section of the Representations provides our commentary on the specific policy themes within the Plan, as currently drafted, insofar as they are relevant to Grosvenor's land interests and the soundness of the Plan. These considerations are set out on a theme-by-theme basis, as they are set out within the draft Local Plan but should also be read in the context of the wider considerations, as set out within Section 2 of these Representations.

Green Belt and countryside

3.2 The draft Local Plan recognises at paragraph 13.2 that changes to the latest NPPF has weakened Green Belt protection through the requirement to meet local housing need; the introduction of Grey Belt and relaxation of what constitutes inappropriate development.

3.3 As such, the emerging Local Plan must review Green Belt boundaries as part of its spatial strategy to ensure that the housing requirement can be met and homes are distributed in sustainable locations and where new homes are needed.

3.4 As per our comments earlier in these Representations, we consider that the Council must consider sites for Green Belt release so that new homes can be delivered, which will likely involve a combination of spatial strategy Options B and C. The Council must undertake a Green Belt Assessment of suitable candidates in order to establish which sites serve the weakest function to the Green Belt purposes and may be the most suitable for development.

3.5 We suggest that draft Policy GB1 reflects the current position in terms of Grey Belt and the latest Green Belt review evidence. Grosvenor would support the Council in setting out a clear methodology and approach for the Green Belt Review (as stated in Policy GB1) as soon as possible.

3.6 Notwithstanding this, a Green Belt and Grey Belt Appraisal, prepared by Turley, has been undertaken to assess Grosvenor's site to the East of Wrexham Road, Chester and is included as Appendix 2 of these Representations.

3.7 We ask that the supporting Green Belt and Grey Belt Assessment for the site is considered by the Council as part of its overall Green Belt review for suitable development opportunities over the next plan period.

3.8 To summarise, the study at Appendix 2 concludes that the site at Wrexham Road qualifies as Grey Belt and performs a weak-moderate role against the Green Belt five functions. The assessment also concludes that releasing the site would not compromise the wider function of the Green Belt.

and development would represent a logical and contained extension to Chester.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

- 3.9 The Council's suggested approach is to amend Policy STRAT11 of the Local Plan Part One to make clear that provision for education for all years will be required, and that housing development may need to make provision for school transport costs. The Council also intends to update Policy STRAT11 to include additional contributions, where appropriate, in relation to communication networks, and community, health and cultural facilities, and could include net zero goal by upgrading or improving the existing transport network to encourage sustainable travel and could require low carbon essential infrastructure and renewable energy connections.
- 3.10 The draft Plan notes that a new Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will identify the strategic infrastructure required to deliver the new Local Plan, on a settlement-by-settlement basis. It is crucial that the IDP clearly sets out the infrastructure required to support new development over the next plan period and that the infrastructure sought is viable, so that it does not prevent development from coming forward. This is essential for the deliverability of the Plan.
- 3.11 Paragraph 15.7 of the draft Plan states viability arguments are unlikely to be justified, especially on greenfield sites, and that Council resources should not be relied upon to fund any financial gap in the costs of infrastructure required to mitigate any development and it is expected that developers will fund and/or deliver all the required infrastructure.
- 3.12 It is crucial that the Council publishes a thorough viability assessment of infrastructure needs to ensure that developers are capable of providing contributions necessary to deliver new infrastructure, as well as achieving other policy requirements in relation to affordable housing, biodiversity net gain, flood mitigation etc. Grosvenor considers that the Council's approach as set out above risks rendering developments unviable if the Council expect contributions which are not proportionate to development proposals.
- 3.13 Paragraph 15.8 of the draft Plan recognises that there may be instances where viability is a genuine issue, and the Council will seek views on how infrastructure requirements could be prioritised. The Council then questions whether affordable housing contributions would take precedence over provision of open space or other community facilities such as school and health provision.
- 3.14 In response, development should only be required to mitigate its own impact and not contribute towards wider infrastructure deficiencies which are not directly affected by the proposed development.

Housing

- 3.15 Grosvenor welcomes the recognition within the draft Plan that the Council must identify sufficient housing land supply to meet the increased housing targets prescribed by the latest standard method, which is crucial to support the growing population and ensuring the future prosperity of the borough.
- 3.16 As discussed in these Representations, the latest NPPF has re-introduced mandatory housing requirements and the Council's housing needs have considerably increased. The Council must, therefore, identify sufficient land to ensure its' housing requirements can be met over the next plan period, including an appropriate buffer of housing land supply.
- 3.17 This is to align with the Government's aspiration to significant boost the supply of homes, as set out at paragraph 61 of the NPPF.
- 3.18 The Council's Housing Need Assessment (HNA) is yet to be prepared, and we wish to review and comment on this at the earliest opportunity. This document will be crucial for the Council to determine housing needs in relation to mix and the requirement for affordable housing. The HNA is critical to inform the new Local Plan housing policies to meet the housing needs of the borough.

Policy HO1

- 3.19 The Council proposes substantial changes to Policy SOC3 of the Local Plan Part One and Policy DM20 of the Local Plan Part Two to reflect the outcomes of the HNA which is being prepared.
- 3.20 Whilst we reserve detailed comments until the HNA is published, the new policy approach is anticipated to provide a more detailed requirement in terms of housing mix, tenures, percentage for self-build and custom build homes, requirements to meet the needs of an ageing population and meeting the needs of residents with disabilities.
- 3.21 Grosvenor has concerns that anything which is overly prescriptive could preclude development from coming forward. As such, the policy should include an element of flexibility to ensure that housing needs can be met without housing delivery being stalled. For example, the Council should not be requiring a rigid mix of homes in a location where a developer considers an amended mix would be more suitable to meet local needs as per latest market data, or where it would render a scheme unviable.

Policy HO2

- 3.22 Policy HO2 does not yet include requirements for affordable housing. However, the approach intends to reflect the Government's requirement for housing sites in the Green Belt to provide at least 50% affordable housing, which, subject to viability testing we agree with.
- 3.23 It is worthy of note that the Grosvenor Estate, via Grosvenor Hart Homes (one of the companies in the Grosvenor Group) is an organisation which is planning to make significant investments to provide more than 750 homes, alongside tailored support services, over the next 10 years. Grosvenor Hart Homes is a small, high-quality, specialist provider and Registered Provider of Social Housing. It is envisaged that Grosvenor Hart Homes are likely to be integral to the delivery of development across Grosvenor's Sites.

Health and Wellbeing

- 3.24 Draft Policy HW1 states that proposals will be supported that provide new or improved health facilities across the borough, supports improved links to healthcare in rural areas and promotes safe and accessible environments and developments.
- 3.25 We raise no objection to this part of the policy, but we highlight that Grosvenor's site to the East of Wrexham Road is capable of accommodating a new medical facility which should be viewed favorably by the Council in the context of Policy HW1.
- 3.26 This is explained further in the following section of these Representations, and the Primary Health Care Provision Needs Case (included at Appendix 5) demonstrates that there is a clear need for a new medical facility following the development of the adjacent allocation to the west of Wrexham Road which has put significant pressures on existing facilities, which are also outdated. Grosvenor's site can address this need.

Green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity

- 3.27 Policy GI1 sets out the Council's suggested policy approach in relation to trees which will retain parts of Policy DM45 of the Local Plan Part Two (which requires replacement planting at a ratio of at least two new trees for each tree lost).
- 3.28 Policy GI1 seeks to improve and maintain tree canopy cover within the borough on a strategic level and rank wards by existing tree cover, where development in these wards will need to provide additional green space as would normally be required. Policy GI1 sets a target of 16% tree cover for all wards. However, there is no information or evidence which confirms what the existing tree

cover for each ward is and how the figure of 16% has been arrived at by the Council.

- 3.29 There is a risk that this could be onerous to developers and create viability issues, as well as affecting the developable area of sites which would be at odds with the Council's requirements to meet its minimum housing needs.
- 3.30 Therefore, Grosvenor is concerned with the policy approach of GI1 as currently drafted, as developers will be expected to provide different levels of green infrastructure / tree cover depending on the existing tree cover within each ward, irrespective of other benefits associated with the proposed developments.
- 3.31 Tree planting should, instead, be considered on a site-by-site basis and take into account tree loss, the condition and maturity of trees, biodiversity net gain, provision of open space, SuDS and a range of other matters which can make up a sustainable development.
- 3.32 It is unclear what the proposed tree canopy requirements have been based on, and we raise concerns that the quantum of tree canopy cover across each ward will have implications in relation to other policy requirements of the draft Local Plan, such as housing density and meeting housing requirements.
- 3.33 The Council should be seeking to maximise the developable area of sites in order to achieve its minimum housing requirement. Onerous policy requirements in terms of tree canopy cover could affect how many homes can be delivered on each site, particularly in wards with lower tree cover.
- 3.34 We consider the policy approach in Policy DM45, which sets out the requirements for replacement tree planting is more appropriate, and still ensures a net gain in tree cover across the borough.

Design and sustainable construction

- 3.35 Whilst Grosvenor does not raise any specific comments on the design related policies within the draft Plan, we note that any policy requirement should align with national policy and the not exceed the requirements contained within the latest Building Regulations.
- 3.36 The draft Plan confirms that a borough-wide Design Code is being prepared to inform the design policies of the Local Plan. Grosvenor would welcome being involved in the engagement on the draft Design Code once it is published for consultation.
- 3.37 Grosvenor advances a sustainably focused agenda for the long term strategy and stewardship of its holding. This means working with communities to provide a wide number of benefits to residents and the economy in the rural area. The estate has managed the rural environment with the same quality and well considered restraint that it has cared for its built assets. That approach will continue into the future as the estate progresses its Eaton Design Guide, which secures the

longevity and sustainability of rural estates within the borough which are not otherwise supported through policy R1 of the Part Two Local Plan.

- 3.38 As per our comments set out in Section 2 of these representations, Grosvenor welcomes the aspiration to plan towards greater energy efficiency and carbon reduction. However, the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned building regulations.
- 3.39 If the Council is to set an increase of a building's TER above the building regulations, then it must have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale that ensures development remains viable, and the impact on housing supply and affordability is considered in accordance with the NPPF. Otherwise, the increase will be rejected by the Inspector at examination (as confirmed in the 2023 WMS).
- 3.40 We also note concerns regarding the requirement within Policy DS2 for on-site renewable energy generation as part of new development. Whilst there may be potential for energy to come from renewable or low carbon sources as part of future proposals, it may be more sustainable and efficient to use larger scale sources. The policy also does not consider the energy efficiency of the development, which may mean small scale renewables or low carbon energy generation are not necessary. The proposed policy will also need to be considered flexibly for situations where the use of renewables such as PV is not appropriate for the building or development.
- 3.41 As such, we consider that on-site renewable energy generation should not be a requirement for all new development and should instead be encouraged and included wherever possible / appropriate.
- 3.42 Policy DS2 states new dwellings will be required to meet the optional higher National Housing Standard for water consumption of 110 litres per person per day. We suggest this is omitted from the policy and it is considered unnecessarily onerous and does not align with the Building Regulations which requires all new dwellings to achieve a mandatory level of water efficiency of 125 litres per day per person, which is a higher standard than that achieved by much of the existing housing stock.
- 3.43 As such, it is not considered that the maximum water consumption limit set out in Policy DS2 is justified by any evidence. As set out in PPG, it will be for a LPA to establish a clear need based on existing sources of evidence, consultations with the local water and sewerage company, the Environment Agency and catchment partnerships and consideration of the impact on viability and housing supply of such a requirement. We consider that requirement for optional water efficiency standard is not justified nor consistent with national policy.

4.0 Grosvenor Eaton Estate's Land Interests

- 4.1 This section of our Representations seeks to introduce the Council to Grosvenor's land interests within the borough, which are being promoted as suitable options for Green Belt release and allocation for residential-led development in the forthcoming Local Plan.
- 4.2 The primary focus of this section is the Land to the East of Wrexham Road which is an exciting opportunity in the south of Chester for a strategic allocation for circa. 1,100-1,400 dwellings, alongside the potential for community infrastructure, a new medical facility, and plethora of green infrastructure and ecological enhancements.
- 4.3 Grosvenor also has land interests in Waverton and Churton which are considered suitable for housing allocation to support the role and function of the borough's smaller settlements which are promoted in the latter part of this section.
- 4.4 Overall, Grosvenor's land interests which are explored in more detail below include:
- 1) Land to the East of Wrexham Road, Chester (c.70ha).
 - 2) Land at Common Lane, Waverton (c.13.5ha).
 - 3) Land at Saighton Lane, Waverton (c.13.79ha).
 - 4) Land off Guy Lane, Waverton (c.12.7ha).
 - 5) Land at the Junction of Guy Lane and Martins Lane, Waverton (c.5.2ha).
 - 6) Land at Pump Lane, Churton (c.1.12ha).
- 4.5 Grosvenor has undertaken ecological assessments for its land interests above which confirm that there are no ecological constraints which would act as a barrier to future development. The ecological work which has been undertaken can be shared with the Council upon request.
- 4.6 As discussed in the previous sections of these Representations, the latest NPPF has changed the climate for residential development both nationally but also locally in Cheshire West and Chester. As part of the changes, the Standard Housing Method has been revised, increasing the local housing need for Cheshire West and Chester by 814 homes per year to 1,914.
- 4.7 Given this increase, and the fact that Chester and most of the northern settlements are constrained by the Green Belt, we believe Cheshire West and Chester must release suitable Green Belt sites which can accommodate sustainable development over the next plan period.
- 4.8 Grosvenor considers that a comprehensive review of the Green Belt is necessary and fundamental to the future success and prosperity of the borough into the next plan period beyond. In planning for the sustainable future development within the borough, Chester will clearly need to be one³¹ of

the main focusses for development and a review of Green Belt land to support that development must be considered.

Land East of Wrexham Road, Chester

Context

- 4.9 This section should be read in conjunction with the accompanying promotional document titled '*Wrexham Road – A Sustainable Urban Extension for Chester*' which is included as Appendix 1 of these Representations.
- 4.10 The site is within the Green Belt and forms part of broader area of Strategic Open Space as shown on the adopted Policies Map. As discussed in Section 2 of these Representations, adopted Local Plan Part Two Policy CH1 identifies strategic open space, and the designation was informed by the study '*Chester: The Future of an Historic City*' (June 1994).
- 4.11 However, as discussed within these Representations, the built context of the area has undergone significant change over the last 30 years, particularly in relation to Grosvenor's site and the development opposite to the west Wrexham Road.
- 4.12 The supporting ILHA included as Appendix 3 confirms that the site comprises relatively ordinary agricultural fields with limited scenic, recreational, or perceptual value. It lacks public access and is visually and functionally disconnected from the more sensitive and valued parts of the Strategic Open Space designation.
- 4.13 Furthermore, the Green and Grey Belt Assessment in Appendix 2 concludes that the site is classified as Grey Belt and performs only a weak-moderate Green Belt role and capable of accommodating development without undermining its strategic function.
- 4.14 Therefore, given the urbanising nature of the surrounding area, the Council's increased housing requirement and the characteristics of the site, it is considered as a logical and sustainable location for growth on the settlement edge of Chester.

Site Description

- 4.15 The site is located to the East of Wrexham Road, approximately 2km to the south of Chester City Centre. The site comprises predominantly arable agricultural land and extends to circa. 70 hectares.
- 4.16 The site abuts the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden, at Duke's Drive, which flanks the northern tip of the site and the eastern site boundary.

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- 4.17 The site is enclosed by clearly defined boundaries. It is contained by the A483 and The King's School to the west, existing woodland to the east, Chester Business Park to the southwest and to the north of the site is a tennis club and private medical facility. The A55 Chester Southerly Bypass lies immediately beyond the southern boundary, providing strong containment to the edge of development in this area.
- 4.18 Wrexham Road has recently seen significant residential development with a number of new residential site access junctions being created along its length. King's Moat residential development which secured outline planning permission for 1,400 residential dwellings is directly to the west of the site. Under Policy STRAT3 of the Local Plan Part One, the adjacent site was released from the Green Belt. As such, the Council has already considered Green Belt release as appropriate in this part of Chester.
- 4.19 Overall, Wrexham Road has an urbanised character. The route is well lit, with bus lanes and cycle lanes. The surrounding context to Wrexham Road is urban, with residential, education and commercial land uses situated to its west and east. Only brief views are available of the fields located to the west of Wrexham, which is broken up by existing development and the School. These views are not considered to be particularly special, and are viewed from an urban context, with other development seen in the background.
- 4.20 The Site is sustainably located to the east of Wrexham Road (A483), which is an arterial route linking Chester to Wrexham. The A483 provides a prominent active travel corridor, being provided with a shared footway/cycleway, with links to a number of routes, and a busy bus corridor with regular bus services including the Wrexham Road Park and Ride service, which benefits from a designated bus lane for journeys into the city centre.
- 4.21 Chester Train Station is also located approximately 2 miles north east of the Site and provides trains to Liverpool, Birmingham, Holyhead, Manchester, Crewe, Leeds and Cardiff. Chester City Centre can be accessed within a half-an-hour walk via the dedicated pedestrian and cycle path along the A483.
- 4.22 Overall, the site is sustainably located to make best use of existing services, amenities and employment opportunities in Chester Town Centre and Chester Business Park and will make a logical extension to the existing urban area. The Site also benefits from proximity to a range of sustainable transport options which will reduce future resident's reliance on the private car.
- 4.23 Accordingly, Grosvenor submits its land to the East of Wrexham Road as a suitable, available and developable development site which is capable of delivering high-quality and sustainable homes worthy of future generations of the borough and in keeping with the aspirations of the Council

tackle climate change and future proof the borough.

Masterplan

- 4.24 An extract of the Emerging Masterplan contained in the promotional document at Appendix 1 is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Extract of the Emerging Masterplan



- 4.25 The concept Masterplan illustrates how the site could accommodate approximately 1,100–1,400 new homes which would provide a valuable contribution towards housing delivery in Chester. The Masterplan also includes the potential to provide a new health facility and potential community uses, alongside interconnected open space and green infrastructure, which would create opportunities for play, sport and recreation.
- 4.26 The proposals seek to strengthen active travel links to Duke's Drive, enhancing public access and enjoyment of this valued green corridor to maximise its use for existing and future residents.
- 4.27 Grosvenor considers that the development of the site would provide a significant opportunity to enhance the contribution that the site can make to its environs. The development of the site can deliver a comprehensive scheme of open space and green infrastructure networks to enhance the recreational value of the site.

-
- 4.28 An important potential feature of the Masterplan is the opportunity to deliver a new, much needed new medical facility at the site.
- 4.29 A Primary Health Care Provision Needs Case, prepared by Stantec on behalf of NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, is included at Appendix 5 of these Representations. The NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (the ICB) are proposing to develop a new facility within the Chester South Primary Care Network (PCN) .
- 4.30 Originally, the Wrexham Road development directly to the west of Grosvenor’s site was proposed to include a small on-site health facility (600 sqm), but this was deemed insufficient given wider shortfalls in provision and inconsistent with NHS strategy to shift toward integrated, community-based care within a growing population. Instead, a Section 106 contribution of approximately £2.3 million was secured to support an off-site facility.
- 4.31 With the addition of the new dwellings and residents associated with the adjacent development to the West of Wrexham Road, the current NHS estate cannot accommodate increasing demand.
- 4.32 The note at Appendix 5 concludes that there is a need for a new healthcare facility in Chester South, driven by the inadequacy of existing infrastructure to meet current and projected demand, with existing facilities no longer fit for purpose.
- 4.33 To address these challenges, a new, purpose-built health facility would be the most appropriate option. Grosvenor’s site is capable of delivering said facility, which should be considered as a major benefit of the site’s promotion. Indeed, it is the conclusion of the wider work undertaken by the NHS that is Site is the only available site to deliver such a facility.
- 4.34 Overall, the key opportunities and benefits associated with the Emerging Masterplan for Grosvenor’s site includes, but is not limited to:
- Deliver of 1,100-1,400 homes to make a valuable contribution towards housing delivery and affordable homes.
 - Potential to deliver a new health facility / medical practice.
 - Potential for additional facilities such as a community centre, sports hub or new primary school.
 - Play space and neighbourhood park and pocket parks.
 - Allotments / community orchard.
 - New playing pitches or sports facility.
 - A comprehensive landscaping scheme including a connected network of green spaces and substantial tree planting.
 - Active-travel-focused streets and enhanced connections to Dukes Drive.
 - Provision of wetland / SuDs.

- Sustainable design and construction which mitigates the impacts of climate change.

- 4.35 The Masterplan has also been informed by the conclusions and recommendations contained in the accompanying ILHA. Therefore, the vision for the site is to retain and reinforce trees along Wrexham Road, field hedgerows, tree clumps, ponds and the dense vegetation on the Duke's Drive edge to the east. The Masterplan seeks to provide a landscaped buffer to the eastern boundary, helping to separate new homes from Eaton Hall RPG, minimise visual effects and maintain a green swathe extending south from the city and apply lower densities towards the eastern boundary.
- 4.36 Further to the above, Astute Transport Planning has undertaken a Transport Paper (Appendix 4) to support the proposed allocation of the site. The assessment confirms that the Site is accessible from the surrounding highway network. A variety of access arrangements are possible, including a primary point of access from Wrexham Road, supported by a secondary access capable of serving an agreed number of homes, together with an emergency / active travel access.
- 4.37 The supporting work from Astute confirms that, based on the emerging Masterplan, the proposed site would be suitable from a national and local planning policy perspective, in terms of transport.
- 4.38 In addition to the above, Grosvenor are in communication with the Local Highways Authority to discuss the potential of the Site to assist the Council in resolving existing surface water drainage issues in the vicinity. Grosvenor will work with the LHA throughout the plan making process on to explore opportunities on the Site (and other land holdings) to assist the Council with resolving those issues.
- 4.39 Overall, the site is suitable, available and achievable and Grosvenor seeks to work collaboratively with the Council to ensure the scheme delivers a lasting legacy for Chester.

Other Opportunity Sites

- 4.40 Further to the above promotion of Grosvenor's site at Wrexham Road in Chester, Grosvenor also controls a number of sites elsewhere in the borough, which we consider to be suitable locations for growth which can support the vitality and viability of smaller rural settlements over the next plan period.
- 4.41 It should be noted that Grosvenor has previously submitted its land interests at Common Lane Waverton, North of Waverton Business Park, and North of Pump Lane Churton via the Call for Sites process. However, those previous Call for Sites submissions are superseded by the below as the red line boundaries for Grosvenor's land interests have been revised (as per the Site Plans enclosed at Appendices 6-10).

Land at Common Lane, Waverton

- 4.42 As shown on the Site Plan at Appendix 6 of these Representations, this Site is located to the east of Common Lane in Waverton and to the southeast of Waverton Community Primary School and comprises part greenfield part brownfield land, extending to circa. 13.5 hectares.
- 4.43 The Site is predominantly within Flood Zone 1 with some patches of Flood Zone 2 and 3 and is within the Green Belt. Development can be advanced without requiring development within Flood Zone 2 or 3.
- 4.44 The nearest bus stops are located on Eggbridge Lane and can be accessed within a 2-minute walk, providing hourly services to Chester, Whitchurch and Tattenhall. The nearest Train Station is located within Chester City Centre, approximately 3.5 miles north west of the Site, and provides trains to Liverpool, Birmingham, Holyhead, Manchester, Crewe, Leeds and Cardiff. The Shropshire Union Canal towpath also offers a recreational walking/cycling route connecting Chester to Nantwich.
- 4.45 Notwithstanding the Site's close proximity to public transport, which provide access to the wider surrounding area, Waverton offers a vairyety of local facilities, such as Waverton Community Primary School, a Church, a convenience store, and a number of restaurants, bars and takeaways. Recreation greenspaces, including Waverton Village Hall Playground and Waverton pump track are also located directly adjacent to the north west boundary of the Site. It is considered that the development of the Site will assist in meeting some of the future growth needs in Waverton and will also contribute to expanding existing facilities in the future.
- 4.46 This represents a logical residential extension to Waverton, rounding off the settlement pattern to the southwest. The Site is well connected to the existing village and facilities.
- 4.47 Our view is that this Site is well contained by natural and man made features and would likely present a candidate for development as a Grey Belt Site. The northern part of the Site in particular performs a very limited role in terms of Green Belt function in regard to points a), b) and d) of NPPF paragraph 143.
- 4.48 As per Grosvenor's call for sites submission, the Site is considered suitable to accommodate education, employment, residential or mixed use development.

Land at Saighton Lane, Waverton

- 4.49 As shown on the Site Plan at Appendix 7, the Site is sustainably located to the south east of Chester in the village of Waverton. The Site comprises three main parcels of land extending to circa. 13.79 hectares and is adjacent to Whitchurch Road (A41), an arterial route which connects Chester to

Whitchurch, to the north east and Saughton Lane to the south east.

- 4.50 Waverton Business Park is located adjacent to the Site and agricultural land extends from the western boundary. The nearest bus stops are located on Whitchurch Road, directly adjacent to the north east boundary of the Site, and offer buses every hour to Chester, Whitchurch and Tattenhall. Chester Train Station is located within Chester City Centre, approximately 3.5 miles north west of the Site, and provides trains to Liverpool, Birmingham, Holyhead, Manchester, Crewe, Leeds and Cardiff.
- 4.51 The Site benefits from its proximity to public transport, which provide access to the wider surrounding area, and Waverton offers a variety of local facilities as identified above.
- 4.52 The Site is well contained by the existing highway network and by Waverton Business Park. The Site also benefits from the natural field boundaries, beyond which residential properties on to the east and west. It is considered that the development of the Site will assist in meeting some of the future growth needs in Waverton and contribute to expanding existing facilities in the future.
- 4.53 The Site is, therefore, sustainably located to make best use of existing services, amenities and employment opportunities in the surrounding area, and will make a logical extension to the existing urban area. This Site represents a logical opportunity for employment / mixed use, as an extension to the business park. In the face of significantly increased housing numbers within Cheshire West and Chester, the Council should support the infilling of the gap between the business park and existing built-up area of Waverton.
- 4.54 For the reasons set out above, the site does not check the unrestricted sprawl of Waverton. Our view is that the site presents a good candidate for development as a Grey Belt Site, particularly the northern parcels which perform a very limited role in terms of Green Belt function in regard to points a), b) and d) of NPPF paragraph 143. Development of the site would be a logical extension to Waverton and would not result in the merging of towns of harm to the special character of historic towns.

Land off Guy Lane, Waverton

- 4.55 This Site is approximately 12.7 hectares and is located to the south of Guy Lane in Waverton and is situated between existing residential development on the eastern edge of the main built up area, and Eaton Golf Club. A Site Plan is enclosed at Appendix 8 of these Representations.
- 4.56 The Site has clearly defined boundaries and is enclosed on all sides by existing development and strong natural features.

- 4.57 For the same reasons set out above for other sites in Waverton, the Site is considered as a logical rounding off to the existing settlement of Waverton and benefits from its proximity to public transport links and local services and amenities located within Waverton.
- 4.58 We consider the site to be an excellent candidate as a Grey Belt site as it has clearly defined edges, bound on two sides by existing development and as a whole the site performs a very limited role in terms of Green Belt function at points a), b) and d) of NPPF paragraph 143.

Land at junction of Guy Lane, and Martin's Lane, Waverton

- 4.59 As shown on the Site Plan at Appendix 9, this Site is located to the south of Guy Lane and directly to the east of Eaton Golf Club.
- 4.60 The Site extends to circa. 5.2 hectares and includes Guy Lane Farm, comprising a number of farm buildings and adjoining agricultural land. Grosvenor's aspiration for the Site is to redevelop the existing farm buildings for residential development, with the longer term vision for the estate to develop the adjacent land beyond the farmstead for a residential-led scheme with the potential for commercial and leisure use.
- 4.61 The Site is considered suitable for development and bound on all sides by development, serving a limited Green Belt function and is considered to be a suitable Grey Belt site as it is enclosed by existing field boundaries to the east and by Guy Lane and Martin's Lane to the north and east, will not result in the merging of towns and will preserve the setting and special character of the boroughs historic towns.

Land at Pump Lane, Churton

- 4.62 This Site is located in the village of Churton, approximately 6 miles north-east of Wrexham and 6 miles south of Chester. A Site Plan is included at Appendix 10.
- 4.63 The Site comprises a mix of brownfield and greenfield land extending to circa 1.12 hectares. The Site is bounded by New Lane to the west, a private driveway to the north, and existing properties located on Pump Lane to the south. Agricultural land extends from the eastern boundary. The Site is, therefore, well contained and would comprise a sustainable and logical infill site.
- 4.64 The closest bus stops are located on Chester Road (B5130), which can be accessed within a 2-minute walk. From here, regular services to Chester, Wrexham and Holt are provided. Train stations are located within both Chester City Centre and Wrexham Town Centre, where services to Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Crewe, Leeds and various locations in North and South Wales can be accessed.

- 4.65 Notwithstanding the Site's close proximity to public transport, which provide access to the wider surrounding areas of Chester and Wrexham, local facilities, such as a primary school, a doctors surgery, a Church, convenience shops, and a variety of restaurants, cafes and takeaways are located in Farndon, which is approximately 1 mile to the south of the Site.
- 4.66 The Site in Churton is likely to support services within the nearby rural settlements of Farndon and Holt.
- 4.67 The scale of Churton is likely to lend itself to small scale infill and back land development. As such, it is considered appropriate to accommodate small scale residential development to support the vitality and viability of this rural settlement.
- 4.68 It is our view is that this Site is well contained and represents a small infill site which would likely present a candidate for development as a Grey Belt Site. The site is on the edge of Churton and its scale and adjacent features means it does not check the unrestricted sprawl of Churton and the site does not prevent the merging with a neighbouring town. Furthermore, this site does not serve a function in preserving the setting and special character of the boroughs historic towns. As such, we consider the site to have a very limited role in terms of Green Belt function in regard to points a), b) and d) of NPPF paragraph 143 and passes as a Grey Belt site.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 These Representations are submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council (the “Council”) on behalf of our Client, Grosvenor’s Eaton Estate, in response to the Council’s Regulation 18 Consultation on the Draft Local Plan which was published for consultation on 4th July 2025.
- 5.2 Grosvenor welcomes the progress made by the Council in getting to this stage of the new Local Plan, and its intention to meeting the development needs of the borough. Notwithstanding this, Grosvenor has raised a number of concerns; primarily in relation to the Spatial Strategy Options and potential growth areas which must ensure that the Council can meet its housing requirement, whilst ensuring that a proportionate amount of development is directed to each of its settlements. We also provides commentary on several thematic policies in relation to Green Belt, Infrastructure, Housing, Health and Wellbeing, Green Infrastructure, and Design and Sustainable Construction.
- 5.3 It is not considered that maintaining the Green Belt will be sufficient to meet the Council’s uplifted housing requirement introduced using the Standard Method calculation, nor would it direct a sufficient level of growth to the borough’s most sustainable settlements such as Chester, which is heavily constrained by the Green Belt (which covers 42% of the borough).
- 5.4 The review of the Local Plan should maintain Chester as the main focus for growth and the borough’s key driver for economic growth. Delivering Chester’s next period of growth for the emerging plan period will require further strategic land allocations, which will require a further review of the Green Belt in order to meet the Council’s increased housing requirement of 1,914dpa.
- 5.5 Grosvenor’s site to the East of Wrexham Road, Chester, has not been considered as one of the four potential growth areas in Chester on the basis of its historic Strategic Open Space designation. For the reasons set out within these Representations, and the supporting evidence enclosed within the appendices, we consider that the Council should re-consider Grosvenor’s site on its own merits as a sustainable, logical and strategic allocation opportunity.
- 5.6 Grosvenor considers that the land to the East of Wrexham Road which is contained on all sides by development, save for the Duke’s Drive, which contains the land to the east, provides a primary opportunity for further release of land from the Green Belt for development. Development of the site in co-operation with the estate would provide the Council with the opportunity to establish a truly sustainable and future proof residential-led development in line with the Council’s aspirations for passive building and environmentally friendly infrastructure. The estate is keen to explore that option further with the Council.
- 5.7 Furthermore, in order to enable the continued vibrancy and vitality of the borough’s rural settlements

there will be a need to adopt a more flexible approach to development proposals submitted in these areas during the plan period. Policies should seek to enable (where sustainable) the establishment of new businesses, expansion/diversification of existing businesses, improvement of services, and delivery of new housing of a sufficient mix and tenure to meet local housing needs.

- 5.8 Grosvenor considers that there is opportunity in Waverton for the allocation of land to provide smaller scale housing development to meet local needs and help maintain the vitality and vibrancy of the village and its current function as a Local Service Centre.
- 5.9 Grosvenor has identified four potential sites on the edge of Waverton, which it controls and that can assist the Council in supporting the function of this settlement. An additional site in Churton is also promoted for small scale, infill residential development to ensure the future vitality and viability of this rural settlement.
- 5.10 In summary, the Local Plan must ensure that new development is located in sustainable locations, which supports the role and function of each settlement and the future housing needs of its residents. The Local Plan must plan for a proportionate level of growth towards each settlement, which we consider will require the release of Green Belt land that serves the weakest role against the Green Belt functions.
- 5.11 The Local Plan must also be supported by sufficient evidence to ensure that the most suitable sites are allocated for future development, and that the requirements set out in its policies are reasonable and viable. The Local Plan should not place onerous requirements on applicants, which would preclude development from coming forward when the Council should be supporting sustainable development to meet the Government's aim of significantly boosting the supply of homes.
- 5.12 We trust that these Representations will be afforded full consideration by the Council and would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Council to discuss further.

Appendix 1 – Wrexham Road Promotional Masterplan Document

Wrexham Road

A Sustainable Urban Extension for Chester

Local Plan Allocation Submission | Grosvenor's Eaton Estate



GROSVENOR



This document has been prepared by Grosvenor's Eaton Estate ('Grosvenor') to demonstrate the development potential of land at Wrexham Road, Chester. As a long-term landowner, Grosvenor places great importance on legacy and the creation of high-quality places.

To inform this work, Grosvenor has commissioned a multidisciplinary team of planning, landscape, highways and design professionals to investigate the Site and shape an emerging concept masterplan. The work is not fixed but is intended to illustrate how the Site could accommodate development in a sustainable and sensitive way, while delivering lasting benefits for Chester and its communities.



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Executive Summary

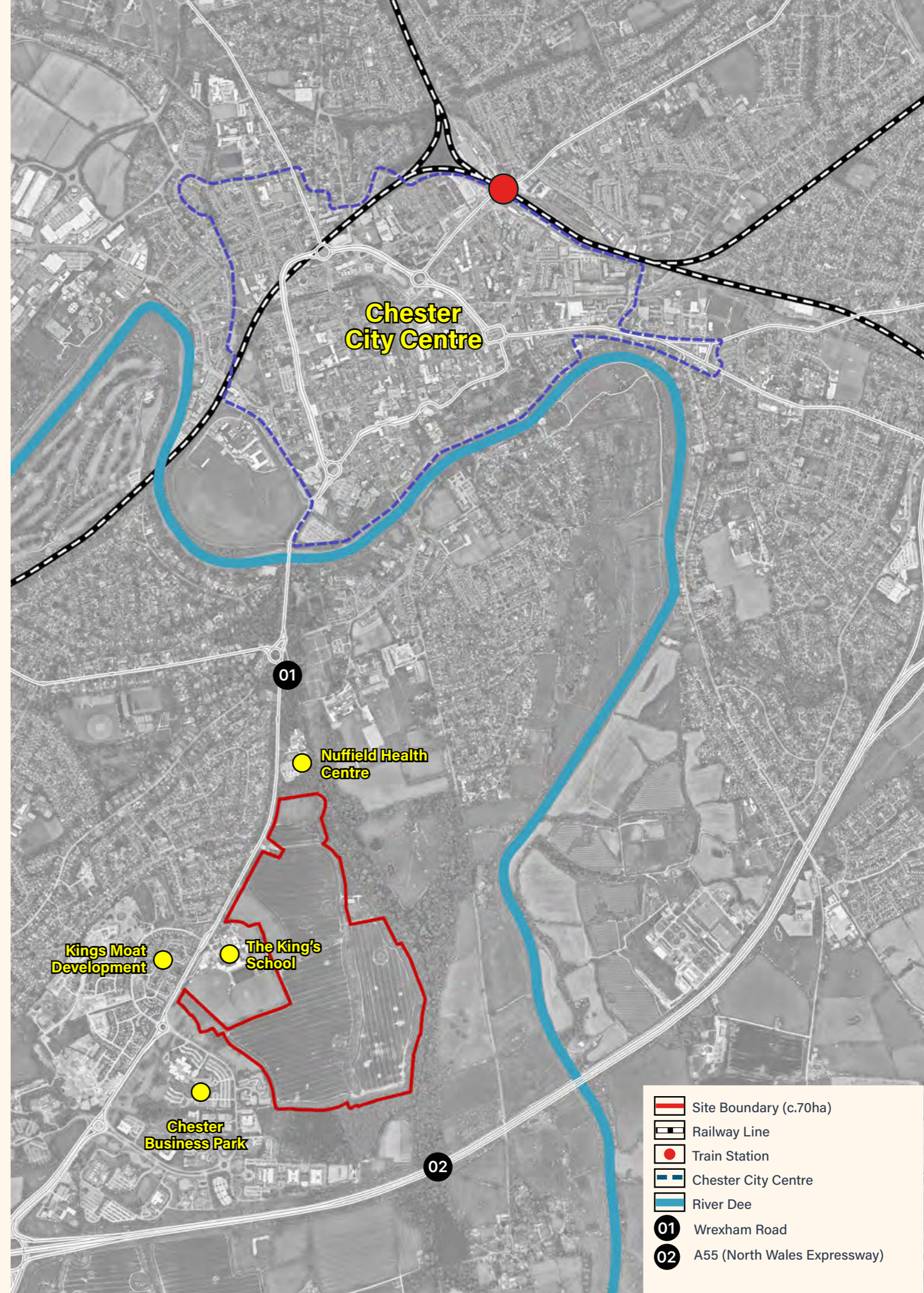
Grosvenor is promoting a residential-led proposal for our land at Wrexham Road, Chester (the Site), through Cheshire West and Chester Regulation 18 Local Plan Issues and Options Draft 2025. This document sets out our clear commitment to bring forward a high-quality residential-led development of approximately 1,200–1,400 homes, alongside community facilities and enhanced green infrastructure. It demonstrates the Site's suitability, availability and achievability, while recognising that the final design and layout will be refined collaboratively with the Council to ensure the scheme delivers a lasting legacy for Chester.

The Site extends to around 70 hectares on the southern edge of Chester, 2km from the city centre. It is highly accessible served by frequent public transport. Located opposite the King's Moat residential development, and enclosed by existing development, woodland and the A55, the Site qualifies as grey belt and it represents a logical opportunity for Green Belt release.

Our assessments confirm:

- **Green Belt & Appropriateness:** Classified as 'grey belt' performing only a weak-moderate Green Belt role and capable of accommodating development without undermining its strategic function.
- **Landscape & Heritage:** An intensively managed urban-fringe landscape, with limited wider visibility. Sensitive, landscape-led design can safeguard the setting of Duke's Drive and the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden, while strengthening green infrastructure and open space access.
- **Highways & Movement:** Accessible from Wrexham Road with capacity for a primary and secondary vehicular access, supported by emergency and active travel links.
- **Ecology:** Initial appraisals identify scope for further survey work but confirm the Site has capacity to achieve biodiversity net gain.

The concept masterplan illustrates how the Site could accommodate around 1,200–1,400 new homes, together with a new health facility and potential community uses. A connected framework of green and blue infrastructure would create opportunities for play, sport and recreation. Crucially, the proposals also strengthen active travel links to Duke's Drive, enhancing public access and enjoyment of this valued green corridor.



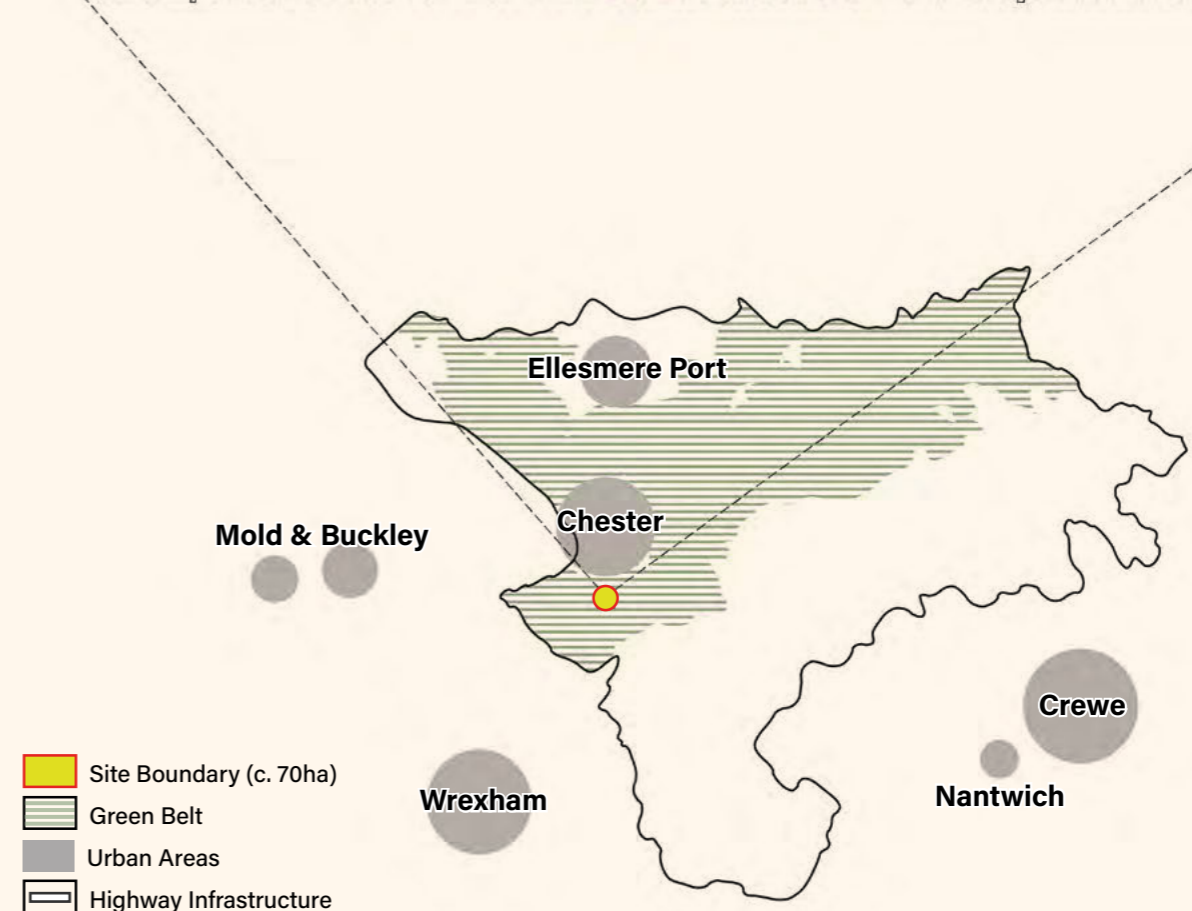
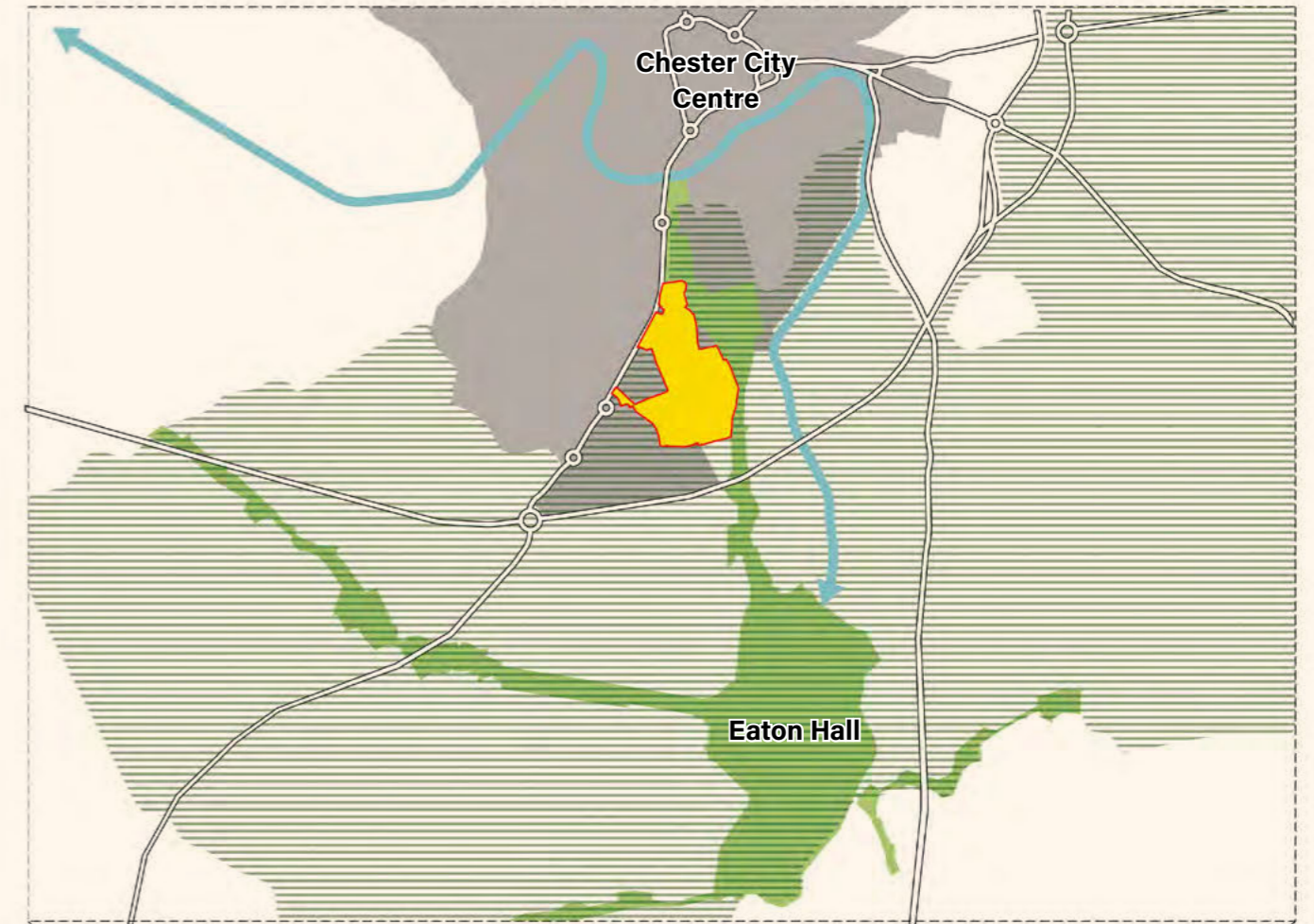
- Site Boundary (c.70ha)
- Railway Line
- Train Station
- Chester City Centre
- River Dee
- 01 Wrexham Road
- 02 A55 (North Wales Expressway)

Grey Belt Classification

The Green and Grey Belt Appraisal, prepared by Turley, confirms that the Site qualifies as grey belt. It is enclosed by permanent boundaries and not subject to overriding environmental or heritage constraints. The assessment also concludes that releasing the Site would not compromise the wider function of the Green Belt, and development would represent a logical and contained extension to Chester.

