

06 March 2020

Delivered by email

Parish Clerk
Alderley Edge Parish Council
Festival Hall
Talbot Road
Alderley Edge
SK9 7RH
alderlynp@gmail.com

Dear Sir/ Madam

ALDERLEY EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 – 2030: REGULATION 14 DRAFT PLAN FOR CONSULTATION

Introduction

We are pleased to provide comments on behalf of David Wilson Homes North West (hereafter referred to as 'DWH') in relation to the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Development Plan (AENDP) (Regulation 14 Draft Plan) which has been published for a period of public consultation until 09 March 2020.

This follows previous representations that were made to the AENDP Emerging Policies Document (October 2018) and the AENDP First Draft Consultation (September 2019) (**Enclosure 1**).

As set out within DWH's response to the First Draft Consultation, DWH is part of Barratt Developments PLC, the UK's largest housebuilder, and has a track record of working with local communities to deliver high quality developments which benefit those living and working in the area in which they are provided.

In Alderley Edge, DWH is the promoter of 'Whitehall Meadow', a high quality residential development opportunity at Wilmslow Road ('the Site'). The proposals for the site include the construction of a car park to be gifted to the Parish Council and which is aimed at addressing a major local shortfall in parking in and around the village centre.

DWH therefore welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Regulation 14 Draft AENDP which has been published for consultation.

Regulation 14 Draft AENDP 2020 – 2030

The majority of the comments raised in DWH's response to the AENDP First Draft Consultation (September 2019) remain relevant to the current draft. Table 1 below provides an overview of where the comments raised in DWH's previous representation should still be considered in the ongoing preparation of the AENDP, highlighting where matters have changed within the Regulation 14 Draft AENDP.

1 New York Street
Manchester
M1 4HD

T 0161 233 7676 turley.co.uk

It is acknowledged that the main change within the Regulation 14 Draft AENDP is the deletion of previously drafted Policy AE21 which identified an area of allotments at Heyes Lane to provide an additional 40-50 public car parking spaces adjacent to the Festival Hall and Medical Centre.

Table 1: Overview of DWH’s Representations to the AENDP First Draft Consultation (September 2019)

Key Matter/ Draft Policy	Relevance to the Regulation 14 Draft AENDP (January 2020)
Vision and Objectives	DWH’s previous comments remain relevant - See Page 2 of Enclosure 1
Draft Policy AE1 ‘Alderley Edge Development Strategy’	DWH’s previous comments remain relevant - See Pages 2/3 of Enclosure 1
Draft Policy AE2 ‘Location, Design, Scale and Type of New Housing’	DWH’s previous comments remain relevant – See Page 4 of Enclosure 1
Draft Policy AE3 ‘Sustainable Housing Design’	DWH’s previous comments remain relevant – See Page 5 of Enclosure 1
Draft Policy AE9 ‘Landscape Character and Access’	DWH’s previous comments remain relevant – See Page 5 of Enclosure 1
Draft Policy AE13 ‘Key Views and Townscape’	DWH’s previous comments remain relevant – See Page 5 of Enclosure 1
Draft Policy AE16 ‘Supporting the Provision of Additional Parking at the Park on Ryleys Lane to Improve Car Parking Facilities in Alderley Edge’	See sub-section ‘Car Parking’ below
Draft Policy AE17 ‘Car Parking’	See sub-section ‘Car Parking’ below

Car Parking

As set out within each draft of the AENDP to date, the acknowledged shortage of car parking spaces in and around the village centre (specifically in close proximity to the rail station) continues to be one of the most important, if not the most important, issue for local residents and local businesses.

Despite the issue of car parking being highlighted within the AENDP, DWH notes that due to the responses received to the previous First Draft consultation (from residents, allotment holders, as well as groups and individuals from outside of Alderley Edge), the Steering Group has deleted Draft Policy AE21 which previously sought to allocate additional car parking for the medical centre and Festival Hall at the Heyes Lane Allotments. It is noted that the Regulation 14 Draft of the AENDP does not seek to make any further provision for increased parking provision within the village.

The Regulation 14 Draft of the AENDP does not therefore seek to respond to the wider concerns of the community in this respect. DWH considers that this is a significant missed opportunity which fails to respond to the purpose of neighbourhood planning, which seeks to *‘give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area’*¹. The current draft of the AENDP has removed a policy which sought to alleviate the longstanding issue of car parking within Alderley Edge and cannot therefore be considered to meet the acknowledged community’s needs.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance: Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20190509

DWH do not support the methodology adopted by the Steering Group whereby at Paragraph 10.22 of the current consultation document it states:

“...Taking into consideration the need for the NDP to secure a Yes vote in a local referendum in order to be used to help determine planning applications, the Steering Group recommend the deletion of former Policy AE21 since there was no clear majority in favour of any one option.”

This approach is contrary to Planning Practice Guidance which states:

“There should be a positive and constructive dialogue about the planning ambitions of the community and any wider planning considerations that might influence the neighbourhood planning process if the outcome of that process is to be a neighbourhood plan or Order that meets the basic conditions for neighbourhood planning.”²

As currently drafted, the AENDP does not positively respond to wider concerns of the community and the Steering Group should therefore review alternative options for car parking. DWH is able to contribute towards the village’s aspiration for an overarching strategy to alleviate the issue of car parking within Alderley Edge, through the allocation of land at Whitehall Meadow.

The provision of a 50-space public car park at the southern end of the Site would help meet the village’s current and future all-day parking requirements, and provide a long term economic benefit to the community, as has previously been supported by the Parish Council³.

The social and economic benefits of additional parking within Alderley Edge are also of particular importance to Cheshire East Council, whereby it is acknowledged:

“...that the availability of car parking in the village can be an issue with competing needs of residents, workers and shoppers. Alderley Edge Parish Council has carried out a car parking review and is seeking to provide additional capacity and to manage existing provision through a car parking strategy.”⁴

DWH therefore encourages the AENDP Steering Group to acknowledge the significance of the car parking issue within the village and seek to identify additional suitable land for such provision.

Whitehall Meadow is a suitable and available site for the provision of a 50-space publically accessible car park, to be gifted to and managed by the Parish Council. The adoption of such a policy would address existing issues within the village which are identified by the local community as something that needs to change for the future. Ultimately, the proposed parking spaces at Whitehall Meadow will complement the operation of car parking in both the village centre and at the Railway Station, alleviating constraints upon local businesses and the village centre, in accordance with Draft Policy AE17 ‘Car Parking’.

Summary

This letter has been prepared on behalf of DWH and has predominantly reiterated the main matters raised within the representations submitted in September 2018 in relation to the AENDP First Draft. DWH continue to recommend that the Steering Group act on the following key recommendations to improve the emerging AENDP and to benefit the wider community:

² Planning Practice Guidance: Paragraph 025 Reference ID: 41-025-20190509

³ <http://www.alderleyedge.com/news/article/15527/four-new-housing-developments-could-change-the-identity-of-alderley-edge-forever>

⁴ Cheshire East Council: Alderley Edge Settlement Report (June 2019)

- The AENDP Steering Group (including the local community) must take back control of the proposed housing allocations for the local area, as Government guidance in the PPG allows for, and which was the original intention; and
- The AENDP Steering Group should accept the opportunity to deliver much needed additional car parking provision, for which there is an identified need, by allocating the site at Whitehall Meadow.

We trust you find these representations useful and DWH welcomes the opportunity to liaise further with the Steering Group to further discuss the contents of this letter and the forward strategy for the land at Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact either Nick Graham (nick.graham@turley.co.uk) or myself should you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely



Alice Fitton
Senior Planner

alice.fitton@turley.co.uk

Enclosure 1: DWH Representations to the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan First Draft (September 2019)

12 September 2019

Delivered by email

Parish Clerk
Festival Hall
Talbot Road
Alderley Edge
SK9 7HR
alderleynp@gmail.com

Dear Sir/ Madam

ALDERLEY EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN - FIRST DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Introduction

We are pleased to provide comments on behalf of David Wilson Homes North West (hereafter referred to as 'DWH') in relation to the First Draft Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Development Plan ('AENDP') which has been published for a period of public consultation until 12 September 2019.

This follows previous representations which were made to the AENDP Emerging Policies Document in October 2018.

DWH is part of Barratt Developments PLC, the UK's largest housebuilder, and has a track record of working with local communities to deliver high quality developments which benefit those living and working in the area in which they are provided. In 2017 DWH delivered 572 new homes in the North West, meeting local and general housing needs, providing around 1,600 direct and indirect jobs and almost £100m increase in Gross Value Added (GVA) throughout the region.

An infographic summarising the north-west socio-economic footprint of DWH is enclosed at **Enclosure 1**.

DWH is currently building houses at a number of sites in the borough including Bollin Park and Stanneylands in Wilmslow. Both of those sites comprise a range of attractive and spacious new family homes, including affordable dwellings, but also provide additional facilities which address a range of outstanding issues in the local community. At Stanneylands, the development includes the construction of a new bridge over the Rive Dean for use by cyclists and pedestrians, as well as a large area of public open space, well in excess of policy requirements. The development at Bollin Park has contributed over £500,000 to improve the local park and play facilities at Browns Lane. The masterplan for improvements to the park was unveiled last year and includes the introduction of a multi-use games area, play equipment for all ages, a shared cycle and foot path, enhanced pond and drainage system, timber seating, new fencing and landscape planting.

1 New York Street
Manchester
M1 4HD

T 0161 233 7676 turley.co.uk

In Alderley Edge, the BDW proposals include the construction of a car park to be gifted to the Parish Council and which is aimed at addressing a major local shortfall. Further detail is provided within these representations.

DWH is the promoter of 'Whitehall Meadow', a high quality residential development opportunity at Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge ('the Site'). A Vision document is provided at **Enclosure 2** which identifies how sustainable development can be achieved on the site, making an important contribution towards meeting the specific housing needs for Alderley Edge and the Borough's overall housing requirement.

DWH welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft policies within the emerging AENDP, as follows.

Vision and Objectives

DWH broadly support the AENP vision:

"To promote the evolution and growth of Alderley Edge, whilst preserving our unique village culture, identity and character and protecting the quality of life and well-being of the residents, employers, employees, and other stakeholders."

It is positive that there are several objectives which seek to address the specific elements of the overarching vision; two of which are particularly supported by DWH which seek to support new housing development that will meet local needs and support a balanced community (Housing Objective), as well as aspiring to address local parking constraints (Access and Infrastructure Objective).

DWH is able to contribute towards Alderley Edge achieving its overall vision, through the promotion of land at Whitehall Meadow which will be able to provide new homes immediately, and delivery of an area of public parking at the southern end of the site, accessed from Wilmslow Road.

Section 5: Overarching Approach to Development

Draft Policy AE1: Alderley Edge Development Strategy

In order to meet the specific development needs and to support sustainable growth of Alderley Edge, additional land is required around the settlement and as such Green Belt release is needed, as has been identified within the emerging Cheshire East Council ('CEC') Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document ('SADPD') (2019).

The emerging neighbourhood plan presents an opportunity to the local community to shape the development and growth of their local area. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) seeks to establish the benefits of the neighbourhood planning and states¹:

"Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 10, 15, 20 years in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people. They can put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision or grant planning permission for the development they want to see."

The PPG also seeks to define the role of neighbourhood planning and states²:

*"Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. **They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings***

¹ PPG, Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 41-003-20190509

² PPG, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20190509

they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area." (emphasis added)

However, Paragraph 5.13 of the AENDP establishes that the neighbourhood plan will not identify new housing sites and that the SADPD process will determine the strategic sites, and any changes to the Green Belt boundary.

DWH are of the view that this represents a missed opportunity for the AENDP Steering Group to take control of development within the parish and shape development in the way envisaged by the PPG.

The current development strategy is also appears flawed given that the CEC SADPD has not yet been adopted and as such is susceptible to change. Consequently, the First Draft AENDP refers to a version of the SADPD that has been superseded and there are discrepancies between the considerations of land.

Later sections of this letter will consider the inconsistencies between the AENDP and the Publication Draft SADPD (2019) (specifically in relation to housing and key views) and the following sub-section will set out DWH's recommendation to the AENDP Steering Group for an alternative development strategy.

In accordance with national guidance, the allocation of land within the AENDP should reflect the community's preferred locations for growth within the local area, one of which is Whitehall Meadow, as identified following the Questionnaire in 2017³.

Alternative Development Strategy

As set out within DWH's response to the First Draft SADPD (October 2018) (**Enclosure 3**) DWH disagree with the proposed spatial distribution of housing across the Local Service Centres (LSCs) within the borough, as proposed by CEC within the SADPD.

Despite assessing various options for the spatial distribution of housing, CEC concluded⁴ that preferred Option 7, which is for a Hybrid approach that combines a blend of the other options, is to be selected. For Alderley Edge this results in a requirement to accommodate 250 dwellings.

DWH has previously set out that Option 7 would result in a highly unbalanced distribution between the northern and southern settlements of the Borough. This is clearly articulated within the Council's own evidence base which states that the option encourages the majority of development to be accommodated within the south of the Borough (63.4%), with just 36.6% of the overall dwelling requirement being apportioned to the north of the Borough (including Alderley Edge)⁵.

The development strategy of the AENDP should therefore seek to re-balance the significant imbalance that already exists within the LSCs and aspire to achieve sustainable patterns of growth, supporting the vitality and vibrancy of the northern communities. This would be best achieved through the allocation of additional land within the AENDP, recognising the sustainability of the settlement, as summarised within **Enclosure 4**.

Draft Policy AE1 should therefore be amended so that it allocates the most sustainable and suitable sites for development, including Whitehall Meadow. This approach would reflect one of the community's preferred locations for growth within the local area, and provide a balanced mix of new homes to respond to local needs, including the provision of affordable homes.

³ <http://www.alderleyedge.com/news/article/15541/residents-confirm-their-preferred-sites-for-new-housing-developments-in-alderley-edge> (Whitehall Meadow - Ref. 'Land opposite Horseshoe Farm (118)')

⁴ The LSCs comprise Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington, Wrenbury

⁵ Cheshire East Council: Local Service Centre Spatial Distribution Disaggregation Report (June 2019)

Section 6: Housing

As set out above, DWH do not support the proposed development strategy within the AENDP given that it currently relates to a superseded version of the CEC SADPD. As such, paragraph 6.13 and Map 3 'Proposed Housing Sites, SADPD August 2018' of the AENDP do not reflect the current site allocations within Alderley Edge. In particular, the AENDP does not consider the Land north of Beech Road which is the subject of a draft allocation for around 35 new homes within the Publication Draft of the SADPD.

DWH will provide a separate response to the Publication Draft SADPD, which has been published for consultation until 30 September 2019. However, the Steering Group for the AENDP should be aware that the assumptions used by CEC in applying the site selection methodology for allocating sites within the SADPD is currently unsound and as such this should not form the development strategy for the AENDP.

For instance, DWH is able to demonstrate that the Alderley Edge Settlement Report⁶ details how the Green Belt contribution that certain sites make to the Green Belt have been re-assessed and re-evaluated in an inconsistent manner. This has directly impacted on the sifting of sites in stage 1 of the site selection methodology and the removal of sites from further assessment. This has resulted in potential development sites such as the land at Whitehall Meadow not being fully assessed for allocation within the SADPD.

Based on a review of the evidence base for the SADPD, it is clear that the AENDP should undertake its own assessment of sites for allocations, acknowledging the preferred sites that were identified by the local community, including the land at Whitehall Meadow.

Draft Policy AE2: Location, Design, Scale and Type of New Housing

DWH is generally supportive of providing a range and choice of homes to meet the needs of the local area given there is a recognised need for smaller houses, bungalows, and opportunities for existing residents to downsize.

Specifically, the availability of affordable housing is extremely limited within Alderley Edge which presents a severe barrier to the aim of retaining and attracting young people and families to the settlement to support the local economy, facilities and services.

DWH also recognise that the population in Alderley Edge is ageing and without suitable new housing stock to retain and attract young new families, the average age of the population will consequently continue to rise and the proportion of working age people will decline further.

The Draft Policy could be improved to ensure it provides a more flexible approach, specifically, Point 4 of the Draft Policy should acknowledge that local needs will vary across each site within Alderley Edge and as such prescriptive requirements should not be provided which may stall the delivery of development. It is therefore suggested that Point 4 of Draft Policy AE2 is reworded as follows:

"4. Type

*A. Development must contribute towards a mix of house types, sizes and tenures and meets local housing needs as identified in the most up to date local housing needs assessment. Schemes should ~~make provision~~ **for consider** the recommended split of dwellings by bedroom number as follows..."*

In accordance with the general principles of Draft Policy AE2, the proposed development at Whitehall Meadow will seek to accommodate a broad housing mix, to meet the local needs, providing affordable homes and in particular an increased proportion of bungalows and smaller properties which will provide opportunities for existing residents to downsize.

⁶ Cheshire East Council: Alderley Edge Settlement Report (June 2019)

Draft Policy AE3: Sustainable Housing Design

DWH generally support the principle of Draft Policy AE3 which will ensure that new housing developments will demonstrate best practice in terms of sustainable design. However, DWH is concerned that Point 9 within Draft Policy AE3 does not accord with any guidance established within the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). It is therefore suggested that Point 9 is removed from Draft Policy AE3 which currently requires major housing developments on land that was formerly Green Belt to achieve a reduction in energy use compared to standard new build construction.

The requirement for developments on land that was formerly Green Belt to incorporate additional eco-design measures is unjustified, contrary to national policies and as such the current draft of the AENDP would not meet the basic conditions which are required to be satisfied in order for the neighbourhood plan to proceed to referendum.

Section 8: Character and Landscape

Draft Policy AE9: Landscape Character and Access

DWH acknowledge the importance of protecting landscape character and access within Alderley Edge. As such, supporting evidence has been collated to demonstrate that the landscape and visual effects of residential development at Whitehall Meadow would be limited and acceptable.

Specifically, the enclosed Vision Document identifies how the site is contiguous with the existing urban area and is enclosed by mature landscaping and existing roads. The development of Whitehall Meadow would 'round off' the settlement and not result in any coalescence between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow to the north. As such, the scale of the development represents a logical and controlled expansion of the existing settlement that will not harm its character or urban form. Specifically, through the adoption of suitable landscaping, new development can create a 'softer edge' to the north of Alderley Edge, providing an appropriate transition from the wider rural area to the built form of the settlement.

Draft Policy AE13: Key Views and Townscape

There are a number of key views within and surrounding Alderley Edge, all of which DWH acknowledge will need to be considered when identifying future development opportunities.

As identified in Section 8.38 and Map 9 'Key Views', the AENDP considers there to be 13 Key Views within the neighbourhood plan boundary area, one of which (Key View 1) relates to the land allocated by CEC for development within the Publication Draft of the SADPD (2019) (Site Ref. CFS130b 'Land north of Beech Road').

Draft Policy AE13 considers that the identified Key Views make an important contribution towards local visual amenity and Alderley Edge's townscape, setting and character. As such, DWH recommend that the AENDP seeks to allocate its own development sites, and not to rely on allocations within the Cheshire East SADPD, given that it seeks to allocate land within an area that the local community recognise as 'an open view onto the rural landscape'.

Notwithstanding, Whitehall Meadow is considered to be 'the village 'edge' seen when approaching Alderley Edge' (Key View 7). However the Vision Document successfully demonstrates how this characteristic of the site can be retained to the north of the proposed development, following the provision of additional planting to create a soft edge to the north of the settlement.

Section 9: Access and Infrastructure

Draft Policy AE16: Supporting the Provision of Additional Parking at the Park on Ryleys Lane to Improve Car Parking Facilities in Alderley Edge | Draft Policy AE17: Car Parking

Paragraph 9.27 of the AENDP states that public consultation responses have shown that a shortage of public car parking spaces in and around the village centre, and specifically at the station, are one of the most important, if not the most important, issue for local residents and local businesses.

DWH is able to contribute towards the village's aspiration for an overarching strategy to alleviate the issue of parking within Alderley Edge, through the allocation of land at Whitehall Meadow.

The provision of a 50-space public car park at the southern end of the Site would help meet the village's current and future all day parking requirements, and provide a long term economic benefit to the community, as has previously been supported by the Parish Council⁷.

The social and economic benefits of additional parking within Alderley Edge are also of particular importance to CEC, whereby it is acknowledged:

"...that the availability of car parking in the village can be an issue with competing needs of residents, workers and shoppers. Alderley Edge Parish Council has carried out a car parking review and is seeking to provide additional capacity and to manage existing provision through a car parking strategy."⁸

Despite the AENDP seeking to allocate land for additional parking at the Park on Ryleys Lane and part of the Heyes Lane allotment site, DWH encourage the AENDP Steering Group to acknowledge the significance of the car parking issue within the village and seek to identify additional suitable land.

A suitable site has been identified at Whitehall Meadow, for the provision of a 50-space publically accessible car park, to be managed by the Parish Council. The adoption of such a Policy would address existing issues within the village, in accordance with what the local community has identified as something that needs to change for the future. Ultimately, the proposed parking spaces at Whitehall Meadow will complement the operation of car parking in both the town centre and the Railway Station, alleviating any impact upon local businesses and the village centre, as in accordance with Draft Policy AE17.

Summary

This letter has been prepared on behalf of David Wilson Homes North West and has set out DWH's general support and concerns in relation to the Draft Policies of the emerging Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Development Plan. Several recommendations have been identified for where the document could be amended to ensure that the AENDP is in in accordance with national planning policy and responds to the local issues for Alderley Edge appropriately. Acting on the following key recommendations would present major benefits for the AENDP, and the village as a whole:

- The AENDP Steering Group (including the local community) must take back control of the proposed housing allocations for the local area, as Government guidance in the PPG allows for, and which was the original intention; and
- The AENDP Steering Group should accept the opportunity to deliver much needed additional car parking provision, for which there is an identified need, by allocating the site at Whitehall Meadow.

⁷ <http://www.alderleyedge.com/news/article/15527/four-new-housing-developments-could-change-the-identity-of-alderley-edge-forever>

⁸ Cheshire East Council: Alderley Edge Settlement Report (June 2019)

We trust you find these representations useful and DWH welcome the opportunity to liaise further with the neighbourhood plan Steering Group to further discuss the contents of this letter and the forward strategy for the land at Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact either Nick Graham (nick.graham@turley.co.uk) or myself should you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely



Alice Fitton
Senior Planner

alice.fitton@turley.co.uk

Enclosure 1: DWH NW Socio-Economic Footprint



The infographic below provides an illustration of our socio-economic footprint for the financial year 2017.

Investing in new homes

572

new homes (including JV) of which 15 are affordable



47%

of Barratt's homes are built on previously developed land



Employment and skills development

1,600 jobs

Direct, indirect and induced employment through Barratt, it's sub-contractors and suppliers



£97.9m

of Gross Value Added (GVA), Barratt's contribution to UK economic output



7

new graduates, undergraduates, trainees and apprentices employed directly by Barratt



Supply chain networks

90%

of components manufactured in the UK



310

sub-contractor companies supported



290

supplier companies supported



Supporting public services

£4.8m

New Homes Bonus payments by Government over 6 years based on new homes built



£20m

tax generated Corporation Tax, NI, PAYE, SDLT and local Council Tax generated (p.a.) by our activities



Building stronger communities

£2m

local contributions including affordable housing sales and s106/equivalent contributions



£7.2m

expenditure on physical works benefiting local communities (including highway and environmental improvements and community facilities)



19

school places provided



£9.2m

additional spending in shops and services by residents of new homes (p.a.) supporting 100 retail and service-related jobs (p.a.)



Safeguarding the environment



28,900

trees or shrubs planted or retained on developments



13.4ha

of greenspace created through public open space and private gardens



40%

of sites using above ground landscape-led Sustainable urban Drainage System solutions



2.51

tonnes of CO₂e emissions per 1,000 sq. ft.



5.04

tonnes of waste per 1,000 sq. ft.



97%

of construction waste recycled

Enclosure 2: Vision Document

Vision Document

July 2018

Whitehall Meadow

Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge

prepared on behalf of David Wilson Homes



DAVID WILSON HOMES

WHERE QUALITY LIVES

Turley

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Contact:

Sam Ryan
Director
sam.ryan@turley.co.uk

Office Address:

1 New York Street
Manchester M1 4HD

Telephone:

0161 233 7676

Date of issue:

July 2018

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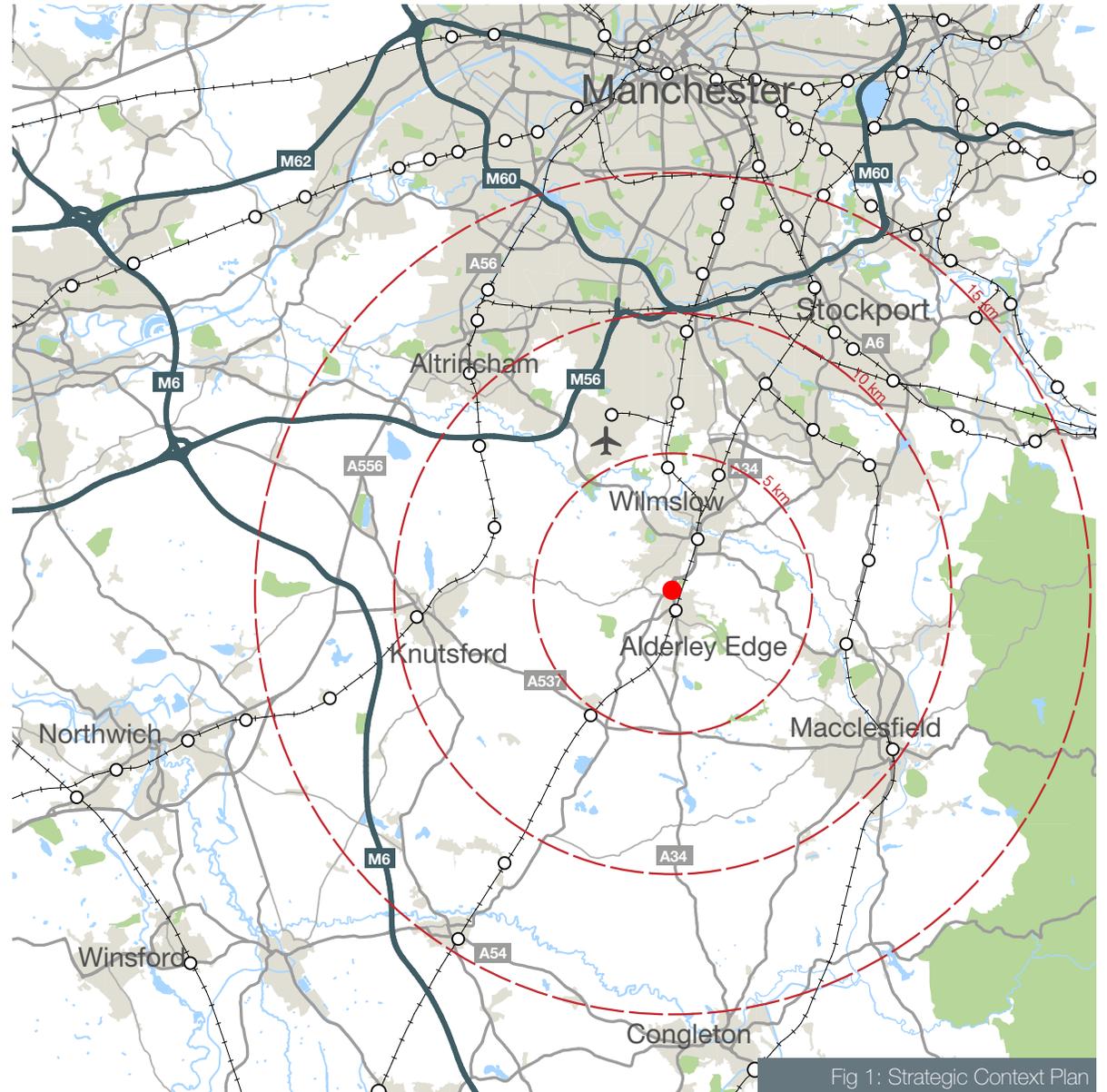


Introduction

This Vision document presents the merits of a new residential development on land at Wilmslow Road (“the site”) to meet local housing needs and contribute positively toward the borough’s overall housing requirement in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan.

1.1 Alderley Edge is a large village (population 5,400) located in the north of the borough. It is identified as a Local Service Centre (“LSC”) in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan in recognition of its size, range of facilities and highly sustainable location in proximity to the nearby employment opportunities (in Alderley Park, Macclesfield, Wilmslow, and the Greater Manchester conurbation). The settlement has excellent access to major road, rail and airport infrastructure. The Parish Council has identified that approximately 100 new homes is an appropriate amount for Alderley Edge and is planning for that level of development in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The site (to be known as ‘Whitehall Meadow’ in recognition of the Whitehall Brook that adjoins the site) can help to meet the need for new homes in Alderley Edge being identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. It lies at the northern edge of Alderley Edge, immediately abutting existing residential properties to the south. Two of its boundaries are clearly defined by existing roads; the A34 (to the west) and Wilmslow Road (to the east). The northern boundary is partly defined by existing trees. It is sustainably located, within a short walking distance of the key services and facilities within the local centre, and the railway station.



1.3 The first part of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan, known as the Local Plan Strategy (“LPS”), was subject to examination by a Government Inspector in autumn 2016; in July 2017 the LPS was adopted. The LPS confirms the strategic growth requirements and the distribution of development across the borough. This will inform the second part of the Local Plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies (“SADP”) plan, which will identify non-strategic site allocations in smaller settlements, such as Alderley Edge. The issues paper of the SADP was published for public consultation until April 2017. This SADP will allocate sites to make sure that the overall development requirements set out in the LPS are met; it will look to allocate developments of up to 150 dwellings in size.

1.4 The Whitehall Meadow site is under option to David Wilson Homes (“DWH”), part of Barratt Developments PLC, the UK’s largest house builder. In 2016 DWH delivered 551 new homes in the North West, meeting local and general housing needs and providing new jobs and investment throughout the region. DWH is currently building Bollin Park in Wilmslow, comprising a range of attractive and spacious new family homes.

1.5 DWH has carried out an initial appraisal of the site and have confirmed that it represents an available, achievable, and suitable opportunity to deliver up to 90 new homes. Alderley Edge Parish Council undertook a Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire in March 2017 which was delivered to 2,500 residents. Residents responded to this questionnaire stating that they would like to see more car parking around the village centre.

Scope

1.6 This document confirms:

- **The Need** – a summary of the strategic drivers for new housing in Alderley Edge
- **The Opportunity** - an appreciation of the strategic constraints and opportunities for growth around Alderley Edge and why an expansion of the settlement to the north represents the best location for growth.
- **Site Suitability** – confirmation that the site is suitable for a housing allocation.
- **The Vision** – the place-making opportunity presented by the site, taking account of its individual constraints and opportunities.
- **Conclusion** - a summary of the benefits that can be realised through the proposed development.



Fig 2: Aerial Photograph of Site

The Need

National planning policy seeks to redress recognised housing shortages across the country by significantly boosting the supply of housing.

Cheshire East

2.1 The emerging LPS confirms that sufficient land will be provided in the borough to accommodate 36,000 new homes over the 20-year plan period (2010 and 2030)¹. This represents a significant step-change from the housing restraint policies that prevailed in the borough's previous development plans.

2.2 The LPS settlement hierarchy recognises that Local Service Centres (such as Alderley Edge) may be able to accommodate small scale growth in housing and employment where it supports the creation of stronger local communities.²

2.3 The LPS indicates that at least 3,500 new homes will be accommodated across all of the LSCs over the plan period, but stops short of apportioning an individual housing requirement to each settlement.³ This approach will inevitably result in development flowing to those LSCs with the least constraints; in particular those settlements beyond the Green Belt in the south of the borough. The evidence shows that this pattern is already occurring as around 70% of existing completions and commitments in the LSCs are in non-Green Belt settlements.

2.4 The Council claim that the existing completions and commitments in the LSCs already amount to 2,550 new homes. They have therefore indicated that the SADP will need to allocate land to accommodate around 1,125 new homes in those settlements.⁴

2.5 If this residual LSC requirement is allowed to be directed to the south of the borough, it will undermine the achievement of sustainable development across the plan and all of the northern LSCs. The Inspector has recognised **“that channelling too much development to areas beyond the North Cheshire Green Belt to the south of the borough would result in unsustainable patterns of development and commuting, and would not address the development needs of the northern settlements”**.⁵

Accordingly, it is necessary to take positive policy intervention in the emerging SADP to ensure an appropriate distribution of housing to each northern LSC having regard to the scale of the settlement, local housing needs, the range of facilities it contains and sustainability of its location.

2.6 National planning policy makes clear that when releasing land from the Green Belt, additional land should be released and safeguarded to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period. This will prevent Green Belt boundaries from being repeatedly amended every time a new development plan is prepared. The SADP will need to identify locations for safeguarded land around the key LSCs.

Alderley Edge

2.7 Alderley Edge is the third largest LSC in the borough and is in a highly sustainable location to accommodate further growth. It contains a good range of shops, facilities and social infrastructure, and benefits from a railway station with good accessibility and frequent services to Manchester and Macclesfield. This is confirmed by the Council's evidence⁶ which indicates that whilst Alderley Edge is identified as a LSC, its community, retail and transport facilities put it on a par with Key Service Centres; it is only a LSC because of its relatively small population which is due to Green Belt constraints to growth.

¹ Policy PG1, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

² Paragraph 8.34 & Policy PG2, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

³ Draft Policy PG6, Proposed Changes to the Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, March 2016

⁴ Table A.4, Proposed Changes to the Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, March 2016

⁵ Paragraph 43, Further Interim View, EIP Inspector, December 2015

⁶ Spatial Distribution Update Report, Appendix 20, Page 200 (AECOM, August 2015)

⁷ Paragraph 6.2.1, Green Belt Assessment Update, Arup, July 2015

2.8 The settlement is in an attractive and desirable area, with a high demand for new housing. The Council's evidence confirms that demand currently exceeds supply for all sizes of property in Alderley Edge⁷. This is compounded by very limited increases to the housing stock caused by the tightly drawn Green Belt and past policies of housing restraint.

2.9 The Council's evidence clearly points towards the opportunity and demand for new housing in Alderley Edge. If an appropriate scale of development is not delivered in the settlement it is likely to have severe consequences on its future sustainability, in particular:

- The population in the Alderley Edge is aging (24% of the village is aged 65+, this is well above the borough average⁸). Without suitable new housing stock to retain and attract young families the average age of the population will continue to rise and proportion of working age people will decline further. This will have adverse impacts on the local economy, the vitality of the local centre, and increase the burden on health-related services.
- The availability of affordable housing in Alderley Edge is extremely limited. The Council's evidence shows a significant pent up demand for more affordable accommodation in the settlement. Only 6.2% of households in Alderley Edge constitute affordable housing, significantly below the Cheshire East average (11.8%). As a consequence Alderley Edge has a significantly higher number of applications on the housing register than any other LSC.⁹
- The average house price in Alderley Edge is £334,000, which is well above the borough average of £181,000 and the LSC average of £284,900. A lack of suitable and affordable housing is a severe barrier to the aim of retaining and attracting young people and families to the settlement to support the local economy, facilities and services.

- A lack of new housing in the settlement is likely to drive house prices even higher due to the constrained supply. People in lower paid jobs may need to live elsewhere and commute into the area for work due to the lack of affordable and suitable housing. Lack of new housing has led to the redeveloping of existing residential plots which is considered locally to have had an unacceptable impact on character and appearance.
- Alderley Edge benefits from a relative abundance of local jobs (particularly at Alderley Park which lies to the south of the settlement), which has led to a significant level of net in-commuting. The remodelled Alderley Park is expected to provide approximate 2,650 jobs by the end of 2019¹⁰. 59% of in commuters travel from settlements within Cheshire East – including 18% from Macclesfield – with smaller proportions travelling from Manchester, Stockport, and Cheshire West and Chester. The delivery of new housing in the town will help to reduce the level of in-commuting and assist in decreasing congestion and pollution.

2.10 In summary, the Council's evidence indicates that there is an acute requirement for new housing in Alderley Edge. This is required to contribute generally to the borough's overall housing requirement, and more particularly the urgent and compelling need to address the issue of housing availability and affordability in Alderley Edge. It would be appropriate for the emerging plan to actively recognise the need for housing growth in Alderley Edge and that this will require Green Belt release on the edge of the settlement, including for safeguarded land. Suitable sites or locations for housing should be identified which are of an appropriate scale to address the needs of the settlement having regard to its status as an LSC. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Alderley Edge recognises the need for new housing in the town and has recently consulted the local community about the preferred locations for development to provide approximately 100 new homes.



Right: Existing apartments to the south of the Whitehall Meadow site

⁸ Appendix 20, Spatial Distribution Update Report, AECOM, July 2015

⁹ Appendix 20, Spatial Distribution Update Report, AECOM, July 2015

¹⁰ Appraisal of proposed Alderley Park Investment Fund, Five Lines, August 2014

The Opportunity

Alderley Edge is tightly bound by Green Belt and the Council's evidence confirms that the opportunity for new development on brownfield land is severely limited.

3.1 The Council's Brownfield Register, published in December 2017, indicates that there is only sufficient previously developed land available within the settlement boundary to accommodate 14 new homes.¹¹

3.2 The distinct absence of brownfield land combined with the compelling need for new housing in Alderley Edge (see Section 2), indicates that exceptional circumstances exist to review the Green Belt boundary around the settlement to accommodate new housing. This point is recognised in the emerging LPS which explicitly states that small alterations¹² to the Green Belt to accommodate non-strategic sites (ie. less than 150 dwellings)¹³, will be made in the emerging SADP. Sites which can be released and designated as safeguarded land will also need to be identified.

3.3 The Council's evidence indicates that there are three broad potential locations for new housing around Alderley Edge (see **Figure 3**). These opportunities primarily lie to the north and west of the settlement due to the prevailing topographic, flood risk and nature conversation constraints to the south and east.

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire published by the Parish Council in March 2017 asked local residents to consider the potential sites for new housing in Alderley Edge. The community selected Whitehall Meadow is one of its preferred sites for development.

Green Belt

3.5 All of the potential development locations around Alderley Edge will result in expansion of the settlement and encroachment into Green Belt. The Council's Green Belt Assessment classifies the locations as making either a significant or major contribution to the purposes of Green Belt with those to the north judged to make a greater contribution in light of the relative proximity of Wilmslow to Alderley Edge. However, the Green Belt assessment is relatively simplistic and relates to broad areas of land rather than specific potential development parcels.

3.6 A more detailed Green Belt appraisal of all of the specific development options around Alderley Edge has been prepared by Sweco. It identifies that a minor incursion into Green Belt north of Alderley Edge will have no discernible impact in terms of narrowing the gap between the settlement and Wilmslow. Indeed, development of the land under option to DWH would not result in the built up area of Alderley Edge getting physically closer to Wilmslow than any existing development. The land has strongly defined boundaries, such that its development would not result in unrestricted encroachment into the open countryside and will maintain the separate and distinct identities of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow.

3.7 There are other potential options for development around Alderley Edge. However, these would be likely to result in a much greater encroachment into the open countryside and a sense of urban sprawl away from the core of the settlement. Land to the west of Alderley Edge also has a stronger relationship with the town's historic core.

3.8 Loss of Green Belt and impact on its five main purposes is just one factor to be taken into consideration when identifying locations and making allocations for development. Other important considerations to be weighed in the balance include technical and environmental constraints, sustainability of sites and appropriateness of scale. There are all important factors to be considered in the round when determining the appropriate direction and scale of growth for Alderley Edge.

