

Bold Forest Garden Village
Masterplan Framework

Stage 1 Baseline Overview

Non-technical summary of
baseline assessments undertaken
Oct 2024 - June 2025

October 2025

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SWOT analysis (People, Place, Environment)
Summary constraints and opportunities plans

Document format: A4 landscape spreads for on-screen viewing

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This document summarises a number of baseline documents prepared by SLR, Avison Young and Useful Projects over the period October 2024 - June 2025.

1. Introduction, site and setting

Introduction

- 1.1 Avison Young, SLR and Useful Projects have undertaken a baseline review to inform the development of a Framework Masterplan for Bold Forest Garden Village (BFGV).
- 1.2 The baseline review has been progressed using available information across a number of topics, and builds upon previous work undertaken by St Helens Borough Council as part of the site's allocation in the **St Helens Local Plan Up to 2037 adopted July 2022** ['the Local Plan'].
- 1.3 The following document aims to provide a summary overview of key findings from reports prepared by Avison Young, SLR and Useful Projects and present these in an accessible, 'non-technical' format. This document summarises a set of more detailed parent reports.

Study area

- 1.4 The site is located to the south east of St Helens, bounded by Reginald Road, Bold Road, Travers Entry, Gorsey Lane and Crawford Street (Figure 1.1). The site is allocated for residential development in the Local Plan (Site 4HA / Policy LPA11).
- 1.5 The Masterplan Framework to be developed for the site will cover the Local Plan allocation site and adjacent Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (*Tunstall's Farm and Field North of Gorsey Lane LWS*). The LWS is protected by Policy LPC06 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
- 1.6 The total Masterplan Framework study area (comprising site allocation 4HA plus LWS) measures approximately **147ha**. Site allocation 4HA is 133ha.

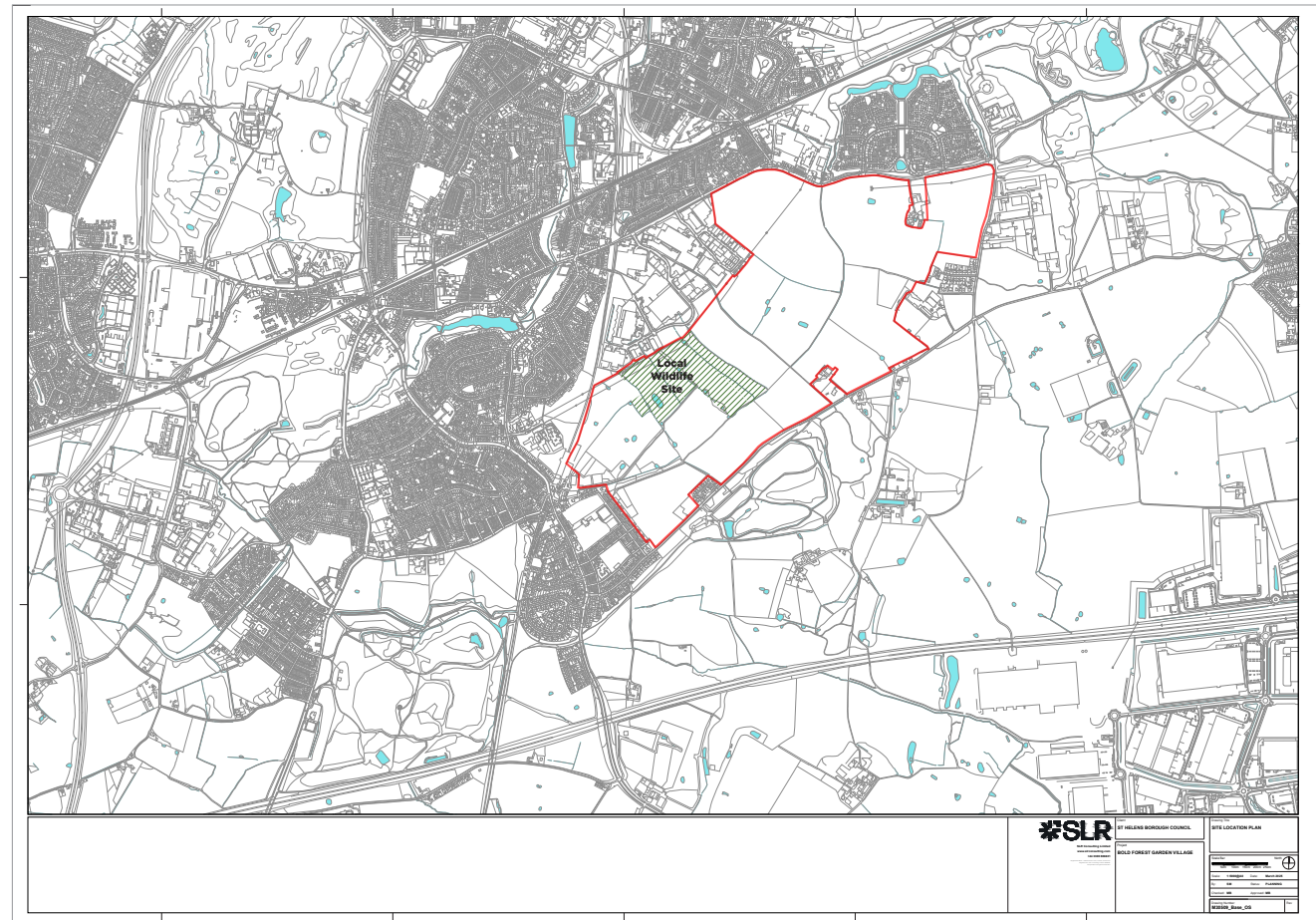


Figure 1.1 Masterplan Framework project area

- Framework Masterplan Framework project area boundary (147ha)
- Tunstall's Farm and Field North of Gorsey Lane Local Wildlife Site

- 1.7 Site location and accessibility is summarised at Figure 1.2. The site is located in the south of the borough and is divided between the wards of Bold & Lea Green and Sutton South East. The site is located 2.5 miles south of St Helens Town Centre and is approximately 3 miles from Junction 7 'Rainhill Stoops' of the M62.
- 1.8 St Helens Junction Rail Station and Lea Green Rail Station are located within walking distance of the site and provide access to regular train services to Liverpool, Manchester and other intervening and onward destinations.

Wider context

- 1.9 St Helens Borough as a whole has a strategically significant location on the junction of Merseyside and Greater Manchester conurbations. Its local economy is closely linked with that of the rest of the Liverpool City Region and West Lancashire, and it shares a housing market with Halton and Warrington. The borough is also linked economically, in terms of journeys to work, with Wigan, Salford and Manchester.
- 1.10 Being located to the south of the borough, in close proximity to strategic movement

infrastructure, the site has excellent connections to all parts of the sub-region. Key opportunities in the surrounding area include the growth of Liverpool Superport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport and proposed enhanced transport linkages driven by the Transport for the North (TfN) vision.

- 1.11 The site falls within the Bold Forest Park (Figure 1.3). The Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan was adopted in 2017 and provides a framework for the development of the Bold Forest Park area, seeking to ensure that new development contributes to its further enhancement.

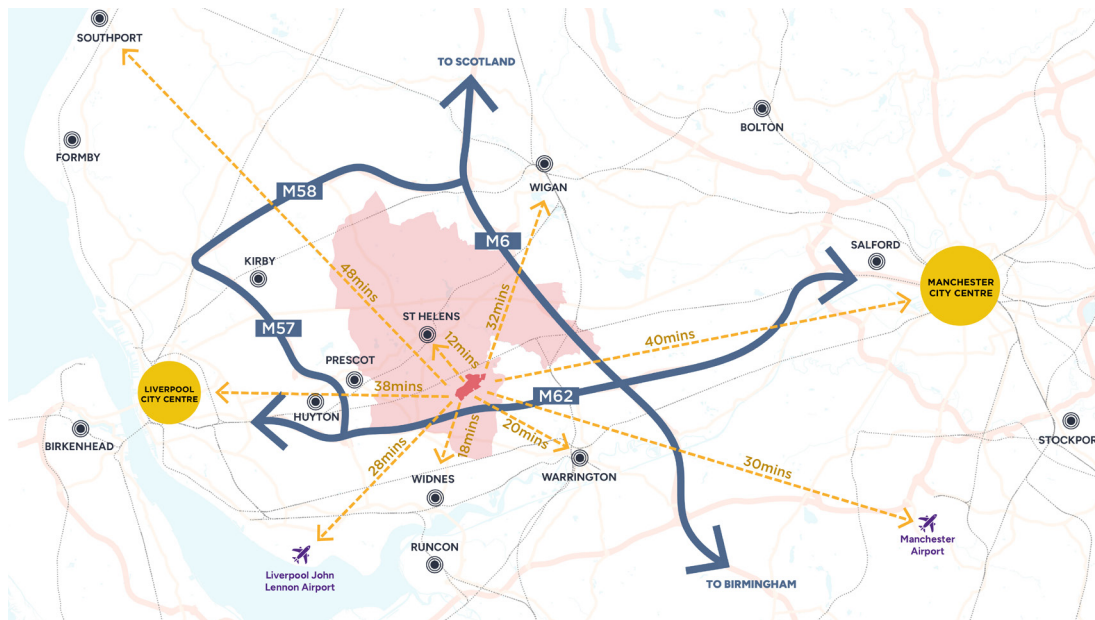


Figure 1.2 Sub-regional context

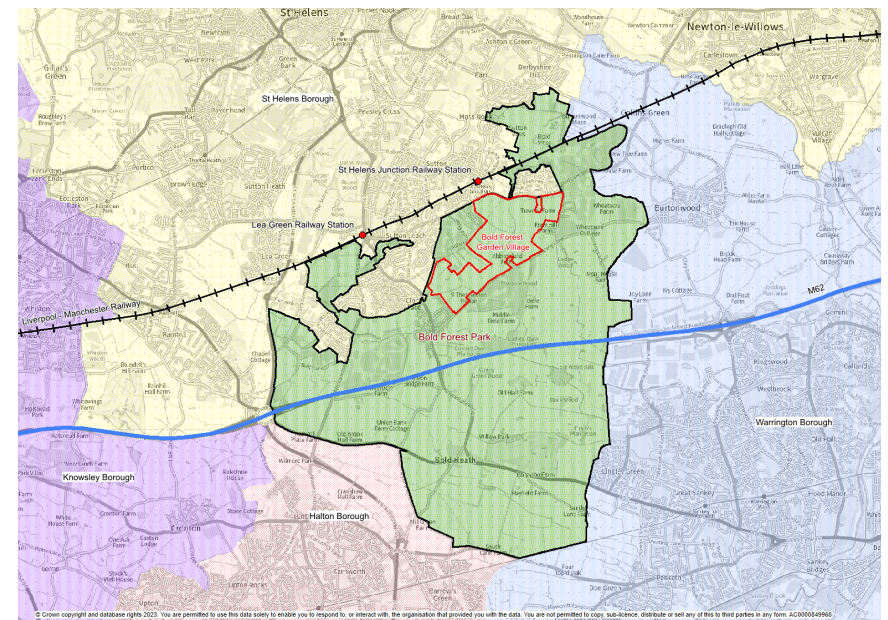


Figure 1.3 Site location in the context of Bold Forest Park (source: St Helens Borough Council)

Site features overview

- 1.12 The baseline review helps to identify site-specific features, characteristics and constraints (alongside broader contextual analysis) that will inform the masterplan framework.
- 1.13 Figures 1.3 and 1.4 provide a non-technical, illustrative overview of selected site features and constraints, drawn from the baseline review and as referred to in the various sections of this summary report.

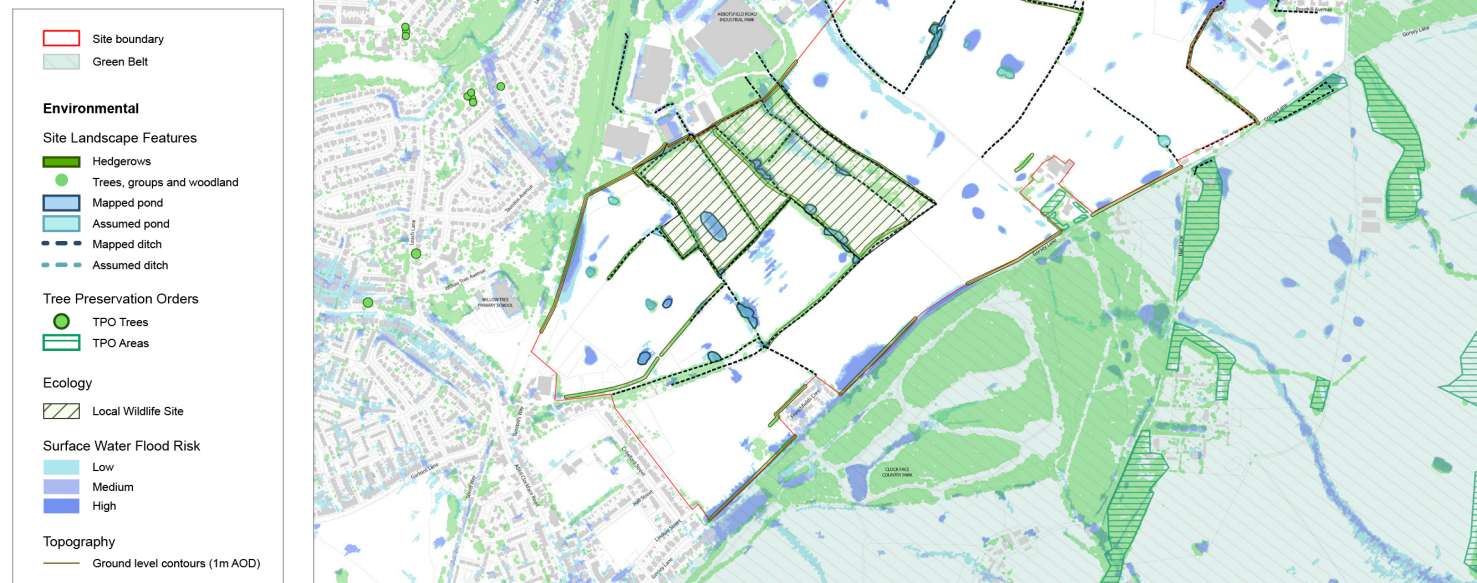
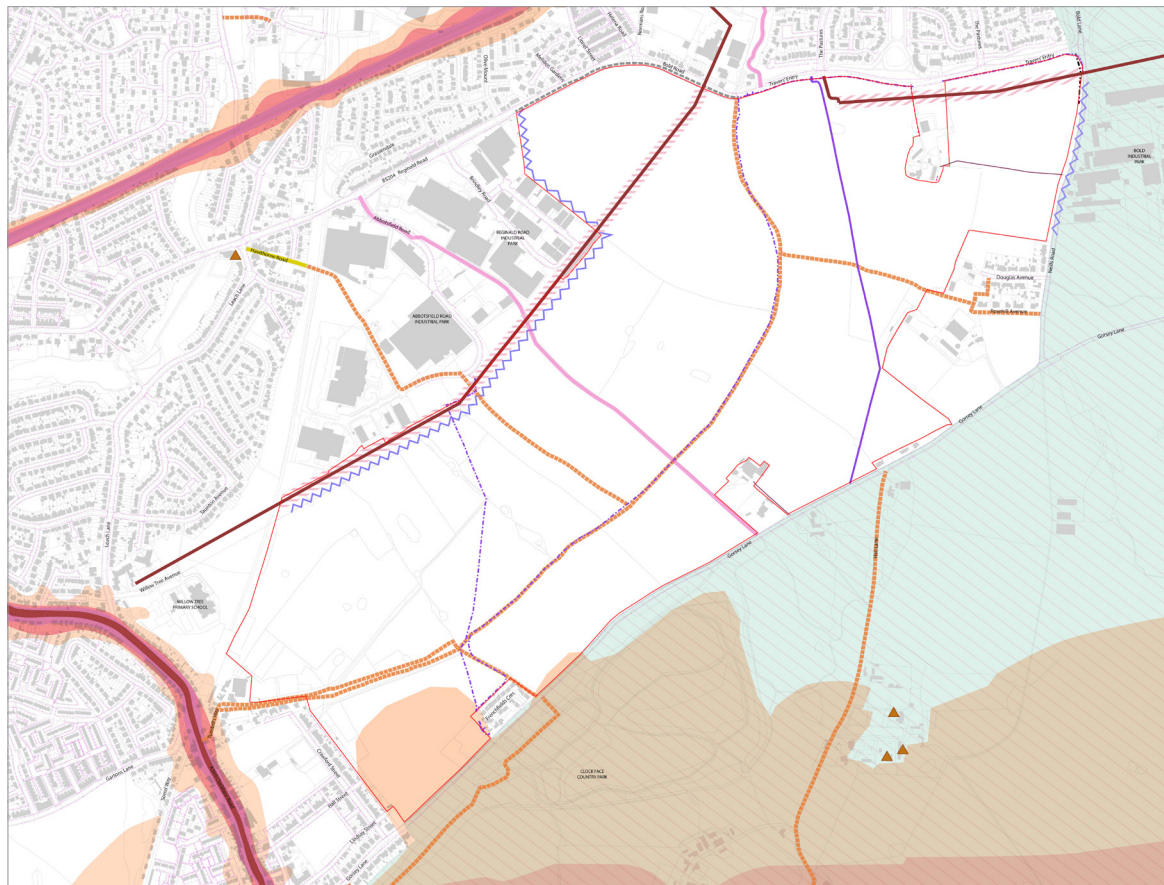
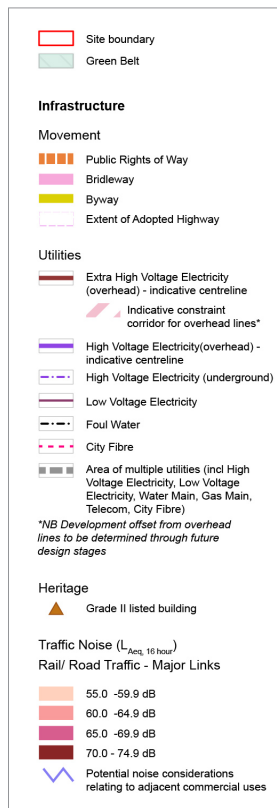


Figure 1.3 Non technical site constraints summary: Environment




 For illustration
 Not to scale

Figure 1.4 Non technical site constraints summary: Movement and infrastructure

Urban setting

- 1.14 The site is located on the southern edge of St Helens urban area broadly equidistant from St Helens town centre and the northern fringes of Warrington.
- 1.15 As illustrated in Figure 1.5 the southern part of St Helens is strongly characterised as a mixed use area, comprising residential neighbourhoods and prominent large scale employment areas. This gives the area a fragmented structure, with residential areas appearing physically distinct to employment areas and infrastructure corridors.
- 1.16 The site is adjacent to locally distinctive residential neighbourhoods, explored in the accompanying *Local Context and Characteristics* baseline document (refer to Section 5, below).

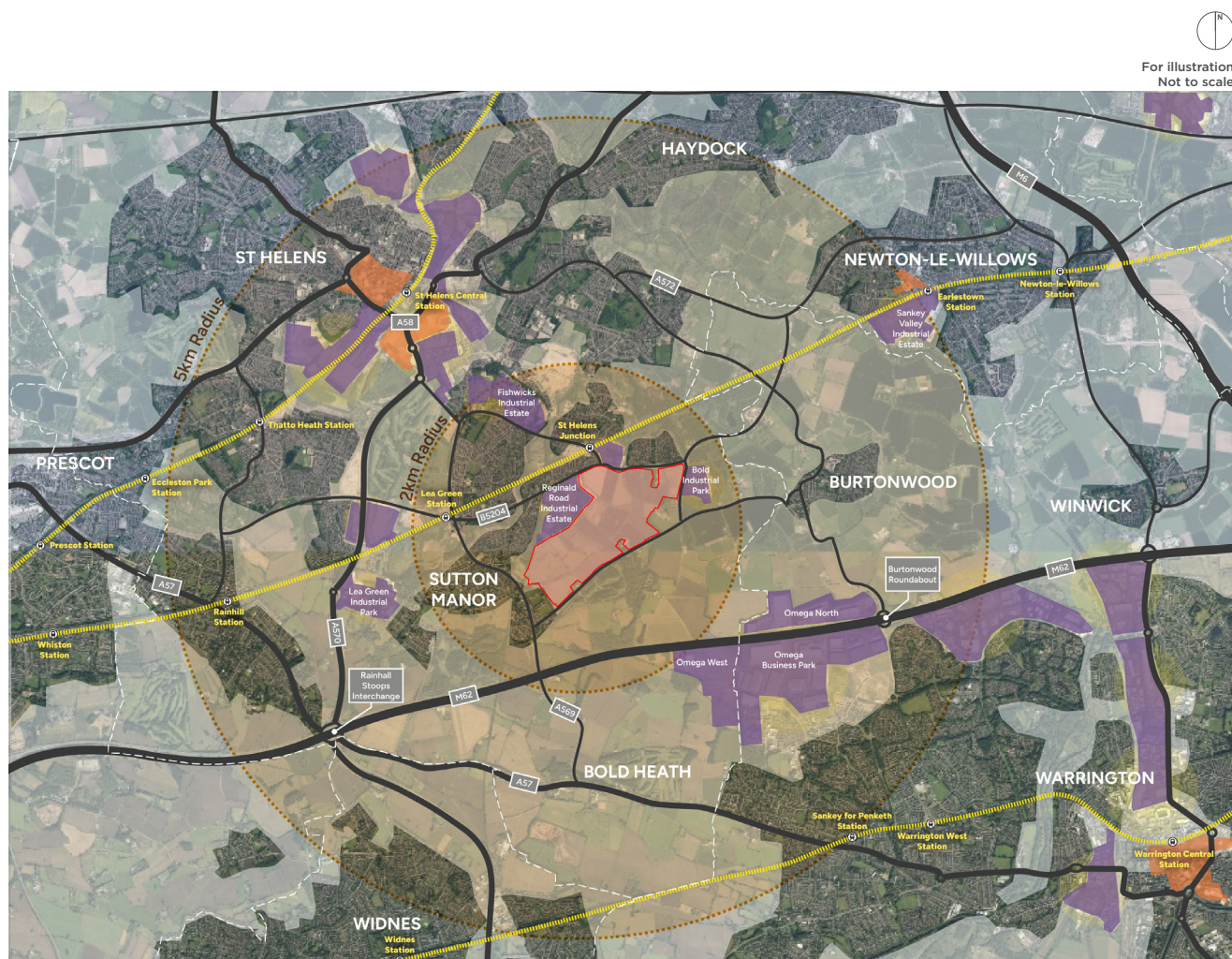


Figure 1.5 Wider urban context (principal land use characterisation)

- Site Boundary
- Town Centre
- Employment
- Railway Line

Green infrastructure

- 1.17 The site lies within the Bold Forest Area Action Plan (AAP) boundary. This area incorporates designated landscapes including the Country Parks at Clock Face, Bold Moss and Sutton Manor; access to which is via the existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) network.
- 1.18 There are several additional notable green spaces outside of the AAP area within proximity of the site, summarised at Figure 1.6..
- 1.19 There are numerous smaller parks and sports pitches within Sutton, Sutton Leach and Clock Face.
- 1.20 Watercourses and field ponds are a key characteristic of the site and the wider area.