Assessment Summary:

- **Purpose (a) - Check unrestricted sprawl:** Moderate contribution. The Site is already strongly influenced by urban features, including the King's Moat residential development, Chester Business Park, The King's School and the Nuffield Health Centre, as well as major road infrastructure. These features also act as clear and permanent edges, alongside the A55 (Wrexham Road) and mature woodland belts, ensuring development would remain contained
- **Purpose (b) - Prevent towns merging:** Weak contribution. The Site does not form part of a strategic gap. Development would not risk coalescence, with separation between Chester and Ellesmere Port maintained by the wider Green Belt.
- **Purpose (c) - Safeguard the countryside from encroachment:** Weak-moderate contribution. While development would introduce built form, the Site is already urban-fringe in character and enclosed by neighbouring development. Extensive open landscapes beyond the A55, which perform this purpose more strongly, would remain safeguarded.
- **Purpose (d) - Preserve the setting of historic towns:** Moderate contribution. The Site lies within Chester's wider setting but is visually separated from the historic core by modern development and vegetation. Sensitive treatment of the relationship with Duke's Drive/Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden will be required
- **Purpose (e) - Assist in urban regeneration:** Applies equally to all Green Belt sites. Release here would not prejudice regeneration elsewhere.



Strategic Opportunity

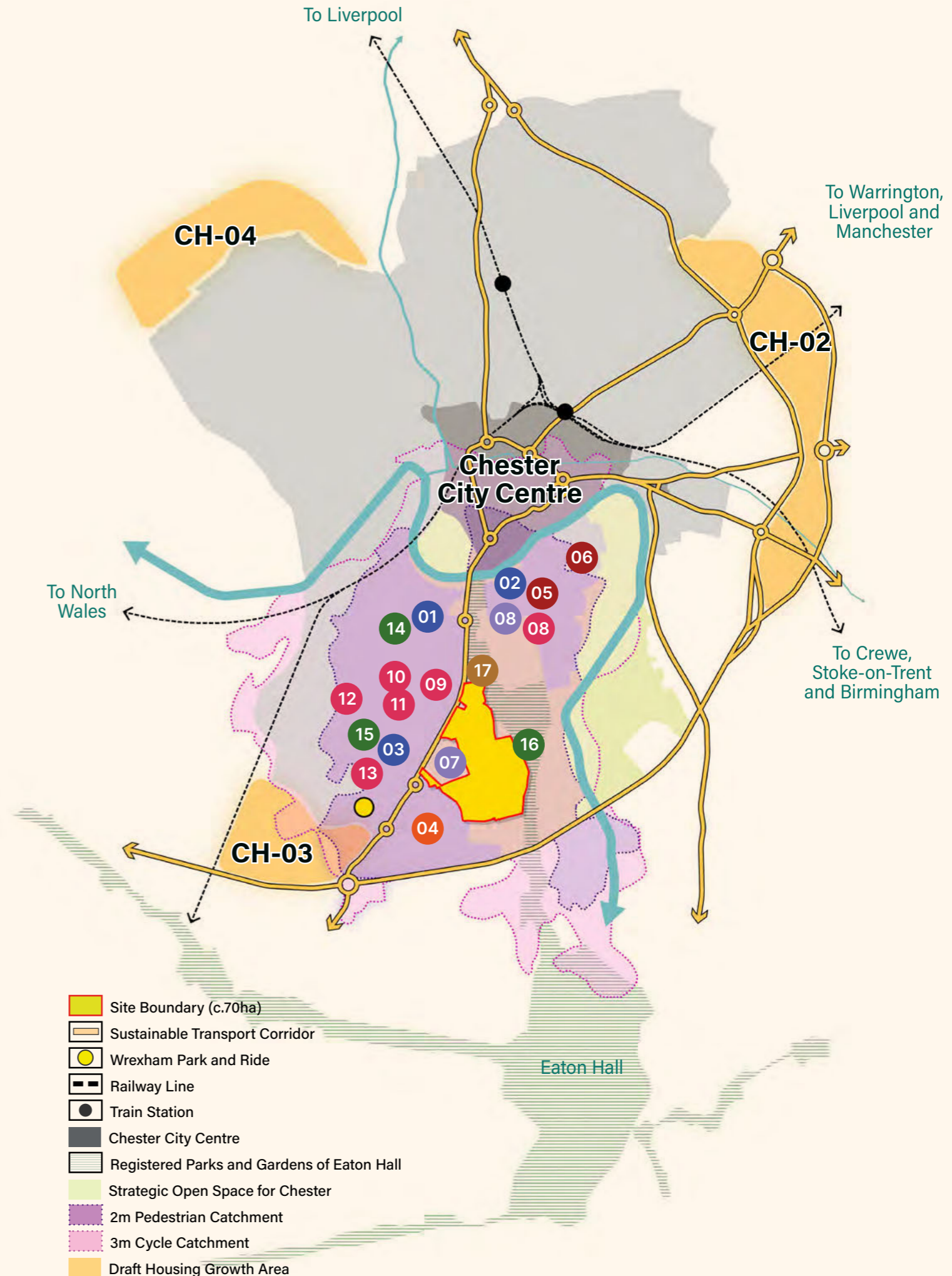
The Site is located just 2km from the city centre, accessible via the Wrexham Road sustainable transport corridor. It benefits from nearby amenities, including new facilities planned adjacent to Wrexham Road, and lies within walking distance of Chester Business Park. The scale of the Site also creates the opportunity to deliver additional amenities that complement the wider offer.

Strategic Influences

- **Public transport:** Direct access to a high-frequency bus route into Chester and nearby communities.
- **Walking & cycling:** Within 2 km walk/ 5 km cycle of the city centre, Business Park, schools and local centres.
- **Education:** Strong provision of primary and secondary schools, plus University of Chester and a nearby college.
- **Highway access:** Strong links via Wrexham Road (A483) and close to the A55.
- **Healthcare:** Close to Grosvenor Nuffield Hospital, with potential for a new health facility on Site.
- **Employment:** Immediate access to Chester Business Park.
- **Local centres:** Near to local centres at Westminster Park, Handbridge and Moat Park (planned).
- **Recreation and green space:** Adjoining Duke's Drive, with wider access to Westminster Park and planned facilities at Moat Park and Playing Fields.

- 01 Westminster Park Local Centre
- 02 Handbridge Local Centre
- 03 Planned Wrexham Road Village Centre
- 04 Chester Business Park
- 05 Cheshire College South & West
- 06 University of Chester, Queen's Park Campus
- 07 The Kings School
- 08 Pauline Quirke Academy of Performing Arts Chester
- 09 Overleigh St. Mary's Primary School
- 10 Belgrave Primary School
- 11 Lache Primary School
- 12 St Clares Catholic Primary School
- 13 Planned Wrexham Road Primary School
- 14 Westminster Park
- 15 Planned Moat Park & Playing Fields
- 16 Duke's Drive Registered Park and Garden
- 17 Nuffield Health Chester Fitness & Wellbeing Gym

- Local centres
- Employment
- Further education
- Secondary education
- Primary education
- Open space
- Open space



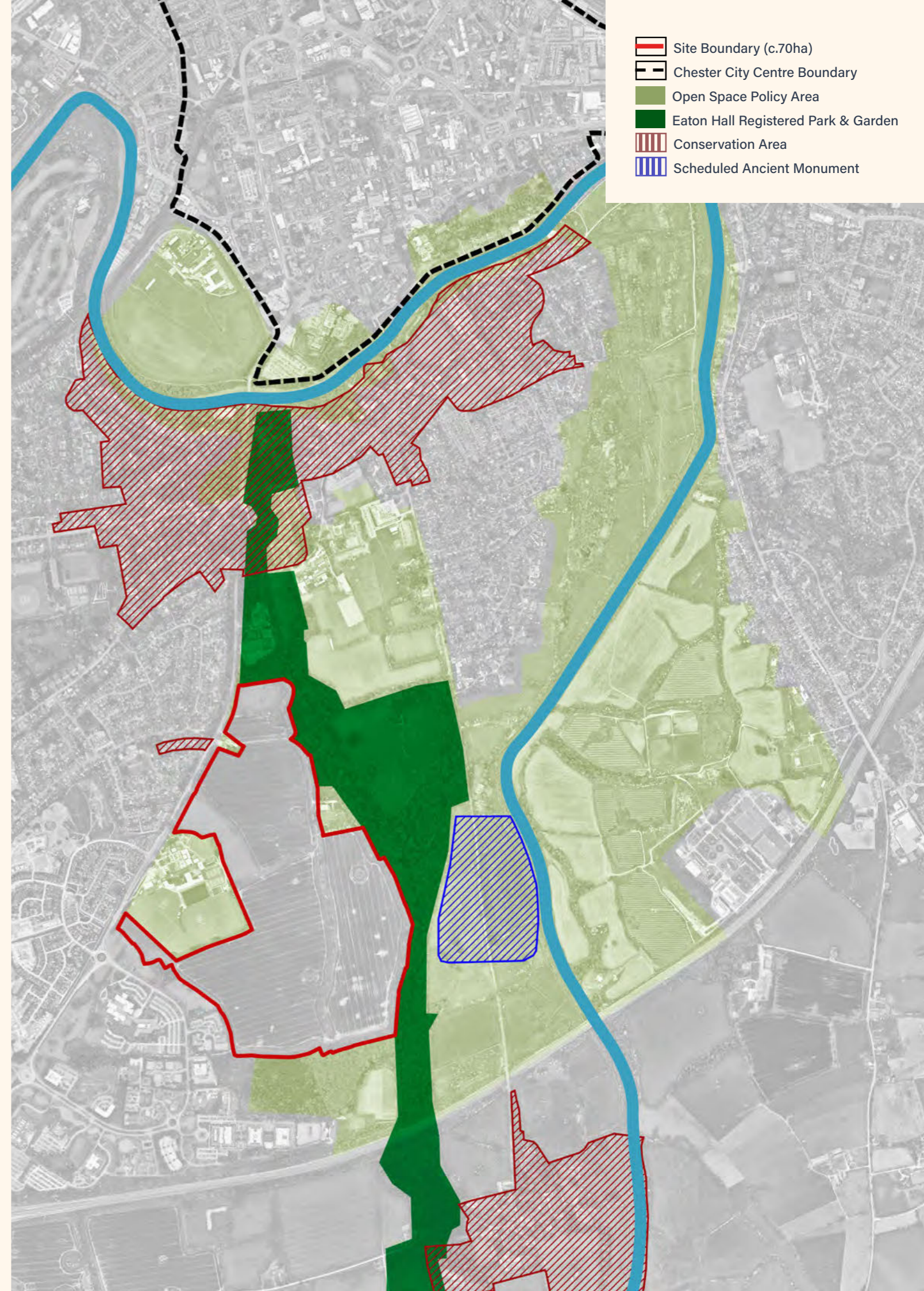
Planning Context

Our planners at Stantec have made representations that highlight the pressing need for housing in Cheshire West and Chester, with a mandatory target of 1,914 homes per year. The draft Plan sets out three spatial strategy options, but to achieve balanced growth the Council will need to release Green Belt land capable of supporting the role and function of its settlements. The representations critique the spatial options and conclude that sustainable sites such as land west of Wrexham Road, Chester, should be allocated to ensure housing needs are met in the right locations.

Existing Policy Alignment Summary:

The Site is being promoted through the emerging Local Plan which will develop its own Development Management Policies. However, to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to design considerations we have had regard to extant policies of the adopted Local Plan.

- **Housing Need & Strategy (STRAT2, STRAT3, CH1):** Chester must deliver 1,914 homes annually (calculated using the standard method); edge-of-city Green Belt release in sustainable locations such as Wrexham Road is essential to deliver new homes in Chester.
- **Green Belt (STRAT9, GBC2):** The Site makes only a weak-moderate contribution and is appropriate for release without harming the wider Green Belt.
- **Infrastructure & Accessibility (STRAT10, STRAT11, SOC5):** The Site can support new health, education and transport provision, alongside strong walking/cycling links.
- **Design, Landscape & Heritage (ENV2, ENV5, ENV6, DM3, DM4, DM47, DM49):** A landscape-led approach can respect Eaton Hall RPG and Duke's Drive, while creating a distinctive neighbourhood.
- **Sustainability & Transport (SOC5, T1, DM19, ENV1, DM41):** Location enables active travel and bus connections, with potential for energy-efficient homes and SuDS.
- **Environment & Green Infrastructure (ENV2-4, DM44, DM45):** The Site can deliver biodiversity net gain, retained green corridors, new parkland, and access to Duke's Drive.

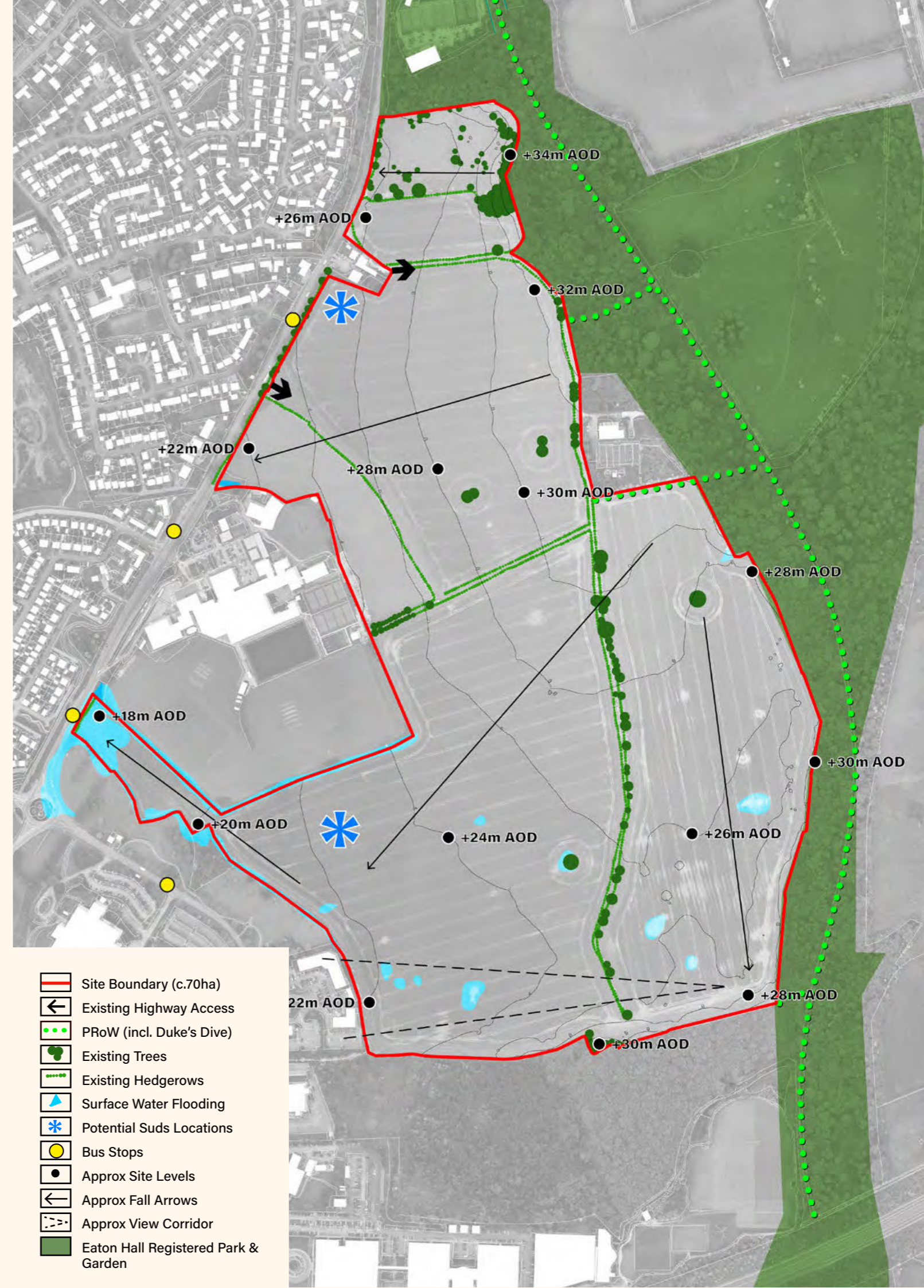


Site Assessment

The Site represents a logical parcel for future development, being entirely owned by Grosvenor and accessible from Wrexham Road. It comprises predominantly intensively farmed arable land with limited landscape features. Broadly level with a gentle fall, it is well contained by existing development, woodland and major road infrastructure, with no significant environmental or technical constraints.

Assessment Summary:

- **Existing vehicle access:** Two vehicular access points are present from Wrexham Road - one north of Ashgrove Farm and one north of The King's School.
- **Topography:** The Site is broadly level, with a gentle fall from east to west.
- **Flood risk:** Fully within Flood Zone 1, with small areas of localised surface water risk. Grosvenor are actively working alongside the council and the local highways authority to address surface water flooding on Wrexham Road/the Site.
- **Drainage:** A drainage ditch runs along the eastern boundary. Further assessment will be required to identify preferred surface water discharge points.
- **Ecology:** An ecological appraisal has identified mature trees with bat roost potential.
- **Landscape & visual:** Contained by woodland to the east and south; partial screening along Wrexham Road; view corridor to the Welsh Hills.
- **Heritage:** Adjoins Duke's Drive, part of the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden. A listed asset lies within Chester Business Park.
- **Utilities:** Edge-of-city location, close to existing services and infrastructure.
- **Recreation use:** A small section of the Site is currently used by The King's School for recreation.
- **Water Treatment Works:** Located adjacent to the eastern boundary, accessed via a single carriageway running through the Site from Wrexham Road.
- **Pedestrian access:** Limited connectivity within the Site, aside from a farm track to the Water Treatment Works. Informal breaks in the woodland connect to Duke's Drive.
- **Surrounding land uses:** King's School campus, the King's Moat residential development (under construction), Chester Business Park, and Nuffield Hospital.

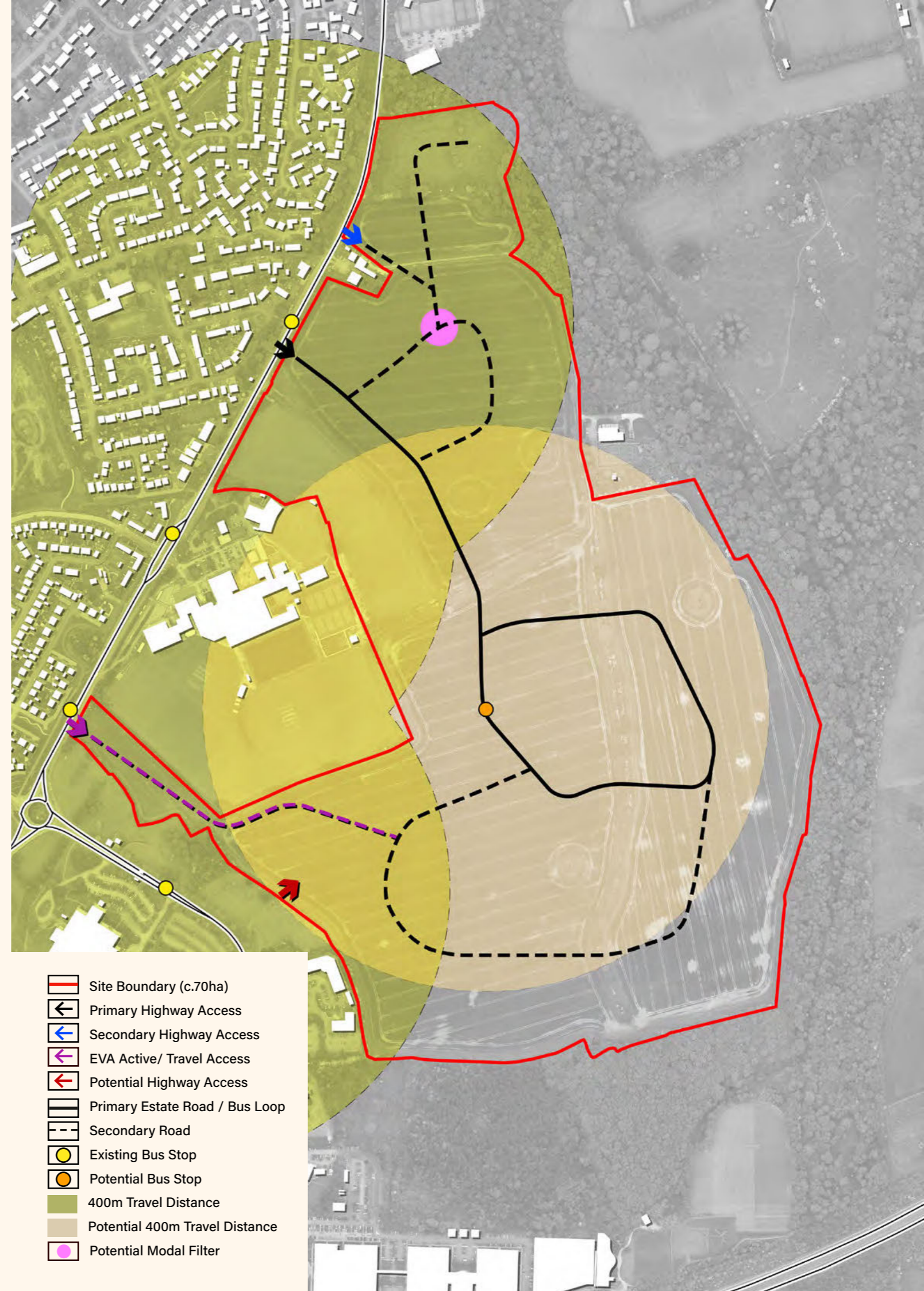


Highways and Access

Astute Transport Planning has undertaken a Highways and Access Appraisal to support the proposed allocation of the Site. The assessment confirms that the Site is accessible from the surrounding highway network. A variety of access arrangements are possible, including a primary point of access from Wrexham Road, supported by a secondary access capable of serving an agreed number of homes, together with an emergency/active travel access. There is also potential to secure a further point of access from Heronsway, subject to more detailed consideration.

Recommendations Summary:

- **Primary vehicular access:** To be taken from Wrexham Road, with flexibility for the junction location. This could be delivered either as a priority junction or a roundabout, depending on detailed design and traffic capacity testing
- **Secondary access:** A further point of access from Wrexham Road could be provided. If necessary, this may be limited to serving only an agreed number of homes, rather than connecting through to the wider site. The design could incorporate well-considered modal filters.
- **Emergency and active travel access:** An additional access point from Wrexham Road is identified for emergency vehicle access and active travel connections. While the location currently experiences surface water flooding, discussions are ongoing between Grosvenor Estate and the Council to help address and resolve this issue.
- **Internal road hierarchy:** The development would be structured around a primary estate road capable of accommodating a bus route. This would be supported by secondary circulation routes and a finer grain of residential streets.
- **Active travel network:** A comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes would be delivered, running through green spaces and connecting with the wider cycle network and Duke's Drive.



- Site Boundary (c.70ha)
- Primary Highway Access
- Secondary Highway Access
- EVA Active/ Travel Access
- Potential Highway Access
- Primary Estate Road / Bus Loop
- Secondary Road
- Existing Bus Stop
- Potential Bus Stop
- 400m Travel Distance
- Potential 400m Travel Distance
- Potential Modal Filter

Landscape & Heritage

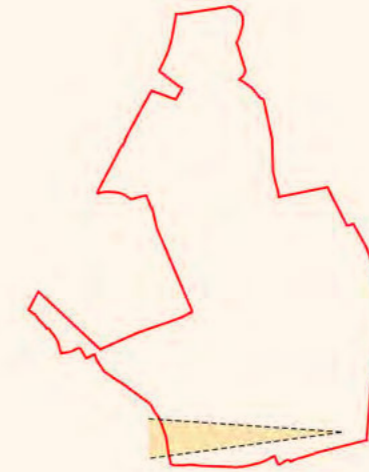
The Landscape and Heritage Appraisal, prepared by Turley, describes the Site as intensively managed urban-fringe farmland, enclosed by development, woodland and road infrastructure, with limited visibility beyond its setting. Although historically part of the Grosvenor’s Eaton Estate, the Site is physically and visually separated from Duke’s Drive and the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden (RPG) by substantial woodland, with only filtered views. Its contribution to the RPG is limited, and with sensitive design, development can safeguard heritage and strengthen green infrastructure.

Recommendations Summary:

- **Retain & strengthen structure:** Keep and reinforce trees along Wrexham Road, field hedgerows, tree clumps, ponds and the dense vegetation on the Duke’s Drive edge.
- **Protect key views:** Preserve long-distance views in the southern part of the Site towards the Welsh Hills.
- **Registered Parks and Garden buffer:** Provide a landscaped buffer to the eastern boundary, helping to separate new homes form Eaton Hall RPG , minimise visual effects and maintain a green swathe extending south from the city.
- **Sensitive edge:** Apply lower densities and softer edges towards the eastern boundary adjoining the RPG.
- **Tree-lined streets:** Deliver tree-lined streets across the scheme (NPPF para 136).
- **Duke’s Drive connections:** Where feasible, enhance links with Duke’s Drive without loss of existing trees.
- **Active travel:** Provide a network of active travel routes through the Site and connecting with existing routes, neighbourhoods and employment destinations.
- **Character & materials:** Create a distinctive, landscape-led scheme that reflects local character, using appropriate traditional materials and building forms.
- **Nature recovery:** Contribute to the Cheshire & Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy through habitat creation, biodiversity corridors and management.



Retain and Strengthen Structure



Protect Key Views



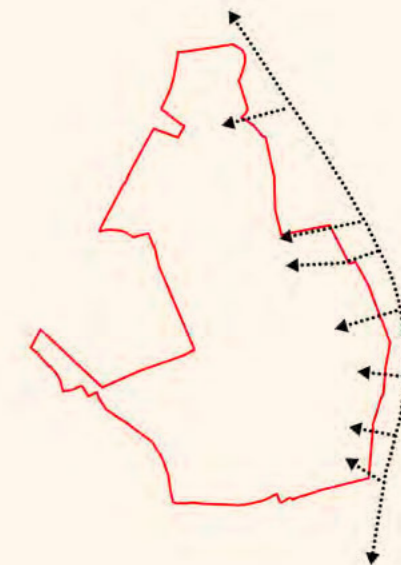
Registered Parks & Gardens Buffer



Sensitive Edge



Tree Lined Streets



Dukes Drive Connections

Emerging Masterplan

The concept masterplan presented opposite is an emerging framework, informed by our assessment of the Site and its surroundings. Our approach reflects Grosvenor's long-term commitment to legacy: to create a well-balanced, sustainable neighbourhood that endures over time. The vision is not fixed - it will be developed collaboratively with the Council and stakeholders to ensure the scheme delivers not only new homes but also the essential community facilities, health provision and green infrastructure needed to support a thriving community.

Emerging Proposals:

- 01 New homes:** Around 1,200–1,400 homes, including a significant proportion of affordable housing (to be agreed with the Council).
- 02 Health facility:** With capacity for two GP surgeries and around 40 consultant rooms.
- 03 Pharmacy:** Directly linked to the health facility.
- 04 Community facilities:** Potential for additional facilities such as a community centre, sports hub, or new primary school, integrated with the neighbourhood park.
- 05 Neighbourhood park:** A central 'King's Park' providing new green space with a key active travel link to Duke's Drive, with potential to accommodate sports and play.
- 06 Sports provision:** Potential for new pitches or facilities that could support both the community and complement existing provision, including at The King's School.
- 07 Play:** A mix of formal and informal play spaces for children and teenagers.
- 08 Allotments/orchards:** Space for local food growing and community use.
- 06 Green infrastructure:** A connected network of green spaces and tree-lined streets.
- 09 Semi-natural edge:** A landscaped eastern edge that provides separation from Eaton Hall RPG, minimises visual effects, and maintains a green swathe extending south from the city.
- 10 Movement network:** Walkable, active-travel-focused streets with safe links to Duke's Drive and the wider cycle network.
- 12 Landscape framework:** Retention and integration of mature trees and hedgerows.
- 13 Blue infrastructure & SuDS:** Natural drainage features to manage surface water and support biodiversity.
- 14 Mobility Hub:** Tying in with community facilities and offering the potential for vehicle & bike sharing, EV charging and parcel collection.

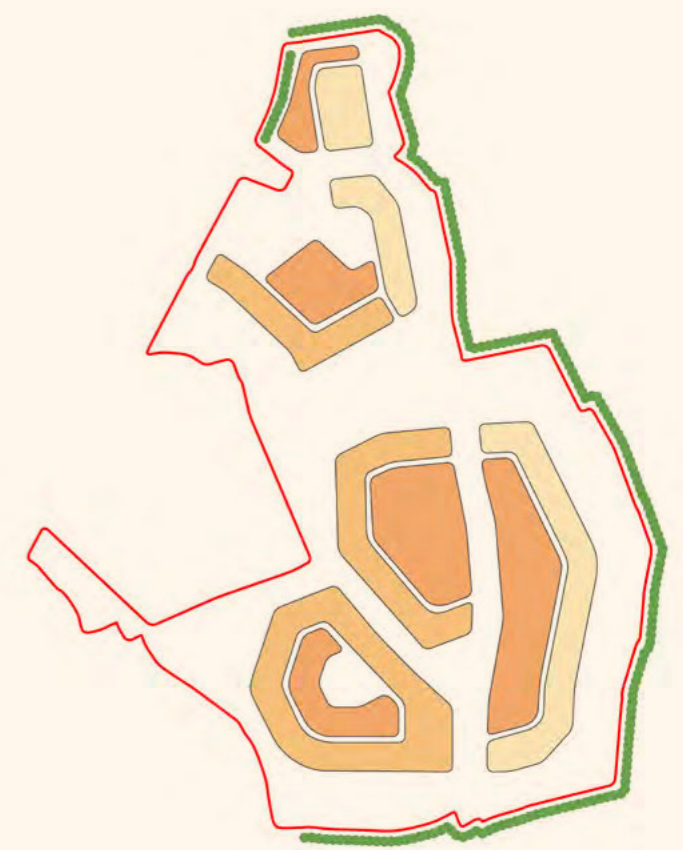


Landscape & Heritage

Active Travel

Connectivity & Community

Character & Density



- Neighbourhood park 'King's Park'
- Semi-natural edge
- Landscaped gateways
- Wetland/ SuDS
- Recreational green space
- Pocket parks/village greens
- Planted green corridors

- Pedestrian / cycle network
- Natural parkland walk

- Primary highway access
- Secondary highway access
- EVA/ active travel access
- Primary estate road / bus route
- Secondary roads
- EVA / active travel route
- Potential heath facility
- Potential community facility

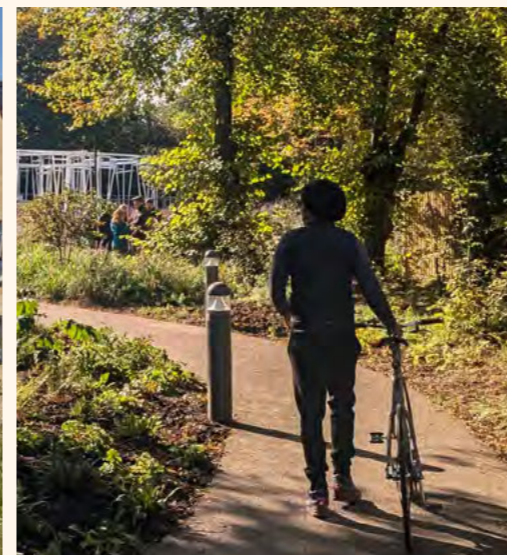
- Lower density edge
- Medium density edge
- Higher density core

Land at Wrexham Road, Chester

Conclusion: Suitable, available & achievable

This document has demonstrated that the Site can deliver a sustainable, landscape-led neighbourhood of around 1,200–1,400 new homes, supported by community infrastructure and high-quality green spaces. As a ‘grey belt’ site, it makes only a weak-to-moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes, is readily developable, and represents a logical and contained opportunity for growth on the edge of Chester.

Grosvenor is committed to working collaboratively with Cheshire West and Chester Council and engaging meaningfully with the community to shape the emerging proposals. Our ambition is to create not only new homes, but also a lasting legacy - strengthening green infrastructure, improving access to nature, and delivering the facilities needed to support a thriving, well-connected community



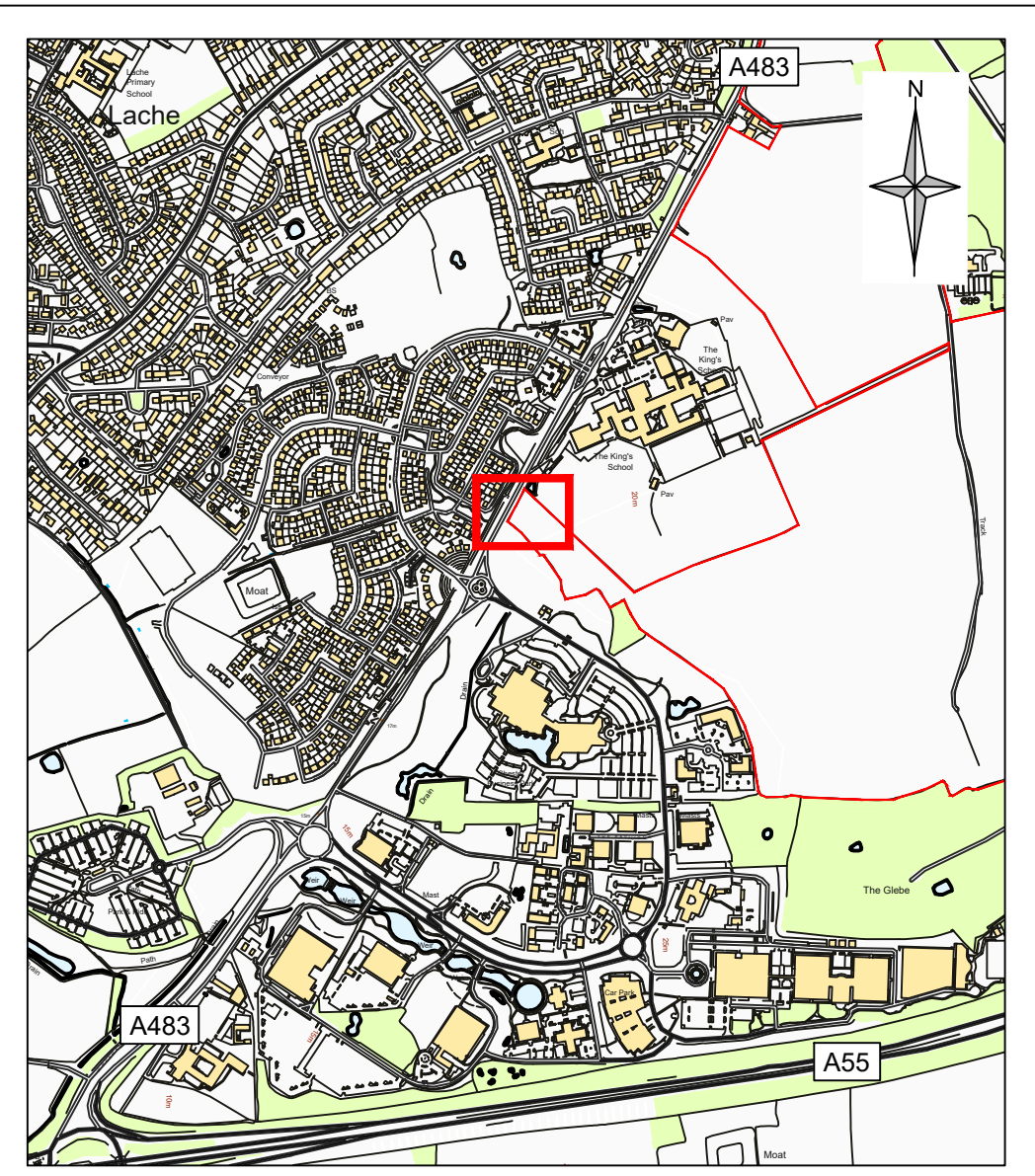
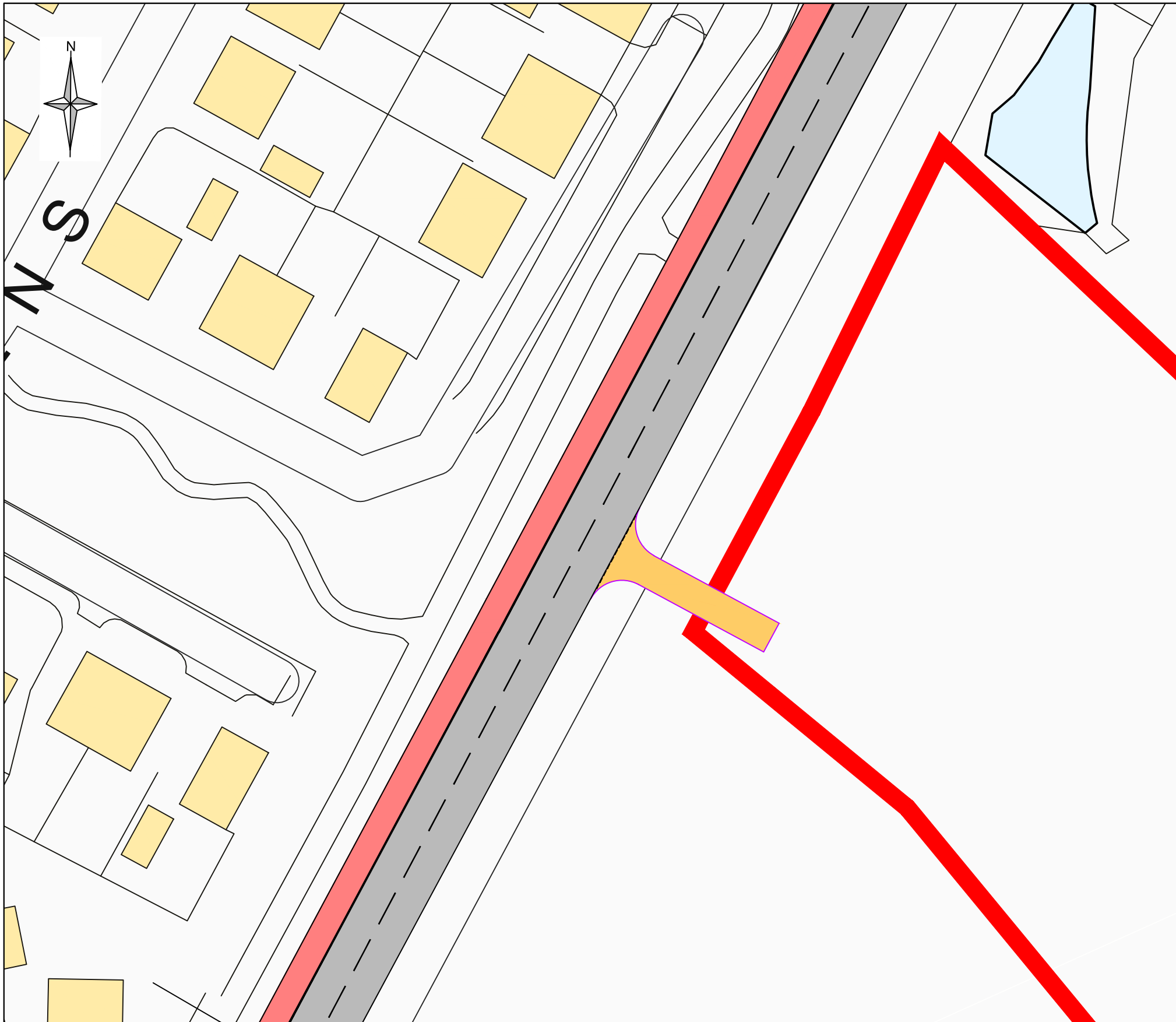
Wrexham Road

A Sustainable Urban Extension for Chester

Appendix



GROSVENOR



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Drawing Status & Suitability Code
Preliminary

Drawn MW	Checked ML
Date xx.xx.25	Date xx.xx.25

Drawing Number
A25091-0100-001

Rev. **P0**

Client
GROSVENOR ESTATE

Project
CHESTER SITE PROMOTION

Drawing Title
EMERGENCY ACCESS

Scale
NTS @ A3

Asstute Project No.
A25091

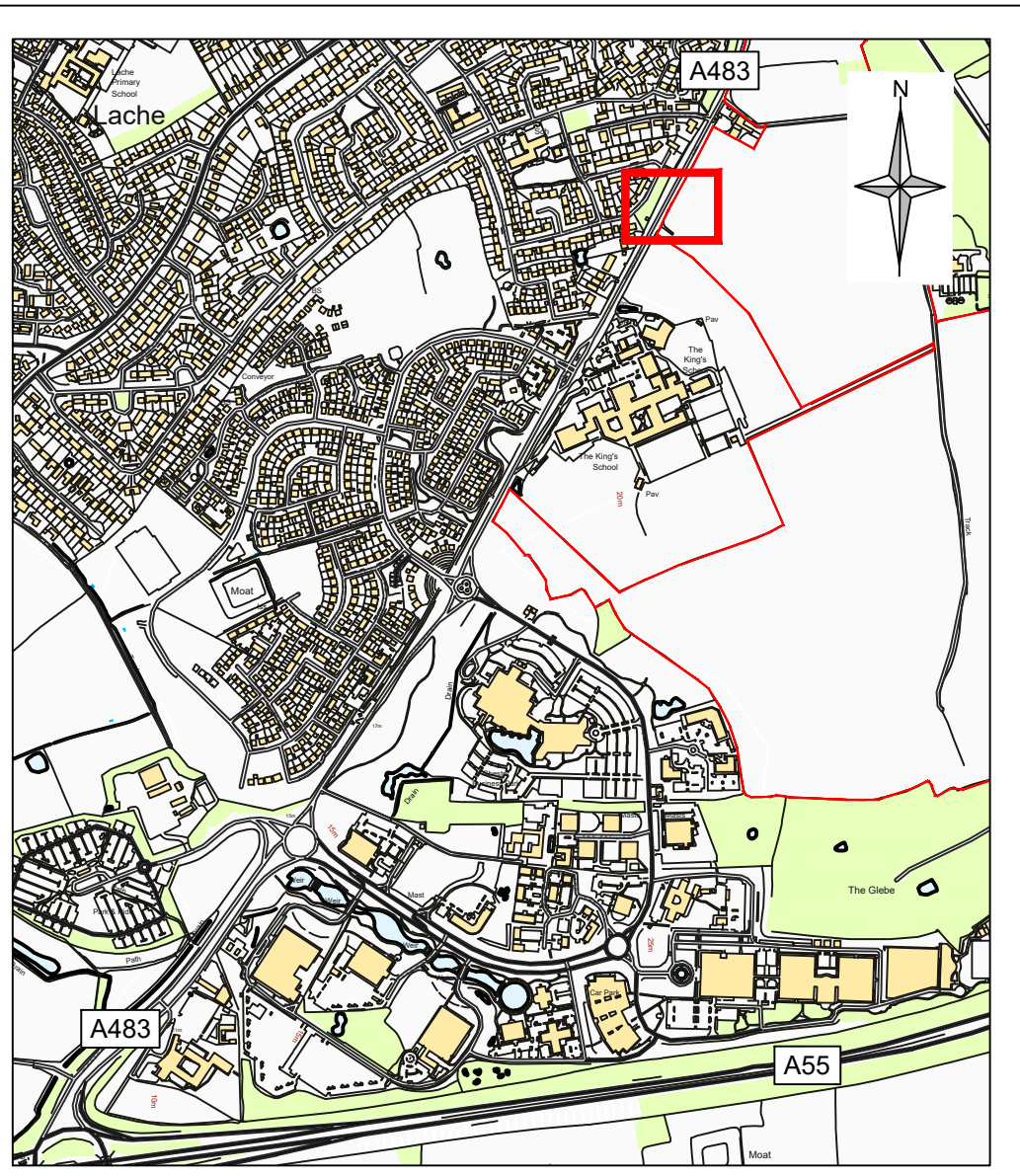
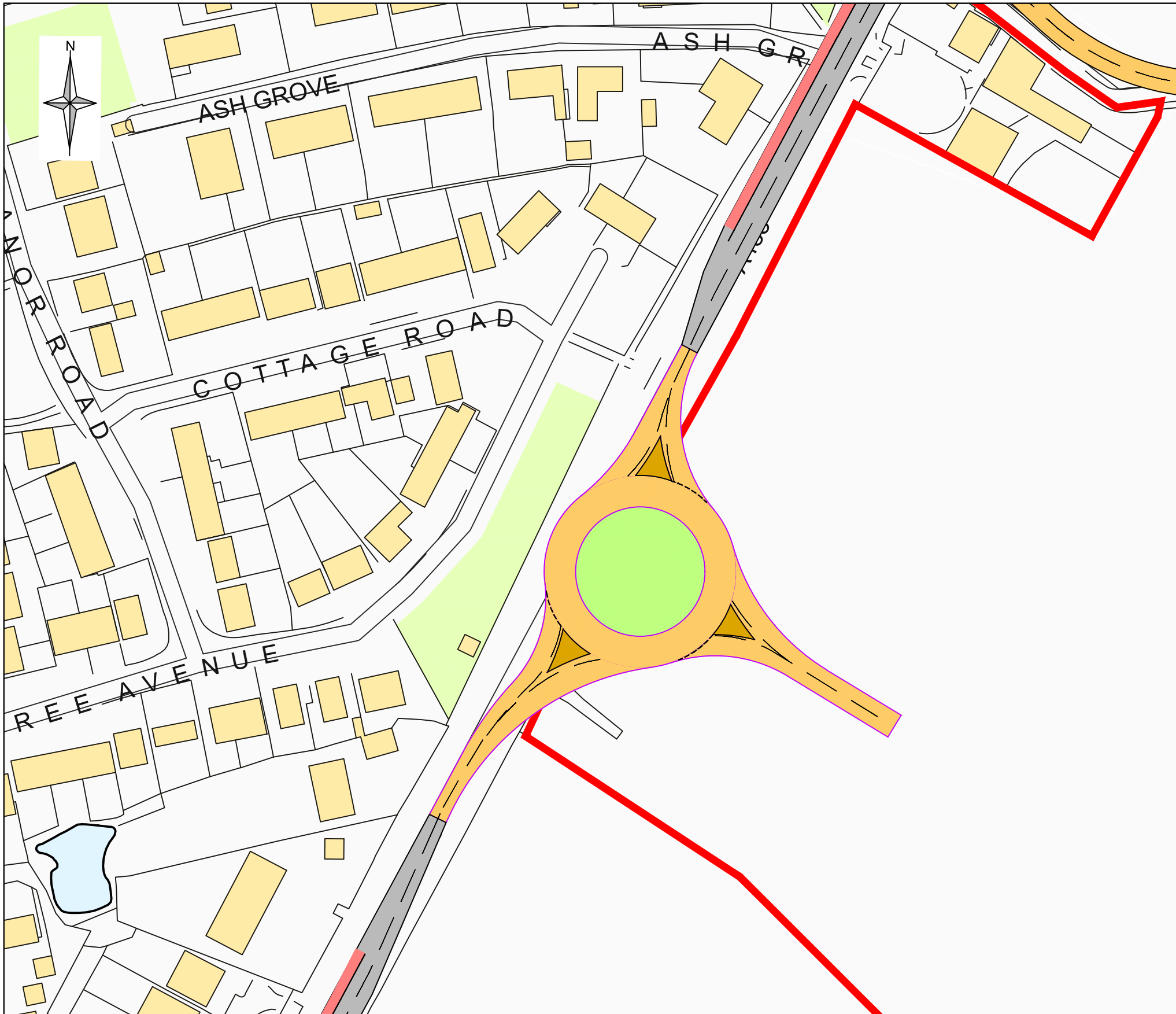