¹¹ Assessment of the Urban Potential of the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres and Possible Development Sites Adjacent to Those Settlements, Cheshire East Council, August 2015 [Examination Document PS E039, PS E039b]

¹² Paragraph 8.30, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

¹³ Policy PG3, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

- KEY
- Site
 - Green Belt / settlement boundary
 - Other potential development areas
 - Grade I listed building
 - Railway / station
 - Alderley Edge centre
 - Higher ground / landscape of special county value
 - SSSI
 - Flood zone 2/3

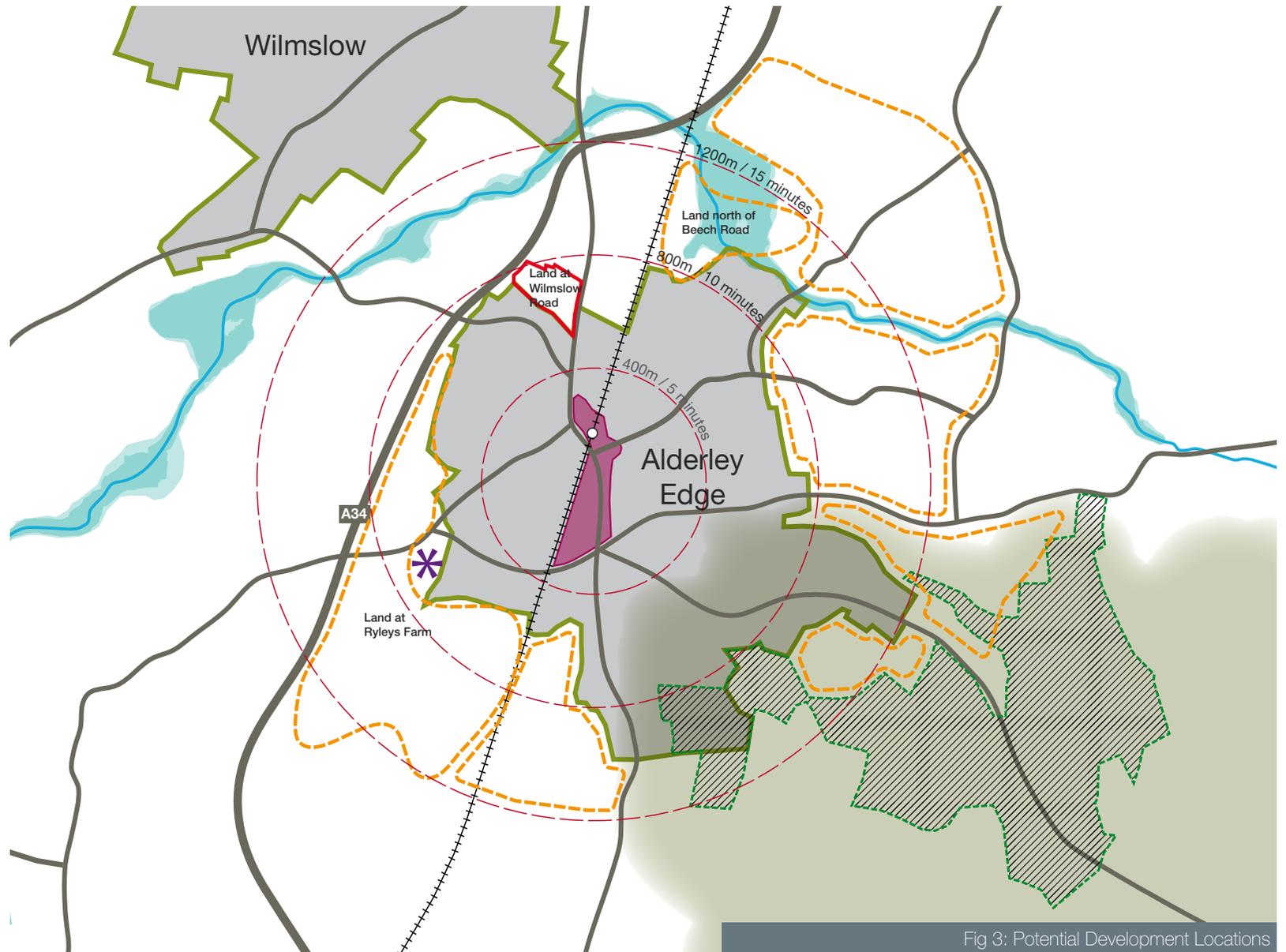


Fig 3: Potential Development Locations

Landscape Appraisal

3.9 SWECO has undertaken a landscape appraisal of the Site and five other areas of land at Alderley Edge. It considers each in respect of their contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge and concludes that:

- The site does not make a significant or critical contribution to the Green Belt purposes;
- The adverse landscape and visual effects of residential development at the Site would be limited and acceptable; and
- The Site does not make a critical or significant contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

3.10 The Landscape Appraisal considers in particular the extent to which a 'green gap' exists between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow to the north, and the extent to which such a gap – if it does exist – would be compromised by the residential development of the Site. It concludes that:

- There is not a clear area of open countryside that forms a 'gap' between the two settlements in the vicinity of the Site. The area between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow has already been "...substantially compromised..." given the existing development in the area and along Alderley Road; and
- Even if it were consider that such a 'gap' did exist, due to its specific location and limited extent the Site would not make a critical contribution to it which would merit protection.

3.11 As such, the residential development of the Site is suitable in landscape terms and would not preclude the retention of an area of Green Belt to the north of the Site.

Sustainable Location

3.12 New development sites should be located in the most accessible locations, which are well related to public transport links and within convenient walking distance to jobs, shops and services. **Figure 3** indicates that the Wilmslow Road location is the most conveniently located housing opportunity around Alderley Edge. The site is sustainably located just 400m from the railway station and the edge of the local centre which can be accessed via existing pedestrian footpaths. The alternative potential locations for housing are located further away from these facilities and pedestrian walking routes to them are much more convoluted.

3.13 Public transport routes (buses) also run along Wilmslow Road providing direct access into the village centre and employment opportunities in nearby towns and the Greater Manchester conurbation.

3.14 The site could include an area of parking to the south to support the operation of the nearby town centre and rail station. This would alleviate existing parking issues in the town. DWH would develop a 50 space car park, which would be transferred to the Parish Council following its completion. It would then be managed by an independent car park operator. There are various potential management arrangements to consider, such as a joint venture between the operator and the Parish Council in which the income generated from the car park is shared between both parties.

Technical Constraints

3.15 Land around Alderley Edge is subject to a number of significant technical constraints posing limits to where new development can be delivered (see Figure 3):

- Land to the north-east of the settlement is at risk from flooding¹⁴. Both the Framework and NPPG advise that it is not appropriate to consider this land for housing development when there are sequentially preferable and suitable alternatives available that have a lower probability of flooding (such as the site at Wilmslow Road)

¹⁴ Environment Agency Flood Zones 2 and 3

- Land to the east / south-east of the settlement comprises steep wooded slopes which are undevelopable, and designated as a landscape of “special county value”.
- Land to the west of the town provides an attractive open green setting to Chorley Old Hall which is a Grade I listed building. Development in close proximity to the hall will need to take account of the impact on the setting of this nationally important heritage asset.

Scale of Development

3.16 It is important that any sites identified for expansion of Alderley Edge are of an appropriate scale for the settlement. The Parish Council has identified that approximately 100 new homes would be an acceptable amount for the settlement and is planning for that level of development in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

3.17 In that context it is worth noting that the DWH site at Whitehall Meadow can accommodate around 90 new homes which represents a balanced expansion to meet local needs within the capacity of existing infrastructure, and appropriate to the urban form of Alderley Edge. It may be possible to bring the development forward in phases, so that one part gets developed before another.

3.18 The alternative potential locations for housing sites around Alderley Edge are all much larger in scale. The March 2017 Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire identifies that some of them are over 10ha in size and are capable of accommodating several hundred new homes. The other sites are less well-related to the settlement than Whitehall Meadow in terms of scale and urban form.

Right: DWH development at Bollin Park, Wilmslow

Conclusion

3.19 Analysis of a range of factors demonstrates that a modest expansion of the settlement on land to the north of Alderley Edge, that does not result in any significant incursion into Green Belt or narrowing of the gap between it and Wilmslow, represents the most appropriate direction for growth of the settlement. It is the most sustainable location for development and compared to other locations, would have the least adverse impacts on the Green Belt and surrounding landscape.



Site Suitability

This section demonstrates that the site is a suitable location for a new residential allocation by having regard to the selection criteria used by the Council in the LPS.

Is the site Available?

4.1 The site is being actively promoted by DWH who have secured a legal interest over all of the land. There are no legal or ownership problems, such as multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies, or operational requirements of landowners that would prevent the site from being brought forward for housing at the earliest opportunity.

Is the site Achievable?

4.2 Alderley Edge is one of the most popular and desirable places in Cheshire East to live and it has an urgent need for new housing. The site is therefore viable and DWH are committed to deliver new market and affordable housing on the site at the earliest opportunity.

Is the site Suitable?

Impact on the Settlement and its Urban Form

4.3 The site is contiguous with existing urban area and is enclosed by mature landscaping and existing roads (permanent and defensible boundaries). Development on the site would round off the settlement and not result in any coalescence between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow to the north. As a result, the scale of the development represents a logical and controlled expansion of the existing settlement that will not harm its character or urban form.

4.4 Existing residential buildings currently form a strong building line along part of the southern site boundary, and therefore to the existing settlement edge. New development could create a softer edge to the settlement.

4.5 There is no townscape reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.



Landscape, Trees and Hedgerows

4.6 The site is not within or in close proximity to any local or national landscape designations.

4.7 It includes a number of good quality trees and hedgerows which screen the site from the wider landscape. Where possible these features can be retained by designing the development to cause minimal disruption. It could also be possible to enhance the landscape through supplementary planting in appropriate locations.

4.8 There is no landscape or arboricultural reasons to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.

Compatibility with Neighbouring Land Uses

4.9 The site is contiguous with an existing residential area and the provision of additional housing could be wholly compatible with the neighbouring land use.

Below: Panoramic view of the site from the existing site entrance showing the prominence of existing development on the edge of the settlement



Highways and Accessibility

4.10 The site benefits from approximately 200 metres of frontage on to Wilmslow Road where vehicular access into the site can be achieved via a standard priority controlled junction. Additionally a car park access can also be achieved off Wilmslow Road without having an impact upon the existing trees, which contribute to the streetscene. This has been corroborated by the transport appraisal undertaken by Crofts which has demonstrated that both accesses can be achieved off Wilmslow Road without the need to remove any trees. Wilmslow Road is also of sufficient width to accommodate two-way traffic and the modest level of development on the site could be accommodated without severe harm to the local transport network.

4.11 The site can connect with existing pedestrian footways to provide convenient access to the railway station and the local centre.

4.12 All of the site is within 400m of an existing bus stop.

4.13 There are no identified highway constraints that would prevent the site being developed for residential purposes. The site is also capable of accommodating a small car park which will be served by a separate access towards the south of the Wilmslow Road frontage.

4.14 The nearby town centre and rail station have parking constraints. On street parking associated with business uses in the local area can be a nuisance, and the lack of parking constrains footfall in the town centre and journeys by rail.

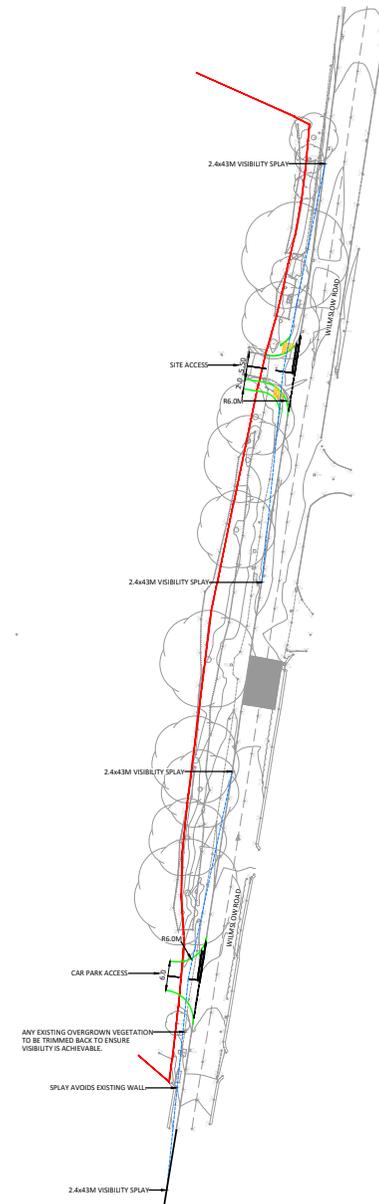


Fig 4: Proposed Access Plan

KEY

- Site
- Key roads
- Railway line / station
- Bus route / bus stop
- Pedestrian link from site to centre
- School
- Recreation space
- Alderley Edge centre
- Conservation area
- Council-owned land
- Grade I listed building

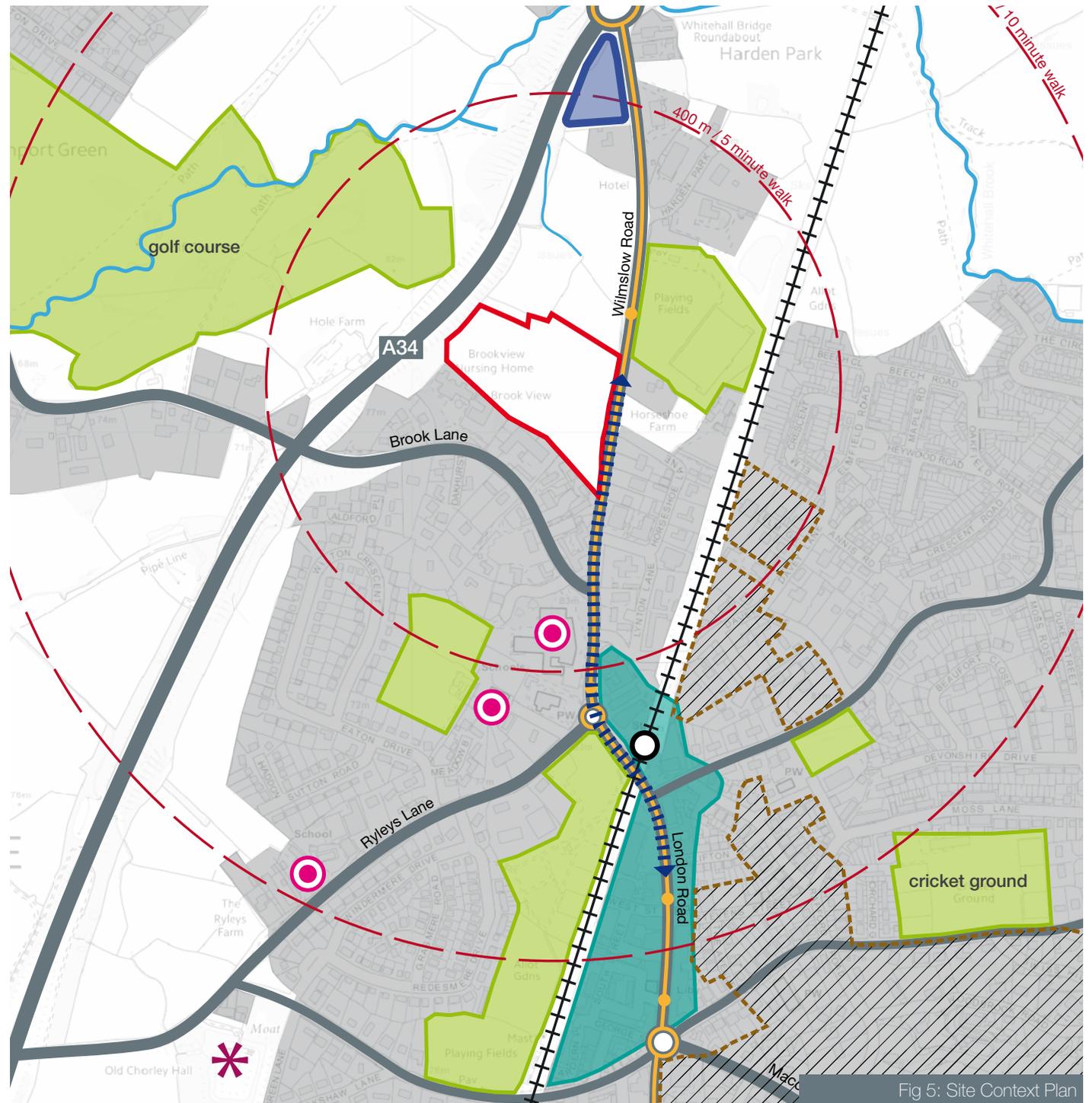


Fig 5: Site Context Plan

Noise

4.15 The only potential noise source is from traffic on the A34 and Wilmslow Road to the west and east of the site respectively. The A34 is in cutting where it abuts the site and this helps to provide some degree of noise attenuation. Any residual noise impact of road traffic can be effectively mitigated through the use of good practice in scheme layout design, orientation of dwellings and use of appropriate construction materials. If necessary, acoustic bunds, fencing or landscaping can be incorporated.

4.16 Overall, there are no insurmountable noise constraints to prevent the site being allocated for residential development

Air Quality

4.17 The site does not lie within an Air Quality Management Area and the modest scale of development will not give rise to adverse air quality impacts in its own right.

4.18 There is no air quality reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Heritage

4.19 The Whitehall Meadow site is not situated adjacent or near to any listed buildings, conservation areas or other heritage assets.

4.21 There is no heritage reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Ecology

4.21 The site does not form part of, or is adjacent to, any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. Surveys will be carried out to identify the potential for any protected habitats and species and biodiversity enhancement.

4.22 Subject to standard mitigation, there is no ecological reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Flooding and Drainage

4.23 The site rises gently from the south to the north. The Environment Agency Flood Maps confirm that the site is at low risk from flooding (Flood Zone 1). The layout and drainage strategy for development can be designed carefully to minimise flood risk and promote sustainable drainage.

4.24 There is no flood risk reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Utilities

4.25 The site is adjacent to a well-established residential area and has the potential to connect with existing services including electricity, gas, water, sewerage and telecoms services.

Social Infrastructure

4.26 Suitable provision can be made for the social infrastructure needs created by the proposal, such as local school places. If it is necessary, the proposed development can mitigate any effects of the development on existing social infrastructure through a binding legal agreement as part of a future planning application,

Summary

4.27 The site has been assessed against the Council's own site selection criteria. This analysis demonstrates that it is available for development and is situated in a viable market area. The site is also suitable for development, meaning there are no technical or environmental constraints that would prevent housing from being delivered on the site.

The Vision

05

Design Principles and Objectives

5.1 The influences in the previous chapter have informed the following design principles and objectives for the site, to:

- Bring forward high quality residential development in an attractive landscape, retaining existing trees and creating new areas of public open space
- Respect the amenity and views of existing adjacent residents to the south west
- Create a new, softer settlement edge to the north.

Creating a Development Framework

5.2 The following series of diagrams – or ‘mastersteps’ – demonstrate how the development potential of the site has been informed by the opportunities and constraints identified in this report.



1. Retention of Site Assets

- Retain key tree groups as a starting point for development, particularly along Wilmslow Road to retain the street's leafy character.

2. Residential Amenity

- Consideration of proximity of existing 3 and 3.5 storey residential properties to the immediate south west
- Development blocks should allow views through the site towards open land to the north.



3. Landscape Framework

- Areas of public open space located around the existing mature trees within the site
- Additional planting towards the south western boundary, providing screening/buffer to existing residential; to the north western boundary, providing additional screening to the A34; and to the northern boundary, creating a soft edge to the settlement.



4. Movement Network

- A clear movement strategy has been developed to create a permeable network of streets and spaces within the site, with priority for pedestrians and cyclists
- Access into the site is to be taken from an existing point on Wilmslow Road
- A clear network of streets and spaces create views through the development to the open land to the north, and towards POS within the site
- An area of parking to the south would support the operation of the nearby town centre and rail station.



5. Development Parcels

- Frontage to Wilmslow Road, set back behind existing trees, gradually set further back from the street moving northwards, to reflect the open setting to the north
- Low density / informal layout towards the northern boundary; higher density / more formal layout towards the south west and west
- Respect the amenity and privacy of existing adjacent dwellings. Minimum interface distances to be observed with additional planting
- Frontages are created to all streets and spaces
- An area of designated land to the west which could meet longer-term development needs.



Development Framework

5.3 The resulting development framework plan demonstrates how the site can be structured to form a well-connected, accessible development which responds to the site's existing landscape assets, while creating a softer settlement edge.

5.4 The illustrative masterplan opposite demonstrates how the site can potentially accommodate around 90 dwellings.

5.5 Dwelling frontages define and overlook streets and spaces to create a legible and safe development. Where existing dwellings lie close to the site boundary, minimum interface distances will be observed to ensure the privacy and outlook of existing dwellings is respected.

5.6 Towards the northern boundary, lower density dwellings will create a softer, informal edge. With appropriate planting/screening along this boundary, a gentle transition between the urban edge of Alderley Edge and open land to the north is achieved.

5.7 The site could also provide an area of parking towards the south, accessed off Wilmslow Road. This would be publicly accessible to people using the nearby town centre and rail station, which currently have insufficient parking. The site would therefore support the viability and vitality of Alderley Edge as a local service centre.



Safeguarded land for longer-term needs

- KEY
-  Site boundary
 -  Existing trees to be retained
 -  Development parcel / frontage
 -  Development area
 -  Public open space
 -  Primary street
 -  Secondary street / shared surface
 -  Footpath / cycle link
 -  Landscape buffer
 -  Tree planting / screening

Fig 7: Illustrative Masterplan

Illustrative Layout

5.8 Informed by the design principles set out earlier in this document, an illustrative masterplan has been prepared to demonstrate how 50 new dwellings can be delivered on the eastern part of the site. The indicative mix is as follows:

- 22 no. 4 bedroom detached houses
- 13 no. 4 bedroom townhouses
- 15 no. 2 bedroom apartments.

Layout and Access

5.9 The development parcels are set out in the form of perimeter blocks, creating natural surveillance to streets and spaces. The layout also creates a frontage to Wilmslow Road; the proposed car park to the south; and to open land to the north.

5.10 Access into the development is from Wilmslow Road. Buildings frame views through the site towards the west. A secondary route serves the two development parcels to the north, which are served by shared drives, forming a soft, informal frontage to the north. In order to limit the impact of cars on the street, parking within these two blocks is generally accommodated in integral garages or garages/parking spaces set back from the street.

5.11 Most of the southern development parcel is served via a secondary route which leads to a shared parking area to the rear of the block, also minimising the impact of cars on the street scene.

Scale and Grain

5.12 To reflect the transition from the existing urban area, which is characterised by larger footprints and buildings up to three storeys in height, to the more open landscape setting to the north; the grain of the indicative development change from higher density / larger footprints towards the southern boundary; to lower density / smaller footprints towards the northern boundary. The height of the indicative proposals also reflects this transition, with three storey apartments towards the south; and 2.5 and two storeys towards the north.

Landscape and Environment

5.13 A key principle in the approach to development at Whitehall Meadow is to retain the existing landscape character of the site. Mature trees towards the centre and northern boundary of the site have been retained, together with majority of the trees along Wilmslow Road.

5.14 The existing landscape character of the site is further enhanced by the retention of a generous green buffer around the perimeter of the development.

Character and Identity

5.15 In accordance with Cheshire East's Borough Design Guide, new development should reflect the positive aspects of local character, such as detailing and materials. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Alderley Edge also picks up on the importance of 'enhancing the culture, identity and character' of the area.

5.16 Buildings are set back from Wilmslow Road behind the existing mature trees, reflecting the existing built form and landscape character of the area. Glimpsed views of the development are offered through the existing trees.

5.17 The suggested house types reflect the villas and larger houses characteristic of Alderley Edge in terms of their scale, architectural features and detailing. Typical materials in the area include red brick, stone and render, which are incorporated into the emerging proposals (as shown on the CGIs across the following pages).

5.18 The emerging proposals demonstrate the opportunity for a unique development which reflects the positive character of the local area, whilst creating a new identity for the Whitehall Meadow site.

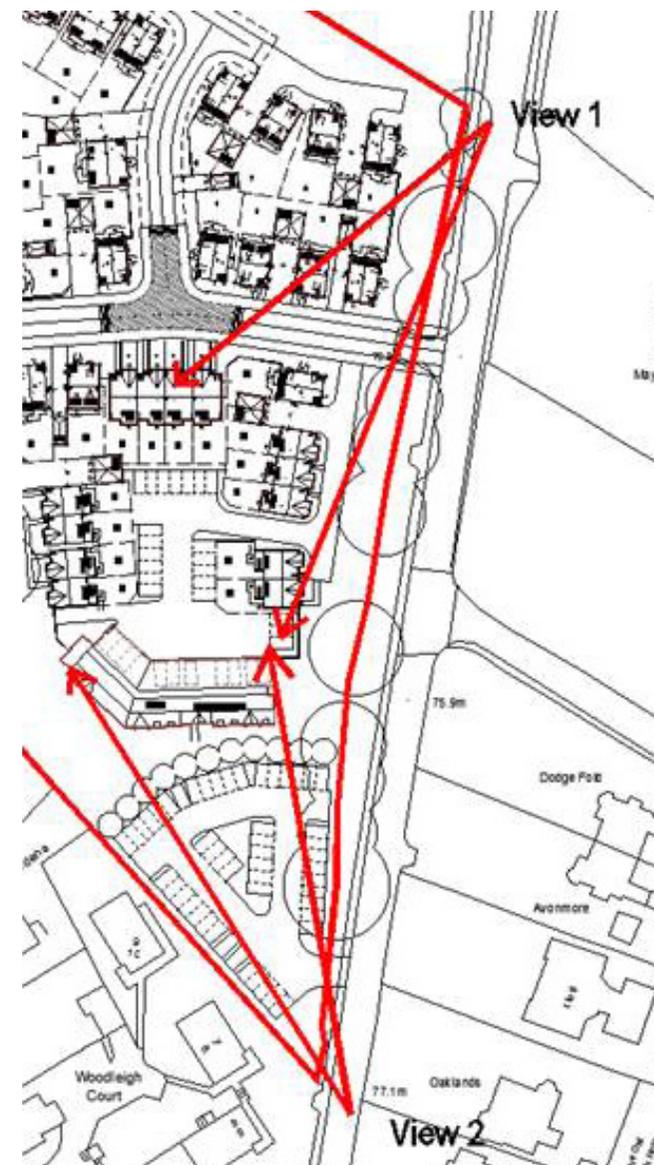


Fig 9: Location of views (see pages 26-27)



Fig 10: 'The Hesketh' - 3 storey townhouse



Fig 11: CGI View 1



Fig 12: CGI View 2

Conclusion

The local plan process, including the supporting evidence base, has identified the requirement to increase the overall level of housing provision across the borough, but also the pressing need to deliver new homes in LSCs in the north, such as Alderley Edge, to satisfy local housing needs and affordability issues.

6.1 Alderley Edge is one of the largest LSCs in the borough; it is located in close proximity to key employment locations and transport connectivity (road, rail and air).

6.2 A modest expansion of Alderley Edge to the north is the most appropriate solution having regard to Green Belt, technical, environmental and sustainability factors and scale of development. Allocation of the Whitehall Meadow site in the SADP will provide an opportunity to deliver around 90 new homes in this location. The site is available, achievable and suitable.

6.3 An illustrative masterplan has been prepared based on initial technical analysis of the site. This demonstrates that the site is suitable for development and is deliverable.

6.4 The scale of the development that can be achieved on the site is appropriate to the needs of Alderley Edge in the context of the emerging development plan strategy. Alternative sites would be more harmful particularly in terms of encroachment into Green Belt and impact on heritage and flood risk.

6.5 The site has the backing of nation's largest housebuilder and is deliverable in the short term, offering social, environmental and economic benefits to the settlement, including:

- The scheme can make an important contribution to local housing need, helping to attract new families to the town and improving the availability and affordability of housing in Alderley Edge.
- The proposed development can offer a balanced mix of dwellings, providing a choice of type and size in response to the identified housing demand. 30% of the new homes will be affordable, in accordance with the relevant policy of the LPS.
- The scheme can mitigate and adapt to future climate change through sustainable design and a commitment to deliver high quality, energy efficient homes.
- A landscaping strategy for the site that can allow for ecological and bio-diversity enhancements and soften the edge of the settlement.
- A parking area to support the operation of the nearby town centre.



For further information contact

Sam Ryan

sam.ryan@turley.co.uk

Enclosure 3: DWH Response to the First Draft SADPD (October 2018)

First Draft Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Policies Document

Whitehall Meadow, Wilmslow Road, Alderley
Edge

Representations on behalf of David Wilson
Homes North West

October 2018

Turley

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Appendix 2: Whitehall Meadow Vision Document

Appendix 3: Landscape and Visual Appraisal, (Sweco) (August 2018)

Appendix 4: DWH Representations to the SADPD: Issues Paper (March 2017)

Contact

Sam Ryan
sam.ryan@turley.co.uk

17 Oct 2018

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Report has been prepared by Turley, on behalf of our client David Wilson Homes North West (hereafter referred to as 'DWH'). It provides representations to Cheshire East Council ('CEC') in respect of the First Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) (August 2018) which is subject to public consultation until 22 October 2018.

Background

- 1.2 DWH is part of Barratt Developments PLC, the UK's largest housebuilder, and has a track record of working with local communities to deliver high quality developments which benefit those living and working in the area in which they are provided. In 2017 DWH delivered 572 new homes in the North West, meeting local and general housing needs, providing around 1600 direct and indirect jobs and almost £100m increase in Gross Value Added (GVA) throughout the region. DWH is currently building houses at a number of sites in the borough including Bollin Park and Stanneylands in Wilmslow; those sites comprise a range of attractive and spacious new family homes, including affordable dwellings.

An infographic summarising the north-west socio-economic footprint of DWH is at **Appendix 1**.

- 1.3 CEC will be aware that DWH is the promoter of 'Whitehall Meadow', a high quality residential development opportunity at Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge ('the Site'). A Vision document has been submitted to CEC alongside previous representations and the Call for Sites exercise. It identifies how sustainable development can be achieved, making an important contribution towards meeting the specific housing needs for Alderley Edge and the Borough's overall housing requirement.

A copy of the Vision Document is at **Appendix 2**.

Representations

- 1.4 These representations:
- Demonstrate a clear requirement to increase the quantum of new housing allocations in Local Service Centres (LSCs), and for the majority of those allocations to be directed to settlements in the north of the borough, principally Alderley Edge;
 - Show that the Whitehall Meadow site could provide a balanced mix of dwellings, including much needed affordable housing for Alderley Edge and should be the first choice for allocation in the town. DWH has also committed to providing a car park which will be controlled by the Parish Council and will assist in addressing local concerns relating to car parking in residential streets of the town centre;

- Provide further detailed commentary relating to proposed development management policies and their consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework;
- Conclude that the draft SADPD as currently prepared is inconsistent with the adopted Local Plan Strategy and National Planning Policy in that it fails to identify sufficient housing sites in the right locations and will not 'boost significantly' housing land supply.

Structure

1.5 The structure of this document is as follows:

- Chapter 2: Planning for Growth in the Local Service Centres
- Chapter 3: The Whitehall Meadow Opportunity
- Chapter 4: Draft SADPD Policies
- Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

2. Planning for Housing Growth

Local Plan Strategy

- 2.1 The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy ('LPS') (2010 – 2030) was adopted in July 2017 and sets out the overall vision and planning strategy for development within the Borough.
- 2.2 The LPS confirms that sufficient land will be provided in the borough to accommodate *a minimum* of 36,000 new homes over the 20-year plan period (2010 and 2030). This development will be distributed in line with the following settlement hierarchy:
- The Principal Towns of Macclesfield and Crewe.
 - Key Service Centres: which have a good range of facilities including shops, schools and cultural and leisure facilities; and contain public transport links.
 - Local Services Centres (LSC) including Alderley Edge, are smaller towns and villages provide a range of services and facilities that help meet the needs of local people, including those living in nearby settlements.
 - Other Settlements and Rural Areas.
- 2.3 Whilst the LPS confirms that the majority of development will be shared amongst the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres (17,600 new homes), it also recognises that Local Service Centres must accommodate *"...modest growth in housing and employment to meet locally arising needs, reduce out-commuting, and secure their continued vitality"*¹. As such, the LPS indicates that *"at least"* 3,500 new homes will be accommodated across the LSCs over the plan period (LPS, Policy PG7). The LPS does not apportion an individual housing requirement to LSCs and proposes that non-strategic site allocations will be made in the emerging SADP.
- 2.4 Mindful that the requirement is a minimum – i.e. it is a "floor" to be exceeded rather than a "ceiling" which presents a "cap" to growth – it is evident that CEC has the flexibility to ensure that the full housing needs of each LSC are met, even if doing so will result in the delivery of more homes across the Borough than the minimum prescribed by the LPS. The scale of growth apportioned to Alderley Edge by the SADPD and DWH's comments on it must be considered in this context.

Flexibility

- 2.5 At the Examination of the LPS, CEC's evidence set out the case for allocations to be made in excess of the overall housing requirement to account for any potential future changes to sites or changing housing market conditions over the life of a plan². In those circumstances, a 7% 'Flexibility Factor' was added to the housing requirement in the LSCs, thereby increasing the 'target allocation' figure in those settlements by 245 dwellings (3500 x 7%).

¹ LPS, paragraph 8.30

² Housing Supply and Delivery Topic Paper, CEC, August 2016, Paragraph 3.1 [LPS Examination Document: PC B037]

Scale of Housing Development in the Site Allocations Plan

2.6 CEC claims that the allocations in the First Draft SADPD have been identified in accordance with the strategy and policies of the adopted LPS. In terms of housing that means making allocations to meet the minimum residual requirement (i.e. taking account of completions since the start of the plan period and existing commitments) for each of the settlement hierarchies.

2.7 Notwithstanding that claim, it is clear the housing allocations that have been made in the LSCs exceed the target residual requirement for those settlements by just 52 dwellings; representing a flexibility factor in LSCs of just 1.5%. CEC seeks to justify this as follows:

“...it is the Council’s position that flexibility is no longer required or justified at the Local Service Centre (LSC) and Other Settlement and Rural Area (OSRA) tiers of the settlement hierarchy. The issue of flexibility has been addressed at the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres...”³

2.8 DWH does not agree with this position or accept the reasoning of CEC, since it:

- Will deliver only a marginal oversupply that does not provide any flexibility in the plan in the event some of the committed or allocated sites either fail to come forward or deliver the quantum of housing required.
- Is clearly contrary to CEC’s own evidence that an element of housing supply ‘flexibility’ is required for each tier of the settlement hierarchy; removing that flexibility is inconsistent with the adopted LPS and the conclusions of the examining Inspector.
- Will put increased impetus on those settlements at the upper and lower end of the settlement hierarchy to deliver additional dwellings.
- Fails to ensure that an appropriate scale of development is provided in all of the LSCs to support sustainable and inclusive communities comprising a range of households, including affordable and family housing, with services and facilities to meet their needs.
- In those circumstances, it also:
 - Means that locally arising needs in each of the LSCs, particularly in the north of the borough will not be met, contrary to paragraph 8.30 of the LPS; and
 - Fails to meet national planning policy guidance requiring local planning authorities to put in place policies to ‘boost significantly’ the supply of new housing⁴.

³ Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – The Approach Towards Housing Supply Flexibility in the SADPD, Cheshire East Council (2018)

⁴ NPPF, paragraph 59

- 2.9 It is DWH's view that the impact of providing insufficient new housing development in each of the LSC's will have a significantly detrimental impact on their ability to meet the needs of their communities and, in particular, exacerbate existing problems of affordability and an ageing population profile (see further below). DWH considers that the SADPD should ensure that allocations meet the flexibility factor identified in the LPS by allocating sites for, at least, a further 193 dwellings in the LSCs.
- 2.10 Additional allocations in those settlements in excess of the LPS flexibility factor would also be acceptable and in accordance with: the 'minimum target' set out in the adopted plan. It would ensure that the locally arising needs of each of the LSCs and their continued role and function is supported in accordance with the LPS and would be consistent with national planning policies.

The Spatial Distribution of Housing Allocations in Local Service Centres

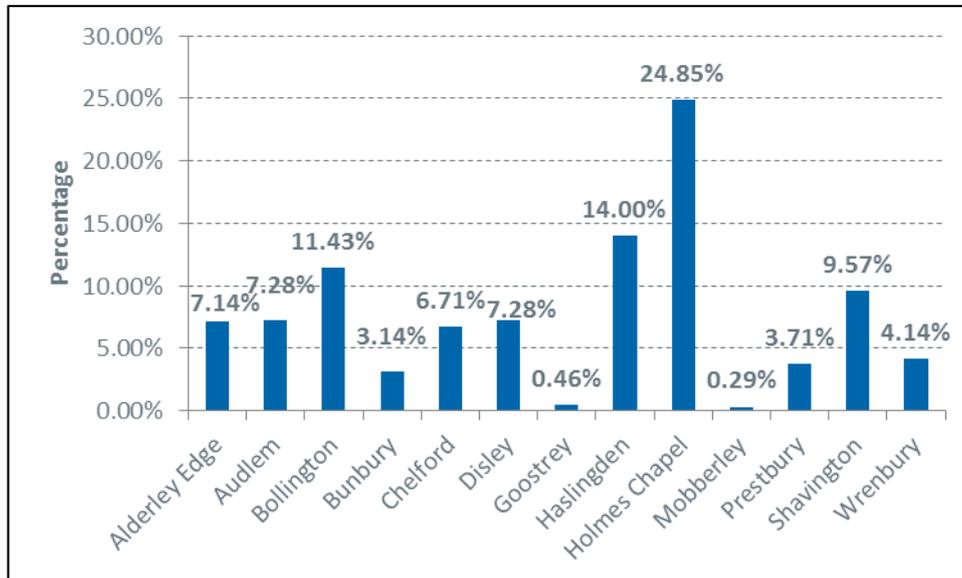
- 2.11 In preparing the SADPD, CEC has assessed various options for the spatial distribution of the housing requirement⁵ and concluded that its preferred Option 7 is for a Hybrid approach that combines a blend of the other options examined; the result of that exercise is to apportion just 250 dwellings to Alderley Edge during the plan period equivalent to just 7.14% of the overall LSC 'target' of 3,500 dwellings.
- 2.12 While CEC considers that a hybrid approach may offer an optimum strategy for the plan that amalgamates a range of factors it is noted that, with the exception of the two constrained options (Options 4 and 5), it results in a disproportionately low housing figure for Alderley Edge that is not commensurate with its scale and function (this is considered further below). Each of the other unconstrained options identifies a need for in excess of 300 dwellings in Alderley Edge; for those options related to population and households (Options 1 and 2) the target for the town would increase to between 360 and 381 dwellings; this is on a par with Holmes Chapel for those options⁶.
- 2.13 DWH also fundamentally disagrees with CEC's analysis of Alderley Edge under Option 4, that the town is so constrained environmentally it could not deliver any development. That is evidentially not the case as clearly demonstrated by the suitability of the Whitehall Meadow site for residential development, which does not have any environmental or technical constraints (see Section 3 and **Appendix 2**). That flawed assessment of Alderley Edge under Option 4 then skews the analysis for the hybrid approach in Option 7 leading to an unrealistically low figure for the town. In the circumstances, DWH does not consider it to be justified or the most appropriate strategy for distributing growth across the LSC. This is elaborated further below.
- 2.14 In the first instance, Option 7 results in a highly unbalanced distribution between the northern and southern settlements of the Borough; this is clearly articulated in the LSCSDDR which states that the option encourages the majority of development to be accommodated within the south of the Borough (63.4%) with just 36.6% of the overall

⁵ Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Local Service Centres Spatial Distribution Disaggregation Report (LSCSDDR), Cheshire East Council (2018)

⁶ Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Local Service Centres Spatial Distribution Disaggregation Report (LSCSDDR), Cheshire East Council (2018), table 5

3,500 dwelling requirement being apportioned to the north of the Borough (including Alderley Edge); this is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Proportion of 3,500 dwelling requirement distributed to each LSC⁷



2.15 DWH recognises that that uneven distribution is, in part, a consequence of CEC’s failure to advance an early development plan, resulting in an historic legacy of planning permissions being granted on an ad hoc basis within the southern settlements of the borough that are not constrained by Green Belt. For example, the supply of completions and commitments in Holmes Chapel is 873 dwellings.

2.16 Given the significant imbalance that already exists, it is essential that the residual LSC requirement is directed to the north of the borough in order to best achieve patterns of sustainable development and support for the northern communities. In that context, the Interim Views of the Inspector into the examination of the LPS is relevant; he recognised:

“...that channelling too much development to areas beyond the North Cheshire Green Belt to the south of the borough would result in unsustainable patterns of development and commuting, and would not address the development needs of the northern settlements”.