1. Sutton Manor
2. Clock Face Country Park
3. Bold Moss
4. Brickfields Community Woodland
5. Mersey Valley Golf and Country Club
6. Sherdley Park
7. Sherdley Park Golf Course
8. Thatto Heath Meadows
9. Sutton Brook / Sutton Mill Brook
10. The Duckeries

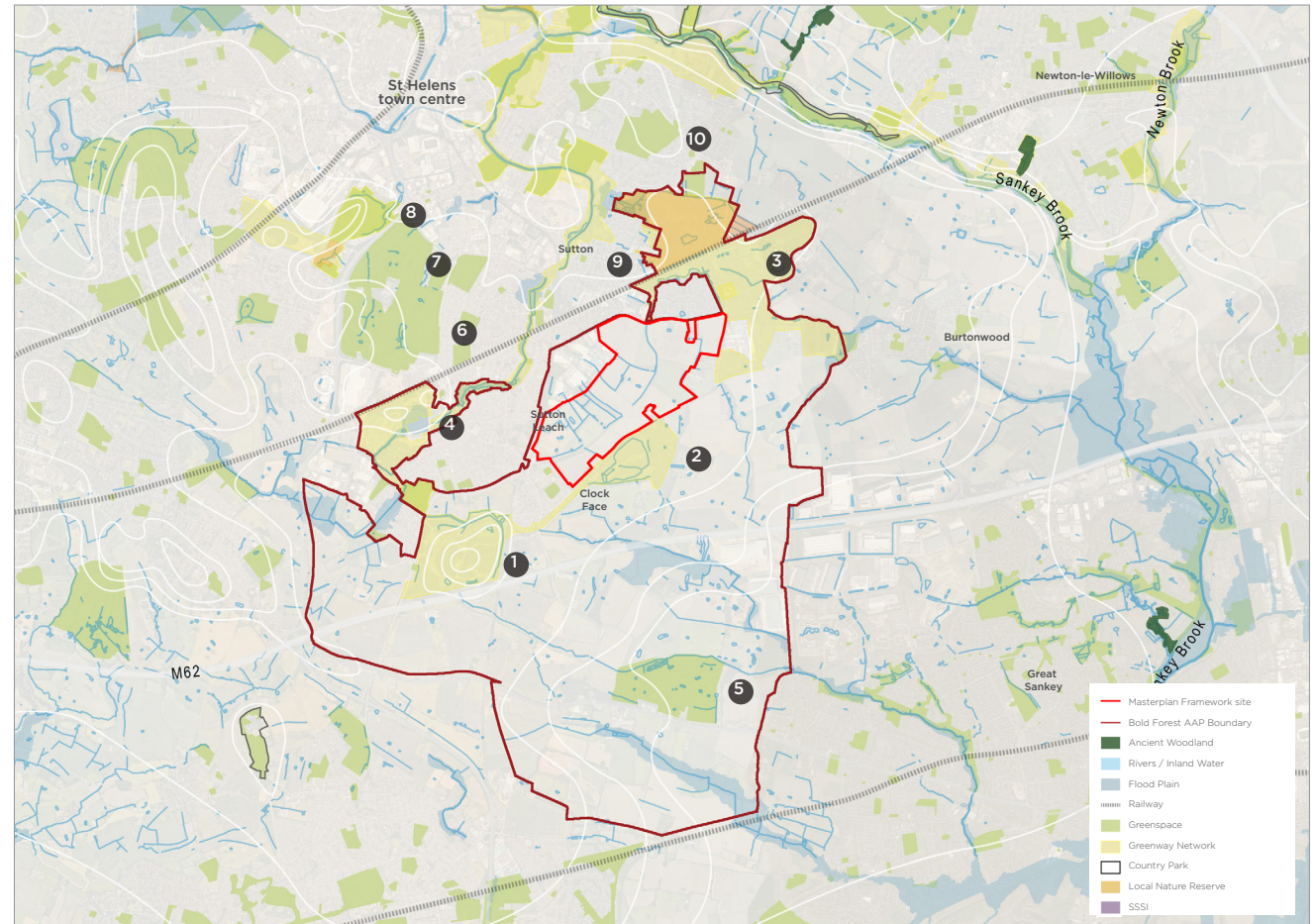


Figure 1.6 Wider green infrastructure network

2. Policy objectives - summary

National and Regional Policy

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must be taken into account when preparing a development plan and is of material consideration for planning decisions. To align with the NPPF it is important to ensure the BFGV scheme favours sustainable development, boosts the supply of homes, and enhances the natural and local environment. Meanwhile, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Spatial Development Strategy is emerging, and will be strongly considered within the context of development following its finalisation.

Local Policy

- 2.2 A full review of the St Helens Borough Local Plan (2022 – 2037) and The Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (2017) has been undertaken see Table 2.1).

St Helens Borough Local Plan (2022 – 2037)

- 2.3 The St Helens Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in 2022, sets out the framework for growth and development of the Borough identifying where new development and strategic regeneration will take place. Table 2.1 below summarises relevant Local Plan policy implications.
- 2.4 The site is allocated as 'Bold Forest Garden Suburb' (Policies LPA04, LPA04.1, LPA11) in the Local Plan Policies Map.
- 2.5 The development of BFGV will support the vision of the Local Plan by meeting the aims and objectives relating to supporting regeneration and balanced growth, ensuring quality development, meeting housing needs and safeguarding and enhancing quality of life.

The Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (2017)

- 2.6 The Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan (AAP) sets out that the vision for the area is to provide a high-quality setting to stimulate tourism and provide a platform for local businesses to grow and develop and for the establishment of new businesses. The AAP is a statutory document which sets out the detailed policies and actions needed to develop and sustain the Forest Park.
- 2.7 Table 2.2 below summarises relevant AAP policies and their implications.

Additional Relevant Policies and Strategies

- 2.8 Other policies considered include:

- **The Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)** – A key document setting out the direction for sustainable waste management across the LCR, forming part of the statutory development plan for each Local Authority.
- **St Helens Borough Housing Strategy (2022 – 27)** – A core supporting document of the St Helens Borough Strategy that sets the vision for the Borough until 2030. The strategy sets out priorities for housing in St Helens.
- **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2020)** – The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a supporting document to the Local Plan, covering the Plan Period to 2035 that sets out the infrastructure requirements for the Borough so that the growth and development proposed in the Local Plan can be achieved.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 2.9 The following SPDs are of relevance and have been considered:
- Affordable Housing SPD (2010)
 - Open Space Provision and Enhancement SPD (2024)
 - Design SPD (2024)
 - Developer Contributions SPD (2024)
 - Transport and Travel SPD (2025)

Planning History

- 2.10 A planning application search has been conducted on the masterplan area over the past 5 years. There are no major applications to note within the area.

Policy	Implication for Bold Forest Garden Village
LPA 01: Spatial Strategy	BFGV is the largest housing allocation within St Helens and the Liverpool City Region. It is located within an area of land removed from the Green Belt for the purposes of development. Housing-led development within the allocation is a fundamental component of meeting housing need and supporting economic growth ambitions across the borough.
LPA04: Meeting St Helens Borough's Housing Need	
LPA04.1: Strategic Housing Sites	
LPA06: Transport and Travel	The BFGV masterplan is being supported by analysis of existing and future transport and travel (including active travel). A movement framework will be integrated into the masterplan, including off-site and on-site recommendations, and a phasing plan.
LPA07: Infrastructure Delivery and Funding	The BFGV masterplan process is including clear recommendations regarding the delivery of supporting infrastructure required to create a quality sustainable neighbourhood. Recommendations in relation to delivery (including location and phasing of infrastructure) will be integrated into the masterplan. Engagement with land owners regarding infrastructure delivery is being progressed alongside the design evolution process, and stakeholder engagement with partners including e.g. Homes England is supporting the early consideration of potential funding solutions.
LPA08: Green Infrastructure	The BFGV masterplan is being prepared in accordance with garden village principles. An integrated open space and landscape strategy will be key to the future success of the place. The masterplan will be supported by a landscape and open space strategy that will shape detailed proposals as they come forward through individual planning applications.
LPA11: Bold Forest Garden Suburb	Policy LPA11, as the allocation of BFGV, is the starting point for the masterplan process. It establishes the requirements of the masterplan – which have formed a key component of the project brief and KPIs against which success will be measured.
LPC01: Housing Mix	The BFGV masterplan is supported by housing market analysis undertaken independently and provided by St Helens Borough Council. The evidence base proposes a residential mix that is being tested through the design process and further market analysis and viability testing. The BFGV masterplan needs to respond to current and future housing need by providing a reasonable mix of new homes.
LPC02: Affordable Housing	The BFGV masterplan will not prescribe the location or specificity of mix of affordable housing at phase or plot level, but an assumption of on-site delivery will be captured in the final output, including in viability analysis undertaken.

Table 2.1: St Helens Local Plan Implications (continued over page)

Policy	Implication for Bold Forest Garden Village
LPC05: Open Space	The BFGV masterplan is being prepared in accordance with garden village principles. An integrated open space and landscape strategy will be key to the future success of the place. The masterplan is having regard to policy requirements in relation to open space. Where appropriate opportunities for off-site provision is agreed to be preferential to on-site this will be confirmed, but the majority of open space provision will be within the red line of the masterplan.
LPC06: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	The BFGV masterplan is supported by biodiversity and geology baseline analysis. The final output will have regard to both protecting and enhancing existing habitats and areas of note. It will include an assessment of BNG.
LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management	The BFGV masterplan is supported by flood risk analysis and will include a water management strategy. Where possible nature-based solutions to water management will be integrated into the public realm to support the wider amenity of the area, and to align with garden village principles.
LPC13: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development	The BFGV masterplan will be supported by a strategy addressing renewable and low carbon energy measures to be delivered through future development and investment.
LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development	It is envisaged that phase or plot specific planning applications will be progressed that will establish the detail of design at property-specific level. The BFGV masterplan will emphasise the importance of quality of design and delivery – including within public realm, and to include management of spaces in perpetuity.
LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development	The BFGV masterplan is being prepared in accordance with garden village principles. An integrated open space and landscape strategy will be key to the future success of the place. The masterplan is having regard to policy requirements in relation to open space. Where appropriate opportunities for off-site provision is agreed to be preferential to on-site this will be confirmed, but the majority of open space provision will be within the red line of the masterplan.

Table 2.1 (continued): St Helens Local Plan Implications

Policy	Implication for Bold Forest Garden Village
Policy BFP1: A Sustainable Forest Park	BFGV sits as a housing allocation within the AAP area. Development is therefore supported – but it must be brought forward in line with garden village principles.
Policy BFP ECON1: Supporting Economic Growth	BFGV sits as a housing allocation within the AAP area. The masterplan is exploring supporting amenity – including community and commercial uses that will integrate into the wider AAP area.
Policy BFP INF6: Creating an Accessible Forest Park	The BFGV masterplan process includes review of strategic road network and identification of investment required to support future development of the area in line with the Local Plan allocation. This may include investment that benefits accessibility to the existing strategic park assets. The BFGV masterplan is also considering how delivery will include connectivity into the strategic park assets.
Policy BFP SN1: Meeting the Development Needs of the Borough in a Manner Appropriate to the Forest Park	BFGV sits as a housing allocation within the AAP area. Development is therefore supported – but it must be brought forward in line with garden village principles. This includes demonstrable landscape and open space strategy, and with clear connectivity into wider strategic open space assets.
Policy BFP ENV1: Enhancing Landscape Character	Tree planting strategy to be included within BFGV masterplan landscape and open space recommendations. Requirement to increase tree planting noted across the AAP area.
Policy BFP ENV2: Ecological Network	BFGV masterplan to protect and enhance identified ecology in line with BNG requirements.
Policy BFP COM3: Bold Forest Park as a Flagship for Delivery of Community Health Improvement	BFGV masterplan to specifically consider the function of open space in the context of community health improvement.

Table 2.2: Bold Forest AAP Policy Implications

People

Social Infrastructure
Property market

3. Social infrastructure

Introduction

- 3.1 Avison Young have assessed the social infrastructure around BFGV, as well as undertaken engagement with Council officers to understand the potential social infrastructure requirements that will need to be delivered alongside the housing development.
- 3.2 Whilst the site is located within St Helens, its proximity to the borough boundary makes it relevant to consider existing social infrastructure in neighbouring areas. This has included both Warrington and Halton.
- 3.3 The assessment focuses on social infrastructure, which is defined as infrastructure that is created to help communities come together and provide wider benefit to people. Physical infrastructure such as highways and utilities is covered in separate baseline reports.
- 3.4 The analysis has summarised and considered relevant council policy, desktop analysis on local infrastructure in the context of BFGV, and engagement with council officers to determine key needs and requirements within their specialist areas.

Schools and early years

- 3.5 **Policy Review** – The Local Plan states a requirement as part of Policy LPA 11 Bold Forest Garden Suburb for: *“Contributions towards primary and secondary school provision in the area, to meet the identified need for additional school places, through the extension of existing schools and / or delivery of new school facilities”*
- 3.6 **Desktop Analysis** – Avison Young has undertaken high level analysis of local school provision. Concurrently, St Helens Council has commissioned a more detailed review of school

provision, including engagement with schools. Schools in close proximity include Willow Tree Primary School, St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Sutton Oak CofE Primary School, The Sutton Academy and St Cuthbert's Catholic High School.

- 3.7 Additionally, Avison Young have considered the location and proximity of nurseries within the immediate context. Although there is relative provision, mapping indicates a void space to the northern boundary, which may need to be assessed and addressed for future provision.
- 3.8 **Officer Engagement** – Initial discussions with Council officers found initial capacity in local primary schools, but that is likely to be exceeded by the time the development is completed, from the impact of BFGV and other developments. Secondary schools face capacity issues, being assessed in more detail by St Helens Council. Officers prefer on-site delivery for primary and nursery provision, with secondary and SEND needs met through expansion of existing facilities.
- 3.9 **Masterplan Implications** – Council modelling suggests a likely need for a 3FE primary school and maintained nursery on-site, while secondary and SEND provision would be delivered through off-site expansions. Current school capacity suggests the on-site primary school infrastructure is not seen as an upfront infrastructure requirement.

Health

- 3.10 **Policy Review** – Local Plan Policy LPA11 establishes a clear requirement for on-site health infrastructure in the form of a GP surgery. It is noted that this relates both to existing under provision in the local area, as

well as the future demand anticipated from additional population arising from BFGV.

- 3.11 **Desktop Analysis** – Key local provision comprise St Helens Hospital and Warrington Hospital, 10 GP surgeries where BFGV falls within the GP catchment area, 20 NHS dental practices within a 5km distance, and 44 pharmacies within a 5km distance. There is a noticeable distance to health facilities particularly on the eastern end of the site.
- 3.12 **Officer Engagement** – Council officers identified a clear need for new health infrastructure despite local GP surgeries currently accepting patients, citing oversubscription and limited capacity to meet demand from the new development. Detailed analysis by NHS England confirmed that the 6 closest GP surgeries to BFGV are all operating at over capacity. A new health centre is likely needed early in the development, with relocating and expanding an existing practice seen as a potential solution to provide immediate patient capacity. Limited dental capacity was also noted, and while dental facilities should be considered in the masterplan, lack of NHS funding makes their inclusion unlikely.
- 3.13 **Masterplan Implications** – The analysis confirms the need for a new health facility (estimated at 566sqm) due to limited capacity at existing practices and the projected growth from BFGV. Delivering the facility is complex, as full upfront construction risks underutilisation during the 12-15 year housing build-out. Relocating an existing practice could address early demand but would likely require alternative funding as BFGV can only fund the demand unlocked by the development itself.

Public Open Space

- 3.14 **Policy Review** – Avison Young have considered the St Helen's Local Plan, with specific focus on Policy LPC05: Open Space and LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development. The policies clearly outlined that there is likely to be a requirement for POS provision to be provided given the scale of the development. Another relevant document that was considered is the Open Space Provision and Enhancement SPD.
- 3.15 **Desktop Analysis** – High level analysis undertaken to understand open space provision in proximity to the site showed excellent connectivity to large natural and semi-natural green areas such as Clock Face Country Park, Colliers Moss and Sutton Manor Woodland. However, there is a lesser amount of more formal open space in and around BFGV. This was backed up by Council analysis which showed an oversupply of natural and semi-natural green space in the Bold & Lea Green area but under supply for parks & gardens, amenity greenspace and provision for play.
- 3.16 **Officer Engagement** – Officer engagement confirmed the need to prioritise formal open space, including at least one NEAP and likely a LEAP as well, with the north east of the site seen as an area with particularly poor provision.
- 3.17 **Masterplan Implications** – Ample natural and semi-natural greenspace in the area means this is not deemed a priority in the masterplan. There are local shortfalls in parks, amenity greenspace, and play areas, with the development expected to deliver around 9.0 ha, 11.2 ha, and 1.2 ha respectively. Council officers emphasised the need for both a NEAP and a LEAP as part of the play provision within the scheme.

Sports and Leisure

- 3.18 **Policy Review** – There is no specific reference to Sport and Leisure within Local Plan Policy LPA11: Bold Forest Garden Suburb. However, Avison Young have considered the Council's LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development Policy, Open Space Provision and Enhancement SPD, Playing Pitch Strategy, Active Lives Strategy, and Sports England's Planning for Sport document as part of the masterplan process.
- 3.19 **Desktop Analysis** – Avison Young carried out mapping on local sport provision in the St Helens area. This included key sports clubs, council managed leisure centres, private leisure centres, gyms and yoga/pilates facilities.
- 3.20 **Officer Engagement** – Consultation highlighted significant pressure on local leisure facilities, especially Sutton Leisure Centre, which needs investment, along with nearby sites like Clock Face Miners Recreation Club and King George V Playing Fields. There was also an identified shortage of swimming pools in the borough.
- 3.21 Officers felt that investment should focus on enhancing existing facilities rather than new, but felt that it was important that physical activity and movement is integrated into BFGV.
- 3.22 **Masterplan Implications** – While there is a need for playing pitches, officers suggest enhancing existing sports and leisure facilities may better serve the community than delivering new on-site. Sutton Leisure Centre is a key improvement site, though limited local facilities near the development boundary may justify some on-site provision. Engagement with Clock Face Miners Recreation Club is also important to explore nearby upgrades or new pitches to support their growth.

Retail, Commercial and Community Facilities

- 3.23 **Policy Review** – A review of Local Plan Policy LPA11 Bold Forest Garden Suburb provides an indication of the expected retail provision for BFGV, with regard to providing 'a small local centre containing community and retail facilities'. Whilst this provides limited information into the anticipation of exactly what is provided it shows a clear anticipated requirement for some retail and community provision on-site. Avison Young have also considered the Council's Retail and Leisure Study, 2017.
- 3.24 **Desktop Analysis** – Avison Young has undertaken high level analysis of local retail centres, supermarkets and general community provision. The mapping helped identify that immediate vicinity locations, in particular Bold and New Bold, have fairly limited local retail centre provision. Another key finding is that the southern part of St Helens around BFGV appears underprovided in terms of community provision compared to other parts of the borough.
- 3.25 **Masterplan Implications** – There is limited retail centre provision near the site, especially in the north, making this a logical location for a new local centre to benefit both new and existing provision. The southern part of the borough, including BFGV, is also underprovided in community facilities, suggesting additional uses could be included within the make-up of the local centre. Retail impact modelling should be part of the masterplan to gauge the scale of provision supported by future housing growth.