P0	First issue.					
Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth	

Legend:

Red line site boundary

Notes:

1. This is not a construction drawing and is intended for illustrative purposes only.

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Drawing Status & Suitability Code
Preliminary

Drawn MW	Checked ML
Date xx.xx.25	Date xx.xx.25

Drawing Number
A25091-0100-002

Rev. **P0**

Client
GROSVENOR ESTATE

Project
CHESTER SITE PROMOTION


Drawing Title
ROUNDABOUT ACCESS

Scale
NTS @ A3

Astute Project No.
A25091

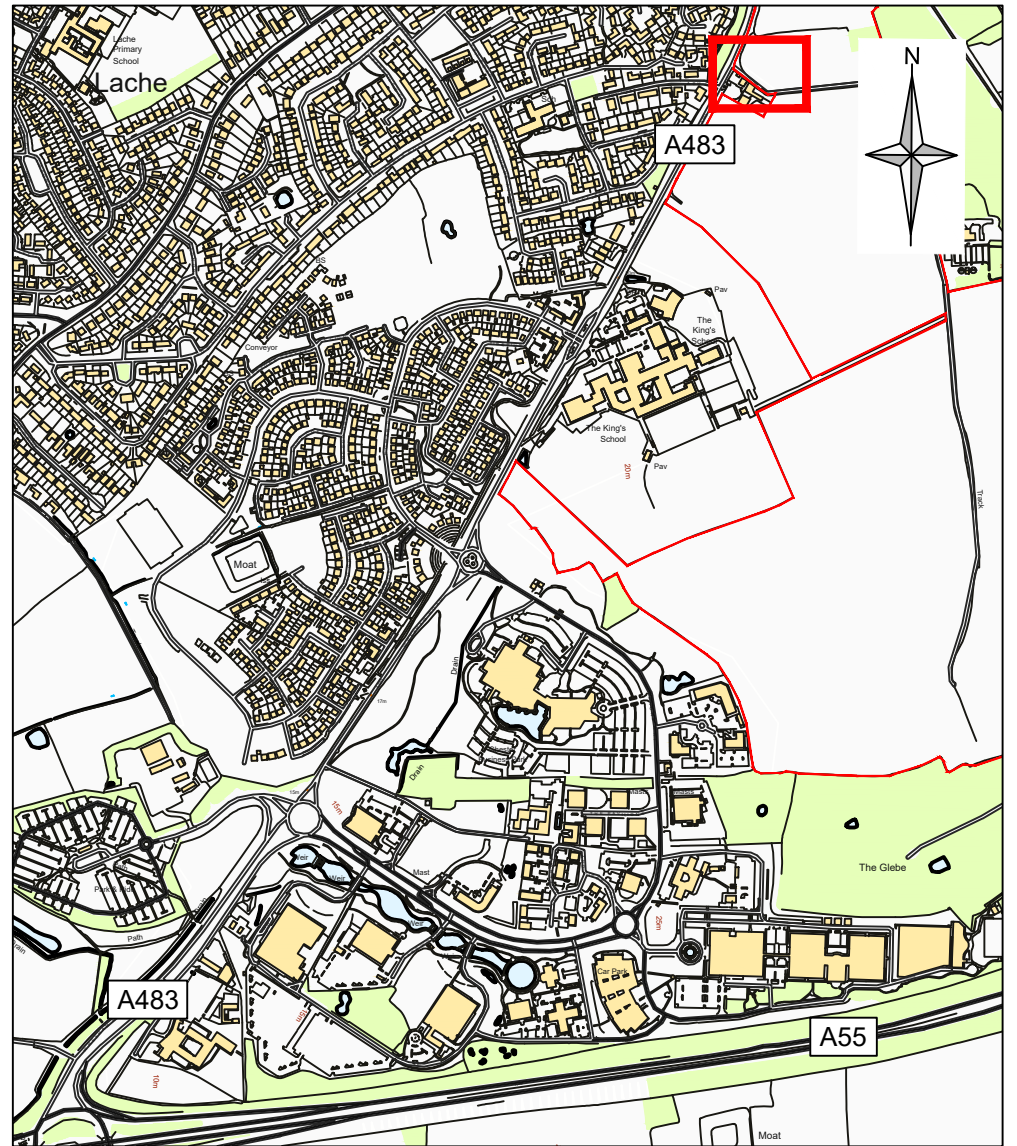
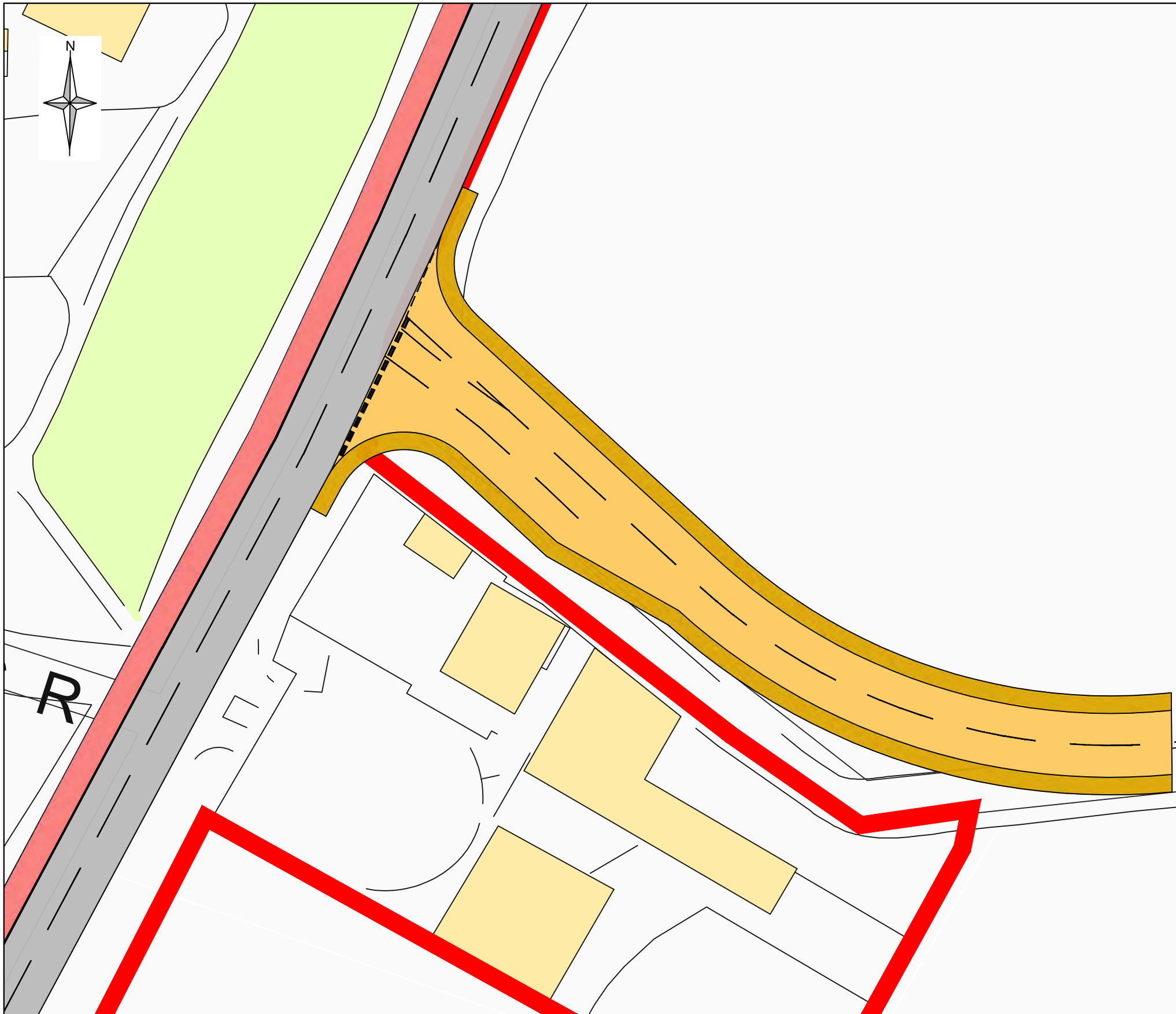
P0	First issue.					
Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth	

Legend:

 Red line site boundary

Notes:

1. This is not a construction drawing and is intended for illustrative purposes only.



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Drawing Status & Suitability Code
Preliminary

Drawn MW	Checked ML
Date 21.08.25	Date 21.08.25

Drawing Number
A25091-0100-003

Rev. **P0**

Client
GROSVENOR ESTATE

Project
CHESTER SITE PROMOTION

Drawing Title
REALIGNED PRIORITY JUNCTION

Scale
NTS @ A3

Aslute Project No.
A25091

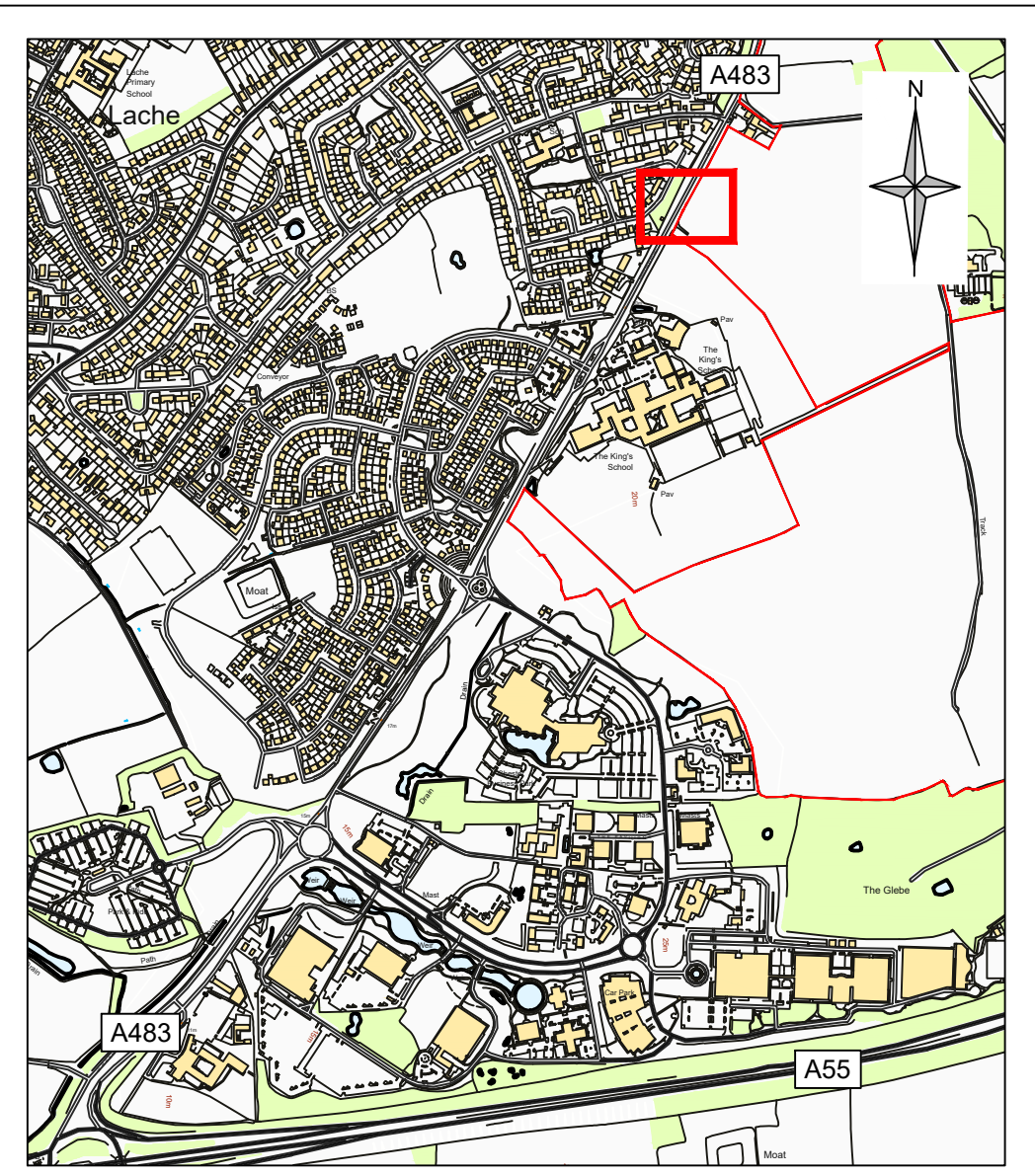
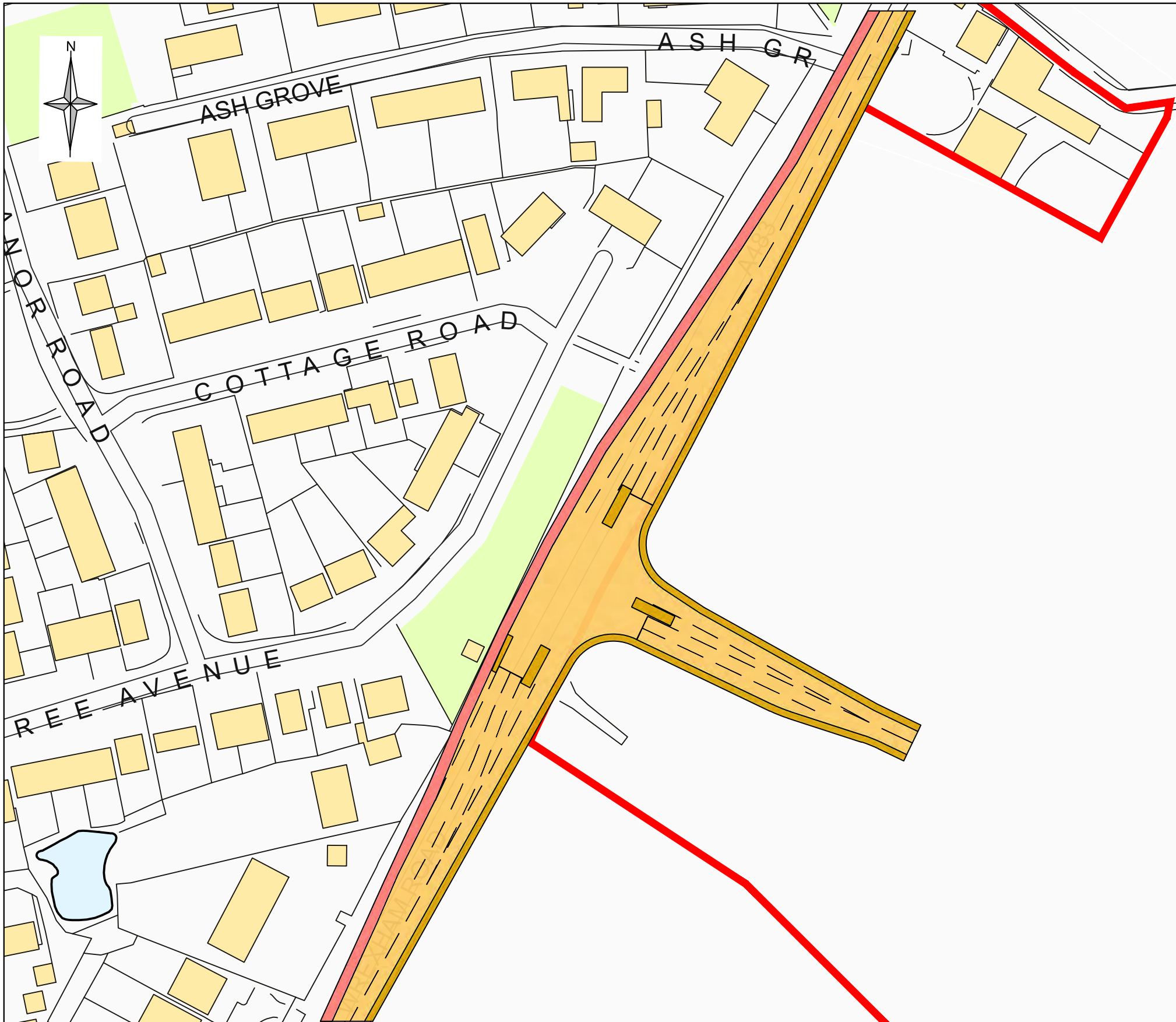

P0	First issue.				
Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth

Legend:

- Red line site boundary
- Existing bus lane
- Proposed realigned access

Notes:

- This is not a construction drawing and is intended for illustrative purposes only.

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Drawing Status & Suitability Code
Preliminary




Drawn MW	Checked ML
Date 21.08.25	Date 21.08.25

Drawing Number A25091-0100-004	Rev. P0
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Client GROSVENOR ESTATE
Project CHESTER SITE PROMOTION
Drawing Title SIGNALISED JUNCTION
Scale NTS @ A3
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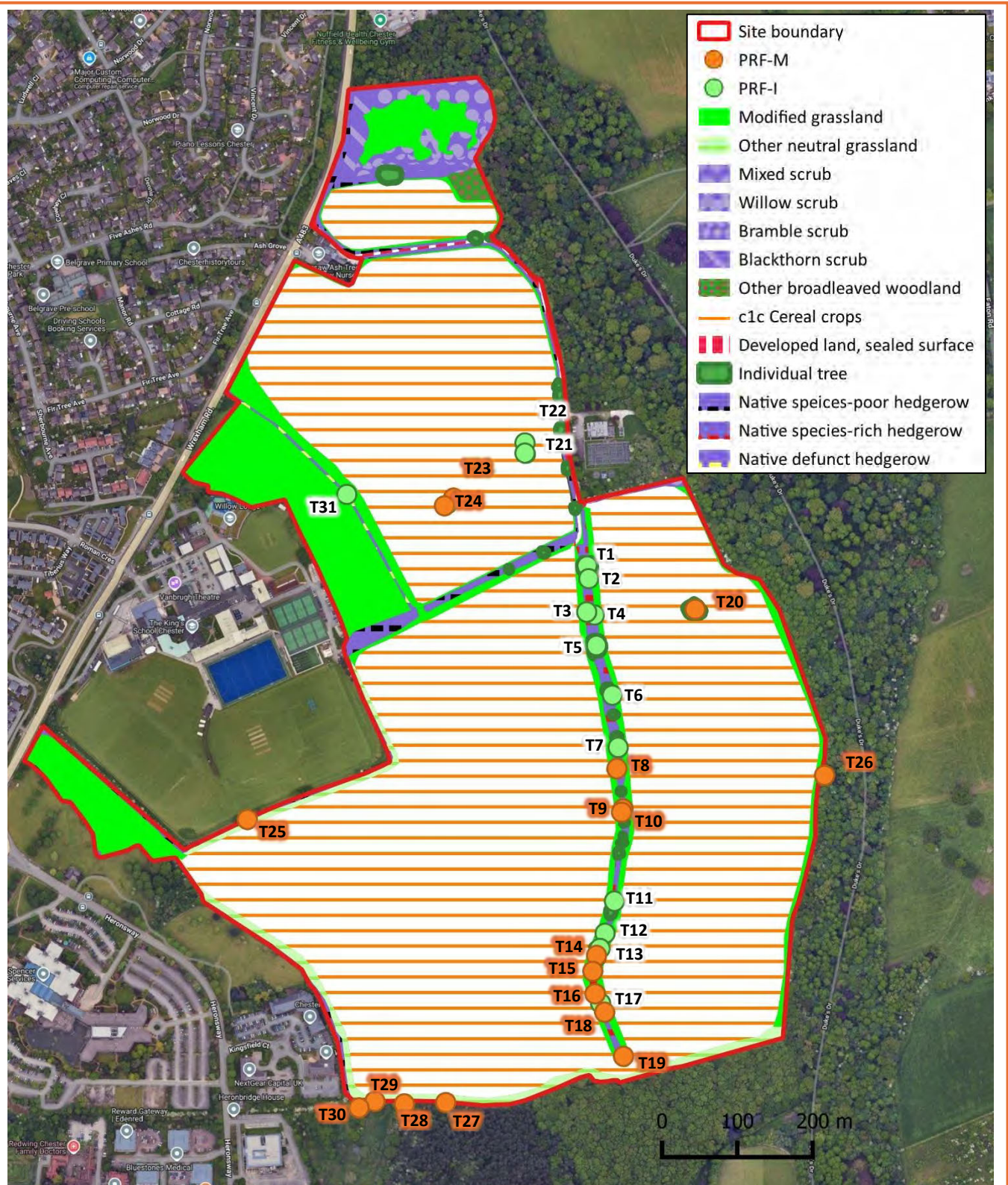
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Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth

Legend:

-  Red line site boundary
-  Bus lane
-  Proposed signalised junction

Notes:

- This is not a construction drawing and is intended for illustrative purposes only.



- Site boundary
- PRF-M
- PRF-I
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Mixed scrub
- Willow scrub
- Bramble scrub
- Blackthorn scrub
- Other broadleaved woodland
- c1c Cereal crops
- Developed land, sealed surface
- Individual tree
- Native species-poor hedgerow
- Native species-rich hedgerow
- Native defunct hedgerow

Project title	Land at Wrexham Rd	Subject	Ecological Assessment
Project ID	ECO_1311	Drawing number	ECO1311-01Eco_A
Client	GROSVENOR		
Drawing date	17/06/2025	Drawn by	MM





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Appendix 2 – Green and Grey Belt Assessment

Green and grey belt appraisal

Land at Wrexham Road, Chester

August 2025

Executive Summary

Site	Presence of Footnote 7 Areas/Assets of Importance?	Strongly performs purposes of Green Belt a, b, or d?
Wrexham Road, Chester	No – Site is located adjacent to the Registered Park and Garden of Eaton Hall; however, with appropriate masterplanning and sensitive design, any potential impact on the setting of this heritage asset can be effectively mitigated. As such, its proximity to Eaton Hall would not, in itself, constitute a strong reason for refusal of a planning application on the Site.	No - The Site plays a moderate role in checking urban sprawl (purpose a) and preserving the setting and special character of historic towns (purpose d); and weak role in preventing neighbouring town from merging into one another.
Is the Site grey belt? Yes		

Site	155 (a) fundamentally undermine Green Belt Purposes across the plan area?
Wrexham Road, Chester	Development of the whole Site would not undermine the Green Belt Purposes across the plan area.
Is development appropriate? The Site is not considered to perform a strong Green Belt function and is considered to be Grey Belt; its development will not undermine the purposes of the Green Belt across the plan area. As set out within Grosvenor’s wider planning representations it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist to justify a review of the Green Belt on a borough wide basis and the impact of that review overall will be something the Council will need to consider as a while. The proposed development will deliver development in a sustainable location, provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the development and provide a policy compliant level of affordable housing and will comply with parts b-d of paragraph 155 and the Golden Rules (paragraph 156).	

Introduction

1. This note summarises our appraisal of Land at Wrexham Road, Chester against policy and guidance on the identification of grey belt land. The site forms part of an area of Green Belt which comprises agricultural land, and areas of tree belts located to the south western edge of the City of Chester. As shown in **Figure 1** below.

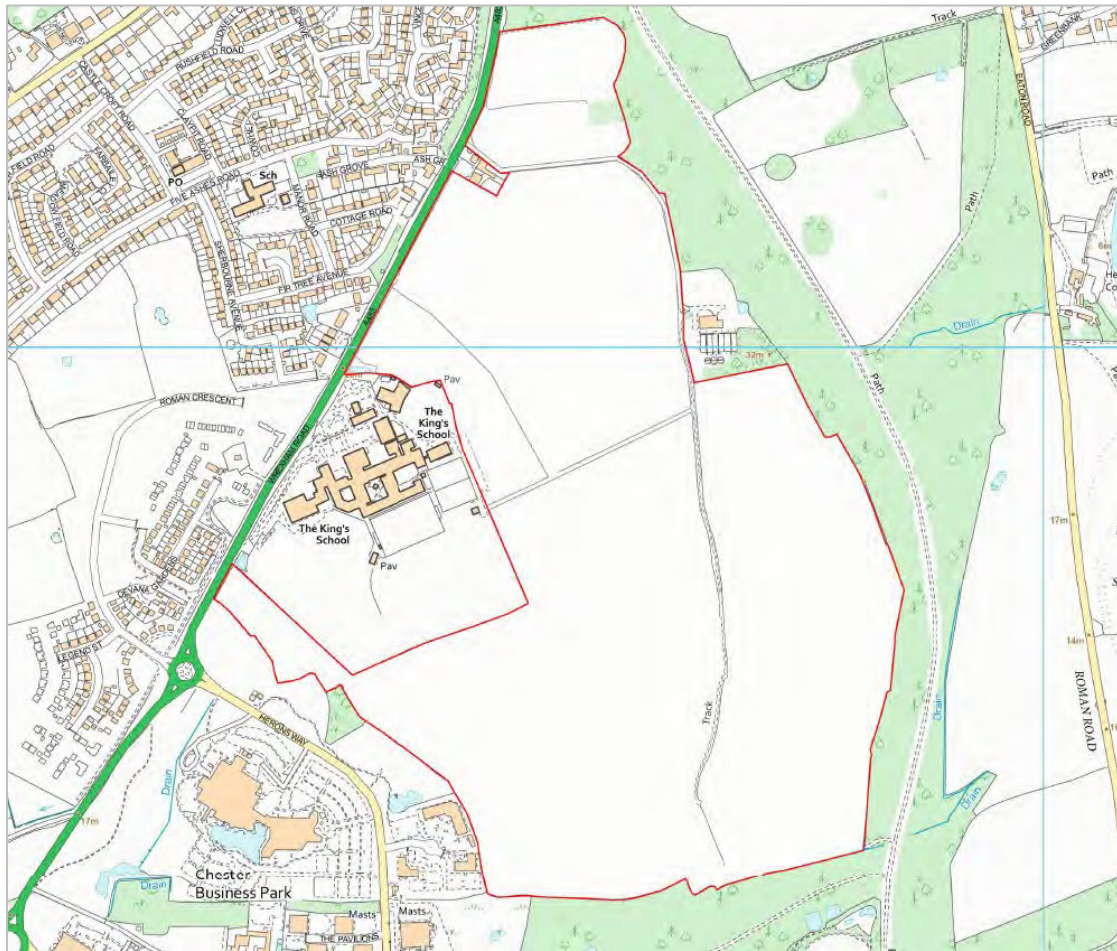


Figure 1: Site plan location plan (shared by Stantec)

2. This appraisal is based on desktop research of aerial photography; existing policy designations (described in footnote 7 to NPPF paragraph 11); review of latest published Green Belt assessment(s); and a site visit.
3. This appraisal presents a concise summary of our findings for discussion with Grosvenor’s Eaton Estate (Grosvenor); and to support representations to the Cheshire West and Chester, Regulation 18 Local Plan issues and options 2025.

Approach and Methodology

4. The revised NPPF (December 2024) introduced a new sub-type of Green Belt which is referred to as grey belt land and is defined as:

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

5. Supporting guidance on the methodology and criteria to be used when undertaking green belt assessments and identifying grey belt land was provided in a Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) update on Green Belt (February 2025). This report provides an assessment of the Site against the

confirmed definition of grey belt set out in the December 2024 NPPF and uses the criteria and methodology set out in the new PPG. It has been informed by a desktop appraisal of relevant mapping, background documents and a site visit which was undertaken in August 2025.

6. The assessment has considered the Site which is currently being promoted for development by Grosvenor.
7. The grey belt assessment has been undertaken in two stages. The first stage assessed whether the land makes a 'strong contribution' to any of Green Belt purposes: a) – restricting urban sprawl; b) – preventing towns from merging or d) preserving the setting and special character of historic towns. The assessment has been informed by the PPG which provides guidance on the illustrative features that should be considered when making judgements on the level of contribution for each of these purposes. These are included in **Appendix 1** to this report. The first stage also assessed whether applying the policies relating to the areas or assets of particular importance identified in footnote 7 to paragraph 11 of the NPPF could potentially provide a 'strong reason for refusing or restricting development on the Site'.
8. The second stage of assessment was undertaken to assist in judging whether proposed development in this area could be regarded as 'not inappropriate' development in the Green Belt in the context of NPPF paragraphs 155a and 156c. This comprised firstly, an assessment of whether the current development proposals would '*fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan*¹' and whether the proposals for the area could make appropriate contributions to '*the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces*²'. For assessment as to whether development is appropriate in line with NPPF paragraphs 155b - d please refer to the planning statement.

The Site

9. The Site is located to the east of Wrexham Road (A483) and to the south of the urban edge of Chester. It comprises predominantly arable agricultural land, set within a wider mixture of fields, woodland belts, and existing development. The Site extends northwards, wrapping around the existing King's School campus, and is enclosed to the east by a mature belt of woodland that follows Duke's Drive.
10. To the west, the Site is bounded by recent residential development and the King's Moat residential development area (currently under construction), while to the southwest it is adjacent to Chester Business Park, a major employment hub with large-scale built form. The A55 Chester Southerly Bypass lies immediately beyond the southern boundary, providing strong containment to the edge of development in this area.
11. The Site is generally flat with a gentle fall to the south west. It is open in character, although its visibility is limited by the presence of surrounding development and extensive vegetation, particularly along the eastern and southern boundaries. A series of hedgerows, field boundaries,

¹ NPPF para 155a

² NPPF para 156c

and scattered trees contribute to the Site's semi-rural appearance, although the influence of nearby urban and commercial uses is evident.

12. The Site measures approximately 70 hectares and the Site boundary is indicated below on an aerial image from Google Earth at **Figure 2**.



Figure 2: Site location plan on aerial image from Google Maps

13. The current Environment Agency flood map³ shows the Site is fully within flood zone 1 and does not lie in an area with a probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. The Site is also not generally at risk of surface water flooding although there are small, localised area of high, medium and low risk of surface water flooding as shown on **Figure 3** below.

³ [Map – Flood map for planning – GOV.UK](#) accessed 15/08/25



Figure 3: Extract from Environment Agency surface water flooding map

14. The Site does not fall within or close to a national landscape designation, there are no heritage assets located within the Site itself. The Site abuts the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden, at Dukes Drive which flanks the northern tip of the site and the eastern Site boundary. An extract from Magic Map is shown in **Figure 4** demonstrating the heritage assets adjacent to the Site and in the local context.

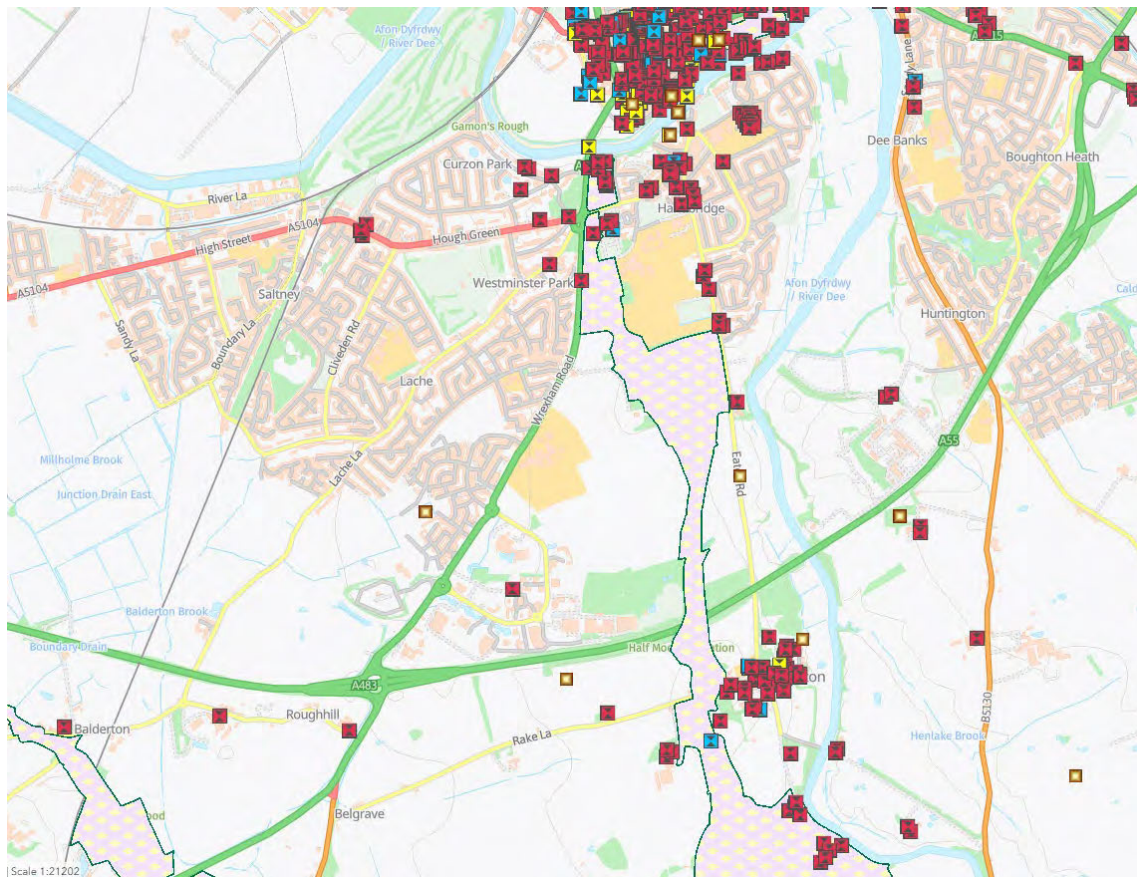


Figure 4: Extract from MAGIC Map confirming there are no national designations within the Site. Grade I listed buildings are indicated with yellow squares, Grade II* listed buildings are indicated with a blue square, Grade II listed buildings are indicated with a red square. Pink and yellow hatched areas indicate the Registered Parks and Gardens and the Orange Squares indicate Scheduled Monuments

Part 1: Does the Site meet the definition of grey belt?

Published Green Belt Assessment

15. Cheshire West and Chester Green Belt Studies (Stages 1⁴ and 2⁵) form the Council's latest Green Belt Study. This study focuses on land around Chester and within the Stage 1 assessment the majority of the Site is shown as falling within Area 2. The northern most tip of the Site is located within Area 3.

⁴ Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council Stage One Green Belt Study, 2011

⁵ ARUP Chester West and Chester Council, Stage Two of the Chester Green Belt Study: Technical Site Assessment July 2013

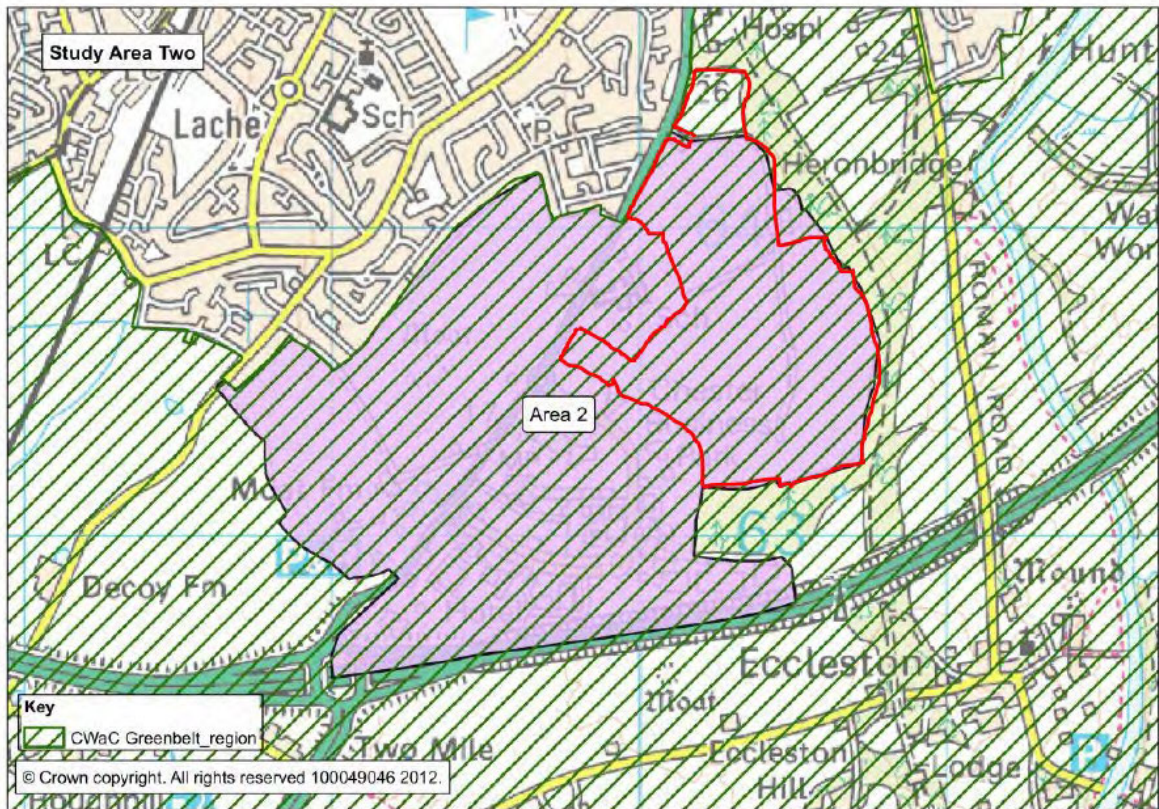


Figure 5: Extract from the Cheshire West and Chester Green Belt Study (Stage 1) showing the location and extent of Study Area 2 (the site boundary is indicatively shown in red)

16. A summary of Green Belt Study Part 1 findings for Area 2 is set out below in **Table 1**. (Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land was not assessed). It should be noted that Area 2 also includes a large area beyond the extents of the Site to the west. The study provides narrative but does not provide an overall conclusion on the level of contribution.

Table 1: Summary of the Cheshire West and Chester Grey Belt Study in relation to Study Area 8 (partially comprising the Site)

Study Area	Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas	Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging	Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside	Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
2	Partly contained - approximately 28% adjoining the urban area at Lache / Westminster Park and Handbridge. Strong boundary strength with durable boundaries to	Nearest settlement is Eccleston - 1 mile from existing built form within the area e.g. Chester business park.	Meets three Green Belt opportunities (access / retaining landscapes, visual amenity & biodiversity). Approximately 36% developed with	No views of the historic city due to topography Mixture of built form and open countryside.

	the north (building line), the east (woodland corridor at Duke's Driveway), south (A55) and west (Park and Ride).		prominent Park and Ride, Chester Business Park and The Kings School	Significant part of setting for historic city of Chester.
3	Well contained - Approximately 57% adjoining the urban area of Chester at Handbridge, City Centre / Huntington) Strong boundary strength with durable boundaries to the north (urban area), east (urban area), south (A55) and west (the Duke's Driveway).	Nearest settlement is Eccleston – 1.1 miles from urban fringe in Area Three, and 0.33 miles from southern boundary of Area Three.	Meets four Green Belt opportunities (access, outdoor sport & recreation, retaining landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity). Approximately 9% developed, including waste water treatment works and the Eaton Estate.	Views of the city possible from Beeston View / Duke's Driveway and across towards the Meadows and Grosvenor Park. View of Cathedral and Town Hall from Sandy Lane. Green corridor and wedge in to the city with open spaces and woodland corridors in to the heart of the city. Eaton Park, field systems associated with Eaton Estate, Heronbridge and a Roman road.

17. Within the Stage 2 study, a portion of Area 2, land to the west of Wrexham Road, is identified as Area 2a and analysed further. Subsequently, Area 2a directly adjacent the western site boundary was removed from the Green belt and has since been developed for housing.

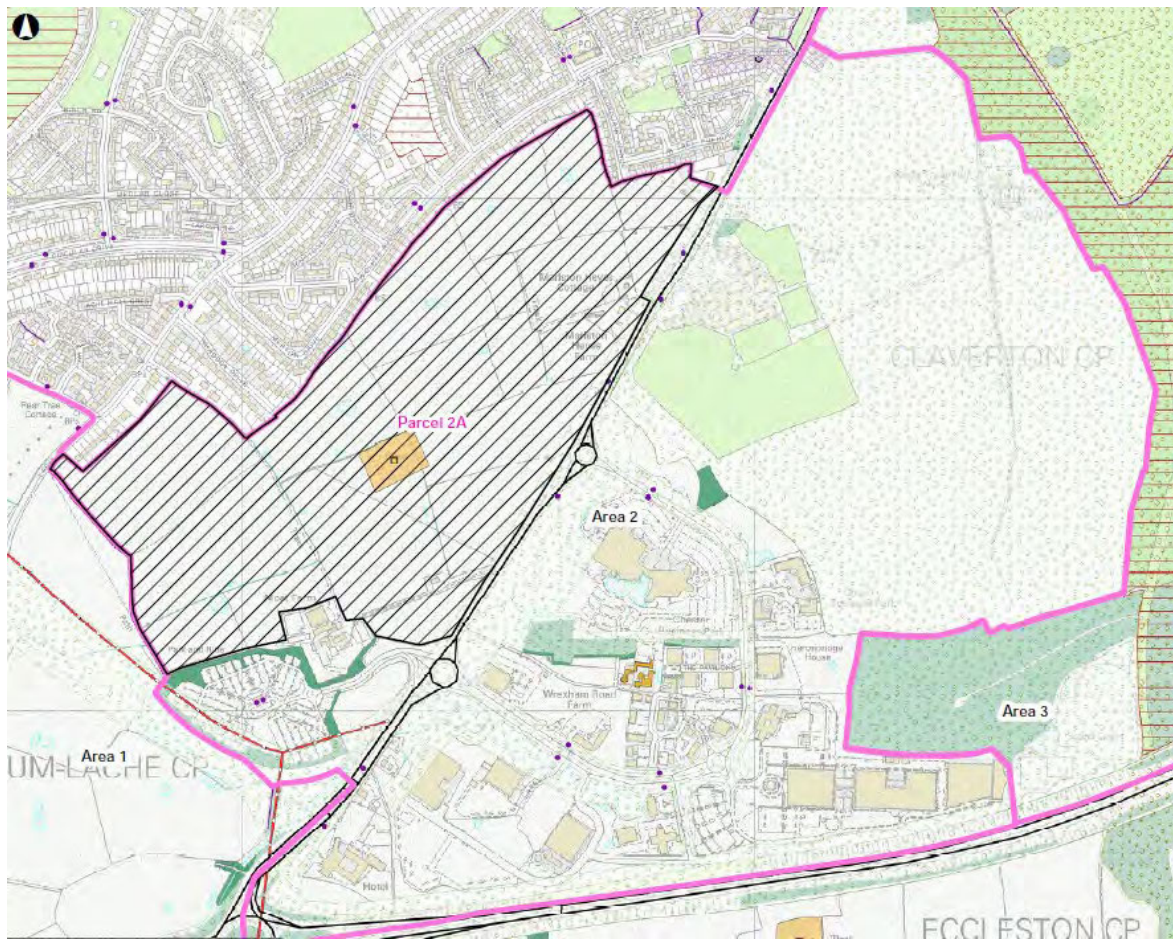


Figure 6: Extract from the Cheshire West and Chester Green Belt Study (Parts 2) showing the location and extent of Study Area 2a

18. The Stage 2 study identifies Parcel 2a as Land to the West of Wrexham Road and the remaining parcel (including the Site) as Land to the East of Wrexham Road.