2.17 All of the residual housing requirement (including the flexibility allowance identified in the LPS) should, therefore, be directed to the northern LSCs. However, the ‘off plan’ permissions granted in the southern LSCs, most notably Holmes Chapel, have already created a significant imbalance in the distribution of development that cannot be addressed simply by directing the residual, plus flexibility allowance, requirement to the northern settlements. In the circumstances, the SADPD should not be constrained by the figure of 3,500 dwellings, which is a minimum figure, and should ensure that each of the LSCs receives sufficient development to meet its local needs and priorities;

⁷ **Northern LSC’s** comprise Alderley Edge, Bollington, Chelford, Disley, Mobberley and Prestbury. **Southern LSC’s** comprise Audlem, Bunbury, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Shavington and Wrenbury.

only be adopting that approach would the SADPD be in accordance with the adopted LPS (see paragraph 2.3 above) and national planning policy.

- 2.18 Secondly, and related to the above, Option 7 does not encourage development and growth in some of the most sustainable settlements in the borough (based on CEC's own evidence⁸); or where there is a pressing requirement to deliver new housing to help address a large, and widening, affordability gap.

Profile of Alderley Edge

- 2.19 In terms of the scale and function of settlements DWH notes that in drafting the settlement hierarchy in the LPS CEC concluded that Alderley Edge was one of three settlements on the 'borderline in terms of their position as either a Key or Local Service Centre within the hierarchy'⁹, and indeed the majority of factors suggested that it should be classified as a KSC. While, on balance, the report made a judgement that the settlement should be classified as a LSC, it went on to state that its future position in the hierarchy should be kept under review. The latest evidence prepared by CEC in support of the SADPD reinforces the role of the town:

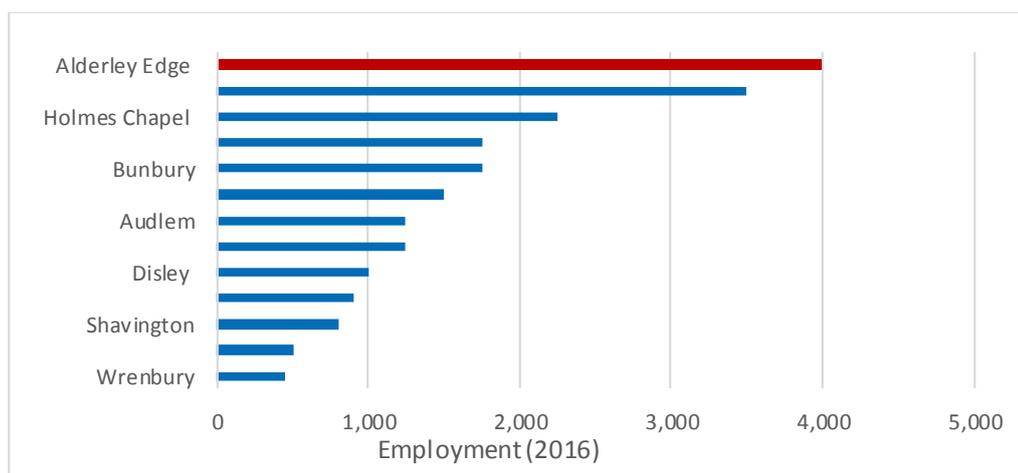
Population

- 2.20 CEC's latest evidence confirms that the size of the population varies across the LSCs; Alderley Edge is the third largest in population terms and contains a relatively high component of children.

Economy

- 2.21 Alderley Edge contains the largest concentration of employment in the LSCs, with over 4,000 jobs in 2016. This is illustrated in the following chart.

Figure 2.2: Total Employment by LSC 2016



Source: Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Local Service Centres Spatial Distribution Disaggregation Report, Cheshire East Council (2018)

⁸ Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Local Service Centres Spatial Distribution Disaggregation Report, Cheshire East Council (2018)

⁹ Ibid, Paragraph 7.5

- 2.22 The relationship between the workforce and the labour force provides an indication of how many jobs are available relative to the size of the population, with this ratio measuring whether there is an abundance or shortage of local employment opportunities. In Alderley Edge, there are around 1.2 jobs per employed resident, indicating that the town plays a significant wider employment role and attracts in-commuting from other settlements.
- 2.23 Alderley Edge is one of the nearest settlements in the borough to the key employment site at Alderley Park (c. 3 km) which already provides significant job opportunities and is expected to be a key focus for further employment growth over the plan period to maximise the potential of the life science industry. The Alderley Park Development Framework has been developed to proactively guide any future development and recent planning permissions have been granted for a range of employment, retail, residential, and leisure development at the site. Alderley Park is capable of meeting the employment needs of Alderley Edge and will play a key role in the economic growth of the North; sufficient new housing development is required to support that growth in a sustainable way, for example by not resulting in significant increases in commuting.

Housing Market

- 2.24 House prices provide an indication of the local balance between housing supply and demand. Based on sales recorded between April 2016 and March 2017, CEC's evidence base shows that the average house price in Alderley Edge during that period was £365,000 and significantly higher than average for both the borough and other LSCs. This indicates that Alderley Edge is characterised by relatively high house prices, which are likely to be at least partially driven by an imbalance between supply and demand, with very limited new supply coming forward.
- 2.25 While there are existing commitments for 54 new dwellings in the town, all but one site is for less than 10 units (12 dwellings at Horseshoe Lane) and the majority comprise developments of just 1 unit; including a number of sites where there will be no net gain due to replacement of an existing dwelling.
- 2.26 Even when taking account of variation in local incomes, the scale of the affordability challenge in Alderley Edge is clear where average house prices are 6.4 times average earnings; although similar to other LSCs, that is higher than the average for Cheshire East (5.5 x average earnings) and nationally.
- 2.27 The characteristics of the local housing markets result in unmet needs for housing arising. Compared to other LSCs, a relatively large proportion of households in Alderley Edge are overcrowded with fewer bedrooms than required. While there is a backlog of households on the Housing Register in need of affordable housing in all LSCs, it is most notable in Alderley Edge.

Accessibility

- 2.28 The accessibility of LSCs varies, with rail connectivity a key factor which shapes the functionality of each settlement. Alderley Edge has 16 rail services providing a commutable weekday morning journey¹⁰ to the principal CEC towns of Crewe and Macclesfield as well as Manchester, as a major employment destination - with 6

¹⁰ Weekday services leaving after 7am and arriving before 9.30am, either direct or with one change

services each to Crewe and Manchester and 4 to Macclesfield in the morning peak. This compares favourably to all other settlements which have between 1 and 12 services for those LSCs that have a railway station; with 5 LSCs having no rail service.

- 2.29 The Settlement Hierarchy paper prepared for the LPS identified the frequent train and bus services from Alderley Edge for commuters, stating that this was in line with that expected of a KSC and contributed towards its assessed borderline status as a Key Service Centre (KSC) settlement.

Social Infrastructure

- 2.30 Alderley Edge contains a state primary school and a number of private schools. It also has health facilities and a wide range of shops, leisure and cultural facilities. Alderley Edge has been previously found to '*perform a retail role commensurate with a Key Service Centre*'¹¹, contrasting with smaller settlements which contain noticeably fewer retail units.

Conclusion

- 2.31 The above analysis and summary of CEC's own evidence demonstrates that Alderley Edge is a highly sustainable settlement and one of the largest LSCs in the borough, with a role and function that is in many ways commensurate with that of a KSC. This is reflected in the Alderley Edge Settlement Report¹² which recognises that it is one of the largest LSCs and contains an extensive range of shops, services and community facilities, including a library, sports centre and local schools providing the social infrastructure required to underpin the daily life of local residents.
- 2.32 Notwithstanding, the clear attributes of the town, there has been limited housing development in recent years due primarily to the tightly drawn Green Belt boundary; there is a significant affordability gap and relatively high level of affordable housing need exacerbated by the lack of large sites in the town.
- 2.33 The scale and function of Alderley Edge means that it is clearly capable of accommodating a greater proportion of the housing requirement than other LSCs; the SADPD should take the opportunity of allocating additional sites in appropriate locations to meet the housing need and provide long-term support for social infrastructure in the town. Allocations should be made in Alderley Edge consistent with the LPS 'flexibility factor' for LCS of an additional 193 dwellings identified at paragraph 2.9 above.

National Policy

- 2.34 A balanced geographical approach is required to ensure there is sufficient growth to sustain and maintain the vitality of all LSC's, in accordance with Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires development to have an economic objective which will ensure that sufficient land is available in the right places, at the right time to support growth, and in coordination with the provision of infrastructure. Focussing future growth on sustainable principles would also be in accordance with Paragraph 138 of the NPPF which states:

¹¹ Determining the Settlement Hierarchy, Cheshire East Council, November 2010, Paragraph 6.26

¹² Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Alderley Edge Settlement Report, Cheshire East Council (2018)

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.”

Green Belt Boundaries

Draft Policy PG 11

- 2.35 The LPS recognises that in the north of the borough it is necessary to release some land from the Green Belt in order to meet the spatial distribution of development. DWH supports Green Belt release around Alderley Edge given that additional land is required to support sustainable growth and meet the specific development needs of the settlement (see above). The exceptional circumstances to amend Green Belt boundaries, as required by national planning policy, are met and were agreed as part of the examination into the LPS.
- 2.36 Notwithstanding the above, DWH disagree with the findings of CEC’s Green Belt Sites Assessment which is relatively broad grain and amalgamates potential development parcels on the edge of settlements; the Green Belt Assessment for Alderley Edge is enclosed at Appendix 2 of the Alderley Edge Settlement Report¹³. It assesses the Whitehall Meadow site as part of a larger parcel lying adjacent to the northern edge of the existing settlement boundary and categorises that parcel as being an ‘essential gap’ between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow. However, the Assessment does go on to recognise that given that the area of the proposed Whitehall Meadow development is located at the southern end of the parcel and adjacent to the existing built-up area, this would not lead to actual merging of those settlements.
- 2.37 The Assessment also considers other potential development sites in Alderley Edge. DWH notes that the proposed safeguarded land at Horseshoe Lane (SADPD Ref. ALD4) is similarly assessed in terms of Green Belt contribution as being part of the ‘essential gap’ between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow; notwithstanding, CEC proposes to remove that land from the Green Belt while retaining Whitehall Meadow within it. There is no clear rationale or explanation of CEC’s reasons for accepting site ALD4 while rejecting Whitehall Meadow, particularly in light of the further benefits that development of the DWH site could bring (see below).
- 2.38 The CEC’s Site Selection Methodology Paper¹⁴ states that the assessment of Green Belt sites was undertaken on an iterative basis and those sites that had the lowest contribution to Green Belt purposes were identified first; in light of the above comments that does not appear to be the case. In any event, DWH disagree with the analysis of the site in the Green Belt Assessment and have commissioned SWECO to carry out an independent landscape appraisal of the various land parcels around Alderley Edge.

¹³ Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Alderley Edge Settlement Report, Cheshire East Council (2018)

¹⁴ Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Site Selection Methodology Report, Cheshire East Council (2018)

Landscape Appraisal

2.39 The Landscape Appraisal undertaken by SWECO comprises an examination of the Whitehall Meadow Site and five other areas of land put forward for development at Alderley Edge. It is a more fine-grained analysis than CEC's Green Belt Assessment considering each parcel of land in respect of their contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. The report is provided at **Appendix 3**. It concludes that:

- The landscape and visual effects of residential development at Whitehall Meadow would be limited and acceptable; and
- The Site does not make a critical or significant contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

2.40 In particular, the Landscape Appraisal considers the extent to which a 'green gap' exists between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow to the north, and whether such a gap (if it does exist) would be compromised by the residential development of the Site. It concludes that:

- There is not a clear area of open countryside that forms a 'gap' between the two settlements in the vicinity of the Site. The area between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow has already been "...*substantially compromised*..." given the existing development in the area and along Wilmslow Road; and
- Even if it were considered that such a 'gap' did exist, due to its specific location and limited extent the Site would not make a critical contribution to it which would merit protection.

2.41 As such, the Landscape Appraisal report concludes that on the basis of its more detailed understanding of the relationship and landscape between the towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge and the delineating features that define their natural extent; and a more detailed understanding of the character of the partially open landscape that lies between them along Wilmslow Road; the Site makes a limited contribution to the three most relevant Green Belt purposes and its allocation for residential development would not be harmful to the physical integrity of the Green Belt or to its policy objectives¹⁵.

2.42 Finally, the Landscape Appraisal evidence confirms that the land at Whitehall Meadow contributes no greater or less than other potential residential site allocations around Alderley Edge (including those sites that have been identified for development in the SADPD). In those circumstances, other material considerations will have increased importance as part of the site selection process (i.e. beyond consideration of Green Belt).

Other Material Considerations

2.43 The NPPF identifies sustainable development to comprise three overarching objectives; as such future development should mutually be supported by economic, social and environmental objectives. On that basis, the role of the Green Belt should comprise

¹⁵ Landscape Appraisal Report, paragraph 4.2.4

only one factor of the site selection process. This is the approach adopted by the Inspector for the EIP into the LPS:

“...Although the release of land from the Green Belt was based on several factors, this suggests that insufficient weight may have been given to the status and value of certain sites in the Green Belt terms compared with other factors such as land ownership, availability and deliverability, when preparing and finalising the plan.”¹⁶

2.44 As supported by the landscape appraisal evidence, the land at Whitehall Meadow does not form an ‘essential gap’ between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow. The site is also able to offer wider benefits that will make an important contribution to environmental and social objectives for the village - in particular through the provision of a 50-space public car park (see Appendix 2 and following section of this report) and much needed affordable housing in the town. Those benefits should be weighed in support of allocating the site for future development.

2.45 The social and economic benefits of additional parking within the Centre are of particular importance given that CEC acknowledges:

“...that the availability of car parking in the village can be an issue with competing needs of residents, workers and shoppers. Alderley Edge Parish Council has carried out a car parking review and is seeking to provide additional capacity and to manage existing provision through a car parking strategy.”¹⁷

2.46 This issue was also picked up by the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan Group’s own consultation on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, when the local community identified the need for more parking in the village centre as one of the most important issues to be addressed in the plan; leading the Parish Council to offer in principle support to an allocation at Whitehall Meadow:

“The provision of a new 50-space car park would help meet the village’s current and future all day parking requirements and provide a long-term economic benefit to the community. With this in mind, we could support, in principle, a development of 50 new homes in this location”¹⁸

2.47 Through the Neighbourhood Plan Group’s consultation the community also gave Whitehall Meadow one of the highest ranking scores of the range of potential residential allocations in the village.

2.48 It is clear that the site selection methodology undertaken by CEC has:

- Unfairly assessed the contribution that Whitehall Meadow makes to Green Belt objectives, and then given undue weight to that assessment without considering other relevant factors;

¹⁶ Examination of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy, Inspector’s Interim Views and Clarification (6 & 28/11/14)

¹⁷ Site Allocations and Development Policies Document – Alderley Edge Settlement Report, Cheshire East Council (2018)

¹⁸ <http://www.alderleyedge.com/news/article/15527>

- Failed to give weight to the social and economic benefits of allocating land at Whitehall Meadow for housing **and** a public car park to serve the needs of the village; and
- Not given due weight to the community preferences identified through the Neighbourhood Group consultation.

Conclusions

- 2.49 The adopted LPS sets out a minimum target of 3,500 dwellings to be provided in the LSCs including Alderley Edge. The plan also advocates making provision for a 7% 'flexibility allowance' equivalent to a further 245 dwellings. The SADPD does not make sufficient allocations in accordance with that allowance; further sites should be identified in the LSCs in the north of the borough to help address an historic imbalance of planning permissions, support long term sustainable communities and boost housing land supply in accordance with national and local planning policy objectives.
- 2.50 DWH's previous representations to the SADPD: Issues Paper makes clear that there is an acute requirement for new housing development in Alderley Edge; this is supported by CEC's own evidence base to the SADPD (and previously to the examination of the LPS). There is compelling and urgent need to address the issue of housing availability and affordability in the town, to provide a sustainable future for its services and facilities mindful in particular that the role and function of the settlement is in some ways commensurate with that of a KSC, and support the delivery of new jobs in the local area. This is not reflected by the allocations in the emerging SADPD which do not make sufficient provision for an appropriate quantum of new residential development in the settlement. This is due in part to CEC's preferred Option 7 for the distribution of growth having been skewed to an unrealistically low figure by the flawed conclusion under Option 4 (see above). It is evident that additional allocations are required necessitating the release of further land from the Green Belt to meet the locally arising need.
- 2.51 In identifying sites to be allocated, CEC has given undue weight to its own broad grain Green Belt Assessment which does assesses a wider parcel of land than is proposed for development at Whitehall Meadow; the fine-grained analysis contained in the Landscape Appraisal by SWECO provides a more detailed assessment of the contribution that the site makes to the Green Belt and, as such, is to be preferred.
- 2.52 CEC has also failed to give due regard to other significant factors that provide clear support for an allocation at Whitehall Meadow; including the contribution that it can make towards meeting much-needed affordable housing needs in Alderley Edge and provision of a car park to alleviate parking in residential streets near to the railway station and town centre.
- 2.53 Land at Whitehall Meadow should be allocated to support the current needs and future growth requirements of Alderley Edge. The impact that the site makes to the purposes of Green Belt is limited and any harm is clearly outweighed by the overwhelming need to meet the housing requirements of the settlement. Further commentary in support of that site and comparison with other allocations in the town is provided in the following chapter.

3. Development Opportunity at Whitehall Meadow

- 3.1 DWH is the promoter of 'Whitehall Meadow', a high quality residential development opportunity at Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge. A Vision Document has been prepared which provides details of the development opportunity; it is provided at **Appendix 2** of these representations. A summary of that report highlighting the suitability of Whitehall Meadow as a housing allocation is set out below.

The Site

- 3.2 The Site is approximately 3.4ha in size; it:
- **Is a Sustainable Location for Growth** – It is situated in close proximity to the town centre and Railway Station both of which are within walking distance. Bus stops are located within 100m along Wilmslow Road and the site has good access by non-car modes to a range of services and facilities in the town, and wider centres of employment including Manchester and Macclesfield.
 - **Has direct access to the strategic road network** - The site is located on Wilmslow Road (B5359) which provides access onto the A34 towards Wilmslow, in turn providing access to Manchester Airport and the M60 Motorway towards Manchester.
 - **It will not result in harm to the Green Belt** – As set out in the supporting evidence, Whitehall Meadow does not perform a strategic Green Belt function; its release from the Green Belt will result in relatively limited harm and will not undermine the general extent of the North Cheshire Green Belt. This issue is discussed in greater detail below.
 - **Is within a viable market area** - CEC's own Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment classed the site as being available, achievable and developable. DWH has an active legal interest in the land and there are no legal or ownership constraints, such as ransom strips or tenancies. In the event that the site is removed from the Green Belt and allocated for development DWH are committed to bringing forward an early development of the site.
 - **Is not subject of any know technical or environmental constraints** - The Site comprises of greenfield land. It has been subject of preliminary technical assessments and there is no known contamination, flood risk or other unusual constraints to prevent the early development of the land. There are no Listed Buildings in close proximity to the Site, nor is it located within or in the setting of a Conservation Area.

The Development Opportunity

- 3.3 The accompanying Vision Document presents the proposed development framework for the Site. In summary, the Site presents an opportunity to provide:

- 50 new homes now in accordance with the Parish Council / community preference to limit the scale of any single allocation in the town to that size. There is potential for the site to be extended, in due course, to provide up to 90 new homes in total.
- A high quality and landscape-led development within an extensive landscape framework that would create both a softer and new and defensible edge to the settlement boundary. This would involve:
 - A balanced mix of new homes to respond to local needs, with a range of densities which both respect the amenity of existing properties to the south and reflect the open land to the north;
 - Affordable homes in line with CEC’s policy requirement;
 - The retention of key trees and other landscaping;
 - Vehicular access directly off Wilmslow Road, in accordance with Manual for Streets and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges guidelines;
 - Areas of public open space which act as focal points within the development;
 - A clear movement strategy with a permeable network of streets, spaces and routes, with priority for cyclists and pedestrians; and
- The development would also deliver an area of parking at the southern end of the site, accessed from Wilmslow Road. This would be publicly-accessible under the control of the Parish Council. It would complement the operation of car parking in both the town centre and the Railway Station and help to alleviate existing problems of car parking and congestion within nearby residential streets.

Proposed Allocations in the SADPD

3.4 Despite the clear advantages of development at Whitehall Meadow as identified above, the Site has not been allocated for development in the draft SADPD. Section 2 of these representations sets out the reasons why Whitehall Meadow should be allocated in addition to those sites currently identified in the draft SADPD. The following paragraphs provide further commentary to demonstrate that if CEC disagrees, then the Site merits allocation in any event as an alternative to the sites that are currently allocated in Alderley Edge in the draft plan.

Land at Ryleys Farm

3.5 Land at Ryleys Farm is the largest housing allocation in Alderley Edge; it is expected to deliver c.75 dwellings on a site of c.2.2ha on the eastern edge of the town. The site is less preferential to Whitehall Meadow for the following reasons:

- It has a poor relationship with the existing urban area and would not represent rounding off of the settlement pattern; it has no urbanising influences and is

characterised by a significant degree of openness. Unlike Whitehall Meadow, development on the land would represent a clear expansion of Alderley Edge into open countryside;

- The boundaries of the site are less well contained than those at Whitehall Meadow leading to potential further encroachment into open countryside;
- The scale of development proposed on the site is in excess of that supported by the local community and parish council who would prefer to see smaller allocations around the town;
- There are no proposals to provide any public car parking within the site, nor would it be appropriate to do so given the relative distance of the land from the railway station and the heart of the town centre.

Land at Jenny Hayes

3.6 Land at Jenny Hayes is a very small site at the north-eastern extremity of the settlement and remote from existing transport and social infrastructure. It is allocated for 'about 10 dwellings'.

3.7 The land represents a clear, albeit modest, extension of the settlement. It has potential flood risk constraints meaning that there may be viability issues to delivery and /or a reduced quantum of development on the site with little or no opportunity to provide some much needed affordable housing for the town. In any event, its relative remoteness from public transport routes and town centre facilities means that it is significantly less well-suited to providing affordable housing than the land at Whitehall Meadow.

3.8 The site is of such small scale that there is no opportunity to provide any other complementary uses on the land.

Conclusion

3.9 The Whitehall Meadow Site is in a highly sustainable location; it is able to offer both the scale and type of new housing needed in Alderley Edge, including affordable housing, together with a new public car park which will help to alleviate existing car parking problems in the town. The Site should be allocated for up to 50 dwellings and a local car park under a new draft policy ALD3.

3.10 The combination of its location and wider benefits means that, in the event there is no requirement for additional allocations in Alderley Edge, the site is to be clearly preferred above those draft allocations currently in the SADPD. In those circumstances, one of more of those allocations should be deleted and replaced with Whitehall Meadow as a new allocation.

4. Draft SADPD Policies

- 4.1 DWH made representations to the Issues and Options Paper of the SADPD, providing commentary on proposed development management policies (attached at **Appendix 4**). Further commentary on the detailed drafting of those policies is set out below.

Housing Mix

Draft Policy HOU 1

- 4.2 This policy seeks delivery of a range of housing types, sizes and tenures in line with Policy SC4 of the LPS. It then goes on to require all housing schemes of 10 or more dwellings to provide a statement setting out an assessment of housing need, the local housing market and the ability of the scheme to accommodate a mix and range of housing, viability and demand for self and custom build.
- 4.3 While DWH is generally supportive of providing a range and choice of homes to meet the needs of the local area, it is however concerned that any policy is workable and will not compromise housing delivery due to overly prescriptive requirements or the onerous need to provide significant amounts of additional evidence.
- 4.4 DWH supports a flexible approach to housing mix which recognises that need and demand will vary from area to area and site to site. It is essential that schemes are viable and provide an appropriate mix for the location. The evidence required to support the housing mix should be proportionate to the development.

Self and Custom Build Dwellings

Draft Policy HOU 3

- 4.5 This policy requires that housing developments of 30 homes or more provide for self or custom build homes. While DWH is not opposed to this as a matter of principle the company is concerned that CEC's approach is restrictive rather than permissive by requiring the inclusion of such housing on sites of 30 dwellings or more; such requirement is overly prescriptive and should be removed. Rather, the need to accommodate self-build plots should be assessed on a site-by-site basis dependent upon local demand and viability considerations.
- 4.6 Regarding the latter point, DWH supports the inclusion of a viability clause, within part 3 of the Policy. However, it is concerned that CEC do not appear to have published a whole plan viability assessment as part of this consultation. Therefore, it is not possible to consider whether the requirements of this Policy and others are generally considered viable.

Optional Technical Standards

Draft Policy HOU 6

Accessible and Wheelchair Housing Standards

- 4.7 The PPG sets out the circumstances in which LPAs may set policy standards for accessible dwellings. This requires clear evidence of, inter alia, the likely future need of

the size, type and location for those dwellings and viability of provision. It also identifies other requirements for policy including the need to consider site specific factors such as vulnerability to flooding and site topography.

- 4.8 CEC's evidence¹⁹ does not cover all the requirements set out within the PPG. In the circumstances, while DWH generally recognises and supports the need for accessible and adaptable dwellings, this part of the Policy is not supported as it is not properly evidenced and is inconsistent with national policy and planning guidance.

Internal Space Standards

- 4.9 The nationally described space standards (NDSS) as introduced by Government are intended to be optional and can only be introduced where there is a clear need and they retain development viability.
- 4.10 PPG (ID 56-020) identifies the type of evidence required to introduce such a policy. It states that 'where a need for internal space standards is identified, local planning authorities should provide justification for requiring internal space policies. Local planning authorities should take account of the following areas:
- **Need** – evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impacts of adopting space standards can be properly assessed, for example, to consider any potential impact on meeting demand for starter homes.
 - **Viability** – the impact of adopting the space standard should be considered as part of a plan's viability assessment with account taken of the impact of potentially larger dwellings on land supply. Local planning authorities will also need to consider impacts on affordability where a space standard is to be adopted.
 - **Timing** – there may need to be a reasonable transitional period following adoption of a new policy on space standards to enable developers to factor the cost of space standards into future land acquisitions'.
- 4.11 CEC has not provided the robust justifiable evidence necessary to introduce the NDSS as a policy requirement.
- 4.12 Further, the absolute requirement to meet the NDSS may have a negative impact upon viability, increase affordability issues and reduce customer choice; particularly for those on lower incomes. As drafted, this part of the Policy is clearly at odds with government guidance and is not supported.

Housing Density

Draft Policy HOU 12

- 4.13 This policy generally expects development to achieve a net density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. DWH recognise that the NPPF (Paragraph 123) encourages local authorities to optimise the use of land and include a minimum density for city and

¹⁹ Housing Optional Technical Standards Report, Cheshire East Council (2018)

town centres or other locations that are well served by public transport. However, this should be based upon local circumstances and not harm the overall objective of boosting significantly housing supply. The blanket requirement to achieve a minimum density standard across all new housing developments is at odds with the NPPF particularly as there are clearly some areas of Cheshire East where lower density developments would be more appropriate. The Policy should be amended to allow for flexibility and include additional factors such as market aspirations and viability considerations.

Housing Delivery

Draft Policy HOU 13

- 4.14 This Policy states that CEC will consider imposing planning conditions requiring development to begin within a shorter timescale, reflecting Paragraph 76 of the NPPF. While not generally opposed to accepting conditions requiring early commencement of development, DWH is concerned that this is not always achievable for reasons outside the developer's control. In any event, it is not necessary to repeat national policy and this requirement should be removed from the Plan.
- 4.15 The Policy also suggests that CEC will require that planning obligations are signed within defined timescales. DWH welcome earlier resolution of Section 106's and strives to ensure that obligations are completed in a timely fashion. However, delays may occur for a variety of reasons, which may be beyond the control of the applicant (including resource issues at CEC). In the circumstances, DWH do not consider that this part of the Policy is appropriate. It would be more effective for CEC to work closely with the developers of the site to ensure that delivery targets are not frustrated by procedural matters.

Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland Implementation

Draft Policy ENV 6

- 4.16 This Policy states that '*where tree loss is unavoidable it must be compensated for on the basis of at least three new trees for every tree removed*'. DWH have not seen any evidence for this ratio of replacement. It is considered that if CEC are seeking a 'net environmental' gain that this could be achieved in many other ways than seeking a 3:1 tree ratio; this part of the Policy should be deleted.

Indoor Sport and Recreation Implementation

Draft Policy REC 2

- 4.17 This Policy requires all major housing development to contribute towards indoor sport and recreation facilities. DWH do not think that this contribution is clearly necessary to make all development acceptable in planning terms. Each development should be considered on its own merits and only those obligations necessary to mitigate the impact of the development should be sought.

Natural Environment, Climate Change and Resources

4.18 As set out in DWH's previous representations several of the requirements set out within the 'Natural Environment, Climate Change and Resources' chapter of the First Draft SADPD unnecessarily replicate requirements already included in the adopted LPS. Several of the draft policies are, therefore, contrary to the clear guidance at paragraph 16 of the NPPF which states that Plans should *"serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies..."*.

4.19 In particular, the following policies replicate those in the LPS and should be removed:

- Draft Policy GEN 1 'Design Principles' would overlap with adopted LPS Policy SD 1 'Sustainable Development in Cheshire East';
- Draft Policy ENV 1 'Ecological Network' would overlap with adopted LPS Policy SE 3 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity';
- Draft Policy ENV 3 'Landscape Character' and draft Policy ENV 5 'Landscaping' would overlap with adopted LPS Policy SE 4 'The Landscape';
- Draft Policy ENV 6 'Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland Implementation' would overlap with adopted LPS Policy SE 5 'Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland';
- Draft Policy ENV 12 'Air Quality' would overlap with adopted LPS Policy SE 12 'Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability'; and
- Draft Policy ENV 15 'Surface Water Management and Flood Risk' would overlap with adopted LPS Policy SE 13 'Flood Risk and Water Management'.

5. Summary and Conclusions

5.1 These representations have been prepared on behalf of David Wilson Homes (DWH) NW. They set out a clear case for:

- Increasing the quantum of new housing allocations in the Local Service Centres (LSC) in accordance with the adopted Local Plan Strategy (LPS) for those settlements to meet their locally arising needs, and to meet the objectives of national planning policy to boost significantly housing land supply;
- Directing all housing allocations in LSC to those settlements in the north in order to address the recent imbalance of development across the LSCs and support sustainable communities across the borough;
- Make additional housing allocations in Alderley Edge commensurate with the scale, character and function of that settlement; and to help meet the pressing need for affordable dwellings in the town;
- Specifically allocate land at Whitehall Meadow as a housing allocation for up to 50 dwellings within the plan period, and provision of a community car park to address parking issues associated with use of the railway station and town centre shops and facilities;
- Make amendments to a range of draft development management policies in the plan to ensure consistency with the LPS, council's evidence base (as appropriate) and national planning policy guidance.

Amendments to the plan

5.2 The requested changes to the plan are to:

- Reinstate the flexibility allowance for housing allocations in the LSC, increasing the requirement in those settlements by at least 193 dwellings, distributed among the southern LSCs identified in draft policy PG8;
- Increase the housing requirement in Alderley Edge to 'at least 300 dwellings', reflecting the opportunity provided by Whitehall Meadow (draft policy PG8);
- Allocate land at Whitehall Meadow as a new housing allocation for up to 50 dwellings and 50-space car park (new policy ALD3) (necessitating re-numbering of existing draft policies ALD3 and ALD4);
- Amend the development management policies in accordance with the comments set out in section 4 of this document (draft Policies HOU1, HOU3, HOU6, HOU12, HOU13, ENV6 and REC2);
- Remove those draft policies that replicate those in the LPS or national guidance (draft policies GEN1, ENV1, ENV3, ENV6, ENV12 and ENV15).

Appendix 1: David Wilson Homes NW Socio-Economic Footprint



The infographic below provides an illustration of our socio-economic footprint for the financial year 2017.

Investing in new homes

572

new homes (including JV) of which 15 are affordable



47%

of Barratt's homes are built on previously developed land



Employment and skills development

1,600 jobs

Direct, indirect and induced employment through Barratt, it's sub-contractors and suppliers



£97.9m

of Gross Value Added (GVA), Barratt's contribution to UK economic output



7

new graduates, undergraduates, trainees and apprentices employed directly by Barratt



Supply chain networks

90%

of components manufactured in the UK



310

sub-contractor companies supported



290

supplier companies supported



Supporting public services

£4.8m

New Homes Bonus payments by Government over 6 years based on new homes built



£20m

tax generated Corporation Tax, NI, PAYE, SDLT and local Council Tax generated (p.a.) by our activities



Building stronger communities

£2m

local contributions including affordable housing sales and s106/equivalent contributions



£7.2m

expenditure on physical works benefiting local communities (including highway and environmental improvements and community facilities)



19

school places provided



£9.2m

additional spending in shops and services by residents of new homes (p.a.) supporting 100 retail and service-related jobs (p.a.)



Safeguarding the environment



28,900

trees or shrubs planted or retained on developments



13.4ha

of greenspace created through public open space and private gardens



40%

of sites using above ground landscape-led Sustainable urban Drainage System solutions



2.51

tonnes of CO₂e emissions per 1,000 sq. ft.



5.04

tonnes of waste per 1,000 sq. ft.



97%

of construction waste recycled

Appendix 2: Whitehall Meadow Vision Document

Vision Document

Whitehall Meadow

Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge

prepared on behalf of David Wilson Homes

July 2018



DAVID WILSON HOMES

WHERE QUALITY LIVES

Turley

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Contact:

Sam Ryan
Director
sam.ryan@turley.co.uk

Office Address:

1 New York Street
Manchester M1 4HD

Telephone:

0161 233 7676

Date of issue:

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Introduction

This Vision document presents the merits of a new residential development on land at Wilmslow Road (“the site”) to meet local housing needs and contribute positively toward the borough’s overall housing requirement in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan.

1.1 Alderley Edge is a large village (population 5,400) located in the north of the borough. It is identified as a Local Service Centre (“LSC”) in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan in recognition of its size, range of facilities and highly sustainable location in proximity to the nearby employment opportunities (in Alderley Park, Macclesfield, Wilmslow, and the Greater Manchester conurbation). The settlement has excellent access to major road, rail and airport infrastructure. The Parish Council has identified that approximately 100 new homes is an appropriate amount for Alderley Edge and is planning for that level of development in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 The site (to be known as ‘Whitehall Meadow’ in recognition of the Whitehall Brook that adjoins the site) can help to meet the need for new homes in Alderley Edge being identified through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. It lies at the northern edge of Alderley Edge, immediately abutting existing residential properties to the south. Two of its boundaries are clearly defined by existing roads; the A34 (to the west) and Wilmslow Road (to the east). The northern boundary is partly defined by existing trees. It is sustainably located, within a short walking distance of the key services and facilities within the local centre, and the railway station.

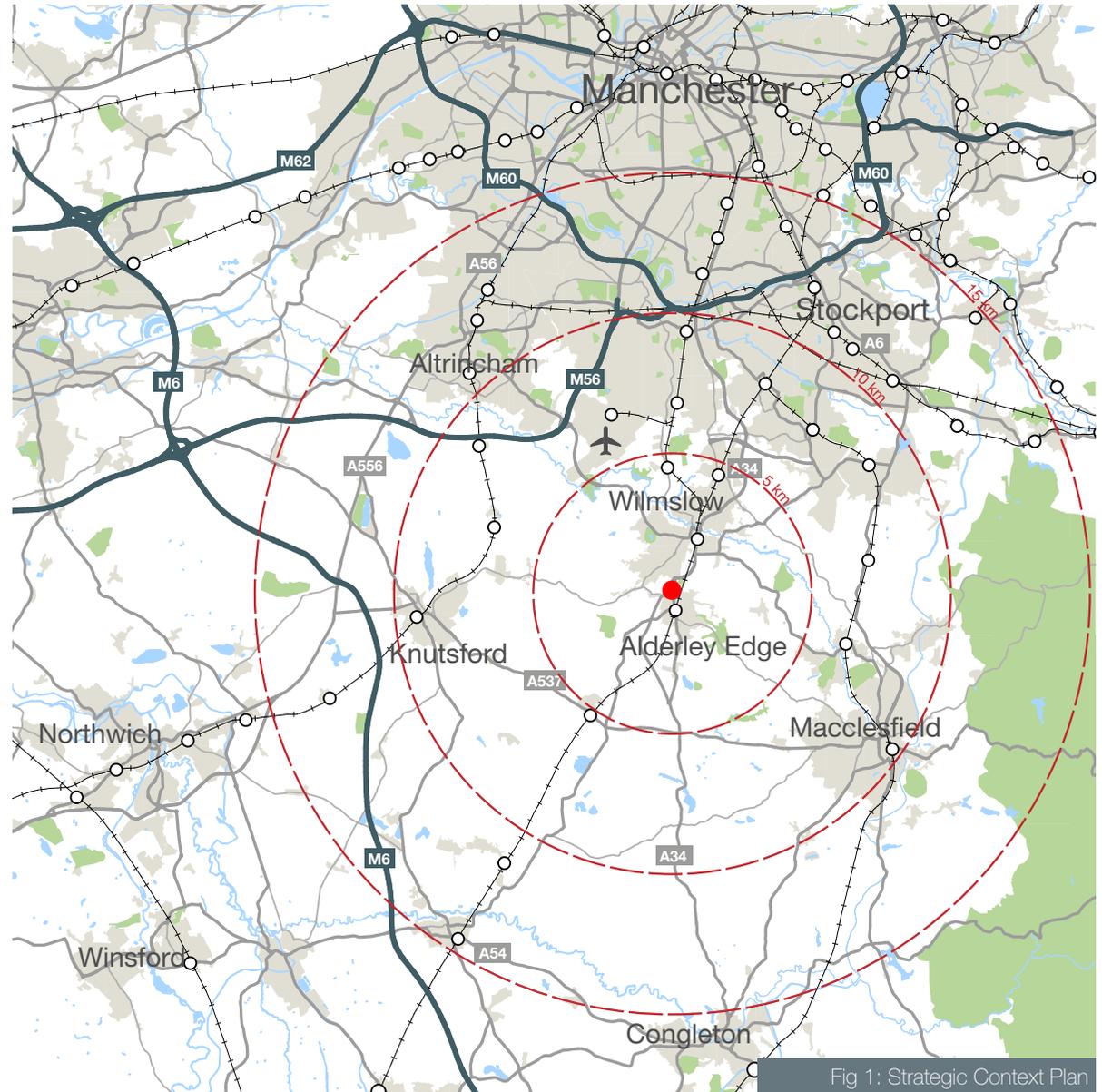


Fig 1: Strategic Context Plan

1.3 The first part of the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan, known as the Local Plan Strategy (“LPS”), was subject to examination by a Government Inspector in autumn 2016; in July 2017 the LPS was adopted. The LPS confirms the strategic growth requirements and the distribution of development across the borough. This will inform the second part of the Local Plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies (“SADP”) plan, which will identify non-strategic site allocations in smaller settlements, such as Alderley Edge. The issues paper of the SADP was published for public consultation until April 2017. This SADP will allocate sites to make sure that the overall development requirements set out in the LPS are met; it will look to allocate developments of up to 150 dwellings in size.

1.4 The Whitehall Meadow site is under option to David Wilson Homes (“DWH”), part of Barratt Developments PLC, the UK’s largest house builder. In 2016 DWH delivered 551 new homes in the North West, meeting local and general housing needs and providing new jobs and investment throughout the region. DWH is currently building Bollin Park in Wilmslow, comprising a range of attractive and spacious new family homes.

1.5 DWH has carried out an initial appraisal of the site and have confirmed that it represents an available, achievable, and suitable opportunity to deliver up to 90 new homes. Alderley Edge Parish Council undertook a Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire in March 2017 which was delivered to 2,500 residents. Residents responded to this questionnaire stating that they would like to see more car parking around the village centre.

Scope

1.6 This document confirms:

- **The Need** – a summary of the strategic drivers for new housing in Alderley Edge
- **The Opportunity** - an appreciation of the strategic constraints and opportunities for growth around Alderley Edge and why an expansion of the settlement to the north represents the best location for growth.
- **Site Suitability** – confirmation that the site is suitable for a housing allocation.
- **The Vision** – the place-making opportunity presented by the site, taking account of its individual constraints and opportunities.
- **Conclusion** - a summary of the benefits that can be realised through the proposed development.



Fig 2: Aerial Photograph of Site

The Need

National planning policy seeks to redress recognised housing shortages across the country by significantly boosting the supply of housing.

Cheshire East

2.1 The emerging LPS confirms that sufficient land will be provided in the borough to accommodate 36,000 new homes over the 20-year plan period (2010 and 2030)¹. This represents a significant step-change from the housing restraint policies that prevailed in the borough's previous development plans.