4. Property market

Introduction

- 4.1 Avison Young has reviewed the viability and market baseline context in the BFGV masterplan area to support the masterplanning process including viability analysis. The viability will be integrated into the option testing process, assessing the project's deliverability and also considering any public funding requirements that may be necessary for example to unlock infrastructure delivery.
- 4.2 Avison Young have carried out the following:
- A review of Council policy and work undertaken prior to instruction, most notably the Housing Market Demand Analysis produced by Icení;
 - Assessment of residential market values across St Helens and the surrounding area; and
 - A review of potential development costs using industry available data and Avison Young's own experience of similar residential construction projects within the North West.

Icení Housing Market Demand Analysis

- 4.3 Icení Projects and Justin Gardner Consulting were appointed by St Helens Borough Council to undertake a Housing Market Demand Analysis (HMDA) to inform the development of the BFGV Masterplan Framework. This work included engaging with local landowners and housebuilders and should be considered a starting point in understanding the market sentiment for development.
- 4.4 Key findings of this report included:
- The BFGV area (which is comprised of the Bold & Lea Green and Sutton South East

wards) averages 2.35 people per household, matching the North West average and higher than the St Helens average;

- When compared to St Helens Borough the population in the BFGV area is younger, 71% of the population is under 55 compared to 65.9% in St Helens overall;
- The most common household types in the BFGV area are 2-person households (35.1%) followed by single-person households (28.2%);
- Analysis within the report shows an estimated annual need for Social/Affordable rented housing of 386 dwellings in the St Helens Borough;
- The report highlights that Build to Rent would be best placed in the northern half of the site, close to existing transport links such as St Helens Junction railway station. Additionally, it highlights the potential demand for specialist accommodation such as dementia care;
- Housing mix analysis pointed towards particularly strong demand for two- and three-bedroom accommodation, but also for larger 4+ bedroom family dwellings within the market housing delivery; and
- Based on Icení's findings through landowner and promoter engagement, analysis suggested a rate of delivery of 60 dwellings per annum could be achieved across three to four sales points across BFGV at any one time, equating to 240 dwellings per annum assuming 4 sales points. This is a much faster delivery programme than the trajectory suggested in the Local Plan. This would equate to 12.5 years to complete the circa 3,000 dwellings.

Additional Market Analysis

- 4.5 Avison Young analysis has assessed average new build sales and rental values based on achieved transactions in the last 5 years across a 5-mile radius from BFGV, these values have been adjusted to reflect House Price Index (HPI) to make comparable to today's market.

House type	Average sales value
Apartment New Build	£210
Terrace New Build	£250
Semi-Detached New Build	£270
Detached New Build	£310
Average New Build Sales	£268

Table 4.1: Average New Build Sales Values (£ per sqft)

House type	Rental value PCM			
	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4-Bed
Apartment New Build	£650	£850	-	-
Terrace New Build	-	£900	£1,150	-
Semi-Detached New Build	-	£1,000	£1,200	-
Detached New Build	-	-	£1,400	£1,650

Table 4.2: Average New Build Rental Values

Source: Searchland, 2025

4.6 The values above are derived from numerous schemes across St Helens and the wider area. This shows values increasing based on the size and type of housing, with detached properties performing better than other types and apartment sales the lowest values averaging £210 psf, £100 psf less than Detached property sales averages.

4.7 Similar analysis has been undertaken of re-sale values within the area, summarised in Table 4.3. The analysis considers the WA9 postcode area which encapsulates elements of St Helen's town centre, thus driving down average values. These values are therefore lower than other adjoining postcodes. We would anticipate secondary stock at the southern fringe of WA9 to derive higher values due to being in a higher value area than the town centre and edge of town centre elements of WA9.

House type	Average Sale Value psf	HPI Adjusted Average Sale Value psf
Apartment New Build	£151	£161
Terrace New Build	£131	£135
Semi-Detached New Build	£158	£162
Detached New Build	£215	£223

Table 4.3: Average Sales Values All House Sales – WA9 Postcode

Source: Searchland, 2025

Local Comparables

4.8 Avison Young undertook a review of transactional evidence to assess new build values in the local area across both sales and rental products. This analysis looks at new build properties currently on the market across the surrounding area to act as a benchmark for what developers are currently expecting to achieve within the area.

4.9 Key identified schemes include: The Landings, Watchmakers Court, Sutton Gardens, Suttonfield, Sherdley Green, Omega R3, The Gardens, and Abbey Vale.

4.10 The analysis of these specific schemes shows that values are broadly in line with the figures set out in Table 4.1 (above). The new build evidence suggests that recent overall developments are marketing and transacting at around £300 psf. This should, therefore form the starting point for values across the area with refinement undertaken for unit size and type where appropriate.

Housing Mix Evidence Base

4.11 As well as values, Avison Young assessed the housing mix and approach to density that is being delivered in local schemes. This will help to give an indication of the mix and density that developers may seek to bring forward at BFGV.

4.12 Out of the seven identified schemes where data is available, semi-detached dwellings attribute to the highest allocation overall at 47% of housing delivered, with detached accommodation being a close second (46%). Semi-detached is also the most common dwelling type across four of the seven schemes.

4.13 There is no terraced accommodation brought forward in any of the identified schemes, which may reflect the large amount of terraced housing already available in St Helens (28.3% according to data provided by census 2021).

4.14 In terms of number of bedrooms the vast majority of schemes are focused on larger housing (3+ beds) with only a small amount of 1-bed and 2-bed properties being brought forward. The majority of the space being delivered is of 3-bed (49%), followed by 4-bed (39%), with limited 5-bed properties (as only 1 property out of 561 were of a 5-bed specification).

4.15 Further analysis of the schemes concluded that they have produced average densities of circa 30 dwellings per hectare (dph). However, we believe that these densities may be underestimated due to the exclusion of detail (not available) that will impact on the averages. Within BFGV we recognise that density may need to be higher given the stated housing target for the allocated area.

Place

Local context and characteristics

Landscape and visual baseline

Heritage appraisal

Transport baseline

5. Local context and characteristics

Facilities and hubs

- 5.1 The area around the site has a broad mix of facilities and amenities. These are mainly located along main road corridors but some are clustered into groups that form distinctive local community destinations or 'hubs', illustrated in Figure 5.1.
- 5.2 The two hubs in closest proximity of the site are Clock Face Road and Sutton, located approximately 300m and 400m to the west and north of the site respectively. Sutton is allocated as a Local Centre in the Local Plan.

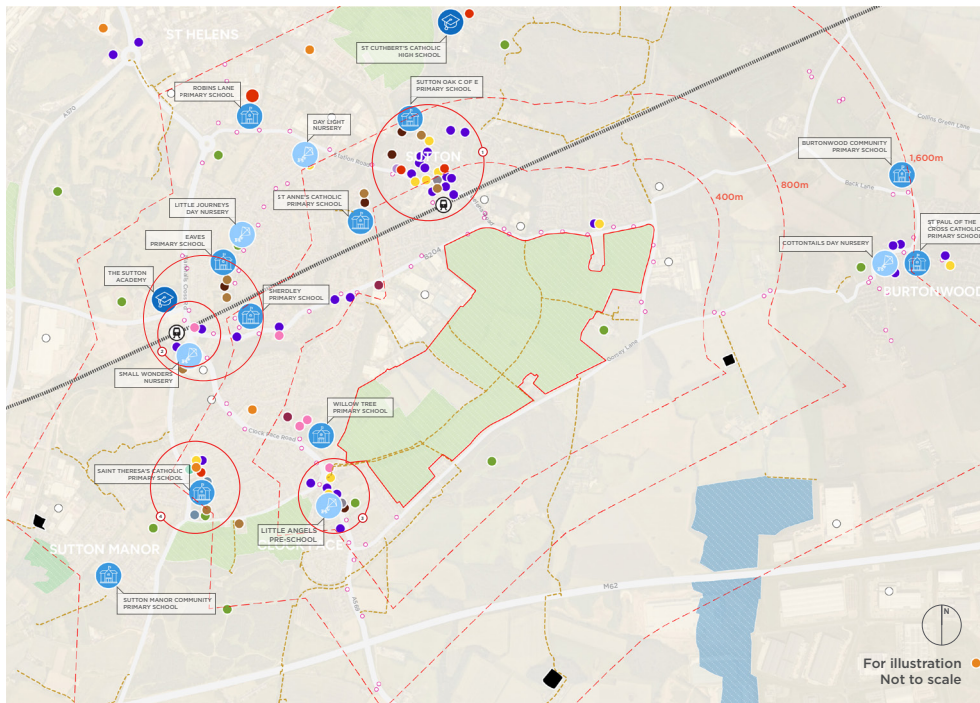


Figure 5.1 Local facilities and hubs

Major residential development

- 5.3 This part of St Helens has seen several development proposals and planning consents over recent years. Of particular relevance to Bold Forest Garden village is the approved residential development at Gartons Lane proposed by Taylor Wimpey, located approximately 500m to the west of the site (Figure 5.2).
- 5.4 This scheme of 514 family homes aims to balance its relationship between existing



Figure 5.2 Proposed planning layout, land at Gartons Lane
(source: planning documents available as public documents via <https://publicaccess.sthelens.gov.uk> - planning application P/2023/0075/FUL)

residential areas to the north and the substantial, significant green spaces of Sutton Manor to the immediate south.

Industrial history

- 5.5 The area's industrial history is well documented. In the 18th - 19th centuries local canal and rail networks developed to drive the growth of mining, chemical, and metal refining industries, transforming the local economy.
- 5.6 The area of Clock Face developed directly as a result of the coal industry during the mid-

19th century, with Clock Face colliery located on Gorsey Lane. Other significant local coal workings included the Bold, Collins Green and Sutton Heath collieries.

5.7 This industrialised development history is evident both in the area's urban form and landscape - examples below.

Urban form and structure



Former Clock Face PH (Clock Face Road) and examples of traditional worker's terraces (Reginald Road)

Landscape



Left: Sutton Manor and The Dream sculpture, a symbol of post-industrial future, forming the local skyline. Right: path network at Sutton Manor providing panoramic views.

Local neighbourhood characteristics

5.8 More broadly, historic development patterns across St Helens have influenced settlement structure and land use, resulting in a network of varied neighbourhoods.

5.9 In proximity to the site, a series of distinct neighbourhood character areas are evident in the urban structure (illustrated in Figures 5.3 and 5.4). These areas display varied characteristics that contribute to the distinctiveness of the area, and which could potentially help inform the design of development within Bold Forest Garden Village.

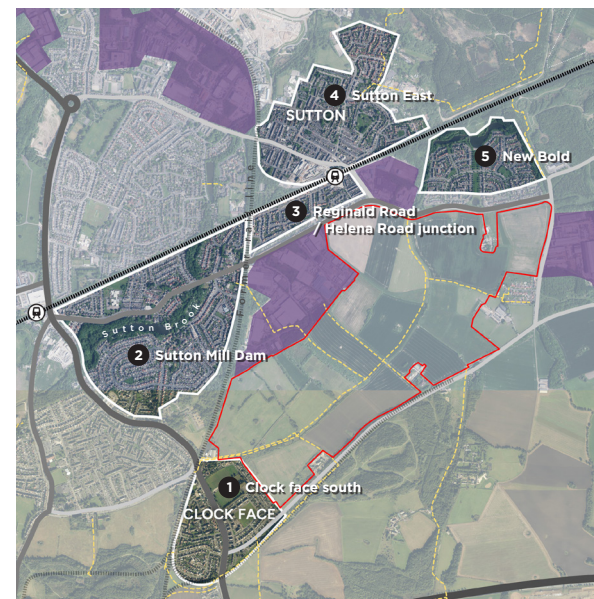


Figure 5.3 Neighbourhood character areas (informal assessment)

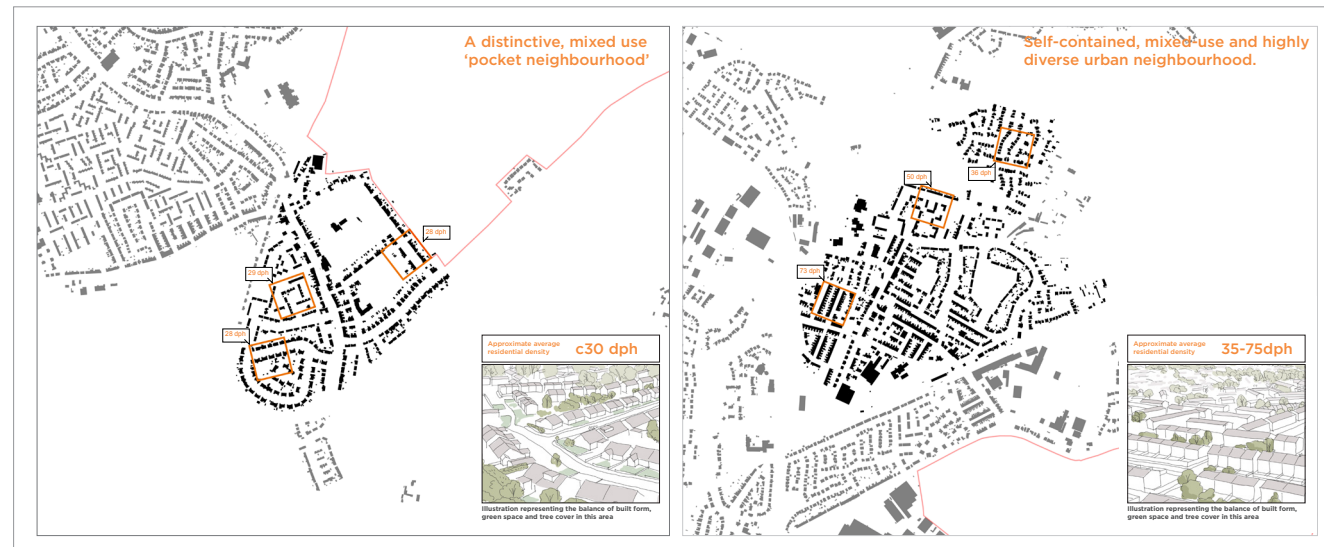


Figure 5.4 Extracts from baseline character area analysis (Clock Face, left and Sutton, right) revealing varied urban structure, urban grain and density patterns around the site. Local residential density can be seen to vary from approx 30dph to approx 75dph. This density range is achieved in street-based urban family housing.

Landscape and open space context

- 5.10 The local landscape is characterised by undulating agricultural land comprising large-scale fields separated by drainage features. Subtle rises and falls in elevation are aligned to local watercourses, with an overall tendency for the land fall to the south and east towards the River Mersey floodplain and Sankey Brook. The broad features of the local landscape are illustrated by Figure 5.5, below.
- 5.11 There are wide-ranging views across the landscape, including towards hills (e.g. West Pennine Moors) on the distant horizon.

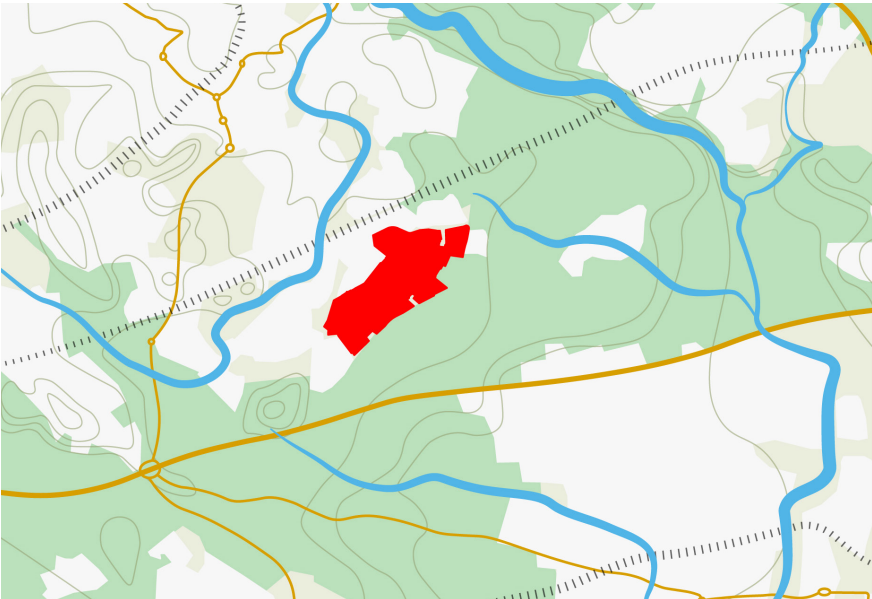
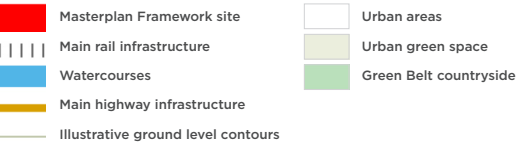


Figure 5.5 Illustrative landscape setting (strategic features)



- 5.12 Bold Forest AAP establishes objectives to enhance the local landscape by developing Bold Forest Park as a “...fitting legacy to the former mining industry which helped shape the area and St. Helens as a town”. The AAP extract at Figure 5.6 below captures the aim to link ‘Recreation Hubs’ at Sutton Manor, Clock Face Country Park, Colliers Moss Common, and Mersey Valley Golf and Country Club via Strategic Linking Routes for pedestrians, cyclists and/or equestrians. Local woodland context relative to the AAP area is shown in Figure 5.7.

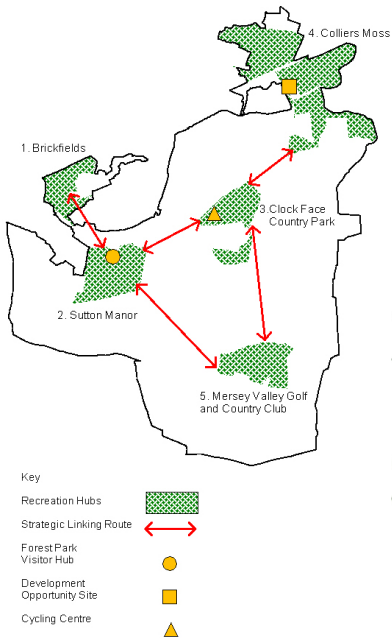
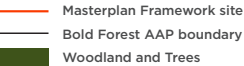


Figure 5.6 AAP extract showing linked recreation hubs



Figure 5.7 AAP extract showing woodland context



Existing Public Open Space distribution

5.13 A range of public open spaces are located in proximity to the site, illustrated by Figure 5.8. Examples include;

- Bold Moss, Sutton Manor and Clock Face Country Park - major natural / semi-natural spaces forming key community assets.
- Sherdley Park, a substantial multifunctional parkland c1.2km to the north west.
- Multiple amenity spaces, parks, play areas and outdoor sports facilities.

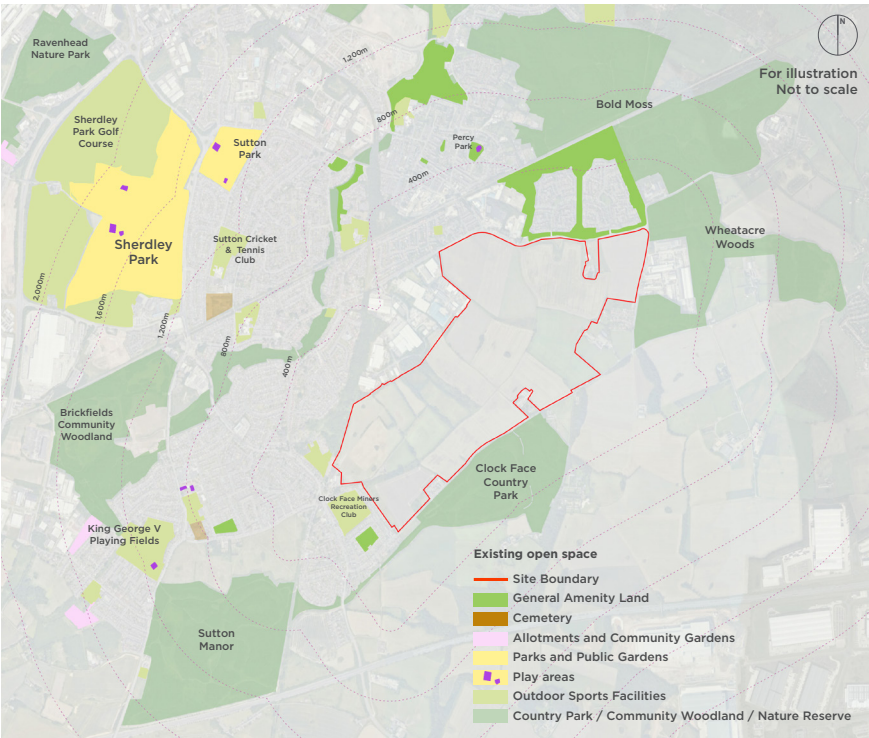


Figure 5.8 Local Public Open Space network

Site interfaces

5.14 The site boundaries create important interfaces with adjacent environments and communities. The nature of each interface will influence layout design, access, movement and green infrastructure.