19. With regards Parcel 2a the study states that:

“Land to the west of Wrexham Road has some landscape and historic environment constraints. The release of land to the west of Wrexham Road would have no impact on key views in to or out of the city given topography and existing barriers. Land to the west of Wrexham Road connecting the existing built form of Lache/Westminster Park with the existing build development at the Park and Ride facility and Chester Business Park does provide an opportunity to be considered as land that could be released from the Green Belt.”

20. With regards the remaining area of Parcel 2 in which the Site sits the study states that:

“Land to the east of Wrexham Road, whilst featuring more development, has limited functional connectivity with the urban built form of Chester. Furthermore, with the exception of the Chester Business Park, the east of Wrexham Road is a location of open countryside and strategic green space serving to maintain the openness and attractiveness of the open setting around Chester; and its openness also safeguards the woodland areas to the east from encroachment.”

21. With regards to Area 3 the study states that:

“Area Three is highly effective in terms of meeting the purposes of Green Belt, and in conjunction with the wide range of site-based constraints, it has been determined that there are no suitable land parcels within Area Three which could potentially be appropriate and justifiable to release from the Green Belt.”

22. The Green Belt Studies prepared in 2011 and 2013 provide useful context on the functioning of the Green Belt in this location, however, this work was prepared based on a methodology that was compiled before the updated government guidance with regard to grey belt was published and is therefore out of date.

23. A detailed assessment of the Site with regards Purposes 1, 2 and 4 / a, b and d⁶ pertinent to assessing if the Site can be considered as grey belt has been undertaken and is set out below.

Grey belt appraisal

24. To meet the definition of grey belt land, as illustrated in **Figure 7**, land must be previously developed land and/or not contribute strongly to any of Green Belt purposes a, b or d and secondly, not be affected by areas or assets of importance identified in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) that would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

25. The Site does not comprise of any Previously Developed Land.

⁶ Purposes 1, 2 and 4 in the 2015 Green Belt study are referred to as purposes a, b and d in the December 2024 NPPF

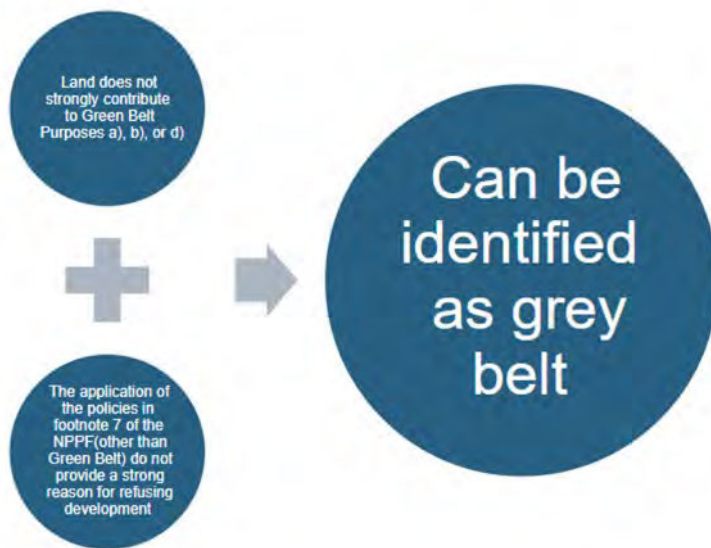


Figure 7: Extract from the Green Belt Guidance: ‘Figure 1. When can land be identified as grey belt’. Paragraph: 007 ID: 64-007-20250225

26. The Green Belt context of the Site is illustrated in **Figure 8** below and the contribution of the Site to purposes a), b) and d) is then considered below in **Table 2**. This assessment is based on the approach and criteria set out in the PPG on Green Belt (published February 2025).

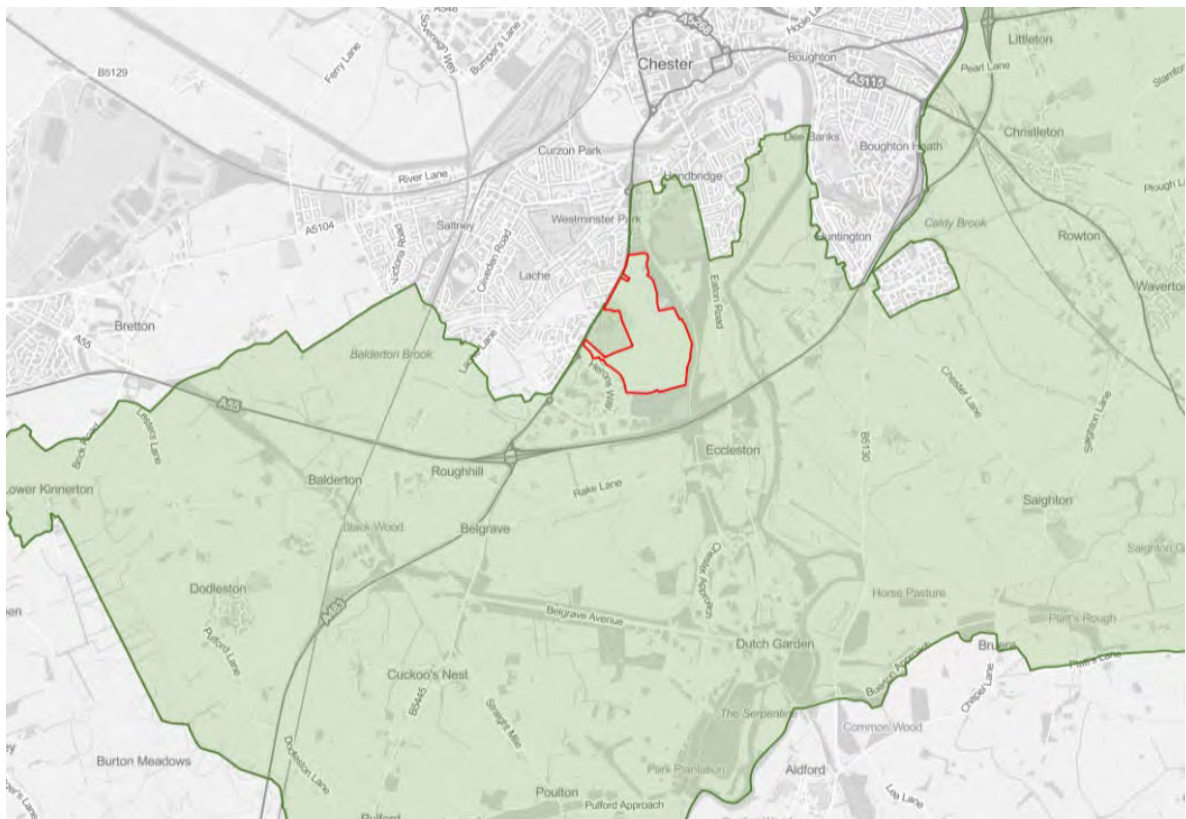


Figure 8: Green Belt context (source: English Local Authority Green Belt Dataset (Dec 2024)) Site shown in red outline

Table 2: Assessment of contribution the Site makes to Green Belt purposes a, b and d

Purpose	Contribution
(a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>Moderate - The Site is located adjacent to the large built-up area of Chester; however, it includes several features that weaken its contribution to this Green Belt purpose.</p> <p>The Site has physical features both adjacent to and in close proximity that could help to restrict and contain development. To the north lies the existing development in Chester and mature woodland; to the west, The King’s School, the A483/Wrexham Road, and residential development; to the southwest, Chester Business Park; to the southeast, The Glebe’s dense woodland belt; and to the east, a mature woodland belt that follows Duke’s Drive. To the south beyond The Glebes and Chester Business Park is the A55 which also provides a strong defensible boundary to the south of the City of Chester preventing any further outward sprawl.</p> <p>The Site is partially enclosed by existing development to the west and south. As such, development within the Site would not result in an incongruous pattern of development. Instead, it would represent a logical infill or extension to the City of Chester.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Site is already influenced by urbanising features. It is enclosed on the west, and south by a mix of residential and commercial development and is influenced by the adjacent road network. The character of the Site is therefore more reflective of an urban fringe than a rural countryside setting.</p>
(b) To prevent neighbouring town from merging into one another	<p>Weak - The Site is located to the south of Chester, within a wide expanse of Green Belt on the outskirts of the City. In this location the Site does not form part of a separation between Chester and any surrounding towns. The Site comprises only a small portion of this wider gap to the south of Chester the nearest towns lie well beyond the outer edge of the Green Belt.</p>
(d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	<p>Moderate - The Site lies outside of the defined settlement boundary of the historic City of Chester at a distance over 1.4km from the historic core. However, the Site is considered in policy CH1 as forming part of the strategic open space which</p>

contributes to the setting and character of Chester. In considering the Site's contribution preserving the setting of Chester, it should be noted that the City has expanded south over time with further modern development including residential development at Handbridge and Curzon Park. This development along with the river provides suitable physical and visual separation between the Site and the centre Chester.

The Site has no important visual relationship to historic core of Chester. Its separation is reinforced by existing built development and the dense mature woodland along Duke's Drive, which acts as a strong visual and physical buffer.

27. As demonstrated in **Table 2**, the Site is not considered to perform strongly against the Green Belt purposes a), b), and d).

National designations and Footnote 7 areas/assets of importance

28. Land defined as grey belt excludes areas *'where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development'*. The Site has therefore been reviewed against the areas/assets of particular importance identified in 'footnote 7' of the NPPF in **Table 3**. This analysis is based on available desktop sources and following a Site visit carried out in March 2025. The analysis set out below would need to be verified by the relevant technical expert should an application be progressed.

Table 3: NPPF Footnote 7 Area or Asset of Importance

Area or Asset of Importance	Comment
Habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest	The Site is not covered by any of the designations listed in paragraph 194 and it is not a SSSI. The nearest SSSI is located 500m to the east of the Site, beyond the mature dense tree belts associated with Dukes Drive.
Local Green Space	The Site is not designated (nor proposed) as Local Green Space
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast	The Site is not within any of these designations.
Irreplaceable habitats	We are not aware of the Site containing any irreplaceable habitats, ecological advice should be sought to confirm this. NB: the government plans in due course to review and ensure the robustness of the definition of irreplaceable

	habitats to ensure it is comprehensive to support decision makers. This situation should be kept under review.
Designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest)	<p>The Site does not contain any designated heritage assets; however, the Site is located directly adjacent to the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden. Any development within the Site would need to respond to this asset; if appropriately designed it is unlikely that the impact of development adjacent to the Registered Park and Garden would form a strong reason for refusal.</p> <p>Archaeological advice should be secured to confirm absence of any below ground assets.</p>
Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change	<p>The Environment Agency Flood Map shows the Site is within flood zone 1 is not at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. The Site does include some small, localised areas at risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>It is unlikely that flood risk would from a strong reason for refusing or restricting development subject to adequate design and mitigation measures. It would be necessary for a scheme to demonstrate compliance with the NPPF (including the sequential and exceptions tests where applicable) to confirm that it is not within the definition of Footnote 7.</p>

29. Based on the analysis set out in Table 3, the Site is unlikely to contain areas or assets of particular importance identified in footnote 7 to the NPPF that would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development on the Site. However, detailed analysis would be required from the relevant built heritage, flooding and archaeological technical experts to confirm this.

Conclusion

30. The Site is not recognised as an important habitat and is not likely to contain areas or assets of particular importance identified in footnote 7 of the NPPF that would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development. It does not perform strongly against purposes a), b) or d) and can therefore be considered as grey belt. The Site makes some contributions to the setting of Chester and is located directly adjacent to a linear tree belt that forms part of the Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden. Any proposed development within the Site would need to respond appropriately to this designated heritage asset.
31. With appropriate landscape led masterplanning the land could be developed for residential uses. The existing landscape features including the trees and vegetation, and ponds should be retained, protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Part 2: Could development be appropriate?

Impact on the fundamental function of the Green Belt across the plan area

32. For the development of grey belt land to be regarded as not inappropriate in the Green Belt, paragraph 155a of the NPPF requires that the development proposals would not '*fundamentally*

undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan⁷. The PPG on Green Belt advises that, to come to a judgement on this, ‘authorities should consider whether, or the extent to which, the release or development of Green Belt Land would affect the ability of all the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan from serving all five of the Green Belt purposes in a meaningful way’.

33. The extent of Green Belt land across the plan area is illustrated in **Figure 9**. The Site forms a small part of the Green Belt across the plan area. Key objectives for the Green Belt across the plan area include maintaining the strategic gap between Chester and Ellesmere Port and maintaining the open setting of Chester. Further analysis on the potential impacts on the strategic functioning of the Green Belt is provided in **Table 4** below.

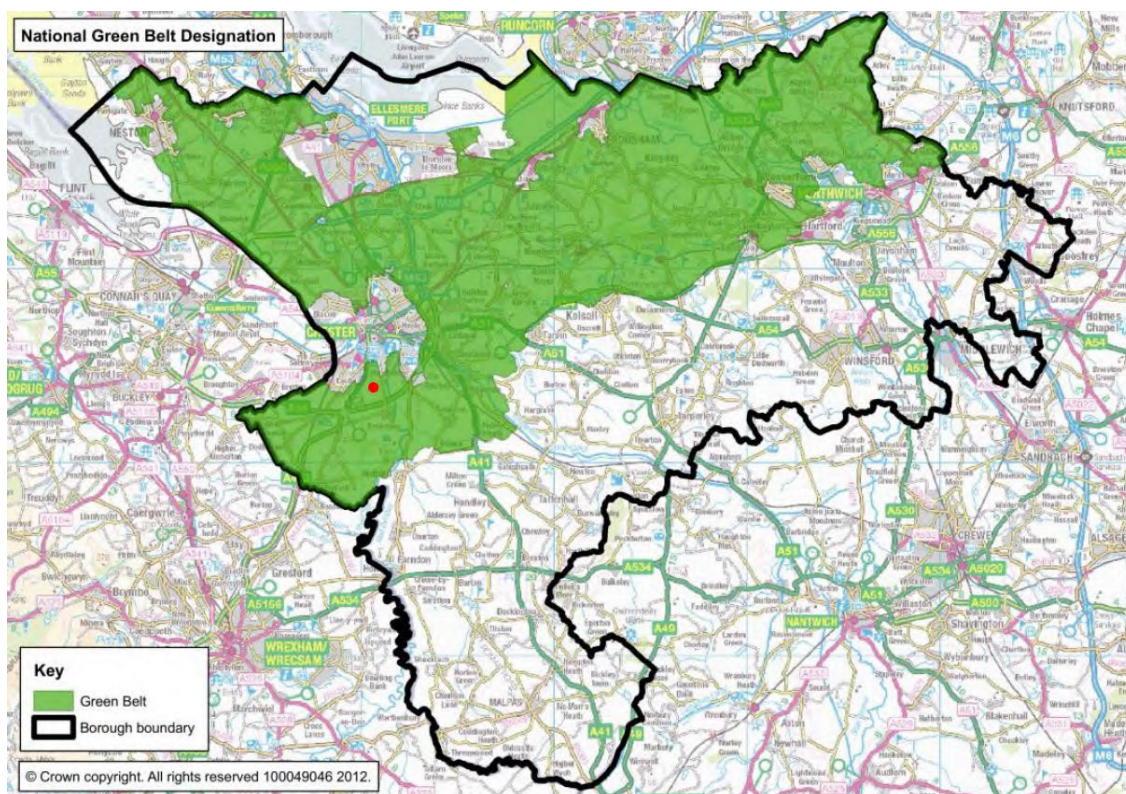


Figure 9: Extract from the Cheshire West and Chester Green Belt Study illustrating the North Chester Green Belt: broad location of Site marked with red dot

Table 4: Impact of development proposals on the strategic functioning of the remaining Green Belt

Green Belt Purpose	Impact on the strategic functioning of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area
Purpose a - To check the unrestricted	The introduction of development within the Site would forms a small part of the area of Green Belt land within the

⁷ NPPF para 155a

sprawl of large built-up areas	borough which contributes to the prevention of the unrestricted sprawl of Chester. As demonstrated in Table 2 , Site does not make a strong contribution to this purpose. Development of the Site would represent a very small change to the extent of Chester and existing permanent physical features would continue to prevent further outward expansion. The Site is closely associated with existing development and development of it would not result in an incongruous pattern of development. The remaining Green Belt within the plan area would continue to serve this purpose in a meaningful way.
Purpose b - To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	The Site is located on the southern edge of the existing large settlement of Chester. As set out in Table 2 , the Site does not form a gap between towns. Land within the wider Green Belt would continue to prevent Chester and Ellesmere Port and there would be no impact on this purpose as a result of development within the Site.
Purpose c - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Development of the Site would introduce built form into an area which is currently undeveloped land, but which is enclosed by developed areas of Chester to the north and west, and Chester Business Park to the south. The Site is urban fringe in character and influenced by adjacent urbanising features and land uses. As such, development within the Site could integrate with the settlement pattern of Chester. Extensive areas of open landscape beyond the A55 that contributes more strongly to this purpose would be preserved. Development within the Site would not form an incongruous intrusion into the countryside and would not weaken or compromise the ability of the remaining Green Belt in the plan area from serving purpose c in a meaningful way.
Purpose d – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The Site is considered to form part of the setting of Chester. However, due to the expansion of Chester over time with more modern development and given existing vegetation that separates the Site from the historic core of Chester the Site does not form a fundamental function to this purpose of the Green Belt. The land to the east of the Site is identified as key green finger into the City of Chester.
Purpose e - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All Green Belt within the plan area achieves purpose e to the same extent. There would be no change to this as a result of the development on the Site.

34. In conclusion, as demonstrated above, development within the Site would not *'affect the ability of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan from serving all five of the Green Belt purposes in a meaningful way'*. Development on the Site (if appropriately designed) would therefore comply with the first test set out at NPPF para 155a regarding appropriateness of development in the Green Belt. The proposed development will deliver development in a sustainable location, provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the development and provide a policy compliant level of affordable housing and will comply with parts b-d of paragraph 155 and the Golden Rules (paragraph 156).

Opportunities to enhance the Green Belt

35. National policy requires that where grey belt is brought forward for development it should meet the so called "golden rules" (NPPF para 156). These include, for housing development, higher levels of affordable housing; necessary infrastructure provision; and delivering the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. Potential opportunities for delivering Green Belt enhancements through new green space in association with development opportunities for the Site include:
- provision of new public open space associated with residential development including appropriate recreational uses to meet any unmet needs within the area;
 - formalising existing connectivity from the Site to the adjacent land uses including links to the residential areas and amenities to the west and utilising an existing link into the Registered Park and Garden to the east;
 - Retaining and enhancing existing landscape features such as the existing vegetation and pond to improve biodiversity.
36. The submitted representations are accompanied by Development Framework Document and illustrative masterplan – "Wrexham Road - A Sustainable Urban Extension for Chester" which sets out Grosvenor's vision for a residential-led proposal for the Site. The document sets out our clear commitment to bring forward a high-quality residential-led development of approximately 1,100–1,400 homes, alongside community facilities and enhanced green infrastructure. It demonstrates the Site's suitability, availability and achievability, while recognising that the final design and layout will be refined collaboratively with the Council to ensure the scheme delivers a lasting legacy for Chester. The document demonstrates how the development of the Site can respond positively to the provisions set out within paragraph 156 of the NPPF above.

Contact

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August 2025

03927

Appendix 1: Extract from Planning Practice Guidance (February 2025)

Green Belt

Advice on the role of the Green Belt in the planning system.

How should the contribution land makes to the relevant Green Belt purposes be assessed?

When making judgements as to whether land is grey belt, authorities should consider the contribution that assessment areas make to Green Belt purposes a, b, and d. Considerations for informing these judgements are set out below:

Purpose A – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

This purpose relates to the sprawl of large built-up areas. Villages should not be considered large built-up areas.

Contribution	Illustrative features
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development, and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. They are also likely to include all of the following features: - be adjacent or near to a large built up area- if developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended “finger” of development into the Green Belt)
Moderate	Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be adjacent or near to a large built up area, but include one or more features that weaken the land’s contribution to this purpose a, such as (but not limited to): - having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development - be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development - contain existing development - being subject to other urbanising influences
Weak or None	Assessment areas that make only a weak or no contribution are likely to include those that: - are not adjacent to or near to a large built up area- are adjacent to or near to a large built up area, but containing or being largely enclosed by significant existing development

Purpose B – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

This purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages

Contribution	Illustrative Features
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development and include all of the following features: - forming a substantial part of a gap between towns- the development of which would be likely to result in the loss of visual separation of towns
Moderate	Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be located in a gap between towns, but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to): - Forming a small part of the gap between towns - being able to be developed without the loss of visual separation between towns. This could be (but is not limited to) due to the presence or the close proximity of structures, natural landscape elements or topography that preserve visual separation
Weak or None	Assessment areas that contribute weakly are likely to include those that: - do not form part of a gap between towns, or - form part of a gap between towns, but only a very small part of this gap, without making a contribution to visual separation

Purpose D – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

This purpose relates to historic towns, not villages. Where there are no historic towns in the plan area, it may not be necessary to provide detailed assessments against this purpose.

Contribution	Illustrative Features
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely be free of existing development and to include all of the following features: - form part of the setting of the historic town- make a considerable contribution to the special character of a historic town. This could be (but is not limited to) as a result of being within, adjacent to, or of significant visual importance to the historic aspects of the town
Moderate	Assessment areas that perform moderately are likely to form part of the setting and/or contribute to the special character of a historic town but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to): - being separated to some extent from historic aspects of the town by existing development or topography- containing existing development- not having

an important visual, physical, or experiential relationship to historic aspects of the town

Weak or None Assessment areas that make no or only a weak contribution are likely to include those that: - do not form part of the setting of a historic town- have no visual, physical, or experiential connection to the historic aspects of the town

Appendix 3 – Initial Landscape and Heritage Appraisal

Initial Landscape and Heritage Appraisal

Land east of Wrexham Road, Chester

August 2025

Introduction

1. This initial and preliminary Appraisal ('ILHA') has been prepared by Turley's specialist Heritage, Townscape and Landscape team on behalf of Grosvenor's Eaton Estate ('Grosvenor'). It provides an initial understanding of landscape and heritage considerations associated with future development of land to the east of Wrexham Road in Chester ('the Site') and is intended to inform representations in connection with Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan – Issues and Options 2025 consultation and an Illustrative Masterplan.
2. The Appraisal describes the Site and summarises its history and development, within the context of the wider southern setting of the City of Chester. It identifies heritage assets with potential to be affected by future development of the Site and describes their significance and setting, including the contribution made by the Site. The landscape and visual section of the appraisal summarises the landscape context of the Site, its setting, the visibility of the Site and key views into it from the surroundings. It culminates with the identification of key landscape and heritage considerations and how these could be addressed and/or mitigated by future proposals.
3. This Appraisal has been informed by a site visit undertaken during August 2025, a desk-top review of existing published information, including a search of nationally and locally designated heritage asset resources, and initial archival research, including historic map regression. It has been prepared in accordance with the principles set out in the Historic England publications 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'¹ and 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment'².
4. It should be noted that the potential implications of future development on the archaeological resource (i.e. below ground heritage assets) is outside the remit of this initial Appraisal.
5. The IHLA has regard for relevant legislation, policy and guidance in its assessment and informs the approach taken to the masterplanning and promotion of the Site through the emerging Local Plan. In particular, it addresses the contribution of the Site to the Strategic Open Space designated under the Council's current Local Plan (Policy CH1).

Site Description

6. The Site is located to the east of Wrexham Road (A483), to the south of the urban edge of Chester. It comprises predominantly arable agricultural land, set within a wider patchwork of fields, woodland belts, and existing development. The Site extends northwards, wrapping around

¹ Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition), 2017, Historic England

² Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Second Edition), 2015, Historic England

the existing King's School campus, and is enclosed to the east by a mature belt of woodland that follows Duke's Drive.

7. Directly adjacent the eastern Site boundary is the Duke's Drive corridor which is associated with the Eaton Hall Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. The northern portion of the Duke's Drive is a public right of way forming part of the Chester Approach, and the southern portion is a locally walked route that connects into an area of woodland called The Glebe. It is a popular walking/ cycling route through the area that tracks along the north south alignment of the Registered Park and Garden.
8. To the west, the Site is bounded by recent residential development and the recently constructed King's Moat residential development , while to the southwest it is adjacent to Chester Business Park, a major employment hub with large-scale built form. The A55 Chester Southerly Bypass lies immediately beyond the southern boundary, providing a strong edge to development in this area. The A55 and the A41 typically defines the settlement extents of Chester.
9. The Site is generally flat to gently undulating and open in character, although its visibility is limited by the presence of surrounding development and extensive vegetation, particularly along the eastern and southern boundaries. A series of hedgerows, field boundaries, and scattered trees contribute to the Site's semi-rural appearance, although the influence of nearby urban and commercial uses and road infrastructure is evident. The northern tip of Site comprises a small field parcel that is overgrown with unmanaged and self-seeded vegetation.



Figure 1: View from Wrexham Road adjacent to the existing residential development looking north towards Chester and the western Site boundary



Figure 2: Northern field parcel overgrown and unmanaged



Figure 3: Southern field parcels with open character

10. The Site sits at the interface between the built edge of Chester and the more rural hinterland to the east and southeast. It functions as part of the urban fringe and is subject to strong urbanising influences, including road infrastructure, schools, business uses, and housing.
11. The Site measures approximately 70 hectares and the Site boundary is indicated in **Figure 3**.

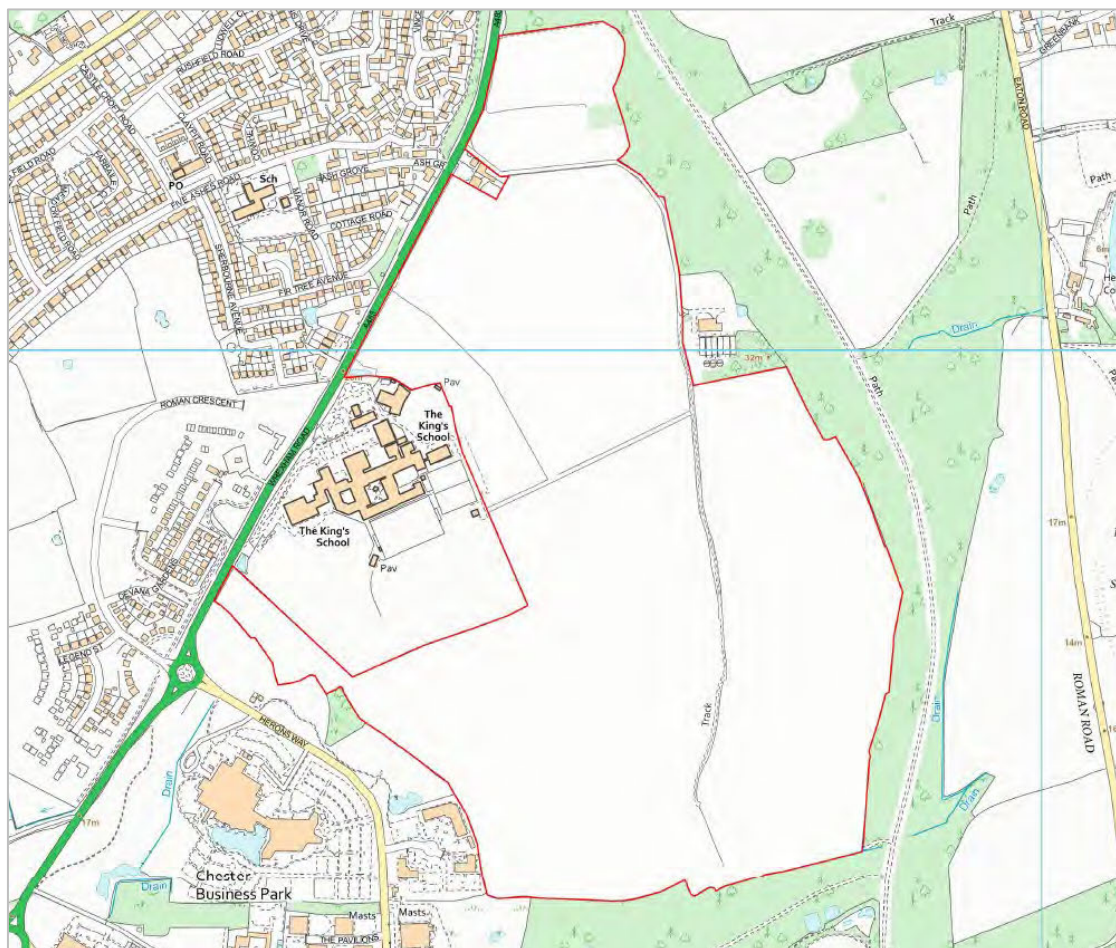


Figure 4: Site location plan

Overview of Historic Development

12. Chester was founded by the Romans and continued as a fortified settlement through the medieval period. It was largely contained within its walls until the late 18th century, when it expanded eastwards along the Chester Canal (Figure 4).

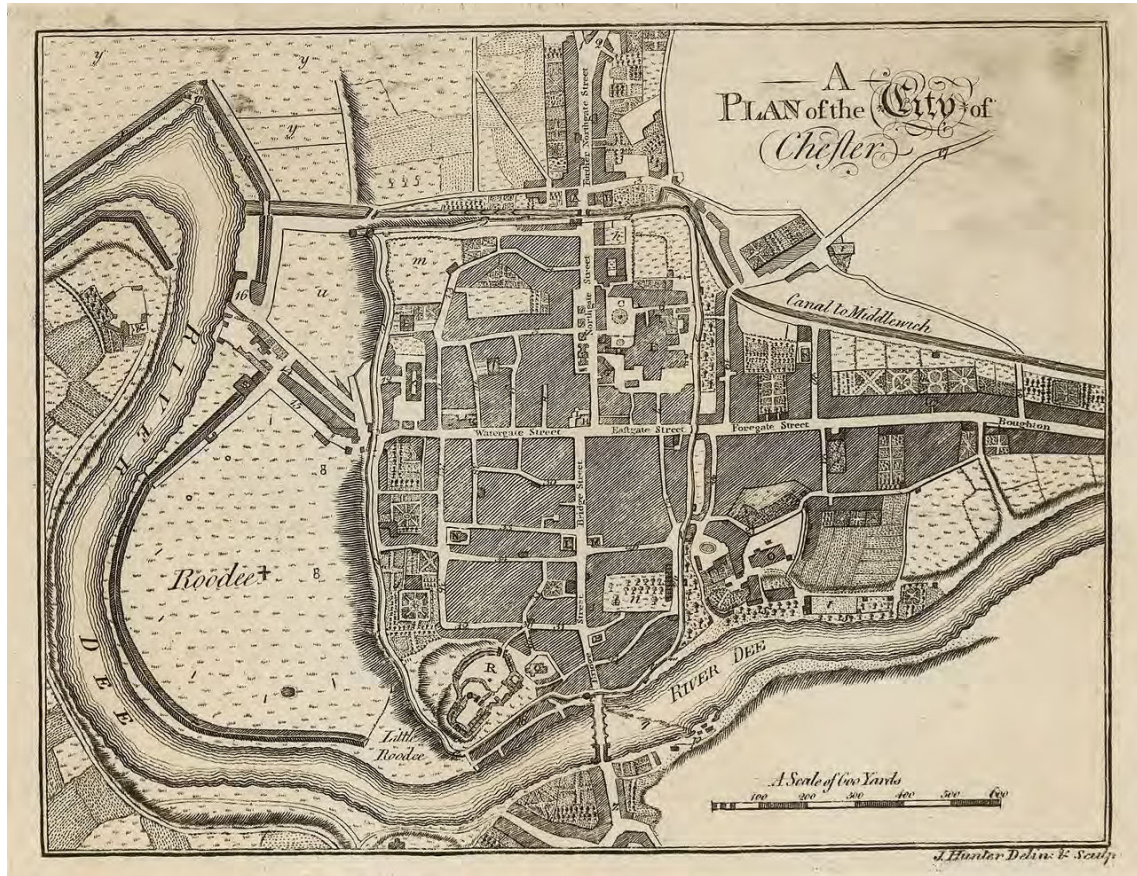


Figure 5: 1782 Thomas Pennant Plan of the City of Chester (© National Library of Wales). The Site does not feature on this plan and is to the south

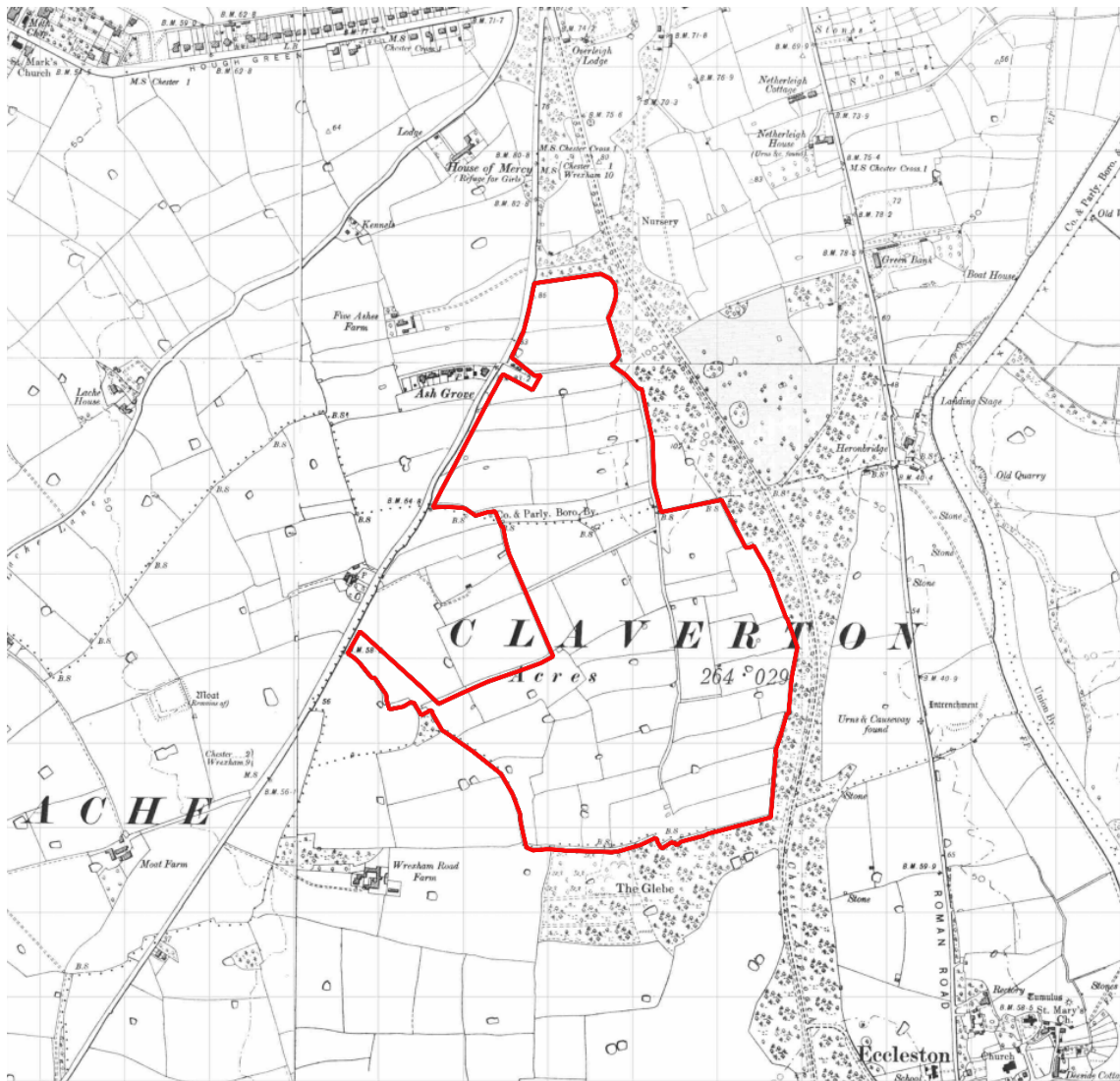


Figure 6: 1897-98 Ordnance Survey (OS) Map. The approximate location of the Site is outlined in red

13. Expansion southwards began in earnest in the early to mid 19th century, driven by improved transport links and industrial prosperity. This initially took place to the south of the River Dee along Hough Green, where large areas of formerly open fields were developed with housing (Figure 5).

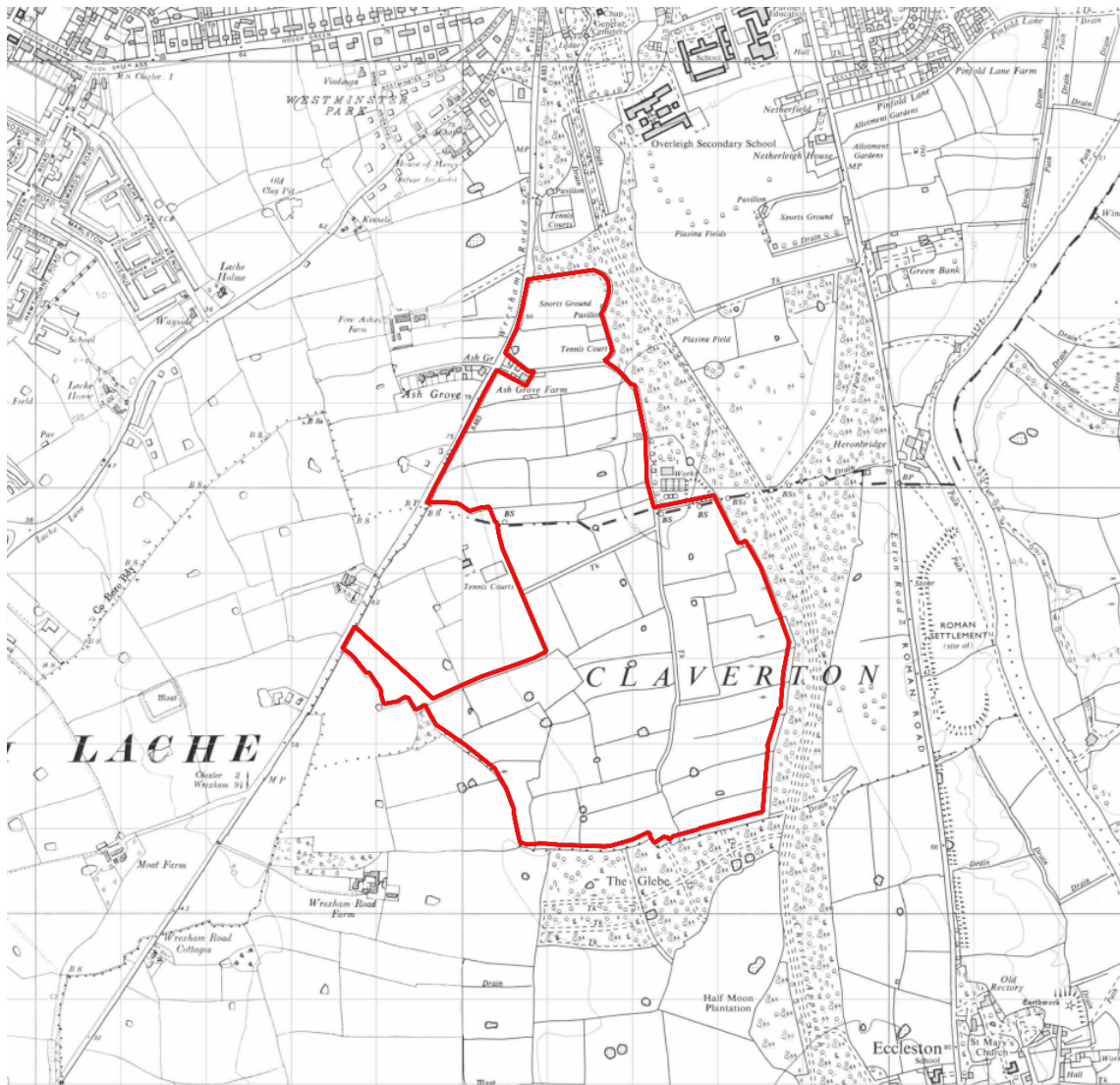


Figure 7: 1964-68 OS Map. The approximate location of the Site is outlined in red

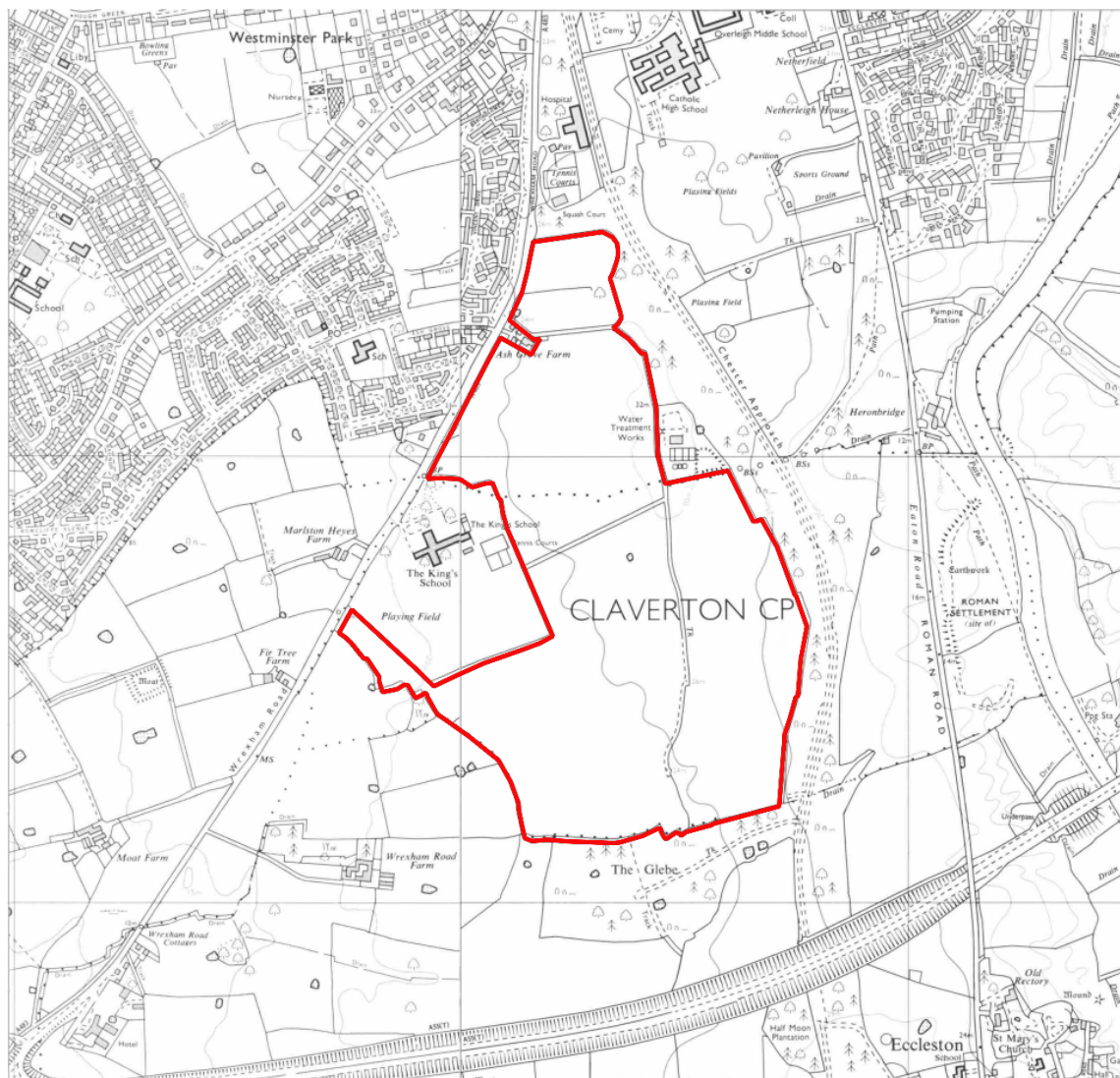


Figure 8: 1982-87 OS Map. The approximate location of the Site is outlined in red

14. The 20th century saw considerable changes to Chester and the surrounding area, particularly during the post-war period (**Figures 6 and 7**). Population growth and post-war housing demand gave rise to pressure for development, and large areas of modern houses were built. This resulted in the rapid urban expansion of Chester southwards, around Lache, Westminster Park and Handbridge. The North Wales Expressway (A55) was built in the late 20th century and Chester Business Park was built to the south of the Site in 1988.
15. The Site itself remained open fields. Many of the field boundaries were removed in the late 20th century around the time of the construction of a water treatment works to the east of the Site, and King's School to the west of the Site.



Figure 9: Google Earth modern aerial image. The approximate location of the Site is outlined in red

16. In recent years, additional residential development has taken place to the west of the Site on the opposing side of Wrexham Road.

Heritage Assets

17. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).”³

Designated Heritage Assets

18. Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions which involve them.

Registered Park and Garden

19. The Site is adjacent to the western boundary of the grade II* **Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden (Eaton Hall RPG)**, included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England on 10 June 1985.

³ MHCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 – Annex 2

Conservation Areas

20. The Site is also adjacent to **Ash Grove Conservation Area**, first designated by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWACC) in March 1999. The boundaries of the conservation area and its relationship with the Site are illustrated on the Heritage Asset Plan at **Appendix 2**.