2.2 The LPS settlement hierarchy recognises that Local Service Centres (such as Alderley Edge) may be able to accommodate small scale growth in housing and employment where it supports the creation of stronger local communities.²

2.3 The LPS indicates that at least 3,500 new homes will be accommodated across all of the LSCs over the plan period, but stops short of apportioning an individual housing requirement to each settlement.³ This approach will inevitably result in development flowing to those LSCs with the least constraints; in particular those settlements beyond the Green Belt in the south of the borough. The evidence shows that this pattern is already occurring as around 70% of existing completions and commitments in the LSCs are in non-Green Belt settlements.

2.4 The Council claim that the existing completions and commitments in the LSCs already amount to 2,550 new homes. They have therefore indicated that the SADP will need to allocate land to accommodate around 1,125 new homes in those settlements.⁴

2.5 If this residual LSC requirement is allowed to be directed to the south of the borough, it will undermine the achievement of sustainable development across the plan and all of the northern LSCs. The Inspector has recognised **“that channelling too much development to areas beyond the North Cheshire Green Belt to the south of the borough would result in unsustainable patterns of development and commuting, and would not address the development needs of the northern settlements”**.⁵

Accordingly, it is necessary to take positive policy intervention in the emerging SADP to ensure an appropriate distribution of housing to each northern LSC having regard to the scale of the settlement, local housing needs, the range of facilities it contains and sustainability of its location.

2.6 National planning policy makes clear that when releasing land from the Green Belt, additional land should be released and safeguarded to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period. This will prevent Green Belt boundaries from being repeatedly amended every time a new development plan is prepared. The SADP will need to identify locations for safeguarded land around the key LSCs.

Alderley Edge

2.7 Alderley Edge is the third largest LSC in the borough and is in a highly sustainable location to accommodate further growth. It contains a good range of shops, facilities and social infrastructure, and benefits from a railway station with good accessibility and frequent services to Manchester and Macclesfield. This is confirmed by the Council's evidence⁶ which indicates that whilst Alderley Edge is identified as a LSC, its community, retail and transport facilities put it on a par with Key Service Centres; it is only a LSC because of its relatively small population which is due to Green Belt constraints to growth.

¹ Policy PG1, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

² Paragraph 8.34 & Policy PG2, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

³ Draft Policy PG6, Proposed Changes to the Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, March 2016

⁴ Table A.4, Proposed Changes to the Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, March 2016

⁵ Paragraph 43, Further Interim View, EIP Inspector, December 2015

⁶ Spatial Distribution Update Report, Appendix 20, Page 200 (AECOM, August 2015)

⁷ Paragraph 6.2.1, Green Belt Assessment Update, Arup, July 2015

2.8 The settlement is in an attractive and desirable area, with a high demand for new housing. The Council's evidence confirms that demand currently exceeds supply for all sizes of property in Alderley Edge⁷. This is compounded by very limited increases to the housing stock caused by the tightly drawn Green Belt and past policies of housing restraint.

2.9 The Council's evidence clearly points towards the opportunity and demand for new housing in Alderley Edge. If an appropriate scale of development is not delivered in the settlement it is likely to have severe consequences on its future sustainability, in particular:

- The population in the Alderley Edge is aging (24% of the village is aged 65+, this is well above the borough average⁸). Without suitable new housing stock to retain and attract young families the average age of the population will continue to rise and proportion of working age people will decline further. This will have adverse impacts on the local economy, the vitality of the local centre, and increase the burden on health-related services.
- The availability of affordable housing in Alderley Edge is extremely limited. The Council's evidence shows a significant pent up demand for more affordable accommodation in the settlement. Only 6.2% of households in Alderley Edge constitute affordable housing, significantly below the Cheshire East average (11.8%). As a consequence Alderley Edge has a significantly higher number of applications on the housing register than any other LSC.⁹
- The average house price in Alderley Edge is £334,000, which is well above the borough average of £181,000 and the LSC average of £284,900. A lack of suitable and affordable housing is a severe barrier to the aim of retaining and attracting young people and families to the settlement to support the local economy, facilities and services.

- A lack of new housing in the settlement is likely to drive house prices even higher due to the constrained supply. People in lower paid jobs may need to live elsewhere and commute into the area for work due to the lack of affordable and suitable housing. Lack of new housing has led to the redeveloping of existing residential plots which is considered locally to have had an unacceptable impact on character and appearance.
- Alderley Edge benefits from a relative abundance of local jobs (particularly at Alderley Park which lies to the south of the settlement), which has led to a significant level of net in-commuting. The remodelled Alderley Park is expected to provide approximate 2,650 jobs by the end of 2019¹⁰. 59% of in commuters travel from settlements within Cheshire East – including 18% from Macclesfield – with smaller proportions travelling from Manchester, Stockport, and Cheshire West and Chester. The delivery of new housing in the town will help to reduce the level of in-commuting and assist in decreasing congestion and pollution.

2.10 In summary, the Council's evidence indicates that there is an acute requirement for new housing in Alderley Edge. This is required to contribute generally to the borough's overall housing requirement, and more particularly the urgent and compelling need to address the issue of housing availability and affordability in Alderley Edge. It would be appropriate for the emerging plan to actively recognise the need for housing growth in Alderley Edge and that this will require Green Belt release on the edge of the settlement, including for safeguarded land. Suitable sites or locations for housing should be identified which are of an appropriate scale to address the needs of the settlement having regard to its status as an LSC. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Alderley Edge recognises the need for new housing in the town and has recently consulted the local community about the preferred locations for development to provide approximately 100 new homes.



Right: Existing apartments to the south of the Whitehall Meadow site

⁸ Appendix 20, Spatial Distribution Update Report, AECOM, July 2015

⁹ Appendix 20, Spatial Distribution Update Report, AECOM, July 2015

¹⁰ Appraisal of proposed Alderley Park Investment Fund, Five Lines, August 2014

The Opportunity

Alderley Edge is tightly bound by Green Belt and the Council's evidence confirms that the opportunity for new development on brownfield land is severely limited.

3.1 The Council's Brownfield Register, published in December 2017, indicates that there is only sufficient previously developed land available within the settlement boundary to accommodate 14 new homes.¹¹

3.2 The distinct absence of brownfield land combined with the compelling need for new housing in Alderley Edge (see Section 2), indicates that exceptional circumstances exist to review the Green Belt boundary around the settlement to accommodate new housing. This point is recognised in the emerging LPS which explicitly states that small alterations¹² to the Green Belt to accommodate non-strategic sites (ie. less than 150 dwellings)¹³, will be made in the emerging SADP. Sites which can be released and designated as safeguarded land will also need to be identified.

3.3 The Council's evidence indicates that there are three broad potential locations for new housing around Alderley Edge (see **Figure 3**). These opportunities primarily lie to the north and west of the settlement due to the prevailing topographic, flood risk and nature conversation constraints to the south and east.

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire published by the Parish Council in March 2017 asked local residents to consider the potential sites for new housing in Alderley Edge. The community selected Whitehall Meadow is one of its preferred sites for development.

Green Belt

3.5 All of the potential development locations around Alderley Edge will result in expansion of the settlement and encroachment into Green Belt. The Council's Green Belt Assessment classifies the locations as making either a significant or major contribution to the purposes of Green Belt with those to the north judged to make a greater contribution in light of the relative proximity of Wilmslow to Alderley Edge. However, the Green Belt assessment is relatively simplistic and relates to broad areas of land rather than specific potential development parcels.

3.6 A more detailed Green Belt appraisal of all of the specific development options around Alderley Edge has been prepared by Sweco. It identifies that a minor incursion into Green Belt north of Alderley Edge will have no discernible impact in terms of narrowing the gap between the settlement and Wilmslow. Indeed, development of the land under option to DWH would not result in the built up area of Alderley Edge getting physically closer to Wilmslow than any existing development. The land has strongly defined boundaries, such that its development would not result in unrestricted encroachment into the open countryside and will maintain the separate and distinct identities of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow.

3.7 There are other potential options for development around Alderley Edge. However, these would be likely to result in a much greater encroachment into the open countryside and a sense of urban sprawl away from the core of the settlement. Land to the west of Alderley Edge also has a stronger relationship with the town's historic core.

3.8 Loss of Green Belt and impact on its five main purposes is just one factor to be taken into consideration when identifying locations and making allocations for development. Other important considerations to be weighed in the balance include technical and environmental constraints, sustainability of sites and appropriateness of scale. There are all important factors to be considered in the round when determining the appropriate direction and scale of growth for Alderley Edge.

¹¹ Assessment of the Urban Potential of the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres and Possible Development Sites Adjacent to Those Settlements, Cheshire East Council, August 2015 [Examination Document PS E039, PS E039b]

¹² Paragraph 8.30, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

¹³ Policy PG3, Local Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Council, July 2017

- KEY
- Site
 - Green Belt / settlement boundary
 - Other potential development areas
 - Grade I listed building
 - Railway / station
 - Alderley Edge centre
 - Higher ground / landscape of special county value
 - SSSI
 - Flood zone 2/3

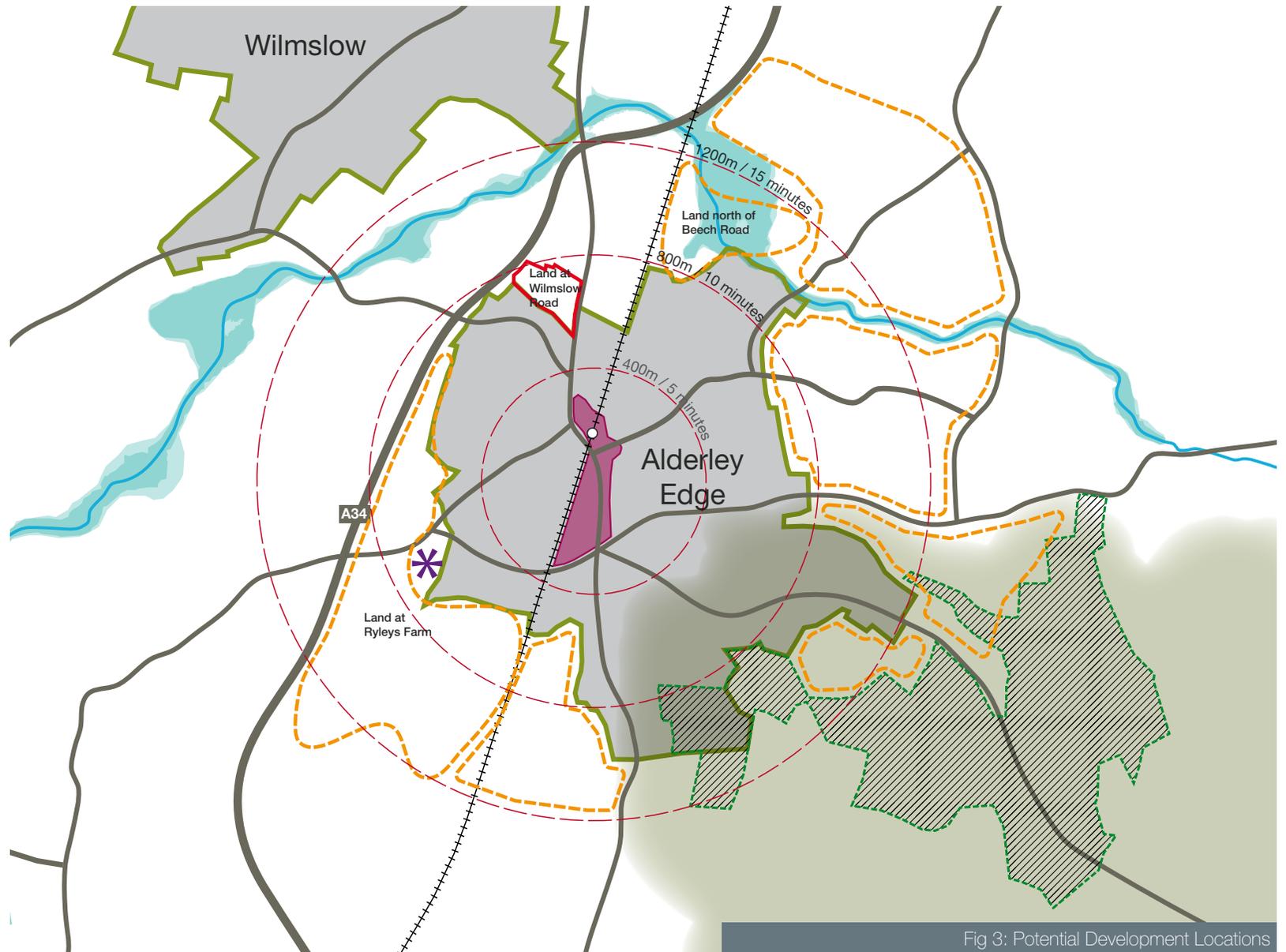


Fig 3: Potential Development Locations

Landscape Appraisal

3.9 SWECO has undertaken a landscape appraisal of the Site and five other areas of land at Alderley Edge. It considers each in respect of their contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge and concludes that:

- The site does not make a significant or critical contribution to the Green Belt purposes;
- The adverse landscape and visual effects of residential development at the Site would be limited and acceptable; and
- The Site does not make a critical or significant contribution to the Green Belt purposes.

3.10 The Landscape Appraisal considers in particular the extent to which a 'green gap' exists between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow to the north, and the extent to which such a gap – if it does exist – would be compromised by the residential development of the Site. It concludes that:

- There is not a clear area of open countryside that forms a 'gap' between the two settlements in the vicinity of the Site. The area between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow has already been "...substantially compromised..." given the existing development in the area and along Alderley Road; and
- Even if it were consider that such a 'gap' did exist, due to its specific location and limited extent the Site would not make a critical contribution to it which would merit protection.

3.11 As such, the residential development of the Site is suitable in landscape terms and would not preclude the retention of an area of Green Belt to the north of the Site.

Sustainable Location

3.12 New development sites should be located in the most accessible locations, which are well related to public transport links and within convenient walking distance to jobs, shops and services. **Figure 3** indicates that the Wilmslow Road location is the most conveniently located housing opportunity around Alderley Edge. The site is sustainably located just 400m from the railway station and the edge of the local centre which can be accessed via existing pedestrian footpaths. The alternative potential locations for housing are located further away from these facilities and pedestrian walking routes to them are much more convoluted.

3.13 Public transport routes (buses) also run along Wilmslow Road providing direct access into the village centre and employment opportunities in nearby towns and the Greater Manchester conurbation.

3.14 The site could include an area of parking to the south to support the operation of the nearby town centre and rail station. This would alleviate existing parking issues in the town. DWH would develop a 50 space car park, which would be transferred to the Parish Council following its completion. It would then be managed by an independent car park operator. There are various potential management arrangements to consider, such as a joint venture between the operator and the Parish Council in which the income generated from the car park is shared between both parties.

Technical Constraints

3.15 Land around Alderley Edge is subject to a number of significant technical constraints posing limits to where new development can be delivered (see Figure 3):

- Land to the north-east of the settlement is at risk from flooding¹⁴. Both the Framework and NPPG advise that it is not appropriate to consider this land for housing development when there are sequentially preferable and suitable alternatives available that have a lower probability of flooding (such as the site at Wilmslow Road)

¹⁴ Environment Agency Flood Zones 2 and 3

- Land to the east / south-east of the settlement comprises steep wooded slopes which are undevelopable, and designated as a landscape of “special county value”.
- Land to the west of the town provides an attractive open green setting to Chorley Old Hall which is a Grade I listed building. Development in close proximity to the hall will need to take account of the impact on the setting of this nationally important heritage asset.

Scale of Development

3.16 It is important that any sites identified for expansion of Alderley Edge are of an appropriate scale for the settlement. The Parish Council has identified that approximately 100 new homes would be an acceptable amount for the settlement and is planning for that level of development in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

3.17 In that context it is worth noting that the DWH site at Whitehall Meadow can accommodate around 90 new homes which represents a balanced expansion to meet local needs within the capacity of existing infrastructure, and appropriate to the urban form of Alderley Edge. It may be possible to bring the development forward in phases, so that one part gets developed before another.

3.18 The alternative potential locations for housing sites around Alderley Edge are all much larger in scale. The March 2017 Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire identifies that some of them are over 10ha in size and are capable of accommodating several hundred new homes. The other sites are less well-related to the settlement than Whitehall Meadow in terms of scale and urban form.

Right: DWH development at Bollin Park, Wilmslow

Conclusion

3.19 Analysis of a range of factors demonstrates that a modest expansion of the settlement on land to the north of Alderley Edge, that does not result in any significant incursion into Green Belt or narrowing of the gap between it and Wilmslow, represents the most appropriate direction for growth of the settlement. It is the most sustainable location for development and compared to other locations, would have the least adverse impacts on the Green Belt and surrounding landscape.



Site Suitability

This section demonstrates that the site is a suitable location for a new residential allocation by having regard to the selection criteria used by the Council in the LPS.

Is the site Available?

4.1 The site is being actively promoted by DWH who have secured a legal interest over all of the land. There are no legal or ownership problems, such as multiple ownerships, ransom strips, tenancies, or operational requirements of landowners that would prevent the site from being brought forward for housing at the earliest opportunity.

Is the site Achievable?

4.2 Alderley Edge is one of the most popular and desirable places in Cheshire East to live and it has an urgent need for new housing. The site is therefore viable and DWH are committed to deliver new market and affordable housing on the site at the earliest opportunity.

Is the site Suitable?

Impact on the Settlement and its Urban Form

4.3 The site is contiguous with existing urban area and is enclosed by mature landscaping and existing roads (permanent and defensible boundaries). Development on the site would round off the settlement and not result in any coalescence between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow to the north. As a result, the scale of the development represents a logical and controlled expansion of the existing settlement that will not harm its character or urban form.

4.4 Existing residential buildings currently form a strong building line along part of the southern site boundary, and therefore to the existing settlement edge. New development could create a softer edge to the settlement.

4.5 There is no townscape reason to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.



Landscape, Trees and Hedgerows

4.6 The site is not within or in close proximity to any local or national landscape designations.

4.7 It includes a number of good quality trees and hedgerows which screen the site from the wider landscape. Where possible these features can be retained by designing the development to cause minimal disruption. It could also be possible to enhance the landscape through supplementary planting in appropriate locations.

4.8 There is no landscape or arboricultural reasons to prevent the site being allocated for residential development.

Compatibility with Neighbouring Land Uses

4.9 The site is contiguous with an existing residential area and the provision of additional housing could be wholly compatible with the neighbouring land use.

Below: Panoramic view of the site from the existing site entrance showing the prominence of existing development on the edge of the settlement



Highways and Accessibility

4.10 The site benefits from approximately 200 metres of frontage on to Wilmslow Road where vehicular access into the site can be achieved via a standard priority controlled junction. Additionally a car park access can also be achieved off Wilmslow Road without having an impact upon the existing trees, which contribute to the streetscene. This has been corroborated by the transport appraisal undertaken by Crofts which has demonstrated that both accesses can be achieved off Wilmslow Road without the need to remove any trees. Wilmslow Road is also of sufficient width to accommodate two-way traffic and the modest level of development on the site could be accommodated without severe harm to the local transport network.

4.11 The site can connect with existing pedestrian footways to provide convenient access to the railway station and the local centre.

4.12 All of the site is within 400m of an existing bus stop.

4.13 There are no identified highway constraints that would prevent the site being developed for residential purposes. The site is also capable of accommodating a small car park which will be served by a separate access towards the south of the Wilmslow Road frontage.

4.14 The nearby town centre and rail station have parking constraints. On street parking associated with business uses in the local area can be a nuisance, and the lack of parking constrains footfall in the town centre and journeys by rail.

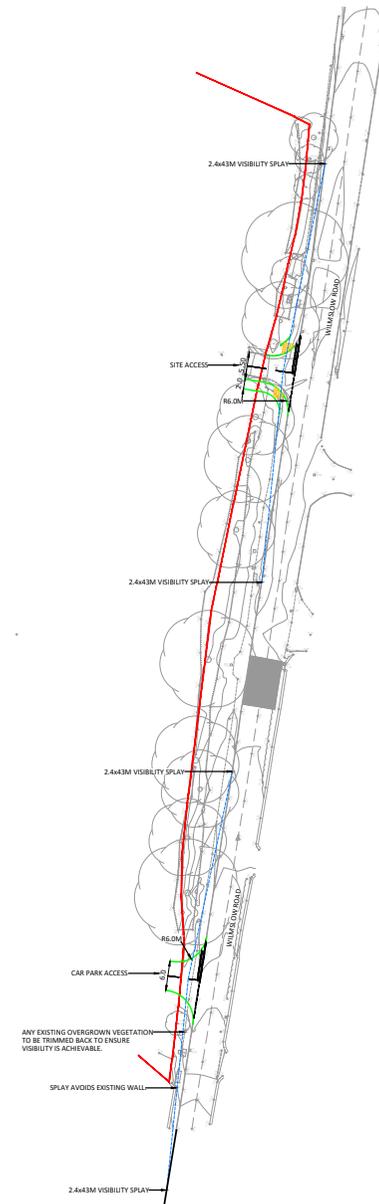


Fig 4: Proposed Access Plan

KEY

- Site
- Key roads
- Railway line / station
- Bus route / bus stop
- Pedestrian link from site to centre
- School
- Recreation space
- Alderley Edge centre
- Conservation area
- Council-owned land
- Grade I listed building

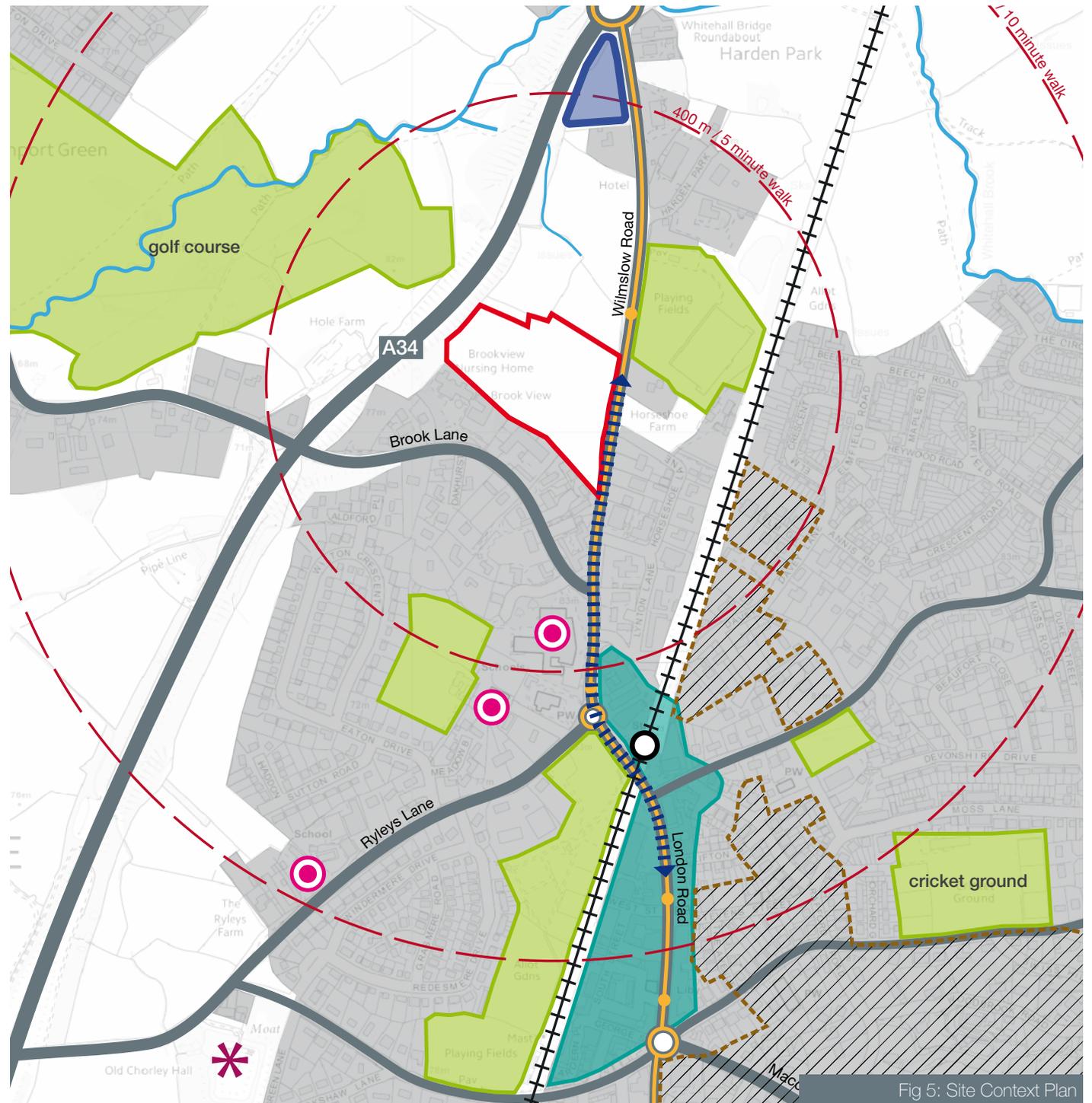


Fig 5: Site Context Plan

Noise

4.15 The only potential noise source is from traffic on the A34 and Wilmslow Road to the west and east of the site respectively. The A34 is in cutting where it abuts the site and this helps to provide some degree of noise attenuation. Any residual noise impact of road traffic can be effectively mitigated through the use of good practice in scheme layout design, orientation of dwellings and use of appropriate construction materials. If necessary, acoustic bunds, fencing or landscaping can be incorporated.

4.16 Overall, there are no insurmountable noise constraints to prevent the site being allocated for residential development

Air Quality

4.17 The site does not lie within an Air Quality Management Area and the modest scale of development will not give rise to adverse air quality impacts in its own right.

4.18 There is no air quality reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Heritage

4.19 The Whitehall Meadow site is not situated adjacent or near to any listed buildings, conservation areas or other heritage assets.

4.21 There is no heritage reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Ecology

4.21 The site does not form part of, or is adjacent to, any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. Surveys will be carried out to identify the potential for any protected habitats and species and biodiversity enhancement.

4.22 Subject to standard mitigation, there is no ecological reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Flooding and Drainage

4.23 The site rises gently from the south to the north. The Environment Agency Flood Maps confirm that the site is at low risk from flooding (Flood Zone 1). The layout and drainage strategy for development can be designed carefully to minimise flood risk and promote sustainable drainage.

4.24 There is no flood risk reason to preclude the site being allocated for residential development.

Utilities

4.25 The site is adjacent to a well-established residential area and has the potential to connect with existing services including electricity, gas, water, sewerage and telecoms services.

Social Infrastructure

4.26 Suitable provision can be made for the social infrastructure needs created by the proposal, such as local school places. If it is necessary, the proposed development can mitigate any effects of the development on existing social infrastructure through a binding legal agreement as part of a future planning application,

Summary

4.27 The site has been assessed against the Council's own site selection criteria. This analysis demonstrates that it is available for development and is situated in a viable market area. The site is also suitable for development, meaning there are no technical or environmental constraints that would prevent housing from being delivered on the site.

KEY

-  Site
-  Existing trees
-  Existing site access point - potential to be upgraded
-  Proposed access road
-  Existing buildings
-  Existing 3 storey buildings
-  Existing embankment and screening to bypass
-  Gentle slope up towards northern boundary
-  Consideration of views / proximity of existing residential buildings
-  Opportunity to create a softer village edge
-  Opportunity to enhance screening / buffer to A34
-  Potential secondary access serve new car park

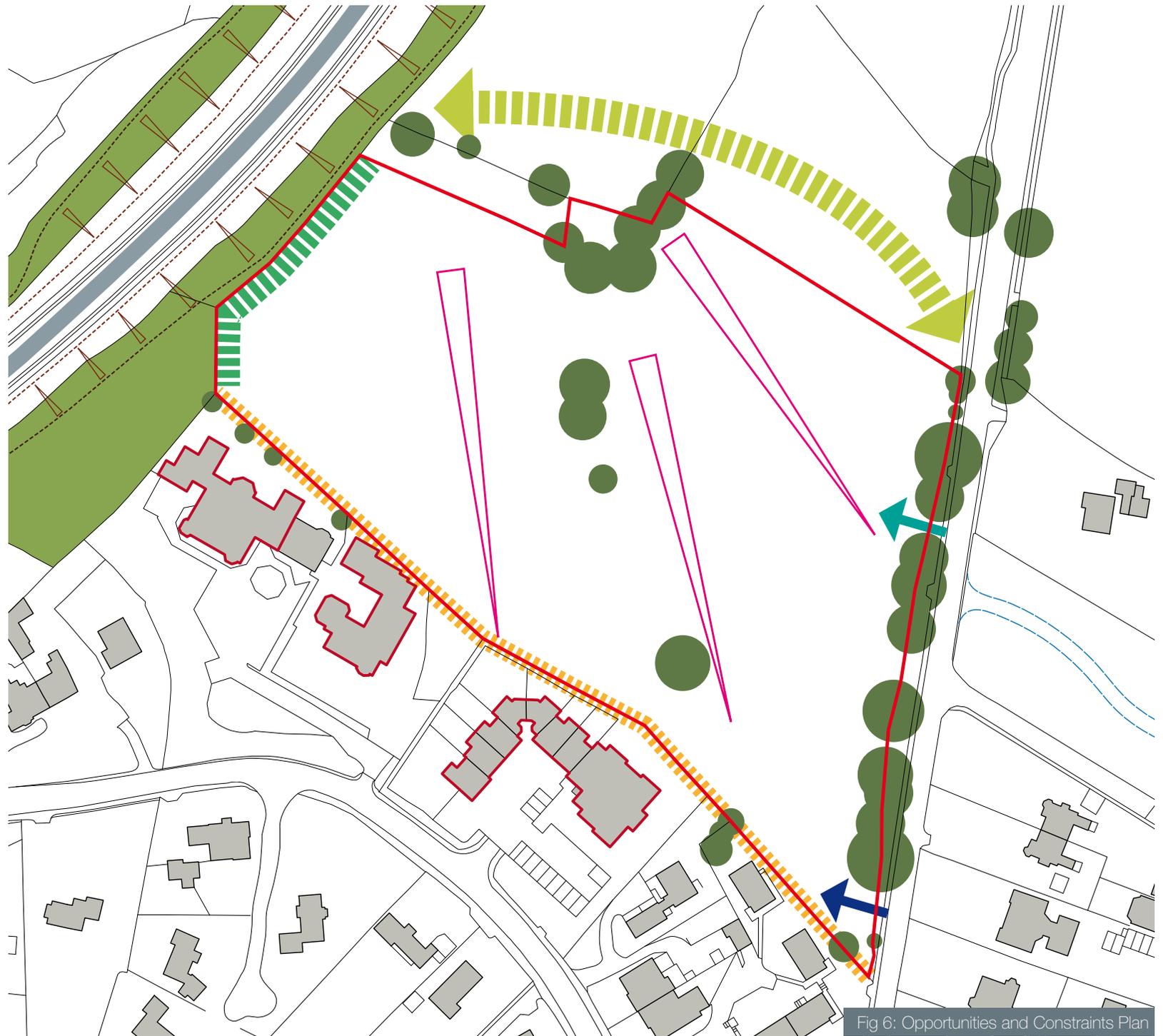


Fig 6: Opportunities and Constraints Plan

The Vision

05

Design Principles and Objectives

5.1 The influences in the previous chapter have informed the following design principles and objectives for the site, to:

- Bring forward high quality residential development in an attractive landscape, retaining existing trees and creating new areas of public open space
- Respect the amenity and views of existing adjacent residents to the south west
- Create a new, softer settlement edge to the north.

Creating a Development Framework

5.2 The following series of diagrams – or ‘mastersteps’ – demonstrate how the development potential of the site has been informed by the opportunities and constraints identified in this report.



1. Retention of Site Assets

- Retain key tree groups as a starting point for development, particularly along Wilmslow Road to retain the street's leafy character.

2. Residential Amenity

- Consideration of proximity of existing 3 and 3.5 storey residential properties to the immediate south west
- Development blocks should allow views through the site towards open land to the north.



3. Landscape Framework

- Areas of public open space located around the existing mature trees within the site
- Additional planting towards the south western boundary, providing screening/buffer to existing residential; to the north western boundary, providing additional screening to the A34; and to the northern boundary, creating a soft edge to the settlement.



4. Movement Network

- A clear movement strategy has been developed to create a permeable network of streets and spaces within the site, with priority for pedestrians and cyclists
- Access into the site is to be taken from an existing point on Wilmslow Road
- A clear network of streets and spaces create views through the development to the open land to the north, and towards POS within the site
- An area of parking to the south would support the operation of the nearby town centre and rail station.



5. Development Parcels

- Frontage to Wilmslow Road, set back behind existing trees, gradually set further back from the street moving northwards, to reflect the open setting to the north
- Low density / informal layout towards the northern boundary; higher density / more formal layout towards the south west and west
- Respect the amenity and privacy of existing adjacent dwellings. Minimum interface distances to be observed with additional planting
- Frontages are created to all streets and spaces
- An area of designated land to the west which could meet longer-term development needs.



Development Framework

5.3 The resulting development framework plan demonstrates how the site can be structured to form a well-connected, accessible development which responds to the site's existing landscape assets, while creating a softer settlement edge.

5.4 The illustrative masterplan opposite demonstrates how the site can potentially accommodate around 90 dwellings.

5.5 Dwelling frontages define and overlook streets and spaces to create a legible and safe development. Where existing dwellings lie close to the site boundary, minimum interface distances will be observed to ensure the privacy and outlook of existing dwellings is respected.

5.6 Towards the northern boundary, lower density dwellings will create a softer, informal edge. With appropriate planting/screening along this boundary, a gentle transition between the urban edge of Alderley Edge and open land to the north is achieved.

5.7 The site could also provide an area of parking towards the south, accessed off Wilmslow Road. This would be publicly accessible to people using the nearby town centre and rail station, which currently have insufficient parking. The site would therefore support the viability and vitality of Alderley Edge as a local service centre.



Safeguarded land for longer-term needs

KEY

- Site boundary
- Existing trees to be retained
- Development parcel / frontage
- Development area
- Public open space
- Primary street
- Secondary street / shared surface
- Footpath / cycle link
- Landscape buffer
- Tree planting / screening

Fig 7: Illustrative Masterplan

Illustrative Layout

5.8 Informed by the design principles set out earlier in this document, an illustrative masterplan has been prepared to demonstrate how 50 new dwellings can be delivered on the eastern part of the site. The indicative mix is as follows:

- 22 no. 4 bedroom detached houses
- 13 no. 4 bedroom townhouses
- 15 no. 2 bedroom apartments.

Layout and Access

5.9 The development parcels are set out in the form of perimeter blocks, creating natural surveillance to streets and spaces. The layout also creates a frontage to Wilmslow Road; the proposed car park to the south; and to open land to the north.

5.10 Access into the development is from Wilmslow Road. Buildings frame views through the site towards the west. A secondary route serves the two development parcels to the north, which are served by shared drives, forming a soft, informal frontage to the north. In order to limit the impact of cars on the street, parking within these two blocks is generally accommodated in integral garages or garages/parking spaces set back from the street.

5.11 Most of the southern development parcel is served via a secondary route which leads to a shared parking area to the rear of the block, also minimising the impact of cars on the street scene.

Scale and Grain

5.12 To reflect the transition from the existing urban area, which is characterised by larger footprints and buildings up to three storeys in height, to the more open landscape setting to the north; the grain of the indicative development change from higher density / larger footprints towards the southern boundary; to lower density / smaller footprints towards the northern boundary. The height of the indicative proposals also reflects this transition, with three storey apartments towards the south; and 2.5 and two storeys towards the north.

Landscape and Environment

5.13 A key principle in the approach to development at Whitehall Meadow is to retain the existing landscape character of the site. Mature trees towards the centre and northern boundary of the site have been retained, together with majority of the trees along Wilmslow Road.

5.14 The existing landscape character of the site is further enhanced by the retention of a generous green buffer around the perimeter of the development.

Character and Identity

5.15 In accordance with Cheshire East's Borough Design Guide, new development should reflect the positive aspects of local character, such as detailing and materials. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Alderley Edge also picks up on the importance of 'enhancing the culture, identity and character' of the area.

5.16 Buildings are set back from Wilmslow Road behind the existing mature trees, reflecting the existing built form and landscape character of the area. Glimpsed views of the development are offered through the existing trees.

5.17 The suggested house types reflect the villas and larger houses characteristic of Alderley Edge in terms of their scale, architectural features and detailing. Typical materials in the area include red brick, stone and render, which are incorporated into the emerging proposals (as shown on the CGIs across the following pages).

5.18 The emerging proposals demonstrate the opportunity for a unique development which reflects the positive character of the local area, whilst creating a new identity for the Whitehall Meadow site.

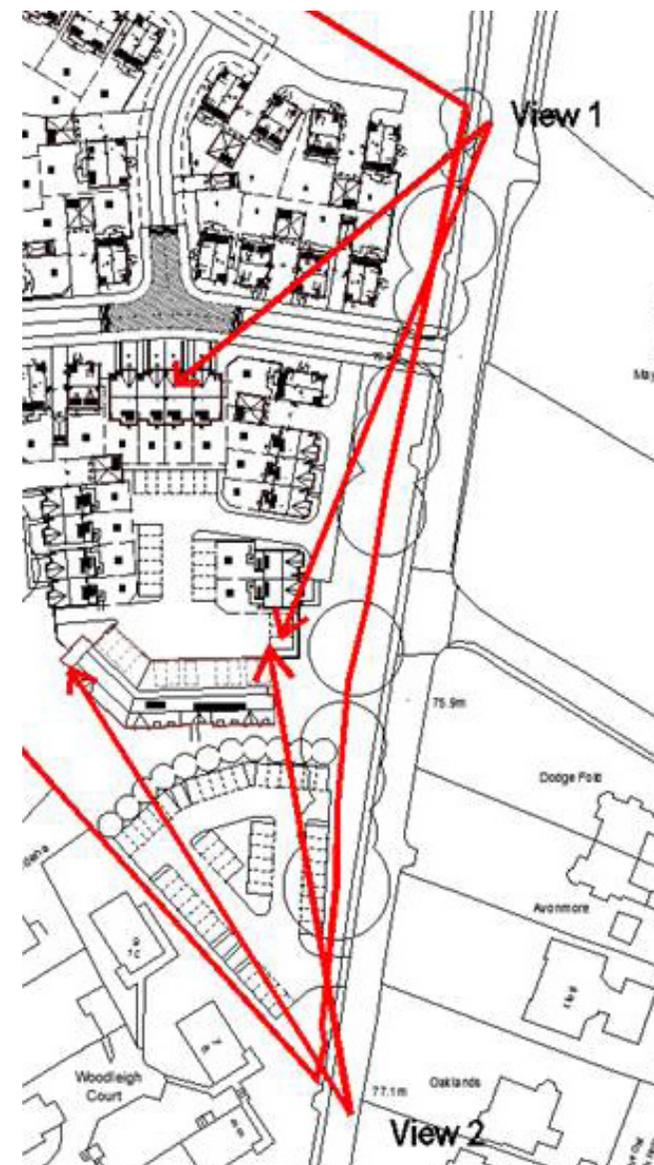


Fig 9: Location of views (see pages 26-27)



Fig 10: 'The Hesketh' - 3 storey townhouse



Fig 11: CGI View 1



Fig 12: CGI View 2

Conclusion

The local plan process, including the supporting evidence base, has identified the requirement to increase the overall level of housing provision across the borough, but also the pressing need to deliver new homes in LSCs in the north, such as Alderley Edge, to satisfy local housing needs and affordability issues.

6.1 Alderley Edge is one of the largest LSCs in the borough; it is located in close proximity to key employment locations and transport connectivity (road, rail and air).

6.2 A modest expansion of Alderley Edge to the north is the most appropriate solution having regard to Green Belt, technical, environmental and sustainability factors and scale of development. Allocation of the Whitehall Meadow site in the SADP will provide an opportunity to deliver around 90 new homes in this location. The site is available, achievable and suitable.

6.3 An illustrative masterplan has been prepared based on initial technical analysis of the site. This demonstrates that the site is suitable for development and is deliverable.

6.4 The scale of the development that can be achieved on the site is appropriate to the needs of Alderley Edge in the context of the emerging development plan strategy. Alternative sites would be more harmful particularly in terms of encroachment into Green Belt and impact on heritage and flood risk.