5.15 There are five broad interface types around the site illustrated in Figure 5.9 below. Each interface presents:

- Either a positive, neutral or detracting influence on local character (e.g. with consideration to adjacent land uses, views and landscape).
- Different opportunities to accommodate future access points, whether for pedestrians, cyclists and/or vehicles.

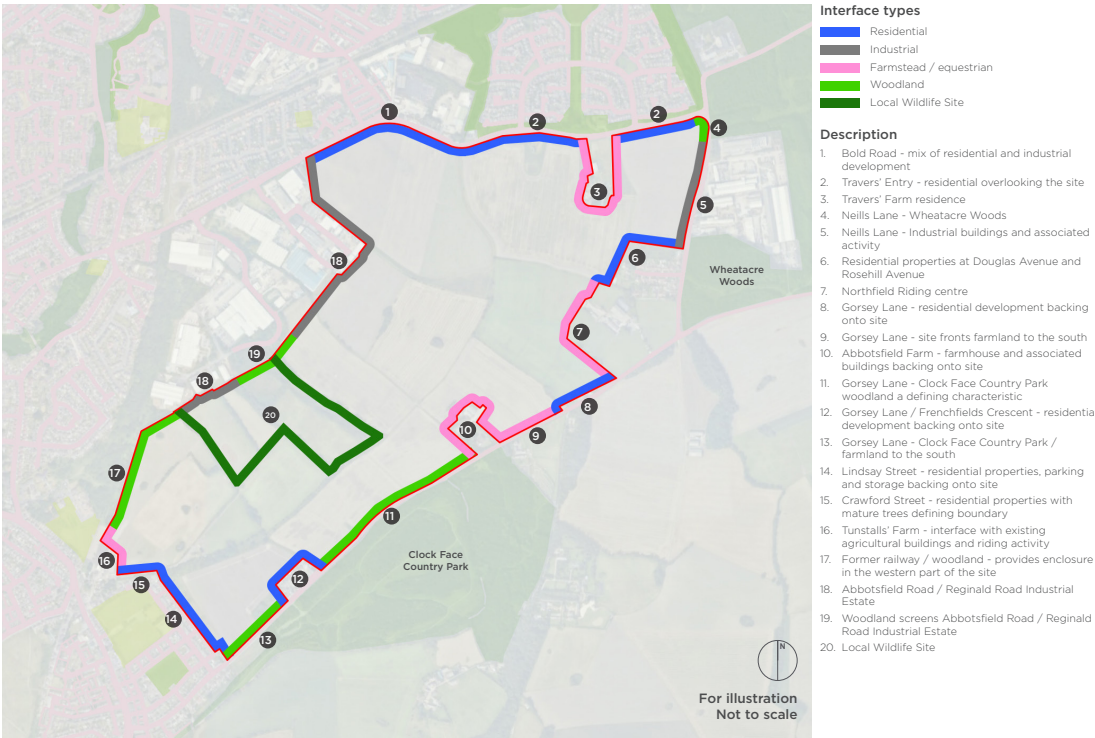


Figure 5.9 Interface types

6. Landscape and visual baseline

Landscape

6.1 The site predominantly lies within the 'Floodplain Farmland' Landscape Character Type and 'Sutton Fringe' Landscape Character Area, as identified by the St Helens Borough Landscape Character Assessment. More locally, the site and surrounding area includes a mix of distinctive landscape elements and attributes, illustrated at Figure 6.1.

6.2 Taking into account this landscape context, the site is considered to display four landscape characters, influence by a combination of physical features (e.g. land form) and aesthetic and perceptual aspects (e.g. sense of enclosure). The four character areas are illustrated in Figure 6.2 as follows:

- Enclosed Sloping Fields.
- Enclosed Plateau with Small-Scale Fields.
- Open Plateau with Large-Scale Fields.
- Open Sloping Fields with Settlement Influence.

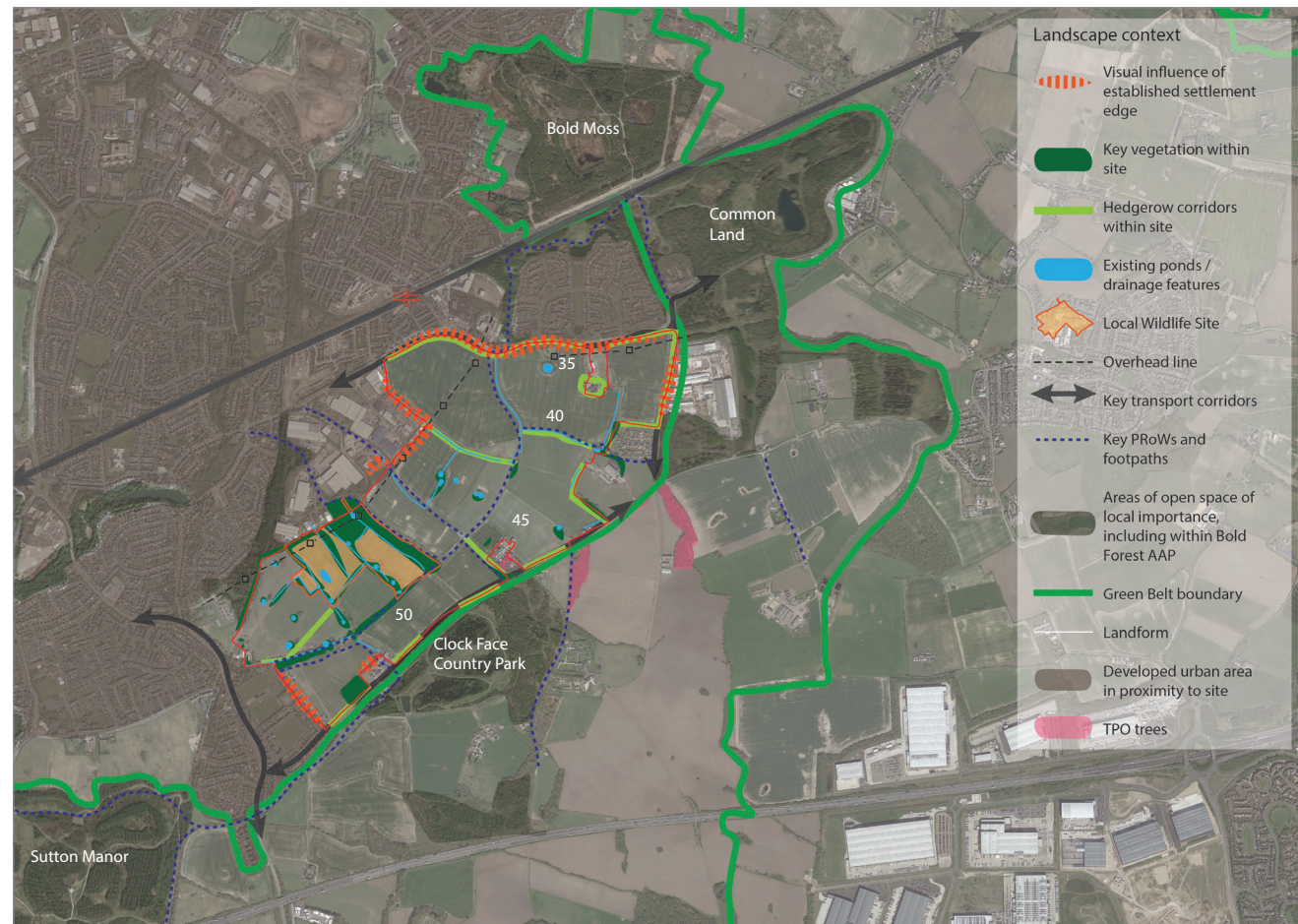


Figure 6.1 Landscape context (extract from Landscape and Visual Baseline Review, SLR, Rev 1 - May 2025)

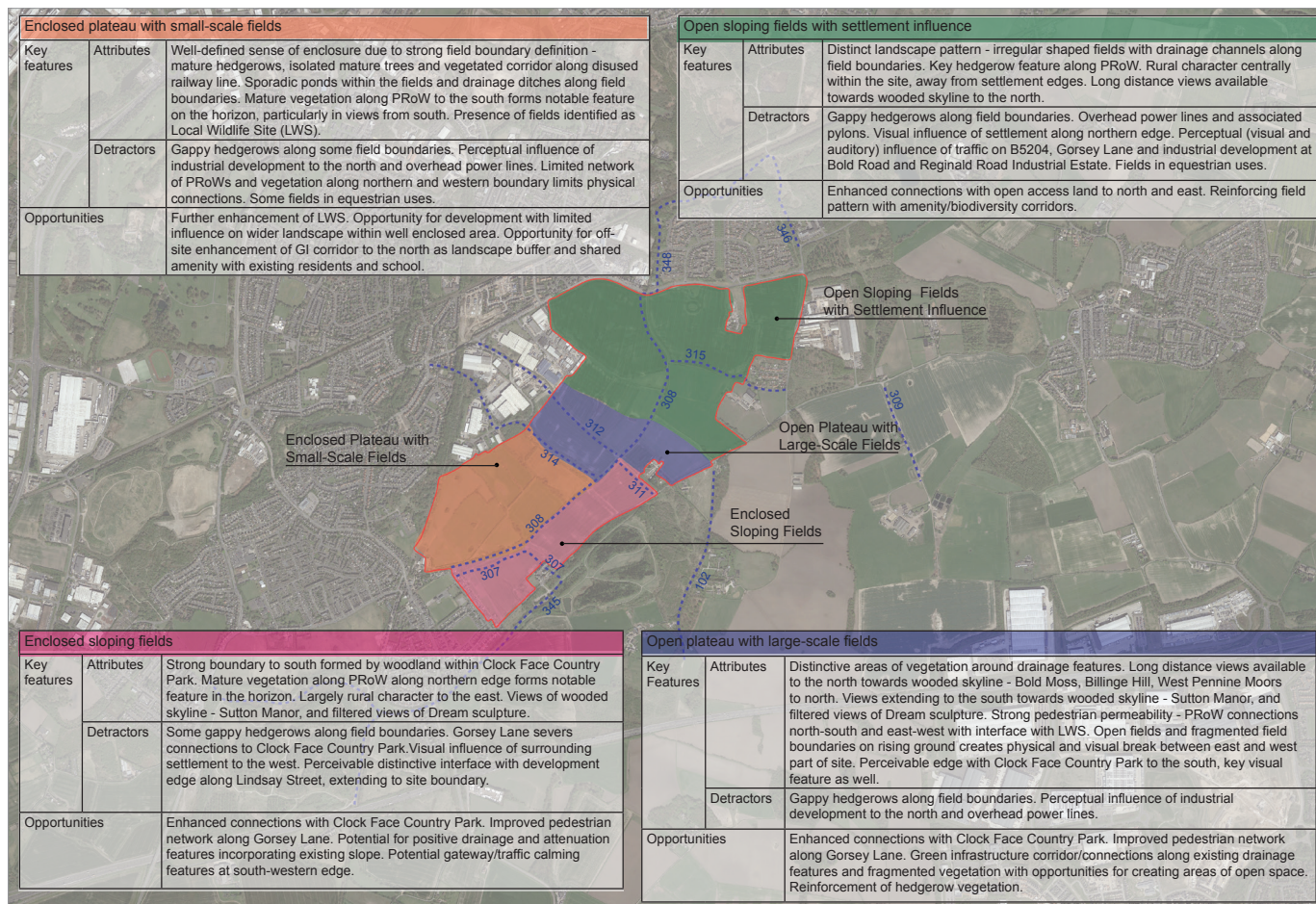


Figure 6.2 Site-wide landscape characterisation, describing attributes and opportunities (extract from Landscape and Visual Baseline Review, SLR, Rev 1 - May 2025)

Views / visibility

6.3 Visual context is summarised at Figure 6.3.

6.4 Visibility from the surrounding area is largely limited to local views. The site is generally well screened in the wider landscape, with limited longer-distance views. However, distant high ground forms the horizon when looking out from the site (e.g. areas around Knowsley Park, Billinge Hill and West Pennine Moors).

6.5 Locations in the local area where views of development within the site may be experienced have been assessed, taking into consideration different perspectives including existing residential properties, places of work and users of public footpaths and roads.

6.6 Locations that may have higher visual sensitivity to development include;

- Bold Road and Reginald Road - Open direct views into site from residential properties.
- New Bold - Open direct views into site from residential properties.
- Rosehill Avenue and Douglas Avenue - Close proximity views into eastern parts of the site.
- Travers' Farm - Close proximity views into eastern parts of the site.
- Gorsey Lane (near Park Cottage) - Close proximity views into the site.
- Abbotsfield Farm - Potential for close-proximity views into site.
- Lindsay Street, Hall Street, Frenchfields Crescent, Gorsey Lane - Close proximity views towards southern parts of site.
- Path leading to Dream Sculpture (Sutton Manor) - Elevated filtered views towards southern parts of site.

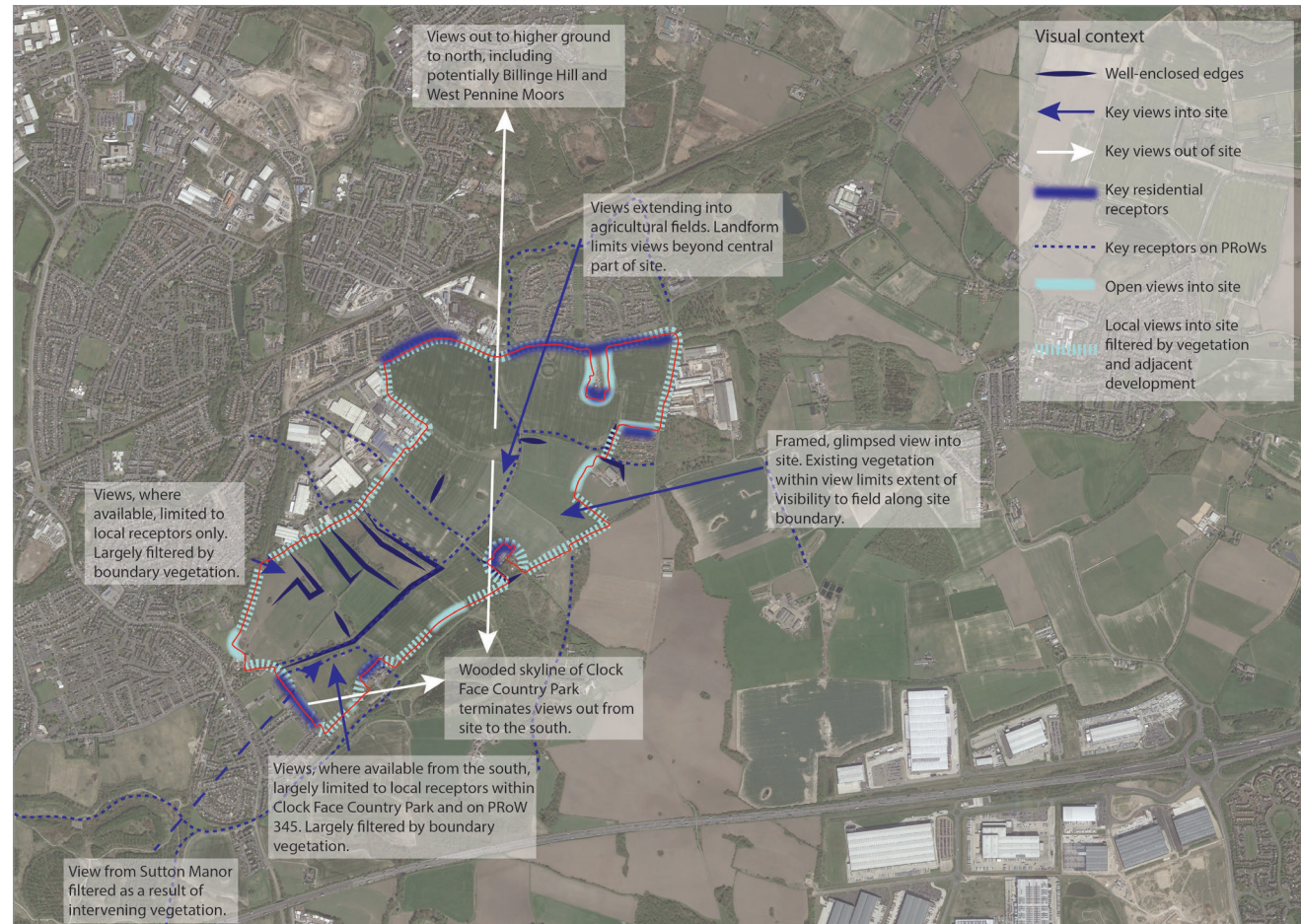


Figure 6.3 Visual context (extract from Landscape and Visual Baseline Review, SLR, Rev 1 - May 2025)

Overarching opportunities

6.7 Future development should aim to;

- Reinforce existing - and create new - landscape elements and connections.
- Incorporate landscape management recommendations, e.g. reinforcement of existing gappy hedgerows, management of drainage features and wetland areas.
- Create a landscape edge along the south-western boundary (Gorsey Lane frontage) in response to Green Belt countryside and proximity of Clock Face Country Park (e.g. retention of visual connections with the wooded skyline).
- Connect currently fragmented habitats through the centre of the site through vegetated landscape and ecology corridors and open spaces.
- Retain and improve existing landscape features, especially LWS.
- Enhance key PRoW connections as amenity and ecological GI corridors.
- Incorporate screening for high sensitivity receptors, e.g. landscape edges and corridors.
- Retain visual connections with wooded skyline (e.g. Bold Moss, Clock Face Country Park) as far as possible, with opportunities to create framed vistas within the development.

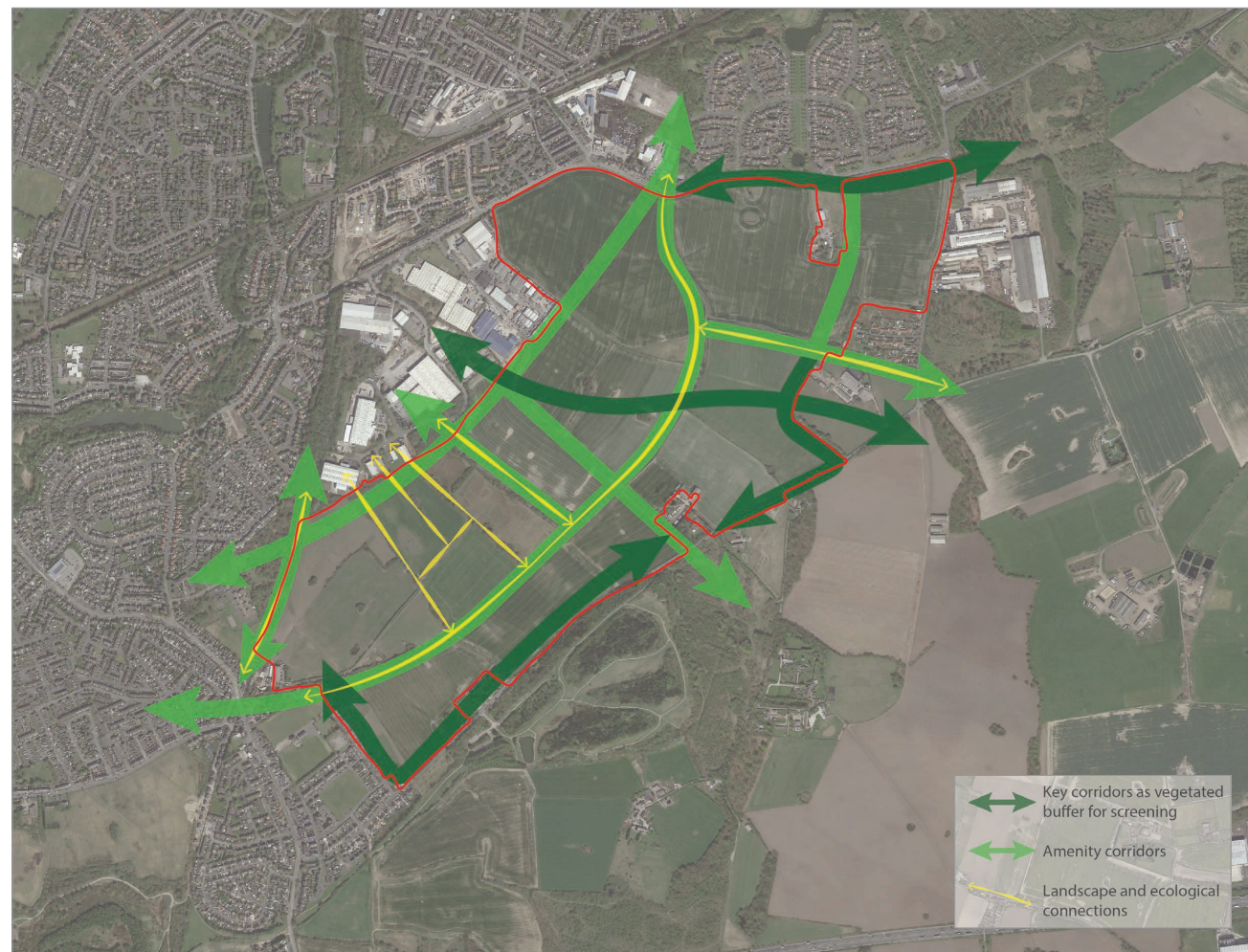


Figure 6.4 Green infrastructure opportunities (extract from Landscape and Visual Baseline Review, SLR, Rev 1 - May 2025)

7. Heritage appraisal

Historical background

- 7.1 St Helens is strongly shaped by the industrial revolution following discovery of coal in the mid-16th century. Settlement growth accelerated during the mid-18th century following construction of the Sankey Canal (St. Helens Canal), followed by the arrival of the railways in the 1830s. The borough of St Helens was formed in 1868.
- 7.2 The earliest detailed mapping of the site itself is the Tithe Maps of the Township of Bold (1840)

and the Township of Sutton (1843). The Tithe maps shows the site divided into over 100 enclosures during the early 19th century. By the turn of the 20th century significant field amalgamation had taken place.