Listed Buildings

21. The Site is close to a number of listed buildings with potential for their significance to be affected by future development and change within their setting. These are also included on the Heritage Asset Plan (HAP) at **Appendix 2**.
22. There is a grade II listed **Milepost (Milepost approximately 450 metres south of Overleigh roundabout)** located directly to the north of the Site and adjacent to the western boundary of the Eaton Hall RPG. It dates from the early 20th century and comprises an octagonal tapered cast iron column with a signage plate inscribed with the distance to Chester Cross. The listed milepost is principally of historic and functional interest, drawing significance from its position on Wrexham Road. It is currently surrounded by vegetation and is not clearly visible from the western or northern boundary of the Site.
23. To the south of the Site is the grade II listed **Wrexham Road Farmhouse and Farmbuildings**. The complex dates to 1880 and was designed by well known local architect John Douglas for the 1st Duke of Westminster, suggesting that the building formed part of the same landholding as the Eaton Hall estate and parts of the Site. The linked buildings are built of brown brick with stone dressings and red tiled roofs. The principal farmhouse is symmetrical with a projecting central bay and Flemish gables with tall, shaped chimney stacks. The connecting farm buildings are stylistically similar, have steep roofs and are described in the Historic England list entry description as 'picturesquely grouped' and 'a good example of Douglas' model farms for 1st Duke of Westminster'. Now forming part of Chester Business Park, the setting of the complex of listed buildings is now characterised by modern development and car parking and is physically and visually separated from the southern part of the Site.
24. Based on observations made during a site visit and initial appraisal it is not considered likely that the significance of these designated heritage assets (including the significance they derive from their setting) would be affected by future development of the Site, of the extent and nature currently envisaged. These judgements would be reviewed and re-evaluated as proposals progress.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

25. The NPPF identifies that heritage assets include both designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). Historic England's guidance⁴ states that:

"Non-designated heritage assets include those that have been identified in a Historic Environment Record, in a local plan, through listing or during the process of considering the application."

⁴ Historic England (2015) Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2.

26. CWACC has paused Local List nominations, although an earlier iteration of the Local List is accessible⁵. There are no locally listed buildings with potential to be affected by future development.

Assessments of Significance

27. The NPPF 2024 defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site’s Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.”⁶

28. The Historic England Advice Note 12, Statements of Heritage Significance⁷ advocates a staged approach to the assessment of the significance of heritage assets.

Registered Parks and Gardens

29. Historic England holds a Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest. The designation may complement other designations such as listed buildings. The published Register lists the criteria against which sites are assessed for inclusion.

Conservation Areas

30. Conservation areas are designated on the basis of their special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Historic England has published guidance in respect of conservation areas which provides a framework for the appraisal and assessment of the special interest of a conservation area.⁸

Setting

31. The NPPF defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”⁹

32. Historic England has published guidance¹⁰ in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes. The guidance confirms that:

“setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the relevant heritage asset itself.”

⁵ <https://maps.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/cwac/webmapping>

⁶ MHCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 – Annex 2

⁷ Historic England, 2019, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets, Historic England Advice Note 12

⁸ Historic England, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, 2019.

⁹ MHCLG, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 – Annex 2: Glossary

¹⁰ Historic England, Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition), 2017.

33. The guidance sets out a step-by-step process for proportionate assessment of the significance of a heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal.
34. Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be taken into account is set out in the latest National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG') relating to the historic environment. The NPPG sets out that:

“The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.”¹¹

¹¹ DCMS and MHCLG, National Planning Practice Guidance, 2019. Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 18a-013-20190723

Table 1: Registered Parks and Gardens with potential to be affected by the Proposed Scheme

Conservation Area	Special Interest	Setting (Physical Surroundings and Experience of the Asset)
<p>Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden (grade II*)</p>	<p>Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden (RPG) spans approximately 500 hectares. It is expansive, extending from the River Dee in the north and Pulford in the south, and has special historic interest as a multi-phased garden and parkland associated with Eaton Hall country house and wider estate.</p> <p>The estate originated under the Grosvenor family in the 15th century, and the first building at the Eaton Estate is thought to be a manor house with a moat, to the south of the present hall. The next house was built during the 17th century on the site of the present Hall and the Hall and parkland was extensively remodelled in 1804-06 under John Webb. William Andrews Nesfield introduced new garden features in the mid 19th century, and Edwin Lutyens redesigned parts of the garden during 1896-98.</p> <p>The main formal approach to Eaton Hall is from the west along Belgrave Avenue. This was present from the late 17th century and was extended as part of John Webb's remodelling in 1804-6, with an avenue of trees is along its length. There are two other secondary approaches to the Hall, including Chester Approach from the north (also referred to in this Appraisal as Dukes Drive) and Pulford Approach from the south. These are lined with woodland plantations.</p> <p>The principal gardens are to the east of the Hall. These are in four main compartments, paired on either side of a short canal. Nesfield added formal parterres in the mid 19th century. To the south of the Hall is a yew-hedge Italian Garden which was redesigned by Edwin Lutyens in 1896-98 and again by Detmar Blow in 1911. The northern part of the garden comprises floral parterre beds, and to the middle is a cruciform pool. A Kitchen Garden is to the north of the hall, surrounded by high brick walls.</p> <p>The main features of the Parkland, to the south east of the Hall, include a large Fish Pond and the Serpentine and Oxleisure Pool further south. These elements were contrived in John Webb's 1804-06 remodelling. Woodland plantations are to the west of Serpentine and occupy large parts of the southern extent of the registered area.</p>	<p>Due to the extent of the Eaton Hall RPG and the wider associated Grosvenor Estate and landholdings, the RPG also has an expansive setting, covering the physical surroundings of the asset and associative relationships with other buildings and land, including listed buildings with group value and stylistic similarities. In general terms, the Eaton Hall RPG forms part of what was, and still is, a rural estate on the edge of, and with strong links to, Chester and surrounding villages. This setting has become more mixed and varied over time and now comprises a combination of open agricultural land, historic villages, modern development and road infrastructure.</p> <p>What could be described as the heart or core of the RPG is located to the south of Eccleston, extending westwards from the River Dee. This is where the present Eaton Hall is located, with a concentration of other listed buildings, including garden structures. From this area, the Belgrave Avenue east to west approach is of particular significance as a formal drive, orientated to exploit views westwards towards Beeston Castle. Other approaches and entrances to the garden, parkland and wider estate are also of importance, both to the RPG itself and its setting, and this Appraisal concentrates on the northern Chester Approach, given its proximity and visual relationship with the Site.</p> <p>Chester Approach was truncated and divorced from the southern extent of the RPG when the A55 was built in the late 20th century. The setting of this northern portion of the estate, as found today, is influenced by a range of uses, development and features including the River Dee, the southern extension of the historic core of Chester, Overleigh Cemetery, education campuses, modern residential development, open agricultural land and aspects of rural setting, Heronbridge Roman site (scheduled monument), the route of the A55 and Chester Business Park. It therefore has a mixed and changed setting, that is more influenced by the southern expansion of Chester, when compared with the remainder of the RPG.</p> <p>Contribution made by the Site</p> <p>The Site extends westwards from the northern extent of the RPG. It was historically owned by the Grosvenor Estate and therefore has an associative relationship with the Eaton Hall RPG, albeit as a small part of a much wider and extensive landholding. The Site comprises an area of open agricultural land that was part of a wider rural area historically, but that which is now influenced by modern development and change. It is separated from Duke's Drive by thick woodland plantation. There are very limited and heavily filtered views into the Site from Duke's Drive itself and the woodland edge, and it can only be glimpsed. Views are particularly restricted during the summer months.</p> <p>The Site does not contain or contribute to any designed or intended views from or to the RPG, and it is physically and visually separated from the core of the RPG to the south. Due to very limited intervisibility with Duke's Drive itself, any contribution made by the Site to the significance of the RPG is restricted to its associative relationship as part of the much wider Grosvenor landholding, and as an element of an also expansive rural setting (when the RPG is considered in its entirety).</p>

Table 2: Conservation Areas with potential to be affected by the Proposed Scheme

Conservation Area	Character and Appearance	Setting (Physical Surroundings and Experience of the Asset)
<p>Ash Grove Conservation Area</p>	<p>History and Development</p> <p>Ash Grove was built in the 1850s. Prior to this, the land formed part of the Marquis of Westminster’s (the Grosvenor family’s) estate and comprised open farmland as shown on the 1847 estate map. It was then developed as a single speculative scheme, sold individually, to form a small planned residential enclave. The northernmost farm buildings at Ash Grove Farm date to the late 19th century. At the Wrexham Road junction, a pair of Edwardian semi-detached houses, Dyreham and Ashfield, were added later by 1911.</p> <p>Character and Appearance</p> <p>Ash Grove Conservation Area encompasses the southern side of Ash Grove, together with the former Ash Grove Farm opposite, and is laid out as a small cul-de-sac. The entrance to Ash Grove is marked by stone piers inscribed ‘Ash Grove’. Plots are large with buildings set back from the road behind modest front gardens, with larger private gardens to the rear. Boundaries between plots consist of low garden walls and hedging, with a tall hedge along the northern side of Ash Grove.</p> <p>Buildings along Ash Grove are typically of two and a half storeys and built primarily in red brick with painted stone lintels and door surrounds. Each building is individually designed, although all are well-proportioned and feature sash windows and symmetrical frontages, typical of the mid Victorian architectural style. At the street entrance, Dyreham and Ashfield are examples of Edwardian architecture. They are built of brick with white render and feature half-timbering and gables, which are common derivatives of the Neo-Tudor style (a style often used for Edwardian suburban housing). The former farm buildings for Ash Grove Farm (now nursery) on Wrexham Road are brick built and generally plainer and utilitarian in character than that found along Ash Grove.</p>	<p>The Ash Grove Conservation Area is compact and well defined. As with the Eaton Hall RPG, its setting has also changed and evolved over time. When speculatively built it had a more rural and sylvan setting than it does today. It is now principally experienced and appreciated within the context of Wrexham Road (a main route carrying flows of traffic and public transport into the City of Chester), and in combination with modern residential development to the north, south and west. The main part of the conservation area, extending westwards from Wrexham Road, is a private and enclosed street with restricted views. It has no clear relationship with its setting. The eastern extent, including Ash Grove Farm and car park is more open and there is a stronger visual and physical relationship with surrounding agricultural land that comprises the Site.</p> <p>Contribution made by the Site</p> <p>The Site has no visual relationship with the majority of the conservation area, the exception being the eastern extent which includes Ash Grove Farm and associated land, and it is possible that there was an historic functional relationship or common land ownership. Any contribution made by the Site to the character and appearance or significance of the conservation area is limited to the relationship it has with the former farm complex and is diminished by the extent to which the former farm itself has been altered.</p>

Landscape Context

Landscape Designations and Landscape Value

35. The Site does not fall within a national landscape designation. The nearest designated landscapes are the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape which lies c. 18km to the southwest.
36. The Site is identified locally as part of Policy CH1 Chester - Strategic Open Space. The Site lies within this broad policy designation intended to protect Chester's key green infrastructure corridors. The policy does not preclude development within or adjacent to areas of Strategic Open Space. However, any proposals must be of an appropriate scale and type, and incorporate sensitive boundary treatments to ensure that the character, quality, and scale of these spaces are not harmed, nor public enjoyment of them impeded. Particular consideration should be given to the special qualities and characteristics of these Strategic Open Spaces, which make an important contribution to the setting and landscape character of Chester.
37. In landscape terms, the land within the Site comprises relatively ordinary agricultural fields with limited scenic, recreational, or perceptual value. It lacks public access and is visually and functionally disconnected from the more sensitive and valued parts of the CH1 designation. Duke's Drive corridor, which lies to the east of the Site and is within the Eaton Hall RPG, does meet the criteria of a locally valued landscape, offering public access, mature woodland, and a strong relationship with the River Dee corridor. Dense vegetation along Duke's Drive forms a strong visual and physical boundary, providing effective separation between the Site and this more sensitive landscape. As such, the Site makes a limited contribution to the overall value and function of the CH1 area and does not meet the thresholds for a "valued landscape" under NPPF paragraph 187.

Landscape Character

38. At a national level, the Site lies within the western portion of National Character Area (NCA) 61 – Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain. The NCA covers much of Cheshire, northern Shropshire, and north-west Staffordshire. It features flat or gently undulating pastoral farmland, bordered by the urban Mersey Valley to the north and the rural Shropshire Hills to the south. To the west lie the Welsh border hills, and to the east and south-east lie urban areas and adjacent NCAs including the Potteries and Churnet Valley, Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands, and Cannock Chase. The NCA profiles provide a high-level overview of the landscape characteristics.
39. At a district level, 'A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester Borough' was produced on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council in 2016. The Site is located within Landscape Character (LCA) Type 11: Estate Farmland as defined within the Strategy. It is described as "*A medium-scale, low-lying and well maintained landscape character area falling in extensive tracts of the Cheshire Plain either side of the Dee Valley LCA south of Chester. It is defined through a consistency in topography, land use, woodland blocks and formal parkland and tree-lined avenues associated with historical estate ownership, with particularly strong and distinguishing settlement and architectural elements.*"
40. The site is located within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 11a: Grosvenor Estate.
41. The key characteristics of this LCT that are of relevance to the Site and its landscape setting are:
 - *A gently rolling or flat landscape with few views apart from longer vistas to higher ground east and west of the area*

- *Underlying geology comprises Kinnerton Sandstone and Chester Pebble Beds Formation overlain by Devensian till*
- *Large blocks of woodland, predominantly oak with a more ornamental mix of species around Eaton Hall*
- *Mix of pastoral and arable land use*
- *Strong network of well managed hawthorn hedges with a high proportion of oak trees*
- *Sense of enclosure arising from low elevation, dense hedgerows and significant woodland blocks creating middle distance and close skylines*
- *Extensive areas of flood plain as tributaries meet with the River Dee, such as Stoneyford Brook, Powsey Brook and Plowley Brook*
- *Dense concentration of listed historic estate buildings, set within Conservation Areas at Eaton Hall and within most of the designed villages across the LCA*
- *Three motte and bailey castles in the villages of Aldford, Pulford and Dodleston and a number of medieval moated sites*
- *Eaton Hall clock tower and spire provides an imposing landmark unchallenged by other constructions*
- *Views to some estate village church spires and towers, such as Eccleston, Pulford and Aldford*
- *Influence of important designers on the designed landscape and built environment of the LCA, such as John Douglas, John Webb, William Andrews Nesfield and Edwin Lutyens reflected by designations*
- *Big skies*
- *Some field ponds, often of habitat importance*
- *A sparse network of often straight, quite lanes and roads, including private estate roads*
- *Significant influence of road and rail infrastructure to the northern parts of the LCA*
- *Significant variation in public access to the countryside between the eastern part with good public rights of way network, and the western area where the network is less extensive*
- *Connectivity between the two parts of the LCA is significantly limited by very limited crossing points of the River Dee*
- *Large garden centre complex and car park at Belgrave reflects diversification of the estate and rural enterprise.*

42. The land surrounding the Site is broadly representative of Landscape Character Type (LCT) 11a: Grosvenor Estate. It exhibits key characteristics such as a gently rolling or flat landscape, a mix of

pastoral and arable land use, and a strong network of hedgerows with mature oak trees, all contributing to a sense of enclosure. The Site is located within the rural fringe of Chester, where limited views and low-lying terrain are typical features of the character area. It also lies within land historically associated with the Eaton Estate, and the surrounding road layout and nearby designed villages reflect this estate influence. While landmark estate features such as the Eaton Hall clock tower or historic moated sites are not directly visible from the Site, they form an integral part of the wider landscape character.

43. The landscape condition is described as “*active agricultural use and is intensively managed by the estate for dairy and arable land use. Despite erosion of formal parkland, the condition of the landscape is generally good, although hedgerow loss and the influence of urban extension and transport infrastructure to the north is increasing*”. The Site is currently used as arable land.

Site Character

44. The Site is urban fringe in its character, it is surrounded on most sides by existing development which includes Chester Business Park to the south, recently constructed housing development and The Kings School Chester to the west and Nuffield Health Centre to the north. Noise and vehicle movements along the A483, and in some locations the A55 North Wales Expressway, also impacts on the tranquillity of the Site. The Site itself is formed by a series of agricultural fields, and mature vegetation within and around the Site. From some locations, there are long distance views out of the Site towards the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape (**Figure 9**). Future development proposals should respect the countryside qualities of the Site by reinforcing existing landscape features and retaining views lines and visual connections with the Welsh Hills.



Figure 10: View from within the Site (not publicly accessible) looking west across the Site demonstrating the long distance views towards the uplands of the Welsh Hills within the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape

Site Features

45. Features within and around the Site which contribute to its current character include: The dense vegetation along Duke’s Drive, the hedgerows (gappy in places) and scattered large trees marking the field boundaries throughout the Site; and the occasional pond and associated clusters of vegetation. Where possible, some of these features should be incorporated within the

development proposals to preserve the Site and contribute to the character and place-making of the new development.

Visual Context

46. The visibility of the Site has been established through both a desktop analysis of the surrounding area and by confirming on site the localised screening effect of the vegetation and built form.

Extent of visibility

47. The Site is relatively well-contained due to its topography. There is a gentle fall across the area from west to south east and enclosure by the dense mature vegetation along Duke's Drive to the east, and The Glebes to the south east. The existing development to the south west, and west of the Site provide further containment from the surroundings. The main area where views of the Site are possible is from the A483 as it passes the Site. The extent of visibility varies on account of the level of vegetation alongside this road (**Figures 10 and 11**). There are limited views from Duke's Drive into the Site. Typically, the Site is obscured by the dense mature trees associated with this route (**Figure 12**), however, during the winter month these views into the Site would become more filtered, and there maybe occasional views into the eastern most field parcel.



Figure 11: View looking south east towards the northern point of the Site from the A483 Wrexham Road, vegetation screening views into the Site



Figure 12: View looking south into Site from the A483 Wrexham Road, where vegetation along the boundary is less dense



Figure 13: View along Dukes Drive demonstrating the dense nature of the vegetation that flanks the route.

Key Visual Receptors

48. The identified visual receptors include:

- **Pedestrians on Duke's Drive/ Chester Approach** - Limited filtered views from Duke's Drive/ Chester Approach into the Site, views become less filtered during the Winter months.
- **Road users, cyclist and pedestrians on the A783** - Intermittent views from A783 (partly filtered by roadside vegetation). Key approach route into Chester. Views experienced by roads users are fleeting and generally experienced at high speed with less attention given to the views of the surrounding area.

Key Heritage, Landscape and Visual Considerations

49. The following considerations and recommendations are made with regard to the significance and setting of the identified heritage assets, and the relationship of the Site with them, guidance provided in the landscape character assessment and associated with Policy CH1 Chester - Strategic Open Space.

- Retain, incorporate and strengthen existing landscape features that make an important contribution to landscape character including: trees along the western site boundary with the A483/ Wrexham Road, field hedgerows, tree clumps, ponds and dense vegetation along the eastern Site boundary at Duke's Drive/ Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden. Ensure developable areas are set back from root protection areas of retained trees and retained landscape features are incorporated into open space to ensure retention.
- Protect long distance views lines within the southern portion of the Site looking west towards the Welsh Hills (National Landscape).

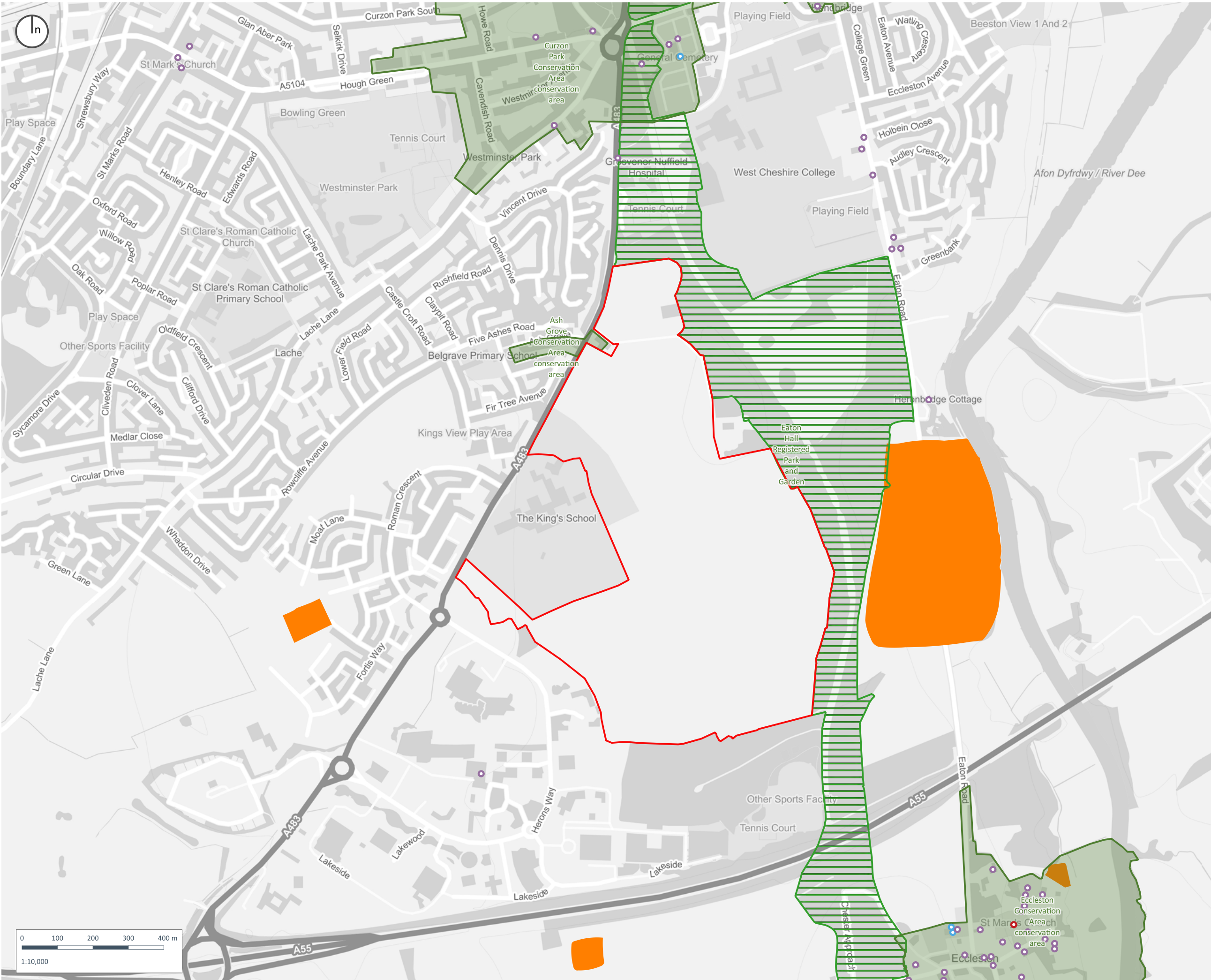
- Create a buffer between the western boundary of Eaton Hall RPG and any developable area, to separate new built form from the RPG, ensure that visual impact is minimised, and retain a swathe of green and open space extending southwards from the City.
- Incorporate tree-lined streets within development area (in accordance with NPPF para 136).
- Incorporate pedestrian and cycle routes connecting east into Dukes Drive and west to the local amenities and residential area at existing connection points to enhance the recreational value of the Site and permeability for new and existing communities.
- Potentially enhance connections between the Site and Duke's Drive subject to no loss of existing trees.
- Create a unique, high-quality development, which is landscape-led, reflecting the local character of the Site and its surroundings and using traditional materials and building forms.
- Consider the use of less dense development towards to the eastern Site boundary adjacent to existing Eaton Hall Registered Park and Garden.
- Potential to fulfil the objective of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Cheshire and Warrington

Appendix 1: Heritage Asset Plan

August 2025

03927





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- Site Boundary
 - Registered Park and Garden
 - Conservation Area
 - Scheduled Monument
- Listed Buildings
- I
 - II*
 - II

CLIENT:
Grosvenor

PROJECT:
East of Wexham Road, Chester

DRAWING:
Heritage Asset Plan

PROJECT NUMBER:
03927

DRAWING NUMBER: GIS_100 **CHECKED BY:** KL

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Appendix 4 – Transport Paper



Wrexham Road, Urban Extension Cheshire West and Chester Emerging Local Plan Allocation Submission

Transport Paper

Grosvenor's Eaton Estate

August 2025

Report Control

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Appendix A Site Access General Arrangement Drawings



1. Introduction

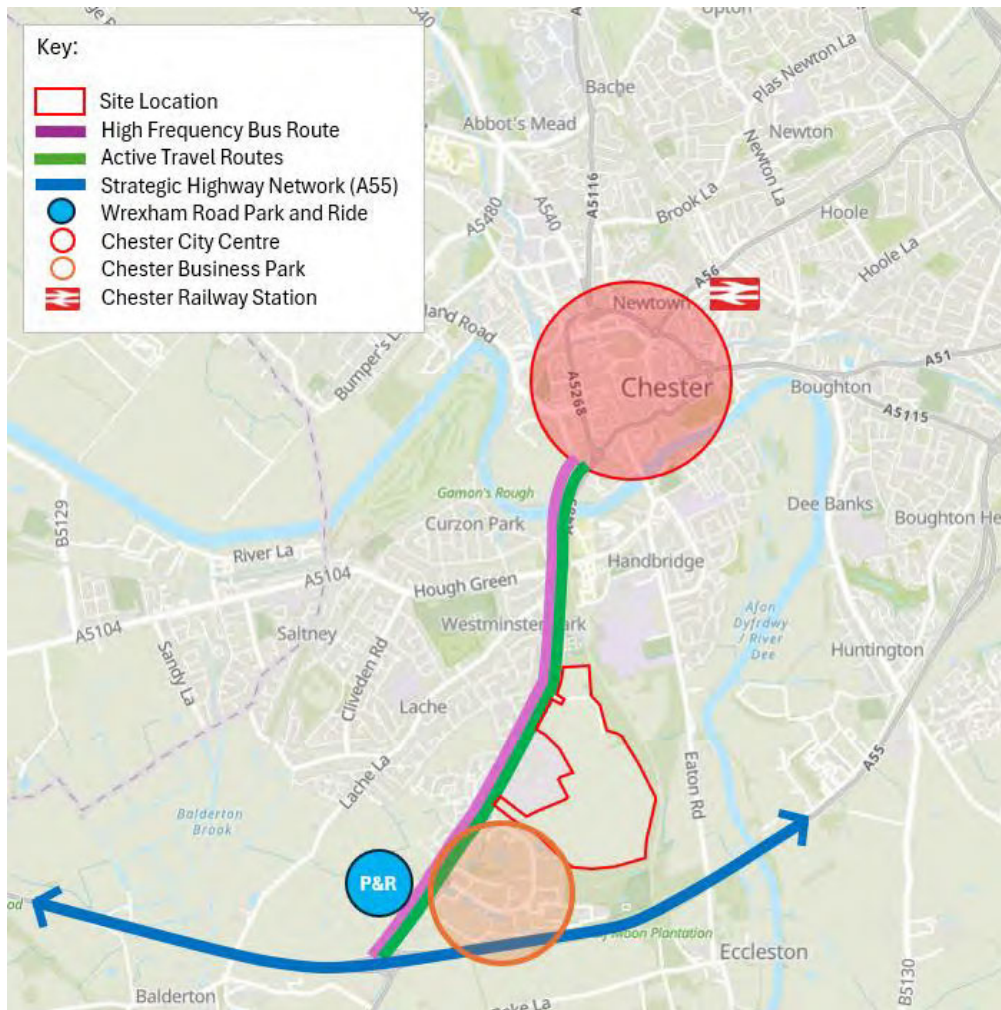
- 1.1. Astute Transport Planning has been appointed by the Grosvenor's Eaton Estate (Grosvenor) to provide a Transport Paper to support the proposed allocation of land to the east of Wrexham Road, Chester, in the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan. This draft plan is currently going through the Regulation 18 public consultation process.
- 1.2. The proposed allocation site is located within the jurisdiction of Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC), who act as both the local planning and highway authority.
- 1.3. A masterplanning exercise has been undertaken to demonstrate how the site could provide a residential-led development of around 1,100-1,400 new homes, together with a potential new health facility and potential community uses on circa 70ha of land.
- 1.4. The site provides the opportunity to develop a thriving community that provides opportunities for local living and reducing the need to travel.
- 1.5. Grosvenor is proposing the sustainable development of a well-located site on the southern edge of Chester, approximately 2.6km from the city centre. The site is served by an existing high-frequency bus route and active travel corridor and lies adjacent to Chester Business Park and The King's School Chester.
- 1.6. This Transport Paper forms part of the representations being made to CWaC as part of the Local Plan preparation process and demonstrates the deliverability of the proposed residential site in transport terms.

The Site

- 1.7. The Site is located to the south of Chester city centre along the Wrexham Road (A483) transport corridor. The Site is bound by woodland to the north, Duke's Drive to the east, woodland and Chester Business Park to the south and Wrexham Road (A483), The King's School Chester and Jigsaw Ash Tree Farm Day Nursery to the west. The majority of the Site is currently used for agricultural purposes.
- 1.8. Wrexham Road (A483) provides for a variety of modes, including cars, regular bus services including the Sapphire 1, X4 and Wrexham Road Park and Ride service. Wrexham Road (A483) also acts as an active travel corridor for pedestrians and cyclists via a shared off-carriageway route linking Chester Business Park and Chester City Centre. The site also has excellent linkages to the local and strategic highway network, mainly the A55 North Wales Expressway. **Figure 1.1** shows the site in the strategic transport context.



Figure 1.1: Strategic Transport Context



- 1.9. There are three existing vehicular access points into the Site. There is an existing unnamed private access road from Wrexham Road (A483) that is under Grosvenor ownership to the north of the Jigsaw Ash Tree Farm Day Nursery. The road provides access to an area of car parking for the nursery, a water treatment works and the Site for agricultural purposes.
- 1.10. There are two further agricultural access points also located adjacent to Wrexham Road (A438) on the western boundary of the Site.
- 1.11. The Site lies to the east of Kings Moat Garden Village, which was a site identified by CWaC and allocated in the current Local Plan. This site was allocated for around 1,300 dwellings but got permission for up to 1,400 dwellings together with essential community infrastructure including the provision of a new primary school.
- 1.12. A planning application was submitted in December 2017 for the demolition of the buildings that were on site and the phased delivery of 786 dwellings and the provision of associated infrastructure. The planning application was



approved in April 2019 and subsequently a significant proportion of the Kings Moat Garden Village development has been delivered, with further areas of the site still being built out.

- 1.13. An indicative location of the Site is shown in **Figure 1.2** and the existing vehicular and agricultural access points into the Site are shown in **Figure 1.3**.

Figure 1.2: Site Location (Source: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer>)



Figure 1.3: Existing Vehicular Access Points (Source: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer>)



- 1.14. The proposed site would need to provide an improved access strategy to cater for the scale of development that could be accommodated. An initial access strategy is discussed in more detail in **Section 3**.

The Vision

- 1.15. Wrexham Road will grow into a neighbourhood of lasting quality, shaped by landscape and connected to the city. New homes, green spaces, local amenities and a health centre will form part of a walkable and well-connected community. Streets will feel calm and green. Paths will lead to schools, to work, to neighbours, and to nature.
- 1.16. This site provides a chance to deliver a place that feels like part of Chester. The ambition for the proposed Site is clear, which is to create a place that carries Grosvenor's values forward, with the kind of design, care, and long-term thinking that creates a meaningful legacy. The concept masterplan for the proposed site is shown in **Figure 1.4**.

Figure 1.4: Emerging Masterplan (Source: MCAU)



Scope of Report

- 1.17. This Transport Paper provides a review of the existing transport conditions in and around the Site, establishing the baseline and future conditions that would set the context for development at this Site. This includes consideration of the sustainable accessibility of the Site as well as its policy compliance. The Transport Paper also provides a review of the potential access strategy to serve the Site and initial consideration of the impact of potential development in terms of vehicle trip generation.
- 1.18. Throughout the report, comparison is made between the existing draft allocation strategic residential sites located around Chester, including CH01, CH02, CH03 and CH04. A comparison is made against these sites looking at a number of criteria including the accessibility of the sites using active travel modes. This comparison has been made to demonstrate that the allocation of this Site would be wholly in keeping with the policies outlined in the draft allocation plan.

1.19. Following this introduction, the report provides the following information:

- **Section 2: Baseline Conditions & Accessibility by Sustainable Modes** - provides a review of the baseline conditions in the vicinity of the Site including accessibility by sustainable modes of transport.
- **Section 3: Development Proposals** - this Section provides details of the initial masterplanning exercise.
- **Section 4: Initial Vehicle Trip Generation** - deals with forecast vehicle trip movements and distribution.
- **Section 5: Summary and Conclusions.**

2. Baseline Conditions

2.1. Section 2 of the report discusses the existing Site, describes the existing active travel provision, public transport accessibility and local highway network. This section also provides a desk-top study of existing traffic conditions surrounding the Site and reviews the highway safety record on the immediate highway network.

2.2. The Site has good connectivity with the existing pedestrian and cycle network and there are a number of key local services and facilities accessible on foot and bicycle from the Site, including schools, neighbourhood centres, medical facilities, bus stops and leisure facilities. The proposed Site would benefit from and compliment the new facilities provided as part of the Kings Moat Garden Village development to the west. The proximity of the Site to the King's Moat Garden Village also highlights the suitability of the locating for new residential development, in this area.

Active Travel Accessibility

Walking

2.3. In terms of accessibility on foot, it is widely recognised that walking is the most important mode of travel at the local level and offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly under 2km.

2.4. Existing pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of the Site include formal footways, shared footway/cycleways, and Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

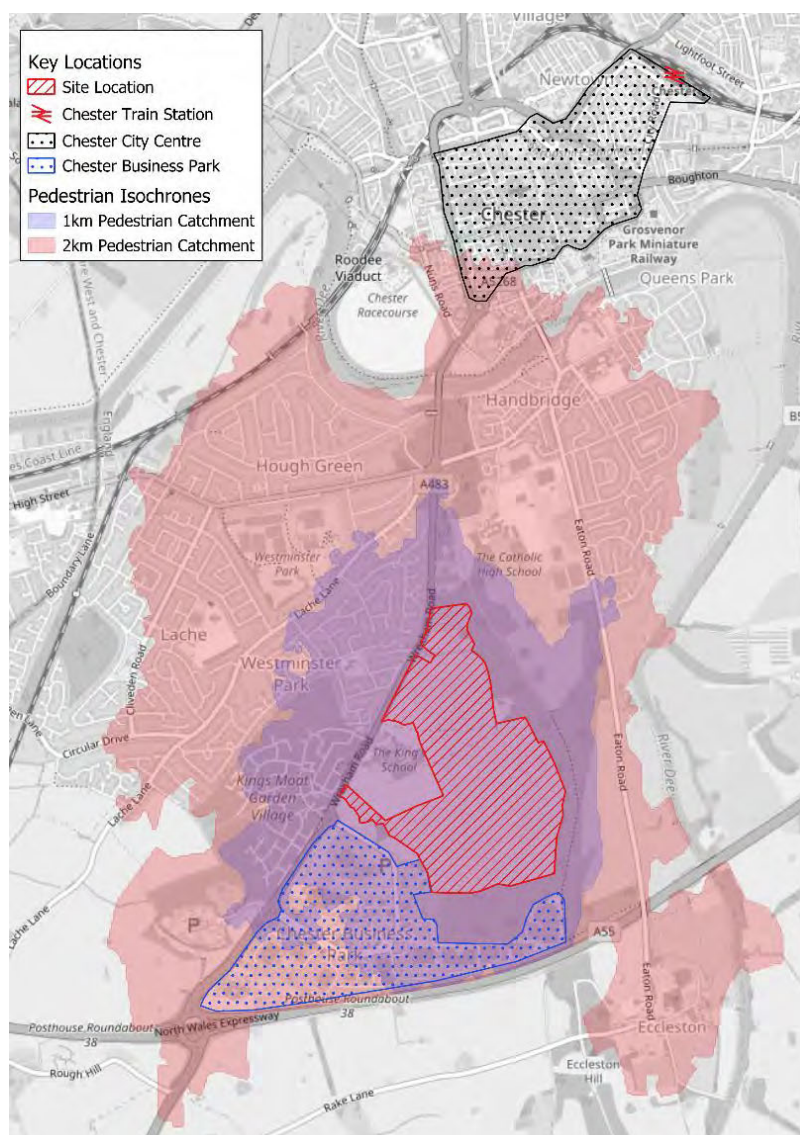
2.5. There is an existing shared footway/cycle way for the entirety of Wrexham Road (A483) between the Overleigh roundabout junction to the north of the site and the A55 roundabout junction to the south of the site. The shared footway. Street lighting is provided at regular intervals on both sides of the carriageway.

2.6. There are two pedestrian crossings on Wrexham Road (A483) along the site frontage, with one at the signalised junction of Wrexham Road (A483)/The King's School Chester/Roman Crescent and the other approximately 120m to the north of the access to Nuffield Health Chester. Both of these crossings are signalised, with tactile paving and dropped kerbs provided.



- 2.7. In addition, the Site lies to the west of Duke's Drive, which also provides a traffic-free walking route towards Chester city centre. Duke's Drive runs between the Overleigh roundabout junction to the north and Eaton Road to the south.
- 2.8. **Figure 2.1** illustrates the 1km and 2km walking catchment from the site. These walking distances are in accordance with the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) document entitled "Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot" (2000), which states a preferred maximum walking distance of 2km for commuters, school trips and sightseeing, with 1km being a more acceptable distance. These distances have therefore been used to illustrate the catchment areas that are accessible on foot from the Site.

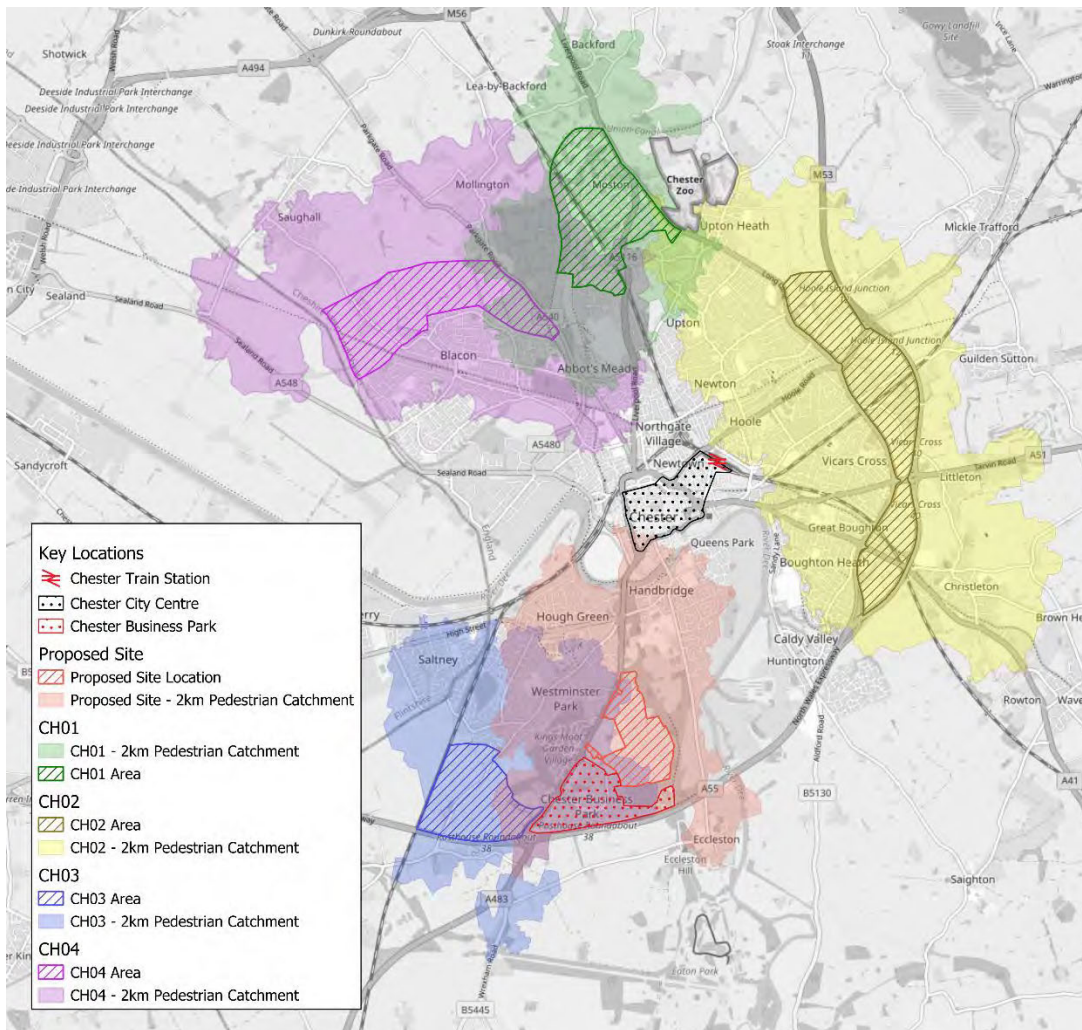
Figure 2.1: 1km and 2km Walking Catchment Areas



2.9. As it can be seen from **Figure 2.1**, the 2km catchment area extends to the existing residential areas immediately surrounding the Site, The King's School Chester and Chester Business Park. The figure also shows that the southern part of Chester city centre is also within the 2km catchment area of the Site.

2.10. **Figure 2.2** shows the 2km walking catchment area from the Site, compared to the 2km catchment areas of the other strategic residential sites currently being supported for allocation in the draft Local Plan.

Figure 2.2: 2km Walking Catchment Area compared with other Strategic Sites



2.11. **Figure 2.2** shows that when compared to the other sites currently being supported for allocation, the proposed Site is the only one that falls within a 2km catchment area of Chester city centre. The Site also has good pedestrian connectivity to Chester Business Park, which serves as a key employment area for the city. Only site CH03 of the strategic residential sites currently being supported can also offer this.

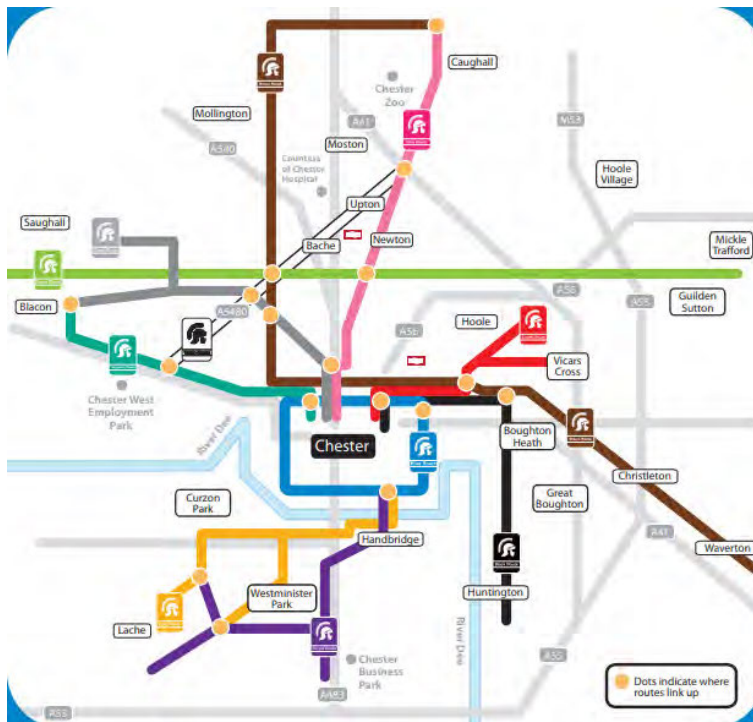
2.12. It has therefore been demonstrated that the Site is highly accessible on foot for residents and visitors to the Site.



Cycling

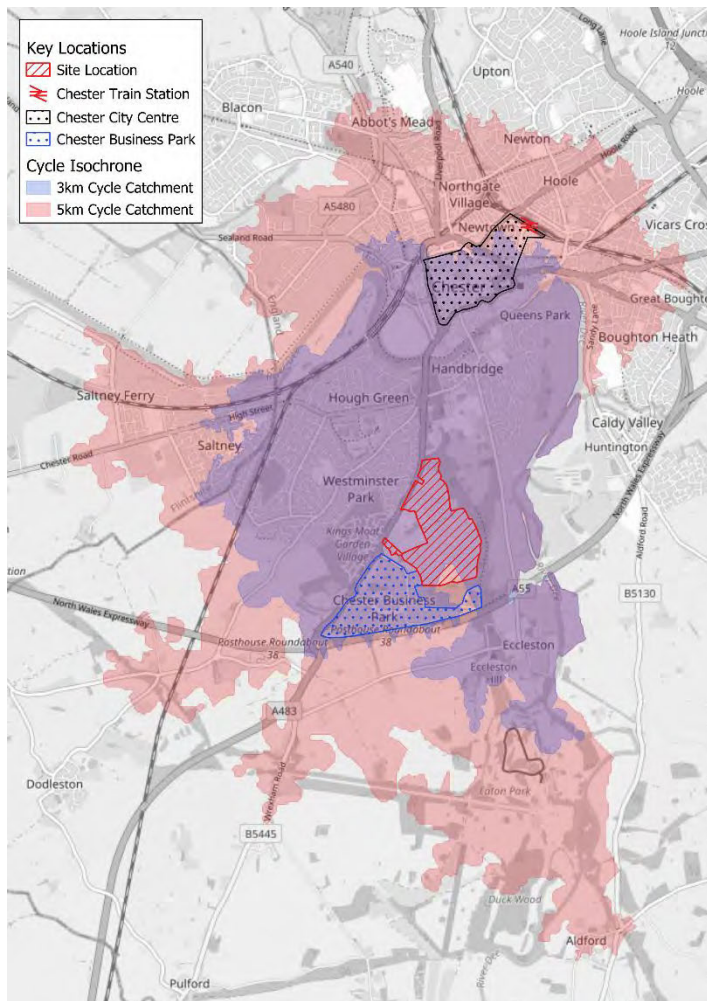
- 2.13. It is widely accepted that cycling also has the potential to substitute for short car trips, particularly those less than 5km, and can form part of a longer journey by public transport.
- 2.14. The local cycling network comprises on and off-road routes, signed cycle routes and shared use routes that directly pass the site. In addition, CWaC also identifies strategic routes, labelled by colour which connect most of the city by cycle. The strategic routes are shown in **Figure 2.3**.