6.5 The site has the backing of nation's largest housebuilder and is deliverable in the short term, offering social, environmental and economic benefits to the settlement, including:

- The scheme can make an important contribution to local housing need, helping to attract new families to the town and improving the availability and affordability of housing in Alderley Edge.
- The proposed development can offer a balanced mix of dwellings, providing a choice of type and size in response to the identified housing demand. 30% of the new homes will be affordable, in accordance with the relevant policy of the LPS.
- The scheme can mitigate and adapt to future climate change through sustainable design and a commitment to deliver high quality, energy efficient homes.
- A landscaping strategy for the site that can allow for ecological and bio-diversity enhancements and soften the edge of the settlement.
- A parking area to support the operation of the nearby town centre.



For further information contact

Sam Ryan

sam.ryan@turley.co.uk

**Appendix 3: Landscape and Visual Appraisal,
(Sweco) (August 2018)**

Final report

Alderley Edge

Cheshire East

Landscape Study

Appraisal of residential site allocation options

Sweco UK Limited
Abbey House, 4th Floor
33 Booth Street
Manchester, M2 3LW
+44 161 927 4810



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is currently considering options for allocating land on the periphery of Alderley Edge for residential development. In all cases land would require release from the Green Belt given its tightly drawn boundary around the existing urban area.

In parallel, Alderley Edge Parish Council (AEPC) is promoting completion of a Neighbourhood Plan to help ensure that allocation decisions taken by CEC reflect local views.

The purpose of the report is to consider the relative merits of different areas of land around the periphery of Alderley Edge for Green Belt release and for allocation for residential development. The study has been led by a professionally qualified landscape architect who is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). The different options for the potential growth of the town are considered from two principal perspectives:

- The likely landscape and visual effects of residential development - this is referred to as the landscape and visual suitability of different areas of land around the periphery of the town to successfully accommodate residential development; and
- The contribution of the different areas of land to the five purposes of Green Belt designation – this acknowledges that Green Belt is not a landscape designation and focuses on how release might affect the effectiveness and integrity of Green Belt policy as it applies in this location.

These two perspectives are distinct and conclusions are drawn separately for each. The former takes a landscape and visual perspective to understand how residential development might affect the character and value of the landscape resource and people’s visual amenity. The latter focuses on land use, the purposes of Green Belt policy and the maintenance of the essential characteristics of Green Belts which are their openness and permanence (paragraph 133 of the NPPF, July 2018). However, the report also concludes with a combined professional judgement as to the overall relative suitability of different areas of land around the periphery of the town.

1.2 Scope and approach

The report comprises the following sections:

- **Section 2** introduces **the landscape setting of Alderley Edge** and seeks to identify landscape features or characteristics that help to define the natural limits to the potential growth of the town (i.e. lines beyond which growth of the town might fundamentally alter its character and its relationship to its setting).
- **Section 3** undertakes **an assessment of 42 parcels of land around the periphery of the town** to provide a consistent and comprehensive overview of its options for growth.

- Drawing on the conclusions reached in Section 3, **Section 4** then focuses in more detail on a number of **sites that are known to be the subject of proposed development** (i.e. competing sites for residential allocation).

2 The landscape setting of Alderley Edge

2.1 Introduction

This Section of the report provides a general overview of the landscape setting of Alderley Edge. The purpose of this introduction is to identify ways in which landform, hydrology and landcover help to define the relationship between the town and its landscape setting and may help to identify ways in which growth could be accommodated without adversely changing this relationship. These aspects of the landscape setting of the town are illustrated by Figure 1.

2.2 Landform

Eponymously the location of the town is defined by its position adjacent the distinctive topographical feature of Alderley Edge. The Edge comprises a substantial and steeply sided landform to the south east of the centre of the town that provides both a prominent wooded backdrop to the town and extensive views over the Cheshire Plain and towards the Pennines to the west and north. The town centre sits at the lower elevation on the edge of the Cheshire Plain with the current settlement limits taking in a combination of both elevated and low-lying areas. Large scale and often older development extends up the slopes of 'The Edge' and the visibility of these more elevated areas helps to define the town's distinct built and landscape character. The existing elevated town edges that relate to this topography to the west of Congleton Road to the south of the town and to the north of Mottram Road to the east of the town are important to its distinct character.

Land to the west and north of the town is in large part low lying within the Cheshire Plain. There are however subtle variations that influence how development in different areas might affect the setting of the town:

- Open areas to the south and to the north east of the town are slightly more elevated with lower ground principally located to the north west; and
- Although some areas appear relatively flat, distinct undulations and low hills are found in several locations, especially near the A34 road corridor which meanders through them.

The current footprint of the town generally avoids these low landforms and, other than at the Edge itself, generally extends over lower ground.

2.3 Watercourses

The topographical context influences the local hydrology with two influential watercourses located to the north and to the west of the existing settlement footprint:

- To the north Whitehall Brook forms a natural boundary between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow. No part of the existing town extends to the north of this watercourse which in many places also marks the Parish boundary.

- A minor watercourse flows to the south west of the town. Sometimes hardly visible on the ground, it nevertheless provides a similar function to Whitehall Brook.

These hydrological features delineate a subtle topographical change of aspect. The town generally extends over land with a subtle south western, western and northern aspect running down to these two watercourses from the elevated ground of 'The Edge'.

2.4 Landcover

Figure 1 shows areas of tree cover around the town which are greater than 10m high. This is derived from BlueSky National Tree Map (NTM) data but with lower vegetation removed. A focus on vegetation which is more than 10m high helps to illustrate the relative levels of visual enclosure provided by landcover. The analysis illustrates:

- The very open nature of the landscape in parts of the north east and south west which comprise continuous tracts of extensive and very open countryside.
- The location of smaller field parcels with greater visual enclosure often located around the immediate periphery of the town. Such field parcels are not found in all locations and in some places the larger scale open countryside extends to the settlement limits without a buffer of smaller and more enclosed parcels.
- The generally higher levels of tree cover located to the north west towards Wilmslow. This is associated with a range of what can broadly be described as urban fringe land uses between the two towns including dispersed residential properties, major highway corridor, a golf course, school, hotels, public houses and playing fields.

The relationship of this tree cover to areas of more fragmented field pattern on the periphery of Alderley Edge marks where the finer grain and more enclosed character has been more heavily influenced by proximity to the town. A distinction can be drawn between larger parcels of continuous and open agricultural countryside and those areas of land on the periphery of the town which are undeveloped but nevertheless have a more settled character. These may comprise small fragmented fields and paddocks, parkland influences associated with larger older properties and in some cases a slight sense of suburbanisation.

It is nevertheless acknowledged that some of these parcels of land which have a partially settled character derived from their proximity to the town can also be areas of less intensively farmed and relatively high landscape value which, in their current open state, sometimes make an important contribution to the landscape setting of the town (these areas are in addition to the locally designated Area of Special County Value which protects the elevated landscape to the south east – see section 2.6 below). This is often particularly the case where these smaller scale open parcels relate to larger properties and the older, possibly more historic, parts of the town which make a special contribution to local distinctiveness (for example west of Congleton Road on the south west side of the town and north of Mottram Road and Moss Road on the north-east side of the town).

2.5 Landscape character

The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (2008) identifies that the following landscape types are found around the periphery of Alderley Edge:

- Landscape Character Type 9 – Estate, Woodland & Meres (EWM) – The elevated areas to the south east of the town around ‘The Edge’.
- Landscape Character Type 10: Lower Farms and Woods – Generally lower lying countryside of the Cheshire Plain to the north and west of the town.

The location and extent of these landscape types is identified by Figure 2.

Landscape Character Type 9 – Estate, Woodland & Meres (EWM)

EWM is described as containing a concentration of historic estates and associated features, a high density of woodland, numerous mosses and meres. Topography is described as ranging from flat to undulating with occasional steeper slopes. The visual characteristics of EWM include reference to *“the predominance of mature woodland blocks and individual parkland trees, resulting in a substantial degree of enclosure and creating a small to medium scale landscape”*. Views from ‘The Edge’ are noted as *“particularly striking and extend beyond the Bollin Valley to encompass the Manchester-Stockport conurbation and the Pennine Hills beyond”* (a photograph provided within Appendix C demonstrates an example of this view within the context of this study).

Landscape Character Type 10 – Lower Farms and Woods (LFW)

LFW is described as a gently rolling landscape with greater concentrations of woodland (compared to the Lowland Plain Landscape Character Type), a slightly higher settlement density and a mix of arable and pasture. In terms of the visual characteristics, LFW is *“characterised by a medium scale landscape, with local variations dependent upon the presence of woodland and the condition of hedgerows. Local increases in vegetation are often associated with larger brooks or minor watercourses... a great variety in the range of available views but they are often limited in extent due to the lack of elevated vantage points”*. The study includes references to views of the prominent wooded escarpment of Alderley Edge and the urban influences of the Manchester-Crewe railway and the busy Handforth-Wilmslow Bypass and how *“the noise generated by both rail and railway can be intrusive and the roofs of residential properties can be glimpsed amongst mature trees”*.

2.6 Landscape designations

The Local Development Plan identifies a local landscape designation to the south east of Alderley Edge. The designation is an Area of Special County Value (ASCV), a historic Cheshire County policy designation adopted in the 1970s. The southern and eastern periphery of Alderley Edge falls within the “Bollin Valley and Parklands” ASCV. Its extent is shown on Figure 2. Its designation reflects the following valued features and characteristics identified within an appraisal undertaken in May 2013: intact and high quality rural landscape, historic parkland estates, undulating landscape with wooded backdrop focal points and the Alderley Edge wooded sandstone escarpment.

There is a close correlation between the extent of the identified landscape character areas and the local landscape designation (see Figure 2). Where there is inconsistency, principally an area of land to the south of the town (an area to the south of Whitebarn Road that falls within the Area of Special County Value but outside of the EWM character type), a site visit has been undertaken during which it was confirmed that no significant area of landscape which might be able to successfully accommodate residential development had been included within the Area of Special County Value.

2.7 The Green Belt at Alderley Edge

A Green Belt has been designated which extends around all sides of Alderley Edge. The boundary of the Green Belt generally extends up to the existing settlement footprint with no significant areas of open land around its periphery excluded from protection. Some areas of ribbon development to the west and south of the town (such as along the Brook Lane to the west of the A34) are washed over by the designation.

The purposes of Green Belt designation have remained broadly consistent over many decades and are re-stated in paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2018). The essential characteristics of Green Belts are re-stated as their openness and permanence such that release from Green Belt should only take place in exceptional and fully evidenced circumstances. A particular purpose of the Green Belt at Alderley Edge has been to prevent it merging with the neighbouring town of Wilmslow to the north west. The degree to which any real gap between the two towns persists today is a theme which runs through this report.

3 Assessment of the periphery of the town

3.1 Introduction

This Section of the report provides a consistent and comprehensive assessment of land around the periphery of Alderley Edge that could be subject to potential allocation for residential development. The scope of the assessment comprises:

- The landscape and visual implications of residential development (the suitability of different areas to potentially successfully accommodate low-rise residential development); and
- The contribution of different areas of land to the five defined purposes of Green Belt designation.

3.2 Study area

The study area for this general assessment of the periphery of the town comprises all areas of designated Green Belt located within 500m of the current settlement boundary (as defined by the Green Belt boundary which encircles the town) but which fall outside of the locally designated Area of Special County Value on the south-eastern side of the town. A site visit to the south-eastern periphery of the town included within the local landscape designation confirmed that it should be treated as a hard constraint to potential allocation and should therefore be excluded from the assessment. Contiguous areas of built up development within the Green Belt comprising residential plots (including gardens) were also been excluded from the study area. The study area is shown on Figure 3. This study area is considered to capture all land around the immediate periphery of Alderley Edge that is likely to be subject to promotion for allocation for residential development.

3.3 Identification of assessment parcels

Land within the study area was divided into parcels to enable assessment. The starting point for parcel identification was the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment update of 2015. This was a broad-brush study undertaken over a very wide area and a finer grain of assessment was considered necessary to better understand options for growth at Alderley Edge. 42 parcels were identified. In many cases these comprise individual fields but some fields were amalgamated where there was little landcover on the ground to divide them (e.g. a simple, open fence line). The identified parcels strike a balance between a reasonably fine grain of assessment and a manageable number. They are mapped on Figure 3. The assessment parcels are either the same as, or subdivisions of, those used in the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update of 2015 (i.e. no parcel assessed in this study crosses the boundary between two used in the earlier and broader brush work undertaken at District level).

3.4 Assessment criteria

Using a combination of desk top analysis and site visits during which each parcel was assessed from a single publicly accessible vantage point, each parcel of land was subject to a simple qualitative assessment with reference to the following criteria. These criteria were used to guide and assist structured and consistent assessment. The weight attributed to each of the listed criteria was variable reflecting the need for an overall professional view.

Landscape and visual criteria

Each land parcel was assessed with reference to a consistent set of landscape and visual suitability criteria. The following landscape and visual criteria were adopted.

TABLE 1: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria	Comments
Landform	The ability of the landform to successfully accommodate appropriate growth of the town for residential development. This was a rounded judgement which included consideration of elevation; gradient; aspect including the topographical relationship of the land to the existing extent of the town; and any enclosure that might be achieved through topography. In this context an easily developable flat site was not necessarily considered to be preferable in terms of landform.
Watercourses	Whether the land parcel lies within the alignments formed by notable watercourses that help to define the natural settlement limits of Alderley Edge (see Section 2). This consideration has a connection with aspect in that land between the existing town and these watercourses has a subtly different aspect to the land that lies beyond them.
Existing landscape structure / framework	The presence of tree and other landcover which would assist in integrating new residential development with the existing town and the landscape. Parcels which are already defined by a strong existing landscape framework were considered favourably.
Character - countryside influences	Continuity of open uninterrupted agricultural countryside. More fragmented parcels which do not form part of extensive areas of uninterrupted open countryside were considered favourably.
Character - urban influences	Influences of the town, views of urbanising features and any sense of suburbanisation of landscape character. This criterion and the preceding reflects a spectrum between the parcel forming part of an area of uninterrupted open countryside as opposed to a strong sense of connection with and influences of the existing town.
Landscape value	Relative landscape value. NB: given that all assessed land parcels fall outside of the local landscape designation none is considered to be of the highest value. Some lower level differentiation of different parcels was however considered helpful.
Visual openness	General openness and visual exposure to surrounding areas.

Visual relationship with surrounding countryside	Visual effects in views from surrounding countryside areas. A focus on views from surrounding footpaths, roads and other accessible areas within the open countryside that surrounds Alderley Edge towards the town and how any new settlement edges might appear in those views. This considered the acceptability of the likely appearance of the changed settlement edge rather than its simple visibility.
Visual relationship with the town	The acceptability of views from the town (roads, footpath and properties) and whether a strong visual connection with the town already exists. This was a rounded professional judgement of the likely visual effect where visibility from the town was not necessarily considered to be unfavourable. The judgement included consideration of any special views from the town into the surrounding countryside that might contribute to the overall character and distinctiveness of the settlement (e.g. elevated views over surrounding countryside from the more historic parts of the town).
Views from important elevated vantage points	Views across the town from elevated vantage points, in particular 'The Edge' (see Appendix C), elevated hillsides such as around Congleton Road and visually sensitive settlement edges such as in the vicinity of Moss Road/Mottram Road.

Green belt purposes

The following approach was taken to the assessment of contribution to Green Belt purposes.

TABLE 2: GREEN BELT PURPOSES ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Criteria	Comments
Merging	Contribution of the parcel to the prevention of the merging of neighbouring towns. In this study this focused on the nature of the gap between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow. This assessment is premised on the observation that the gap between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow on the northern side of the town in the vicinity of Wilmslow Road is no longer effective due to landscape fragmentation and the influence of diverse urban fringe land uses (see final paragraph in section 3.6).
Sprawl	Sprawl beyond existing settlement limits. A sense of unrestricted and unimpeded growth into areas outside of the natural limits of the town and where future growth would be unlikely to be prevented by the presence of strong defensible boundaries. This criterion is most relevant to land parcels that immediately abut the existing settlement edge.

Encroachment	Safeguarding from encroachment into and loss of uninterrupted, open, countryside of a character with limited existing sense of connection to the town. This criterion is most relevant to land parcels that do not immediately abut the existing settlement edge.
Setting of historic towns	Any special or notable contribution of the land parcel to historic aspects of character and setting (the assessment of contribution to this purpose shows limited range with contribution identified only where the parcel abuts and contributes to the visual setting of particularly historic or otherwise sensitive parts of the town).
Urban regeneration	Encouragement of brownfield development (included for completeness – all land parcels have been judged the same against this purpose).

3.5 Assessment method and ‘scoring’ system

The assessment was undertaken using a combination of desk top and field assessment techniques. A brief site visit was undertaken to all 42 parcels to record site observations and to capture a typical site photograph (parcel photographs are provided in Appendix B). An elevated vantage point at ‘The Edge’ was also visited to determine which parcels would result in significant changes to the available view (an annotated photograph is provided within Appendix C).

During field work each criterion was assessed on a four-point scale. The assessment was wholly qualitative based on the following RAG (Red, Amber, Yellow, Green) ‘scoring’ system. Each assessment is the product of rounded professional consideration and the non-quantitative ‘scoring’ system is simply used as shorthand to express the observations made and the overall professional opinion reached. The four-point scale and terminology used for the assessment of contribution to Green Belt purposes is consistent with that used in the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update of 2015.

TABLE 3: RAG 'SCORING' SYSTEM

Red	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates not suitable to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	Major contribution to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Not considered suitable/preferable for residential allocation
Orange	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates low suitability to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	Significant contribution to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Unlikely to be suitable/preferable for residential allocation
Yellow	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates moderate suitability to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	Contribution to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Potentially suitable/preferable for residential allocation
Green	Landscape and visual suitability criteria	Criterion indicates high suitability to accommodate residential development
	Green belt purposes	No contribution to Green Belt purposes
	Overall suitability for residential development	Suitable/preferable for residential allocation

3.6 Assessment observations

The assessment matrix provided in Appendix A summarises the combined desk and field assessment of the 42 land parcels around the periphery of Alderley Edge. These assessments are mapped by Figures 4, 5 and 6. It is stressed that in combining different criteria, rounded and considered professional judgement was applied and appropriate variable weight has been applied to each consideration to reach an overall professional view.

The assessment matrix provided in Appendix A generally shows a correlation between the landscape and visual suitability of different parcels of land for residential development (Figure 4) and their assessed Green Belt contribution (Figure 5) (albeit that only one parcel of land has been identified as making 'no contribution' to Green Belt purposes). This reflects an overall preference within both assessments to avoid areas of extensive, uninterrupted, open, countryside which lie outside of the perceived current urbanising influence of the town. Such areas do not have the existing landscape character and structure that would help to accommodate residential development which would therefore result in a strong perceived impression of sprawl beyond the natural limits of the town's influence and encroachment into open countryside.

A degree of correlation also exists at Alderley Edge between the consideration of landscape value and important views within the landscape and visual assessment and the Green Belt purpose of preserving the setting and special character of an historic town. The landscape value of land parcels immediately to the west of Congleton Road (east of the railway) are influenced by their visual relationship with the adjacent historic and elevated parts of town which overlook them. Their openness contributes to the setting of the town and, conversely, views of the built heritage and mature tree cover within these parts of the town contribute to their landscape value. The same applies to land to the north of Moss Road on the north-eastern side of the town. Development on these parcels would be visible from the elevated viewpoint at 'The Edge' to the south (thereby affecting the setting of the town in an important way) and the appearance of 'The Edge' as a distinct, heavily wooded backdrop to the landscape of these parcels increases landscape susceptibility and landscape value in this vicinity. These areas of greater landscape value (albeit outside of the locally designated Area of Special County Value) are principally located on slightly higher ground on the north eastern and southern periphery of the town.

There is potentially less correlation on the north and north-western side of the town between the landscape and visual suitability of the parcels to accommodate residential development and the land's arguable contribution to the Green Belt purpose of preventing the merging of the neighbouring towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. The conclusion of this study is that land on the north and north-western side of Alderley Edge towards Wilmslow is generally of a character, visual structure and landscape value that would be better suited to allocation. The unintended consequence of placing too much weight on a desire to limit development between the two towns would be to steer the growth of the town towards less suitable locations. On the northern edge of the town in the vicinity of Wilmslow Road the gap between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow has already been lost and protecting land from development here for the purpose of preventing their merging would be ineffective and is unnecessary (refer also to final paragraph in this section of the report

below). In this respect the conclusions of this study's assessments reach a different opinion to that set out in the Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment Update of 2015 within which the relevant assessment results map shows the greatest contribution to Green Belt purposes ('Major Contribution') in areas between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow.

Figure 6 shows this study's combined professional view as to the overall suitability of different parcels of land around the periphery of Alderley Edge for residential allocation. It illustrates three key conclusions:

- That areas of open, uninterrupted, countryside which is unsuitable for residential allocation flow up to meet the existing settlement edge in areas to the north east and south west of the town (e.g. parcels 10, 28 and 42).
- More fragmented and potentially suitable areas to the south east are often of greater landscape value and contribute to the historic setting of the town due to being overlooked (e.g. parcels 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 to the north and parcels 34, 35, 36 and 39 to the south).
- The gap between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow is already characterised by a range of urbanising influences and the Green Belt purpose of preventing the merging of the two towns should not be used to steer development to the less suitable locations indicated above.

Many of those parcels considered to be most suitable areas for allocation are located on the north and north-western periphery of the existing settlement footprint (i.e. closer to Wilmslow). This area comprises a series of physically fragmented and visually enclosed parcels of land which are bisected by various man-made and natural features that provide a strong existing landscape framework and defensible boundaries for potential future residential development. Foremost amongst these are the fragmentation and visual enclosure created by the A34, Wilmslow Road, the mainline railway and tree cover associated with the course of Whitehall Brook. The cumulative effect of the entwined alignments the A34 and Whitehall Brook would create a natural northern limit to the settlement footprint of Alderley Edge with no significant corresponding loss of any remaining gap between the two towns. The remaining open land in this vicinity, particularly as perceived from the north-south route of the main road that joins the town towns (i.e. Alderley road/Wilmslow Road), does not function as a gap and its development would not result in significant harm to the Green Belt or, more generally, to the landscape.

4 Appraisal of proposed site allocations

4.1 Introduction

This Section of the report considers various proposed site allocations in light of the assessment observations set out in Section 3 and Appendix A. The following text expands on the assessments of individual parcels to enable an opinion to be given on the overall merits of each promoted allocation.

4.2 Ryleys Farm

Ryleys Farm is formed of two parts falling to the north and south of Ryleys Lane. The A34 contains both parts to the west. The northern parcel is roughly triangular with an eastern edge formed by the existing settlement boundary and the southern edge formed by Ryleys Lane. The southern part is more irregular in shape and it is bound to the north by Ryleys Lane, Old Chorley Hall and the existing settlement boundary; to the east by the Manchester-Crewe railway line; and to the south by agricultural fields.

South of Ryleys Lane

The southern part of Ryleys Farm falls within Parcels 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 42 (Figure 7). The landscape and visual suitability for development has been determined as follows: parcels 29 and 30 as high, parcels 31 and 32 as low and 28 and 42 as not suitable for development. Parcels 29 and 30 were assessed more favourably due to the definition provided by a watercourse, greater levels of structural landscape features, higher levels of enclosure, lower continuity with the surrounding open countryside and lower intervisibility with the wider Green Belt.

In terms of Green Belt, all the southern part parcels contribute to the purposes of Green Belt. Parcels 31 and 32 provide significant contributions in terms of prevent sprawl and encroachment into the countryside and parcels 28 and 42 providing major contributions in terms of preventing sprawl and encroachment into the countryside. This reflects the particularly open character of these parcels, their continuity with the open countryside to the south west and the general absence of urbanising or suburbanising influences.

Overall suitability for allocation and residential development has been assessed as follows: the more enclosed areas at parcels 29 and 30 are considered suitable/preferable, parcels 31 and 32 are unlikely to be suitable/preferable, and 28 and 42 are not considered suitable/preferable. When forming an opinion on the developability of the southern part of the Ryleys Farms site, land to the east of Green Lane and north of the watercourse is the most suitable/preferable for allocation. Land to the east of Green Lane and north of the watercourse has greater levels of structural vegetation and relatively higher levels of enclosure, lower continuity with the surrounding open countryside and lower intervisibility with the wider Green Belt. The existing extent of the town already exerts an influence on the character of these areas. Development of parcels 29 and 30 would not harm either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. Should any part of the southern part of Ryleys Farm be taken forward for allocation, the area to the east of Green Lane has scope for residential development focused towards the existing settlement edge and north of the watercourse. The remaining areas should remain free of development to prevent

sprawl into the open countryside and to maintain a positive ‘gateway’ along the Ryleys Lane approach to Alderley Edge. The particularly large scale and open character of parcels 28 and 42 are considered important to the integrity of the Green Belt on this side of Alderley Edge and provide no existing landscape structure that would help to successfully accommodate residential development. Development here would be seen as a substantial incursion into open countryside which is currently influenced very little by its proximity to the town.

North of Ryleys Lane

The northern part of Ryleys Farm falls within Parcels 26, 27 and 40 (Figure 7). The landscape and visual suitability for development has been determined as follows: the fragmented and low value landscape at parcels 26 and 27 as high, and parcel 40 as low. Landform, definition provided by water course and the comparatively lower landscape value associated with parcels 26 and 27 contribute to making them preferable to parcel 40. All parcels contribute towards Green Belt purposes and parcel 40 provides a significant contribution in terms of preventing sprawl and protecting the historic setting of Alderley Edge. Although there is limited structural vegetation along the watercourse which divides parcels 40 and 27, the south-western corner of this potential allocation at parcel 40 is relatively elevated and development in this corner would detract from what is currently perceived as a positive arrival point into the town adjacent Old Chorley Hall which coincides with the point at which Ryleys Lane crosses a watercourse which helps to define the natural limits of the town.

Overall suitability for allocation and residential development has been assessed as follows: parcels 26 and 27 are considered suitable/preferable and parcels 40 is unlikely to be suitable/preferable. Taking this forward into forming an overall opinion regarding the developability of the northern part of the Ryleys Farm site, there is some potential for residential development focused towards the northern extents of the northern part closer to the existing settled edge of Alderley Edge. The south-western corner of the northern part is less suitable and residential development within parcel 40 would result in a perception of sprawl and the loss of a positively perceived ‘gateway’ into the town along Ryleys Lane.

4.3 Hole Farm

This study has interpreted ‘Hole Farm’ as the entirety of both parcel 38 and 17.

Hole Farm is located to the west of the A34 and to the north of Brook Lane. It falls completely within assessment parcels 17 and 38 (Figure 7). As there is no proposed allocation boundary available, the allocation area is taken to be the same extent as the combined extent of assessment parcels 17 and 38. Parcels 17 and 38 are bound to the east by the A34, to the south by residential properties along Brooke lane and to the north and west by Alderley Edge Golf Course.

Parcels 17 and 38 have been assessed as suitable in terms of landscape and visual suitability, do not provide any significant or major contributions to Green Belt purposes and suitable/preferable overall for residential development allocation. The parcels are completely hidden from view by existing vegetation and housing along Brook Lane, have low continuity with the surrounding countryside, high levels of enclosure and low levels of intervisibility with surrounding open countryside. Development of this site

would not harm either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. Taking this forward into forming an opinion regarding the developability of the Hole Farm site, there is potential for residential development. Should the site be taken forward, plans for residential development should include the retention and enhancement of existing vegetation to prevent opening the site to the wider countryside and surrounding Green Belt.

4.4 Land off Wilmslow Road

Land off Wilmslow Road proposed allocation site is located to the west of Wilmslow Road and to the east of the A34. It is bound to the south by residential properties along Brook Lane and to the north by adjacent agricultural fields. Its boundary correlates with assessment parcel 16 (Figure 7).

Parcel 16 has been assessed as having high landscape and visual suitability to accommodate residential development, as providing no significant or major contributions to Green Belt purposes, and overall suitable/preferable for residential allocation.

Previous sections of this study have concluded that on the northern edge of the town, in the vicinity of Land off Wilmslow Road, the gap between the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow has already been lost and protecting sites from development here for the purpose of preventing their merging would be ineffective and is unnecessary. The vicinity of the site comprises a series of physically fragmented and visually enclosed parcels of land which are bisected by various man-made and natural features that provide a strong existing landscape framework and defensible boundaries for potential future residential development. Foremost amongst these are the fragmentation and visual enclosure created by the A34, Wilmslow Road, the mainline railway and tree cover associated with the course of Whitehall Brook. The cumulative effect of the entwined alignments the A34 and Whitehall Brook would create a natural northern limit to the settlement footprint of Alderley Edge with no significant corresponding loss of any remaining gap between the two towns. The remaining open land in this vicinity, particularly as perceived from the north-south route of the main road that joins the town towns (i.e. Alderley road/Wilmslow Road), does not function as a gap and its development would not result in significant harm to the Green Belt.

The parcel is considered suitable due to landform (with an aspect facing into the existing town), watercourses, a low continuity with surrounding open countryside, low intervisibility with the wider surrounding countryside and no visibility from 'The Edge'. Development of this site would result in very limited harm to either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. The structural vegetation framework around the site is moderate and the local landscape value attributed to the parcel is relatively high because of the intact nature of the landscape features, such as trees and ponds, within the parcel (the site has a slight parkland character). Taking this forward into an opinion regarding the developability of the Land off Wilmslow Road site, there is potential for residential development and should the site be taken forward, plans for residential development should include the retention of valued landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows along the boundary with Wilmslow Road to retain landscape value and prevent opening up the site.

4.5 Land north of Beech Road

Land north of Beech Road proposed allocation site is located to the east of the Manchester-Crewe railway line and to the west of Whitehall Brook. The site is irregular in shape; bound by residential properties along Beech Road to the south, by allotment gardens to the south west, by the Manchester to Crewe railway line to the north-west and agricultural fields to the north-east. The boundary of the proposed site partially correlates with assessment parcel 11 to the west and cuts roughly halfway through the assessment parcel to the east (Figure 7).

Parcel 11 has been assessed as having high landscape and visual suitability to accommodate residential development, as providing no significant or major contributions to Green Belt purposes, and overall suitable/preferable for residential allocation. In terms of the site proposed for allocation, located within the extents of parcel 11, the site is suitable/preferable for residential development allocation. This is due to its position to the west of Whitehall Brook, the visual enclosure provided by vegetation along the brook, existing structural visual enclosure and the role of Whitehall Brook in helping to define the natural limits of the town. Development of this site would result in very limited harm to either the landscape or the integrity of the Green Belt. The proposed allocation comprises a fragmented area of land which is perceived as having strong connections to the existing extent of the town and as very separate from the much more open (and occasionally elevated) areas of uninterrupted countryside located to the north east of Whitehall Brook.

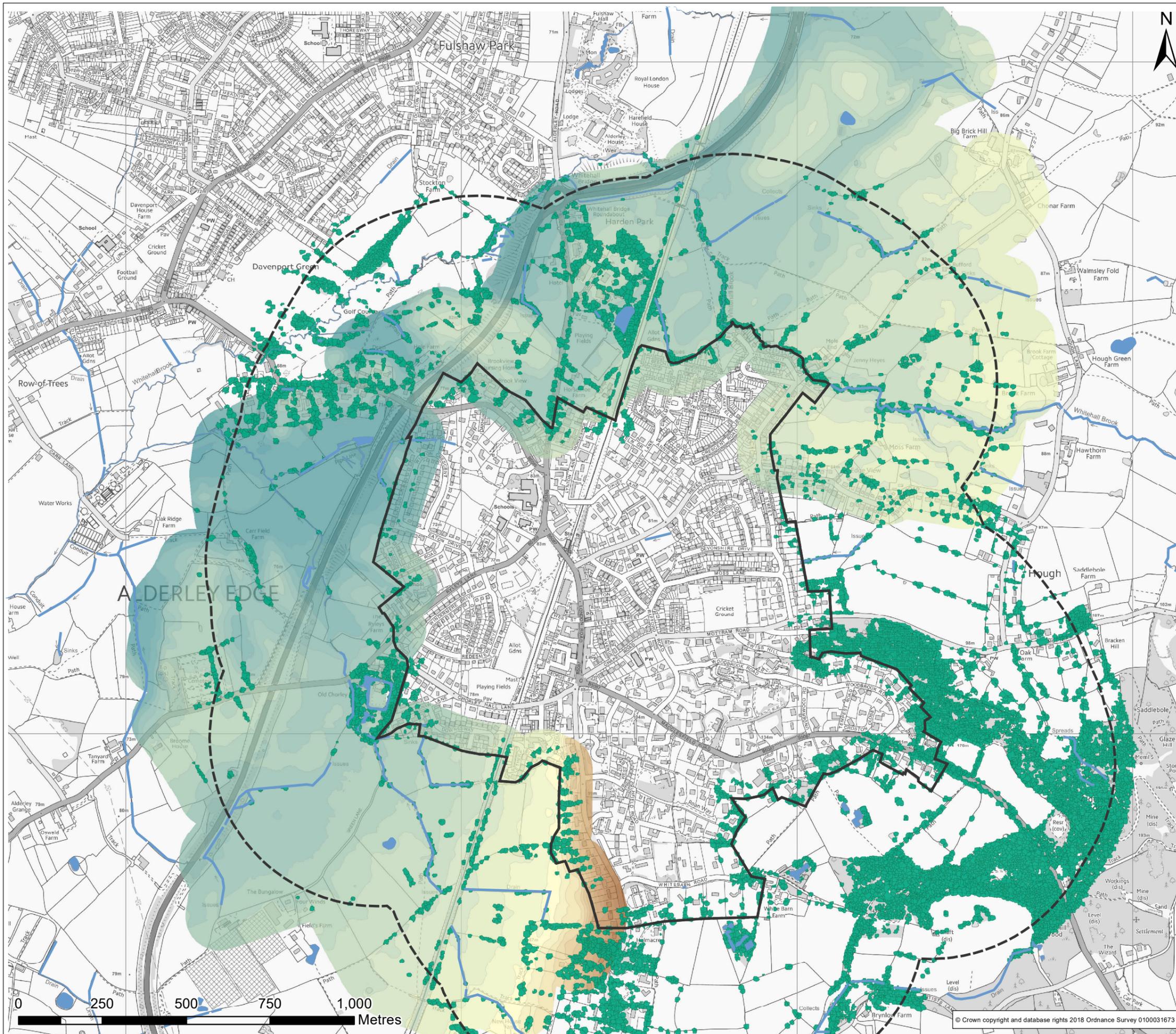
4.6 Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes

The Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes proposed allocation site is located to the south of Heyes Lane. The site is bound to the north west by Heyes Lane, to the south west by Whitehall Brook, to the north east by Jenny Heyes residential property and by agricultural fields to the south east. The proposed allocation boundary falls within the western extent of assessment parcel 6 (Figure 7).

Parcel 6 has been generally assessed by this study as having low landscape and visual suitability to accommodate residential development, as providing significant contributions to Green Belt purposes, and overall unlikely to be suitable/preferable for residential allocation. Development may be possible within the small parcel of land at Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes because of the limited presence within this small plot of any special landscape character or value and the degree of its visual enclosure. Separation from the continuity of open countryside within the eastern extent of parcel 6 and further to the north and east is partially achieved by layers of hedgerow and tree vegetation of moderate height. However, overall the findings of this study suggest that development is unlikely to be preferable here due to the potential visibility of any development in the elevated view from 'The Edge' (see Appendix C), prevention of sprawl and the protection of the historic setting of the town.

Furthermore, it is noted that the boundaries of Local Landscape Designations within Cheshire East are currently under review and that the Local Landscape Designation to the south east of Alderley Edge may be extended northwards to include the Land adjacent to Jenny Heyes site. It is understood that the proposed extension of the designation is in large part due to its visibility from 'The Edge', underlining that despite its small size this land may not be suitable for residential development.