Site features

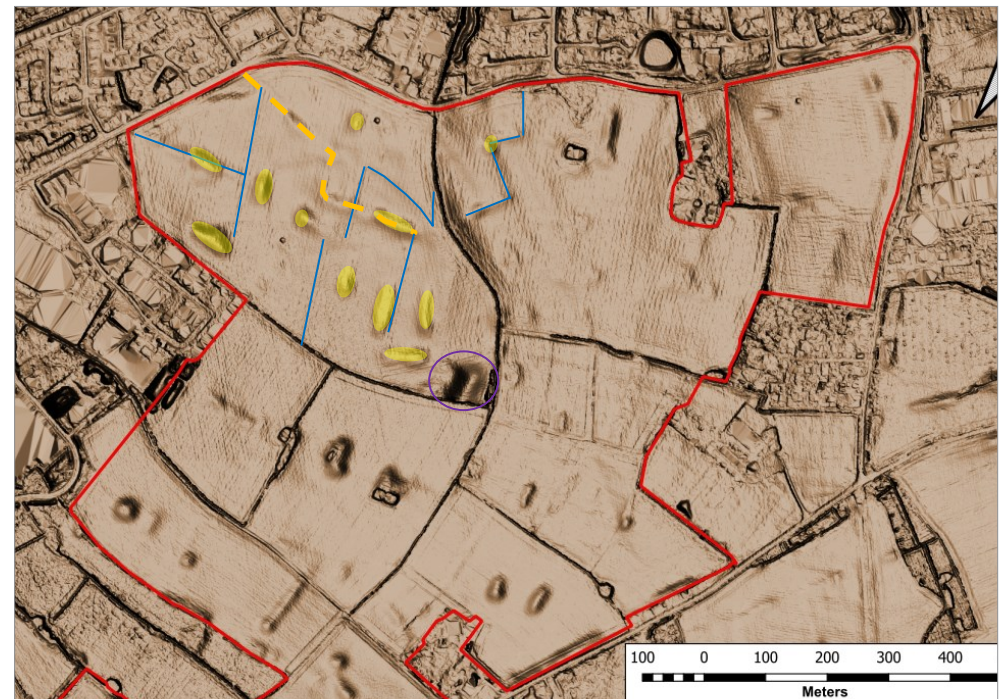
- 7.3 Photographic and topographic data analysis reveals historic features of the site that are not immediately evident when walking or viewing the site. Examples are shown in Figure 7.2 below.

Key to site features

-  Irregular shaped depressions (likely representing extraction of raw materials)
-  Remnant field boundary ditches (largely correspond to Tithe mapping)
-  Former trackway extending from the northwest (access to former farmsteads).
-  Former 19th century rifle range ('battery cob'), later the site of a 1943 WWII airplane disaster
-  Potential post-medieval ridge-and-furrow earthworks
-  Former Abbots Hall Farm



Figure 7.1 Micro-topography analysis revealing site features (extract from Heritage Appraisal, SLR, Rev 3 - April 2025)



Heritage significance

Designated heritage assets

- 7.4 No meaningful or existing functional associations have been identified between the site and identified designated heritage assets (Figure 7.2);
- The site does not contain any designated heritage assets, is not located within or near to any Conservation Area, and does not form part of the setting of any designated heritage asset.
 - Listed buildings in the area are Grade II listed. None are located in immediate proximity to the site, and none have visibility towards the site. Three scheduled monuments lie within 2km of the site, separated by a screen of tree cover.
- 7.5 It is unlikely that the site's development would impact upon the significance of identified designated heritage assets.

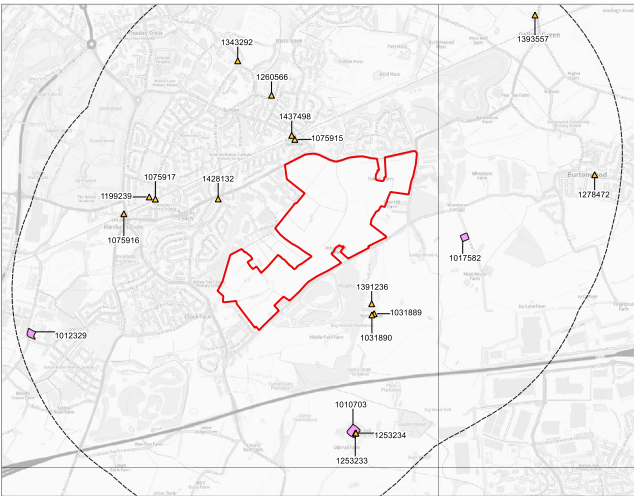


Figure 7.2 Map of designated heritage assets, e.g. Listed Buildings (extract from Heritage Appraisal, SLR, Rev 3 - April 2025)

Non-designated heritage assets

- 7.6 There are five non-designated assets within the site, but these are 'site of' records noting former location of assets no longer extant. The site potentially forms part of the setting of non-designated historic buildings in the local area, for example; Barn at Travers Farm (to north of site); Maypole Farm and Barn (south east - see Figure 7.3); Barn and Outbuilding at Abbotshall Farm (south east); Rosehill Farm (east).
- 7.7 However, the significance of such buildings is considered low. The buildings derive some significance from their wider setting (which includes a relationship with the site); however, their significance mainly derives from their immediate setting (i.e. associated farmyards, outbuildings and structures) and from which their interest is best appreciated.



Figure 7.3 Example of non-designated historic building in the local area (Maypole Farmhouse) (extract from Heritage Appraisal, SLR, Rev 3 - April 2025)

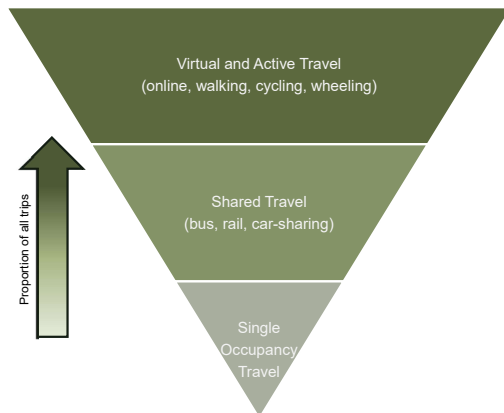
Constraints and opportunities summary

- 7.8 The site retains a negligible/low amount of heritage interest in and of itself. The site has been vastly altered over the last half century, with many historic field boundaries removed. Its landscape character is late-20th century.
- 7.9 Nonetheless, development of the site could potentially integrate heritage as follows;
- Location and extents of former farmsteads, as well as the airplane crash could possibly be acknowledged via interpretation material.
 - Carefully considered design approach to massing, scale and materials close to non-designated built heritage (e.g. avoiding visually dominating structures and designs).
 - Alternatively, measures such as landscape 'buffers' between any potential non-designated heritage assets and new development.
 - The retention of the historic Public Right of Way through centre of the site should be prioritised.
 - A Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment (HEDBA) will be required for future planning applications, to assess impact on surrounding heritage assets and archaeological potential, and inform a scheme of future archaeological works, if required.
 - It would be advisable to accompany the HEDBA with a full geophysical survey.
 - If preservation in situ of any archaeological remains is not possible, then an appropriate level of excavation, recording and analysis of remains may help to off-set harm.

8. Transport baseline

Changing context

- 8.1 In July 2019, St Helens Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency, acknowledging the need for carbon neutrality by 2040. A key goal is to reduce transport emissions by designing developments that encourage walking, cycling, and public transport while integrating electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.
- 8.2 Travel behaviour patterns have evolved over recent years, e.g. growth in hybrid and remote working changing commuting patterns, and growth of online shopping reducing individual travel (but increasing local delivery traffic).
- 8.3 Such trends will continue to evolve, shaped by policy, technological advances and sustainable design. Accordingly, the St Helens Borough Council's Transport and Travel SPD emphasises the need for the design of development to prioritise people over cars and promote sustainable travel.
- 8.4 In this context, there is an overarching opportunity to promote and create a sustainable movement network at BFGV, where the mode hierarchy is led by an emphasis on active travel, in turn supporting climate and health, and promoting the benefits of green infrastructure.



Mode hierarchy (extract from Transport Baseline Report, SLR, Rev 01b - June 2025)

Vision and validate

- 8.5 Transport planning has shifted from a 'predict and provide' model to a 'vision and validate' approach: meaning increased focus on reducing private car use and increasing active travel. The approach entails setting associated movement objectives or goals associated with a proposed development and defining the measures and/or improvements that will help the development work towards achieving that objective
- 8.6 This is an important approach for BFGV. As a long-term development opportunity there is clear opportunity to focus on such societal goals and priorities, and then assess and provide the infrastructure that will encourage sustainable modes and optimise existing infrastructure. There will be opportunities to use traffic count data as part of the validation process.

Site accessibility

- 8.7 Figures 8.1 and 8.2 help to illustrate the site's accessibility.
- 8.8 Figure 8.1 highlights convenient access to essential amenities, including schools, community facilities, parks, supermarkets, and healthcare services, many of which are within a 20-minute walk, promoting local living and accessibility to employment, retail, and leisure. Pedestrian movements are well-supported by footways, dropped kerbs, and PRoW, connecting the site to the broader network.
- 8.9 Figure 8.2 highlights that cycling connectivity has strong potential, with key destinations like St Helens Junction, Lea Green rail stations, and St Helens town centre within a 20-minute cycle of the site, and locations like Omega and Widnes within 30 minutes. Areas adjacent to the site are already well-served by buses, with St Helen's Bus Station offering regional connections to destinations such as Liverpool and Southport, ensuring sustainable travel options.
- 8.10 The site is also accessible by rail with St Helens Junction and Lea Green providing connections to Liverpool, Manchester and intervening and onward destinations.

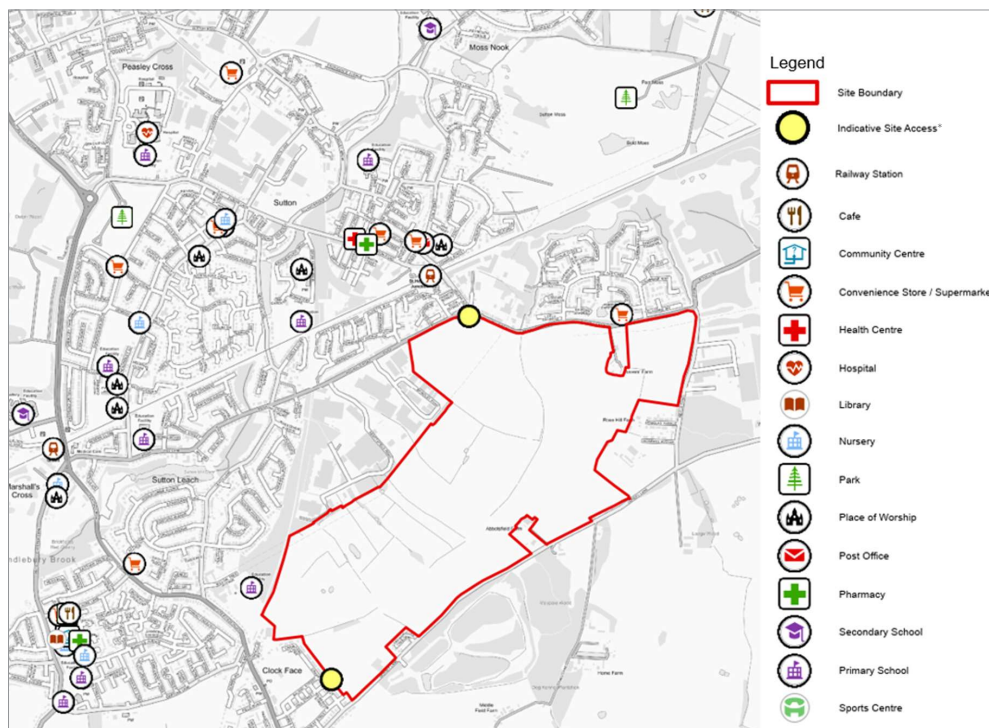


Figure 8.1 Site accessibility - local amenities (extract from Transport Baseline Report, SLR, Rev 01b - June 2025)

*Site access locations used to assess relative proximity / accessibility of local amenities - refer to Transport Baseline Report

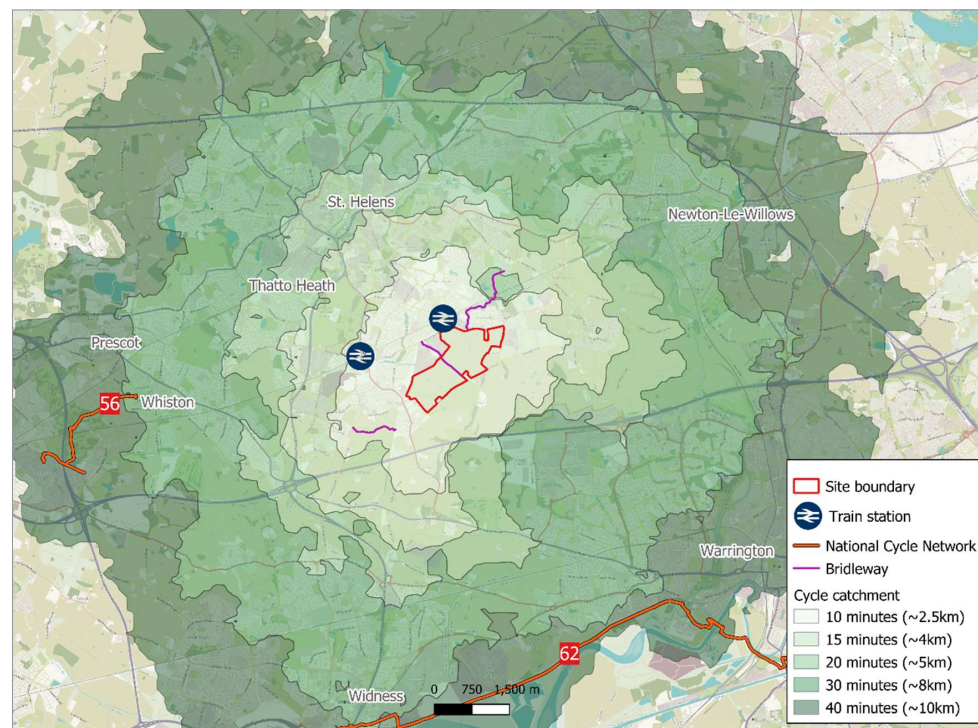


Figure 8.2 Site accessibility - cycling catchments (extract from Transport Baseline Report, SLR, Rev 01b - June 2025)

Key challenges

8.11 To maximise the potential of the site development proposals will need to address key challenges, including;

- **Connectivity to existing services** - Routes within the site along key desire lines will be needed to minimise walking and cycling distances to services. The masterplan process will need to consider whether additional supporting amenities will be needed within the site to support future residents.
- **Public Rights of Way (PRoW)** - Whilst there are opportunities to connect to the existing PRoW network as part of the scheme, the standard / condition of these routes and a number of local roads in the vicinity of the site are not suitable for purpose in their current form.
- **Cycling** - Cycle infrastructure around the site is currently limited, requiring cyclists to travel on-road, without cycle lanes, crossing facilities or priority at junctions, which could dissuade some people from travelling by bicycle. Cycle parking is also poor, e.g. St Helens Junction station.
- **Buses** - Existing bus infrastructure needs upgrading and bus stops are of relatively poor quality without any shelters. Bus services between the site and St Helens Junction and Lea Green stations have a low frequency of 1-2 per hour.
- **Trains.** There are no direct train services to St Helens town centre from St Helens Junction or Lea Green. The car park at St Helens Junction appears underused and signage to the station is poor.
- **M62 Junctions 7 and 8.** Existing congestion experienced at these junctions at peak times will be a consideration for the development.

- **Key local roads** (ped/cycle experience);
 - **Bold Road** feels like an A-road particularly on the eastern section where it is subject to 40 mph and 50 mph speed restrictions and has limited footway provision. There are currently no cycle lanes or formal cycle crossing facilities along the road. Some sections of Bold Road are susceptible to flood risk.
 - **Neill's Road** currently does not have a continuous footway on the western side of the road adjacent to the site. The quality, width and condition of the footways will need to be assessed as part of the delivery of the scheme. The Bold Forest Garden Suburb Transport Review undertaken in 2019 (see para 8.13 below) highlighted the lack of hedgerow maintenance can lead to poor visibility at the junctions with Bold Road and Gorsey Lane. Some sections of Neill's Road are susceptible to flood risk.
 - **Gorsey Lane** currently does not have a continuous footway on the northern side of the road adjacent to the site, is narrow in sections and is subject to high speeds. The quality, width and condition of Gorsey Lane will need to be assessed as part of the delivery of the masterplan. The 2019 Transport Review (para 8.13 below) highlighted congestion issues occurred at the junction with Clock Face Road. Some sections of Gorsey Lane are susceptible to flood risk.



Figure 8.2 Photograph of Gorsey Lane (in proximity to Clock Face Country Park entrance)

8.12 To help address such challenges, accessibility opportunities will continue to be assessed beyond this baseline stage, prioritising identification of interventions that can maximise active and sustainable trips to key destinations.

Bold Forest Garden Suburb Transport Review (WSP 2019)¹

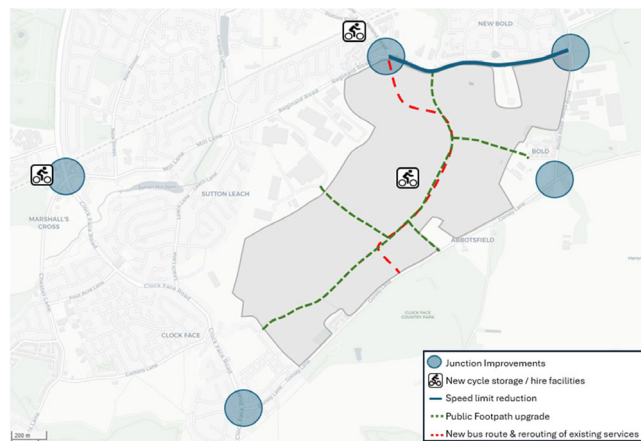
8.13 This report formed part of the supporting evidence for site's allocation in the St Helens Local Plan. It identifies opportunities for local investment, including the following, which remain an important influence over the development process.

- Improved Helena Rd/Bold Rd junction.
- Reduced speed limit on Bold Road from 40 mph to 30 mph or 20 mph.
- New junction at Bold Road / Neill's Road to improve capacity and safety.
- Improvements to visibility at Neill's Road/ Gorsey Lane through changes to planting or provision of a roundabout.
- New signalised junction at Gorsey Lane / Clock Face Road to improve capacity and pedestrian crossings.
- Introduction of segregated cycle lanes and footpaths throughout the site and surrounding areas.
- Improvements to the existing public footpath that runs directly through the site to also support cycling.
- New secure cycle storage within the site and at Lea Green and St Helens Junction stations and a 'bike and ride' initiative to encourage their use.
- New cycle hire scheme for residents.
- Reroute bus services through the site from Gorsey Lane to Helena Road
- New bus route looping between the town centre, Lea Green and St Helens Junction and BFGV to increase frequency.

1. Source:

<https://new.sthelens.gov.uk/media/329483/tra005-bold-forest-garden-suburb-transport-review-2019.pdf>

Right: plan summarising 2019 Transport Review proposals (extract from Transport Baseline Report, SLR, Rev 01b - June 2025)



In summary: key opportunities for transport and movement

- Various amenities surrounding the site can serve the needs of new residents, including secondary school, primary school, public houses, community centres, library, park, place of worship, supermarkets, a sports centre, gym and a hospital.
- The existing PRoW network and the future Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes will bolster accessibility.
- St Helens Junction and Lea Green rail stations, St Helens town centre and Thatto Heath can all be reached within a 20-minute cycle of the site. Omega, Newton-Le-Willows, Widnes and Whiston are within a 30-minute cycle, providing opportunities for future residents to travel sustainably for work either by cycle alone or as part of a multi-modal trip (cycle / rail).
- The site is well connected by bus to local employment, education, leisure and retail centres.
- A bus route through the site may enable a direct connection that benefits journey times for services as well as supporting future residents.
- The site has a high level of public transport accessibility within a 1-hour time catchment. From the centre of the site, residents can easily reach St Helens town centre, Newton-Le-Willows, Thatto Heath, Prescott, Warrington, Widnes, Huyton and Liverpool
- There are pedestrian refuge islands along the western section of Bold Road in the vicinity of the site, including Helena Road, which will connect future residents to St Helens Junction rail station.
- Bus stops on Neill's Road could provide future residents in the east of BGFV with access to existing services.
- Gorsey Lane can provide future residents with direct connection to green space at Clock Face Country Park.