Figure 2.3: CWaC Strategic Cycle Routes (Source: <https://chestercyclecity.org/route-map-library/>)



- 2.15. The purple route is the key route into Chester from the Site. The purple route consists mostly of off-road traffic-free routes, and links to the blue arterial route around the city. The purple route is easily accessible from the Site, connecting to the site via the shared cycle/footway on the western side of Wrexham Road (A483). As part of the access strategy discussed in Section 3, the proposed Site would tie into the purple route.
- 2.16. In addition, the Site lies to the west of Duke's Drive, which also provides a traffic-free cycle route towards Chester city centre. Duke's Drive runs between the Overleigh roundabout to the north and Eaton Road to the south.
- 2.17. The Site is well connected to the existing cycle network, and there is, therefore, potential for a significant proportion of journeys to and from the Site to be undertaken by cycle, including journeys for the purpose of education, employment and recreation.
- 2.18. **Figure 2.4** illustrates the 3km and 5km cycling catchment areas from the centre of the Site.

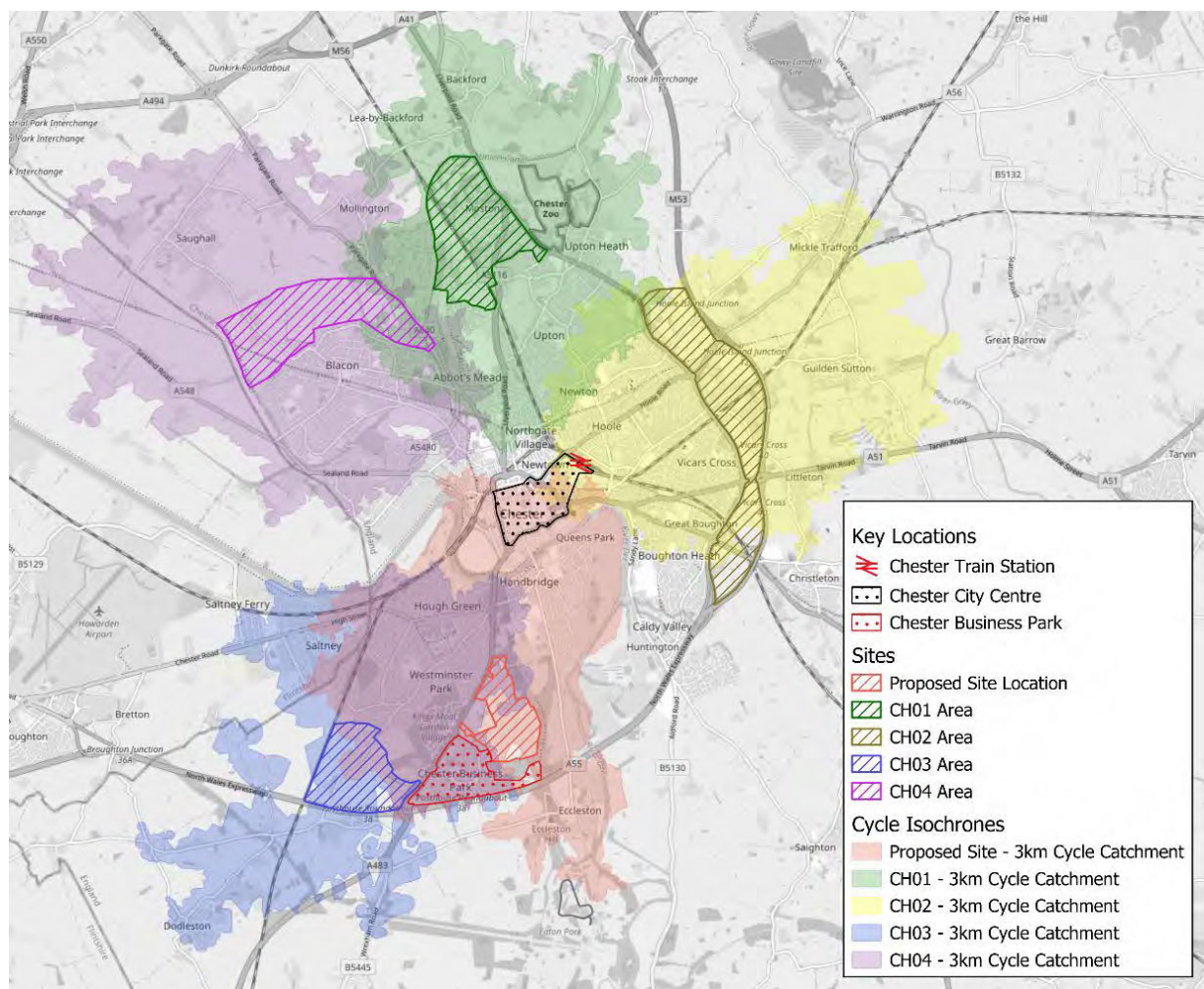
Figure 2.4: 3km and 5km Cycling Catchment Areas



- 2.19. As can be seen from **Figure 2.4**, the 3km cycling catchment area extends to the majority of Chester city centre to the north of the Site.
- 2.20. In addition, the 3km catchment area also includes Chester Business Park, which is a key employment zone in the city. The 5km catchment area extends further encompassing all of Chester city centre, including Chester Railway Station.
- 2.21. **Figure 2.5** illustrates a cycle catchment plan that compares the areas that can be reached from each of the sites currently being supported for allocation and the proposed Site.



Figure 2.5: 3km Cycling Catchment Area compared with other Strategic Sites



2.22. **Figure 2.5** shows that when compared to the strategic residential sites currently being supported for allocation, the 3km catchment area covers larger areas of Chester city centre than CH01, CH03 and CH04. In addition, the 3km catchment area from the Site includes Chester Business Park, which only CH03 can offer of the sites currently supported.

2.23. It has therefore been demonstrated that the Site is highly accessible by cycle for residents and visitors to the Site, especially when compared to the other sites currently being supported for allocation.

Public Transport Accessibility

Bus

2.24. There are a number of bus stops in the vicinity of the Site. On the northbound side of Wrexham Road (A483) there are three bus stops and on the southbound side there are two bus stops between the northern and southern



boundaries of the Site. In addition, Wrexham Road Park and Ride is located 750m to the south of the southern boundary of the Site.

2.25. A summary of the existing bus services operating in the vicinity of the Site is shown in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Summary of Existing Bus Services and Frequency

Operator	Service	Route	Weekday (per hour)		Saturday (per hour)		Sunday (per hour)
			AM Peak	PM Peak	AM Peak	PM Peak	
Arriva	Sapphire 1	Chester - Chester Business Park - Wrexham	4	4	2	4	2
		Wrexham - Chester Business Park - Chester	4	4	2	4	2
Arriva	X4	Chester Railway Station - Chester - Chester Business Park - Mold	1	1	1	1	No Service
		Mold - Chester Business Park - Chester - Chester Railway Station	1	1	1	1	No Service
Stagecoach	PR1	Wrexham Road P&R - Upton Road P&R	3	3	3	3	3

2.26. On the basis of the above, and the relatively short walking distance between the Site and the nearest bus stops (well within the 400m considered to be acceptable), the proposed Site is highly accessible by bus.

2.27. It should be noted that the bus routing arrangements provide scope for interchange with rail services, given the Sapphire 1 serves Chester Railway Station directly, and provides potential for a significant proportion of journeys to and from the Site to be undertaken by bus.



Rail

- 2.28. Chester Railway Station is located approximately 3.1km to the north of the site. The station benefits from 76 cycle parking stands covered by CCTV. There are also 236 car parking spaces in total including 12 accessible spaces at the station. Alternatively, as discussed above, the railway station is serviced by the Sapphire 1 and X4 services from Wrexham Road (A483).
- 2.29. The range of available services to and from Chester Railway Station is excellent and offers a number of connections to the more local area including, Wrexham, the Wirral, Liverpool and Manchester, as well as areas further afield such as Leeds, Cardiff, Birmingham and London Euston.
- 2.30. This enables travel to and from Chester to be a viable option for a wide range of journey purposes, including employment and education with high frequency services during peak periods and for leisure and health with regular services across off-peak evenings and weekends.

Local Highway Network

Wrexham Road (A483)

- 2.31. Wrexham Road (A483) forms part of CWaC's classified road network and is one of the principal corridors into Chester city centre. In the vicinity of the Site, Wrexham Road (A483) provides a link between the Overleigh roundabout junction (approximately 600m to the north of the site) and the Wrexham Road Interchange providing access to the A55 (North Wales Expressway). To the south of the A55, Wrexham Road (A483) continues into Wrexham.
- 2.32. Wrexham Road (A483) is a well-lit, single carriageway. However, between The King's School Chester and the Overleigh Roundabout, a bus lane is provided on the northbound side of the carriageway. There are a number of bus stops on Wrexham Road both north and south of the Site, some are in the form of lay-bys whilst others require the bus to stop on the carriageway. There are also a number of pedestrian crossings, both formal signalised and informal crossings are present.
- 2.33. Wrexham Road (A483) is subject to a 40mph speed limit, however it should be noted that there is a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) in place from a point 400m south of the Overleigh roundabout junction to the roundabout junction of Heronsway and Roman Crescent. The TTRO was put in place on 14th March 2025 and shall continue in force for a period of eighteen months or until safety concerns are resolved whichever is the sooner. The TTRO has been put in place due to longstanding safety concerns regarding the speed limit past The King's School Chester and Jigsaw Ash Tree Farm Day Nursery and an incident that took place in November 2024. Details of this incident are provided in paragraph 2.43.



Heronsway

- 2.34. Heronsway is located to the south of the Site and provides access into Chester Business Park. Heronsway is a loop road that routes through the business park between the roundabout junctions of Wrexham Road and Roman Crescent and Wrexham Road and Wrexham Road Park and Ride. Heronsway is a single carriageway and is subject to a 30mph speed limit.

A55 (North Wales Expressway)

- 2.35. The A55 is a national trunk road otherwise known as the North Wales Expressway providing a link between Holyhead in Anglesey and Chester. In the vicinity of the site, the A55 forms a major strategic route around Chester to the east, offering direct access to the north of Chester city centre where it becomes the M53 to the northeast of Chester for routes towards the Wirral and links towards Liverpool and Manchester. The A55 is subject to the national speed limit.

Grosvenor Road

- 2.36. Grosvenor Road lies to the north of the site and connects Wrexham Road (A483) to Grosvenor Roundabout, which in turn provides access to Chester city centre. Grosvenor Road is a single carriageway, subject to a 30mph speed limit for its entirety and is well lit.

Overleigh Road

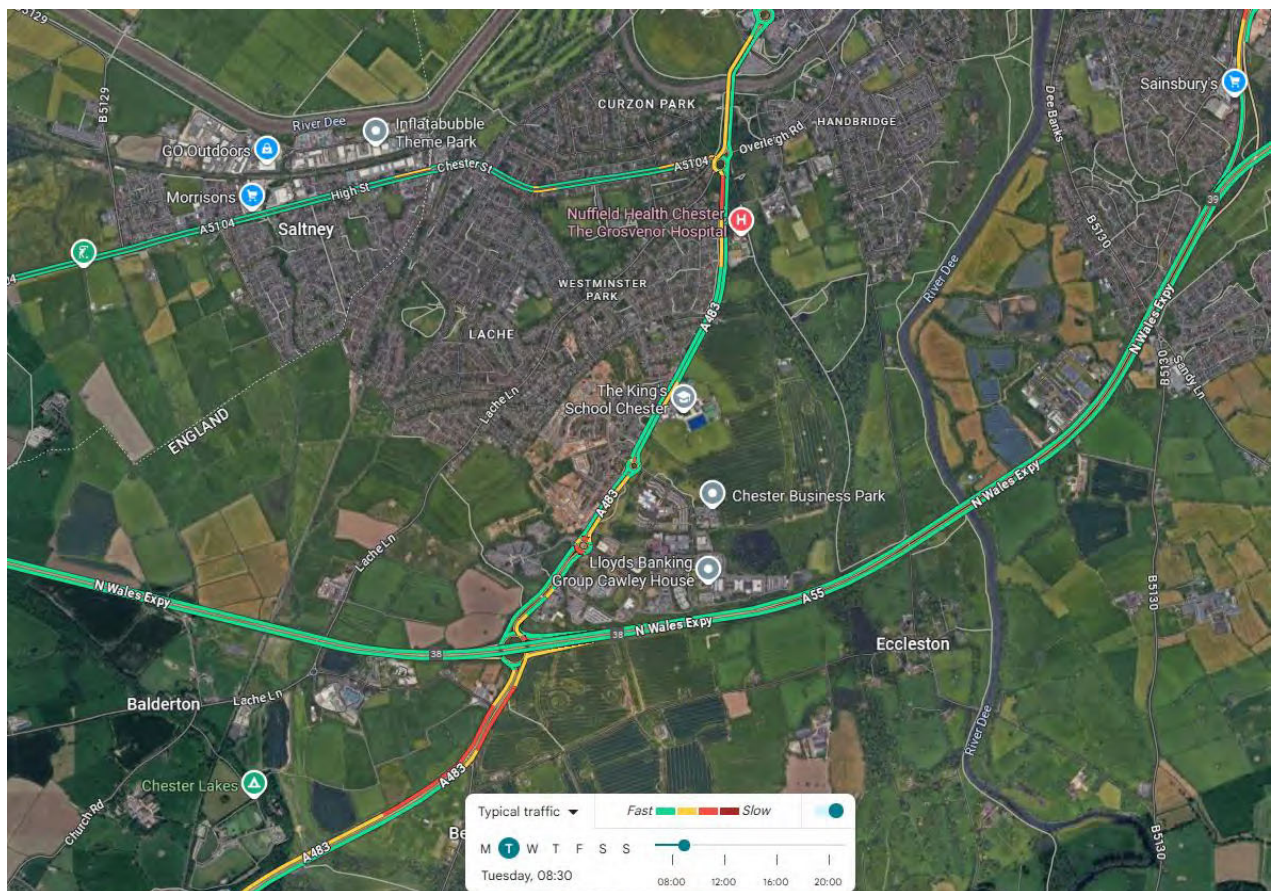
- 2.37. Overleigh Road provides a link between Grosvenor Road (at the Overleigh roundabout junction) and Over Dee Bridge which provides an alternative route into Chester city centre. Overleigh Road is a single carriageway subject to a 30mph speed limit and is well lit.

Existing Traffic Conditions

- 2.38. A desk-based review of the existing traffic conditions has been undertaken using Google traffic data which provides information on typical traffic speeds. The Google data illustrates roads as 'green' (no traffic delays), 'orange' (medium amount of traffic), and 'red' traffic delays, with the darker the red indicating the slower the speed of traffic.
- 2.39. The Google traffic data for the road network in the vicinity of the site is presented in **Figure 2.6** and **Figure 2.7** for typical Tuesday (neutral weekday) morning (8am-9am) and evening (5pm-6pm) peak periods respectively.

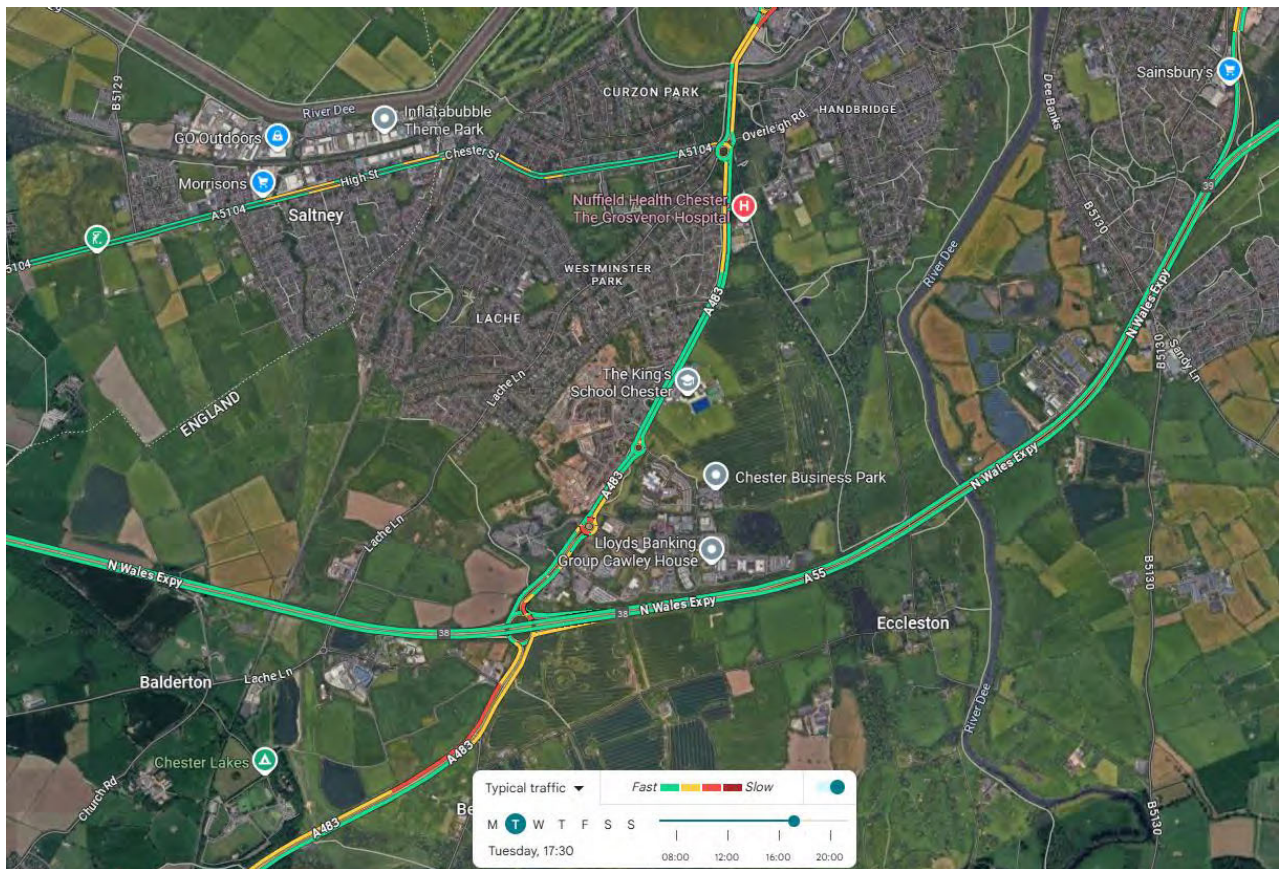


Figure 2.6: Typical Weekday Morning Peak Traffic Conditions (Source: Google)



2.40. **Figure 2.6** shows that some delay occurs on the northbound approach to the Overleigh Roundabout junction to the north and on Wrexham Road (A483) in both directions to the south of the A55 junction. **Figure 2.6** shows that only minimal traffic delays typically occur past the Site with some delay in proximity to the King's School Chester and on the southbound approach to Heronsway Roundabout.

Figure 2.7: Typical Weekday Evening Peak Traffic Conditions (Source: Google)



- 2.41. **Figure 2.7** shows a very similar pattern to the morning peak hour in that some delay occurs on the northbound approach to the Overleigh Roundabout junction to the north and on Wrexham Road (A483) in both directions to the south of the A55 junction. **Figure 2.7** also shows that only minimal traffic delays typically occur past the Site with some delay on the southbound approach to Heronsway Roundabout.
- 2.42. It is considered that the location of the Site allows convenient links to local conurbations and the strategic road network. The specification of the local roads is considered appropriate to serve a residential development of the scale promoted.
- 2.43. It should be noted that should the Site come forward for development, a detailed highway impact assessment would be undertaken, that would be subject to a study area agreed upon with CWaC and National Highways. Based on the Transport Assessment prepared by Vectos for the Redrow/Taylor Wimpey site to the west of Wrexham Road (A483) it is considered that the following junctions (but not limited to) and links would be subject to detailed assessment:

- Site access junctions;
- Grosvenor roundabout;



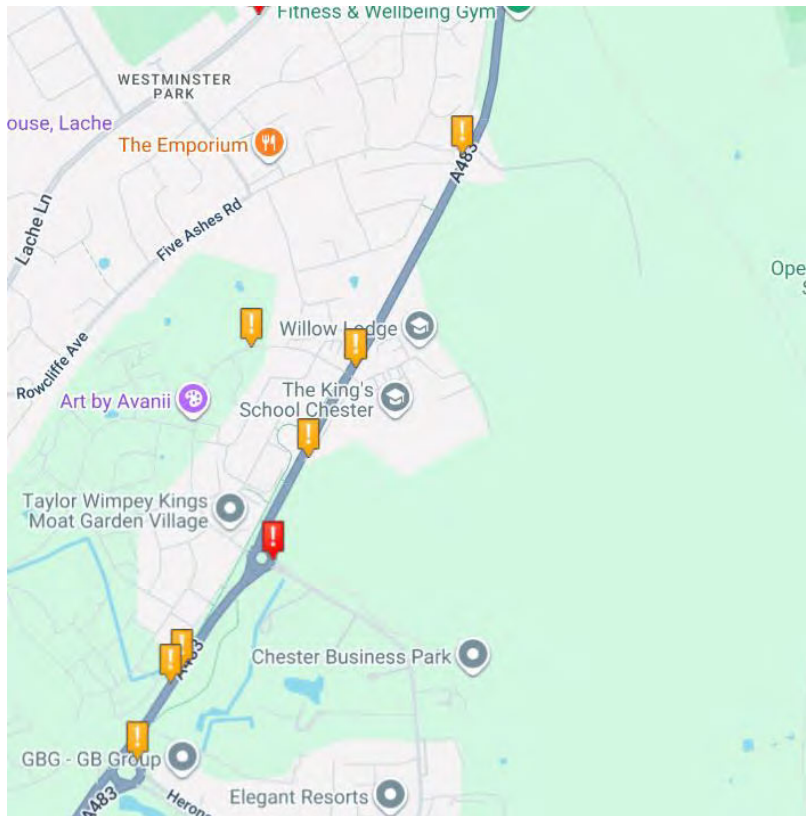
- Overleigh roundabout;
- King's School/Roman Crescent signalised junction;
- Heronsway North/Roman Crescent roundabout;
- Heronsway/Wrexham Road Park and Ride roundabout; and
- A55/Wrexham Road.

Personal Injury Collision Record

- 2.44. A review of Personal Injury Collision (PIC) data for the most recent five-year period available (2019-2023) has been conducted for Wrexham Road (A483) in the immediate vicinity of the site. The study area includes Wrexham Road (A483) between Nuffield Health Chester and the roundabout junction of Wrexham Road (A483), Heronsway and Wrexham Road Park and Ride.
- 2.45. Whilst the most recent five-year period of data available is 2019-2023, it is important to highlight that we are aware that there was a collision outside The King's School Chester in November 2024 resulting in a fatality of a school pupil. As a result of the fatality, CWaC implemented an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order in March 2025 for an initial period of 18-months to reduce the speed limit in the vicinity of The King's School Chester to 30mph.
- 2.46. The PIC information has been sourced from online records of accident statistics made available by UK Local Authorities on CrashMap, a national database of collisions. An extract from the CrashMap website is shown in **Figure 2.8**.



Figure 2.8: Injury Accident Data 2019-2023 (Source: CrashMap)



- 2.48. As shown in **Figure 2.8**, seven PICs during the most recent five-year period within the study area, with six resulting in slight injury and one resulting in a serious injury.
- 2.49. **Figure 2.8** also shows that each of the PICs have occurred at different locations and that no clusters are identified.
- 2.50. Whilst all accidents are regrettable, the rate of accidents over a five-year period is not considered to be indicative of any underlying highway safety issue on the network. It is noted above that CWaC have recently reduced the speed along Wrexham Road to 30mph which will improve the safety of the local highway network in the vicinity of the site.
- 2.51. Therefore, there is no evidence that the proposed development would have any negative impact on highway safety.

3. Emerging Masterplan Proposals

- 3.1. Grosvenor's Eaton Estate is promoting the sustainable development of a well-located circa 70ha site on the southern edge of Chester.
- 3.2. A masterplanning exercise has demonstrated that the proposed Site can deliver a sustainable, landscape-led neighbourhood of around 1,100-1,400 new homes, supported by community infrastructure and high-quality green spaces. A concept masterplan for the site is shown in **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1: Emerging Masterplan Layout (Source: MCAU)



- 3.3. In addition to the new homes, the emerging masterplan also has the potential to allow for the following:
 - Health facility and pharmacy;
 - Community facilities such as a community centre, sports hub or new primary school, integrated with a neighbourhood park;

- Mobility hub offering the potential for vehicle & bike sharing, EV charging and parcel collection;
- New sports pitches and facilities that could support both the community and complement the existing provision, including at The King's School;
- A mix of formal and informal play spaces for children and teenagers;
- Space for allotments/orchards for local food growing and community use;
- The opportunity to extend a bus service into the Site;
- A walkable, active travel focused movement network with safe links to the wider network, including potential links to Duke's Drive

Site Access Strategy Options

- 3.4. As detailed in **Section 1** of this report, the Site currently has three access points into the Site, however two of the access points are used for agricultural use only. As part of any redevelopment proposals for the Site, it is appropriate to develop a revised access strategy and junction arrangements. This process along with the resulting preferred access options to serve a possible residential development are outlined in this section.

Access Constraints

- 3.5. A residential development of this scale should be served by at least two points of access and egress, with the absolute minimum requirement considered to be one main site access junction (high capacity) and a secondary emergency access. The masterplan forming this submission provides 2 vehicle accesses and an emergency access.

Preferred Access Arrangements

- 3.6. Four potential access solutions utilising the land available fronting Wrexham Road (A483) have been considered as part of the masterplanning process, seeking to provide an access arrangement that delivers the appropriate capacity to accommodate future traffic flows and considered to be appropriate from a highways safety perspective.
- 3.7. It should be noted that all access solutions would be tested from a highway capacity perspective as part of any Transport Assessment prepared to support a planning application should the Site come forward.
- 3.8. Preliminary general arrangement drawings have been prepared for the following access solutions:
- Option 1a - Main vehicular access using a signalised junction
 - Option 1b - Main vehicular access using a roundabout junction



- Option 2 - Priority junction using existing access to the north of Jigsaw Ash Tree Farm Day Nursery
- Option 3 - Emergency vehicle access to the south of The King's School Chester

3.9. The four potential access solutions are summarised below. A full version of the figures presented below can be found in **Appendix A**.

Option 1a - Main Access Junction (Signalised Junction Arrangement)

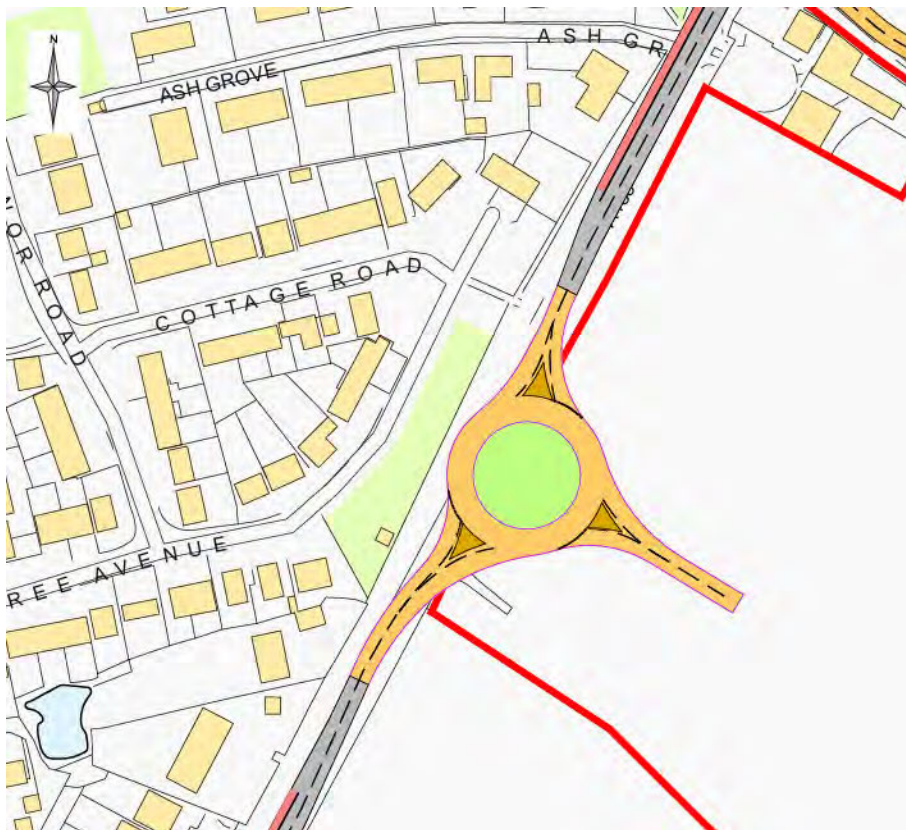
3.10. **Figure 3.2** shows a potential signalised junction on Wrexham Road (A483). The initial arrangement demonstrates that a signalised junction could be accommodated in this location. The initial arrangement also demonstrates that the existing bus lane that runs along Wrexham Road (A438) could be maintained with a bus gate arrangement at the junction. The signalised junction arrangement would also provide pedestrian and cycling facilities.

Figure 3.2: Option 1a - Main Access Junction (Signalised Junction Arrangement)



- 3.11. **Figure 3.3** shows a potential roundabout access junction on Wrexham Road (A483). This option has been considered with highway capacity along Wrexham Road (A483) in mind. It is understood that Wrexham Road (A483) is a busy corridor within the local highway network as one of the main routes in and out of Chester city centre.
- 3.12. **Figure 3.3** shows that a roundabout junction could be accommodated in this location, and would help maintain flow along Wrexham Road (A483) whilst also providing access into the Site.

Figure 3.3: Option 1b - Main Access Junction (Roundabout Arrangement)



- 3.13. **Figure 3.4** shows a potential priority junction to the north of Jigsaw Ash Tree Farm Day Nursery. This option would utilise the existing vehicular access (under Grosvenor ownership) at this location, but would be realigned and upgraded to improve visibility and the access road would be widened to provide two-way access.

Figure 3.4: Option 2 - Priority Junction Arrangement (North of Jigsaw Ash Tree Farm Day Nursery)



Option 3 - Emergency Vehicle Access (South of The King's School Chester)

- 3.14. **Figure 3.5** shows a potential emergency vehicle access junction to the south of The King's School Chester. Given the potential scale of the development, it is considered that a dedicated emergency vehicle access into the Site should be provided. It is considered that this access would primarily be for pedestrians and cyclists, however, it would be designed in such a way that it also allowed for emergency vehicle access when necessary. This access could also provide a pedestrian crossing to the existing bus stop on the northbound side of Wrexham Road (A483), improving crossing facilities for the new community and the school.

Figure 3.4: Option 3 - Emergency Vehicle Access Arrangement

Summary

- 3.15. Four potential access solutions utilising the land available fronting Wrexham Road (A483) have been considered as part of the masterplanning process, seeking to provide an access arrangement that delivers the appropriate capacity to accommodate future traffic flows and considered to be appropriate from a highway's safety perspective.
- 3.16. Based on the options presented above, it is considered that suitable access arrangements can be provided to serve a development of scale. In terms of the main vehicular access, two options have been presented. A signalised junction and a roundabout junction. The drawings show that both junction arrangements could be delivered spatially, but it is acknowledged that should the Site come forward detailed capacity assessments would need to be undertaken to determine which access arrangement is the most suitable.
- 3.17. It is also considered that the secondary access, utilising an upgraded and realigned priority junction to the north of the Jigsaw Ash Tree Farm Day Nursery would be suitable to accommodate a portion of the site, however as above, the operational capacity of the junction would need to be tested in more detail should the Site come forward.
- 3.18. Finally, the drawings provided demonstrate that a suitable emergency vehicle access to serve the Site could be provided to the south of The King's School Chester.

4. Planning Policy Compliance

- 4.1. Based on the emerging masterplan proposals discussed in the previous section, this section demonstrates how the proposed Site would be suitable from a national and local planning policy perspective, in terms of transport.
- 4.2. **Table 4.1** provides a summary of the relevant national planning policies as well as the policies from the emerging CWaC Local Plan Issues and Options report and how the proposed Site would be compliant.



National Policy – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024	
Planning Policy	Site Suitability Against Policy
<p>Paragraph 110 - The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.</p>	<p>The site is located adjacent to established pedestrian and cycle networks and provides convenient access to public transport services. It also benefits from appropriate proximity to a range of day-to-day amenities. The land is therefore an appropriate location for residential-led development, providing the opportunity to deliver houses in a highly sustainable location, and as such one which would not be overly reliant on private cars.</p>
<p>Paragraph 115 - In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code⁴⁸; and d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The site is served by high frequency bus services and is well connected to the existing pedestrian and cycle network in the area. b) It is considered that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users given its accessibility to active travel, public transport and the local and strategic highway networks. c) The masterplanning process would ensure that the design of the site would reflect current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. d) Should the site be subject to a planning application, the submission would be supported by a detailed Transport Assessment that would include the assessment of the impact of the development on the transport network and demonstrate that the impact could be mitigated through a vision-led approach.
<p>Paragraph 116 and Paragraph 117 - Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.</p> <p>Within this context, applications for development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use; b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; 	<p>As part of the masterplanning process, priority would be given to pedestrian and cycle movements within the site as well as focussing on connections into the existing pedestrian and cycle network (such as the purple cycle route and potentially Duke’s Drive). The site already benefits from access to high frequency bus services, however as part of the proposals, consideration will be given to how the site can maximise the connectivity to the public transport network.</p> <p>The masterplanning process would ensure that the design of the site would address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport. In addition, the site would be designed to create a safe, secure and attractive environment and to avoid conflict between the different travel modes.</p>



<p>d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.</p>	
<p>Local Planning Policy – Local Plan Issues and Options (Regulation 18)</p>	
<p>Planning Policy</p>	<p>Site Suitability Against Policy</p>
<p>TA1 – Transport and Accessibility The overall approach is to minimise the need for travel, particularly travel by solo occupancy cars and vans, by locating development so it is accessible to local services and facilities by a range of transport modes, following a vision-led approach and a sustainable transport hierarchy.</p> <p>TA1 – New Development New development will be encouraged in more sustainable locations, recognising that the approach to transport will vary depending on site location.</p> <p>Fundamentally, developments and places should maximise any opportunities for people to be able to meet their regular day to day needs within a reasonable (10 minute/800 meters) walking distance of their homes, as well as being able to travel outside of their settlements by a range of sustainable travel choices.</p>	<p>The site is located within an established pedestrian and cycle network and provides convenient access to public transport services. It also benefits from appropriate proximity of a range of day-to-day amenities. The land is therefore an appropriate location for residential development, providing the opportunity to deliver houses in a highly sustainable location, and as such one which would not be overly reliant on private cars.</p>



5. Initial Vehicle Trip Generation Assessment

Vehicle Trip Generation

- 5.1. This Section of the report provides an analysis of the likely vehicle trip generation associated with a residential development of up to 1,400 dwellings.
- 5.2. To consider the potential allocation of the land, an initial traffic generation exercise has been undertaken. This has used the 'Residential/Houses Privately Owned' range of sites within the TRICS trip rate database. The analysis has selected sites in comparable locations to the proposed site, in accordance with TRICS good practice guidance.
- 5.3. It should be noted that the trip generation assessment methodology would be re-scoped with CWaC and National Highways when the site comes forward for development.
- 5.4. The trip rates and associated vehicle trips for a development of 1,400 dwellings are presented in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Vehicle Trip Rates and Vehicle Trip Generation (1,400 dwellings)

Time	Trip Rates (per dwelling)			Trip Generation (1,400 dwellings)		
	Arr	Dep	Total	Arr	Dep	Total
08:00-09:00	0.151	0.352	0.503	211	493	704
17:00-18:00	0.323	0.144	0.467	452	202	654

- 5.5. The table confirms that a residential development of the scale promoted would be expected to generate 704 two-way (arrivals and departures) trips during the morning peak hour and 654 two-way trips during the evening peak hour.
- 5.6. This equates to between 3 and 4 inbound vehicle trips every minute, and between 8 and 9 outbound vehicle trips per minute, during the typical AM peak hour. During the typical weekday PM peak hour, this scale of development is forecast to generate between 7 and 8 inbound vehicle trips per minute, and between 3 and 4 outbound trips per minute. Notably lower trip generations would occur outside these peak times.
- 5.7. For a site of this scale that will include a number of community uses, including a possible primary school, it is considered suitable to apply an internalisation factor to the vehicle trips as some trips will not leave the Site. In particular, the Site is adjacent to Chester Business Park, which is one of the key employment zones within Chester. Therefore, an internalisation factor of 10% has been applied to the vehicle trips presented in **Table 5.1**. The subsequent trip generation is shown in **Table 5.2**.



Table 5.2: Vehicle Trip Generation allowing for a 10% Internalisation Factor

Time	Trip Generation (1,400 dwellings)		
	Arr	Dep	Total
08:00-09:00	190	444	634
17:00-18:00	407	181	588

- 5.8. With the internalisation factor applied, the proposed Site would be expected to generate 634 two-way trips in the morning peak hour and 588 two-way trips in the evening peak hour.
- 5.9. The Site's location in relation to the local and strategic highway network means that motorists will have a variety of route choices. As such the suggested increase in vehicle trips would not be focussed on a single junction. In view of this, an initial trip distribution assessment has been undertaken in the following section.

Vehicle Distribution Assessment

- 5.10. An initial trip distribution exercise for the vehicle trips generated by the site has been undertaken. The distribution has been based on Census journey to work origin destination data (2011 Census) for all car driver trips within Cheshire West and Chester 043 Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA).
- 5.11. It should be noted that the Transport Assessment for the Redrow/Taylor Wimpey site was prepared using a "predict and provide" approach which was a more traditional way to assess the impact of development. The predict and provide approach was based predominantly on forecast future demand for road traffic use. Using these predictions, more infrastructure, typically road or highway improvements, would be proposed to accommodate the expected increase in traffic.
- 5.12. However, since the Transport Assessment for the Redrow/Taylor Wimpey site was submitted, there has been a shift to a "vision and validate" approach which is a more policy-compliant approach that looks at more sustainable alternatives than the predict and provide approach. For the proposed Site, a vision and validate approach would be adopted that would look to create safe and walkable neighbourhoods, encourage local living and prioritise high use of active travel modes and public transport.
- 5.13. Based on 2011 Census data, 47% of vehicle trips would travel on Wrexham Road (A483) to the north of the Site towards Chester city centre and 53% of vehicle trips would travel to the south of the Site on Wrexham Road (A483) towards the A55.
- 5.14. Given that the Site is highly accessible by active travel modes and public transport, it is considered that the number of vehicle trips that travel to and from Chester city centre could be significantly reduced through strong travel planning.



5.15. Based on the above, it is proposed that the number of vehicle trips travelling to and from Chester city centre is reduced by 20%.

5.16. A summary of the number of vehicle trips, by direction, generated by 1,400 dwellings is provided in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3: Vehicle Trip Generation based on Initial Trip Distribution (1,400 dwellings)

Time	Wrexham Road (North of the site - 27%)			Wrexham Road (South of the site - 47%)		
	Arr	Dep	Total	Arr	Dep	Total
08:00-09:00	51	120	171	89	208	297
17:00-18:00	110	49	159	191	85	277

5.17. **Table 5.3** shows that in the morning peak hour, a total of 171 vehicle trips would be travelling to and from the north of the Site and 298 vehicle trips would be travelling to and from the south of the Site.

5.18. In the evening peak hour, a total of 159 vehicle trips would be travelling to and from the north of the Site and 277 vehicle trips would be travelling to and from the south of the Site.

It should be noted that the vehicle trips generated will be split across the two vehicle access points into the Site.

Based on the emerging masterplan, it is estimated that 80% of vehicles would use the main access junction (Option 1a or 1b) and 20% of vehicles would use the priority junction to the north of the site (Option 2). **Table 5.4** provides a summary of what the likely vehicle trip generation through each access will be.

Time	Main Signalised/Roundabout Access (80%)			Priority Junction Access (20%)		
	Arr	Dep	Total	Arr	Dep	Total
08:00-09:00	112	262	374	28	66	94
17:00-18:00	241	107	349	60	27	87

5.19. **Table 5.4** shows that in the morning peak hour, a total of 374 two-way trips would route through the main access, and 94 two-way trips would route through the priority junction. In the evening peak hour, a total of 349 two-way trips would route through the main access, and 87 two-way trips would route through the priority junction

5.20. The trip distribution assessment demonstrates that vehicle trips would not be focussed on a single junction and that the trips would be well distributed north and south of the Site to the wider network. In addition, the Site will benefit from wider highway and infrastructure improvements that have either been delivered, or committed to, as part of the Redrow/Taylor Wimpey scheme.

5.21. It is accepted that future assessments of the impacts of the proposed Site on the local and strategic highway network could demonstrate the need to provide highway mitigation. However, it is considered that mitigation measures



should be focussed on improving active travel or public transport infrastructure in the first instance, in line with national planning policy and the emerging local policy.



6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1. Astute Transport Planning has been appointed by the Grosvenor to provide a Transport Paper to support the proposed allocation of land to the east of Wrexham Road, Chester, in the emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.
- 6.2. A masterplanning exercise has been undertaken to demonstrate how the Site can be redeveloped to provide a residential-led mixed use development of around 1,100 to 1,400 dwellings on c.70ha of land.
- 6.3. This Transport Paper forms part of the representations being made to CWaC as part of the Local Plan preparation process and seeks to demonstrate the deliverability of the proposed masterplan proposals in transport terms.
- 6.4. This paper considers the transport planning aspects of supporting the allocation of the Site for a residential-led development, and draws the following conclusions:
 - The location of the Site is highly accessible by active travel modes and public transport. Its location provides a direct link to one of the main arterial routes into Chester city centre (Wrexham Road) and is in proximity to the strategic road network (A55). The specification of the local roads is appropriate to serve a residential development of the scale promoted.
 - In highway safety terms it is considered that there are no issues with the design or operation of the local highway network which would prevent the Site being allocated for residential purposes.
 - The Site is policy compliant in relation to the NPPF and emerging CWaC Local Plan policies.
 - The Site is located within an established pedestrian and cycle network, and could provide convenient access to public transport services. It also benefits from appropriate proximity of a range of day-to-day amenities. The Site is, therefore, an appropriate location for residential development and associated uses, providing the opportunity to deliver houses in a highly sustainable location, and as such one which would not be overly reliant on private cars.
 - The Site is well located when compared to the other strategic residential sites currently being supported for allocation in terms of walking and cycling accessibility to key employment areas such as Chester Business Park and Chester city centre.
 - It is considered that site access junctions, appropriate for the scale of development promoted, can be delivered to serve the Site and any access strategies would be developed alongside discussions with the local highway authority.



- An initial trip generation has been undertaken that demonstrates a site of up to 1,400 dwellings could generate a total of 686 two-way vehicle trips in the morning peak hour and 890 two-way vehicle trips in the morning peak hour. The initial trip distribution assessment has demonstrated that these vehicle trips would be evenly split across the local and strategic highway network. It has been acknowledged that should the Site come forward, a more detailed traffic impact assessment would be undertaken using the vision and validate approach to understand the likely impacts on the local and strategic highway network. Any assessment would be subject to agreement with CWaC and National Highways.