Figures

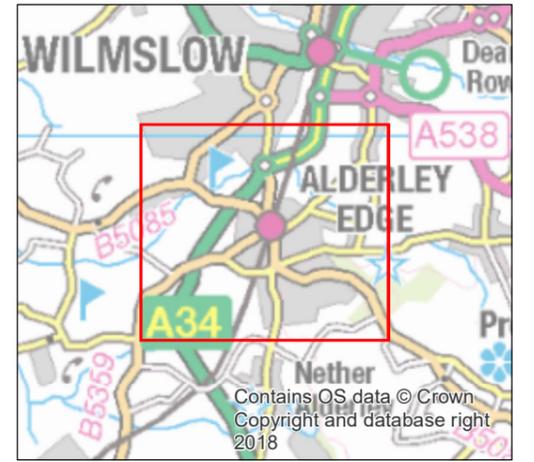


Legend

- Alderley Edge Settlement Boundary
- 500m Buffer from Settlement Boundary
- Water Courses
- Water Bodies
- National Tree Map Canopies (Height of 10m and above)
- Contours (2m Intervals)

Topography (metres above Ordnance Datum)

116m
64m



1	22/08/2018	Final	LS	PB
Rev.	Rev. Date	Drawing Suitability	Drawn	Appr'd

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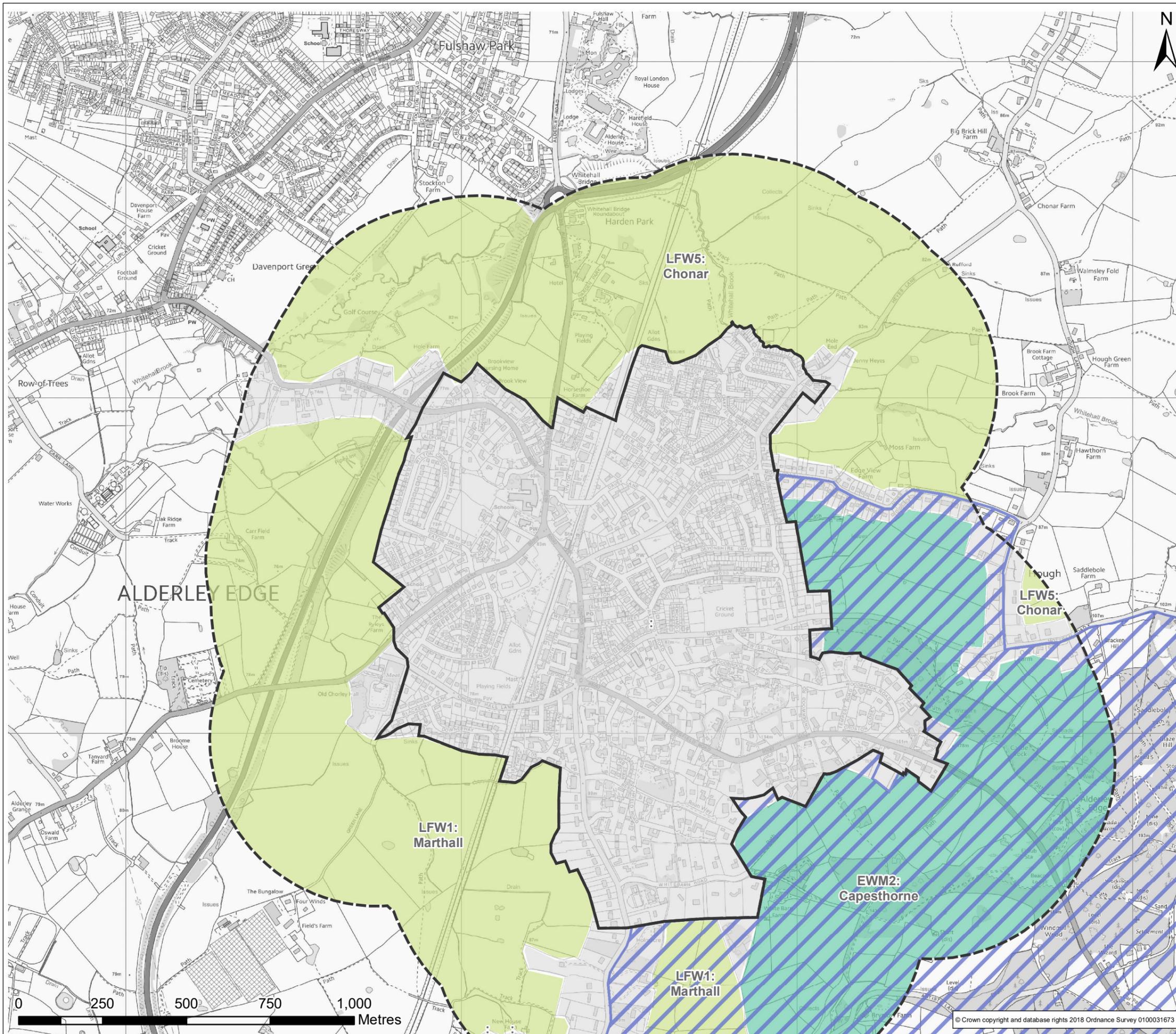
Client: **Barratt D W Homes**

Project: **Alderley Edge Landscape Study**

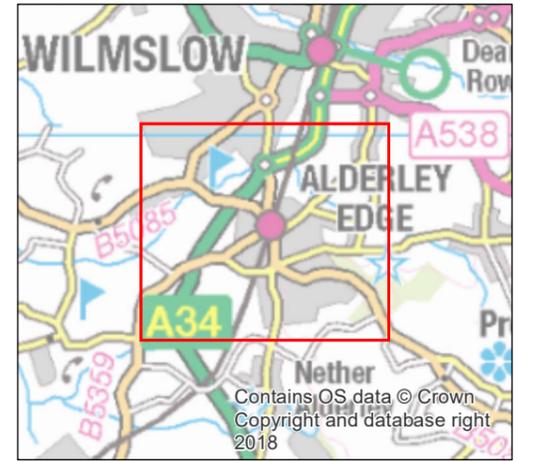
Drawing Title: **Figure 1: Landscape Context**

Scale @ A3	1:11,000	DO NOT SCALE
Project No.	120390 (001)	Status Final
BIM No.	n/a	

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- Legend**
- Alderley Edge Settlement Boundary
 - 500m Buffer from Settlement Boundary
 - Area of Special County Value
- Cheshire 2008 LCA Landscape Character Types**
- Lower Farms and Woods
 - Estate, Woodland & Meres
 - Urban



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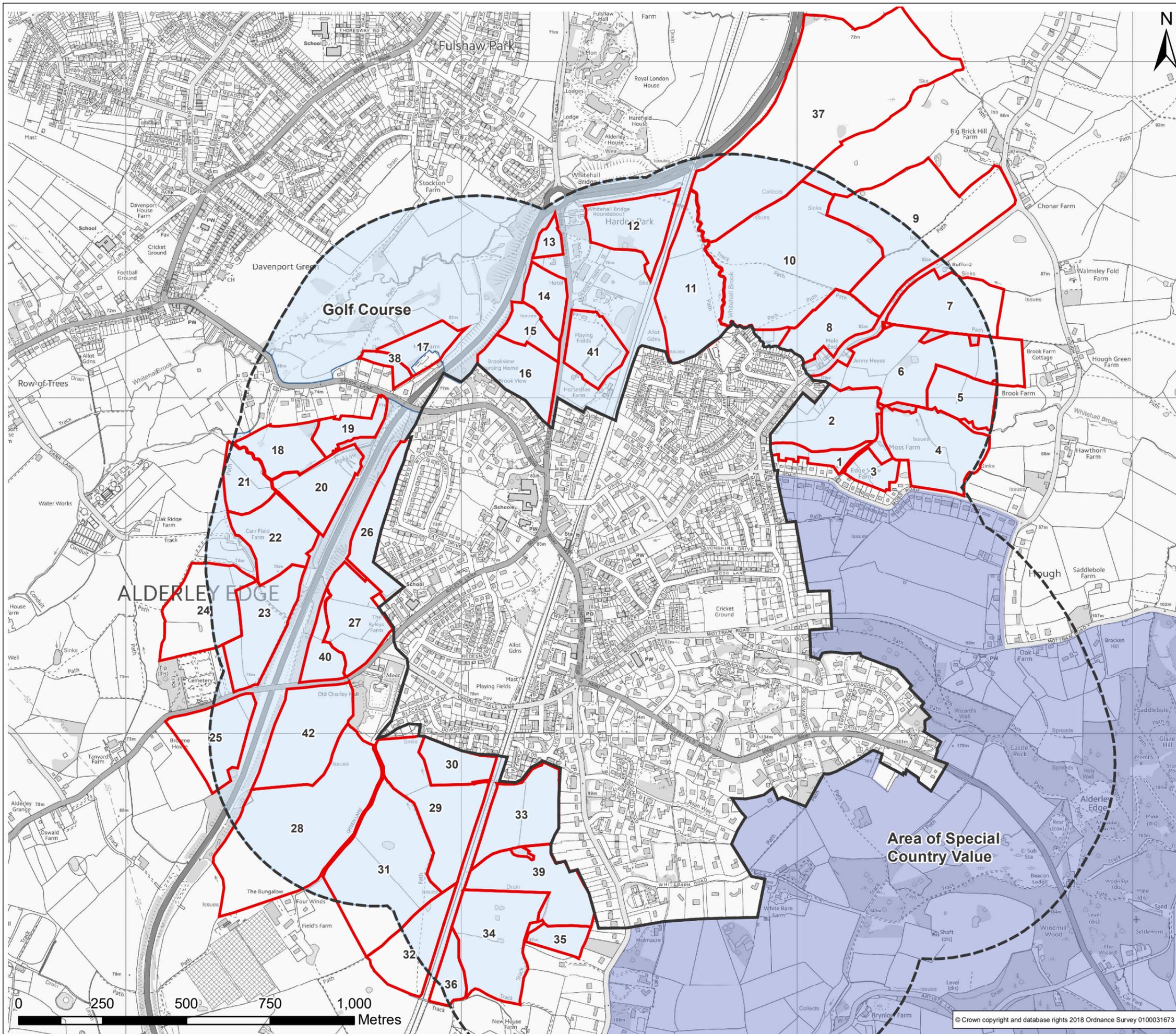
Project: **Alderley Edge Landscape Study**

Drawing Title: **Figure 2: Landscape Character and Designations**

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BIM No.	n/a	

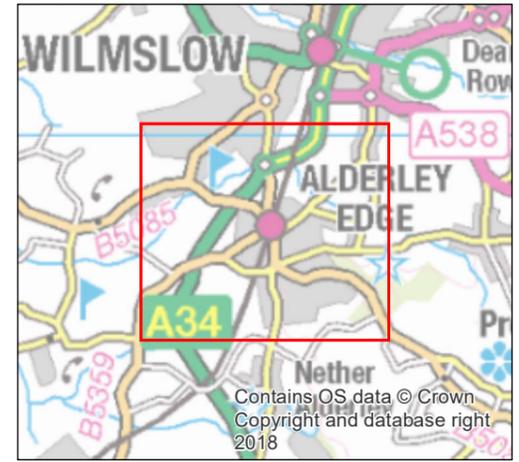
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Legend

- Alderley Edge Settlement Boundary
- 500m Buffer from Settlement Boundary
- Study Area
- Assessment Parcels
- Area of Special County Value



1	22/08/2018	Final	LS	PB
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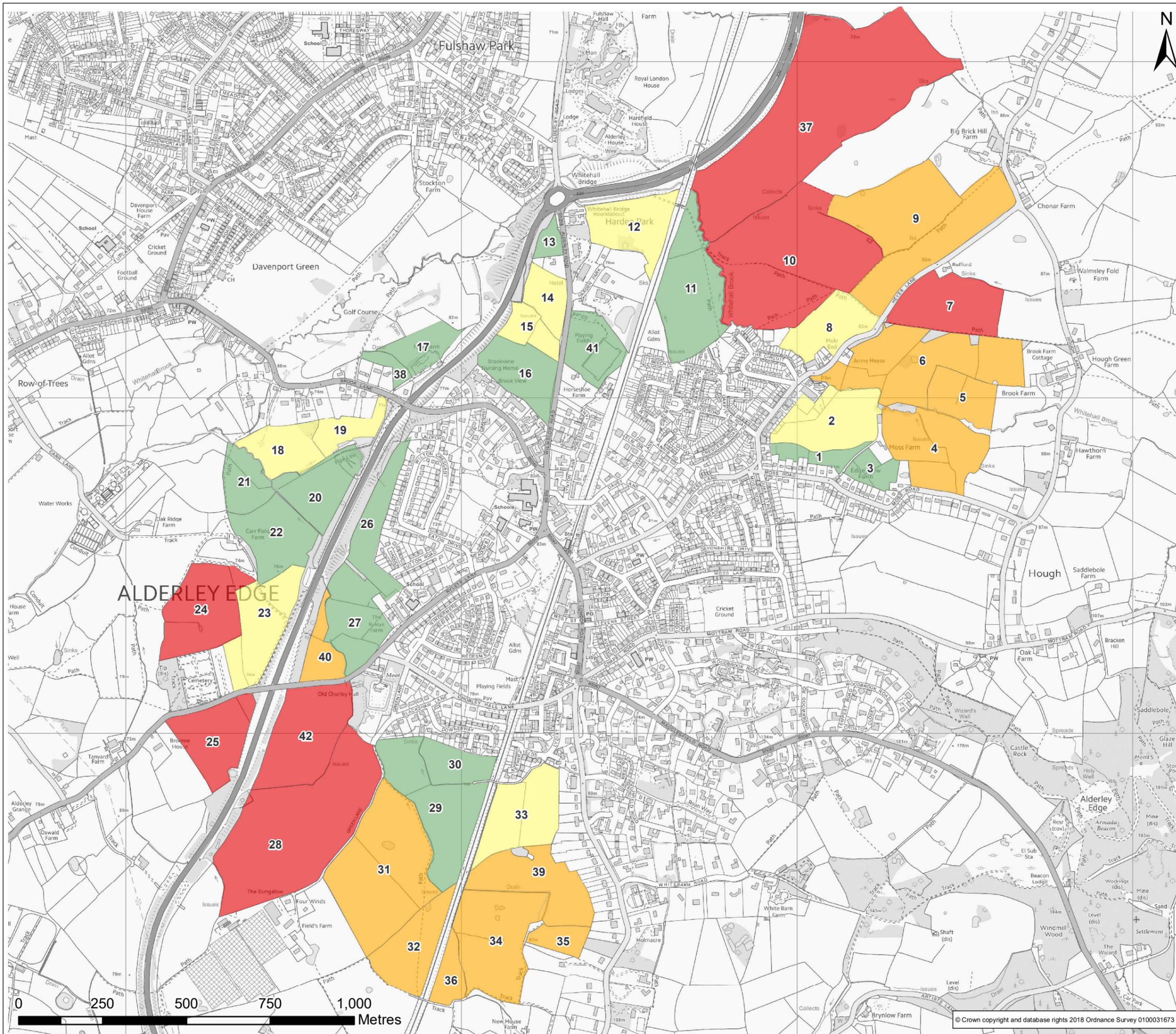
Client: **Barratt D W Homes**

Project: **Alderley Edge Landscape Study**

Drawing Title: **Figure 3: Study Area and Assessment Parcels**

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BIM No.	n/a	

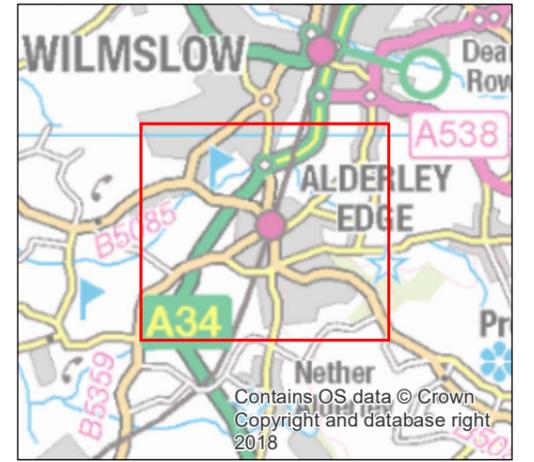
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Legend

Landscape and Visual Suitability for Residential Development

- High suitability to accommodate residential development
- Moderate suitability to accommodate residential development
- Low suitability to accommodate residential development
- No suitability to accommodate residential development



1	22/08/2018	Final	LS	PB
Rev.	Rev. Date	Drawing Suitability	Drawn	Appr'd

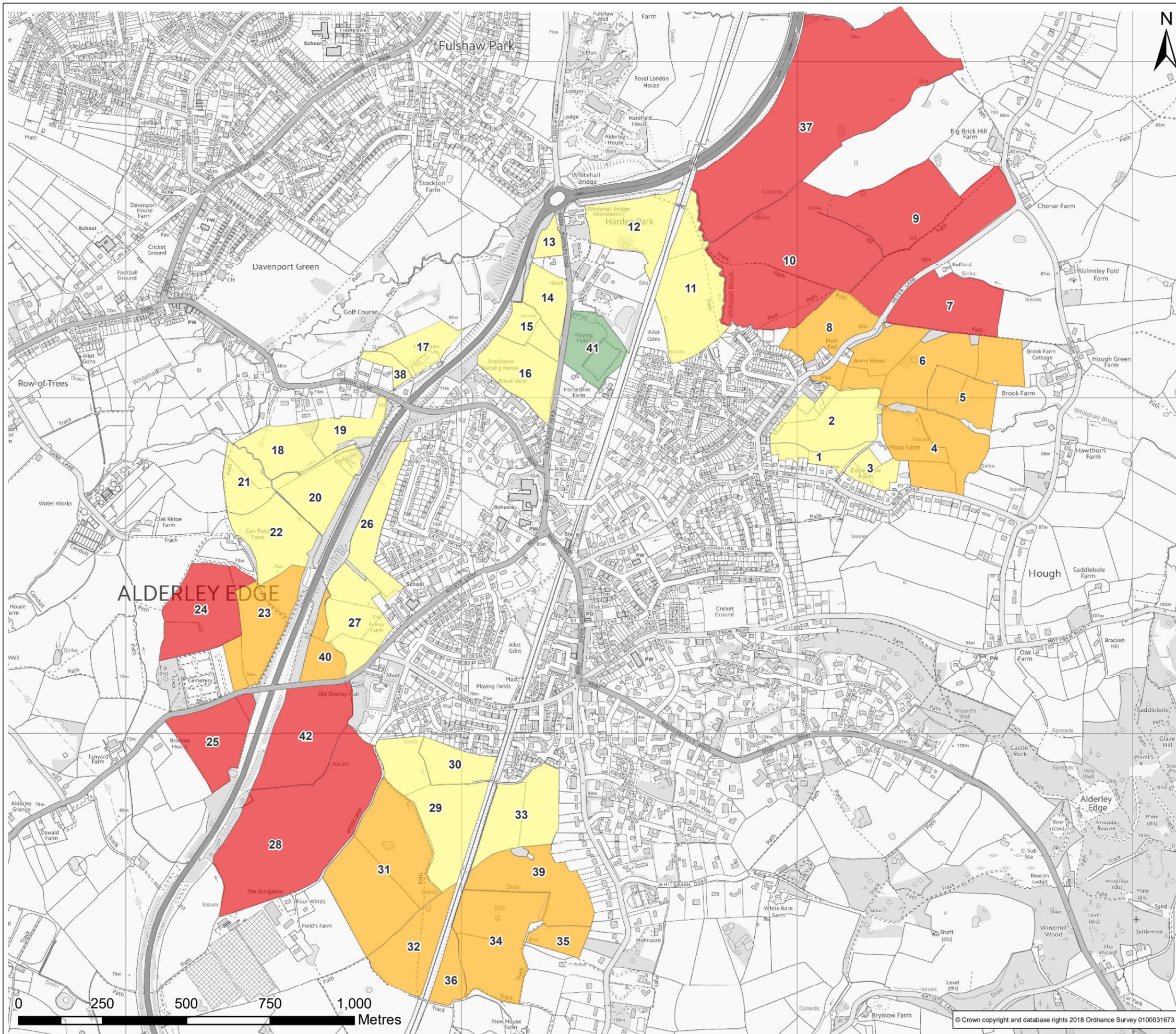


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Client	Barratt D W Homes			
Project	Alderley Edge Landscape Study			
Drawing Title	Figure 4: Landscape and Visual Suitability for Residential Development			

Scale @ A3	1:11,000	DO NOT SCALE
Project No.	120390 (001)	Status Final
BIM No.	n/a	

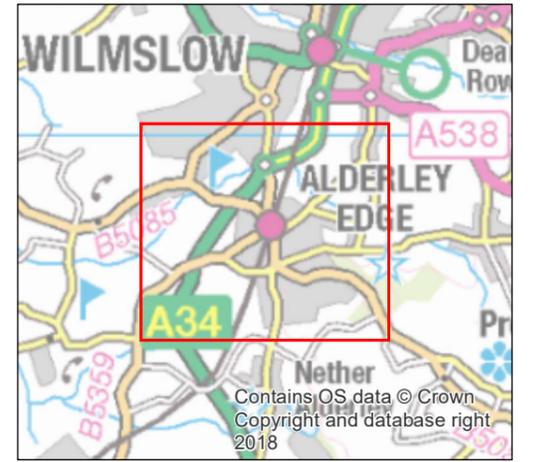
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Legend

Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

- No contribution
- Contribution
- Significant contribution
- Major contribution



1	22/08/2018	Final	LS	PB
Rev.	Rev. Date	Drawing Suitability	Drawn	Appr'd

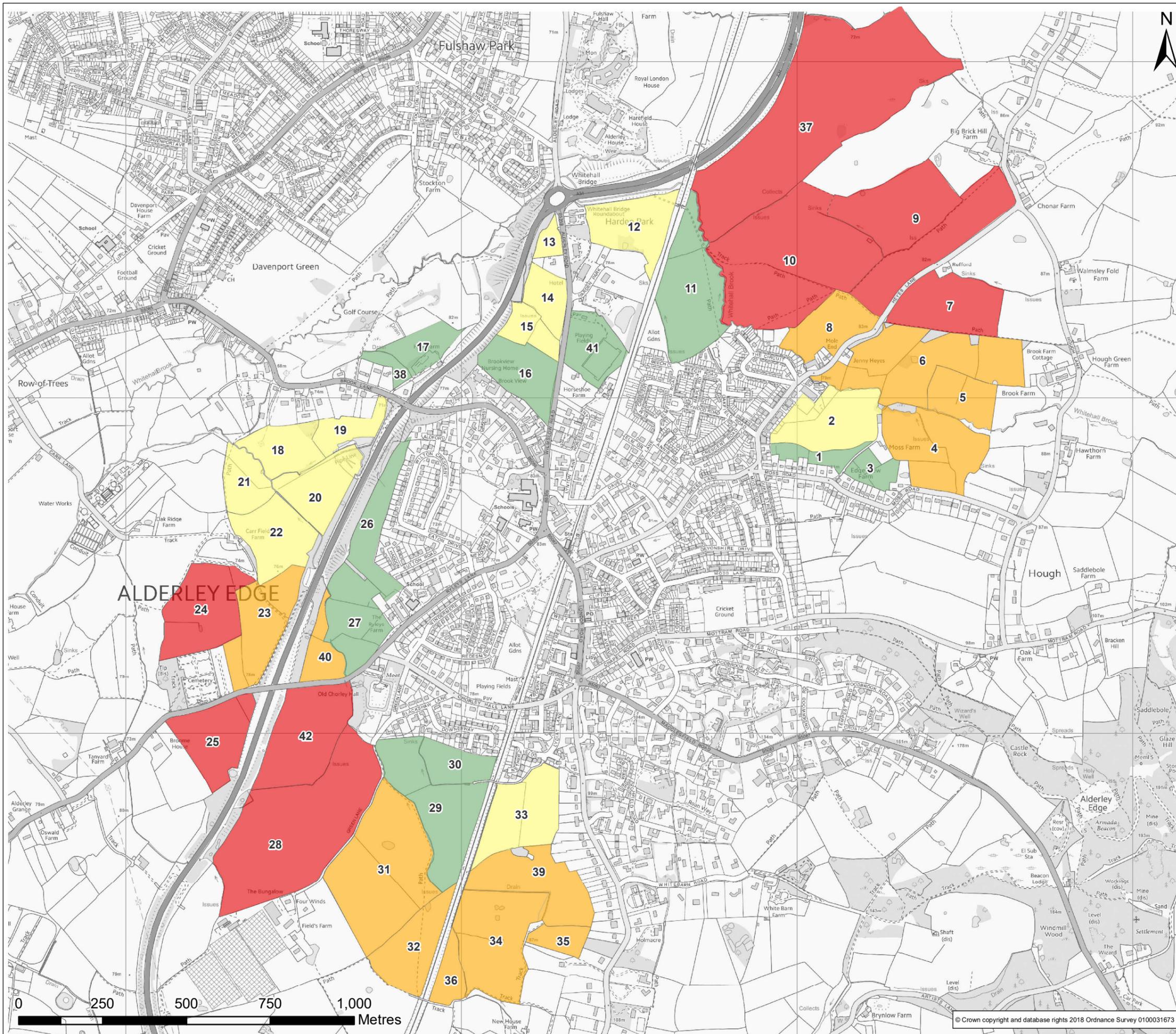
SWECO

Sweco, 4th Floor, Abbey House, 33 Booth Street, Manchester, M2 3LW
Tel: +44 (0)161 927 4827

Client	Barratt D W Homes			
Project	Alderley Edge Landscape Study			
Drawing Title	Figure 5: Contribution to Green Belt Purposes			

Scale @A3	1:11,000	DO NOT SCALE
Project No.	120390 (001)	Status Final
BIM No.	n/a	

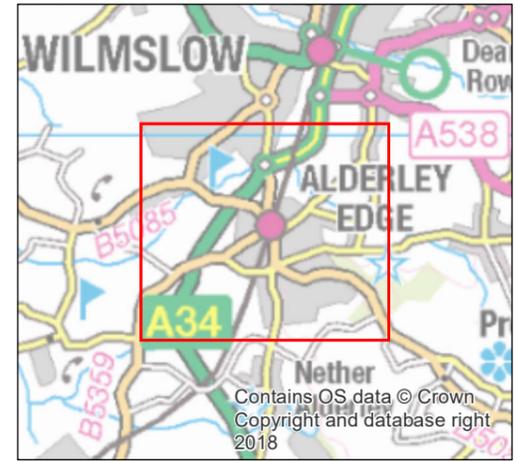
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Legend

Overall Suitability for Development

- Suitable/preferable for residential allocation
- Potentially suitable/preferable for residential allocation
- Unlikely to be suitable/preferable for residential allocation
- Not considered suitable/preferable for residential allocation



1	22/08/2018	Final	LS	PB
Rev.	Rev. Date	Drawing Suitability	Drawn	Appr'd

SWECO

Sweco, 4th Floor, Abbey House, 33 Booth Street, Manchester, M2 3LW
Tel: +44 (0)161 927 4827

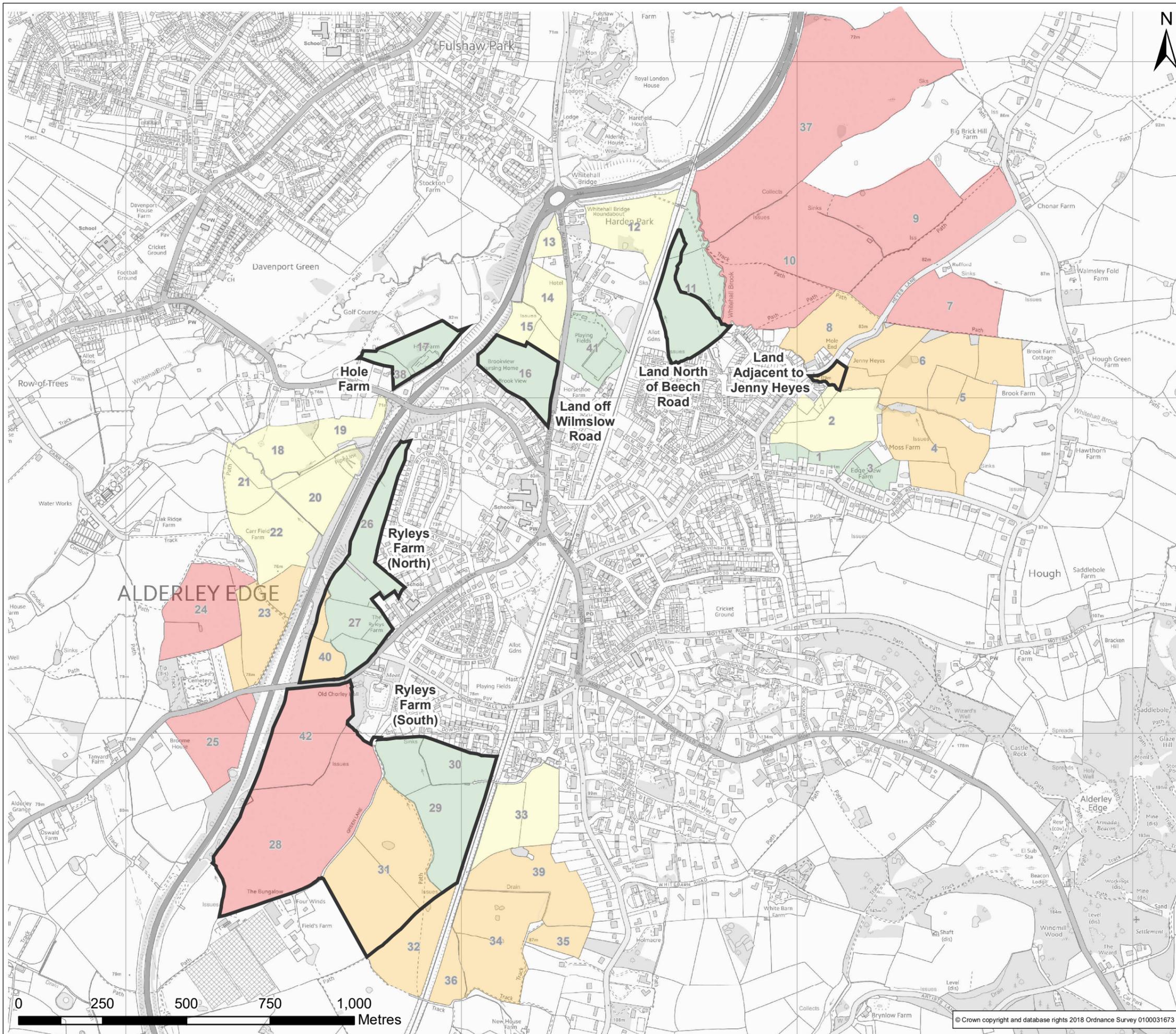
Client **Barratt D W Homes**

Project **Alderley Edge Landscape Study**

Drawing Title **Figure 6: Overall Suitability for Residential Development**

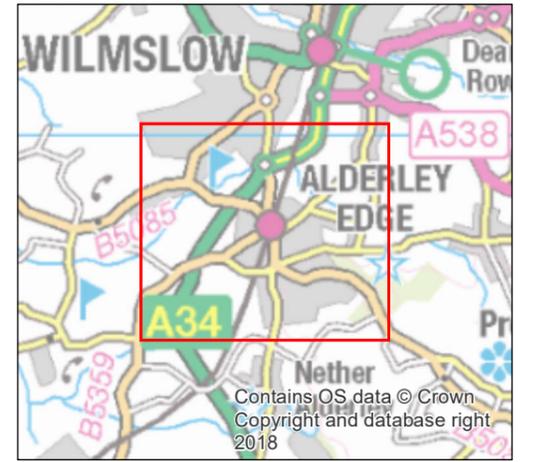
Scale @ A3	1:11,000	DO NOT SCALE
Project No.	120390 (001)	Status Final
BIM No.	n/a	

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Legend

Proposed Site



1	22/08/2018	Final	LS	PB
Rev.	Rev. Date	Drawing Suitability	Drawn	Appr'd



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Tel: +44 (0)161 927 4827

Client
Barratt D W Homes

Project
Alderley Edge Landscape Study

Drawing Title
Figure 7: Proposed Site Allocations

Scale @A3	1:11,000	DO NOT SCALE
Project No.	120390 (R01)	Status Final
BIM No.	n/a	

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Appendix A – Assessment Matrix

This Appendix provides the 'RAG' assessment matrix using the criteria set out in Section 2 of the main report.

Appendix A – Assessment Matrix

Parcel	Landscape and Visual Suitability											Green Belt Purpose Contribution					Overall Suitability for Residential Development	
	Landform	Watercourses	Existing landscape structure / framework	Character - countryside influences	Character - urban influences	Landscape value	Visual openness	Visual relationship with the surrounding countryside	Visual relationship with the town	Views from important elevated vantage points	Overall Landscape and Visual Suitability	Merging	Sprawl	Encroachment	Setting of historic towns	Urban regeneration		Overall green belt contribution
1	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
2	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
3	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
4	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange
5	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange
6	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange
7	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red
8	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
9	Orange	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red
10	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red
11	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
12	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
13	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
14	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
15	Orange	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
16	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
17	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green
18	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
19	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
20	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
21	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
22	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
23	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
24	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red
25	Orange	Red	Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red
26	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
27	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
28	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red
29	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
30	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
31	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
32	Orange	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
33	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
34	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
35	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
36	Green	Red	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
37	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow	Red	Red
38	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Orange	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green
39	Red	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Red	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
40	Orange	Red	Orange	Green	Yellow	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Orange
41	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
42	Orange	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Orange	Red	Red	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red

Appendix B – Parcel Photographs

This Appendix provides a photograph of each of the 42 parcels of land assessed in Section 2 of the report.

Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



Appendix B – Parcel Photographs



37 (furthest visible field)



38 (amongst trees beyond house)



39



40



41



42

Appendix C – Elevated View from ‘The Edge’

This Appendix provides a photograph from ‘The Edge’ annotating which of the 42 parcels of land assessed in Section 2 of the report are visible.

Appendix C – Elevated View from ‘The Edge’



**Appendix 4: DWH Representations to the
SADPD: Issues Paper (March 2017)**

Cheshire East Local Plan Site
Allocations and Development
Policies Document: Issues Paper
Whitehall Meadow, Wilmslow Road,
Alderley Edge

Representations on behalf of David Wilson Homes
North West

March 2017



DAVID WILSON HOMES

WHERE QUALITY LIVES

Turley

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Contact

Nick Graham
nick.graham@turley.co.uk

Client

David Wilson Homes North West

Our reference

BARM3008

27 Mar 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Report is prepared by Turley on behalf of our client David Wilson Homes North West (hereafter referred to as “DWH” or “our client”). It provides representations to Cheshire East Council (CEC) in respect of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document: Issues Paper¹ (SADPD), which is currently the subject of public consultation.

Background

- 1.2 DWH is part of Barratt Developments PLC, the UK’s largest house builder, and has a track record of working with local communities to deliver high quality developments which benefit the local communities in which they are provided. In 2016 DWH delivered 551 new homes in the North West, meeting local and general housing needs and providing new jobs and investment throughout the region. DWH is currently building Bollin Park in Wilmslow, comprising a range of attractive and spacious new family homes.
- 1.3 The emerging Local Plan process for Cheshire East has identified a pressing need to deliver new homes in Local Service Centre’s (LSC’s) in the north of the Borough, such as Alderley Edge, to satisfy local housing need and affordability issues. In this context, CEC will be aware that DWH is the promoter of ‘Whitehall Meadow’, a high quality residential development opportunity at Wilmslow Road in Alderley Edge (“the Site”). Our client has prepared a Vision Document – submitted alongside this Report – which provides an appraisal of the Site and what can be achieved by its development. It identifies that:
- The Site is a sustainable location for residential development with a modest expansion of the settlement to the north of Alderley Edge. It is situated in close proximity to the town centre and the rail station, both of which are within walking distance. Wilmslow Road forms the eastern boundary of the Site and is a bus route, with bus stops located within 100m;
 - Development of this Site would not result in an incursion into the strategic Green Belt or any narrowing of the gap between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow;
 - Based on CEC’s own site selection criteria, the Site is available for development and situated in viable market area. It is suitable for development, meaning there are no technical or environmental constraints that would prevent its development subject to its release from the Green Belt;
 - The Site provides an opportunity to deliver around 90 new homes, offering a balanced mix of dwellings, providing a choice of type and size in response to the identified housing demand and market assessment for the Borough. It can also provide an additional area of parking to complement the operation of the town centre and/or commuter parking for the rail station; and

¹ *Site Allocations and Development Policies Document: Issues Paper*, Cheshire East Council (February 2017)

- A robust landscaping strategy for the Site which can allow for ecological and bio-diversity enhancements to both soften the edge of the settlement and create a robust and defensible long-term Green Belt boundary.
- 1.4 The Site can make an important contribution to meeting the needs of the town, providing a balanced mix of dwellings and making an important contribution to local housing needs whilst attracting new families to the town. DWH is keen to work with CEC and representatives of the local community – including in particular Alderley Edge Parish Council – to assist with the preparation of the SADPD and would welcome further discussions about the proposals for Whitehall Meadow.

Structure

- 1.5 The remainder of this representation is structured as follows:
- Chapter 2: Housing Need and Green Belt Release
 - Chapter 3: The Opportunity at Whitehall Meadow
 - Chapter 4: Development Policies

2. Housing Need and Green Belt Release

- 2.1 This chapter responds to issues 3 and 5 of the SADPD, in respect of the development needs and exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release in particular LSC's.

Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution (Issue 3)

- 2.2 The emerging Local Plan Strategy (LPS) establishes the overall development strategy for Cheshire East. It confirms that the Borough's LSC's should accommodate 3,500 new homes² (the "LSC housing requirement"), but sets out that the specific amount of growth to be accommodated in each of the Borough's 13 LSC's will be addressed in the SADPD. As such, the SADPD Issues Paper identifies that there is a residual housing requirement – taking into account completions and commitments since the start of the LPS plan period – of 1,125 dwellings (net) to be delivered in the LSC's. 'Issue 3' of the SADPD asks how this should be distributed.
- 2.3 It is important to note at the outset that each of the 13 LSC's in the Borough has different characteristics, reflecting factors such as location, size, housing market and infrastructure provision. As such, and in response to Question 3a of the SADPD, whilst our client agrees that paragraph 2.8 of the SADPD Issues Paper identifies the principal matters to be taken into account, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach which can be applied. Instead, CEC must undertake an objective and comprehensive appraisal of the merits of development in each LSC to inform a judgement regarding the share of the residual housing requirement which should be apportioned. In this context, the following paragraphs set out DWH's views in respect of the borough as a whole and Alderley Edge in particular.

Cheshire East

- 2.4 The LPS settlement hierarchy recognises that the LSC's across the Borough should accommodate modest growth in housing and employment to meet locally arising needs, reduce out-commuting, and secure their continued vitality³. However, given that the emerging LPS stops short of apportioning an individual housing requirement to each settlement, it is somewhat inevitable that – in advance of the preparation of the SADPD – development will flow primarily to those LSC's with the least constraints.
- 2.5 Cheshire East has a large expanse of Green Belt to the north of the Borough. As such, evidence from CEC shows that the majority of completions and commitments delivered to date have taken place in the LSC's to the south, where new development opportunities are not constrained by Green Belt. In particular, of the 2,741 dwellings secured in the 13 LSC's to date, almost three quarters (71.84%) are located in the seven LSC's located to the south of the Borough outwith the Green Belt. This is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.

² *LPS Proposed Changes Final Version*, Cheshire East Council (July 2016), Draft Policy PG6, [Examination Document: PS E039b]

³ *Paragraph 8.30 & Draft Policy PG2, Proposed Changes to the Local Plan Strategy*, Cheshire East Council (March 2016)

Figure 2.1: Distribution of completions and commitments



2.6 It is notable that a number of settlements in the south of the Borough have already significantly exceeded the average or mean distribution of the LSC housing requirement (i.e. 269 dwellings per LSC). For example, Holmes Chapel in the south of Cheshire East has accommodated 873 dwellings, significantly above the average distribution. Conversely, all of the Green Belt settlements, with the exception of Bollington, have commitments or completions which are lower than that implied by an equal distribution.

2.7 It is clear that there to date there has been a substantial over-provision of new homes in the south of the Borough. If the residual requirement of 1,125 dwellings is now allowed to be directed to the southern LSC's, it will continue to undermine the achievement of sustainable development across the plan and all of the northern LSC's. This was clearly recognised by the LPS examination Inspector, who stated in the Interim Views that:

"...channelling too much development to areas beyond the North Cheshire Green Belt to the south of the borough would result in unsustainable patterns of development and commuting, and would not address the development needs of the northern settlements..."

2.8 In simple terms, if the residual LSC requirement is not directed to settlements in the north of the Borough, those settlements which are constrained by Green Belt will decline relative to those in the south. This is particularly the case given that CEC evidence for the LSC's in the north indicates that there is a shortage of previously developed brownfield land available within existing settlement boundaries.

2.9 The Green Belt is not an environmental designation; it is a strategic planning tool which was introduced to manage the growth of urban areas. It is wholly appropriate to review Green Belt boundaries when development needs justify such an approach. In respect of Cheshire East, it is necessary to make a positive policy intervention in the SADPD to ensure that an appropriate distribution of housing to each northern LSC. The distinct absence of brownfield land in those settlements combined with their compelling need for new housing indicates that clear *"...exceptional circumstances..."* (NPPF, paragraph 82) exist to review the Green Belt boundaries around the northern LSCs to accommodate

new housing. This point is recognised in the emerging LPS, which explicitly states that small alterations to the Green Belt to accommodate non-strategic sites (i.e. less than 150 dwellings) will be made in the emerging SADPD.

- 2.10 DWH also considers that the overall LSC housing requirement of 3,500 dwellings should not be rigidly adhered to if exceeding is necessary to ensure that each LSC accommodates its development needs. The housing requirement established in Policy PG1 of the emerging LPS is a minimum; it is a ‘floor’ which can be exceeded rather than a ‘ceiling’ which must not be breached. In this regard, it is entirely justified to exceed the minimum housing requirement and may be wholly necessary to do so to ensure that an appropriate amount of development is provided for in each LSC.

Alderley Edge

- 2.11 Alderley Edge is one of the most significant LSC’s in Cheshire East. Indeed, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, when compared to the other 12 LSC’s throughout the Borough, it is:

- The third largest LSC based on the size of its population (5,400 people); and
- The largest LSC in the Borough based on the size of the economically active population (3,300 workforce jobs).

Figure 2.2: Population and workforce jobs by LSC



- 2.12 Alderley Edge is a highly sustainable location for new development. In particular:
- It is located in a strategic position within the Borough, in close proximity to numerous larger social and economic centres. In particular, it is located approximately 10km north-west of Macclesfield, 2.6km south of Wilmslow, 24km south of Manchester and 3km north of Alderley Park.
 - It has an extensive range of services and facilities, including shops, primary schools and health centres. Alderley Edge has a greater level of service provision than other LSC’s in the Borough, and benefits in particular from the presence of a

library, sports centres and private leisure facilities. These provide the social infrastructure required to underpin the daily life of local residents in the town.

- It is highly accessible by numerous modes of transport. The town is situated to the east of the A34, one of the strategic highway routes in Cheshire East. It also benefits from a railway station with good accessibility and frequent services to key destinations including Manchester and Macclesfield.

2.13 In respect of the latter point, the Table 2.1 summarises the number of rail services providing a commutable weekday morning journey from each LSC to the principal CEC towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, as well as to Manchester as a major employment destination. This shows the frequent availability of rail services from Alderley Edge, which surpasses those from other LSC's to a significant degree.

Table 2.1: Railway services from LSC's between 7-9.30am

	Crewe	Macclesfield	Manchester	Total
Alderley Edge	6	4	6	16
Prestbury	4	3	5	12
Holmes Chapel	4	3	3	10
Chelford	5	2	2	9
Disley	2	3	4	9
Goostrey	4	2	2	8
Mobberley	4	1	3	7
Wrenbury	1	-	-	1
Bollington	-	-	-	-
Audlem	-	-	-	-
Bunbury	-	-	-	-
Haslington	-	-	-	-
Shavington	-	-	-	-

Source: Turley analysis

2.14 CEC's own evidence base⁴ identified that in many respects – including the number of retail units it contains and the frequency of commutable train and bus services – Alderley Edge is commensurate with a higher level Key Service Centre (KSC). It is one of three settlements in the Borough which are stated to be “...borderline in terms of their position as either a Key or Local Service Centre within the hierarchy...”. On balance, CEC made a judgement that the settlement should be classified as a LSC solely on the basis of its relatively small population, which is a result of the constraint of housing growth in the town; CEC did however note that its future position in the hierarchy would

⁴ *Determining the Settlement Hierarchy*, Cheshire East Council (November 2010)

be kept under review given that in many respects it performs a greater strategic function on par with a KSC.