Environment

Ecology

Noise

Air Quality

Flood risk and drainage

Utilities

9. Ecology

The Mersey Forest

9.1 The primary ecology data source is the work by *The Mersey Forest* for St Helens Borough Council in 2024:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and BNG Feasibility Report.
- Bold Forest Garden Village Statutory Biodiversity Metric and Condition Assessment sheets ('BNG baseline').

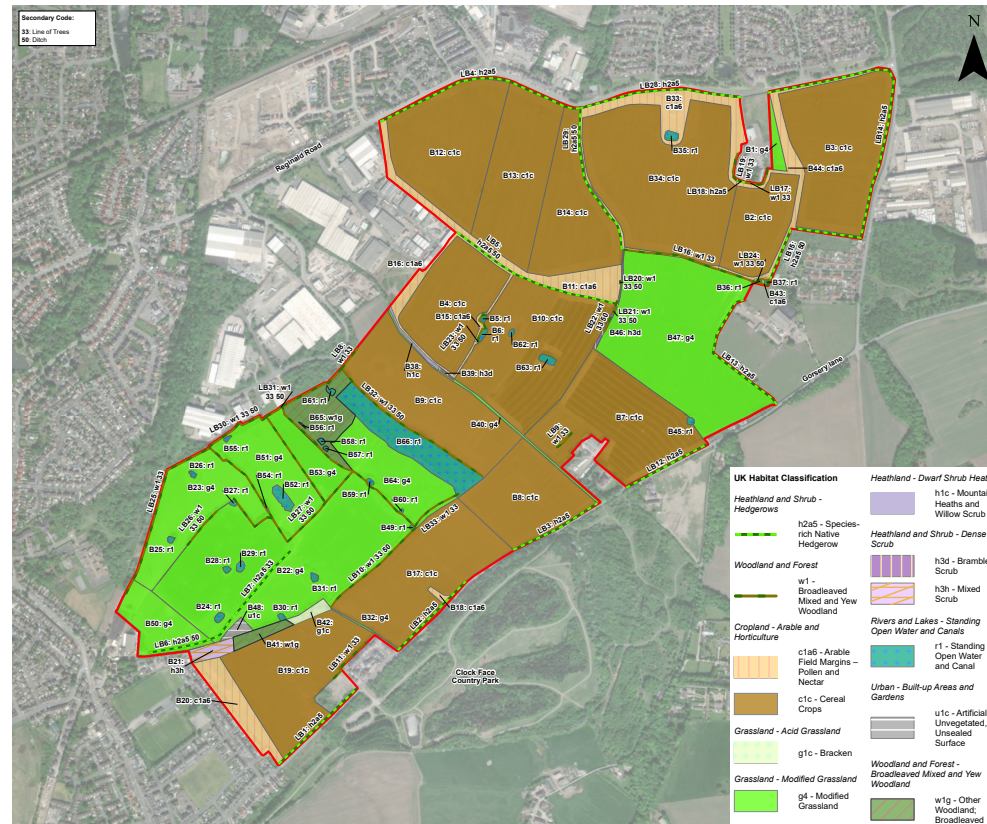


Figure 9.1 Extract from UK Habitat Assessment Baseline plan (extract from Ecology Baseline Briefing Note, SLR, December 2024)

9.2 Key outcomes of the PEA and BNG baseline are illustrated in Figures 9.1 and 9.2 below. These broadly show that existing habitats are currently in poor to moderate condition, including within Tunstall's Farm LWS:

- *UK Habitat Assessment baseline* plan shows the range and extents of habitats currently present in different parts of the site.
- *Habitat Biodiversity Value* plan summarises relative value measured in Habitat Units Per Hectare (derived from habitat distinctiveness, condition and strategic significance). Warmer colours denote higher value habitat.

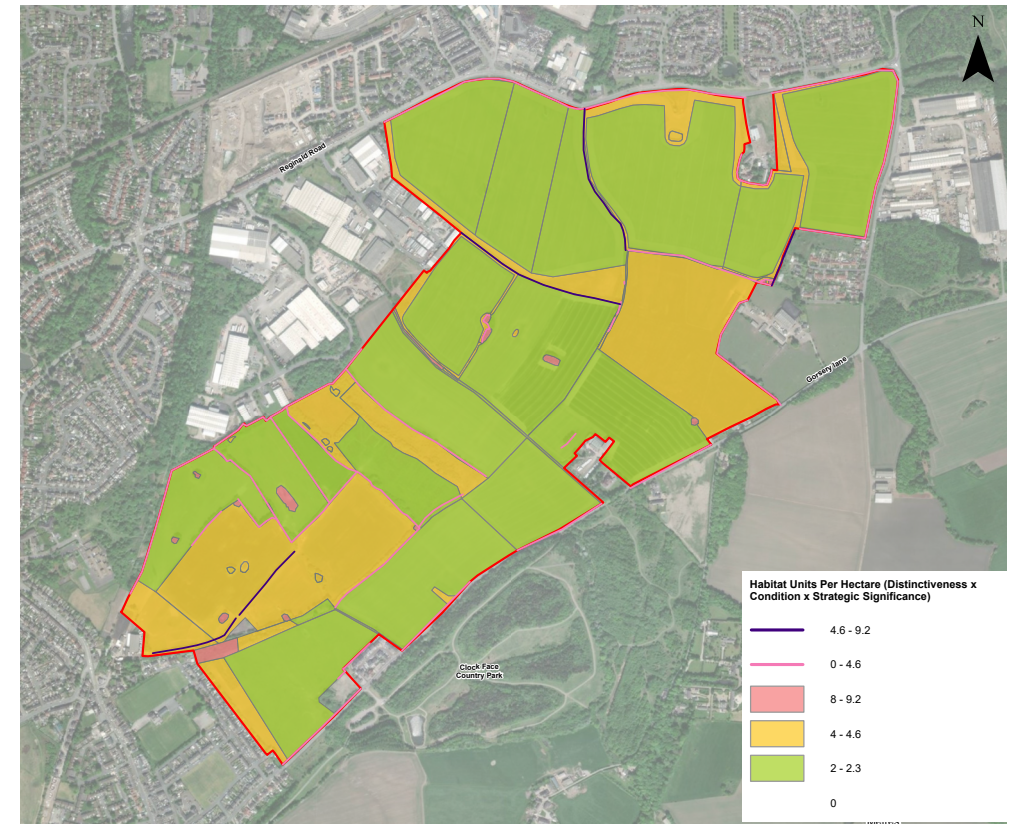


Figure 9.2 Habitat Biodiversity Value plan (extract from Ecology Baseline Briefing Note, SLR, December 2024)

Ecology risks

9.3 The PEA and BNG baseline provide a helpful basis for development of a masterplan framework, but also identify potential risks.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

9.4 There are previous records of GCN within Tunstall's Farm LWS. Although no GCN surveys undertaken as part of the PEA, surveys are currently ongoing to determine the current position.

9.5 Taking a precautionary approach, it is assumed that GCN are present, and that development proposals will need to demonstrate that GCN can be mitigated for appropriately under European Protected Species Mitigation Licence(s).

9.6 No District Level Licensing (DLL) scheme is active in Merseyside currently, so any ponds removed could potentially require replacement at a ratio of at least 2:1.

Birds

9.7 Habitats across the site provide suitable habitat for nesting birds, e.g. notable species include lapwing, skylark, willow warbler and yellowhammer. The PEA report recommends breeding bird surveys be undertaken.

9.8 Any important assemblages of wintering bird recorded may require appropriate wetland habitat provision within the masterplan design.

Bats

9.9 On the basis of PEA findings, the site is considered to have 'moderate' suitability for foraging and commuting bats (and good strategic position for wider landscape connectivity). Various trees have roosting potential.

9.10 Surveys are currently ongoing to determine the current position.

9.11 Based on understanding of bat habitat, broad design principles can be used to inform masterplan design (and any roosts present could be mitigated for appropriately on an individual plot basis at future design stage). However habitat suitability modelling is recommended.

Habitats

9.12 Varied habitats have been recorded through the PEA, including arable field margins, artificial unvegetated unsealed surface, bracken, bramble scrub, cereal crops, lowland mixed deciduous forest, mixed scrub, modified grassland, willow scrub, hedgerows, lines of trees, ditches and ponds.

9.13 Due to limited access in some locations, recording has relied on assumptions being made for some parts of the site, whereas other parts of the site have been excluded altogether.

9.14 The PEA report notes that a 'comprehensive botanical survey' may be required of areas where protected or notable species were identified, and for areas identified as grassland. Any such botanical surveys will be required in the optimal botanical season, and the results applied to future BNG assessments at future design stage.

10. Flood risk and drainage

Context

Local topography

- 10.1 As illustrated in Figure 10.1, the highest elevation is to the west of the site where ground levels reach 53m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Ground levels slope away from this raised area towards site boundaries to the north, south and east.
- 10.2 A large portion of the site slopes in a north easterly direction towards the lowest point in the north east corner, at 33m aOD.

- 10.3 To the south of the site is Clock Face Country Park; a former colliery with artificially raised ground with elevations up to 58m aOD.

Flooding from Rivers (fluvial flooding)

- 10.4 The site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 - Low Probability.

Flooding from surface water and overland flow

- 10.5 Local topographic characteristics mean that any surface water flood risk issue on the site will relate to site derived runoff. The risk of surface water flooding on the site is

predominantly low but there are some higher risk areas which largely align to existing ponds and ditches (see Figure 10.2).

- 10.6 There are existing surface water drainage issues along Gorsey Lane (to south) and along the B5204 (to north).
- 10.7 Drainage connections to the north of the site pass through culverts within Reginald Road Industrial Estate / Abbotsfield Road Industrial estate, where there are areas of surface water flood risk.

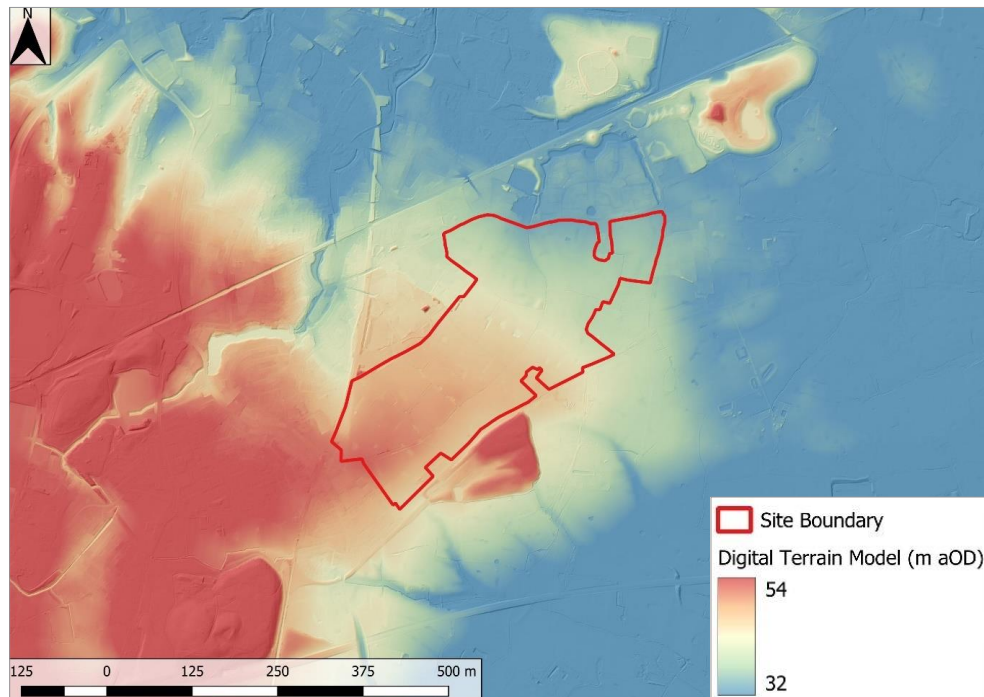


Figure 10.1 Local topography (extract from Flood Risk Screening baseline report, SLR, Rev02 - April 2025)

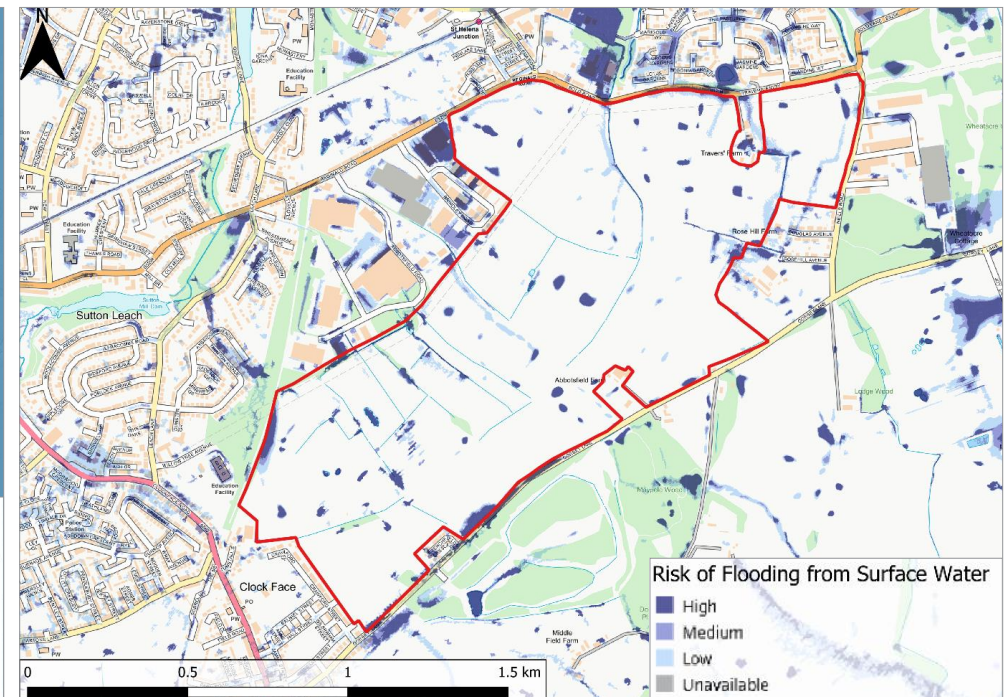


Figure 10.2 Existing surface water flood risk (extract from Flood Risk Screening baseline report, SLR, Rev02 -April 2025)

Local hydrology

- 10.8 The low permeability shallow geology means that infiltration will be limited. Water logging during extended wet periods is therefore likely along with lateral flows within the soils and surface runoff.
- 10.9 Existing ditches and ponds are a strong characteristic of the site;

Ponds

- Series of ponds and depressions.
- Some incorporated into ditch network, others are isolated offline.

Drainage ditches

- System of man-made drainage ditches, that typically delineate the fields.
- Network reflects topography, conveying flows away from high land in the centre.

Surface water catchments and discharge

- 10.10 It is likely that surface water currently discharges from fourteen contributing catchments, illustrated in Figure 10.3:
- Catchments 13 and 14 drain north to meet the Sutton Brook at the northern site boundary.
 - Catchments 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 drain west to meet the Sutton Brook. Onward routing for these ditches is currently unclear; however, they likely discharge through culverts under Reginald Road Industrial Park.
 - Catchments 1, 3, 12 drain to Whittle Brook.
 - Catchment 6 appears to initially drain to the east then immediately south to meet the Whittle Brook below the Lingley Mere Business Park to the south of the site.

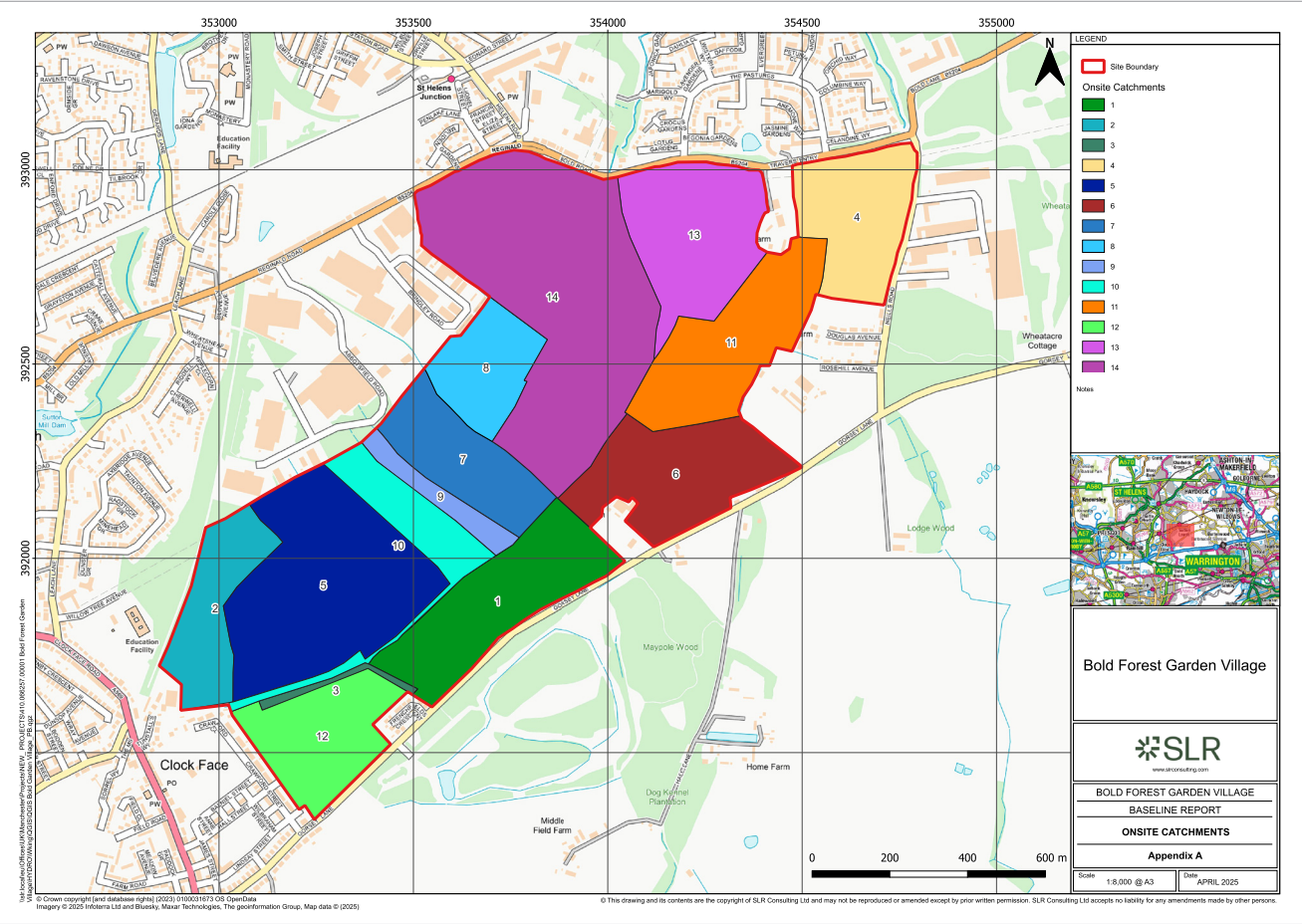


Figure 10.3 Map of existing on-site drainage catchments (extract from Flood Risk Screening baseline report, SLR, Rev02 -April 2025)

11. Land quality risk assessment

11.1 A preliminary land quality risk assessment has been undertaken to record the findings of a site walkover survey and present desk study information with respect to the site's environmental setting, land use history and potential for contamination.

Contamination

11.2 As indicated by Figure 11.1, the site comprises predominantly undeveloped agricultural land (with localised areas of farm buildings and access tracks). Potential on-site sources of

contamination include possible Made Ground around demolished farm buildings, farming related activities (e.g. fertilisers, fuels and oils) and unrecorded areas of buried waste or use of waste materials to fill localised surface depressions and ponds. The former railway line to the western boundary may also be an area of contaminants associated with historical use.

11.3 Whilst potential sources of contamination have been identified there is no indication from desk-based sources that, should it be present, it cannot be dealt with through

further investigation/assessment as part of the development process. Figure 11.2 summarises the local waste and landfill context.

Water sensitivity

11.4 Surface water sensitivity is moderate due to the presence drainage ditches which flow off-site.

11.5 Groundwater sensitivity is high due to the presence of Principal, Secondary A and Secondary Undifferentiated aquifers beneath the site. Part of the site is mapped within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ).