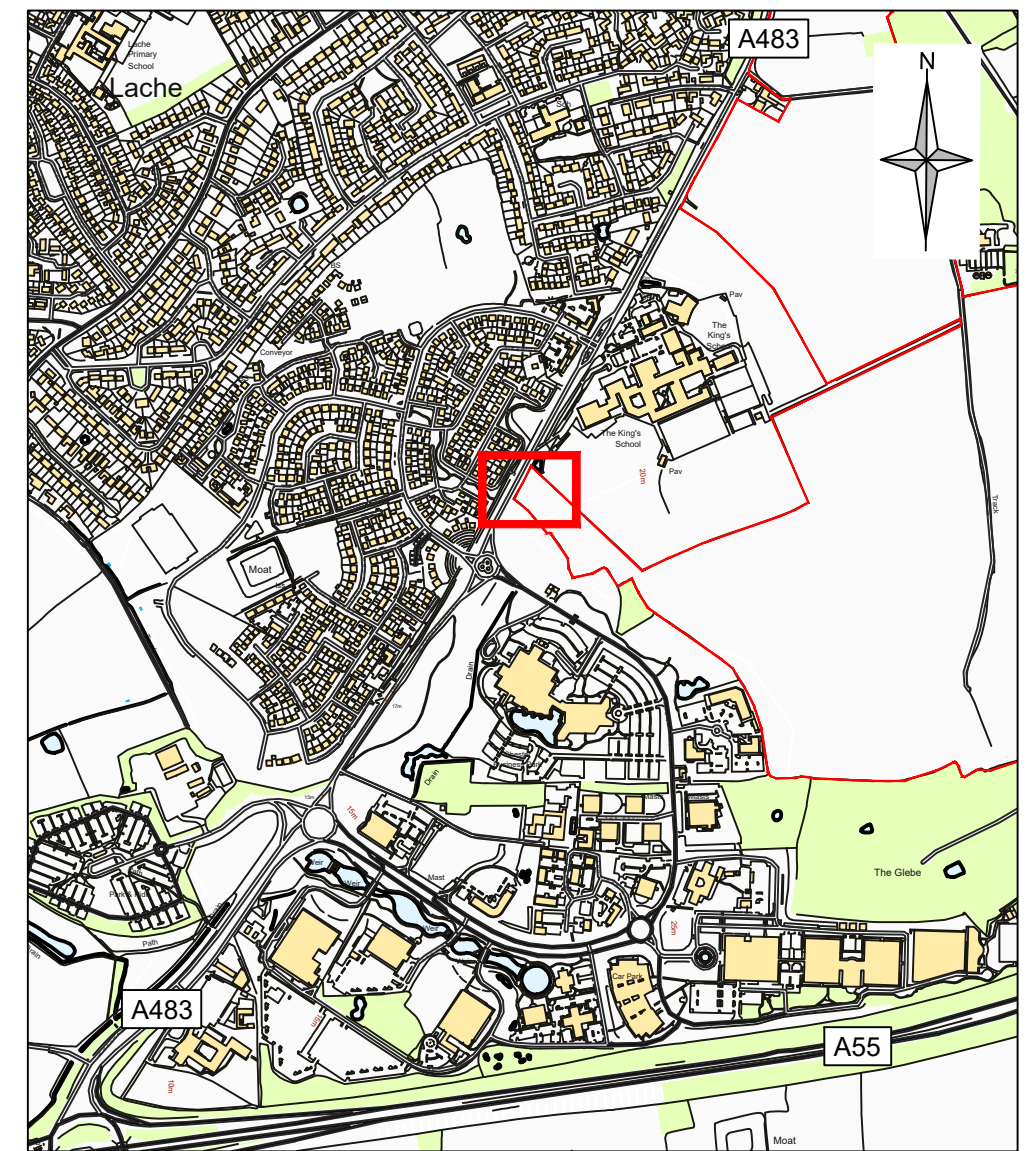
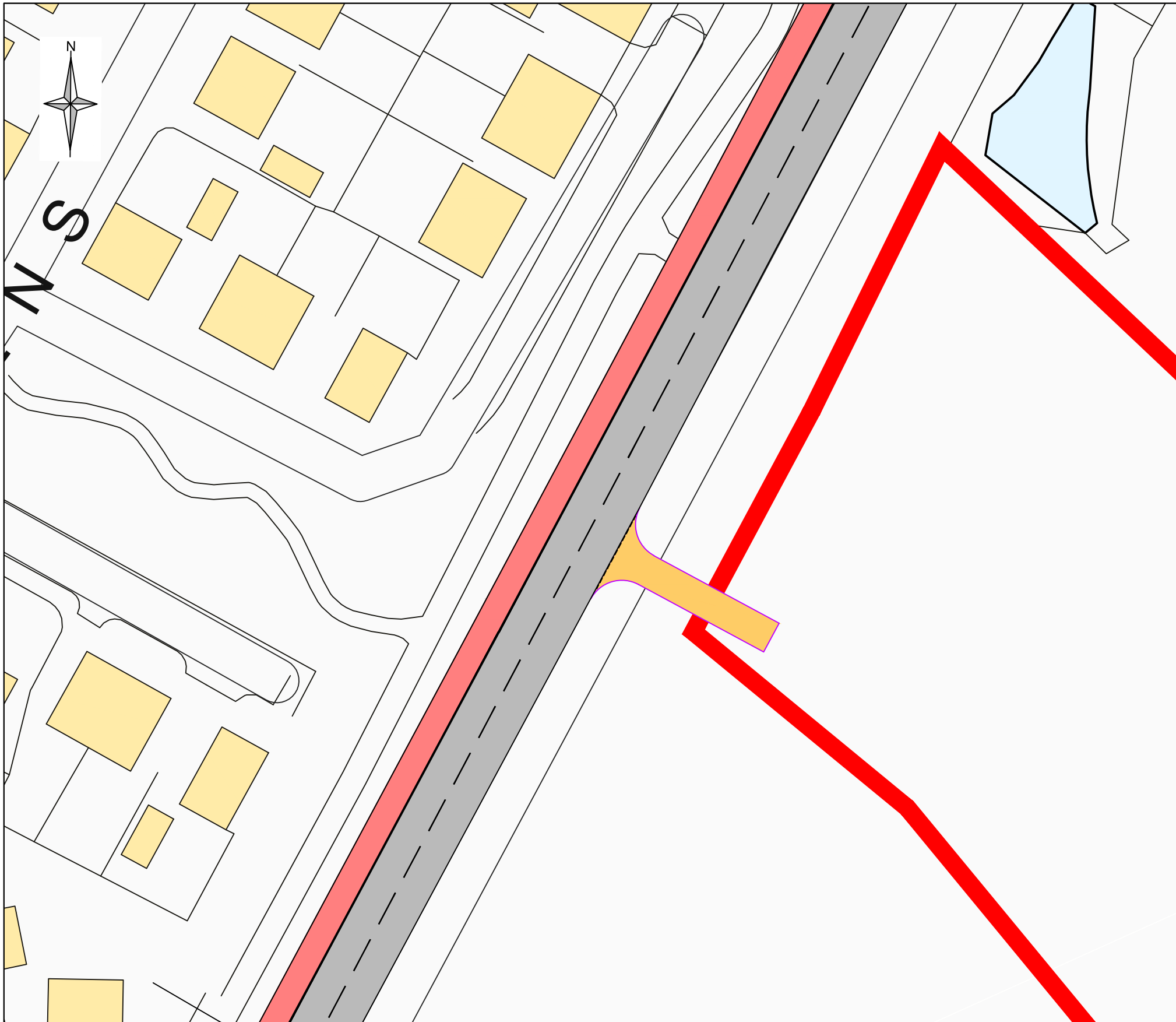
6.5. Therefore, in summary, the Transport Paper does not identify any significant transport constraints at this stage to suggest that the proposed development could not be allocated for residential development in the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan.



Appendix A

Site Access General Arrangement Drawings





astute

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Drawing Status & Suitability Code
Preliminary

Drawn: MW
Checked: ML
Date: xx.xx.25

Drawing Number: **A25091-0100-001**

Client: GROSVENOR ESTATE

Project: CHESTER SITE PROMOTION

Drawing Title: EMERGENCY ACCESS

Scale: NTS @ A3

Rev. P0

Asstute Project No. A25091

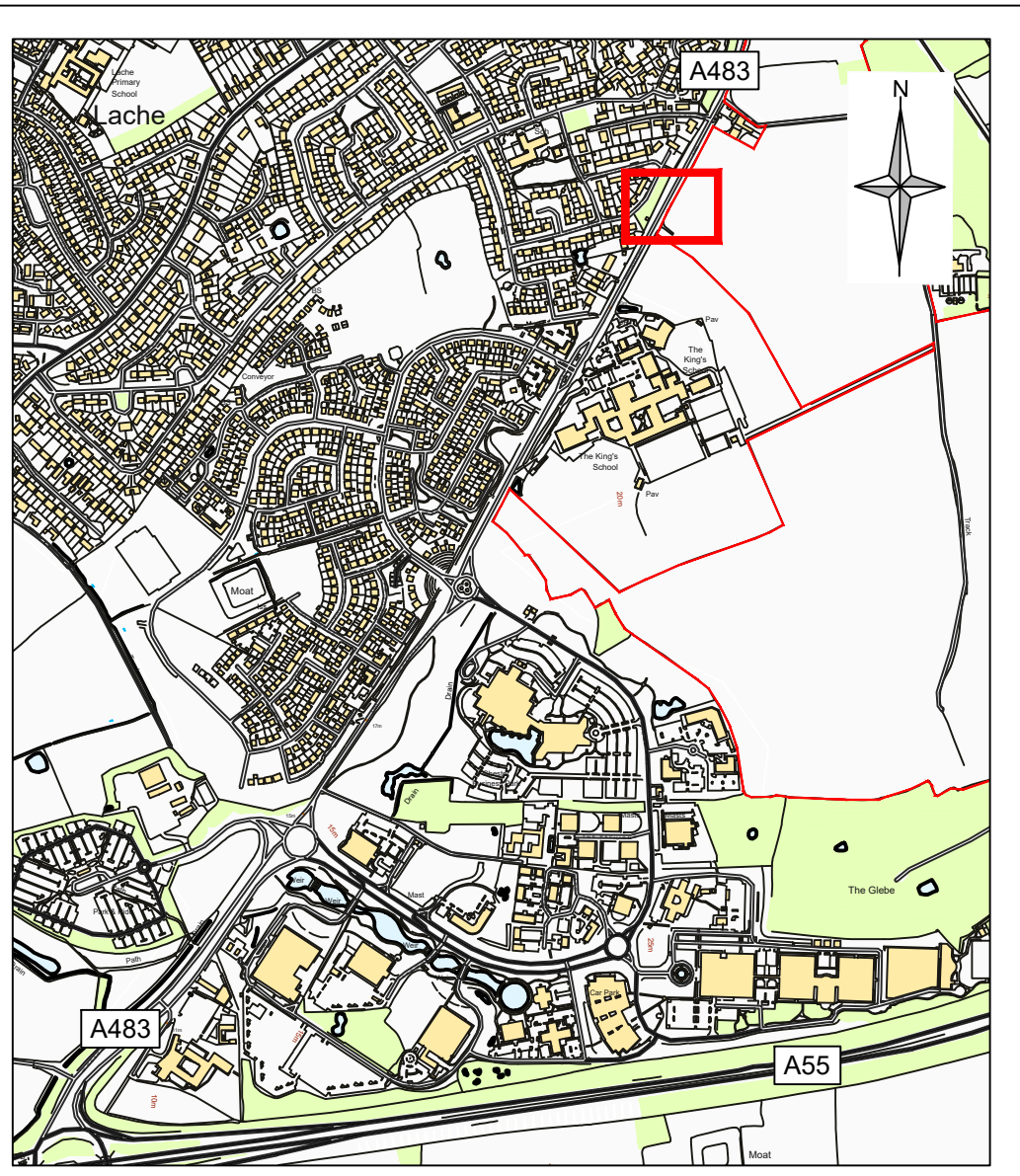
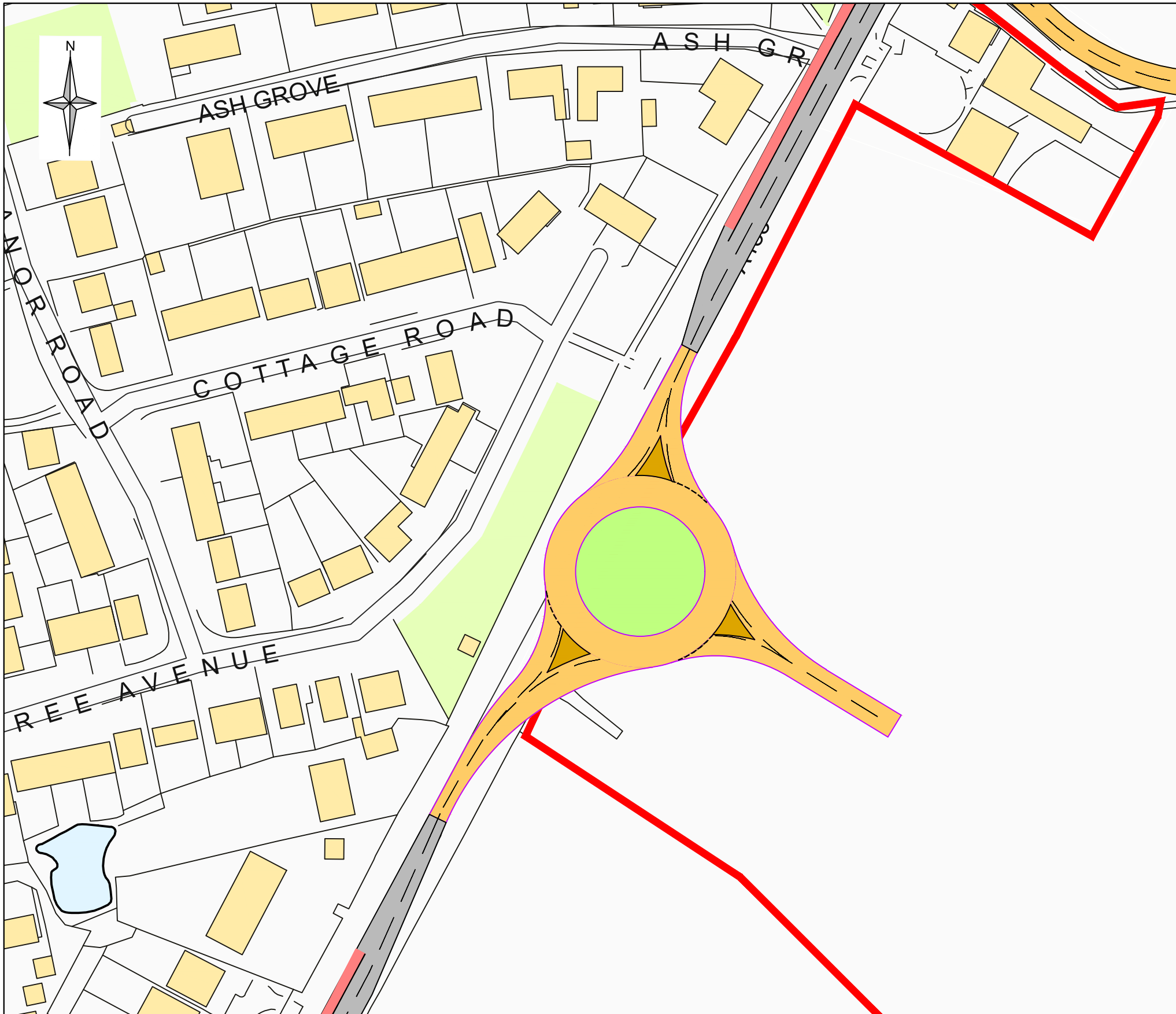

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Red line site boundary

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Project
CHESTER SITE PROMOTION

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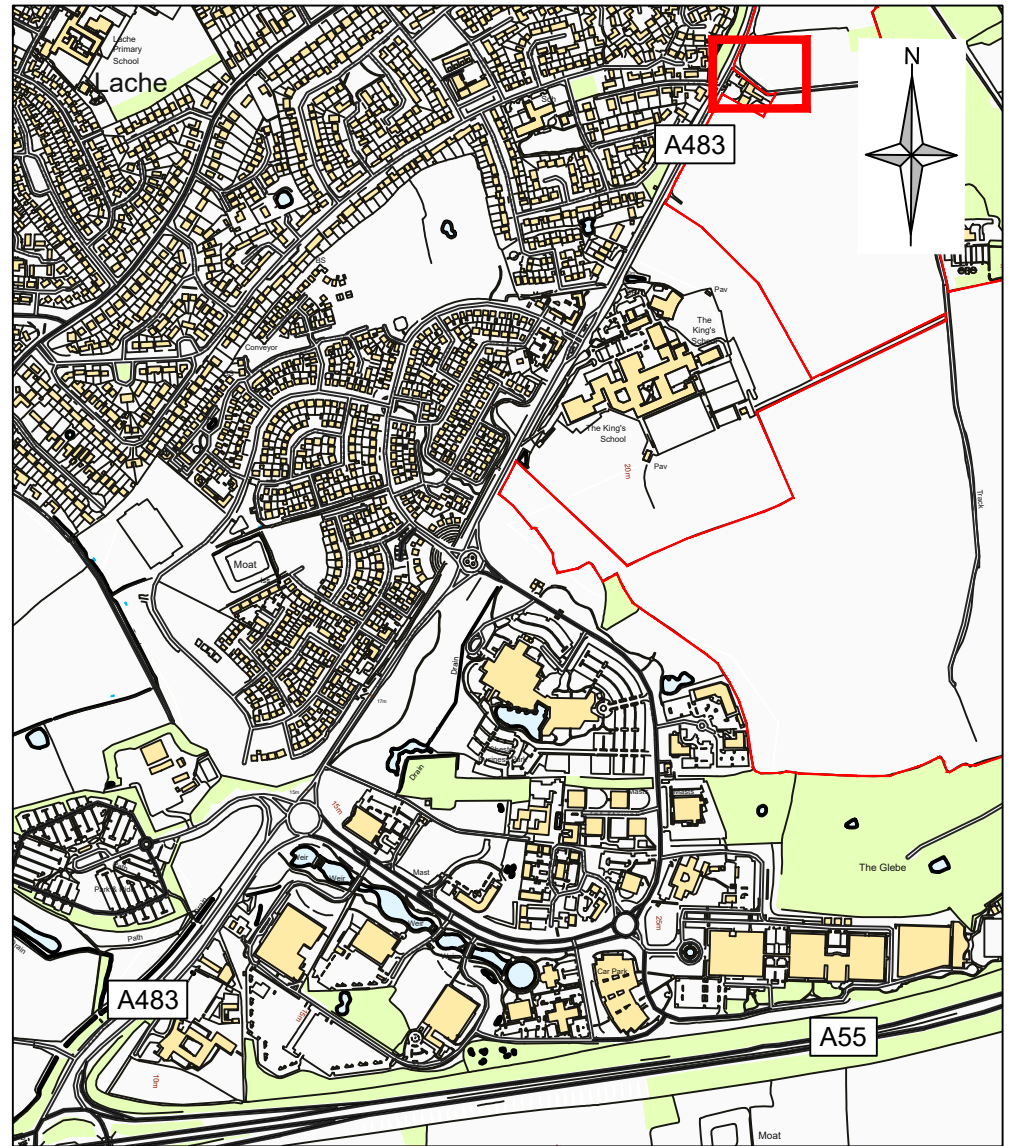
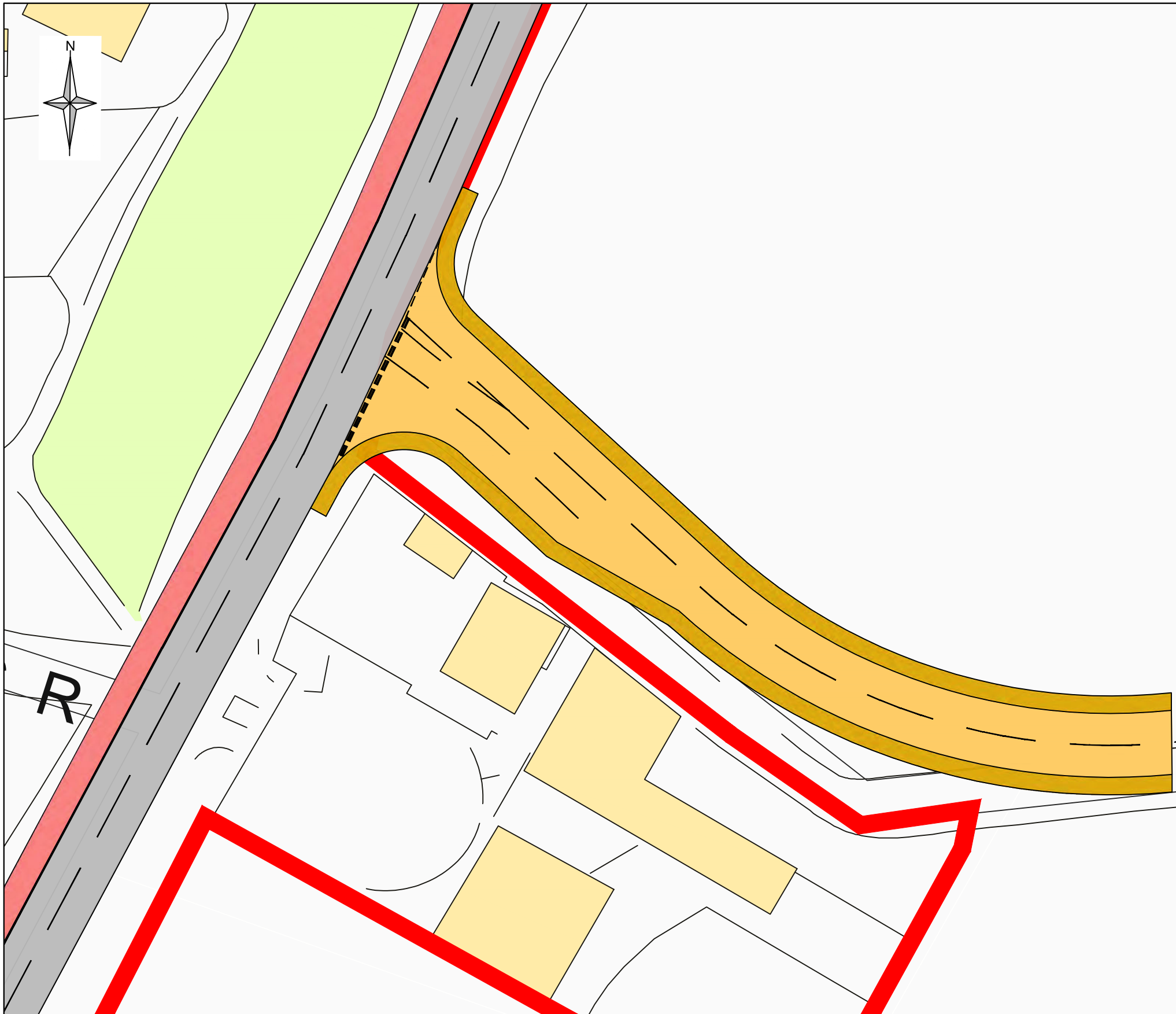
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Project
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A25091

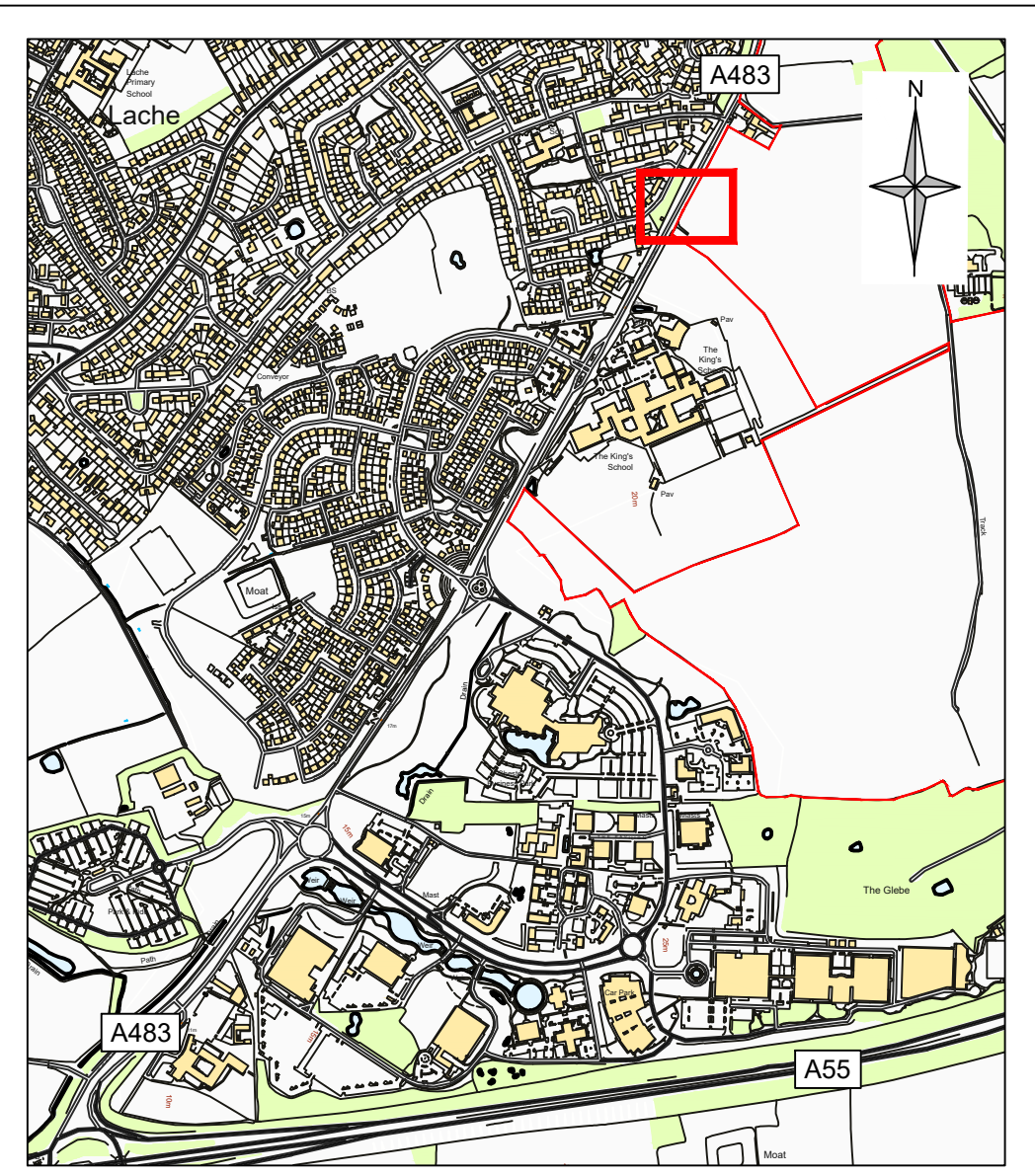
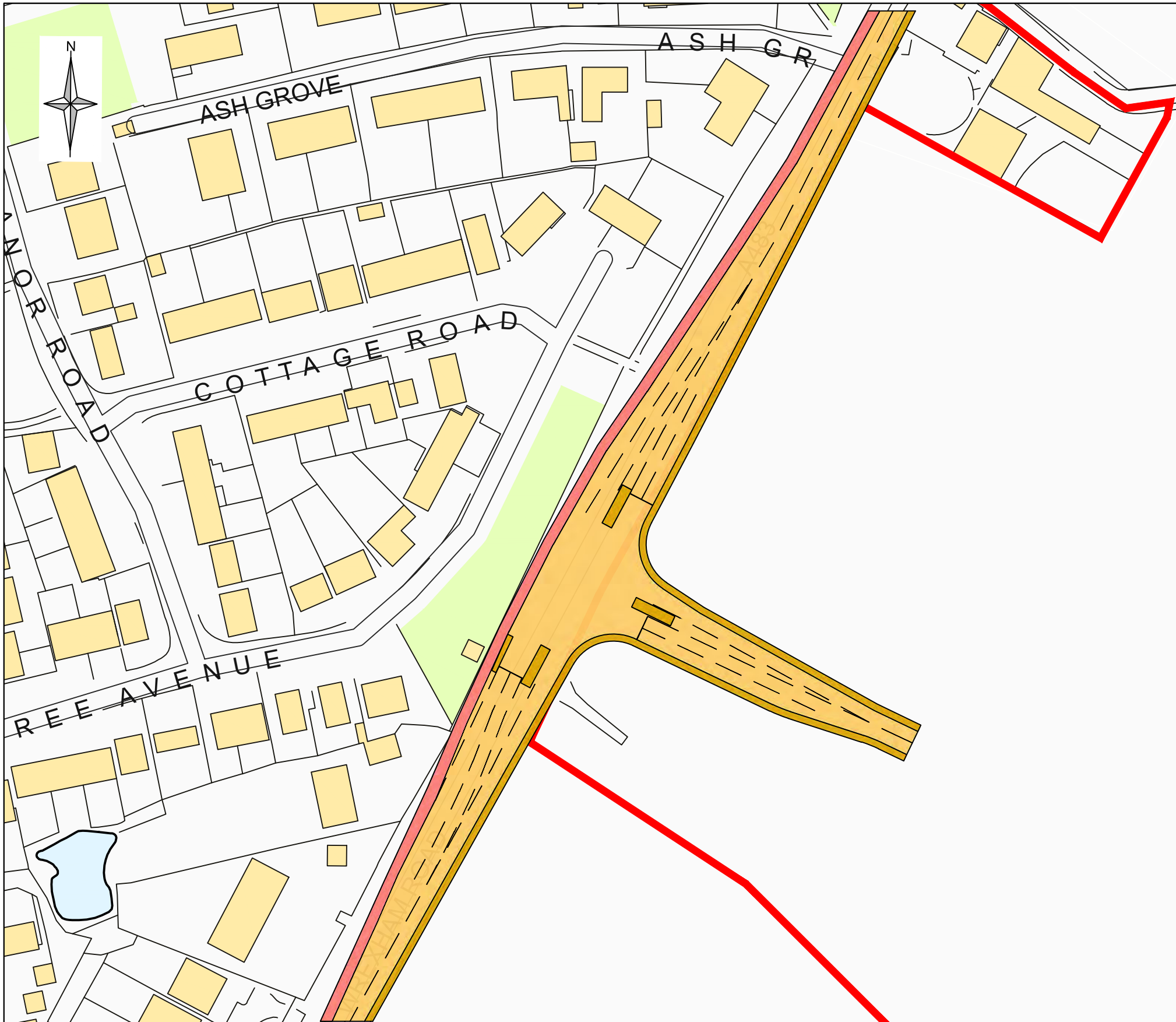

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Legend:

- Red line site boundary
- Existing bus lane
- Proposed realigned access

Notes:

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Rev. **P0**

Client
GROSVENOR ESTATE

Project
CHESTER SITE PROMOTION




Drawing Title
SIGNALISED JUNCTION

Scale
NTS @ A3

Astute Project No.
A25091

P0	First issue.				
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Legend:

-  Red line site boundary
-  Bus lane
-  Proposed signalised junction

Notes:

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Appendix 5 – Primary Health Care Provision Needs Case

Land West of Wrexham Road

Primary Health Care Provision Needs Case - Technical Note



Revision Schedule

Revision	Description	Author	Date	Quality Check	Date
01	Draft	JK & KM	June	PW 2025	June 2025
02	Client Review	PW	August 2025		

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Executive Summary

The NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (the ICB) are proposing to develop a new facility within the Chester South Primary Care Network (PCN). This proposal will provide a modern and fit for purpose health centre that can meet existing needs as well as future growth. The proposed health centre development is required to underpin a clinical model designed to support community care, reducing pressure on urgent and emergency hospital services and safeguarding services for the growing population of Chester South PCN. It also aims to align with Lord Darzi's direction for secondary care services being delivered in a community setting and the care closer to home agenda.

The Primary Needs Case Technical Note builds upon the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) developed by the ICB to develop a new primary healthcare facility. It demonstrates that current and future healthcare needs are unable to be met within the existing NHS Estate within the PCN

The note uses both NHS and ONS population projections to forecast local primary healthcare demand, demonstrating that existing services are already over capacity. This had been previously identified as part of the Wrexham Road planning permission granted in 2017 (Redrow / Taylor Wimpey Site, Planning REF: 17/05201/OUT). This planning permission resulted in a £2.3 million S106 contribution for the delivery of an off-site healthcare facility. Facilities within the PCN catchment are unable to meet current demand or absorb future demand arising from this and additional new developments.

The existing Primary Care facilities in the PCN, specifically Handbridge Medical Centre and Lache Health Centre, are classified as 'Tail 1' and 'Flex' respectively by the NHS. This indicates at present they are unfit for purpose, and beyond their functional lifespan. Considerations for reconfiguring or extending these practices are impractical given the Estate location and current standards. The analysis includes floorspace calculations that quantify the shortfall in clinical and administrative space and highlights the operational inefficiencies and workforce challenges caused by outdated infrastructure.

The note outlines the service gaps, particularly in mental health, respiratory care, and community-based interventions, that cannot be addressed within the existing NHS estate. Currently, these needs are met through the leasing of temporary commercial space to accommodate essential functions which is unsustainable both for the ICS and results in a disjointed service for patients.

The current facilities are incapable of supporting the NHS's strategic shift toward integrated, community-based care within a growing population. The Fit for the Future: Ten Year Health Plan for England (2025)¹ underpins the proposals for the delivery of a new build facility. This plan covers key three shifts:

- Acute to Community
- Treatment to Prevention
- Analogue to Digital

¹ [NHS England » Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England](#)



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Fundamentally, this model supports a move to neighbourhood health services, driven by a new operating model for devolution in healthcare and increased bottom up transparency as well as embracing partnership and collaboration within, and outside, of the NHS.

This operating model aims to move primary and acute healthcare delivery to a neighbourhood level, reducing hospital-centric care. The neighbourhood healthcare model will require primary care delivery to work closely with other health and social care partners (such as physiotherapists, pharmacists and care workers). The vision for this provision include strengthening primary and community based care to enable support closer to home or work, with supporting elements including integrating secondary care such as community clinics, single points of access and community diagnostic centres.

The Technical Note outlines how the new facility would deliver on the Fit for the Future: Ten Year Health Plan for England (2025) as outlined above, the Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan (2023–2028), and the Health and Social Care Act by enabling integrated, preventative, and accessible care. A purpose built health hub would not only replace two unfit GP practices but also serve as a neighbourhood anchor for co-located services, including community mental health, social prescribing, and minor procedures.

Overall, there is an identified need for a modern healthcare infrastructure in Chester South PCN that cannot be met by current provision.



1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB is a partnership that brings together health and care organisations in Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington, and Wirral. The ICB oversees the delivery of health and care services across a diverse range of communities that includes a mixture of rural, coastal and urban deprivation. The health and care organisations are facing significant challenges linked to the scale and quality of physical infrastructure required to deliver core and additional services.

This technical note supports the case for a new health centre in Chester South PCN which has emerged from a combination of long-standing infrastructure challenges and growing population pressures. In 2017, outline planning permission was granted for a major housing development (for up to 1,400 homes) west of Wrexham Road (Planning REF: 17/05201/OUT). At that time of the granting of this outline permission it was recognised that primary health care practices (GP practices) within the NHS West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (WCCCG – abolished in 2022 and functions overtaken by the ICB) were operating at or beyond capacity had already identified that local GP practices were operating at or beyond capacity. The Department of Health's recommended standard of 1,750 patients per 1 full-time equivalent GP.

Originally, the Wrexham Road development was proposed to include a small on-site health facility (600 sqm), but this was deemed insufficient given wider shortfalls in provision and inconsistent with NHS strategy to shift toward integrated, community-based care within a growing population. Instead, a Section 106 contribution of approximately £2.3 million was secured to support an off-site facility.

The development of a modest, multi-purpose healthcare facility would:

- Safeguard primary care provision for both Handbridge and Lache
- Enable relocation of additional services that have been displaced from GP sites
- Address identified service gaps in community and mental health provision
- Align with the emerging model of neighbourhood hubs



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In light of population increases since 2017, and the inability of the current PCN Estate to meet local need it is proposed that a new, purpose-built facility is pursued. To demonstrate this, the following Technical Note provides an updated assessment of local primary healthcare need to understand the scale and type of provision required, as well as outlining the benefits this will bring local, and future, residents.

This Technical Note is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2:** Existing Primary Care Context & Current Capacity Assessment
- **Chapter 3:** Local Primary Care Health Future Needs Assessment
- **Chapter 4:** Case for Change: Assessment of Benefits of New Facility to Meet Healthcare Need
- **Chapter 5:** Conclusion



2 Existing Primary Care Context

The ICB estate comprises over 1,200 properties, including 344 GP practices, 13 acute hospitals, and numerous community and specialist facilities. However, much of this infrastructure is ageing, with 70% of the estate below Condition B and a total backlog maintenance cost of over £654 million. Many buildings are not digitally adaptable or environmentally sustainable, and some are nearing lease expiry.

Key challenges include:

- Ageing and inflexible estate
- Limited capital funding
- High levels of deprivation and health inequality
- Workforce shortages and an ageing estates workforce
- Digital interoperability issues
- Underutilised and void space across the estate

The ICB is made up of 55 PCN's. These group GP practices together to deliver co-ordinated care to specific local communities. PCN's tend to serve patient list areas of approximately 30,000 to 50,000 people and allow collaboration between GPs and the local health and social care system (such as mental health service, social care and pharmacy). These are recognised catchment areas for healthcare delivery.

This technical note addresses the primary care context in South Chester PCN. The Chester South PCN, comprises four GP practices and one branch surgery, serves a growing population. A map outlining this PCN area is provided in **Appendix A**.

The proposals outlined by to develop a modern and fit for purpose facility is driven by need within the catchment of the Handbridge Medical Centre and the Lache Health Centre within this PCN.

Through using this PCN as our study area within the ICBs remit broader context is provided regarding the other 2 GP facilities within the Primary Care Network (PCN). It is recognised that currently there are no sites that have been identified as fit for purpose or delivering required services locally within the PCN. As such, there is potential to deliver wider benefits within the local PCN area through pursuing a purpose-built new facility.

An overview of the national and local policy context that underpin the ICB approach to the Proposed Development is also provided in **Appendix C**.

2.1 Handbridge and Lache GP Practices

Notwithstanding the additional demand for health services generated by application 17/05201/OUT, the replacement of the Handbridge Medical Centre facility has been a long-term aspiration for the



ICB. The building is significantly constrained, lacking accessibility features such as a lift and disabled toilet, and offers only one consulting room on the ground floor. It is classified as a 'Tail 1'² facility, indicating it is not fit for future service delivery. The ICB's medical facility at Lache is classified as a Flex facility and is also in a poor state of repair with the building dating to the 1970s. Whilst the building was at the time purpose built, it does not lend itself to modern primary care services and the required clinical capacity to deliver this.

Both the Handbridge Medical Centre and the Lache Health Centre facilities are beyond their functional lifespan, and the ICB has identified the replacement of Handbridge as a high priority. The current NHS estate cannot accommodate increasing demand, particularly that arising from the Wrexham Road housing development.

In looking to provide additional health facilities in the locality to meet demand, the ICB identified a lack of modern fit for purpose buildings that would fit the requirements of the NHS, and an acute lack of land available to deliver a new practice.

2.2 Local Primary Care Current Capacity Assessment

This section provides an assessment of primary care capacity in the PCN area, it assesses existing patient list sizes against full-time equivalent (FTE) GP ratios³ and floorspace capacity. Using both GP-to-patient ratios and patient-to-floorspace requirements in tandem provides a holistic assessment of a practice's capacity. Whilst the former highlights clinical workload and patient access, the latter ensures the physical environment is suitably equipped to support safe and effective service delivery. Together, they provide a well-rounded perspective on both workforce capacity and infrastructural adequacy

Weighted Patient List Sizes and GP to Patient Ratios

Weighted patient list sizes are provided below for five facilities within the Chester South PCN. Weighted patient list sizes are a mathematically adjusted count that reflect the relative healthcare needs of the population. The weighted patients list size considers a range of factors including age and gender; morbidity and mortality; list turnover; rurality and market forces.

One measure of local capacity is based on patient to FTE GP ratios. The GP-to-patient ratio is a clinically oriented metric that directly reflects the workload placed on general practitioners. It is particularly valuable for understanding how stretched a practice is in terms of delivering timely and effective care. This ratio is patient-centric, easy to standardise across regions, and responsive to changes in staffing levels, making it a helpful tool for workforce planning and service delivery assessments.

² NHS Estate Classifications for Core, Flex and Tail facilities are provided in Appendix B. For patient facing sites, Tail 1 facilities are deemed poor quality and not fit for services. Significant and major investment is required to raise standards. Investments should only be made to core IT (Wi-Fi) and compliance works for patient safety.

³³ The Carr-Hill formula of one full-time equivalent GP to 1,750 patients is applied here.



Table 2.1 Patient Lists Sizes and GP Ratios

GP Practice and Practice Code	Practice List Size	Weighted Patient List Size	No. FTE GPs	GP to Patient Ratio (Carr-Hill Formula) ⁴	Over / Under Capacity
City Walls Medical Centre (N81082)	15,504	16,920	9.2	1 FTE GP to 1,839 patients	Over capacity
The Handbridge Medical Centre (N81101)	8,012	7,815	3.0	1 FTE GP to 2,605 patients	Over capacity
Lache Health Centre (N81115)	7,777	7,339	3.8	1 FTE GP to 1,931 patients	Over capacity
Western Ave Medical Centre (N81626)	4,493	4,720	1.7	1 FTE GP to 2,776 patients	Over capacity

Table 2.1 demonstrates that all practices are operating over capacity in terms of Patient to GP ratios. Where GP are responsible for a high volume of patients this can lead to the following challenges:

- **Reduced access to care:** longer waiting times for appointments, shorter consultation durations and delayed diagnoses and treatments which can compromise the quality of care.
- **Increased pressure on GPs:** can lead to burnout and stress for GPs alongside reduced job satisfaction which can affect recruitment, retention and continuity of care.
- **Impact on Patient Outcomes:** health inequalities may be worsened, especially for vulnerable populations, there may be higher rates of emergency admissions as patients turn to Accident & Emergency or out of hours services when they are unable to access primary care; and decreased patient satisfaction.

Overcapacity is often reflective of population growth or demographic shifts that are not matched by GP recruitment alongside underfunding and resource allocation issues.

A full assessment of GIA and NIA requirements for each facility is presented in **Appendix B**.

Floorspace Capacity

Patient-to-floorspace requirements focus on the physical infrastructure of a practice. This metric ensures that there is adequate space to safely and comfortably accommodate patients and staff. It is especially relevant for planning new facilities or refurbishing existing ones, as it accounts for consultation rooms, waiting areas, and support spaces. Additionally, it supports infection control measures and accessibility standards, which are critical in maintaining a safe healthcare environment.

⁴ GP to patient ratios have been calculated using the weighted patient list size to more accurately reflect health care demand service demand.



Table 2.2 Primary Care Floorspace Capacity

GP Practice	Gross Internal Area (GIA sqm)	Net Internal Area (NIA sqm)	Weighted Patient List Size	Required Total Floorspace (NIA) as per HBN 11-01 for Patient List Size ⁵	Floorspace Surplus / Deficit	% Additional Floorspace Required
City Walls Medical Centre (inc. Saughall Medical Centre Branch Surgery)	831.4	710.6	16,920	1,160 sqm	-449.4 sqm	63.2%
The Handbridge Medical Centre	349.0	298.4	8,012	549.39 sqm	-250.99 sqm	84.11%
Lache Health Centre	290.4	200.9	7,339	503.25 sqm	-302.35 sqm	150.5%
Western Ave Medical Centre	326.9	276.4	4,493	308.10 sqm	-31.7sqm	11.5%

In accordance with standard outlined in Healthy Building Note 11-01, Net Internal Area (NIA) has been used to calculate existing primary care capacity for this assessment rather than Gross Internal Area (GIA). NIA accounts solely for the usable internal space such as consultation rooms, treatment areas, and waiting rooms. NIA excludes non-functional areas like internal walls, stairwells, and plant rooms. This provides a more accurate and practical measure of the space available for direct patient care and operational delivery. In contrast, GIA includes all internal space within the external walls, which may overstate the facility’s functional capacity. Therefore, NIA offers a more meaningful basis for service planning and capacity assessments in primary care settings.

Table 2.2 highlights a significant shortfall in clinical floorspace across all four GP practices when compared to the recommended standards outlined in HBN 11-01. Each practice is currently operating with NIA well below what is required for their respective weighted patient list sizes.

Handbridge Medical Center and Lache Health Centre have the largest deficit in required floorspace to meet their population needs. The Handbridge Medical Center requires 84.11% more NIA space to meet NIA standards while the Lache Health Centre is the most undersized relative to its needs, with a 150.5% increase required, this is more than double its current NIA.

All practices are under provisioned in terms of clinical space which are likely to be adversely impacting service delivery, patients experience and staff working conditions.

2.3 Providing Services to Meet Healthcare Needs

Table 2.3 considers the total primary care floorspace required to meet existing patient list demand at The Handbridge Medical Centre and Lache Health Centre. Given that the facilities are both classified as Tails facilities, the below assessment considers the total cost required to build a fully operational

⁵ Required floorspace per patient in accordance with HBN 11-01 is 120 sqm NIA per 1,750 patient or 150 sqm GIA per 1,750 patients. Table 3 assessed this on the basis of NIA.



clinical facility using local build cost estimates. This assessment is provided on the basis of the Gross Internal Area (GIA) required for the facility rather solely focussing on functional clinical space, all GIA requirements are provided in Appendix B. This demonstrates a significant shortfall in funding meet current demand to be met through the S106 funding secured in 2017.

Table 2.3. Estimated Capital Cost of Floor Space Needed

GP Practice	Weighted Patient List Size	Total Required Gross Internal Area (GIA sqm)	Total GIA % Increase required	Total Estimated Capital Cost Required⁶
The Handbridge Medical Centre	8,012	831.4	96.8%	£4,157,000
Lache Health Centre	7,339	349.0	116.6%	£1,745,000
Total	15,351	1,180.4 sqm	213.4%	£5,902,000

2.4 Service Delivery Implication

The capacity constrains with the PCN and at The Handbridge Medical Centre and Lache Health Centre are inter-linked with wider delivery challenges for other allied or community health services in the local area. Capacity constraints have reduced the availability of these locally in the community.

From an acute care perspective, the primary provider for the area is the Countess of Chester Hospital, which also hosts the majority of associated community services. Additional community and mental health services are delivered by other providers, such as Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust, though these services operate across broader, less defined geographical boundaries.

The Handbridge Medical Centre currently has no on-site acute or secondary care provision, primarily due to space constraints within the existing building. As a result, community services are largely delivered off-site, either at the Countess of Chester Hospital or the Fountains Building. Lache Health Centre has historically hosted some sessional community services; however, these have diminished over time due to increased demand for general practice space, leading to the relocation of services to facilities outside the immediate catchment area.

⁶ Build cost estimates applied for delivery of fully operational clinical primary care facility. This assessment has applied an indicative construction cost of £5,000 per sqm in accordance with recent project estimates. This cost does not account for land, fees, abnormal, inflation or other contingency costs which should be calculated in addition.