2.15 Alderley Edge is in an attractive and desirable area, and experiences high demand for new homes. CEC's own evidence base confirms that demand exceeds supply for all sizes of property in the town⁵ and clearly points towards the opportunity – and indeed the need – for new housing development in the settlement. If an appropriate scale of development is not delivered, it is likely to have severe consequences on its future sustainability. In particular:

- The population in Alderley Edge is ageing. 24.3% of people in the town are now aged 65 and over, well above the Borough average⁶. Without suitable new housing stock to retain and attract younger working age families to the town, the average age of the population will continue to rise and the proportion of working age people will further decline. This will have adverse effects on the local economy, increase the burden on health-related services, and undermine the viability and vitality of local services.
- The availability of affordable housing in Alderley Edge is extremely limited. CEC's evidence identifies significant pent up demand for more affordable accommodation in the settlement. Only 6.2% of the households in Alderley Edge constitute affordable housing, significantly below the average for the Borough (11.8%). As a consequence, the town has a significantly higher number of applications on the housing register than any other the other 12 LSC's⁶ (124 in Alderley Edge, over three times higher than the average of 38 for the other LSC's).
- The average house price in Alderley Edge is £334,000. This is well above the Borough average of just £181,000 and well above the average of £282,640 in the other 12 LSC's. A lack of suitable and affordable housing, and a failure to grow the housing stock in line with household growth (see below), is a severe barrier to the aim of retaining and attracting young people and families to the settlement to support the local economy, services and facilities.
- Alderley Edge benefits from a relative abundance of local jobs, particularly at Alderley Park to the south of the settlement. However, this has led to a significant level of net in-commuting. The ratio of jobs to residents in the town is 1.22, indicating that there are 1.22 jobs in Alderley Edge for every working age person who lives in the town. This ratio is higher than almost every other LSC and is significantly higher than the average of 0.74, indicating that Alderley Edge experiences a significantly higher amount of in-commuting than other LSC's. The remodelled Alderley Park is expected to provide a further 2,650 new jobs by the end of 2019 (compared to 2014)⁷, which will drive further increases in in-commuting if it is not accompanied by the delivery of new homes.

⁵ Paragraph 6.2.1, *Green Belt Assessment Update*, Arup (July 2015)

⁶ Appendix 20, *Spatial Distribution Update Report*, Aecom (July 2015)

⁷ *Appraisal of proposed Alderley Park Investment Fund*, Five Lines (August 2014)

2.16 In summary, it is clear – both from the above and in CEC’s own evidence base – that there is an acute requirement for new housing development in Alderley Edge. There is a compelling and urgent need to address the issue of housing availability and affordability in the town, to provide a sustainable future for its services and facilities, and to support the delivery of new jobs in the local area.

Green Belt Release in Alderley Edge (Issue 5)

2.17 Having considered the development needs of particular LSC’s, ‘Issue 5’ of the SADPD relates to the requirement for and approach to undertaking Green Belt releases in those LSC’s which are currently inset within the North Cheshire Green Belt.

2.18 The paragraph’s above set out DWH’s clear view that there is an acute need for new housing development in Alderley Edge, given:

- The significance and role of the town in the settlement hierarchy; and
- The need to address issues of housing availability and affordability in the town, provide a sustainable future for its services and facilities, and to support the delivery of new jobs in the local area.

2.19 Despite the scale and strategic function of Alderley Edge, and the clear evidence of the need for new homes, there has been a significant shortage of new housing delivery in the town relative to the other LSC’s. Since the start of the LPS plan-period, the number of completions and commitments in the town is just 99 dwellings – the fifth lowest amount of development of the 13 LSC’s and far below the average of 211 dwellings, despite Alderley Edge being the third largest LSC. Moreover, CEC’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment⁸ (SHLAA) has not identified any deliverable or developable residential development sites within the existing built-up area of Alderley Edge. This low rate of delivery of new homes represents a threat to the sustainable future of Alderley Edge and undermines its position in the settlement hierarchy.

2.20 It is evident that there is an urgent need to identify new sources of development land in Alderley Edge to meet the town’s housing needs and a positive policy intervention is now long overdue. The Green Belt is not an environmental designation; it is a strategic planning tool which was introduced to manage the growth of urban areas. It is wholly appropriate to revisit Green Belt boundaries when development requirements justify this.

2.21 The “...*exceptional circumstances*...” required to justify a Green Belt release in Alderley Edge are beyond doubt. The North Cheshire Green Belt was formally established in 1979 and has not been substantially altered around Alderley Edge since that time. A review is therefore timely and clearly critical if the town is to grow sustainably, meet its development needs, and underpin economic growth. In short, the release of land from the Green Belt is critical if Alderley Edge is to have a sustainable future.

The approach to Green Belt alterations (Question 5a)

2.22 DWH does not disagree with the broad approach to determining whether Green Belt alterations are required around specific LSC’s as set out at Paragraph 2.17 of the

⁸ *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment*, Cheshire East Council (February 2013)

SADPD. However, as CEC is aware, in February 2017 the Government published the Housing White Paper⁹ (HWP) which sets out proposed amendments to national planning policy in respect of Green Belt. DWH considers that the approach to Green Belt alterations set out in the SADPD is generally consistent with the policy proposals of the HWP. However, the HWP does add additional detail; for example, it states that that when undertaking releases local planning authorities should look first to land which “...surrounds transport hubs...”.

- 2.23 The HWP is subject to consultation and cannot therefore be given significant weight at the present time. However, DWH considers that the principle of prioritising the release of Green Belt land which is sustainably located is sensible and pragmatic, albeit issues of sustainability must also be balanced against matters such as the relative suitability and deliverability of the land in question.

Safeguarded Land (Question 5b)

- 2.24 The SADPD identifies that 12.6ha of safeguarded land is expected to be identified around the LSC's in the north of the Borough. 'Question 5b' asks how such land should be apportioned to particular LSC's.
- 2.25 DWH strongly agrees that safeguarded land should be identified around the LSC's. The NPPF makes clear that it is necessary to do so when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, in order to ensure that there is available land which is capable of meeting “...longer-term development needs stretching well-beyond the plan period...” (paragraph 85). The identification of safeguarded land will therefore be critical to ensure that the new Green Belt boundaries around each of the LSC's are capable of enduring beyond the LPS plan-period.
- 2.26 Assuming that safeguarded land is developed in future years at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph), the 12.6ha of safeguarded land to be apportioned to the six LSC's currently inset within the Green Belt has the potential to deliver just 378 dwellings. This equates to:
- Just 2.16-years supply against the requirement for LSC's identified in emerging LPS; and
 - An average of just 63 dwellings per LSC – only 23.4% of the total amount of development proposed in the LSC's on average during the LPS plan-period.
- 2.27 The amount of safeguarded land proposed will therefore be wholly insufficient to cater for the longer-term needs of the LSC's or to ensure that the new Green Belt boundaries are capable of ensuring beyond the plan-period. DWH therefore considers that CEC should significantly increase the overall amount of safeguarded land proposed such that it is commensurate with the likely future cumulative development needs of the six LSC's.
- 2.28 Similarly, the overall amount of safeguarded land should be apportioned to each of the LSC's mindful of their relative size, role and function within the settlement hierarchy, sustainability, and likely future development needs. Similar judgements will inform the distribution of the residual housing requirement.

⁹ *Fixing our broken housing market*, Department for Communities and Local Government (February 2017)

Settlement Boundaries (Issue 10)

- 2.29 The SADPD notes that it will be necessary to identify revised boundaries for all settlements. DWH does not disagree with the broad approach to the identification of revised settlement boundaries, as set out at paragraph 2.32 of the SADPD. It is, however, considered that settlement boundaries should also encompass safeguarded land.

Strategic and Local Green Gaps (Issues 7 and 8)

- 2.30 'Issue 7' of the SADPD relates to the identification of "Strategic Green Gaps". It implies that the only such gaps in the Borough are those around Crewe, between it and Nantwich and other surrounding villages. The principle of the gaps around Crewe is established in the emerging LPS, with the key requirement of the SADPD therefore being to define their precise boundaries. This implies that any other gaps identified in the SADPD will be of "local" – rather than "strategic – importance. DWH requests confirmation from CEC that this understanding of 'Issue 7' is correct and reserves the right to comment further in the event that additional "strategic" green gaps are proposed.
- 2.31 'Issue 8' relates to the recognition in the emerging LPS that additional gaps of "local" importance should also be identified. The SADPD states that the purpose of such gaps would be to "...*protect the setting and separate identity...*" of neighbouring settlements and makes clear that such gaps will only be identified in areas which are not designated as Green Belt (paragraph 2.26). DWH agrees with this approach, which will avoid duplication between the purpose of Green Belt and other designations.
- 2.32 In respect of the approach to identifying "Local Green Gaps", DWH considers that CEC must consider the extent to which any such gaps have already been eroded. For example, if two neighbouring settlements have already merged, then the designation of a green gap will be of limited value in maintaining their separate identify. It is important that the consideration of a settlements setting and identity is considered in this context. It is acknowledged that green gaps may be able to play a role in preventing further merging; however, land between settlements should only be included within a gap where its development would result in a perceptible change in the separate identify of the two settlements, having regard to its landscape character and the existing form of the urban area.
- 2.33 This issue is discussed further in respect of Alderley Edge in the following chapter.

3. The Opportunity at Whitehall Meadow

- 3.1 DWH is the promoter of 'Whitehall Meadow', a high quality residential development opportunity at Wilmslow Road in Alderley Edge ("the Site"). The Site is approximately 3.4ha in size. Its location and extent is shown on the Site Location Plan at Appendix 1 and in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Site location



- 3.2 A Vision Document has been prepared which provides an appraisal of the Site and what can be achieved by its development. It is submitted and should be read alongside this Report.

The Site

- 3.3 As set out in the Vision Document, the Site is considered to be:

- **A sustainable location for growth.** The site is well located within walking distance of the centre of Alderley Edge which – as discussed in the preceding chapter – provides a good range of services and facilities. Alderley Edge benefits from a train station with good access to Manchester and Macclesfield. Indeed, CEC's evidence in the Spatial Distribution Update Report (AECOM August 2015) confirms that Alderley Edge scores highly in sustainability terms and is only identified as a LSC rather than a higher-level KSC on the basis of its relatively small population.
- **Direct access to the strategic road network.** The site is located on Wilmslow Road (B5359). This provides access onto the A34 towards Wilmslow, in turn providing access to Manchester Airport and the M60 towards Manchester.

- **It will not result in harm to the Green Belt.** Whitehall Meadow does not perform a strategic Green Belt function; its release from the Green Belt will result in relatively limited harm and will not undermine the general extent of the North Cheshire Green Belt. This issue is discussed in greater detail below.
- 3.4 The Site is particularly sustainable given its proximity to Alderley Edge town centre and rail station, both of which are located just 400m to the south. The Site is also immediately adjacent to Wilmslow Road, which is a bus route with bus stops located within 100m of the Site boundary. It is therefore a demonstrably sustainable location for new homes and is ideally placed to encourage trips by walking, cycling, rail and bus. There are no other development sites or prospective Green Belt releases in Alderley Edge which are closer to the rail station or town centre. In this respect, it is evidence that the Site is the most sustainable option for development.
- 3.5 The Site is currently comprised of greenfield land. There are no known contamination issues with the land, albeit the necessary assessments in this respect can be undertaken in due course as part of the planning application process. The site is entirely located within flood zone 1, as defined on the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Map¹⁰, such that the risk of tidal or fluvial flooding is defined as 'low'. There are no listed buildings in close proximity to the Site, nor is it located within or in the setting of a Conservation Area.
- 3.6 It is therefore clear that the Site is demonstrably suitable for development and represents a sustainable location for the delivery of new homes. DWH also confirms that the Site is:
- Available for residential development. DWH have an active legal interest over all the land. There are no legal or ownership constraints such as ransom strips or tenancies which would present an obstacle to the early delivery of new homes; and
 - Achievable for development. It is located in one of the most popular and desirable places to live in Cheshire East and the town has an urgent need for new housing. The Site is therefore viable and DWH are committed to deliver new market and affordable housing at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.7 It is therefore considered that the Site presents deliverable residential development opportunities and can contribute towards the Borough's housing land supply within the next five years, subject to the release of land from the Green Belt.

Green Belt alternatives

- 3.8 CEC's Green Belt Assessment Update (2015) highlights that there are significant environmental constraints to the south and east of the Alderley Edge. In particular, the land is subject to landscape and topographical constraints, with the land being open and visually exposed to the countryside beyond such that development in these locations would be readily visible. Opportunities to the north and west of the town are therefore more sustainable and suitable for growth.

¹⁰ Environment Agency 'what's in your back yard?' online mapping system

- 3.9 The Green Belt Assessment identifies that the Site provides a “major contribution” to the Green Belt. This conclusion is reached in respect of all of the land east of the A34, which is much more extensive in size than the Site itself which comprises only the southernmost part of the land parcel considered by the Green Belt Assessment. In this regard, the Site itself comprises a much smaller incursion into the Green Belt, which is well-related to the existing urban area.
- 3.10 A high level comparative assessment of alternative sites around Alderley Edge and the contribution that they make to the Green Belt has been undertaken and is provided at Appendix 2. These sites have been considered in detail by CEC in the Green Belt Assessment Update (2015). The assessment demonstrates that the Site would result in no reduction of the Green Belt between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. This is because the existing built form of Alderley Edge already extends beyond the proposed northern boundary of the Site; indeed, when travelling along Alderley Road towards Wilmslow there is ribbon development associated with the northernmost part of Alderley Edge, such that there is no perceptible difference between the two settlements. Moreover, of all the sites assessed, the Site itself represents the smallest reduction in the Green Belt; in contrast, all other sites assessed would result in a marked incursion into the Green Belt beyond existing settlement boundaries. As highlighted earlier, it is also the most suitable and sustainable location in Alderley Edge for an expansion of the urban area.
- 3.11 The Site is surrounded on three sides by existing built development and physical features, including existing built development to the south and east and by the A34 to the west. The northernmost boundary is comprised of existing mature landscaping, which also has the effect of visually screening the Site from the north. As such, in line with the conclusions of the Green Belt Assessment Updated, the Site will result in the creation of defensible Green Belt boundaries. These boundaries will be further enhanced by proposed landscaping to the north as part of the development proposals, which will also create a softer settlement edge.

Landscape Appraisal

- 3.12 SWECO has undertaken a landscape appraisal of the Site and five other areas of land at Alderley Edge. It considers each in respect of their contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. The report is provided at Appendix 3. It concludes that:
- The landscape and visual effects of residential development at the Site would be limited and acceptable; and
 - The Site does not make a critical or significant contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
- 3.13 The Landscape Appraisal considers in particular the extent to which a ‘green gap’ exists between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow to the north, and the extent to which such a gap – if it does exist – would be compromised by the residential development of the Site. It concludes that:
- There is not a clear area of open countryside that forms a ‘gap’ between the two settlements in the vicinity of the Site. The area between Alderley Edge and

Wilmslow has already been “...*substantially compromised*...” given the existing development in the area and along Alderley Road; and

- Even if it were consider that such a ‘gap’ did exist, due to its specific location and limited extent the Site would not make a critical contribution to it which would merit protection.

3.14 As such, the residential development of the Site is suitable in landscape terms and would not preclude the retention of an area of Green Belt to the north of the Site.

The Development Framework

3.15 The accompanying Vision Document presents the proposed development framework for the Site. In summary, the Site presents an opportunity to provide:

- Approximately 90 new homes as part of a high quality and landscape-led development. This would involve:
 - a balanced mix of new homes to respond to local needs, with a range of densities which both respect the amenity of existing properties to the south and reflect the open land to the north;
 - affordable homes in line with CEC’s policy requirement;
 - the retention of key trees and other landscaping;
 - vehicular accessed directly off Wilmslow Road, in accordance with Manual for Streets and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges guidelines;
 - areas of public open space which act as focal points within the development;
 - a clear movement strategy with a permeable network of streets, spaces and routes, with priority for cyclists and pedestrians;
- An area of parking towards the south, accessed of Wilmslow Road. This would be publicly-accessible and would therefore complement the operation of both the town centre and the rail station, both of which are within 400m and have insufficient parking.

3.16 The proposed development of the Site would therefore make an important contribution to the housing needs of Alderley Edge, whilst supporting its role and function as a LSC for both residents in the town and the wider area beyond. DWH is keen to work with CEC and representatives of the local community – including in particular Alderley Edge Parish Council – to discuss and progress the proposals for the Site.

4. Development Policies

4.1 This chapter provides comments on the other issues set out within the SADPD.

Jodrell Bank Observatory (Issue 11)

4.2 Jodrell Bank Observatory is a world class scientific facility and a significant tourist attraction for Cheshire East. DWH therefore agrees with the SADPD that its operation “...should be afforded reasonable protection...” (paragraph 2.36), such that the function and contribution of the Observatory to the Borough can be maintained over the long-term.

4.3 Alderley Edge is not within the consultation zone of the Observatory and is somewhat distant from it. It is therefore considered that any residential development on DWH's landinterests on the edge of the village would have negligible effects on the Observatory. This is particularly the case given that DWH's site is located to the north of Alderley Edge, approximately 9.1km away from Jodrell Bank.

4.4 Nevertheless, DWH acknowledges that new residential development delivered in close proximity to the Observatory may have the potential to adversely impact upon its operation. This should not, however, trigger a widespread objection to the principle of all new residential development in such locations. Such an approach would be:

- Inappropriate because it would unilaterally prevent the development needs of particular settlements from being met, thereby effectively condemning them to decline; and
- Unjustified given that it is possible to appropriately mitigate the potential adverse impacts of new development in this respect, such as through the use of insulation in roof spaces to limit radio wave emissions from devices such as microwaves, mobile phones and TVs.

4.5 A balanced approach is therefore called for to determine whether a development proposal is acceptable. This should weigh the need for new development against the potential adverse impacts on the Observatory, taking into account appropriate and necessary mitigation. In this respect, it is clear from recent planning decisions in the Borough that there is a lack of clarity about the relationship between the Observatory and new development in close proximity to it. As such, in response to ‘Question 11’ of the SADPD, DWH does consider that further planning policy guidance is required in this respect. As a minimum, such guidance should:

- Clearly establish how new development might result in an adverse impact on the operation of the Observatory; and
- Identify the measures which can be taken to appropriately mitigate such impacts.

General Requirements (Issue 12)

- 4.6 The SADPD proposes a policy which sets out general requirements for all development, including in relation to issues of design, access and amenity. DWH supports the objectives of CEC in this regard. However, it is considered that the suggested general requirements – listed at paragraph 3.3 of the SADPD – would overlap with other existing requirements in the emerging LPS and/or NPPF. For example:
- The requirement for development to provide “...*safe, convenient access*...” would overlap with Policy SD 1 of the emerging LPS, which already requires a development to provide “...*safe access*...”;
 - The requirement for development to demonstrate that it would not result in “...*unacceptable levels of traffic congestion*...” would overlap with the requirement of the NPPF to ensure that the residual cumulative impacts of development are not “...*severe*...” (paragraph 32); and
 - The requirement for development to provide “...*necessary parking*...” would overlap with Policy SD 1 of the emerging LPS, which already requires a development to provide “...*sufficient car parking in accordance with adopted highway standards*...”.
- 4.7 The NPPF states that planning policies should only be used “...*where clearly justified*...” (paragraph 153) and the recent Housing White Paper⁹ advises that planning policy documents “...*should not duplicate one another unless clearly justified*...” (paragraph 1.10). Mindful of the above, DWH considers that additional general requirements policies in the SADPD are likely to be somewhat repetitive of existing policies and therefore unnecessary. If there are detailed points of guidance which CEC is keen to establish, such as prescriptive parking standards or separation distances between new homes, these would be more appropriately contained within a Supplementary Planning Document rather than in the SADPD.

Natural Environment, Climate Change and Resources (Issue 13)

- 4.8 The SADPD sets out CEC’s intention to establish policies to add “policy detail” in relation to a range of issues, including biodiversity, flood risk/water management, climate change, pollution and land contamination, and renewable/low carbon energy networks. DWH supports the objectives of CEC in this regard. However, it is noted that the emerging LPS and NPPF include numerous policies which already relate to these matters. As such, in line with the discussion above in relation to ‘Issue 12’, DWH encourages CEC to ensure that the policies of the SADPD in this regard have a clear and specific function, which avoids any potential overlaps with existing policies.

The Historic Environment (Issue 14)

- 4.9 The SADPD proposes to add policy detail regarding the historic environment. DWH does not oppose the preparation of such a policy, assuming that has a clear and specific function which does not overlap with existing policies in the emerging LPS or the NPPF. However, DWH does not consider that the SADPD should identify – either in policy or on the Policies Map – areas of “archaeological potential”. Given that archaeological

remains are typically contained below ground, it is simply not possible to identify areas of potential with any accuracy. Moreover, there are existing policies in the NPPF which cater for the identification and protection of such assets, such that it is unnecessary for the SADPD to include further provisions in this respect.

Housing (Issue 16)

4.10 In addition to matters relating to the scale and distribution of residential development, which are discussed in chapter 2 of this Report, the SADPD sets out various matters relating to, *inter alia*, densities (paragraph 7.7), accelerated implementation (paragraph 7.12) and technical standards (paragraph 7.14). In respect of these issues, DWH comments as follows:

- Densities: DWH has no objection in principle to the use of local standards for housing density. However, such standards must be robustly evidenced and must incorporate a degree of flexibility such that new development is able to respond to the demands of the market.
- Accelerated implementation: DWH welcomes CEC's objective to accelerate the implementation of permitted residential developments. The Government's recent Housing White Paper⁹ (HWP) sets out various suggestions for doing so which are relevant. Many of those suggestions relate not to establishing planning policies but to measures which can be taken as part of the Development Management process, such as minimising pre-commencement conditions. DWH therefore encourages CEC to review the content of the HWP in this respect in order to understand the measures that can be enacted at the local-level.
- Technical standards: as the SADPD notes, the Government has announced its intention to review the National Described Space Standards in the recent HWP, noting that there is no one-size-fits-all approach that reflects the wide-ranging needs and aspirations of households. Any policies applied in the SADPD in this respect will need to be prepared cognisant of the outcome of the Government's review, but DWH encourages CEC to ensure that any proposed space standards incorporate flexibility such that housebuilders are able to respond to the needs and demands of the market whilst making efficient use of land.

Transport and Infrastructure (Issue 18)

4.11 The SADPD proposes various policies regarding transport and infrastructure delivery. Whilst DWH supports CEC's objectives in this regard, it is considered that such matters are sufficiently catered for by existing policies in the emerging LPS and/or the NPPF. Any additional matters of detail can be more appropriately dealt with via Supplementary Planning Documents rather than the preparation of additional policies which may delay the progress of the SADPD.

4.12 DWH has submitted separate representations to CEC regarding matters related to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Policies Map (Issue 20)

- 4.13 DWH supports the preparation of the Policies Map and agrees with the proposed approach to its preparation as set out at paragraph 11 and Table 11.1 of the SADPD.

Appendix 1: Site Location Plan



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 Site boundary

Client:

Name

Project:

Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge

Drawing:

Site location plan

Project Number:

BARM3008

Drawing Number:

10_

Revision:

00

Status:

Final

Scale:

1:2,500 @ A4

Date:

April 2016



Appendix 2: Comparator Green Belt Assessment

Ref.	Green Belt											
	Settlement Coalescence					Countryside Encroachment / Urban Sprawl			Defensible Boundaries			
	Neighbouring settlement	Current width of Green Belt (i.e. distance to neighbouring settlement) (metres)	Future width of Green Belt (i.e. post-development distance to neighbouring settlement) (metres)	Change in Green Belt width (metres)	Change in Green Belt width (%)	Extent of site boundary adjacent to existing urban area (e.g. built development)	Extent of site boundary adjacent to other urban features (e.g. roads, rail lines, etc)	% of site in use as 'Countryside'	Urban boundary features		Natural boundary features	
									% of boundary	Features	% of boundary	Features
AE01	Wilmslow	409	409	0	0	20%	80%	100%	80%	East and West boundary B5359 and A34. Southern boundary bordered by residential use	20%	hedgerow along northern boundary
AE02	Wilmslow	613	362	251	41	50%	50%	10%	100%	East boundary bordered by railway line, western boundary bordered by B5359. North and South boundary bordered by residential use	0%	
AE03	Wilmslow	468	345	123	26	50%	50%	50%	100%	North boundary - Wilmslow bypass. West boundary - B5359. East boundary - railway line. South boundary - residential use	0%	
AE04	Wilmslow	680	474	206	30	25%	50%	100%	60%	Western boundary - railway line. Southern boundary - residential use. Eastern & Northern boundary agricultural land	40%	Tree lined boundary to agricultural land on north east boundary
AE05	Wilmslow	559	171	388	69	10%	40%	100%	75%	Southern boundary - residential use and Heyes Lane with some agricultural land to south west. Eastern boundary - Hough Lane, residential use. North - agricultural use. West - Wilmslow bypass	25%	Trees and hedgerow to northern boundary which borders agricultural land
AE06	Wilmslow	829	135	694	84	5%	60%	100%	65%	Triangular shaped site, eastern boundary - Hough Lane. Western boundary - Heyes Lane. Southern boundary - agricultural land	35%	Tree lined boundary to south which borders agricultural land
AE07	Wilmslow	1055	786	269	25	50%	50%	100%	50%	West and South bound by residential use on Heyes Lane and Moss Road. North and East bound by agricultural use	50%	Tree lined driveto property on eastern boundary and trees / hedgerow to north which borders agricultural land
AE08	Wilmslow	1,024	769	255	25	15%	50%	100%	75%	West, South and East bound by residential use on Moss Road and Hough Lane. North bound by agricultural use.	25%	Trees and hedgerow to northern boundary which borders agricultural land
AE09	Mottram St Andrew	1,793	1,428	365	20	75%	100%	100%	100%	West, North and East bound by residential use on Marlborough Road, Moss Road and Hough Lane. South bound by Mottram Road	0%	
AE10	Mottram St Andrew	2,094	2,000	1,448	69	25%	30%	0%	50%	North - Mottram Road, West and South bound by residential use on Squirrels Jump and Macclesfield Road. East bound by residential use.	50%	Dense wooded area to South and tree lined boundary to East
AE11	Over Alderley	1,838	1,651	187	10	30%	40%	0%	75%	North, West and South bound by properties on Macclesfield Road and Mottram Road. East bound by agricultural land.	25%	Eastern boundary tree lined
AE12	Over Alderley	1933	1697	236	12	50%	5%	100%	40%	North bound by properties on Macclesfield Road. East, South and West bound by agricultural land.	60%	South & East are bordered by trees and hedgerow. Western boundary is open.
AE13	Nether Alderley	1,601	1,031	570	36	50%	75%	85%	80%	West - residential use on Congleton Road, North - residential use on Winterbarn Road. South - residential use on Artists Lane, East - agricultural land.	20%	Eastern boundary tree lined

AE14	Chelford	3384	2882	502	15	50%	80%	80%	70%	West - railway line, North - agricultural land. East and South - residential use on Congleton Road and Welsh Row.	30%	Part of southern boundary is formed by trees and hedgerow
AE15	Chelford	3,575	3,259	316	9	50%	25%	100%	75%	West - railway line, North - residential use on Northfields, East - residential use on Congleton Road. South - agricultural land.	25%	Boundary to south is tree lined
AE16	Chelford	3495	2698	797	23	20%	35%	100%	70%	West - railway line, South & East - agricultural use, North - residential use on Blackshaw Lane	30%	Tree lined boundary to south which borders agricultural land
AE17	Chelford	3,279	2,300	979	30	20%	20%	100%	50%	West - A34, North - Chelford Road, East & South - agricultural use	50%	Hedgerow along East & Southern boundary
AE18	Chelford	3521	3287	234	7	50%	30%	0%	75%	Triangular shaped site, North - Chelford Road, East - residential use on Blackshaw Lane, West - agricultural land.	25%	Hedgerow along western boundary
AE19	Wilmslow	719	663	56	8	40%	100%	100%	100%	West - A34, North - Brook Lane, East - residential use on Wilton Crescent, South - Chelford Road	0%	

**Appendix 3: Landscape and Visual
Appraisal, prepared by Sweco
(April 2017)**

Landscape and visual
appraisal of proposed
residential site allocation
Land west of Wilmslow Road, Alderley
Edge

118852/PhB/170329
Revision 0

Report Prepared For: Barratt David Wilson Homes North
West

Issue	Date	Reason for Issue	Prepared		Checked		Approved	
0	07 April 2017	Final	PhB	07 April 2017	PhB	07 April 2017	PhB	07 April 2017

Landscape and visual appraisal of proposed residential site allocation
 118852/PhB/170329
 Revision 0

Sweco
 Peter House
 Oxford Street
 Manchester
 M1 5AN

+44 161 927 4830
 info@sweco.co.uk
 www.sweco.co.uk

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Appendix 1: Land West of Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge – Landscape Appraisal. RSK, September 2015 (incorporating Figures 1 to 3).

1. Introduction

This report considers the suitability for residential allocation of a 3.3 hectare site to the west of Wilmslow Road on the northern fringes of Alderley Edge (the Site). It does so from the perspective of the likely landscape and visual effects of development. It also includes consideration of the contribution of the Site to the Green Belt and provides a comparison of this contribution with that of other potential residential site allocations around the settlement of Alderley Edge which also lie within the currently designated Green Belt.

The report presents evidence to support the conclusion that:

- From the perspective of its potential landscape and visual effects the Site is suitable for residential development and adverse landscape and visual effects are likely to be limited;
- The Site does not make a significant or critical contribution to Green Belt purposes; and
- Allocation of the Site for residential development would have less (or no more) impact on the Green Belt and its purposes than other potential sites for residential allocation. This is particularly so for those alternative sites that lie to the south and south west of the existing extent of the town and which would result in urban sprawl and in encroachment into an extensive area of uninterrupted open agricultural countryside.

To support these conclusions the report considers whether a landscape 'gap' exists between the settlements of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow in the vicinity of the Site and whether any such 'gap' would be adversely affected by residential development on the Site. Regarding this potential for development to affect the separate identities of the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge the report provides evidence for its conclusion that:

- There is not a clear area of open countryside that forms a 'gap' between the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge in the vicinity of the Site; and
- Even if it was concluded that such a landscape 'gap' does still exist and that it merits protection (either by continued designation as Green Belt or through the future designation of a Local Green Gap in the SADPD), due to its specific location and limited extent the Site does not (or would not) make a critical contribution to any such policy protection (i.e. allocation of the Site would not preclude retention of an area of Green Belt or designation of a new Local Green Gap to the north of the Site).

This report has been prepared by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with experience of assessing the effects of residential development within different landscape contexts. It provides an expert and objective professional opinion on the likely landscape and visual effects of residential development of the Site and on the merits of alternative sites for potential development around Alderley Edge.

In its consideration of different sites around Alderley Edge this report adopts the land parcel referencing contained in the Green Belt Assessment Update prepared in by Arup in

2015 (GBAU). The 3.3 hectare Site which is the subject of this report comprises the southern part of the larger land parcel identified in the GBAU as AE01. This Site is also known as Whitehall Meadow / Land off Wilmslow Road. Land parcel AE01 extends considerably further north than the Site to include land up to the course of the A34 and Whitehall Brook at the southern edge of Wilmslow. In this regard it should be noted that land parcel AE01 forms a bridge that connects across the Green Belt between the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge distorting the GBAU's conclusions regarding the role of the smaller Site which forms only the southern part of that overall land parcel.

This report is supported by a landscape and visual appraisal of the Site carried out by the same author in summer 2015 and which is provided as Appendix 1. Section 3 of the earlier appraisal contains a detailed review of the contribution of land parcel AE01 (including the Site) to Green Belt purposes. This earlier appraisal disagrees with the GBAU's assessment of the contribution to Green Belt purposes of land parcel AE01 setting out its conclusions that:

- The contribution to Green Belt purposes of the Site (to the south) is not the same as the contribution of other parts of land parcel AE01 (further to the north and abutting Wilmslow); and
- The overall assessment of the contribution to Green Belt purposes of land parcel AE01 has been distorted by placing too much weight on maintaining a landscape gap between the towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge that has, in the opinion of this report, already been substantially compromised.

This report revisits and expands on this earlier appraisal to conclude that the Site could be allocated for residential development in Cheshire East's SADPD without resulting in unacceptable landscape or visual effects and without causing harm to the integrity and purposes of the wider Green Belt.

2. The landscape context of the Site

2.1 Introduction

A landscape and visual appraisal of the Site was carried out in September 2015. This earlier appraisal is provided as Appendix 1 and provides a description of the site and its landscape context. Figure 1 in Appendix 1 provides an aerial photograph of the vicinity site identifying the extent of the Site and the extent of GBAU land parcel AE01.

2.2 The natural setting and definition of the two towns

The towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge are located on the southern edge of the Greater Manchester conurbation with Alderley Edge lying directly to the south of Wilmslow. South of Alderley Edge lies an extensive area of open, uninterrupted countryside with no further towns or settlements of any significant size located nearby (settlements within the East Cheshire countryside to the south of Alderley Edge are limited to Chelford at a distance of approximately 4km to the south west and Macclesfield at a distance of approximately 5km to the south east).

When viewed on a map a narrow landscape gap appears to exist between the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge. This apparent gap typically extends to a width of approximately 500 to 600m between areas of reasonably dense residential streets on either side. This typical distance of approximately 500 to 600m also applies to the typical width of the currently designated Green Belt in this location (see Figure 1 in Appendix 1). The B5359 Wilmslow Road (a.k.a. Alderley Road) runs along an almost pure north-to-south axis across the narrow corridor of designated Green Belt to link the two towns. The length of the B5359 Wilmslow Road which passes through the currently designated Green Belt is approximately 600m (taken from the A34 junction to the north, to the first properties lying outside of the Green Belt in the vicinity of Horseshoe Lane in Alderley Edge).

The course of Whitehall Brook forms the natural feature that delineates the two towns and their landscape setting with Wilmslow lying entirely to the north of this watercourse and the built up area of Alderley Edge to the south. This role is reinforced by Whitehall Brook forming the parish boundary between the two towns (with the exception of a small deviation in the vicinity of the B5085 Brook Lane to the north west of Alderley Edge where the parish boundary extends beyond Whitehall Brook to meet the southern fringes of the built up area of Wilmslow at Knutsford Road). The course of Whitehall Brook runs within the corridor of designated Green Belt but, in different locations, forms first the Green Belt boundary with Wilmslow (to the rear of houses at Ashford Road in Wilmslow) and then the Green belt Boundary with Alderley Edge (to the rear of houses at The Circuit at Alderley Edge).

The delineating role of the natural feature of Whitehall Brook is reinforced by the major man-made feature in the area which comprises the route of the A34. This relatively recently built trunk road passes between the two towns before circling to the west of Alderley Edge. In southern parts of Wilmslow the built up area of the town lies to the north west of the route of the A34 with the built up area of the town of Alderley Edge

lying to the south east of the A34 (once again, an anomaly does exist at Brook Lane where ribbon development along the B5085 to the north west of the A34 lies within the parish of Alderley Edge but appears more connected to Wilmslow). As is the case with Whitehall Brook, the course of the A34 is abutted in different places by the southern fringes of the main built up area of Wilmslow (to the rear of houses at Ashford Road where the A34 and Whitehall Brook run next to one another) and the north western fringes of the main built up area of Alderley Edge (at the northern section of Wilton Crescent).

In the context of this spatial relationship between the towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge and the delineating role that the courses of Whitehall Brook and the A34 play, the following key observation can be made regarding the location and extent of the Site:

- The Site is located to the west of the B5359 Wilmslow Road and is contiguous with the existing built up area on the northern edge of Alderley Edge (properties north of Brook Lane). Its eastern frontage along Wilmslow Road is limited to approximately 200m, approximately half of which lies opposite residential properties to the east of Wilmslow Road which lie outside of the Green Belt (at the northern section of Horseshoe Lane). The distance from the north east corner of the Site to the A34 roundabout and to the course of Whitehall Brook directly to the north is therefore approximately 550m. This is an equivalent distance to the typical width of the current Green Belt corridor in this vicinity. In this context it should also be noted that land parcel AE01 that was considered in the GBAU extended across this area to link the Site with land that extended this approximately 550m further north to reach the courses of both the A34 and Whitehall Brook just short of the southern edge of Wilmslow;
- The minimum distance between the north west corner of the site and the course of Whitehall Brook to the north west is approximately 250m; and
- The Site is located adjacent to but exclusively to the east of the route of the A34.

Allocation and subsequent residential development of the Site would not therefore result in any significant or harmful alteration to the spatial relationship between Alderley Edge and the principal natural and man-made features that help to delineate its extent and setting. Looked at in plan, the relationship between the town of Alderley Edge, the course of Whitehall Brook, the course of the A34 and the extent of Wilmslow would be unaltered and the pattern of development in relation to these features would be unchanged.

Subsequent sections of this report consider whether what is apparent in plan is also apparent in how the landscape is experienced on the ground.

2.3

The character of the vicinity of the Site

The landscape which forms the vicinity of the site is defined as comprising the four GBAU land parcels identified as AE01, AE02, AE03 and AE04 (area shown on Figure 1 in Appendix 1). Together these four GBAU land parcels comprise all of the undeveloped land to the north of Alderley Edge that lies to the south of Whitehall Brook and east of the A34.

The character of this area and the degree of visual enclosure experienced is heavily influenced by three major north-to-south transport routes which have a fragmenting effect:

- The north-to-south alignment of the A34 as it passes in cutting to the west of the site – the development of this relatively recent trunk highway incorporates substantial amounts of native tree planting including substantial new hedgerows along the brow of the cutting adjacent the Site;
- The north-to-south alignment of the B5359 Wilmslow Road – this road is enclosed by tree cover on both sides with only occasional glimpses into areas of adjacent open land such as the Site; and
- The north-to-south alignment of the railway to the east – this section of the railway is on embankment with tree cover further adding to the enclosing and fragmenting effect it has on the land to its west (contrasting with land to the east of the railway which takes on a more extensive, open and interrupted rural character).

The combined effect of these three north-to-south transport routes within approximately 150 to 300m of one another is that the landscape between the A34 in the west and the railway in the east is fragmented and visually enclosed. The encapsulated nature of the land between the A34 and B5359 (to the west) and between the B5359 and the railway (to the east) means that there no sense of an uninterrupted area of open agricultural countryside.

Instead, the areas of encapsulated semi-open land that lie between the three main north-to-south transport routes accommodate a variety of land uses, built features and other characteristics that erode the degree to which they are perceived as open and rural and which give the area a settled and suburban character. Principal amongst these are features such as:

- The buildings, ornamental landscape and areas of car parking at Harden Park;
- The Harden Park playing fields and associated buildings and car parking;
- The Merlin public house and associated gardens and car parking;
- A number of commercial businesses in former dispersed residences;
- Other occasional isolated residential properties within the Green Belt; and
- Areas of uncultivated or unused land.

All of this is underlined by the character of Wilmslow Road itself whose reasonably straight alignment and sometimes regularly spaced mature trees on both sides lends a sense of a tree lined avenue within a low density but nevertheless settled and parkland setting. The character of the landscape around the Site as perceived from the route of the B5359 Wilmslow Road is not one of uninterrupted open countryside.

The perception of an absence of openness in the landscape between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow from the perspective of the route of the B5359 Wilmslow Road is important and definitive. There is no public right of access to any of the land between the B5359

Wilmslow Road and the A34 to the west (the latter of which is in cutting and does not provide views in the direction of the Site). Public access to the land east of Wilmslow Road is limited to a single footpath in the north (virtually next to the A34) and to the east of the railway to a footpath that follows the course of Whitehall Brook. It is therefore the views from the B5359 Wilmslow Road that define how the landscape is perceived and reveal it to be fragmented, visually enclosed, settled and suburban. It does not comprise uninterrupted open agricultural countryside. As a consequence, any perceived gap in this vicinity between the towns of Alderley edge and Wilmslow is weak and tenuous.

2.4

The Site

The landscape appraisal in Appendix 1 provides a description of the Site including its landcover and topography. Figures 2 and 3 provide photographs from positions within and around the site. The Site comprises a single field with a southern aspect relating southwards towards the settlement of Alderley Edge.