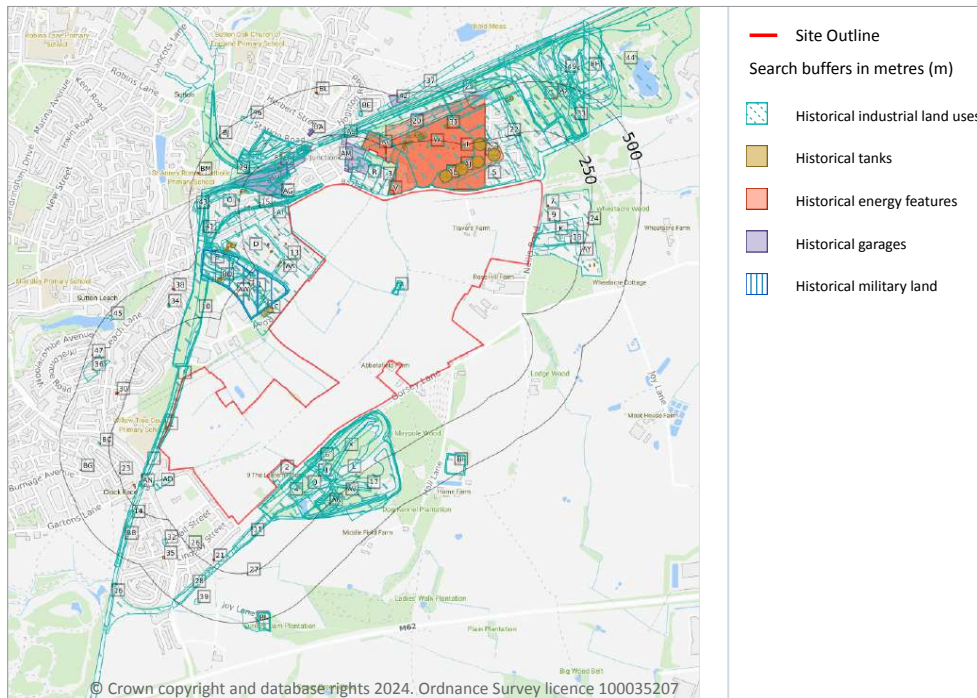


Figure 11.1 Past land use (extract from Groundsure report contained within Preliminary Land Quality Risk Assessment, SLR, December 2024)

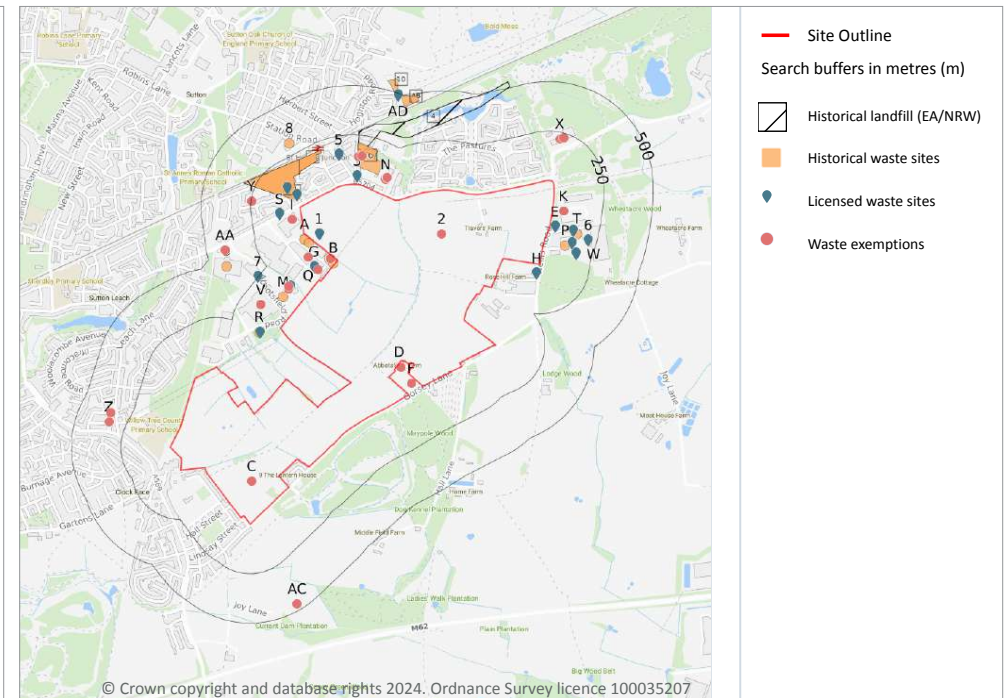


Figure 11.2 Waste and landfill (extract from Groundsure report contained within Preliminary Land Quality Risk Assessment, SLR, December 2024)

11.6 However, qualitative risk assessment indicates that the site represents a low risk of potential contamination impacts to controlled waters associated with the proposed development.

Coal and Minerals

- 11.7 Figure 11.3 summarises records of mining and ground working activity.
- 11.8 The site is located within a coal mining reporting area but has not been identified as a development high-risk area. Coal mine workings exist beneath the site, but these are at significant

depth. Three mine shaft entries are recorded to the south of the site.

- 11.9 At this stage unrecorded mine workings cannot be discounted. Individual coal mining risk assessments will be required for development parcels on a plot-by-plot basis.
- 11.10 Existing reports indicate the site is located within a minerals resource area, in accordance with the St Helens Local Plan. Further discussion with the Mineral Planning Authority would be required to determine the extent of minerals safeguarding and if a minerals resource assessment is required.

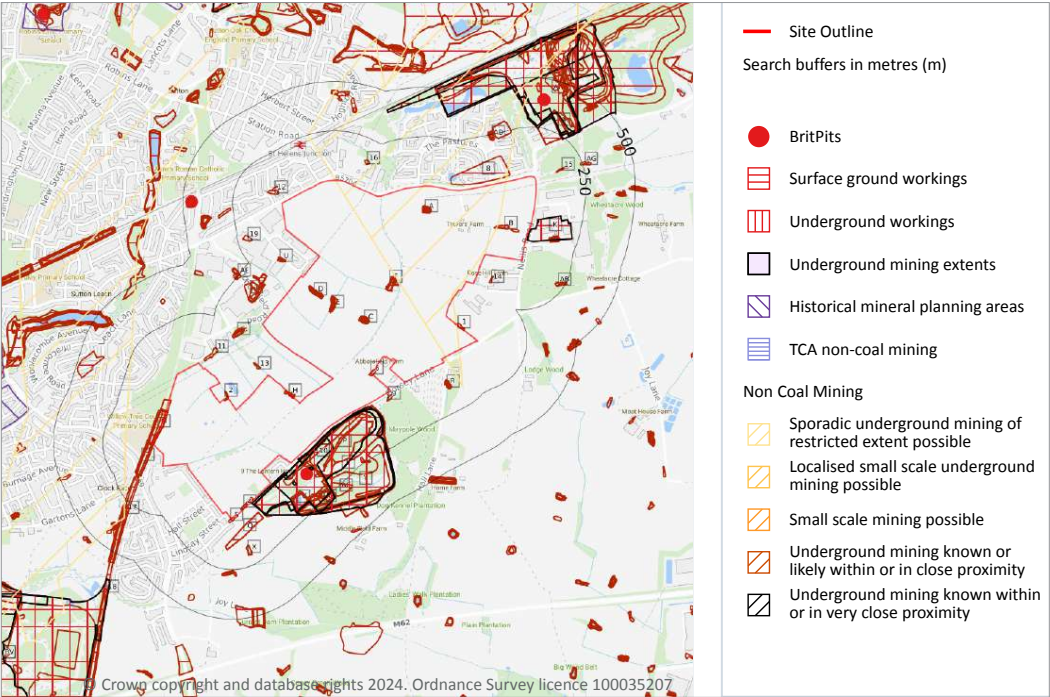


Figure 11.3 Mining and ground workings (extract from Groundsure report contained within Preliminary Land Quality Risk Assessment, SLR, December 2024)

12. Air quality

Current environment

- 12.1 As illustrated in Figure 12.1, the closest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) lies approx. 1.2km to the south (within Warrington Borough Council) along the M6, M62 and M56.
- 12.2 St Helens currently has four AQMAs, the closest being 3.2km from the site. These AQMAs are distant from the site but highlight general sensitivity in the wider area.

Local constraints

- 12.3 Potential air quality constraints are summarised in Figure 12.2. These include roads, industrial estates, equestrian businesses and agriculture. The Reginald Road and Bold Industrial Estates have potential to release pollutant materials and/or odours.

Recommendations

- 12.4 Design recommendations include;
- Avoid layout configuration that inhibits effective pollution dispersion.

- Minimise public exposure to pollution sources, e.g. locating habitable rooms away from busy roads, directing combustion generated pollutants through well-sited vents.
- Plan sensitive land uses away from Reginald Road and Bold Industrial Estates and use other land uses (e.g. green space) as a buffer.

- 12.5 Assuming best practice design measures are adopted, the site would be suitable for residential use in principle. Full assessment will be required as part of future planning applications.

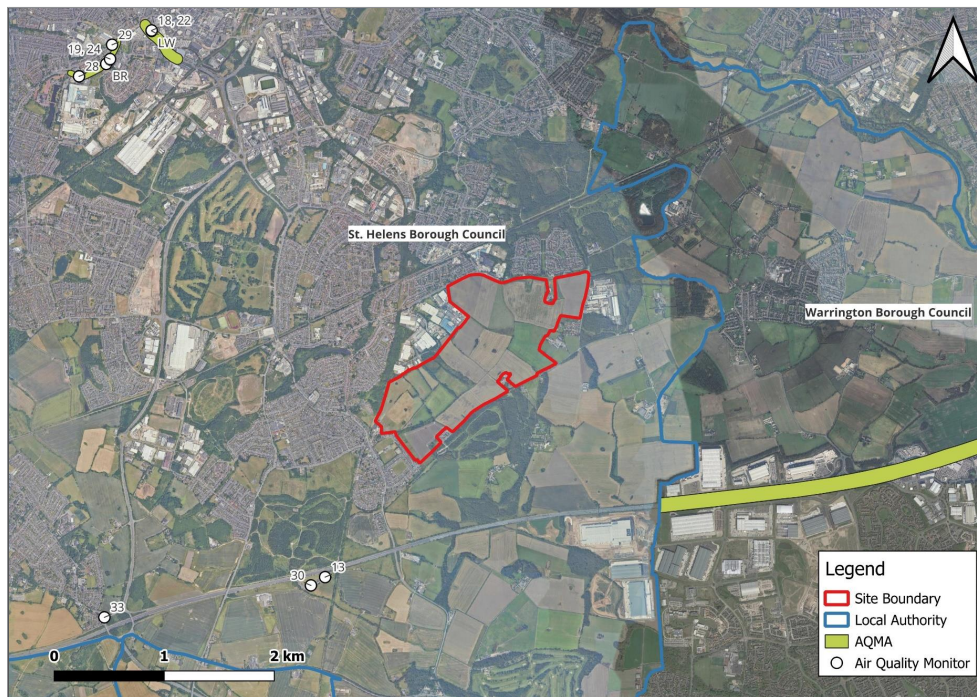


Figure 12.1 Existing AQMAs and air quality monitoring (extract from Air Quality Appraisal, SLR, Rev2.0 -April 2025)

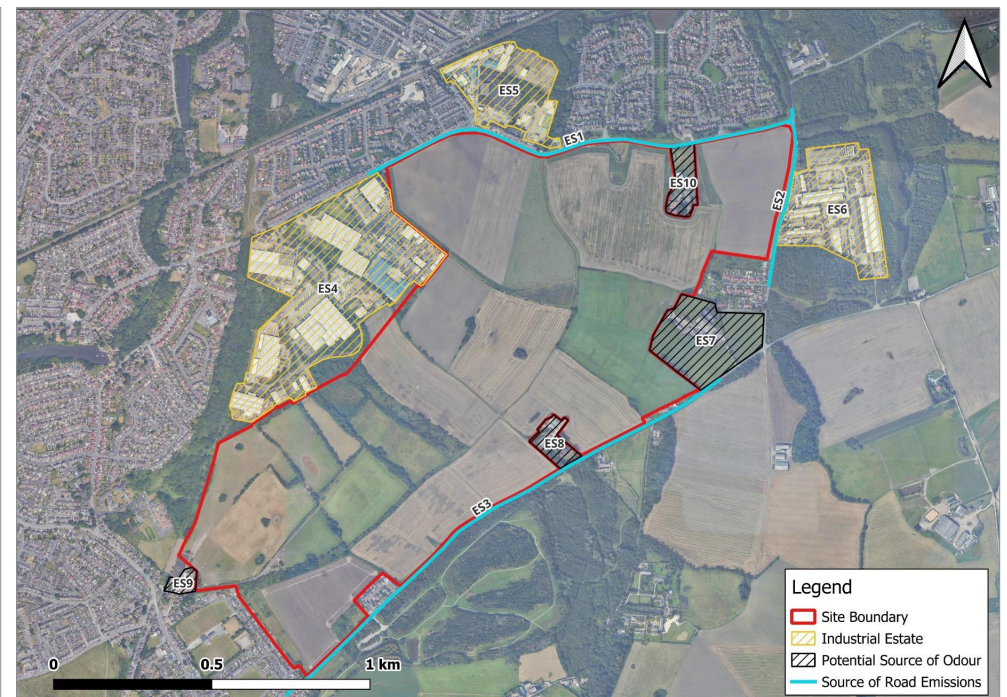


Figure 12.2 Overview of potential air quality constraints (extract from Air Quality Appraisal, SLR, Rev2.0 -April 2025)

13. Noise

Transportation / road traffic

- 13.1 DEFRA strategic road noise maps (Extrium online viewer tool - see Figure 13.1) show current daytime and nighttime average ambient noise levels.
- 13.2 The Bold Forest Area Action Plan also includes some baseline noise measurements, stating that *"The high background noise level is a major environmental detractor for both residents around the area and potential visitors to the Forest Park"*.
- 13.3 Using desktop transportation data modelling, an assessment has been undertaken to understand risks and mitigation requirements for environmental transportation noise (largely associated with the M62).

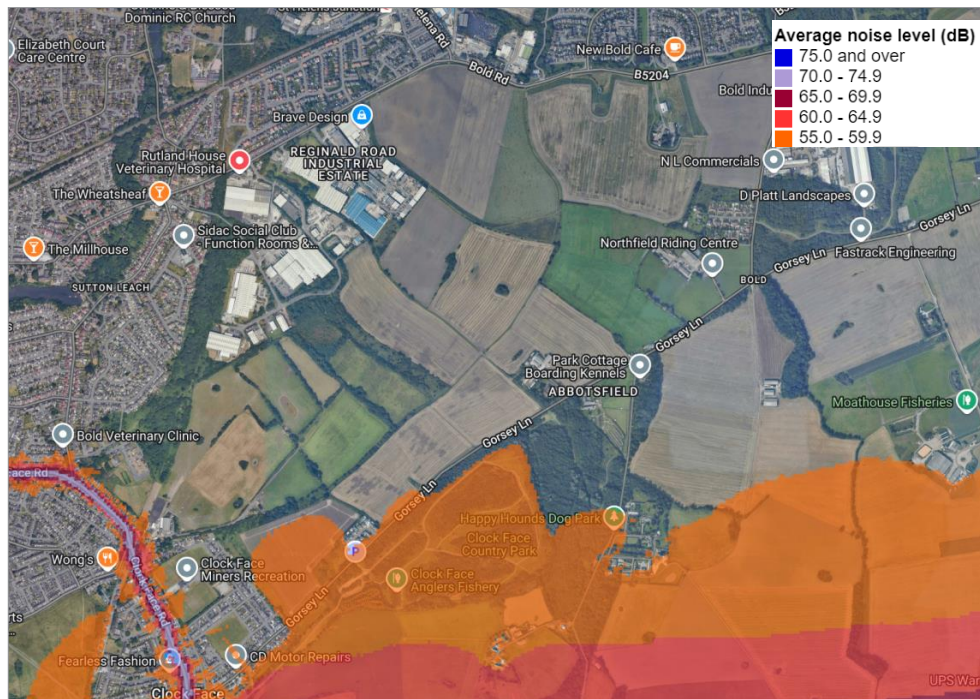


Figure 13.1 Daytime Road Traffic Noise – Major Links (extract from Feasibility Stage Noise Risk Assessment, SLR, Rev03 -April 2025)

13.4 For an unmitigated configuration:

In the daytime

- The site boundary and outer areas falls into medium noise risk
- The site interior falls into low noise risk

In the nighttime

- The site boundary and outer areas falls into high noise risk
- The site interior falls into medium noise risk

13.5 It is advised this assessment is validated through site surveys at a future design stage, before design decisions are fixed. However the above illustrates that fully considered acoustic design is required, and supports the need for Acoustic Design Statements as part of future planning applications.

Commercial and industrial activity

- 13.6 Under the Agent of Change principle, new development should not result in unreasonable restrictions on existing and established businesses. Proposed residential development should be suitably mitigated where necessary.
- 13.7 The site is located within a mixed area, including commercial and industrial activity adjacent to the boundary. Commercial areas that might be noise generating have been identified off Abbotsfield Road, Brindley Road, North of Bold Road and Neills Road. It is advised that an assessment should be undertaken to identify potential acoustic mitigation needed in response to noise ingress from these potential sources. A baseline environmental sound survey would be necessary for this.

Design response

- 13.8 Once the industrial noise contribution to the site soundscape has been considered in detail and transport noise modelling assumptions validated, development proposals should integrate suitable design responses e.g;
- Barrier blocks
 - Standoff distances
 - Plot orientation
 - Internal layout
 - Hierarchy of mitigation

14. Utilities

Baseline findings - overview

14.1 A utilities search was undertaken in December 2024. Key findings include;

- Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) projects a shortfall in electricity substation demand headroom by 2050 (Figure 14.1).
- Pylon-mounted extra high voltage electricity lines are present, plus buried and overhead high and low voltage cables (Figure 14.2).
- There are limited existing gas, communications and surface or foul water sewer assets on the site.

- There may be potential to use nearby disused mineshafts or underlying aquifers as heat sources for a district heat network.

Specific utilities considerations

Electricity - substations

14.2 Further engagement with SPEN will be required to determine plans for upgrading the network. There may be a requirement for a new substation or upgrades to existing.

Electricity - overhead transmission

14.3 If the existing extra high voltage overhead transmission lines must remain in place there will be easement requirements and constraints regarding swing clearances for permitted development.

Gas

14.4 Existing gas assets are shown at Figure 14.3.

14.5 It is assumed that no new gas connections will be required for the development; however, any protection and/or diversion of existing gas

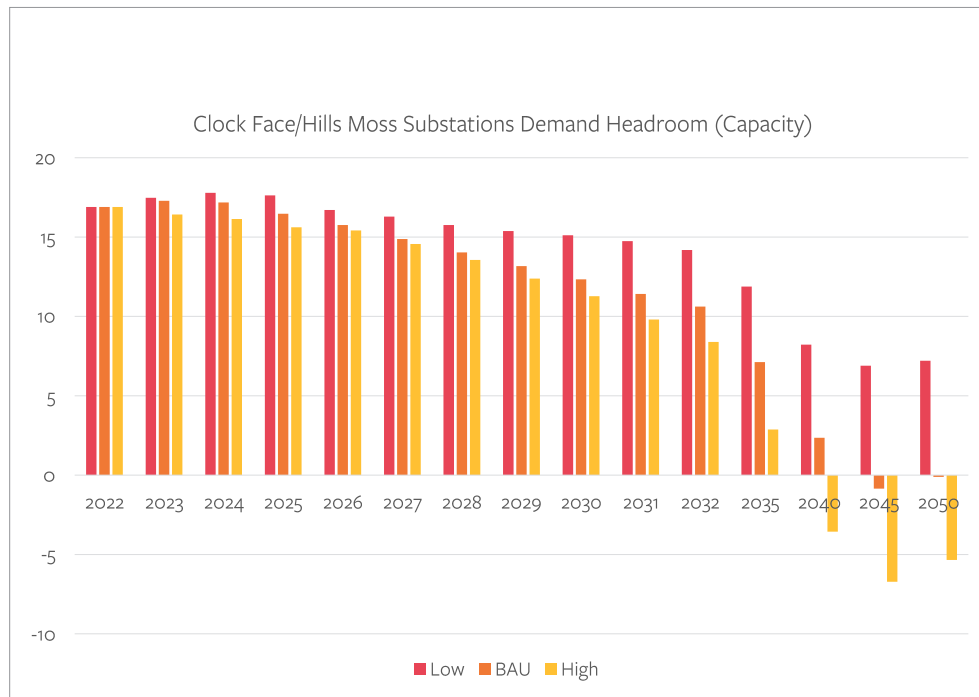


Figure 14.1 Projected substation demand headroom (extract from Utilities and Energy Baseline Study, Useful Projects, Version 02 April 2025)

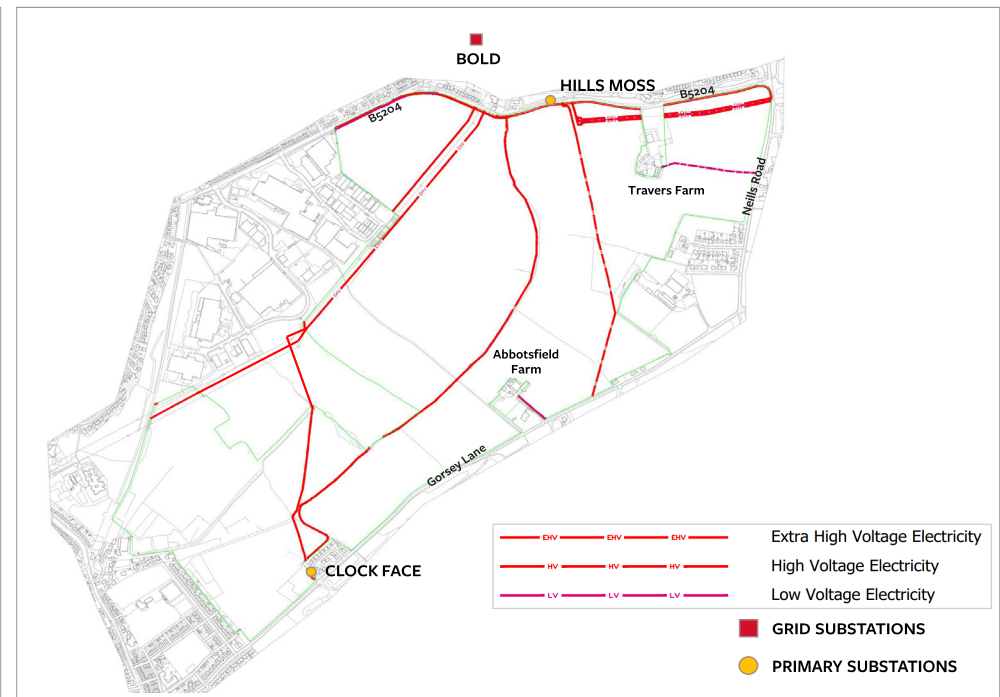


Figure 14.2 Existing electricity assets summary plan (extract from Utilities and Energy Baseline Study, Useful Projects, Version 02 April 2025)

assets will need to be discussed with Cadent Gas.

Surface water sewers

14.6 Any connection and requisitions of surface water sewers will need further discussion with United Utilities. This will include definition of existing capacity as well as any required additional connections and reinforcement works (assumed required, given the scale of development and existing surface water flood risk)

Foul water sewers

14.7 Connection to the foul water sewers will need discussion with United Utilities. This will include definition of existing capacity as well as any required additional connections and reinforcement works (assumed required, given the scale of development).

Communications

14.8 It is assumed the development will need full fibre connectivity. Connection to the communications network will need discussion with BT Openreach and City Fibre. Overhead

(pole mounted) connections may need to be diverted or undergrounded.

Abandoned assets

14.9 Abandoned assets have been identified within the site, shown at Figure 14.4 (water main and electricity assets). More detailed surveys will be needed to determine size, location and ownership of these assets.

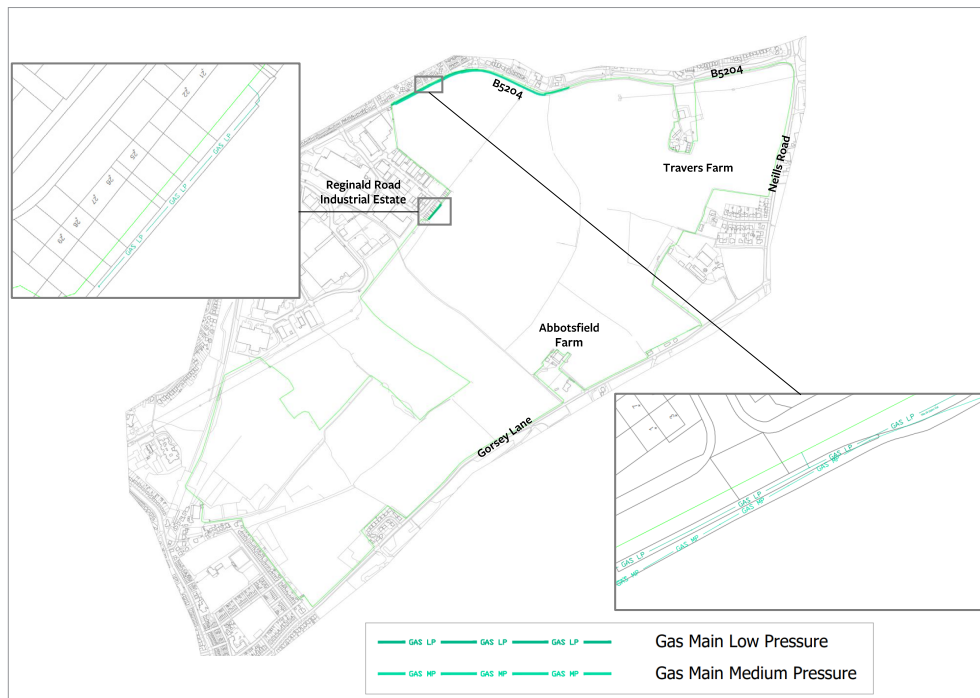


Figure 14.3 Existing gas assets summary plan (extract from Utilities and Energy Baseline Study, Useful Projects, Version 02 April 2025)



Figure 14.4 Abandoned assets location plan (extract from Utilities and Energy Baseline Study, Useful Projects, Version 02 April 2025)

Summary

Constraints and opportunities

People overview: SWOT summary

Strengths

- BFGV is helping St Helens Borough Council to achieve it's Local Plan housing requirements via the delivery of circa 3,000 homes.
- The site is allocated as 'Bold Forest Garden Suburb' (Policies LPA04, LPA04.1, LPA11) in the Local Plan Policies Map. Additionally, it is classed as a housing allocation within the Bold Forest Area Action Plan, which should help with delivery and taking the development through the planning process.
- Specific requirement for a masterplan to be completed prior to any applications being determined gives the Council a good level of control on what development comes forward on the site.
- There are numerous relevant policies and strategies that the design team can lean on which will inform overall development and active design proposals. This in turn should help deliver the overarching aim the council and local area want.
- Analysis of new build evidence suggests that recent developments are marketing and transacting at around £300 psf. We would consider this value to be strong, although, this would need to be adjusted in accordance to the asset and parcel of land.
- There is strong activity in the surrounding area suggesting strong market demand.
- BFGV is well situated to the M62 motorway and in turn the M6, this derives value and opportunity. Additionally, the access to St Helens Junction and Lea Green Railway station is attractive to prospective residents.
- Policy compliant position would be 30% of housing as affordable across the whole scheme. This will help the Council address housing challenges across the borough.
- The site is of significant scale to deliver social infrastructure alongside the development to support the local community.
- Existing natural and semi-natural green space in the surrounding area can be drawn on to limit the amount needed on-site and provide a strong connection to BFGV.
- Significant Officer Engagement will aid the design team regarding the requirements of the masterplan from a social infrastructure perspective.

Weaknesses

- There is limited data on apartments, which in turn makes it difficult to understand if there is demand for new build apartment stock within St Helens. Additionally, there are no new build terraced accommodation brought forward in any of the identified schemes suggesting a lack of demand in the local area, considering the large amount of terraced housing already available in St Helens.
- The housing mix proposed by Iceni should be kept under review as the masterplan evolves.
- A lack of community infrastructure in the local area has been identified indicating the need to incorporate social infrastructure on- site in particular around health, school, public open space and community facilities.

Opportunities

- Significant opportunity to help St Helens Borough Council meet their Local Plan housing targets through delivery of the masterplan.
- Planning policy requirements including the need for a masterplan allows St Helens to ensure high quality development comes forward on the site.
- Strong market sentiment means there appears to be strong demand for development in this area.
- Potential to push density in certain locations given the scale of the development, but also recognise the housebuilder desire to deliver homes at 35 -40 dph in areas of the scheme.
- BFGV is located in a relatively high value area from a residential sales perspective.
- BFGV is the largest housing allocation within St Helen's and the Liverpool City Region.
- BFGV is of a scale to deliver significant on-site infrastructure to benefit the local community.
- There are also wider opportunities to improve off-site leisure facilities to provide further and wider benefit to the community.

Threats

- If new planning policies are brought forward (such as the LCR Spatial Development Strategy), there could be additional obligations that are currently unaccounted for.
- The masterplan will be delivered over a prolonged period. Therefore, there is significant scope for changes in market forces over time.
- Policy compliant position would be 30% of housing as affordable across the whole scheme.
- Multiple landowners could lead to delivery challenges relating to sites coming forward and equalisation.
- Cost analysis is currently based on BCIS, the leading database of cost and price data within the construction industry. For more specific costings, it might be appropriate to acquire the services of a quantity surveyor.
- Abnormal costs are unknown at this stage of the process.
- Whilst a health centre is an established up-front requirement the demand will develop over time and there is a risk of upfront under-utilisation if all delivered upfront.
- Local schools being academies may limit the ability to expand them rather than deliver an on-site facility.

Place overview: SWOT summary

Note: some of the following illustrated within Figures 15.3 and 15.4 below

Strengths

- Relatively flat previously undeveloped site that is generally well screened in the wider landscape.
- Site lies in proximity / adjacent to established communities / mixed neighbourhoods for new residents to access and help sustain local services and facilities.
- Site well located in terms of employment areas, road and rail transport enabling new residents to access employment opportunities and support the local economy. Specifically, well connected by rail - Lea Green and St Helens Junction stations in close proximity.
- Local highway network provides strong connections to St Helens town centre, as well as the strategic network at M62 junctions 7 and 8.
- Urban characteristics representative of St Helens as a place strongly shaped by industrial history with patterns of urban growth giving a distinctive sense of place.
- Local highway routes have historic origins including routes that define the boundaries of the site contributing to sense of place and appreciation of historic growth.
- Local urban character and sense of place strongly influenced by the relationship between residential development, significant green corridors and open spaces and local industrial heritage.
- Wide-ranging views across the landscape, especially to the north where hills can be viewed on the distant horizon.
- Several designated landscapes (AAP area) and notable recreational and amenity parks and open spaces within 1,600m of the site including Sherdley Park, Sutton Brook / Sutton Mill Brook and Thatto Heath Meadows.
- Bold Forest AAP sets a broad framework of objectives that BFGV can respond to.

Weaknesses

- Access to the north-west / north is restricted (severance of disused railway and large scale industrial).
- Urban area punctuated by infrastructure corridors giving a fragmented urban structure, with residential areas interspersed with employment areas and infrastructure corridors.
- Routes of connection towards important open spaces to the west and north west (Sherdley Park, Sutton Park and King George V Playing Fields) are relatively lengthy, with some sections that are not currently pedestrian-friendly and/or difficult to navigate.
- Existing congestion at M62 Junctions 7 and 8 junctions at peak times.



Figure 15.1 Site photograph illustrating topographic characteristics and example of longer distance views

Opportunities

- Inherent opportunity to incorporate measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport.
- Allow existing Green Infrastructure (GI) connections to be reinforced and new connections to be formed – especially fragmented habitats through the centre of the site through the vegetated landscape and ecology corridors, and open spaces.
- Reinforce pattern of site landscape features including the LWS, PRow links, ditches and ponds, and work with local landscape character.
- Incorporate landscape management recommendations (e.g. reinforcement of existing gappy hedgerows, reintroduction of lost hedgerows where possible, management of drainage features and wetland areas).
- Enhance key PRow connections as amenity and ecological GI corridors.
- Help to create promote clear, connected local links that help to overcome perceptions of urban fragmentation.
- Approach to transport and mobility to positively contribute to response to climate emergency (lowering carbon emissions, reducing car usage), and Healthy Streets (improved air quality, lower noise disturbance, increased number of people who travel by active modes).
- Distinctive neighbourhood character areas immediately adjacent to the site provide potential design cues.
- Enhanced connections with Clock Face Country Park and Bold Moss via established PRow and new pedestrian and cycle links. Connect to and enhance existing longer links to Sutton Manor.
- Support delivery of Bold Forest AAP objectives including; creating new economic opportunities; create easily understood and accessible network of linked open spaces; create quality outdoor space for physical activities and to improve mental health and wellbeing; enhance connectivity between the urban area and Forest Park

Threats

- Development highly visible from local network of PRow and bridleways, and some specific high-sensitivity local views from other vantage points.
- Potential loss of existing landscape features within the site, potential for existing infrastructure to restrict new woodland and tree planting.
- Late 20thC growth strongly influenced by creation of M62, accelerating development to the south of St Helens and north of Warrington. Southern areas of St Helens have seen proliferation of commercial and industrial development – creating anonymous, car-centric modern development.



Environment overview: SWOT summary

Note: some of the following illustrated within Figures 15.3 and 15.4 below

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
- Site comprises predominantly undeveloped agricultural land. - Recent site-wide Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (The Mersey Forest, 2024) has enabled a robust BNG baseline position. - Located wholly within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability) for fluvial flood risk. Risk of surface water flooding is predominantly very low but there are some higher risk areas.	- Existing low-permeability shallow geology means that opportunities for infiltration in SuDS will be limited. - Existing surface water drainage / flood risk issues along Gorsey Lane (to south) and along the B5204 (to north) with multiple recent flood incidents reported. - Potential local emissions sources (air quality) have been identified that could potentially constitute design constraints.	- Tunstall's Farm LWS considered to be in 'moderate' condition, with modified grassland and dry / drying ponds and ditches; therefore potential for habitat enhancement to contribute to BNG. - Ground levels slope down towards site boundaries to the north, south and east with existing points of discharge to local water courses. - Residential development to be suitably mitigated against commercial uses, to support the coexistence of noise-sensitive and noise-generating uses. - Site-wide SuDS network to manage surface water run off and help alleviate existing local flood risk issues.	- It is assumed that GCN are present, and that the masterplan will need to demonstrate that they can be mitigated for appropriately. - Existing site surface water run off drains either to Sutton Brook or Whittle Brook but routing of some ditches / discharge points and off-site connections to the water courses is unclear. - Some specific parts of the site (particularly along the ditch network) are vulnerable to surface water flooding and more detailed consideration is needed on related constraints. - Potential on-site sources of contamination e.g. made ground. - Future ground investigation needed for targeted investigation. - The site is located within a mixed use area that includes industrial activity adjacent to the site boundary. Noise generating uses are located at Abbotsfield Road, Brindley Road, North of Bold Road and Neills Road. Reginald Road Industrial Estate and Bold Industrial Estate are considered to have the potential to release pollutant materials and/or odours.



Figure 15.2 Site photography illustrating existing site environment features



In summary: site constraints

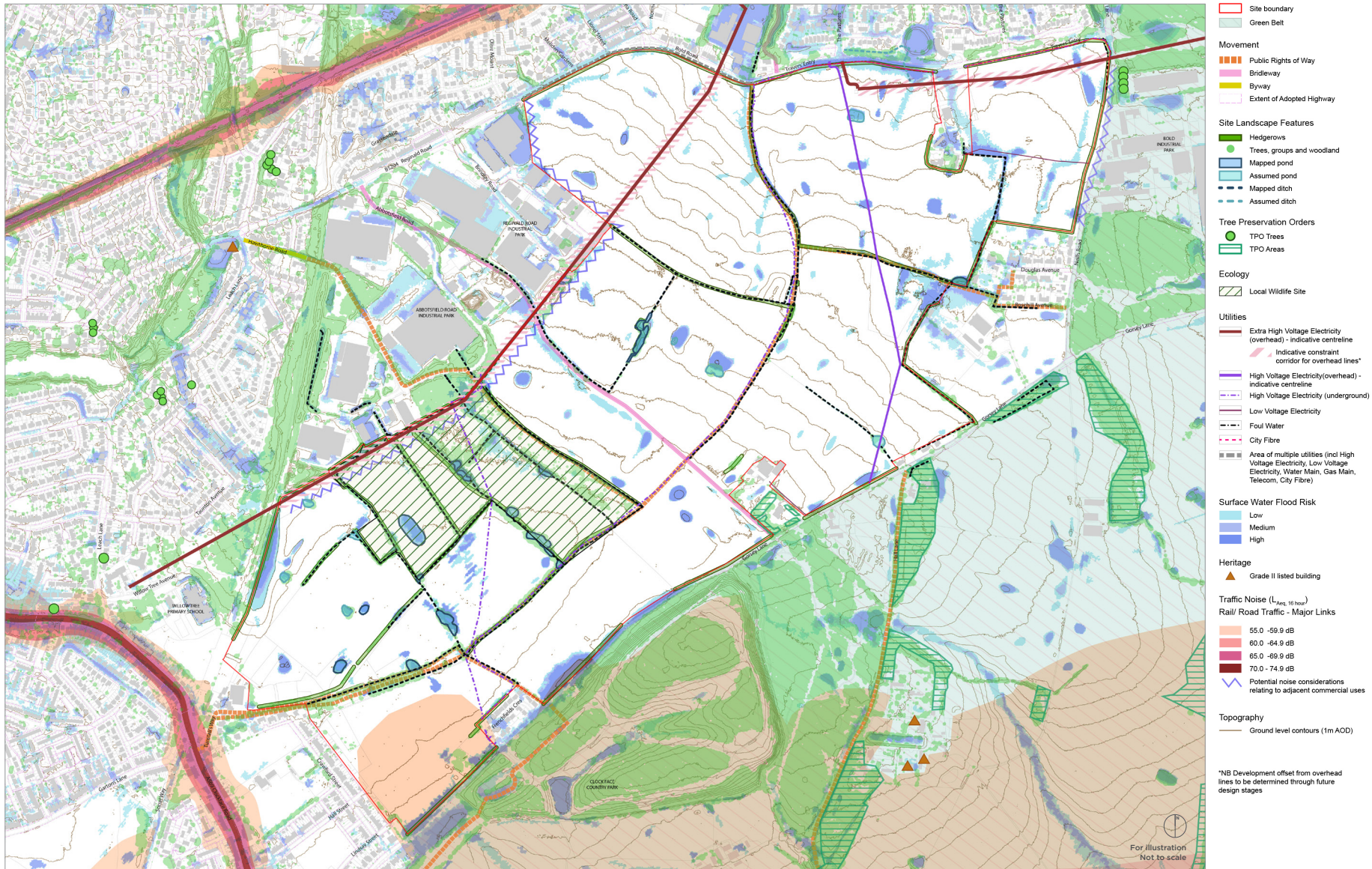


Figure 15.3 Non technical site constraints summary

In summary: site opportunities

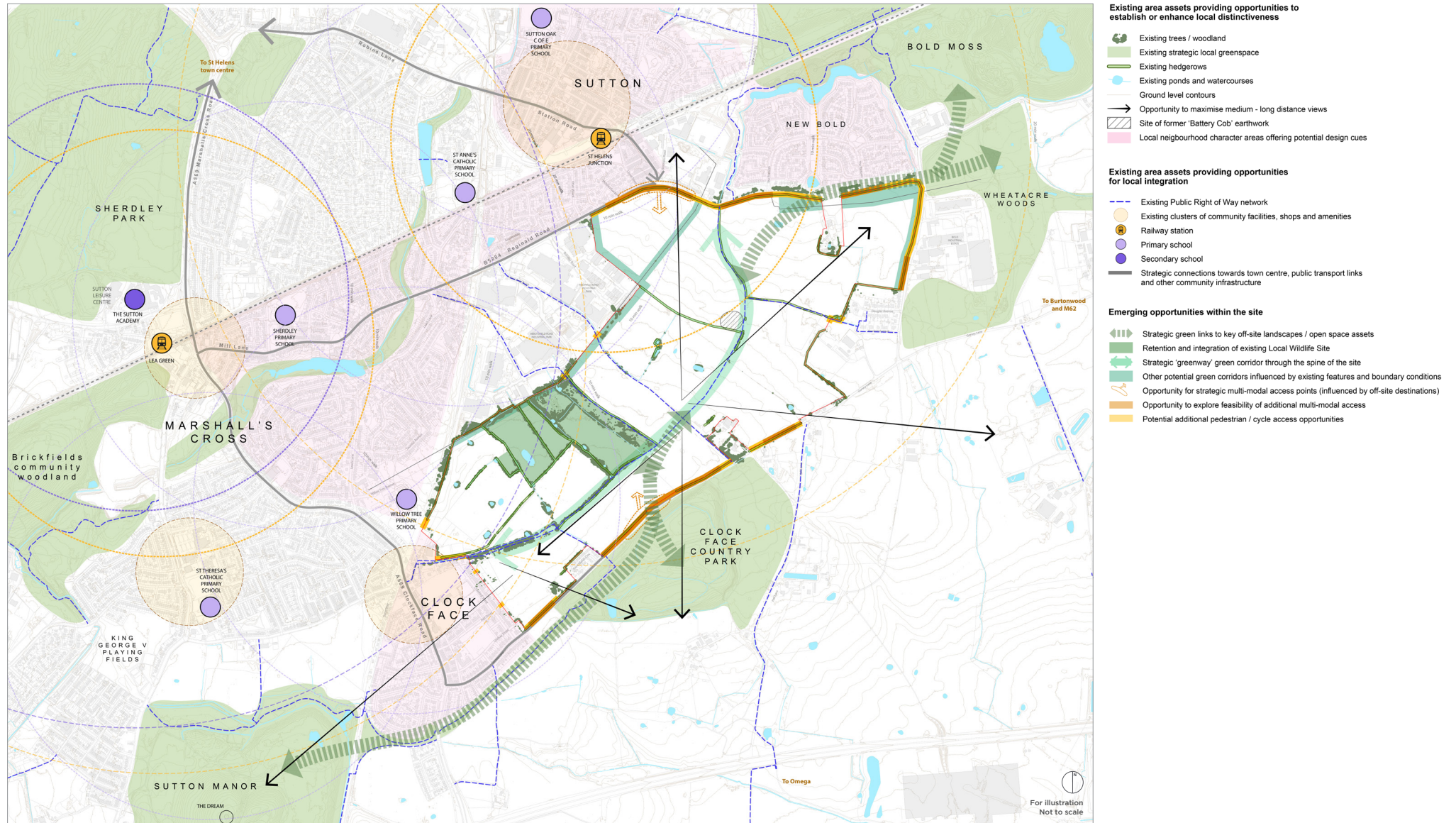


Figure 15.4 Non technical site opportunities summary