Furthermore, additional roles introduced under the GP contract (e.g. for diagnostics and patient support) cannot be accommodated in existing facilities. As a result, the ICB has leased commercial office space for administrative and consultation-only services, which has been in use for 2.5 years and is being extended. There is also a short-term lease on a PCN admin building in the south of Chester, used for social prescribing and administrative functions. However, no buildings in the locality meet the standards of a "Core" estate. The ICB has advised that the provision of the following contractual functions under the additional roles reimbursement scheme (ARRS) are unable to be delivered from local GP practices including

- Clinical Pharmacist: *Provides expert advice on medications and improves medication management.*
- Pharmacy Technician: *Supports the work of pharmacists and provides patient care services.*
- Health and Well-being Coach: *Offers support and encouragement to patients to improve their health and well-being.*
- Care Co-ordinator: *Helps patients navigate complex health and care needs and brings together multidisciplinary teams.*
- General Practice Assistant: *Provides administrative and clinical support within the practice.*
- Digital and Transformation Lead: *Helps practices adopt new technologies and improve digital services.*
- Advanced Practitioner (Nurse, etc.): *Provides advanced clinical skills and expertise.*
- Trainee Nursing Associate: *Supports nurses and provides patient care.*
- Nursing Associate: *Provides patient care under the supervision of nurses.*

This has resulted in a lack of community services within the local area. It is also noted that due to inadequate disabled access provision at the Handbridge site, the ICB is concerned that the areas ageing population cannot be adequately supported. This has also been noted several times within Care Quality Commission inspections and District Valuer assessments.

2.5 Summary

The capacity assessment for Chester South PCN highlights that all four GP practices are operating over capacity in terms of both workforce and infrastructure. GP-to-patient ratios exceed recommended levels, indicating significant pressure on clinical staff and reduced access to care. This is particularly evident at The Handbridge Medical Centre, where each full-time GP is responsible for 2,605 patients, well above sustainable levels, while Lache Health Centre also exceeds capacity with a ratio of 1 FTE GP to 1,931 patients.

In terms of infrastructure, all practices fall short of the Net Internal Area (NIA) required to meet current patient demand, as outlined in HBN 11-01. Lache Health Centre faces the most severe shortfall, requiring a 150.5% increase in usable space. The Handbridge Medical Centre also requires a substantial 84.11% increase. These deficits are likely to impact service delivery, patient experience, and staff wellbeing, underscoring the urgent need for investment in clinical premises across the PCN.



3 Local Primary Care Future Needs Assessment

3.1 Overview

As mentioned throughout this document the current infrastructure provision is inadequate to serve the existing population within the Chester South PCN. This view is supported by the data laid out in Table 2.2 which outlines the floorspace capacity needed to meet current patient list size.

This section details the projected future needs of PCN residents which further supports the need for increased healthcare provision. This is demonstrated through the population projections provided by both the ICB and cross-referencing them with the most recent ONS population predictions.

Additionally, since the planning application for the Land at Wrexham Road was submitted, the up to date ONS figures have been published. These provide further evidence that additional funding and infrastructure is required compared to the projections as laid out in this application.

3.2 Population Growth and Health Care Demand

The below outlines the population growth expected in within the PCN and wider LPA (Chester West and Chester). It is important to note here that figures provided are estimates based on available data at the time of writing.

Change since 17/05201/OUT

The Wrexham Road development (REF: 17/05201/OUT) generated £2.3 million in Section 106 (s106) contributions earmarked for healthcare infrastructure Chester South PCN.

In 2017, outline planning permission was granted for a major housing development (of up to 1,400 homes) west of Wrexham Road. At that time, NHS West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (WCCCG – abolished in 2022 and functions overtaken by the ICB) had already identified that local GP practices were operating at or beyond capacity. The Applicant had also noted that the Handbridge Medical Centre and Lach Health Centre in particular were noted as operated at 1,734 and 1,722 patients per FTE GP respectively (just below the 1,800 threshold according to the Socio-Economic Assessment undertaken at the time⁷).

The Outline planning application noted that the population increase expected from this development was 3,533 using the 2011 Census. This estimate was based on industry standards of worst case scenario assumption modelling that assumes an entirely new population moving into the development. Additionally, it outlined that the population estimate used to deem significance in this application was

⁷ Lichfields (2017): Land at Wrexham Road, Chester Environmental Statement Chapter L: Socio Economic (accessed through: [17_05201_OUT-Chapter L - Socio Economics-2700100.pdf](#))



Land West of Wrexham Road

based on the 2011 Census estimate, stating that there were 333,900 residents in Cheshire West and Chester.

The impact of this new population on healthcare demand was viewed to potentially result in a 3.9% increase in patients for each WTE GP in the WCCC catchment.

The current population estimate last undertaken in 2023, based on the 2021 census is that Cheshire West and Chester's population has now increased to 365,061. This demonstrates a 10.7% increase compared to the figure outlined above. Additionally, the Cheshire South population PCN estimates (mid 2022) stand at 35,161⁸. It is difficult to compare the population at the time of the 2017 application as this was a different catchment area.

Given the specific increase in population associated with the Proposed Development coupled with the general population increase estimates, alongside no change to the provision of primary healthcare infrastructure within the PCN,) it is expected that the current position of inadequate primary healthcare provision remains and has worsened since 2017. This is demonstrated in the increased in patient to GP ratios since 2017 (Table 2.1).

ONS Population Estimates

Population Estimates provided by the LPA⁹ suggest that across all 9 'care communities' (these correspond with PCNs) the second largest expected increase in population to 2038 in Chester South (17 per cent). Both Figure 6.1 and 5.2 demonstrate the expectation that Chester South's population will continue to grow into 2027 and beyond to 2038.

Furthermore, figure 3.2 demonstrates that there is a growing population within Chester South PCN, particularly in regard to both those who are 85+ and 65+. These demographic groups tend to have specific health, accessibility and specialist service needs. Alongside this population growth it is also expected that there will be a significant (18%) population increase in those aged 16-144. It is important not to forget the particular needs of this population. In particular, occupational health, maternity care and mental health support through primary care practices.

⁸ [Population Estimates | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

⁹ West Cheshire and Chester (2018) Population Forecasts (accessed through: [population forecasts 2018 report](#))



Figure 3.1 Care Community Forecasts

	Population			% change	
	2018	2028	2038	2018-28	2018-38
Chester Central	33,000	34,800	36,200	6%	10%
Chester East	30,800	31,600	32,100	3%	4%
Chester South	33,300	36,400	39,000	9%	17%
Ellesmere Port	60,400	65,400	70,100	8%	16%
Helsby and Frodsham	19,300	19,800	20,400	3%	6%
Neston and Willaston	20,200	20,600	21,200	2%	5%
Northwich	73,900	77,400	80,600	5%	9%
Rural	36,600	38,600	40,700	6%	11%
Winsford	33,000	36,900	40,600	12%	23%
Cheshire West and Chester	340,500	361,700	381,000	6%	12%

Figure 3.2 Age Forecasts Chester South Care Community

	Population			% change	
	2018	2028	2038	2018-28	2018-38
0-15	6,400	6,600	6,900	4%	9%
16-44	11,000	12,100	12,900	11%	18%
45-64	8,900	9,000	8,900	1%	0%
65+	7,100	8,600	10,300	22%	46%
(85+)	900	1,300	2,100	47%	128%
Total	33,300	36,400	39,000	9%	17%

Primary Care Network Services and Estate Strategy

It is important to note here that the ONS Population Estimates tend not to include the impact specific housing delivery through consented planning permissions, therefore in the below section some additional demand identified by the PCN have been outlined.

Data has been shared from the Chester South PCN and the Cheshire ICB which outlines the PCN's position on population growth and healthcare demand.

The registered practice population is forecast to increase by 5.4% in next 5 years, an increase of 1,890 (SHAPE data based on ONS population projections).

Additionally, the following 5 developments have been identified in the PCN within the PCN, totalling a potential additional 1,620 new population (noting that not all of this population would be new to the PCN).

- Cheshire West and Chester 025 19 new households; 45 new people
- Cheshire West and Chester 025A 255 new households, 615 new people;



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- Cheshire West and Chester 029D 31 new households, 68 new people
- Cheshire West and Chester 034D 220 new households; 481 new people;
- Cheshire West and Chester 041A 238 new households, 452 new people including 130 in elderly accommodation.
- There is one large development outside the PCN: Cheshire West and Chester 046A 836 new households and 2,017 new people.
- There is one large development just outside of the PCN at Outline Planning stage of 1753 population.

3.3 Summary

Overall, from multiple data sources there is alignment that there will be population growth in the local area which will impact healthcare infrastructure. The current infrastructure within the Chester South PCN is insufficient to meet existing demand, with all practices operating over capacity. This is compounded by significant population growth, particularly among those aged 65+ and 85+, who typically require more intensive and specialised healthcare services. Additionally, an 18% increase is projected in the 16–44 age group, further driving demand for occupational health, maternity, and mental health services.

Since the 2017 planning application for the Wrexham Road development (17/05201/OUT), updated ONS data shows a 10.7% increase in the Cheshire West and Chester population, from 333,900 to 365,061. Chester Sout PCN alone is projected to see a 17% rise, reflecting high levels of new housing. The PCN's registered population of 35,142 is expected to grow by 5.4% (1,890 people) over the next five years.

Cumulative impacts from committed developments within the PCN include five identified schemes totalling 1,620 additional residents, plus two large developments just outside the PCN boundary that could add over 3,700 more. These figures underscore the need to plan for expanded, integrated healthcare infrastructure that reflects both current and future population pressure



4 Case for Change

The case for developing a new health hub in the Handbridge and Lache area is driven by a combination of clinical necessity, operational limitations, and strategic opportunity. The current facilities are no longer fit for purpose, and without intervention, the ability to deliver safe, effective, and accessible healthcare in Chester South PCN is at risk.

4.1 Benefits of New Development to meet Healthcare Need

Clinical and Operational Constraints

Both Handbridge Medical Centre and Lache Health Centre are operating in buildings that significantly constrain the delivery of modern primary care. Neither site has sufficient clinical space to support the staffing levels or service range required. For instance, Handbridge Medical Centre is unable to offer a full-time post to an experienced practice nurse due to space limitations, which has led to high staff turnover and instability within the nursing team.

Accessibility is another major concern. Handbridge Medical Centre's layout is particularly problematic for frail or disabled patients, with most consulting rooms located upstairs and no lift available. This not only limits access but also compromises patient dignity and safety. Furthermore, Handbridge Medical Centre operates across two adjacent buildings, creating fragmentation that hinders collaboration and efficient service delivery. Both sites also fall short of modern standards for confidentiality, infection control, and patient flow, making them unsuitable for today's healthcare environment.

Understanding Local Health Needs

The population served by Chester South PCN is diverse, with pockets of deprivation and affluence. Mental health emerges as a dominant concern, accounting for approximately 20% of all GP appointments. The PCN is particularly focused on addressing low-level mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, while also acknowledging the need for better systems to manage more complex cases. Long waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) exacerbate the burden on primary care, prompting the PCN to consider expanding its mental health workforce and integrating services more effectively.

Respiratory health is another pressing issue, especially given the area's proximity to petrochemical sites. Children's admissions for respiratory infections are higher than the national average, and underdiagnosis of conditions like asthma and COPD remains a concern. The PCN aims to reintroduce community-based respiratory care, including the deployment of a dedicated respiratory nurse and improved diagnostic tools such as FENO testing and spirometry.

Obesity, particularly among school-aged children, is a growing problem linked to socioeconomic factors. The PCN envisions a virtual hub model that brings together dietitians, social prescribers, and mental health professionals to deliver community-based interventions like cooking classes and lifestyle education.



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Cancer care is also a priority, with efforts focused on increasing screening uptake and improving mid-point reviews. Each practice has a designated GP cancer lead, and the PCN is exploring the use of Cancer Champions and partnerships with the Cancer Academy to share best practices.

Population Growth and Demand

The pressure on services is set to intensify. The Wrexham Road housing development alone is expected to bring approximately 3,500 – 4,000 new residents to the area. As of the 2024 Annual Monitoring Report the application has a total of 612 total site completions (with 1,264 now expected by 2030)¹⁰.

The current facilities are already at or beyond capacity and cannot absorb this additional demand. Without a new facility, there is a real risk that GP lists will have to close, limiting access to care for new and existing residents alike.

Co-Benefits of Multi-Purpose Development

Below is an overview of the key additional benefits of providing a new purpose built facility that will positively impact the delivery of primary healthcare services within the PCN.

Operational Efficiency

- Streamlining services through co-location and shared infrastructure.
- Reducing costs associated with leasing temporary commercial space and fragmented service delivery.
- Improving resource utilisation across healthcare providers by enabling flexible use of clinical and administrative space.

Preventative Care Focus

- Providing dedicated spaces and programmes that promote health education, lifestyle interventions, and disease prevention.
- Reducing long-term healthcare demands through early intervention and community-based support.

Modern Facility

- Enable services to be delivered closer to home, reduce pressure on acute settings, and support continuity of care
- Centralised services that reduce the need for multiple appointments across different locations.

¹⁰ [Cheshire West and Chester Council - 2024 Annual Monitoring Report - Chester](#)



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- Provide a modern, inclusive environment that meets current accessibility and infection control standards.
- Improved access to a broader range of services, including diagnostics, mental health, and social prescribing.

Community based services

A dedicated health hub could support include flexible sessional space to accommodate a range of community-based services, including:

- District Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Child Health Services
- Neighbourhood Teams
- Specialist Nurses (e.g. diabetes, COPD, heart failure, incontinence, tissue viability)
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Health Visiting
- Physiotherapy
- End of Life / Palliative Care

Workforce Challenges

The poor condition and layout of the existing premises have a direct impact on workforce morale and effectiveness. Recruitment and retention of skilled staff are increasingly difficult, as professionals are reluctant to work in outdated and cramped environments. Administrative staff are forced to rotate between working from home and limited on-site office space due to a lack of dedicated work areas, further straining operational capacity.

Strategic Alignment

The proposed development aligns closely with key national and regional healthcare strategies. It supports the ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan, the Lord Darzi Review, and the Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan (2023–2028). These frameworks advocate for integrated, preventative, and community-based care models that are simply unachievable within the constraints of the current buildings.

Infrastructure Deficiency

The challenges faced by Handbridge Medical Centre and Lache Health Centre are not unique. Across the region, many GP practices operate from converted residential buildings that were never designed for healthcare delivery. National assessments indicate that over half of the GP estate is not fit for



future models of care. The existing premises at Handbridge and Lache exemplify this issue, lacking the flexibility, space, and infrastructure needed to support modern, integrated services.

The need for additional floorspace and clinical capacity based on quantitative data has been outlined in the previous sections. This section outlines at a high-level the strategic drivers for this consideration and the key co-benefits of improved primary healthcare delivery for the population of the PCN.

NHS Strategic Case and Local Planning Authority (LPA Duties)

A move towards a purpose built facility supports the NHS's strategic shift toward integrated, preventative, and community-based care as outlined in the Fit for the Future 10 Year Plan. Alongside this it is important to note that the LPA has a statutory duty to consider the impact of development on local health infrastructure and are expected to engage with the ICB in delivering healthcare services. The following local and national strategies and policies are listed to demonstrate these drivers:

- NHS Long Term Plan (2019): Emphasises prevention, personalised care, and integrated services.
- Health and Care Act (2022): Establishes Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to promote collaboration and reduce health inequalities.
- Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan (2023–2028): Prioritises tackling health inequalities, improving population health, and enhancing productivity.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024): Requires planning authorities to ensure sufficient healthcare infrastructure is provided to support new development.
- Mitigating the impact of the Wrexham Road development (1,400 homes / ~4,000 residents).
- Delivering infrastructure funded in part by the £2.3 million Section 106 contribution.

4.2 Summary

NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICS oversees care across a diverse region facing significant infrastructure challenges. With over 70% of its estate below acceptable standards and a £654 million maintenance backlog, the system is under strain. In Chester South PCN, this is acutely felt at Handbridge Medical Centre and Lache Health Centre, both are outdated, inaccessible, and unable to meet current or future demand.



5 Conclusion

The report outlines the need for a new healthcare facility in Chester South, driven by the inadequacy of existing infrastructure to meet current and projected demand. The Handbridge Medical Centre and Lache Health Centre are both outdated, classified as 'Tail 1' and 'Flex' respectively, and are no longer fit for purpose. These facilities face significant limitations in accessibility, clinical space, and operational efficiency, which hinder the delivery of modern, integrated care.

Population growth is a key driver of increased healthcare demand in the area. The Wrexham Road development alone is expected to add 3,500–4,000 residents, and broader demographic trends indicate a 10.7% increase in the Cheshire West and Chester population since 2011. The Chester South PCN, currently serving over 35,000 residents, is projected to grow by another 5.4% in the next five years. This growth is particularly pronounced among older adults and working-age individuals, both of whom have distinct and growing healthcare needs.

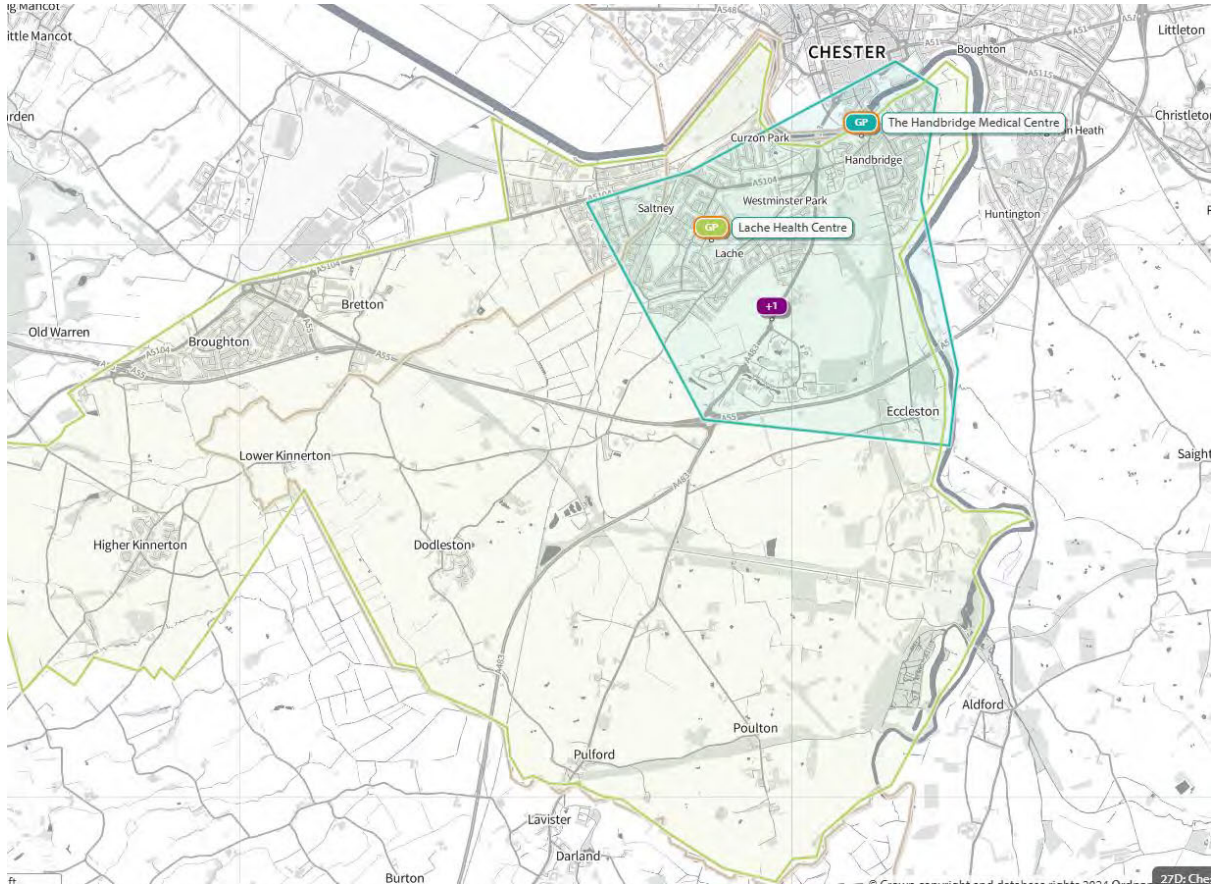
The report highlights that all GP practices in the PCN are operating over capacity, both in terms of GP-to-patient ratios and physical space. Floorspace assessments reveal significant deficits, with Lache Health Centre requiring a 150.5% increase in usable space. These constraints compromise patient care, staff wellbeing, and the ability to deliver additional services such as mental health support, physiotherapy, and social prescribing. To meet current projections of floorspace need contributions of £5.9 million would be required.

To address these challenges, a new, purpose-built health facility would be the most appropriate option. This facility would consolidate services from Handbridge and Lache, provide flexible sessional space for community services, and support integrated, preventative care.

Finally, the report underscores the strategic alignment of the proposed development with national and local policy frameworks, including the NHS Long Term Plan, the Health and Care Act 2022, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). A proposed health hub is critical investment to future-proof care delivery, reduce health inequalities, and support sustainable community health outcomes.



Appendix A Chester South PCN Map



Appendix B NHS Estate Classifications

Table A1. NHS Estate Classifications

Estate Classification	Description
Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality, fit for purpose and future-proofed • Aim to eliminate voids and maximise use, including for other health care/local authority services. • Investment would i) support more patients, including mixed delivery model (telephone/digital pods/etc), ii) support PCNs, iii) support integration of services iv) deliver on Net Zero Carbon delivery targets
Flex 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment would enable the site to become 'core' • Investment would i) support more patients, including in mixed delivery model (telephone/ digital pods/ etc), ii) support PCNs, iii) supports integration of services- likely to be more limited than core and iv) deliver on Net Zero Carbon delivery targets
Flex 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment would not enable the site to become 'core' • Limited investment in short/medium term i.e. maximising space from exiting patient records, where is no alternate estate options • Could consider disinvestment if sufficient capacity in the area
Tail 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient facing site - poor quality and not fit for services • Significant and major investment required to raise to 'Flex' • Only invest in core IT (wi-fi) and compliance works for patient safety • Look to disinvest and relocate services to 'Core or 'Flex 1' facilities
Tail 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non patient facing site - poor quality and not fit for purpose • Significant and major investment required to raise to 'Flex ' • Only invest in core IT (wi-fi) and compliance works for staff safety • Look to disinvest and relocate services to 'Core or 'Flex 1' facilities



Appendix C Primary Care Floorspace Assessment

Table B1 Provides an Assessment of Primary Care Floorspace Requirements in terms of Gross Internal Area (GIA) and Net Internal Area (NIA).

GP Practice	Gross Internal Area (GIA)	Net Internal Area (NIA)	Weighted Patient List Size	Total GIA Floorspace Requirement as per HBN 11-01 for Patient List Size ¹¹	Total NIA Floorspace Requirement as per HBN 11-01 for Patient List Size	GIA Floorspace Surplus / Deficit	NIA Floorspace Surplus / Deficit	% Additional GIA Floorspace Required	% Additional NIA Floorspace Required
City Walls Medical Centre	831.4 sqm	710.6 sqm	16,920	1,450.3 sqm	1,160 sqm	-618.9 sqm	-449.4 sqm	74.4%	63.2%
The Handbridge Medical Centre	349.0 sqm	298.4 sqm	8,012	686.7 sqm	549.39 sqm	-337.7 sqm	-250.99 sqm	96.8%	84.11%
Lache Health Centre	290.4 sqm	200.9 sqm	7,339	629.06 sqm	503.25 sqm	-338.66 sqm	-302.35 sqm	116.6%	150.5%
Western Ave Medical Centre	326.9 sqm	276.4 sqm	4,493	385.11 sqm	308.10 sqm	-58.21 sqm	-31.7sqm	17.8%	11.5%

¹¹ Required floorspace per patient in accordance with HBN 11-01 is 120 sqm NIA per 1,750 patient or 150 sqm GIA per 1,750 patients. Table 3 assessed this on the basis of NIA.



Appendix D Policy Context

National and Local Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

Chapter 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Paragraph 93

- Planning policies and decisions should aim to create healthy, inclusive and safe places. This includes:
 - Enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles.
 - Addressing identified local health and well-being needs, particularly through the built environment (e.g. layout of developments, access to green space, active travel infrastructure).

Paragraph 95

- Local planning authorities are expected to:
 - Engage proactively with public health bodies and healthcare providers.
 - Ensure that local strategies and policies support the timely and sufficient provision of healthcare infrastructure.
 - Consider the capacity and accessibility of existing services when planning for new development.

Paragraph 96

- Planning should support the provision and enhancement of:
 - Shared community spaces and facilities.
 - Local services, including healthcare premises, that contribute to the sustainability and resilience of communities.
 - Infrastructure that enables social interaction and community cohesion.

Chapter 3 – Plan-Making

Paragraph 20

- Strategic policies must set out an overall spatial strategy for development, including:
 - The pattern, scale and quality of growth.
 - Provision for essential infrastructure, explicitly including healthcare and community facilities.

Paragraph 23

- Strategic policies should be:
 - Informed by robust evidence of infrastructure needs, including those of the NHS and other healthcare providers.
 - Prepared in collaboration with relevant infrastructure delivery partners to ensure alignment between growth and service capacity.

Chapter 5 – Decision-Making



Paragraph 57

- In determining planning applications, local authorities should:
 - Consider the impact of development on health and well-being.
 - Assess whether proposals would place additional pressure on existing healthcare services.
 - Where necessary, seek planning obligations or conditions to mitigate impacts on local health infrastructure.

Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Paragraph 73

- Local plans should ensure that housing growth is:
 - Supported by adequate infrastructure, including healthcare provision.
 - Planned in a way that promotes sustainable, well-serviced communities.
 - Aligned with the capacity of local health services to accommodate population growth.

National and Local Guidance

National

The Fit for the Future: NHS 10 Year Plan (2025)

The plan outlines a transformative vision for the NHS, built around three radical shifts: moving care from hospital to community, transitioning from analogue to digital systems, and shifting the focus from sickness to prevention. These changes aim to modernise the health service to better meet the evolving needs of the population, improve outcomes, and reduce pressure on acute services. The government emphasises that this is not just a strategy but a long-term commitment to fundamentally reshape how health and care are delivered across England.

To support these shifts, several policy changes are introduced. These include a new NHS operating model, a transparency framework, and a workforce strategy that aligns staff roles with future service needs. Additionally, the plan proposes a reshaped innovation strategy and a revised approach to NHS finances to enable sustainable reform.

Lord Darzi Review (2024)

A rapid, independent review of NHS England, highlighting that the service is in "serious trouble" due to rising demand, deteriorating public health, and systemic inefficiencies. It calls for honesty about the NHS's challenges and proposes a 10-year reform plan focused on improving productivity, staff morale, and addressing health inequalities 1.

Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP)

Launched in 2019, HIP is a long-term, five-year programme aimed at delivering major investment in NHS infrastructure. It includes commitments to build 40 new hospitals by 2030, upgrade existing facilities, and modernise diagnostic and digital infrastructure to improve patient care and system resilience.



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Carter Review (2016)

Led by Lord Carter of Coles, this review examined NHS hospital efficiency. It identified wide variations in productivity and recommended standardising procedures, improving procurement, and better use of staff and estates to save up to £5 billion annually without compromising care quality.

Five Year Forward View (2014)

A strategic vision for the NHS in England, setting out how the health service should evolve to meet future challenges. It emphasised prevention, integrated care, new models of service delivery, and greater patient control, aiming to close health, quality, and funding gaps.

Health and Care Act 2022 (formerly Bill 2021)

This legislation restructured the NHS in England by establishing Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) on a statutory footing. It promotes collaboration between NHS bodies, local authorities, and care providers, aiming to improve population health and reduce health inequalities.

One Public Estate

A cross-government initiative that encourages public sector bodies to collaborate on property and land use. It supports the release of surplus NHS land for housing and community use, while promoting co-location of services to improve access and efficiency.

NHS Long Term Plan (2019)

A 10-year plan focused on improving outcomes through prevention, personalised care, and digital transformation. It prioritises mental health, cancer care, and community-based services, with funding tied to measurable improvements in service delivery and population health.

NHS Net Zero Commitment

The NHS has committed to becoming the world's first net zero national health system. The plan includes reducing emissions from buildings, transport, and supply chains, with targets to reach net zero for direct emissions by 2040 and for the entire NHS footprint by 2045.

Naylor Review (2017)

Commissioned to assess NHS property and estates, this review found that significant investment was needed to modernise facilities. It recommended selling surplus land, leveraging private investment, and aligning estate planning with clinical strategies to support service transformation.

Local and Regional

Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan 2023-2028

The Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan 2023-28 outlines a comprehensive strategy for improving health and care services across the region. The plan aligns with national NHS objectives while addressing local priorities identified by nine Place-based partnerships.



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Key priorities include:

- Tackling health inequalities - Focusing on the Marmot principles and Core20PLUS5 approach.
- Improving population health - Enhancing prevention, access, and quality of care.
- Enhancing productivity - Maximising resource utilisation and collaboration.
- Supporting social and economic development - Leveraging the NHS's role as an anchor institution.

The plan emphasises:

- Integration of health and care services
- Focus on prevention and early intervention
- Person-centered care and co-production
- Digital transformation and data-driven decision making
- Workforce development and retention

The £15 billion plan aims to transform healthcare delivery, improve outcomes, and reduce health inequalities across Cheshire and Merseyside by 2028.

Cheshire and Mersey Slide Infrastructure Strategy

Estate is a key enabler for General Practice transformation and the way we can deliver services locally to support our specific and complex population needs. There have been a number of nationally produced reports on General Practice recently with particular focus on the infrastructure requirements. A significant proportion of our GP owned buildings are converted ex-residential buildings and therefore the quality and overall functionality are mixed. Over half of our GP owned estate is deemed to be either not sufficiently functional or fit for the future delivery models of general practice when reviewed as part of the National Toolkit Programme.

Chester South PCN Estates Strategy

Strategic Priority 1: 0-3 Years

Mental Health: There is high demand throughout our PCN for MH (anxiety, depression and new presentations). All our challenges are mainly seen for low level MH, however we don't have anything built into the system to look at higher level of mental health, for which GPs or AMP with an interest in MH need to be seen by the patients.

Strategic Priority 2:

Ageing Population: Holistic care relating to older people including proactive management of long term conditions, frailty and social isolation.

Strategic Priority 3:

Respiratory, Asthma and COPD: Improve support for prevention, diagnosis and management for patients with respiratory conditions.



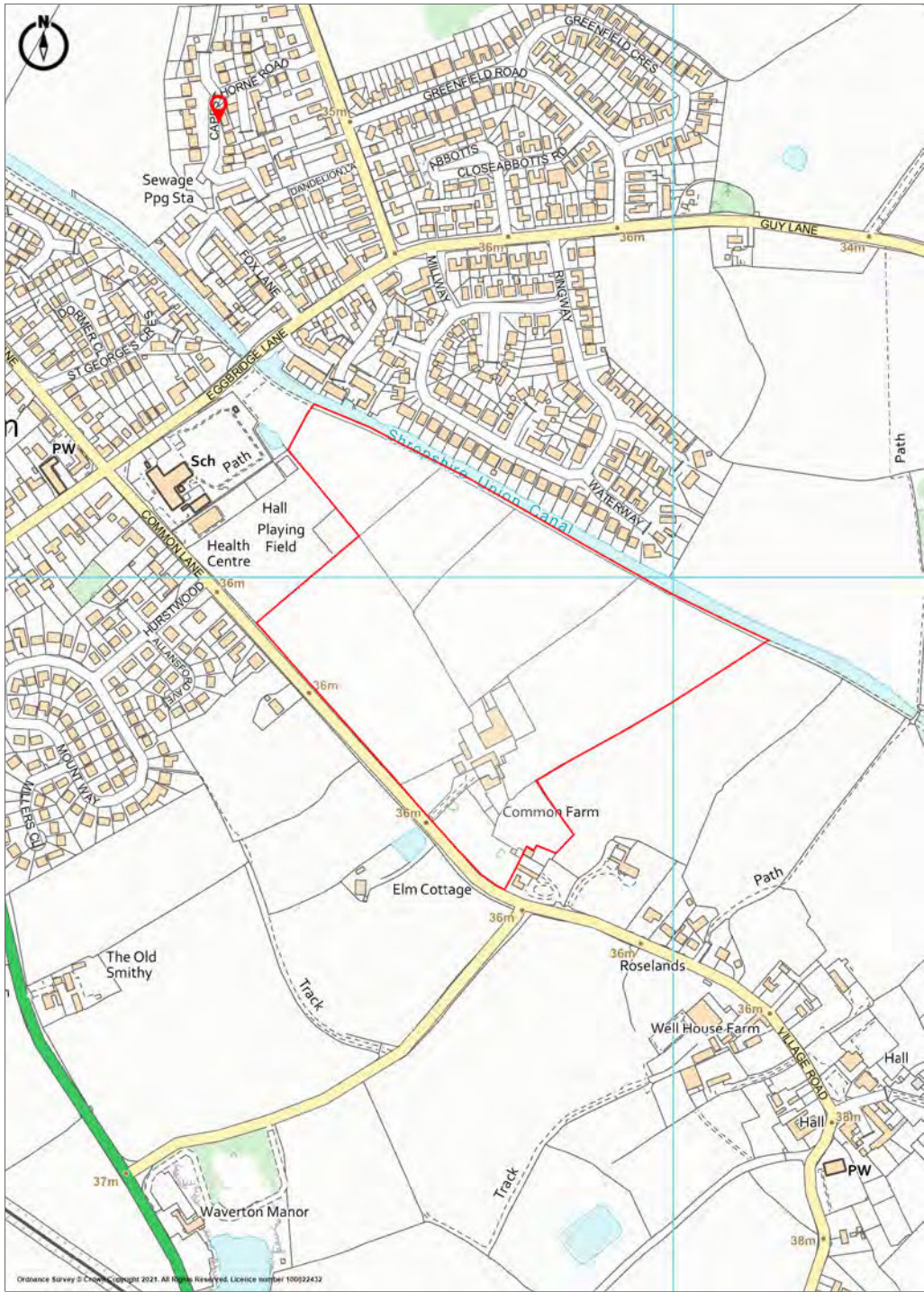
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Appendix 6 – Land at Common Lane, Waverton Site Plan



Appendix 7 – Land at Saughton Lane, Waverton Site Plan

Eaton Estate - Land off Whitchurch Road, Waverton



Key

 Total Area - 14.27 ha / 36.26 ac

Grid Ref : SJ 451 636

Scale 1:4,000 @ A4

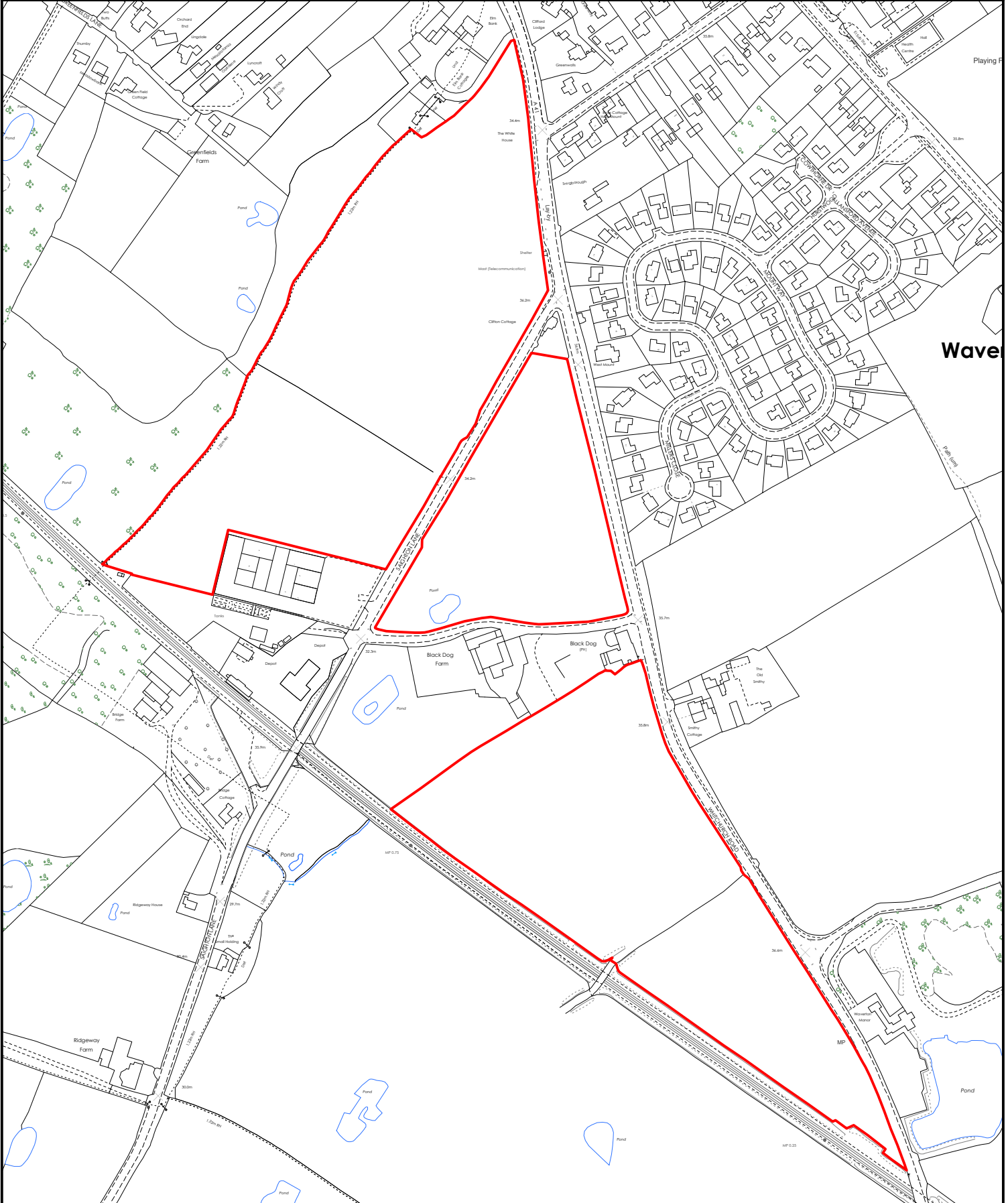
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Appendix 8 – Land off Guy Lane, Waverton Site Plan

Eaton Estate - Land off Guy Lane, Waverton



Key

 Total Area - 13.64 ha / 33.70 ac

Grid Ref : SJ 461 641

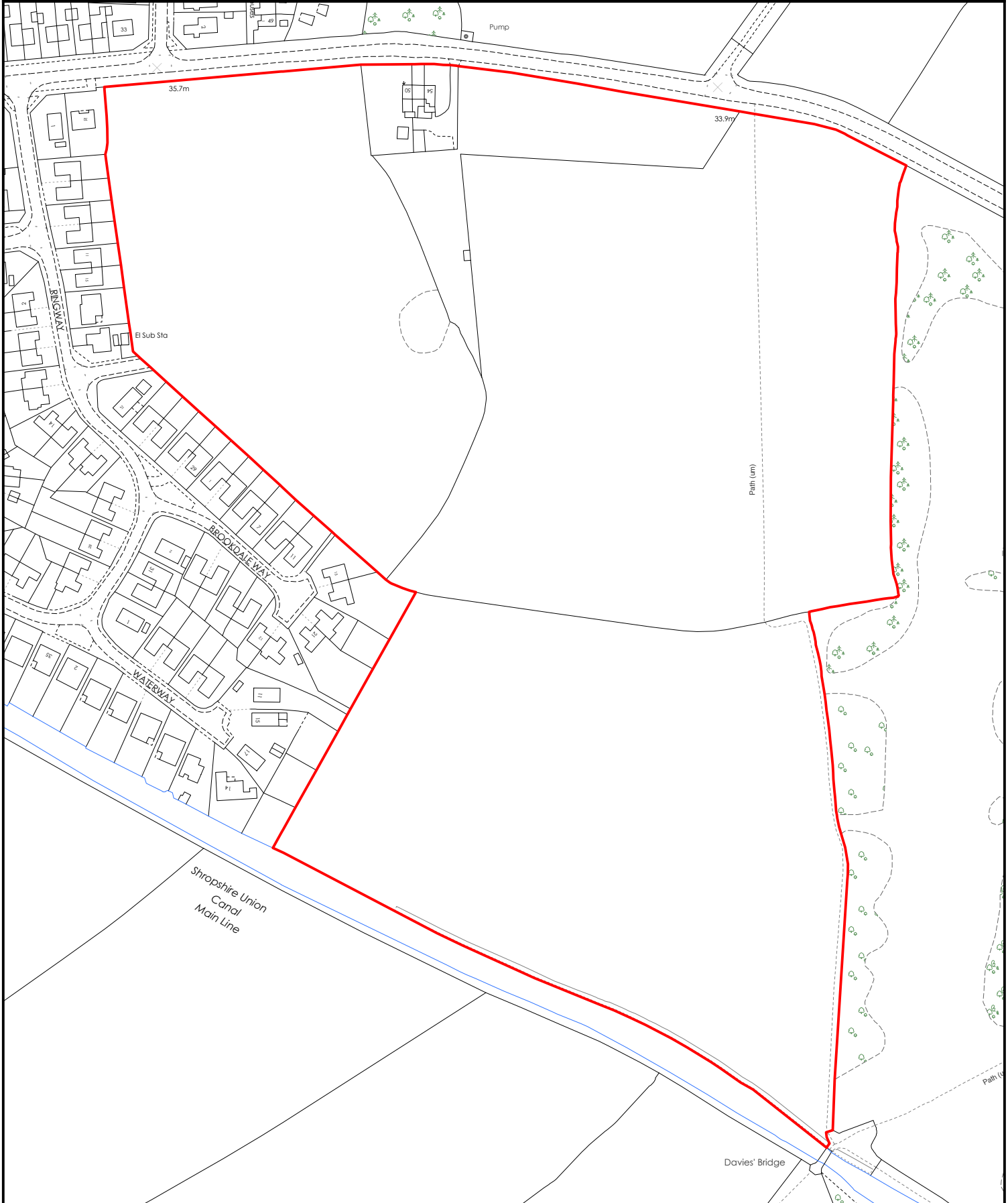
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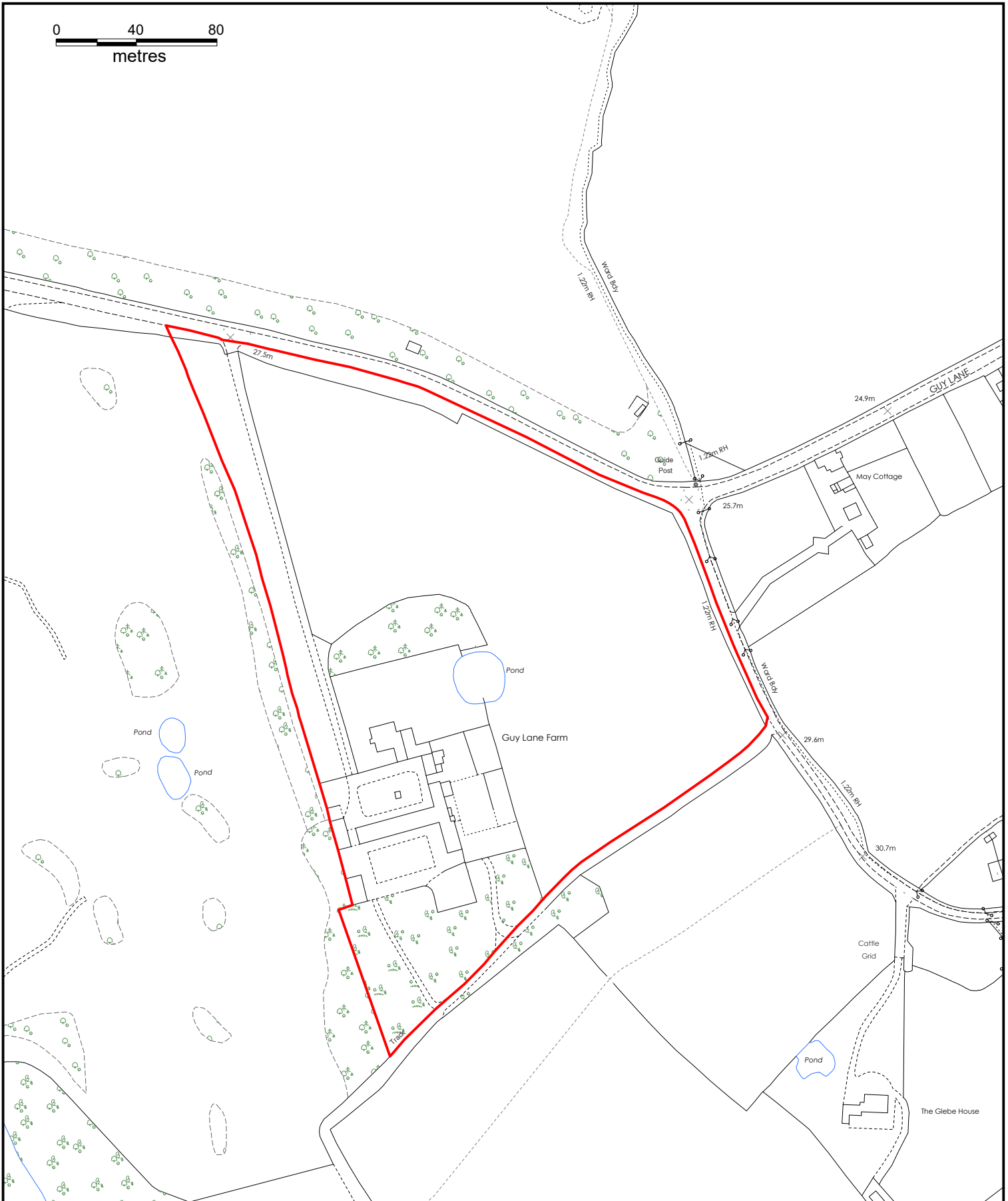
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**Appendix 9 – Land at Junction of Guy Lane and Martin’s Lane, Waverton
Site Plan**

0 40 80
metres



Land at junction of Guy Lane & Martin's Lane



Grid Ref : SJ 473 640

Scale 1:2,500 @ A4

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Appendix 10 – Land at Pump Lane, Churton Site Plan