The approximately 3.3 hectare Site is broadly rectangular in shape extending typically to just approximately 150 north-to-south but up to approximately 250m east to west. Its four boundaries can be described as follows:

- Immediately to the west is the A34 in cutting. There are no views into the Site from this route. In time further enclosure will be developed by recent hedgerow planting located along the brow of the cutting;
- Immediately to the south are the rear gardens of properties along Brook Lane, Alderley Edge;
- Immediately to the east is the tree lined B5359 Wilmslow Road. The approximately 200m on the opposite side of the road is not open in character and does not all fall within the currently designated extent of the Green Belt; and
- To the north is an area of open ground though topographically disconnected and not clearly within any particular use.

The Site has a slight parkland character with mature trees and ephemeral ponds (these appear to mark the alignment of a former field boundary with no evidence of the site having formed part of a designed landscape). Views into the site are limited to those rear views available from properties to the north of Brook Lane and glimpses into the site from the route of the B5359 Wilmslow Road. There is no public access.

3. The likely landscape and visual effects of residential development

3.1 Landscape effects

The Site comprises a single sloping field featuring ephemeral ponds and some mature trees located within central areas away from the contemporary field boundary. However there is no public access and the landscape is experienced only visually by means of views from adjacent properties to the south and by means of glimpses from the B5359 Wilmslow Road to the east. Tree cover to both the east and west and topographical form to the north ensure a good degree of visual enclosure with little connection between the landscape of the Site and open landscape areas found to the north or beyond the A34 to the west. As a consequence the Site is very self-contained.

It is assumed that residential development would likely be of a similar scale to surrounding properties to the east and south. The southern aspect of the site would ensure a strong connection to and association with the existing built up area of Alderley Edge and a strong and defensible northern edge could be established through appropriate planting. Subject to a full arboricultural survey to BS5837 it is likely that any valuable trees on the boundaries of and within central areas of the Site could be accommodated within any eventual layout for a residential scheme.

Section 2.3 of this report describes the landscape character of the surrounding area (as delineated by GBAU land parcels AE01 to AE04). It concludes that a number of north-to-south transport links, generally high levels of tree cover and a diversity of dispersed land uses means that, despite its partial openness, the landscape within the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site is fragmented, visually enclosed, settled and essentially suburban in character. It does not comprise the uninterrupted, open, agricultural Cheshire countryside that is found to the east and south of Alderley Edge and to the west of the A34. As a consequence of this character; the position of the site close to properties along Brook Lane and to the A34; and the relatively short eastern frontage of the Site with the B5359 Wilmslow Road; any change in character arising from its residential development would be limited in degree and un-harmful to the character of the wider area. The landscape effect of residential allocation and subsequently development would not likely be significant.

3.2 Visual effects

The location and self-contained nature of the Site means that views of any development would be highly localised and would not include views from areas of open countryside. Views into the Site would principally be limited to those experienced by:

- Residents of properties to the north of Brook Lane with rear views north into the Site;
- Drivers travelling in both directions along Wilmslow Road;
- Residents of a small number of residential properties on the opposite side of Wilmslow Road close to the south east corner of the Site (although likely with filtered views through tree cover); and

- Views for users of the Harden Park playing fields (although likely with filtered views through tree cover).

Any assessment of the likely visual effects of residential allocation and development must take account of the following:

- The inherent likely acceptability of the appearance of residential development – especially in views from other nearby residential properties (i.e. the same land use);
- The settled and suburban context of the Site (as outlined in section 2 of this report);
- The relatively low general visual sensitivity of other visual receptors such as road users and playing field users;
- The absence of nearby public rights of way of high visual amenity value; and
- The absence in the vicinity of the Site of acknowledged important and valued views that are recognised as significantly contributing to the setting and amenity of the town.

In this context, the visual effects of residential allocation and subsequently development of the Site would not likely be significant. The most substantial changes would be to the rear views of properties on the northern side of Brook Lane. These are private views and, with appropriate design, the appearance of any new development would likely be acceptable.

3.3 Suitability of the site for residential development

The preliminary assessment suggests that from a landscape and visual perspective the Site would be suitable for residential allocation and development. The landscape character and self-contained nature of the Site means that it is likely that the landscape and visual effects of any development would be very limited. Any limited effects could be further reduced and mitigated by incorporation of the following:

- A full arboricultural survey to BS5837 to ensure that individual trees of high amenity value were incorporated wherever possible into any proposed layout;
- Retention where appropriate of mature tree cover along the eastern frontage with Wilmslow Road to preserve the character and setting of that route;
- Supplementary planting along the northern Site boundary to form a strong and defensible edge; and
- A considered design response to views into the Site from the rear of three- and sometimes four-storey properties along Brook Lane to the south.

The opportunity to incorporate these measures would ensure that landscape character and local views are unlikely to be significantly affected or adversely harmed by residential development on the Site. Assuming a scale of development similar to that already present in surrounding areas, no potential landscape and visual effects have been identified that are likely to justify refusal of planning permission.

4. Contribution of the Site to Green Belt purposes

4.1 Introduction - Green Belt purposes

In light of the conclusion in section 3 of this report that in landscape and visual terms the Site is suitable for residential allocation and development, this section of the report considers whether, irrespective of that conclusion, the Site makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt such that it should continue to be protected from development either by continued designation as Green Belt or by the new designation of a Local Green Gap. It considers more closely any critical contribution that the Site may make to the openness and integrity of the Green Belt in this vicinity.

There are five purposes to Green Belt. Two are of limited relevance in the context of Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and the proposed residential allocation of the Site. The Site is not considered to make a special contribution to the historic setting of Alderley Edge (the GBAU records just 'contribution' against this criterion for land parcel AE01) and all land within the Green Belt makes a broadly similar contribution to encouraging urban regeneration and recycling of previously used land.

The three Green Belt purposes that are most relevant to a review of options for residential site allocation around Alderley Edge are:

- To prevent the merging of separate settlements;
- To restrict the sprawl of large built up areas; and
- To safeguard the open countryside from encroachment.

The review contained in Appendix 1 concludes that in its consideration of land between Alderley Edge and Wilmslow definitive weight was placed by the GBAU on the first of these purposes. The implication of this weighting was that land to the south of Alderley Edge that would result in sprawl and encroach on open countryside was deemed preferable for development to land to the north of the town that was, in the opinion of this report, wrongly judged as being critical to prevent merging.

4.2 The likely effect on the Green Belt and its purposes

The following consideration of the Site's contribution to the three most relevant purposes of Green Belt refers back to section 2 of this report drawing on its overview of the natural setting and definition of the towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge and on its description of the character of the landscape between them.

4.2.1 Merging

The separation of the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge is not clearly apparent in the vicinity of the Site as a consequence of the area's fragmented, visually enclosed, settled and suburban character (see section 2.3 above). A drive from Wilmslow to Alderley Edge along the connecting B5359 Wilmslow Road does not pass through a clear area of open agricultural countryside and there is no distinct sense of leaving one town, passing through an area of open Green Belt and then entering another. The partially undeveloped area in the vicinity of the Site has an enclosed, settled and suburban

character defined by the route of the A34; by high levels of tree cover; and by the presence of built features such as scattered properties, a public house and the Harden Park playing fields (with associated built structures and car parking). From the perspective of the route of B5359 Wilmslow Road which links the two towns (the main public route through the area given the limited number of footpaths and limited public access to remaining parcels of open land) the settlements already appear to have largely merged. Allocation and subsequent residential development of the Site would result in very limited change to the existing character of the area between the two towns.

Even were the above not to be accepted (i.e. the view taken that a gap does still exist that requires protection), residential development of the Site (as opposed to all of GBAU land parcel AE01) would not significantly alter the current spatial relationship between the two towns as perceived in this vicinity. A sparsely settled and heavily vegetated zone would continue to exist along Wilmslow Road between the two towns. This would lie between the northern extent of the Site (to the south) and the course of the A34 and Whitehall Brook (to the north). The eastern frontage of the Site with Wilmslow Road is limited to approximately 200m leaving approximately 500m between its north east corner and the course of the A34 and Whitehall Brook to the north at the southern fringes of Wilmslow. The presence of existing residential areas opposite the Site at Horseshoe Lane and Horseshoe Farm means that this would differ little from current conditions. The relationship between the built up extent of Alderley Edge and the delineating role of the course of the A34 and the course of Whitehall Brook would be unaltered.

On either count, retention of the Site as undeveloped is not necessary to prevent the towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge from merging.

4.2.2 Sprawl

Residential development of the Site would not result in sprawl. The Site is limited in extent and Alderley Edge would extend no further north than its current footprint. The extent of development would continue to be contained by the defensible boundary formed by the route of the A34 to the north west and by the presence of residential properties around Horseshoe Lane and the position of Horseshoe Farm on the opposite side of Wilmslow Road. These mean that residential development of the Site (as opposed to all of GBAU land parcel AE01) would be perceived as infill rather than sprawl. The southern aspect of the sloping Site also has a strong association and connection with the existing built up area.

4.2.3 Encroachment

Residential development of the Site would not result in encroachment into open countryside. Preceding sections of this report set out how the vicinity of the Site does not have an open rural character. Fragmentation by various north-to-south communication links have resulted in an enclosed, settled and suburban character defined by the route of the A34; by high levels of tree cover; and by the presence of built features such as scattered properties, a public house and the Harden Park playing fields (with associated built structures and car parking). The character of this area stands in marked contrast to areas of open agricultural countryside found to the south of Alderley Edge. Further

development within this area to the north of the town would not be perceived as encroaching on open countryside.

4.2.4 Overall effect on the Green Belt

Based on a more detailed understanding of the relationship and landscape between the towns of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge and the delineating features that define their natural extent; and a more detailed understanding of the character of the partially open landscape that lies between them along Wilmslow Road; it is concluded that the Site makes a limited contribution to the three most relevant Green Belt purposes and its allocation for residential development would not be harmful to the physical integrity of the Green Belt or to its policy objectives.

5. Comparison with other potential residential site allocations

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report considers how other potential residential site allocations around Alderley Edge contribute to Green Belt purposes and how effects on the Green Belt would compare to the residential allocation of the Site. The assessment principally focuses on land to the north, south west and west of Alderley Edge, coincident with GBAU land parcels AE01 to AE05 and AE16 to 21, on the basis that it is understood that the alternative sites most likely to be considered for residential allocation lie in these directions. No sites are known to be under consideration to the east and south of Alderley Edge (GBAU land parcels AE06 to AE15).

5.2 Land to the east of Wilmslow Road and west of the railway (AE02 and AE03)

These two parcels of land lie between the B5359 Wilmslow Road to the west and the railway to the east. AE03 to the north principally comprises the remaining open land at Harden Park with AE02 to the south principally comprising the Harden Park playing fields. Both areas of land lie to the south of the courses of both Whitehall Brook and the A34. The northern boundary of AE03 abuts the A34 with only a narrow slither of further land lying between the A34 and the course of Whitehall Brook. On the basis of their position to the south of Whitehall Brook development on this land would fall within the natural limits of Alderley Edge.

GBAU land parcels AE02 and AE03 fall within the area described in section 2.3 of this report which forms the landscape setting of the Site. The area is identified as partially undeveloped with an enclosed, settled and suburban character defined by the route of the A34; by high levels of tree cover; and by the presence of built features such as scattered properties, a public house and the Harden Park playing fields (with associated built structures and car parking). Public access to this land is limited. Impressions of the area are achieved principally in views from Wilmslow Road, from the railway and from a footpath route to the far north next to the A34. These views confirm the fragmented, enclosed and partially developed nature of the area which could not be described as open countryside.

Relative to the Site, it is considered that this land east of Wilmslow Road makes a similarly limited level of contribution to the Green Belt. Regarding the three most relevant Green Belt purposes:

- As previously set out in this report, the separation of the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge is not clearly apparent in this location as a consequence of the area's fragmented, visually enclosed, settled and suburban character. Residential development of AE02 and AE03 would not therefore result in the merging of the two towns any more than has essentially already occurred;

- The enclosure of this land by the defensible boundaries of Wilmslow Road, the railway and the A34 means that there would be a limited sense of sprawl; and
- The character of the area (as described previously) means that there would be no encroachment into an area perceived as open countryside.

Although regarded in similar terms to the Site, residential development of this land would not be less harmful to the Green Belt than at the proposed Wilmslow Road Site.

5.3 Land to the north east of Alderley Edge and south west of Whitehall Brook (AE04)

GBAU land parcel AE04 comprises a roughly triangular field delineated by the railway to the west, the course of Whitehall Brook to the east and the existing built up area of Alderley Edge to the south. On the basis of its position to the south of Whitehall Brook and the A34 development on this land would fall within the natural limits of Alderley Edge. The course of Whitehall Brook is well-wooded creating enclosure and separation from the more open agricultural countryside to its east.

GBAU land parcels AE04 is considered to fall within the area described in section 2.3 of this report which forms the landscape setting of the Site (all land to the east of the A34 and to the south of the course of Whitehall Brook). The area is identified as partially undeveloped with an enclosed, settled and suburban character defined by transport links and proximity to the existing town. Public access to this land is provided by a footpath along Whitehall Brook. Impressions of the area are achieved principally in views from this footpath and from the railway. There are no views from Wilmslow Road.

Relative to the Site, it is considered that this land to the east of the railway but west of Whitehall Brook makes a similarly limited level of contribution to the Green Belt. Regarding the three most relevant Green Belt purposes:

- As previously set out in this report, the separation of the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge is not clearly apparent in this location as a consequence of the area's fragmented, visually enclosed, settled and suburban character. Residential development of AE04 would not therefore result in the merging of the two towns any more than has already occurred;
- The enclosure of this land by the defensible boundaries of the railway and Whitehall Brook means that there would be a limited sense of sprawl; and
- The character of the area (as described previously) means that there would be no encroachment into an area perceived as open countryside (the character of land parcel AE04 is considered to be significantly different to that of the open agricultural countryside located to the east of Whitehall Brook beyond what has been defined as the natural limits of Alderley Edge).

Although regarded in similar terms to the Site, residential development of this land would not be less harmful to the Green Belt than at the proposed Wilmslow Road Site.

5.4 Land to the north east of west of Alderley Edge and north east of Whitehall Brook (AE05)

GBAU land parcel AE05 comprises an extensive area of open agricultural countryside to the north of the course of Whitehall Brook and extending to areas located to the east of the southern extent of Wilmslow. On the basis of its position to the north of Whitehall Brook development on this land would fall outside of what is considered to form the natural limits of Alderley Edge.

The extensive, open, agricultural character of this area is considered to contrast with the more fragmented, enclosed, settled and suburban areas located south Whitehall Brook. A network of public footpaths give access to this area of countryside providing a sense of openness and visual amenity and a strong sense of separation from the town of Alderley Edge.

Relative to the Site, it is considered that this land to the north of Whitehall Brook makes a significantly greater contribution to the Green Belt. Regarding the three most relevant Green Belt purposes:

- There is currently a clear and undeniable landscape gap between The Circuit in Alderley Edge and properties along Hough Lane in excess of 800m away to the north east (the latter forming an extension to eastern parts of Wilmslow). Development of GBAU land parcel AE05 would have a merging effect over a considerable distance and would considerably alter the spatial and landscape relationship between the two towns;
- The size of this land parcel and the general absence of visual enclosure (either around the periphery or sub-dividing the parcel within) means that there would be a strong sense of urban sprawl; and
- The character of the area means that there would be a strong sense of encroachment into an area of uninterrupted, open countryside.

Residential development of this land (or any smaller part of it) would be considerably more harmful to the Green Belt than at the proposed Wilmslow Road Site.

5.5 Land to the south west of Alderley Edge (AE16 and 17)

GBAU land parcels AE16 and AE17 comprise areas of open countryside to the south west of Alderley Edge lying between the routes of the A34 and the railway (approximately 700m apart). AE16 is bisected by the course of Mobberley Brook – a watercourse that performs on the south western side of Alderley Edge a similar function to Whitehall Brook to the town's north (i.e. Alderley Edge does not traditionally extend to areas to the west or south of this natural delineating feature). The course of Mobberley Brook supports relatively high levels of tree cover partially enclosing land to the north east. Land parcel AE17 lies exclusively to the west of this watercourse. In this regard, development on the greater part of AE16 and AE17 would fall outside of what is considered to form the natural limits of Alderley Edge.

This is an area of uninterrupted open countryside with a strong and open rural character. An extensive area of glasshouses at the southern end of Green Lane (just outside of GBAU areas AE16 and AE17) is considered to underline the productive agricultural rather than suburban nature of this area of Cheshire countryside. Visual access is provided by a network of public footpaths which give access to this area of countryside providing a sense of openness and visual amenity and a strong sense of separation from the town of Alderley Edge.

Relative to the Site, it is considered that the land to the south of Mobberley Brook makes a significantly greater contribution to the Green Belt (land to the north east of Mobberley brook less so). Regarding the three most relevant Green Belt purposes:

- This land does not have a role in the prevention of towns from merging. The closest settlement to the south west is Chelford at a distance of approximately 4km. That this is the case underlines the potential for development here to encroach into open countryside;
- The size of these land parcels and the general absence of visual enclosure (either around the periphery or sub-dividing the parcel within) means that there would be a strong sense of urban sprawl (the distance between the A34 and the railway and between the A34 and the current southern limits to the town of Alderley Edge means that these features are not regarded as representing potential defensible boundaries to the town's growth); and
- The character of the area means that there would be a strong sense of encroachment into an area perceived as open countryside.

Development of the north eastern part of AE16 to the north east of Mobberley Brook is considered likely to have less impact on open areas of the Green Belt but would nevertheless likely be perceived as encroaching into open countryside to a greater extent than the Site.

Residential development of this land would be more harmful to the Green Belt than at the proposed Wilmslow Road Site.

5.6 Land to the west of Alderley Edge and east of A34 (AE19)

This is an area of fragmented land sandwiched between the existing extent of the town and the route of the A34 to the west. The A34 passes to the west in cutting with substantial new planting at the brow of the cutting that will result in increasing visual enclosure of AE19 over time. The south west corner of AE19 is bisected by the course of Mobberley Brook. The area to the north of Mobberley Brook has an increasingly limited sense of openness due to the proximity of the A34, new planting and proximity and visibility of the urban edge to the east (this edge is in places rather abrupt with limited vegetation at the interface between the built up area, rear gardens and the adjacent fields). On the basis of its position to the north of Mobberley Brook development on the majority of this land would fall within the natural limits of Alderley Edge.

The fields at AE19 have a slightly under-used and neglected character. Visual access is provided from the south along Rileys Lane and from a short section of footpath which follows the course of Mobberley Brook. This section of Mobberley Brook is marked by relatively few trees giving limited visual enclosure. The function and value of this footpath link is somewhat compromised by its severance by the A34 (a crossing is achievable if not attractive to use). The part of the footpath within AE19 does not provide any sense of an extensive area of open, uninterrupted countryside.

Relative to the Site, it is considered that this land to the west of the town but east of the course of the A34 (and largely north of Mobberley Brook) makes a similarly limited level of contribution to the Green Belt. Regarding the three most relevant Green Belt purposes:

- Residential development of AE19 would not result in or contribute to the merging of Alderley Edge with any other town;
- The enclosure of this land by the defensible boundary of the A34 means that there would be a limited sense of sprawl; and
- The character of the area (as described previously) means that there would be no encroachment into an area perceived as open countryside (the character of AE19 is considered to have a slightly degraded and under-used feel).

Although regarded in similar terms to the Site, residential development of this land would not be less harmful to the Green Belt than at the proposed Wilmslow Road Site.

5.7 Land to the west of the A34 (AE20 and 21)

GBAU land parcels AE20 and 21 are located to the south of Whitehall Brook, within the parish of Alderley Edge but to the west of the A34. The A34 is considered to form a man-made boundary to the natural limits and potential western expansion of Alderley Edge. Land west of the A34 comprises countryside disconnected from the town and with stronger associations with Wilmslow.

Ribbon development along Brook Lane means that this area cannot be regarded as uninterrupted open countryside. It is subject to urban fringe influences.

Relative to the Site, it is considered that the land to the west of the A34 makes a significantly greater contribution to the Green Belt. Regarding the three most relevant Green Belt purposes:

- This land has a significant role in the prevention of the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow from merging;
- The size of these land parcels; their physical separation from both Alderley Edge and Wilmslow; and their association with an area of ribbon development between the two towns means that there would be a strong sense of urban sprawl; and
- The character of the area means that there would be some sense of encroachment into an area perceived as open but interrupted countryside.

Residential development of this land would be more harmful to the Green Belt than at the proposed Wilmslow Road Site.

6. Conclusions

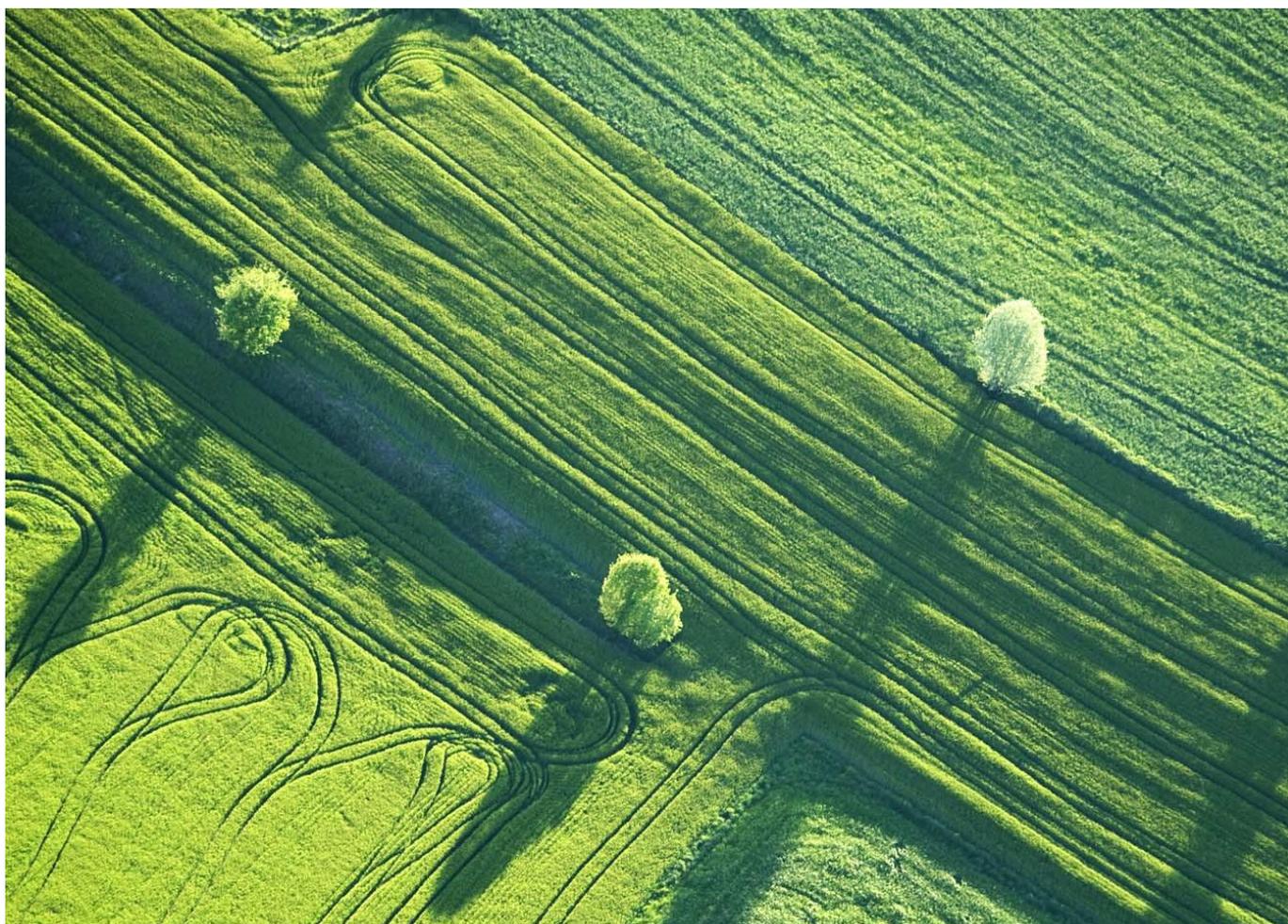
The landscape and visual effects of residential development of Land to the West of Wilmslow Road (the Site) would be limited and acceptable.

The Site makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes. In particular it is considered that the site does not make a contribution to a Local Green Gap or area of Green Belt that requires safeguarding to prevent the towns of Alderley Edge and Wilmslow from merging. This is because (a) no such gap exists and (b) even were others to consider that such a gap still exists, the location and extent of the Site means that it does not make a critical contribution that requires safeguarding.

The Site's contribution to Green Belt purposes is no greater than or less than other potential residential site allocations around Alderley Edge.

Appendix 1

Landscape Appraisal. RSK, September 2015 (incorporating Figures 1 to 3)



Barratt Strategic

Land west of Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge

Landscape appraisal

660749

SEPTEMBER 2015

RSK



RSK GENERAL NOTES

Project No.: 660749

Title: Land west of Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge - Landscape appraisal

Client: Barratt Strategic

Date: September 2015

Office: Manchester

Status: Preliminary draft

Rev Date: September 2015

Author Phillip Black **Technical reviewer** _____

Signature _____ Signature _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

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Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

This work has been undertaken in accordance with the quality management system of RSK Environment Ltd.

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FIGURES

1. Landscape context
2. Site photographs
3. Views from Wilmslow Road

1 INTRODUCTION

The site

- 1.1 Barrett Strategic is promoting residential development at land to the west of Wilmslow Road in Alderley Edge through the emerging Cheshire East local development plan. The site is located on the northern edge of the existing settlement to the north of Brook Lane.
- 1.2 The approximately 3.3 hectare site is identified by Cheshire East Council in its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (update January 2013) as land parcel 3638 (see Figure 1).
- 1.3 The site falls within parcel AE01 of the Cheshire East Council Green Belt Assessment Update 2015 (Final Report 28 April 2015) produced by Ove Arup & Partners Ltd (see Figure 1).

The appraisal

- 1.4 This appraisal provides two things:
 - A brief landscape and visual appraisal of the current site; and
 - A review of the assessment of the site's contribution to Green Belt purposes undertaken by Ove Arup.

2 SITE APPRAISAL

Site description

General introduction

- 2.1 The site comprises a single field of open pasture with occasional mature trees both within the open field and on site boundaries (see Figure 1 and photos 1 and 2). The main footprint of the settlement of Alderley Edge lies immediately to the south (comprising a number of mainly large buildings to the north of Brook Lane) with the recently constructed A34 bypass to the west, further open pasture to the north and Wilmslow/Alderley Road to the east (henceforth referred to as Wilmslow Road).

Landscape character context

- 2.2 The site falls within Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (November 2008) landscape character area LFW1 – Lower Farms and Woods – Marthall character area. This character area extends around the western and southern sides of the settlement of Alderley Edge. A similar character area of the same landscape type (LFW5 – Chonar) lies to the north east of the settlement. The character description identifies ‘low lying gently rolling topography’ with ‘hedgerow boundaries and standard trees’. The site appears to be broadly consistent with the landscape character area description.

Landscape designations

- 2.3 There are no national or local landscape designations at or in the vicinity of the site. The Bollin Valley and Parklands local landscape designation covers the higher ground to the south east of Alderley Edge. Local designations are under review as part of the emerging local plan.

Topography

- 2.4 The site is noticeably undulating with a principally south east facing aspect (see Figure 1). The most elevated parts of the site lie to the west and north with a change in level across the site of approximately 5m. This higher ground is slightly more elevated than the developed areas of Alderley Edge to the south. The western boundary of the site abuts the steeply sloping embankments of the lower A34 bypass which are newly planted with native woodland species. The northern boundary of the site (which currently largely comprises a simple post and wire fence visible on the skyline) is more elevated than its southern boundary (see photo 2 to far left hand side of view). Further high ground lies immediately to the north before the land drops away again towards the roundabout on the A34.

Vegetation

- 2.5 The field comprises open pasture.
- 2.6 Mature trees are located within the field (giving it a slightly parkland character) and on the elevated site boundaries to the north west and along the roadside to the east.

These include a number of mature oaks which are distinct and visible features on the undulating ground in views into the site from the properties to the south and from the road to the east. Recent planting on the bypass embankments just outside of the site boundary to the west is likely to mature into a native woodland belt.

- 2.7 The hedgerow along the eastern boundary with Wilmslow Road is relatively low, gappy and discontinuous which allows views into the rising ground of the site (see photo 8). The southern boundary includes sections of hedgerow – particularly towards the south east corner of the site. This, along with adjacent sections of high wall, forms a strong boundary and edge to the existing settlement.

Access

- 2.8 There is no public access to the site and no public rights of way in its immediate vicinity. With the planted, steeply sloping embankments of the A34 bypass to the west, visual ‘access’ to the site is therefore limited to views from the residential buildings immediately to the south of the site (the properties on the northern side of Brook Lane) and from Wilmslow Road. The occasional properties along the eastern side of Wilmslow Road are generally enclosed by high front boundaries with limited visibility towards the site.

Visibility

- 2.9 Wilmslow Road is an important gateway into Alderley Edge from the Manchester conurbation, the A34 and Wilmslow to the south. The low and gappy hedgerow, intermitted mature trees and rising topography allow views into the site from the highway (see photo 8). This will especially be the case during winter months. On departing Alderley Edge, similar views exist immediately after departing the current extent of the settlement (see photo 3).
- 2.10 Properties to the south of the site include some large apartment and institutional buildings. These extend up to or close to the site boundary with a large number of windows over three or four storeys looking out into the site. These views would feature the open pasture of the site, the rising topography, mature trees and slightly parkland character. Views from lower levels are likely to terminate at the elevated northern boundary of the site which comprises an open post and wire fence which may sit on the skyline within some of these views.

Landscape value

- 2.11 Although the site is not designated, the mature landscape character, distinct mature trees, rising topography and slight parkland character would suggest a moderate degree of landscape value.

Site context

Adjacent areas

- 2.12 The site forms the southern extent of a roughly triangular tract of land encapsulated by the A34 bypass to the west, by Wilmslow Road to the east and by the settlement edge of Alderley Edge in the vicinity of Brook Lane to the south. This tract of land principally

comprises pasture with a single property (now used as a recording studio) towards its narrower northern end.

- 2.13 Land to the east of Wilmslow Road comprises a more diverse mix of land uses including residential properties in large plots, commercial businesses in former residences, a public house (currently disused), a hotel, recreation ground and areas of open ground (some areas to the north east comprising intact fields but with another area adjacent Wilmslow Road appearing to be largely unmanaged).
- 2.14 Land to the west of the A34 bypass comprises open pastoral countryside and a golf course.
- 2.15 The route of Whitehall Brook curves around all of these areas to the west, north and east. This Brook might be interpreted as forming a boundary between Wilmslow to the north and Alderley Edge to the south. Both settlements already extend to the Brook in different locations.

The gap between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge

- 2.16 A site visit was undertaken to understand the nature of the gap between Wilmslow to the north and Alderley Edge to the south.
- 2.17 The routes of the A34 bypass, of Wilmslow Road and of the railway form a series of north-to-south linear elements that fragment the former area of countryside between the two towns. This fragmentation has been exacerbated by distribution of properties and businesses along Wilmslow Road – principally to the east but including the recording studio to the west. The general area is also visually enclosed with mature tree and hedgerow cover along much of Wilmslow road (see photos 5, 6 and 7).
- 2.18 As a consequence of the distribution of buildings to the east of Wilmslow Road it is not possible to clearly identify where Wilmslow ends and where Alderley Edge begins. The properties, hotel and public house to the south of the roundabout on the A34 are not clearly identifiable as being located within either settlement. Despite their position to the south of the A34 and of Whitehall Brook, the hotel and disused public house may already be interpreted as forming the southern extent of Wilmslow.
- 2.19 Consideration of the gap between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge from a number of perspectives has concluded that the gap is very weak and the two settlements are largely perceived to have already merged. No clearly identifiable tract of contiguous and clearly open countryside exists between the two settlements.

3 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE

The Ove Arup Green Belt Assessment

- 3.1 The Cheshire East Council Green Belt Assessment Update 2015 (Final Report 28 April 2015) was produced by Ove Arup & Partners Ltd. It includes consideration of the performance of various tracts of land around both Wilmslow and Alderley Edge against the five Green belt purposes identified in relevant policy.

Green Belt parcel AE01

- 3.2 The site is identified in the Ove Arup Green Belt Assessment as falling within land parcel AE01. This parcel comprises the roughly triangular area of land that lies immediately to the north of Alderley Edge between the A34 bypass and Wilmslow Road.
- 3.3 Field assessment of land parcel AE01 has identified that it can be divided into two principal areas:
- The broader and more elevated areas to the south featuring open pasture with mature trees and a slightly parkland character – this includes the site as well as the similarly elevated land immediately to its north. This area has a relatively high landscape quality with separation from the bypass provided by planted cutting embankments; and
 - The narrower, lower lying land to the north (see photo 4) which is enclosed by high hedgerows, includes a single property (recording studio) and with a lower presence of distinct mature trees. This northern area is of lower landscape quality with lower levels of visibility due to high enclosing hedgerows to the east. The northern area is also at a similar elevation to the adjacent bypass with occasional views to passing traffic.
 - Insert

Review of the Arup assessment of AE01 and the site

- 3.4 The Ove Arup Green Belt Assessment considers the contribution of the whole of area AE01 to the five Green Belt purposes. The following table provides a review of the Ove Arup assessment identifying, where appropriate, how the northern and southern parts of the overall parcel may perform differently. In undertaking the review the elevated land immediately to the north of the site has been included in its assessment.

Table 1: Review of the Arup assessment of AE01 and the site

	Parcel	Parcel 1 Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	2 Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	3 Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	4 Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	5 Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Overall evaluation	Overall assessment
Over Arup Assessment	AE01:Land east of Alderley Edge Bypass and west of Alderley Road	Significant Contribution: Well contained by the surrounding road network (Alderley /Wilmslow Road to the east and the A34 to the west) and backs onto properties along Brook Lane to the south. Prevents the opportunity for development to spread northwards along Alderley/ Wilmslow Road, where there are already a number of buildings, including a hotel and public house contained within the adjacent parcel (AE02).	Major Contribution: A vital area of land in maintaining a gap between Wilmslow and Alderley Edge.	Significant Contribution: Detached from the main built up area of Alderley Edge (with the exception of the southern boundary along Brook Lane), relatively open in feel, although the proximity of main roads reduces this somewhat. Well contained by the surrounding road network to prevent encroachment in the long term.	Contribution: Alderley Edge is a historic town with a designated Conservation Area. The Conservation Area does not fall within the 250m buffer to the south of the parcel however there is a listed building within the buffer but it is separated by an area of residential properties.	Significant contribution; Alderley Edge has 2.2% brownfield urban capacity for potential development, therefore the parcel makes a significant degree of contribution to the purpose.	The parcel makes a major contribution to Green Belt purposes. Although the strong boundaries would prevent encroachment into the countryside, the parcel has an essential role in maintaining the separation of Alderley edge and Wilmslow. The land is has few urbanising influences and mainly consists of gently undulating fields. Openness is affected by the proximity of main roads, particularly the A34 to the west.	Major contribution
RSK Environment Ltd comments on Ove Arup assessment	AE01:Land east of Alderley Edge Bypass and west of Alderley Road	Relevance of surrounding roads not clear. Presence of surrounding roads and cutting embankments would provide a framework and would restrict perceived sprawl.	Towns have already largely or partially merged. Area can only be described as 'vital' on the premise that the very limited sense of remaining separation must be wholly preserved.	Not detached from Alderley Edge. Whole area is not open in feel due to enclosing hedgerows and property (recording studio).	No comment	No comment	Encapsulated between roads. Too much weight placed on maintaining a gap when settlements are already perceived as having partially merged.	Encapsulated between roads. Too much weight placed on maintaining a gap when settlements are already perceived as having partially merged.
RSK Environment Ltd assessment of the site (southern part of AE01 only)	AE01:Land east of Alderley Edge Bypass and west of Alderley Road	Contribution: Perceived sprawl would be very limited due to limited extent of site, contiguousness with the existing settlement footprint and presence of roads to the east and west.	Contribution*: Southern part of AE01 including site does provide views to encapsulated area of open land to west of Wilmslow Road but gap is already very weak. The two settlements have already partially merged. * Assessment is based on the premise that the two settlements are already perceived to have largely or partially merged.	Contribution: Limited sense of the area being perceived as open countryside due to its encapsulated location, proximity to roads and separation from more open areas to the east and west. Slightly parkland character reduces sense of the land forming part of the open agricultural countryside.	Contribution: the existing edge to the south of the site is reasonably strong.	Significant Contribution (no basis upon which to challenge Ove Arup's assessment).	Some contribution but tract of land forms an encapsulated area between roads and towns are already perceived to have partially merged.	Contribution

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The contribution of the southern part of parcel AE01 (including the site) to Green Belt purposes is limited by:
- The limited extent of the site (particularly its north-south dimension and the remaining distance to the A34 roundabout and the main urban area of Wilmslow);
 - The distance of the site from Whitehall Brook which might be interpreted as forming a boundary between Wilmslow to the north and Alderley Edge to the south;
 - The site's contiguity with the existing settlement edge in the vicinity of Brook Lane;
 - The site's encapsulation to both the east and west by surrounding roads which prevent the area from being perceived as part of an extensive area of contiguous open countryside and which would contain any sense of perceived sprawl; and
 - That the settlements of Wilmslow and Alderley Edge are already perceived to have largely or partially merged.
- 4.2 RSK's review of the Ove Arup Green Belt Assessment has concluded that too much weight has been placed on maintaining a gap that has already been substantially compromised between two indistinct urban areas. This, along with the site's inclusion within a larger and varied tract of land, has distorted the assessment conclusions for a site that would not result in significant perceived sprawl or a significant sense of encroachment into open countryside.



- Legend:**
- The Site
 - GreenBelt
 - Arup Green Belt assessment Parcel AE01
 - ◆ Photograph Locations
 - Contours

Notes:-
 This map contains data from the following sources-
 DATA SOURCE (DATE)

Coordinate System: British National Grid
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: OSGB 1936
 Units: Meter

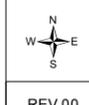
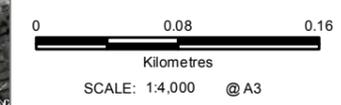


Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
00	16/09/2015	First Draft	WF	PB	PB

Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge



TITLE: Figure 1:
Landscape Context



REV 00

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmap

379000

384000



Photo 1 -



Photo 2 -

Notes:-
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 DATA SOURCE (DATE)
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 Units: Meter

Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
00	16/09/2015	First Draft	WF	PB	PB

Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge



TITLE: Figure 2:
Viewpoint Photos 1-2

REV 00



Photo 3 –



Photo 4 –



Photo 5 –



Photo 5 –



Photo 7 –



Photo 8 –

Notes:-
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 Coordinate System: British National Grid
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: OSGB 1936
 Units: Meter

Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
00	16/09/2015	First Draft	WF	PB	PB

Wilmslow Road, Alderley Edge



TITLE: Figure 3:
Viewpoint Photos 3-8

REV 00

Turley Office
1 New York Street
Manchester
M1 4HD

T 0161 233 7676

Turley

Turley Office
1 New York Street
Manchester
M1 4HD

T 0161 233 7676

Turley

Enclosure 4: Profile of Alderley Edge

Profile of Alderley Edge	
Population	Alderley Edge is the largest in population terms (compared to all of the LSCs) ⁹ .
Economy	Alderley Edge contains the largest concentration of employment in the LSCs, with over 4,000 jobs in 2016 ¹⁰ .
Housing Market	Based on sales records between April 2016 and March 2017, the average house price in Alderley Edge during the period was £365,000 and significantly higher than the average for both the borough and other LSCs ¹¹ (this is likely to be at least partially driven by an imbalance between supply and demand, with very limited new supply coming forward).
Accessibility	Alderley Edge has 16 rail services providing a commutable weekday journey to the principal Cheshire East Council towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, as well as Manchester. This compares favourably to all other settlements which have between 1 and 12 services for those LSCs that have a railway station; with 5 LSCs having no rail service.
Social Infrastructure	Alderley Edge contains a state primary school and number of private schools, as well as health facilities and a wide range of shops, leisure and cultural facilities.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid