Transport Baseline Report

Bold Forest Garden Village

St Helens Borough Council

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Basis of Report

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction 2
2.0 Planning Policy and Best Practice 5
3.0 The Changing Transport Context 22
4.0 Existing and Future Travel Behaviour 24
5.0 Site Accessibility Review 32
6.0 Review of WSP Recommendations 50
7.0 Summary and Next Steps 53

1.0 Introduction

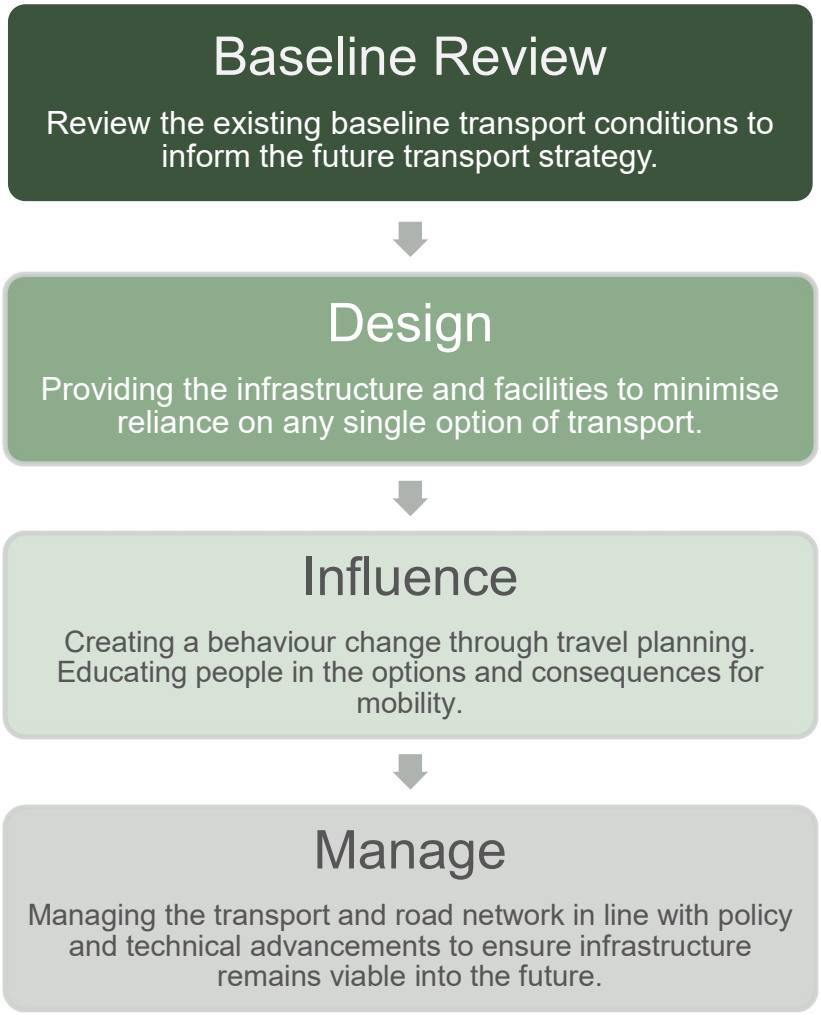
Background

1.1 SLR Consulting has been commissioned by St Helens Borough Council to provide transport and mobility advice to support the development of the **Bold Forest Garden Village (BFGV) Masterplan Framework**.

1.2 The Masterplan Framework will support the design and delivery of development of BFGV over the Local Plan period and will be a material consideration in decision making and informing, assessing, and determining planning applications and s106 requirements through identification of supporting infrastructure.

1.3 The Masterplan Framework will be focused on vision-led planning – defining a long-term vision for mobility, sustainability, and growth, prioritising active and sustainable transport options above private car.

1.4 The approach to designing the development will follow four key stages:

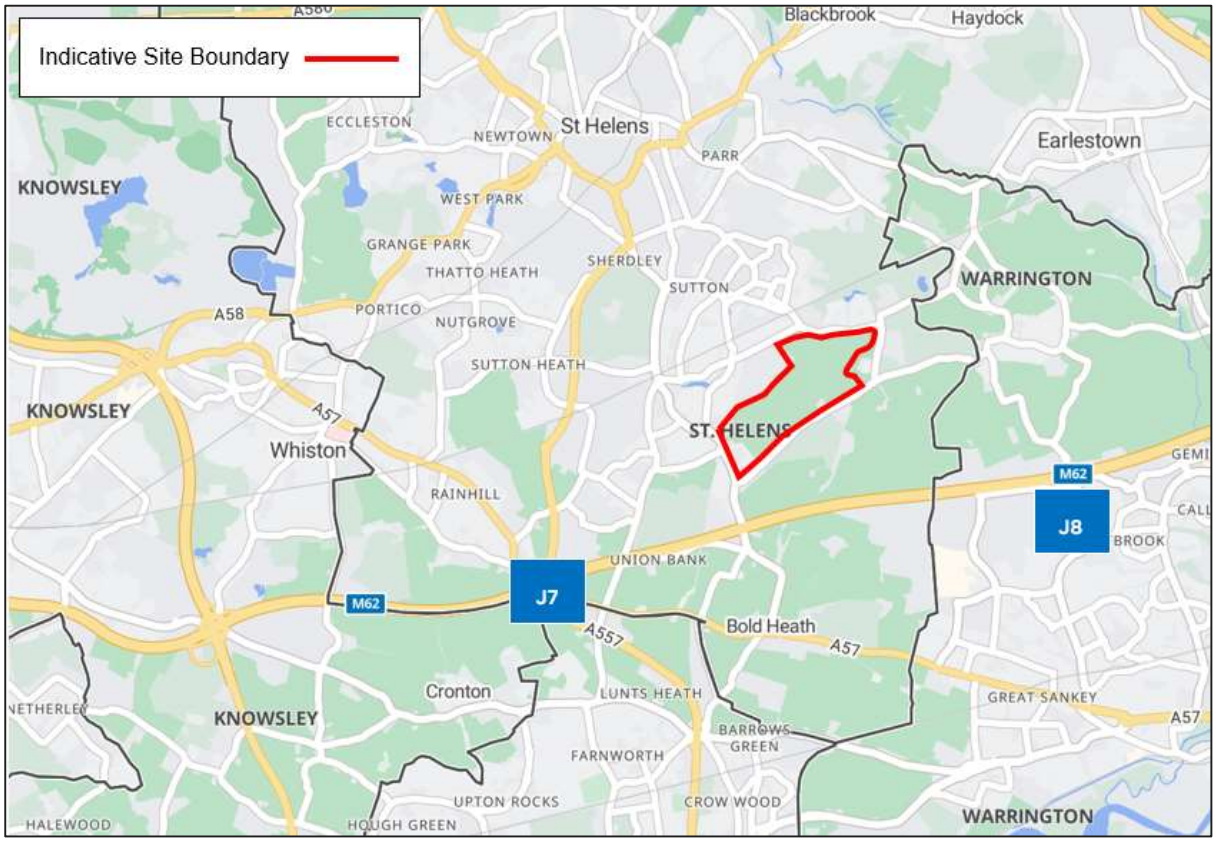


1.5 This report is effectively a summary of the **first stage** of this process (the baseline review) as it sets out the relevant transport policy and the local transport context in terms of existing behaviour patterns and the site's accessibility.

Site Context

1.6 The site currently comprises a large parcel of undeveloped agricultural land, located on the urban edges of Clock Face, Sutton and Bold. The site is bound by Reginald Road Industrial Estate to the north-west; the B5204 Bold Road and existing residential areas to the north; Neills Road and Bold Industrial Park to the east; and Gorsey Lane to the south. The site location in a strategic context is shown in **Figure 1.1** below.

Figure 1.1: Site Location



1.7 The site is well connected by rail to both Liverpool and Manchester with Lea Green and St Helens Junction stations providing direct access to these major cities with regular frequency services. The road network also provides connections to St Helens town centre, as well as the strategic road network (hereafter referred to as the SRN) at the M62 junctions 7 and 8.

1.8 Numerous Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run through the site, providing access across the area on foot, by bicycle and for equestrian users.

Proposals

1.9 BFGV offers the opportunity to deliver high quality, sustainable homes in a new community, to meet the local need for housing. At this stage, the exact quantum of development is still to

be determined, but the Local Plan allocation considers that the site can house up to 3,000 homes with a mix of private and affordable.

1.10 Transport, access and mobility will be considered throughout the masterplanning process, as an iterative approach between urban design, place-making and trip making. BFGV will place a greater importance on sustainable mobility and reflects the changes in travel behaviour that are already occurring.

1.11 Ensuring access for:

- Pedestrians, cyclists, wheeling, mobility aids and equestrians;
- Public transport users (bus and rail); and
- Cab drivers, taxis, deliveries, refuse collection and servicing.

Stakeholder engagement

1.12 To date, SLR have engaged with St Helens Borough Council although further engagement will be undertaken in due course with the relevant stakeholders, including:

- Landowners;
- Merseytravel;
- National Highways;,
- Active Travel England;,
- Other local authorities;
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority;
- Warrington Borough Council;
- Network Rail;
- Environment Agency;
- Utility Companies;
- Lead Local Flood Authority;
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and
- Natural England, amongst others.

Report Detail

1.13 Following this introduction, the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2**: Planning policy and best practice;
- **Chapter 3**: The changing transport context;
- **Chapter 4**: Existing and future travel behaviour;
- **Chapter 5**: Site accessibility review; and
- **Chapter 6**: Summary and next steps.

2.0 Planning Policy and Best Practice

2.1 This section outlines the key national, regional and local transport policy that is pertinent to the development of the BFGV Masterplan Framework.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

2.2 The latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This replaces the previous version of the NPPF which was published in December 2023.

2.3 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.4 With regards to promoting sustainable transport, Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve:

a) making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities;

b) ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places;

c) understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;

d) realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;

e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and

f) identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.

2.5 When considering development proposals, Paragraph 115 of the revised NPPF states that in assessing applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;

- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;

- the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code 48;

- any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

2.6 Paragraph 116 goes on to state that "Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios".

2.7 Paragraph 117 states that applications for development should:

- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

- address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;

- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;

- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles;

- be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

PPG: Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statement in Decision-Taking

2.8 In March 2014, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government in conjunction with the DfT, released advice on when transport assessments and transport statements are required, what they should contain (which is intended to assist stakeholders in determining whether an assessment may be required) and, if so, what the level and scope of that assessment should be.

2.9 The advice reflects current Government policy promoting a shift from the 'predict and provide' approach to transport planning to one more focused on sustainability.

2.10 The document focuses on encouraging environmental sustainability, managing the existing network, and mitigating the residual impacts of traffic from the development proposals.

2.11 The guidance sets out that Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements can positively contribute to:

- Encouraging sustainable travel;

- Lessening traffic generation and its detrimental impacts;
- Reducing carbon emissions and climate impacts;
- Creating accessible, connected, inclusive communities;
- Improving health outcomes and quality of life;
- Improving road safety; and,
- Reducing the need for new development to increase existing road capacity or provide new roads.

2.12 These documents support national planning policy which sets out that planning should actively manage patterns of growth in order to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain

2.13 In July 2021 the Government outlined their approach for decarbonising the Transport network A key thread is the recognition that:

> "*We cannot pile ever more cars, delivery vans and taxis on to the same congested urban roads'*

2.14 With the report stating that:

> *"As we build back better from the pandemic, it will be essential to avoid a car-led recovery."*

2.15 The report includes a commitment to embed transport decarbonisation principles in spatial planning and across transport policymaking.

2.16 In line with the approach set out, the commitment states that:

> *''We need to move away from transport planning based on predicting future demand to provide capacity ('predict and provide') to planning that sets an outcome communities want to achieve and provides the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes (sometimes referred to as 'vision and validate'*)."

Vision & Validate / Vision Led

Traditionally, the planning and design of transport infrastructure to support developments was focussed on a model of '*Predict and Provide*'. This approach effectively predicts how people travel and provides the infrastructure to support it, which, ultimately focuses on providing infrastructure and space for cars.

The '*Vision and Validate'* approach represents an active, deliberate, and policy-driven method of transport planning. Rather than simply forecasting demand and building infrastructure to meet it (as was the traditional method of transport planning), the *Vision and Validate* model focuses on making decisions about the transport system based on societal goals, values, and priorities and then providing infrastructure or services that support those decisions.

Instead of just increasing infrastructure to meet demand, the approach involves shaping demand, encouraging sustainable modes of transport, and optimising existing infrastructure.

The *Vision and Validate* model also better integrates land use and transport planning, considering how the two interact, and also is more responsive to changing transport trends (e.g., growth in working from home, shared mobility, electric vehicles).

Active Travel England Toolkits

2.17 Active Travel England (ATE) is the executive agency of the Department for Transport that is responsible for active travel in England.

2.18 From the 1st June 2023, ATE officially became a statutory consultee on all planning applications for developments equal to or exceeding 150 housing units, 7,500 m^2 of floorspace or an area of 5 hectares.

2.19 ATE is aiming to increase the number of local journeys being walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030 by:

- "investing in and improving standards for active travel schemes across England;
- integrating active travel in the planning and development system;
- focusing on inclusivity and accessibility and giving people from all walks of life the opportunity to try active travel."

2.20 ATE has a suite of toolkits and guidance to assist with active travel planning and design for councils and private developers can use to ensure future developments can support well thought out design to support sustainable travel.

National Highways Guidance: Planning for the future, a guide to working with National Highways on planning matters

2.21 In October 2023, National Highways issued new guidance to set out the new approach to the planning of development. The guide is aimed at anyone involved in development proposals that may result in impacts on the Strategic Road Network (SRN), including development promoters and their consultants, strategic policy-making authorities, local highway authorities, sub-national transport bodies, local enterprise partnerships, and community groups.

2.22 The guidance sets out National Highways' proactive approach to planning, and sets out their commitment to six values:

- Engage early;
- Work openly;
- Share evidence;
- Share knowledge and experience;
- Work collaboratively; and
- Maintain safety.

2.23 The guidance acknowledges that early planning for sustainable modes can influence travel choices:

> *"28. New development should be facilitating a reduction in the need to travel by private car and focused on locations that are or can be made sustainable. Developments in the right places and served by the right sustainable infrastructure…*
>
> *29. Where developments are located, how they are designed and how well delivery and public transport services are integrated has a huge impact on people's mode of travel for short journeys…"*

2.24 The guidance also recognises the benefits of the 'vision and validate' approach to planning through being vision-led and accommodating uncertainty through scenario testing.

2.25 The guidance sets out the vision-led approach as follows:

> "*1. Establish a vision - understand the relevant national and local policy context; identify the drivers of change/key external factors acting on the plan or proposed development; set-out a place-based vision statement with associated outcomes that supports the principles of sustainable development.*
>
> *2. Develop scenarios - develop plausible future scenarios that help to understand the uncertainties that may impact on the ability to deliver the vision.*
>
> *3. Generate options – generate, sift and prioritise options that can help achieve the vision.*

4. *Test options – test how the prioritised options perform in each of the plausible future scenarios (for example, is every option effective in all scenarios or are some less resilient and have some significant risks?).*

5. *Produce a vision strategy – produce a strategy for realising the vision that accounts for the identified uncertainty and includes a 'monitor and manage' approach to identify and address when the vision is unlikely to be achieved.* "

Town and Country Planning Association Guide 3: Design and Masterplanning (December 2017)

2.26 The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) developed the Garden Towns guidelines. The guidelines set out urban design principles to support new development.

2.27 The guidelines set out the following with regard to movement and connectivity:

> "*A good range of infrastructure is essential for new Garden Cities – not least a transport network that makes walking, cycling and public transport the most attractive modes…The masterplan must integrate the Garden City with strategic movement corridors and public transport services so that it is well connected to surrounding settlements and facilities.*
>
> *A Garden City's design must enable at least 50% of trips originating in the Garden City to be made by non-car means, with a goal to increase this over time to at least 60%... Public transport nodes and neighbourhood facilities should be a short walk (no more than 10 minutes) away from every home. Homes should be within 800 metres of schools for children under the age of 11.*"

DfT Road Investment Strategy 2 (2020-2025)

2.28 The DfT Road Investment Strategy (RIS) is a national investment plan for the Strategic Road Network (SRN) that is made up of England's motorways and major A-roads. The Road Investment Strategy determines the funding and projects for National Highways to improve, maintain, and enhance the network.

2.29 The aims of the RIS are as follows:

- Improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.
- Make the SRN safer, with a goal of reducing deaths and serious injuries.
- Improve the environment around the SRN, including reducing noise pollution and mitigating the impact on biodiversity.
- Support economic growth by ensuring the SRN is a reliable and efficient transport network.

Regional Planning Policy

The Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)

2.30 The Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) is a plan that covers all of the Merseyside area, that includes St Helens and was published in 2011.

2.31 LTP3 outlines long-term transport strategies for the region, including bus services, rail infrastructure, and other transport initiatives. For example, LTP3 included plans for the St Helens Central to St Helens Junction reinstatement. The current version of LTP3 is two separate documents, and the plan aims to improve transport and travel choices in the region.

2.32 The main aim of the LTP3 document is to enhance the borough's transport infrastructure and services and ultimately making it a more accessible and sustainable place to live and work by improving public transport connectivity whilst promoting and supporting active travel options like walking and cycling in order to encourage sustainable transportation choices.

Local Transport Plan (LTP4)

2.33 The Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) for St Helens is a new, developing plan being implemented in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. This plan will replace the existing LTP and Combined Authority Transport Plan, aiming to improve the borough's transport network and address emerging issues like decarbonization and the shift towards active travel.

2.34 St Helens is working with the LCRCA to develop and implement the LTP4, ensuring a coordinated approach to transport planning across the region. The LTP4 addresses key challenges and opportunities, including decarbonizing the transport system, promoting active travel, and improving the quality of public transport options.

2.35 The LTP4 will build upon the policies outlined in the St Helens Borough Council Local Plan, ensuring a cohesive approach to planning for transport and development and will prioritise walking and cycling, promoting active lifestyles and reducing reliance on private car.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – Bus Reform

2.36 The LCRCA continues to progress bus reform ambitions with franchising considered to offer the best opportunity for the Combined Authority to deliver on its ambitions for quick and reliable journeys, a comprehensive integrated bus network, simpler ticketing, great value fares and an emission free fleet.

2.37 Franchising is the region’s stated future model for running the bus network and services as announced in October 2023, allowing the LCRCA to specify the bus network, set fares and control fare policy.

2.38 The Combined Authority will deliver a franchised bus service for the region that will allow greater local control over fares, routes and timetables, with services operated in the interests of passengers and surplus profit reinvested into improving the network.

2.39 A fully franchised system is expected to be in place across the whole of the city region by the end of 2028.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – Local Journeys Strategy

2.40 The LCRCA strategy for local journeys is a framework document for guiding the development of services and infrastructure that support sustainable short trips across the Liverpool City Region. The document is underpinned by a vision for action and a delivery framework based on strong evidence and will assist in delivering against the aspirations for economic growth by supporting the use of low carbon modes and improving access to jobs and services.

2.41 The local journeys strategy is structured in three key parts, as follows:

1. Part 1 introduces the local journeys strategy and communicates the aspiration to maximise the potential for sustainable travel choices with respect to local journeys. Part 1 also reviews national and local evidence to advocate investment and provides the supporting policy framework.

2. Part 2 defines the vision and aspirations for local journeys in the city region, outlining a series of clear objectives to assist in guiding the regions actions and uses best practice benchmarks.

3. Part 3 presents the principles in action. Part 3 sets out what the vision is looking to seek to deliver different types of places in the city region, ranging from busy town centres to stable residential communities and new developments whilst highlighting the principles for effective delivery of the strategy.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – Long Term Rail Strategy

2.42 The Long Term Rail Strategy has been developed with the aim of ensuring that the rail network meets Liverpool City Region's needs over the next 30 years and beyond. Its aim is to present a clear vision for the development of the network and articulate the important role rail can play in the economic development of Liverpool City Region, to maximise its contribution to the wider UK economy and act as a catalyst for growth.

2.43 The Liverpool City Region Long Term Rail Strategy presents a bold vision to equip the City Region with a modern railway, providing a necessary step change in terms of quality, accessibility and speed. In acknowledging the huge asset to Liverpool City Region that the rail network already provides, the Strategy provides a pathway that ensures that projected levels of future demand are accommodated and outlines how latent demand can be opened up to the railway by accessing untapped markets and reducing the overall impact of car travel on the region's roads while supporting economic growth.

2.44 The Strategy will remain under regular review to ensure it stays relevant to the physical, policy and economic context of not only the City Region itself, but the wider north of England and the UK as a whole.

Local Planning Policy

St Helens Together: Our Borough Strategy 2021-2030

2.45 The Borough Strategy 2021-2030 identifies six key strategic priorities for the Council and the borough and sets out how to achieve better results for communities by working together with

residents and partners while supporting each other. It intends to build a fairer and more sustainable St Helens for the benefit of future generations. The six key priorities are:

1) *Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life;*
2) *Promote good health, independence and care across our communities;*
3) *Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all;*
4) *Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy;*
5) *Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture;*
6) *Be a responsible council.*

2.46 Priority 5 strives for a "better, healthier and more sustainable" St Helens.

2.47 It recognises there are challenges,

> "*including adapting to climate change, linking communities to services and employment, ensuring good access to open space and increasing the number of people choosing active travel and public transport*", but also acknowledges that "*for the borough to remain a great place to live, work in and visit, [it] must strive to deliver a green recovery…[and] to achieve zero-carbon target by 2040*".

2.48 BFGV will support the borough's sustainability goals by ensuring that development is done sustainably with reduced dependency on the private car for accessibility and greater uptake of more sustainable transport modes.

St Helens Borough Local Plan Up to 2037: A balanced plan for a better future (July 2022)

2.49 The St Helens Local Plan was adopted in July 2022. The Plan sets out the framework for growth and development in the Borough, focused around the following key strategic aims:

1) Supporting regeneration and balanced growth;
2) Ensuring quality development;
3) Promoting sustainable transport;
4) Meeting housing needs;
5) Ensuring a strong and sustainable economy;
6) Safeguarding and enhancing quality of life; and
7) Meeting resource and infrastructure needs.

2.50 BFGV is included in the Local Plan as a significant housing allocation (allocation reference: 4HA). It is the largest housing allocation not only in the Local Plan, but in the Liverpool City Region. The site covers circa 132.86 ha comprising of 15 land parcels, with the ability to

provide approximately 3,000 dwellings and associated social infrastructure (such as a new primary school, local retail centre and potentially health facilities).

2.51 The Local Plan identifies the site as one of substantial scale that can provide the opportunity for a healthy, safe, quiet, clean, resilient, low carbon, vibrant community, with good air quality and green spaces.

2.52 The site was released from Green Belt for the purposes of allocating the site for residential development in the Plan. The Green Belt Review is considered in the next section of this report, but in summary, the site's removal from the Green Belt and its allocation in the Local Plan reflects that the site provides a major strategic opportunity to provide housing within the Borough.

The Green Belt Review (2018) Stage 2B Proformas

2.53 Prior to the Local Plan, the Green Belt Review identified the land parcel as GBP_074 – Land west of Neills Road, and south of Bold, north of Gorsey Lane (now referenced as housing allocation 4HA in the Local Plan).

2.54 At the time, the Green Belt Review highlighted the following in transport terms:

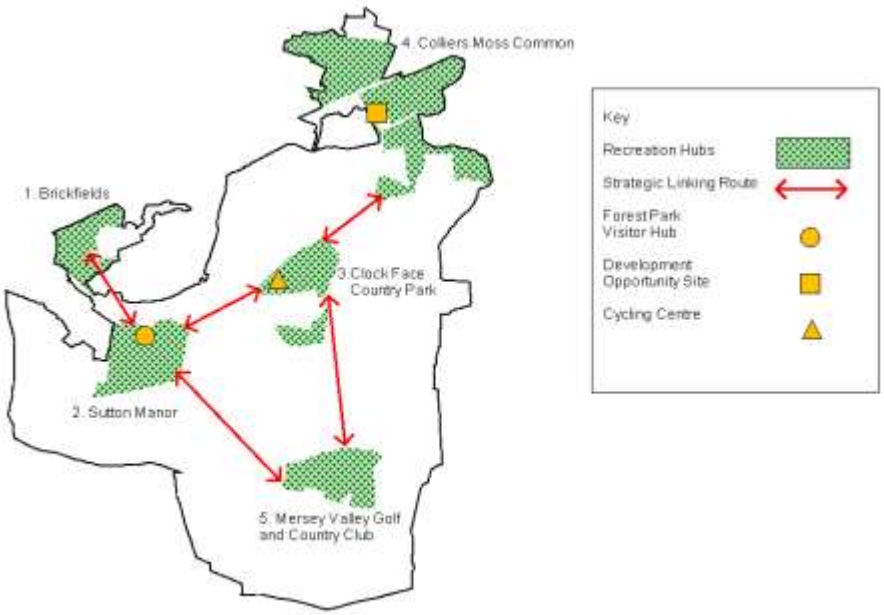
- The northern parts of the parcel are within 800m of Sutton (as the closest existing local centre) and St Helens Junction rail station, therefore within a short walk or cycle.
- Bus stops on roads surrounding the site provide a regular frequency of services to St Helens.
- The scale of the site would lend itself to having its own supporting local or district centre.
- There is a need for at least 2 vehicular accesses to serve future development, and suggested these could be provided off Neills Road and the B5204 (potentially requiring a right-turn ghost island).It also considered there is the opportunity to provide a link road.
- There were no known traffic capacity issues in the vicinity of the site at the time.

2.55 The Review concluded that the site has 'good' development potential.

Bold Forest Area Action Plan (Adopted 2017)

2.56 BFGV lies within the Bold Forest Area, which comprises the five key green spaces of Brickfields, Sutton Manor, Clockface Country Park, Colliers Moss Common, and Mersey Valley Golf and Country Club as shown in **Figure 2.1** below.

Figure 2.1: Strategic Infrastructure Plan of Bold Forest Park (*source: Bold Forest Area Action Plan, Adopted 2017*)



2.57 In 2017, the Bold Forest Area Action Plan was developed to create a vision for the area, of:

> *"a thriving diverse economy, providing a hub for family leisure and adventure sport. The natural environment and cultural environment will be rich and diverse. A network of open spaces and routes accessible to all connects the Forest Park to the wider countryside and links to our local communities."*

2.58 Forming part of the St Helens Local Plan, the Action Plan is a statutory document that sets out the detailed policies and actions needed to develop and sustain the Forest Park.

2.59 The Action Plan recognises that some land may be required to meet objectives beyond outdoor leisure and recreation, to meet the Borough's needs for housing and employment.

2.60 It states that: *"where [development] does occur, the challenge will be to ensure the design and layout of development is fully integrated with the Forest Park and that development fully contributes to the Park's aims and objectives."*

2.61 The Action Plan highlights that the linkages between the five green spaces are currently limited and need strengthening, in part, by adapting the Public Rights of Way network in the area.

2.62 Pertinent to the BFGV site is Clock Face Country Park, which is effectively on the doorstep, located immediately to the south. It has the potential to provide future residents with direct access to a beautiful green space within easy walking and cycling distance.

2.63 Future connections to the Country Park will need to be explored through the masterplanning process, but the existing PRoW network through the BFGV site already provides a significant opportunity to establish those linkages.

Bold Forest Garden Suburb Transport Review (WSP 2019)

2.64 In 2019, as part of the supporting evidence for the Local Plan, consultants WSP were commissioned to carry out a transport review of the proposed BFGV site (known then as Bold Forest Garden Suburb, "BFGS").

2.65 The transport review consisted of two key elements:

- *"The development of a spreadsheet-based assessment tool to examine the likely trip generation, distribution and assignment on the local highway network, based on a core and alternative scenario; and*
- *The preparation of a study report setting out the findings of a site visit and a review of local transport infrastructure, identifying likely masterplanning design requirements and identifying strategic network improvements."*

2.66 The Review highlighted how the location of BFGV provides an opportunity to establish sustainable travel behaviours for new residents from day one through the masterplanning process, ensuring local connectivity to employment within the Borough and over the border in Warrington, such as Omega. Whilst also not forgetting the area also benefits from strategic connectivity in terms of rail and road, lying between two major cities of Liverpool and Manchester.

2.67 The review identified some opportunities for improvements as BFGV comes forward:

- Improvements to Helena's Road/Bold Road junction (signalisation with introduction of pedestrian and cycle facilities);
- Reduction in speed limit on Bold Road (in the vicinity of Neill's Road) from 40 mph to 30 mph or 20 mph;
- New junction at Bold Road / Neill's Road to increase capacity and improve 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 provide pedestrian crossing facilities
- Improvements to Marshalls Cross Road / Mill Lane / Clock Face Road / Chester Lane junction (to provide pedestrian and cycle facilities).
- Introduction of segregated cycle lanes and pedestrian footpaths throughout the proposed development site and surrounding areas;
- Improvements to the existing public footpath that runs directly through the proposed development 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's Road by creating a new link within BFGV and increasing frequency of bus services, particularly to St Helens Junction.
- A new bus route looping between the town centre, Lea Green and St Helens Junction and BFGV to increase frequency.

2.68 These opportunities will be considered in more detail later in this report.

St Helens Borough Council 'Transport and Travel' Supplementary Planning Document (April 2024)

2.69 The Transport and Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), builds upon policies set out in the Local Plan, to provide consistent guidance on access and transport requirements for new developments and re-developments. It supersedes the 'Ensuring a Choice of Travel' (2010) SPD.

2.70 The SPD states it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the Borough, with the following overarching objectives for new developments and re-developments:

1) *"A well-designed development should be easy to get to and move through, making the most of and enhancing existing or proposed facilities in the area;*

2) *The streetscape, urban form and function should be designed in an integrated way to ensure that environments prioritise people ahead of car use;*

3) *Highway design should integrate cars into the public realm without affecting its quality;*

4) *The Modal Hierarchy should be adhered to, with sustainable travel prioritised to ensure car dependency does not become the norm; and*

5) *The level of parking proposed (including modes other than private car) should be dependent upon the type of development and location."*

2.71 In July 2019, St Helens Borough Council voted unanimously to declare a Climate Emergency. The SPD recognises the need for change if the Borough is to meet its highly challenging target of carbon neutrality ("net zero") by 2040.

2.72 The SPD notes that a revised approach to the planning and assessment of transport infrastructure is needed to support the shift to a more sustainable, net-zero future, and instead of '*Predict and Provide'*, a '*Decide and Provide*' (also referred to as '*Vision and Validate*') is a more holistic approach.

In the '*Decide and Provide*' approach, through early masterplanning, it is possible to consider all transport modes, to minimise reliance on the private car. This approach will be used to support the development of the BFGV masterplan and is considered in more detail later in this report.

Sutton Oak Line

2.73 The council is seeking support from the LCRCA to further fund and develop travel options to bring a disused railway line that runs between St Helens Central and St Helens Junction. The Sutton Oak line is regarded as key to improve connectivity in the borough and surrounding areas, allowing passengers to travel from St Helens Central to Newton-le-Willows and even Manchester which currently isn't possible.

2.74 The council is seeking support from the LCRCA to further fund and develop the travel options to bring this closed transport corridor, which is safeguarded through planning policy, back into appropriate and sustainable use.

Parking standards

2.75 Chapter 9 of the Transport and Travel' (SPD) sets out the relevant parking standards for new developments. Whilst BFGV site can currently be classed as rural (zone D in the parking standards), the intention to provide a new village with access to local facilities, and therefore it is proposed that the appropriate standards will be those for villages and parishes (zone C), which will require fewer parking spaces to be provided in line with reducing dependence on the private car.

2.76 A summary of the appropriate standards is shown in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1 St Helens Parking Standards (Zone C: Villages and Parishes)

	Vehicles	Blue Badge	Bicycles	Motorcycles	EV
Dwelling Houses	1 space per 1 bed dwelling 2 spaces per two & three bed dwellings 3 spaces per four bed dwelling and greater	6% of capacity or 3 spaces, whichever is greater. Further considerations to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis	2 per dwelling (allocated) 1 additional space required for each bed above 3	None	1 charge point per car parking space
Dwelling Flats and Apartments	1.5 spaces per dwelling		1 secure space per flat	None	

Minimum Accessibility Requirements

2.77 Chapter 7 of the SPD also sets out the minimum accessibility requirements for new developments with a checklist of criteria (in Appendix A of the SPD) to ensure that all developments comply with the minimum standard.

2.78 This covers accessibility by each mode, with reference to:

- safety,
- location,
- internal layout,
- external layout,
- links to the network,
- cycle parking,
- cyclist facilities,
- access to and frequency of public transport (bus and rail), and
- vehicle circulation and parking.

2.79 The future masterplan will be produced in line with the relevant standards and guidance set out in the SPD.

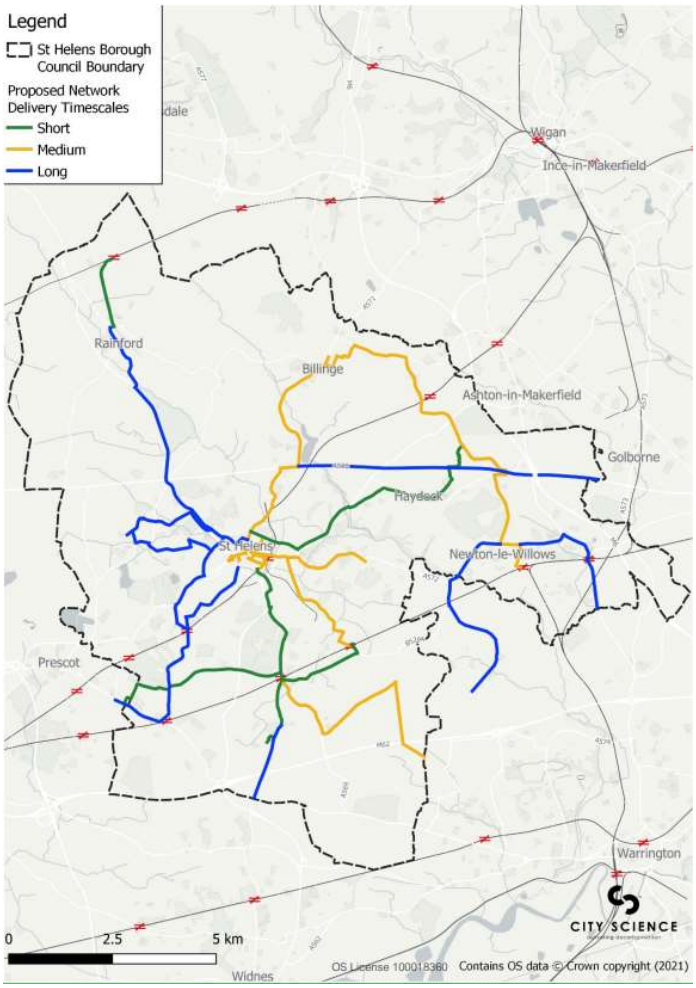
St Helens Borough Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

2.80 The St Helens Borough Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) outlines a 10-year strategy to improve walking and cycling infrastructure, making it safer, more comfortable, and appealing. Developed with thorough research and public consultation, the plan prioritises projects to enhance road safety, accessibility, and environmental sustainability. It focuses on creating and upgrading routes to better connect residents, workers, and visitors to key destinations, such as schools and workplaces, while addressing barriers to active travel.

2.81 The LCWIP was developed to promote walking, cycling, and wheeling for everyday journeys, improving access to key destinations and connecting communities across the borough and the wider Liverpool City Region. Its objectives include fostering healthy lifestyles, enhancing inclusivity, supporting local economic growth, and achieving net-zero carbon goals by 2040.

2.82 The LCWIP identifies schemes to be delivered in the short, medium and long-term as shown in **Figure 2.2**.

Figure 2.2: St Helens LCWIP Schemes (*source: St Helens Borough Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)*)



2.83 The LCWIP schemes that are pertinent to BFGV are:

- Link between St Helens Junction and Lea Green rail station, Clockface and onwards to Whiston Hospital (short-term);
- Link between St Helens Junction and St Helens Central rail station and St Helens town centre (medium-term); and
- Link between Lea Green rail station and Omega Business Park via Gorsey Lane (medium-term).

2.84 The masterplan for BFGV will explore connections through the site to these LCWIP schemes to provide new residents with the choice to travel sustainably to key employment destinations of St Helens Hospital, St Helens town centre and Omega, but also to allow for onward travel from St Helens Junction and St Helens Central as part of a multi-modal journey.

St Helens Borough Local Plan - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (October 2020)

2.85 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is a supporting document to the St Helens Borough Local Plan and covers the Plan period 2020 to 2035. The IDP sets out what level of new or improved infrastructure will be required to deliver the growth proposed in the St Helens

Borough Local Plan. It is an essential element in ensuring that the Local Plan is robust and deliverable.

2.86 The IDP focuses on infrastructure the Local Plan can help facilitate, improve or upgrade to help ensure that new development and infrastructure are planned for and delivered in a timely and co-ordinated manner. It is important to note that infrastructure planning is an iterative process and the precise nature of infrastructure needed to support future development is influenced by a range of factors and arrangements that change over time.

2.87 In relation to the Bold Forest Garden Suburb the plan identifies Bold as a key location for new development. As such the Council commissioned a transport study to understand how development supporting this level of development can broadly be delivered in terms of transport infrastructure requirements and impacts.

Summary

2.88 The planning framework for the BFGV Masterplan will incorporate national, regional, and local policies that emphasise sustainable transport and reduced car dependency.

2.89 National policy, such as the NPPF, advocate for sustainable transport, ensuring access, and mitigating transport impacts through developments.

2.90 Transport planning has shifted from a ‘predict and provide’ model to a ‘vision and validate; or vision-led approach, focusing on outcomes such as reduced private car use and increased active travel.

2.91 The BFGV masterplan will align with policies such as the Department for Transport’s decarbonisation strategy and Active Travel England’s goals to increase walking, cycling, and public transport.

2.92 At the local level, St Helens Borough’s sustainability goals, including a zero-carbon target by 2040, will shape the BFGV transport and mobility strategy. The site’s integration with the Bold Forest Area will ensure the site is well-connected to green spaces via sustainable transport links and PRoW.

2.93 The St Helens Borough Council’s Transport and Travel SPD emphasises the need for designs that prioritise people over cars and promote sustainable travel. Parking standards for BFGV will align with these principles, requiring fewer spaces to reduce car dependency and support a greener future.

3.0 The Changing Transport Context

3.1 In addition to Planning Policy, the emerging transport context is also important when designing for new or expanded communities.

The Changing Transport Context

Carbon Emissions

3.2 In July 2019, St Helens Borough Council voted unanimously to declare a Climate Emergency in recognition that it is not possible to continue on the current trajectory if the Borough is to achieve the highly challenging target of carbon neutrality ("net zero") by 2040.

3.3 Designing developments that support reducing overall car usage is an important goal for reducing the transport sector's carbon emissions and its impact on climate change. By ensuring walking, cycling and public transport the best and most efficient method of getting around, sustainable modes can be a viable alternative to single-occupancy vehicle trips.

3.4 As part of the St Helens Borough Council Climate Action Plan proposals for significant reductions in the use of paper and plastics across the council; the creation of a Climate Action Working Group to lead on developing and implementing initiatives; the appointment of an accountable officer for overseeing and leading on climate change issues; and training for all councillors on the climate emergency.

3.5 Where car trips occur, these should be encouraged to be sustainable modes with new developments incorporating sufficient EV charging facilities for new residents to support the uptake of cleaner vehicles. St Helens Borough Council has adopted an electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategy setting out policies and an approach to supporting the delivery of an appropriate charging infrastructure across the borough.

Healthy Streets

3.6 A reduction in transport emissions can have significant benefits on air quality and noise disturbance for local residents, which in turn can reduce the negative health impacts of transport.

3.7 In addition, increasing the number of people who travel by active modes (walking, cycling and wheeling), can also have significant health benefits and improvements to the quality of life of local residents.

The Impacts of Working from Home

3.8 The use of the internet for working has accelerated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.9 Surveys undertaken by the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) of businesses and employees shows that hybrid working is here to stay with about 83% of organisations now having hybrid working in place.

3.10 More people hybrid working and working from home means residential areas are seeing a change in daily trip making for other purposes such as leisure trips during the day, rather than commuting trips in the traditional morning and evening peak hours.

The Rise in Online Shopping

3.11 The use of the internet for shopping has reduced the need for travel for individuals but has seen an increase in light van deliveries in local neighbourhoods with parcel deliveries occurring more frequently across the day.

3.12 New developments must be designed in a way that can accommodate this trend without negatively impacting local streets and consideration of mobility hubs that also have parcel pick-up and drop-off would support this trend.

Summary

3.13 In July 2019, St Helens Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency, acknowledging the need for carbon neutrality by 2040.

3.14 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. This approach will also improve air quality and reduce noise, benefiting residents' health.

3.15 Travel behaviour patterns have evolved over recent years. The rise of hybrid and remote working, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has changed commuting patterns and the growth of online shopping has reduced individual travel but increased local delivery traffic.

3.16 These trends will continue to evolve going forward, shaped by policy, technological advances and sustainable design, highlighting the need for a different, more forward-thinking and vision-led approach to designing BFGV.

4.0 Existing and Future Travel Behaviour

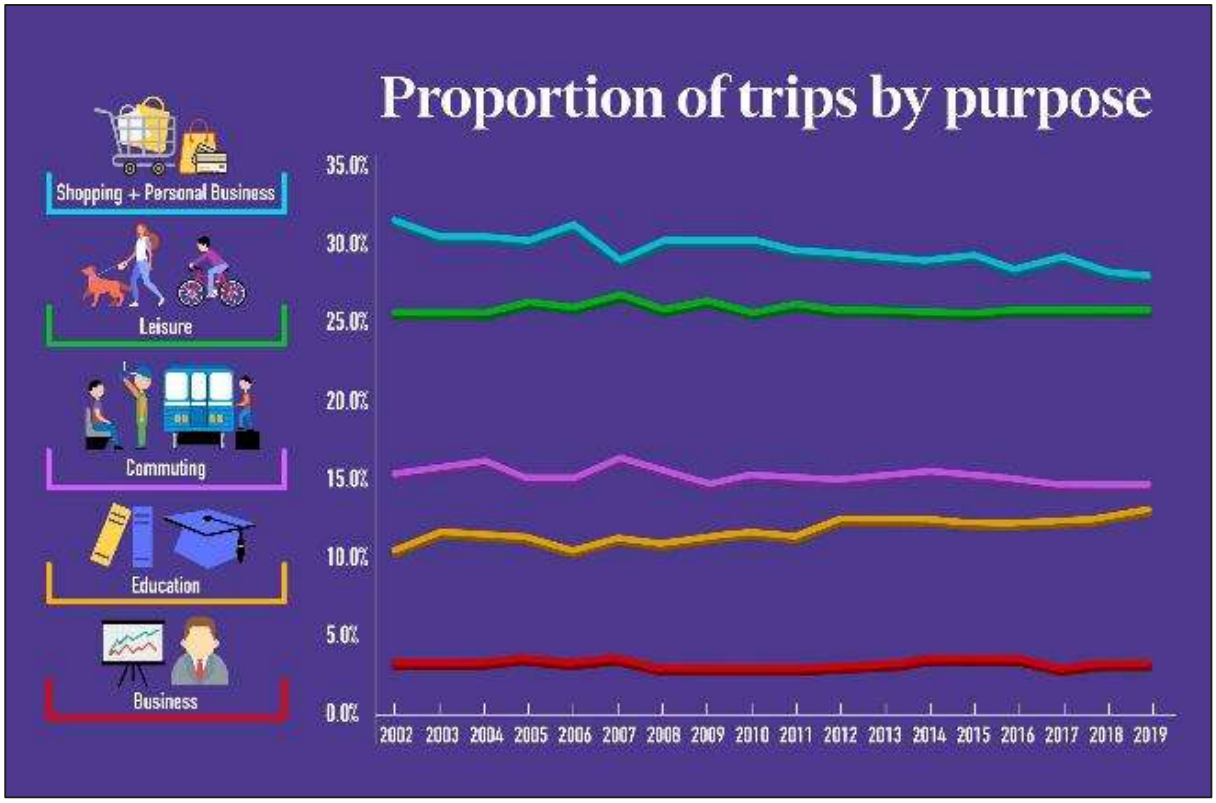
4.1 As set out in the previous chapter, travel behaviour patterns have evolved over recent years and will likely continue evolving. It is important for the development of the masterplan for BFGV to understand existing behaviour and how further uptake of sustainable modes can be supported through design.

Existing Travel Behaviour

Commuting

4.2 The reasons for gaining accessibility to a community are set out in **Figure 4.1**, based on NTS (National Travel Survey) data. The main reasons include leisure (including shopping) and education.

Figure 4.1 Journey Purpose Summary (NTS Data)



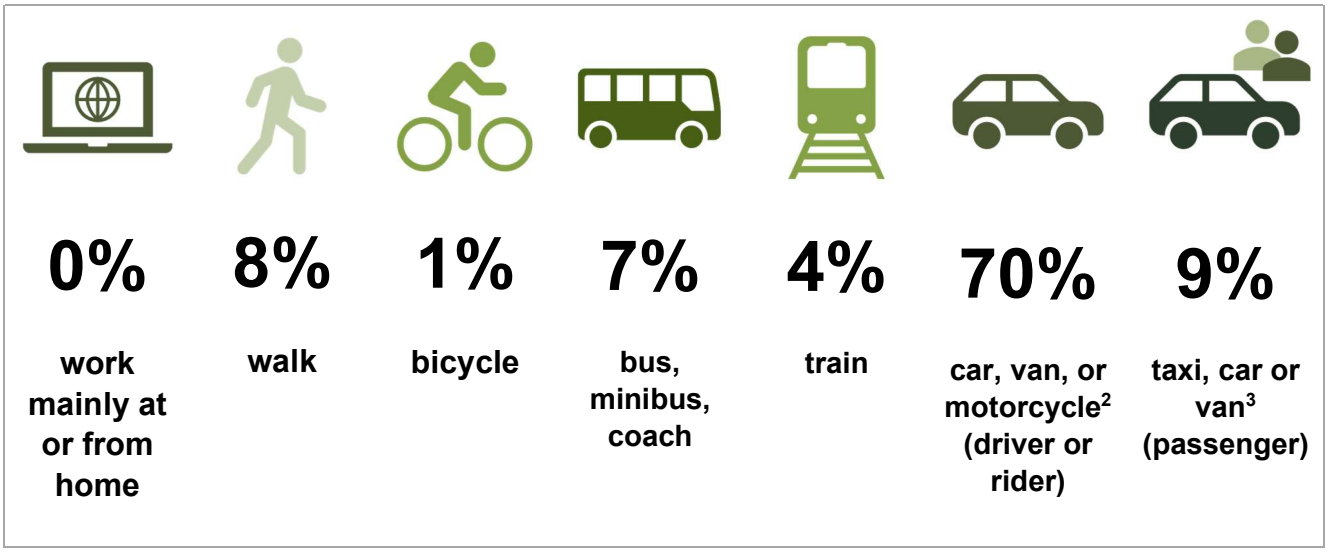
4.3 To understand the existing travel behaviour of nearby residents, data from the Census[1] has been analysed for the neighbouring area of Sutton Leach given it is currently more densely populated than Bold. It should be noted that 2011 Census Data has been provided below due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures influenced the data collected for topics like travel to work, impacting the 2021 data and its suitability for future planning. It is understood that are limitations of the 2011 dataset given the time since it was recorded and

[1] Census 2011 dataset *WU03EW - Location of usual residence and place of work by method of travel to work* for MSOA E02001425: St Helens 020 (Sutton Leach)

ever-changing travel patterns, however in this preliminary stage of the process it is considered that this dataset is the most suitable to utilise at this time.

4.4 Census data has been used to give an indication of the expected mode split for journeys to work by all modes based upon existing travel patterns in the local area. The existing mode split of nearby residents for journeys to work is outlined below in **Figure 4.**.

Figure 4.2 Existing Mode Share for Journeys to Work[1]



Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

4.5 As shown in **Figure 4.**, 69% of nearby residents travel to work by driving a car or van, or riding a motorcycle, with a further 9% travelling as a passenger in a taxi, car or van. Whilst approximately 11% travel by public transport (bus, minibus, coach or train) and 9% via active travel modes (walking or cycling).

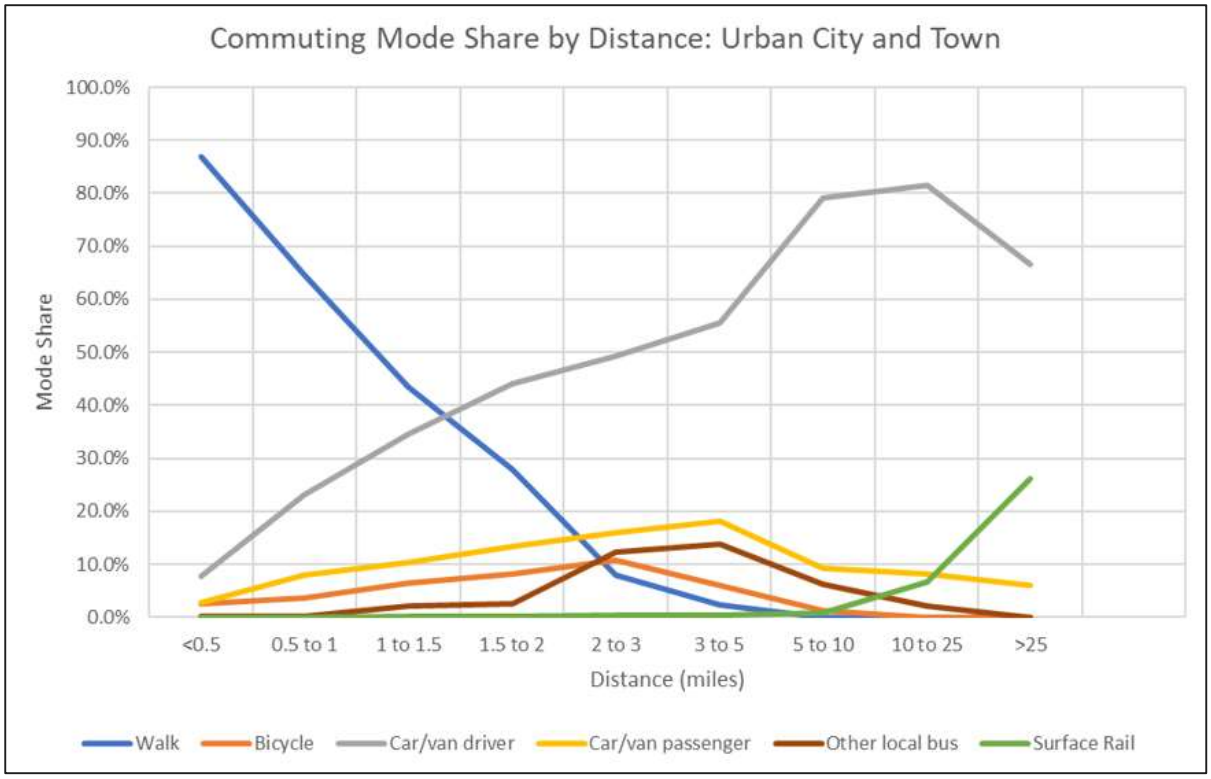
4.6 The data presented in **Figure 4.** was recorded before COVID-19 pandemic which saw a rise in working from home trends. Although it is understood that working from home levels have reduced since lockdown restrictions were lifted, current levels are still greater than pre-pandemic levels and therefore it is likely that more recent data would show an increased proportion of people who 'work at or mainly from home' with a corresponding reduction in the other modes of travel.

4.7 Further to the above, NTS data for trips by distance and how this affects the propensity to walk/cycle/drive for different journey purposes has been analysed. Based on the data available the 'Urban City and Town' dataset was utilised based on the travel behaviour characteristics most comparable to the location of the development site. For the purposes of commuting **Figure 4.3** indicates the NTS mode share by distance for commuting purposes.

[2] 69% drive a car or van, 1% ride a motorcycle

[3] 8% travel as a passenger in a car or van, 1% travel as a passenger in a taxi

Figure 4.3 Mode Share by distance for commuting purposes



4.8 As shown within **Figure 4.3**, the propensity to walk to a workplace when it lies within 0-1.5 miles of a resident's home is greater than that of car/van driver trips. Due to the location of the development site with good access to employment there is a real opportunity to promote local living and reduce the impact of the development on the existing network.

4.9 Employment opportunities within the local area will provide opportunities for future residents to travel sustainably for work by active travel means or as part of a multi-modal trip (cycle / rail). In addition, and as a result of the increased proportion of people working at home leading to a reduction in car/van driver travel, the links / connections outlined as part of masterplanning exercise will be key to promote a move away from designing for single-occupancy car journeys.

4.10 By introducing placemaking interventions that are aligned to the masterplan vision, this will avoid unnecessary private car trips by offering residents the freedom to fulfil many daily activities locally, either physically or remotely.

Education

4.11 For the purposes of education **Figures 4.4 and 4.5** indicate the NTS mode share by distance for Primary School and Secondary School purposes, respectively.

Figure 4.4 Mode Share by distance for Primary School

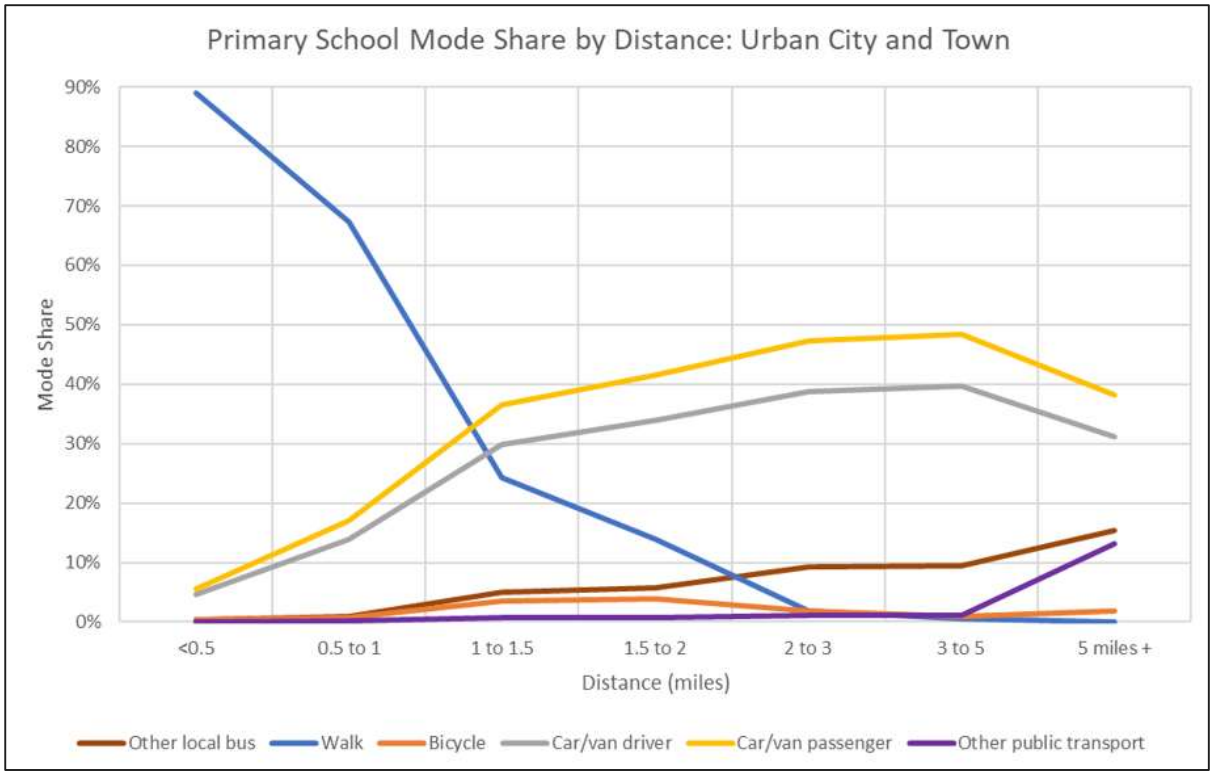
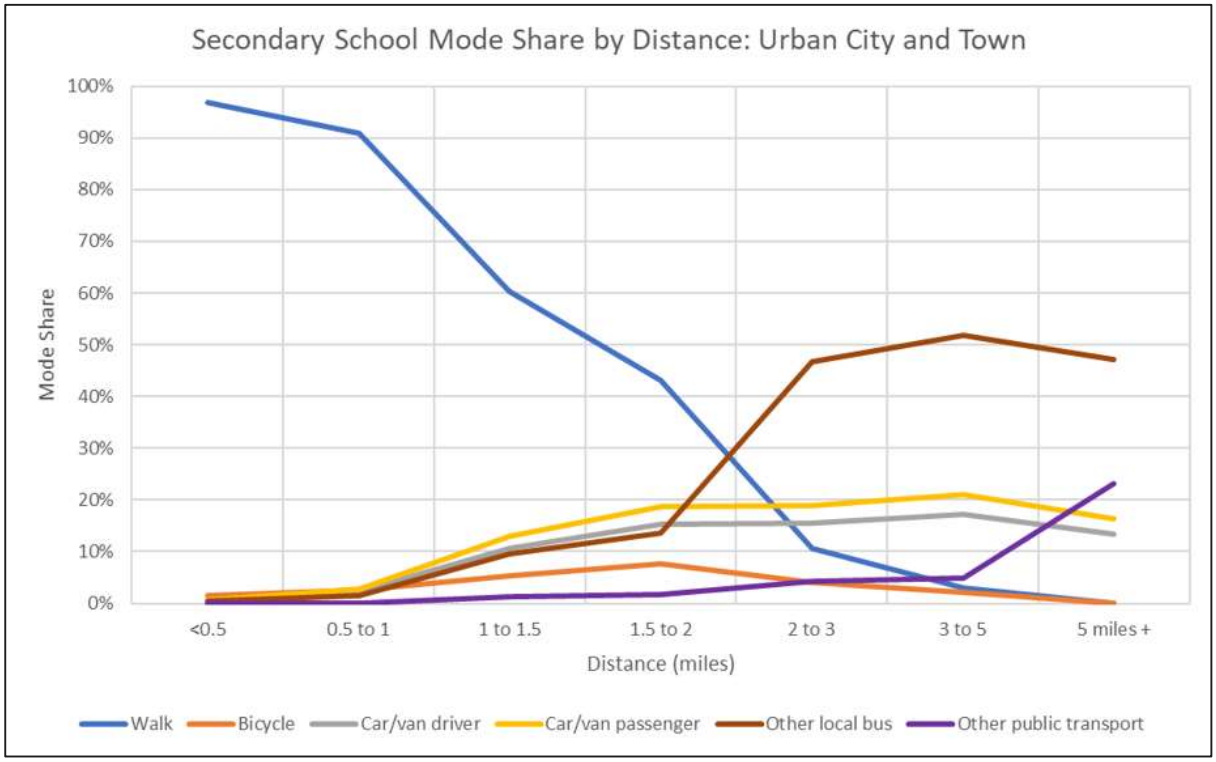


Figure 4.5 Mode Share by distance for Secondary School



4.12 As shown above, given the location of the site and its proximity to a number of existing primary and secondary schools there is a real opportunity to promote local living. The masterplan also has the opportunity to promote active travel for new residents, given that walking is the leading

method of travel for all school trips within 1 mile for primary school journeys and within 2 miles for secondary school journeys based on NTS data.

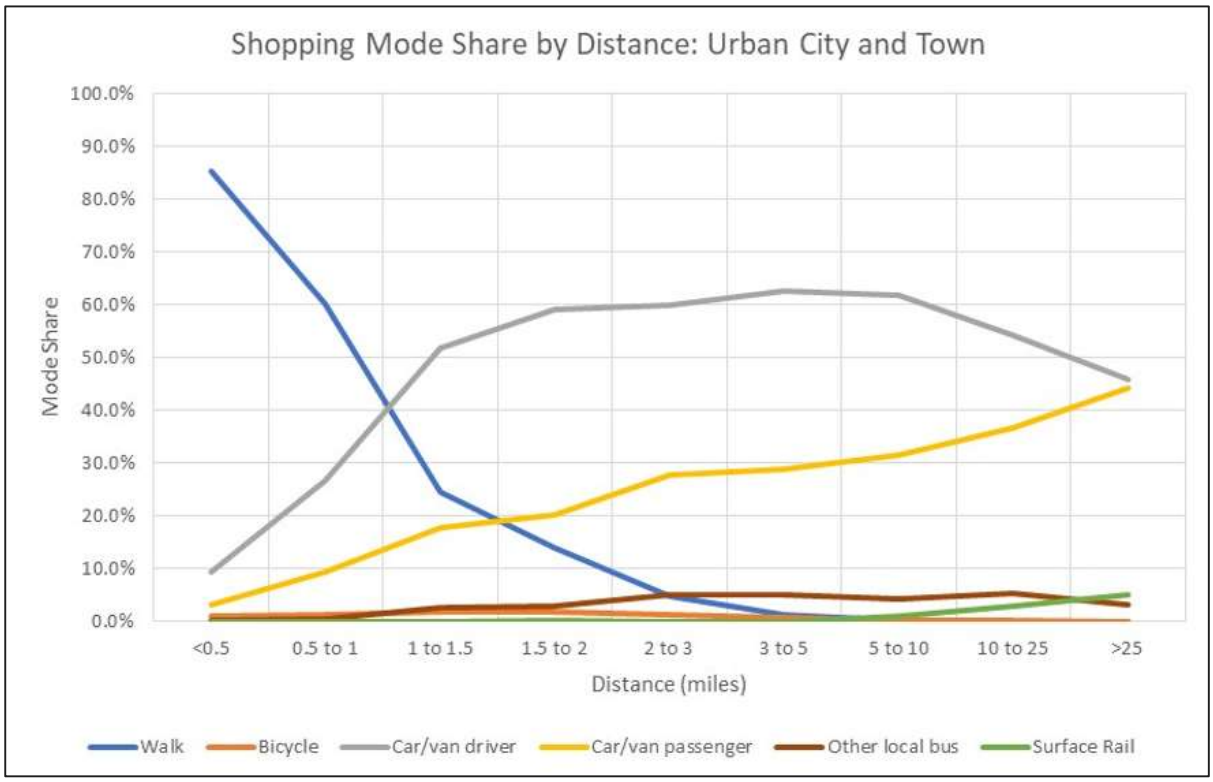
4.13 Discussions regarding the potential introduction of a primary school within the site will be explored as part of the scheme, that will also promote active travel for future residents by internalising education-based trips and thus generating less vehicular trips on the existing highway network, promoting health and reducing the impact of the proposed development.

4.14 By prioritising investment in the highest forms of accessibility as part of the masterplan this can avoid the need to increase highways capacity to promote internal trips and active travel, therefore reducing the need to travel off site for many purposes.

Retail & Leisure

4.15 For the purposes of retail and leisure **Figure 4.6** indicates the NTS mode share by distance for shopping purposes.

Figure 4.6 Mode Share by distance for shopping

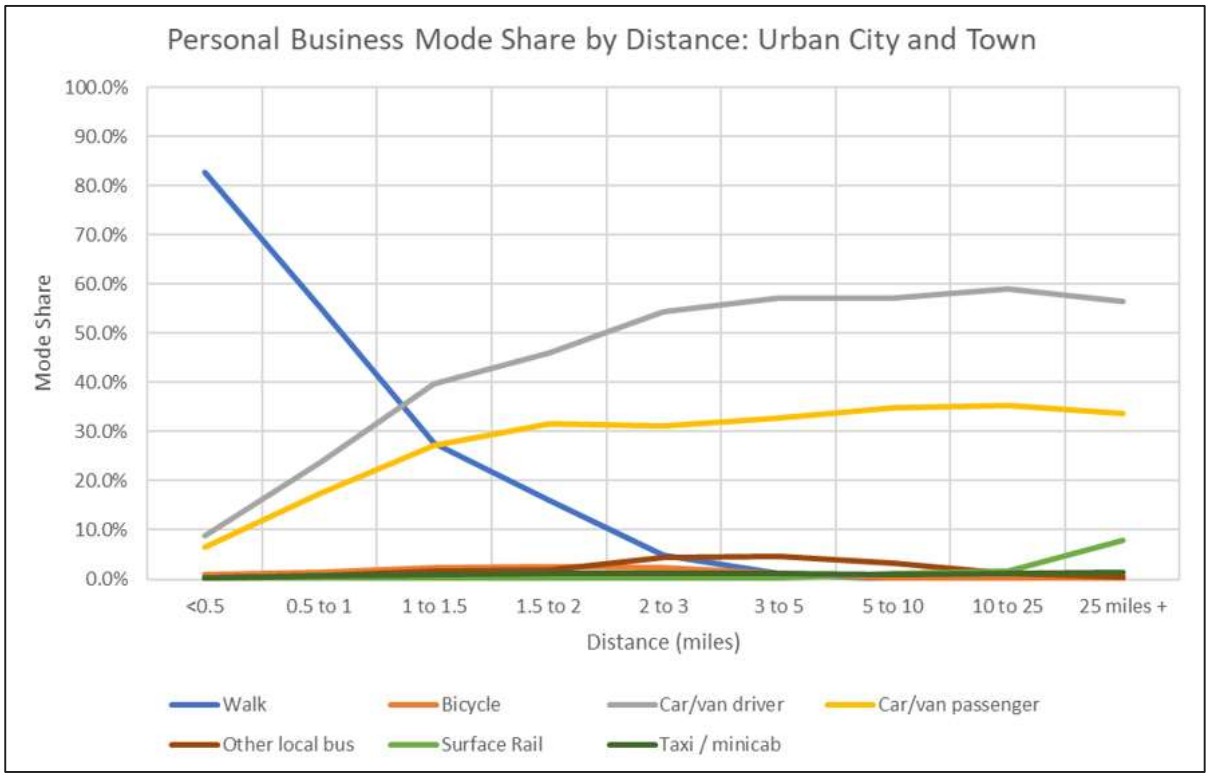


4.16 Given there are various existing shopping opportunities in the vicinity of the site that can serve the needs of new residents, future links connecting the site to the existing area proposed as part of the masterplan design will be key. At present, in terms of food shopping there are a number of local convenience stores (Go Local – Clock Face Road (0.45km), Premier – Gartons Lane (1.2km), MNS Late Shop – Leach Lane (1km) and the New Bold Convenience Store – Travers Entry (0.75km), amongst others) as well as Aldi Supermarket on Clock Face Road (1.4km) that could be utilised by the future development. In addition, given the growing prevalence of online shopping and the potential for internalised retail amenities within the site, it is considered that there is a real opportunity to promote local living.

4.17 By introducing placemaking interventions that are aligned to the masterplan vision, this will avoid unnecessary private car trips by offering residents the freedom to fulfil many daily activities locally, either physically or remotely.

4.18 For the purposes of retail and leisure **Figure 4.7** indicates the NTS mode share by distance for personal business purposes.

Figure 4.7 Mode Share by distance for personal business



4.19 There are various amenities surrounding the site that can serve the needs of new residents and ensure the site feels part of the existing local community. These amenities include community centres, a library, a park, public houses, a place of worship, a sports centre, a gym and a hospital.

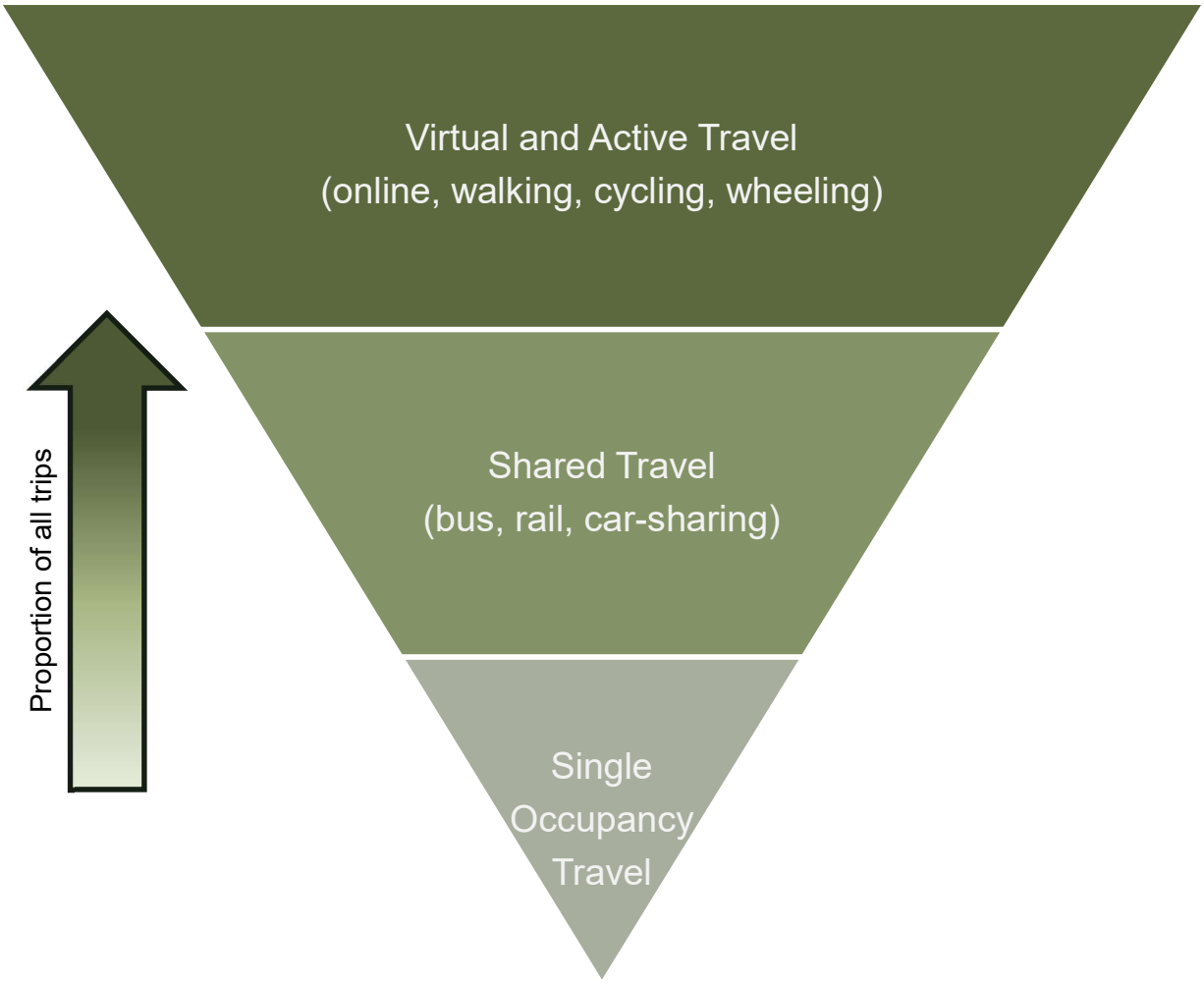
4.20 Given the plethora of existing infrastructure and the potential for further amenities to be provided internally within the site as part of the masterplan vision, it is considered that local living needs for future residents on site can be delivered.

Future Travel Behaviour

4.21 The vision for BFGV is to provide a sustainable new community, that readdresses the mode hierarchy by providing for walking, cycling and public transport, above single-occupancy vehicles. The approach to masterplanning for BFGV will move away from designing for single-occupancy car journeys.

4.22 An initial benchmark framework hierarchy for accessibility for the development is set out in **Figure 4.8** and will be used as a guide when developing the masterplan for BFGV:

Figure 4.8 Mode Hierarchy



4.23 By adopting a strong vision and reprioritising the mode hierarchy, the proposals will be able to focus on providing the best designs for climate and health, promoting green infrastructure which supports active travel instead of primarily focusing on providing more road space which does not support the goals of national and local planning policy.

4.24 Active travel connections will need to be explored to provide connections to local key employment destinations such as St Helens Hospital, St Helens town centre and Omega, to provide a viable option for future residents.

4.25 Connections with the planned LCWIP schemes will support access to employment, especially strengthening connections to the rail stations at St Helens Junction, Lea Green, and St Helens Central to enable people to travel sustainably to employment further afield in Liverpool and Manchester, rather than travelling by car.

Liverpool City Region – Walking and Cycling Index 2023

4.26 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is actively promoting and investing in walking and cycling infrastructure through the Walking and Cycling Index (formerly Bike Life) that is the biggest assessment of walking, wheeling and cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland. It is delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with 23 cities and urban areas. Each

city reports on the progress made towards making walking, wheeling and cycling more attractive, everyday ways to travel.

4.27 The aim of the process is to create a network of high-quality routes, prioritsing safety and efficiency for active travel, especially for short journeys. The LCRCA is continues to work with other local authorities in the region to achieve this goal.

St Helens Active Lives Strategy 2022-2027

4.28 The St Helens Active Lives survey is a key part of the St Helens Borough Council's "*Active Lives Strategy 2022-2027*". The survey aims to understand and improve the levels of physical activity across St Helens, particularly focusing on those experiencing inequalities.

4.29 St Helens borough has an abundance of green space and parks, and there are plenty of sports, activity groups and leisure facilities to provide opportunities for people to take part in activities. Despite this, the data and intelligence suggest that the people of St Helens are not as active and weigh more than they should, as illustrated in **Figure 4.9** below.

Figure 4.9 Physically Active Adults in 2019 / 2020

Location	% of physically active adults 2019/20
St Helens Borough	62.0
North West	63.9
England	66.4

4.30 The strategy emphasises the importance of increasing overall activity levels and addressing inequalities in participation. Through ongoing work and community engagement the aim of the strategy is to provide opportunities for the residents of St Helens to improve their overall health to make walking, cycling and public transport the natural choice for everyday trips.

5.0 Site Accessibility Review

5.1 This section of the report examines the travel options and nearby local amenities, as well as evaluates active travel routes and shared transportation links in the vicinity of the site and summarises the opportunities and constraints for development of BFGV.

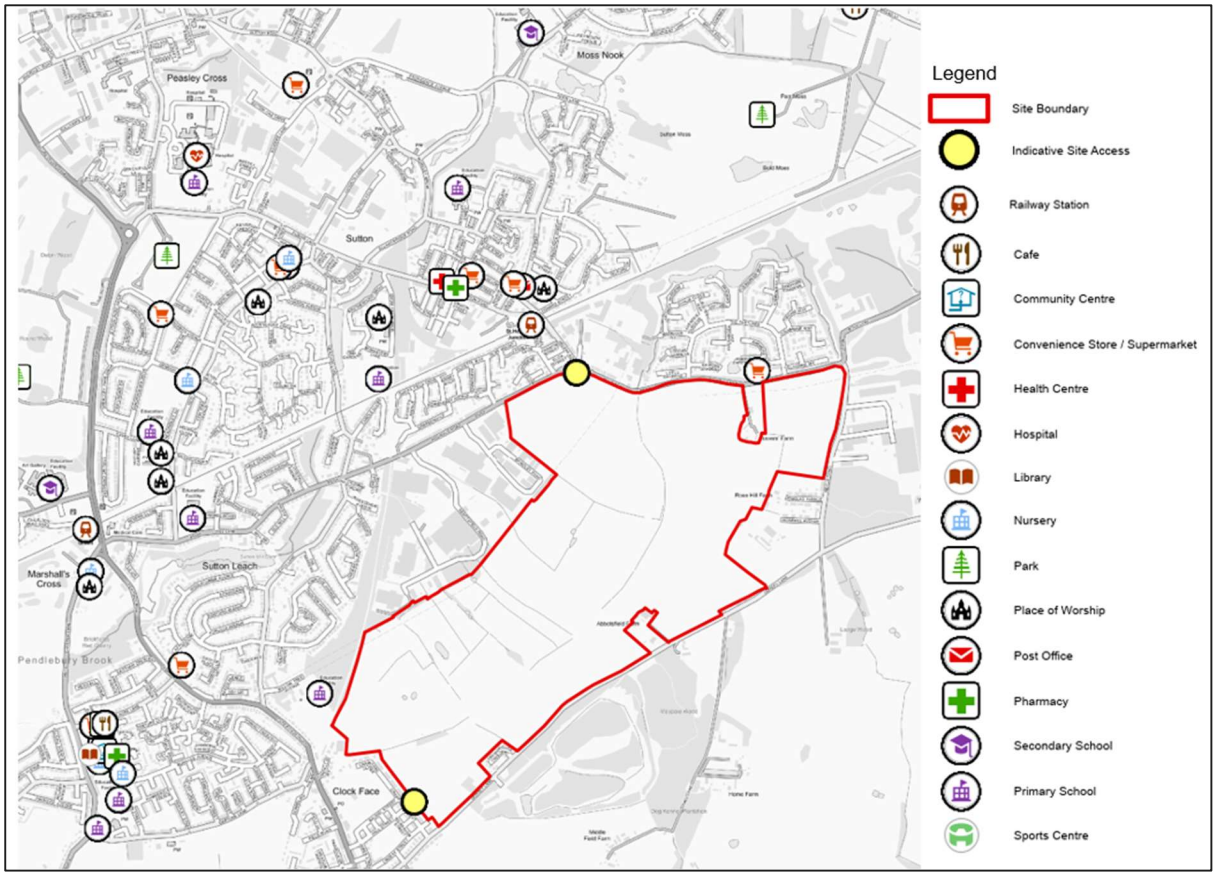
Local Amenities

5.2 Local and national transport policy states that new developments should be focused on locations which are, or can be made, sustainable. Providing travel choice is policy compliant and essential in today's modern and dynamic society.

5.3 One of the primary factors when considering the suitability of a new development is its proximity, accessibility, and connectivity in relation to key local facilities by non-car modes.

5.4 **Figure 5.1** below shows an array of local amenities within the local area.

Figure 5.1 Local Amenities



5.5 Distances to Local Amenities includes:

- Educational Institutions: colleges/further education, libraries
- Healthcare facilities; GP; dental offices; pharmacies
- Entertainment: cinemas, theatres, museums
- Public services: Post Offices, police stations, fire stations and government offices

- Religous and cultural centres: Churches, temples, mosques, community hall
- Financial services: Banks, ATMs

5.6 **Table 5.1** summarises the distances to the nearest local amenities and the equivalent walk and cycle times using indicative locations to the north and west of the site. Walking times have been calculated using a lower speed of 1.2 m/s and an upper speed of 1.4 m/s. Cycling times have been calculated using 16 km/h which represents a leisurely pace.

5.7 **Table 5.1** summarises the approximate distance to a selection of the nearest local amenities to the site that could be utilised by future residents.

Table 5.1: Distances to Local Amenities

Amenity	From	Local Example	Distance	Walking Time (mins)		Cycle Time (mins)
			(km)	1.2 m/s	1.4 m/s	
Convenience Store	North	New Bold Convenience	0.75	10	9	3
	North	Morrisons Daily	0.7	10	8	3
	West	Go Local	0.4	6	5	2
	West	Aldi	1.4	19	17	5
Supermarket	North		2.1	29	25	8
	West		1.4	19	17	5
Primary School	North	St Annes	1.1	15	13	4
	West	Willow Tree Primary School	1.3	18	15	5
	North	Sherdley Primary School	1.9	26	23	7
	West		2.2	31	26	8
Secondary School	North	Sutton Academy	2.9	40	35	11
	West		2.3	32	27	9
Public House	North	Junction Inn	0.3	4	4	1
	West	The Wheatsheaf	1.9	26	23	7
Community Hall	North	Burtonwood Community Centre	3.9	54	46	15
	West	Chester Lame Community Centre	1.8	25	21	7
Place of Worship	North	St. Anne Blessed Dominic Church	1.1	15	13	4
	West	St Michael and All Angels	1.3	18	15	5
Playground	North	Little Dainstead	0.85	12	10	3
	West	Lindsay Street	0.2	3	2	1
Sports Centre	North	Sutton Leisure Centre	3.1	43	37	12
	West		2.6	36	31	10
Medical Facility	North	Rainbow Medical Centre	0.65	9	8	2
	West	Four Acre health Centre	1.6	22	19	6
Rail Stop	North	St Helens Junction	0.3	4	4	1
	West	Lea Green	2.1	29	25	8
Bus Stop	North	Gorsey Lane	0.13	2	2	0
	North	Eliza Street (Helena Rd)	0.5	7	6	2

	West	Gorsey Lane	0.15	2	2	1
	West	Field Road (A569 Clock Face Rd)	0.5	7	6	2

Opportunities:

A variety of local amenities exist within a 20-minute walk from the edge of the site making it a well-connected development, with good access to employment, retail and leisure opportunities with an opportunity to promote local living.

Constraints:

Routes within the site along key desire lines will be needed to minimise walking and cycling distances to services. The masterplan will also need to consider whether additional supporting amenities will be needed within BFGV to support future residents.

B5204 Corridor Link Study - Pell Frischmann

5.8 St Helen's Borough Council commissioned Pell Frischmann to prepare a transport study focusing on the B5204 corridor. The corridor is one of the key local routes through the Sutton area of St Helens.

5.9 The objective of the study was to look at the B5204 in terms of capacity, highway provision/safety and active travel provision particularly when considering the future growth aspirations of the area.

5.10 In order to gain an understanding of the existing conditions and current operation of the corridor, a series of audits were undertaken. Over the course of the audit, the existing conditions and levels of operation of the corridor were observed for all user types. The purpose of these audits was to observe typical weekday operation of the corridor, during typical hour periods in order to make representative observations regarding the operation of the corridor during these periods, as well as to identify any particular issues or key opportunities for intervention in order to improve the corridor as a whole.

5.11 A number of key constraints and opportunities along the corridor were identified and determined through the study and were used to consider the identification of a number of improvement options.

5.12 As identified within the study, it was stated that the current local road network and configuration of the B5204 corridor is sufficient to cater future traffic demand and there is no capacity

problem up to 2037. On this basis, large scale interventions to the corridor would not be necessary.

5.13 In accordance with the objectives of the study and having regard to the identified constraints and taking cognisance of the St Helens LCWIP, a longlist of options and differing types of interventions were developed and discussed during an Option Review Workshop.

5.14 Based on resulting scores of different options assessed in the option appraisal process, it was recommended that a number of options could be taken forward. It was considered that these shortlisted options would be relatively feasible based on preliminary assessments and may (subject to further consideration) offer improvement, in terms of capacity, highway provision/safety and active travel provision.

Walking

5.15 Pedestrian movements around the site are supported by footways with dropped kerbs throughout the surrounding residential streets as well as a number of PRoW that run through the site connecting to the local network, as shown in **Figure 5.2**.

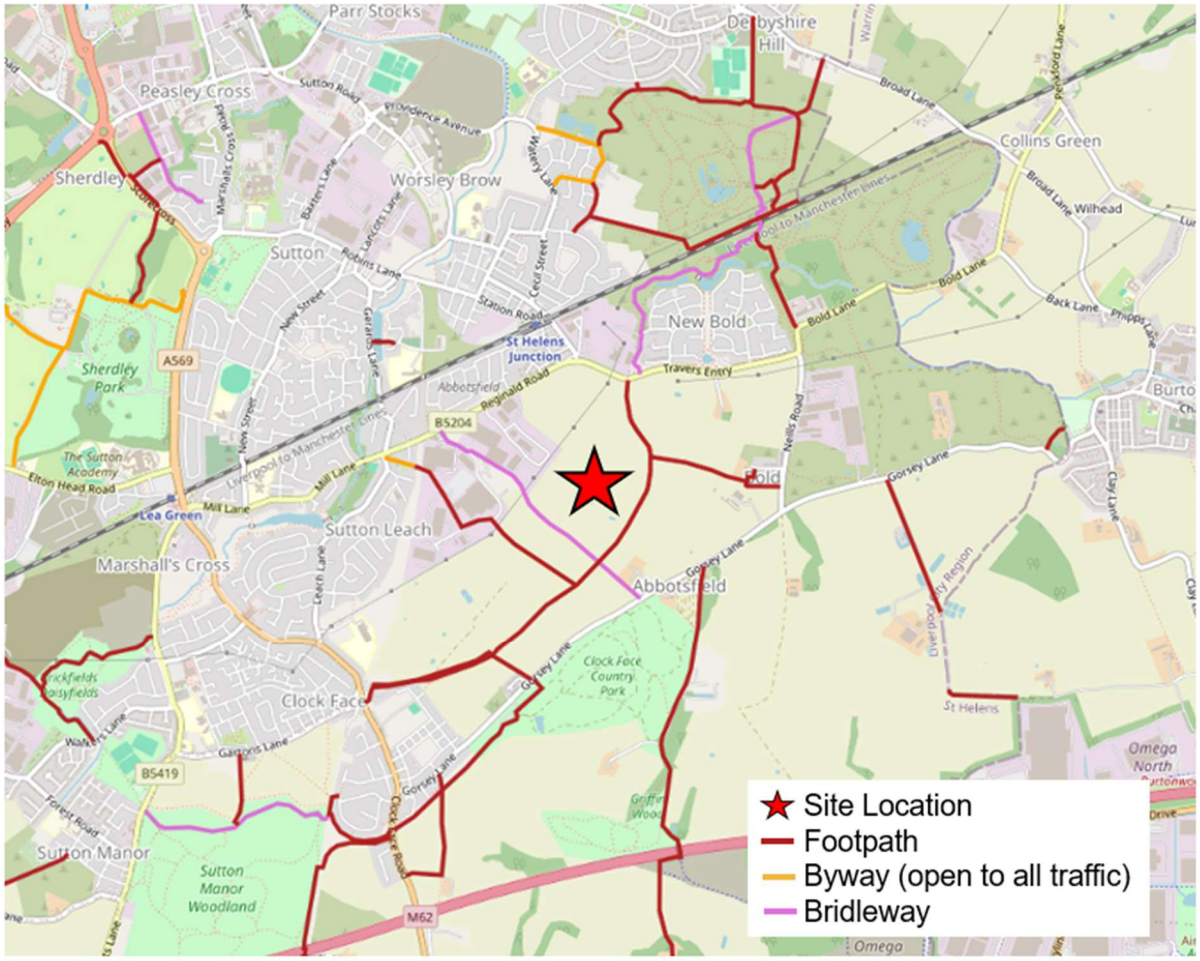
5.16 The LCWIP mentioned previously has a number of schemes that are pertinent to the BFGV development, as follows:

- Link between St Helens Junction and Lea Green rail station, Clockface and onwards to Whiston Hospital (short-term);
- Link between St Helens Junction and St Helens Central rail station and St Helens town centre (medium-term); and
- Link between Lea Green rail station and Omega Business Park via Gorsey Lane (medium-term).

5.17 The masterplan for BFGV will explore connections through the site to these LCWIP schemes to provide new residents with the choice to travel sustainably to key destinations.

5.18 It should also be noted that there is a bridleway through the site providing an off-road route for equestrians of the Northfield Riding Centre on Gorsey Lane.

Figure 5.2: Public Rights of Way (PRoW)



Opportunities:

The existing PRoW network and the future LCWIP schemes will bolster accessibility for existing and future residents.

Constraints:

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

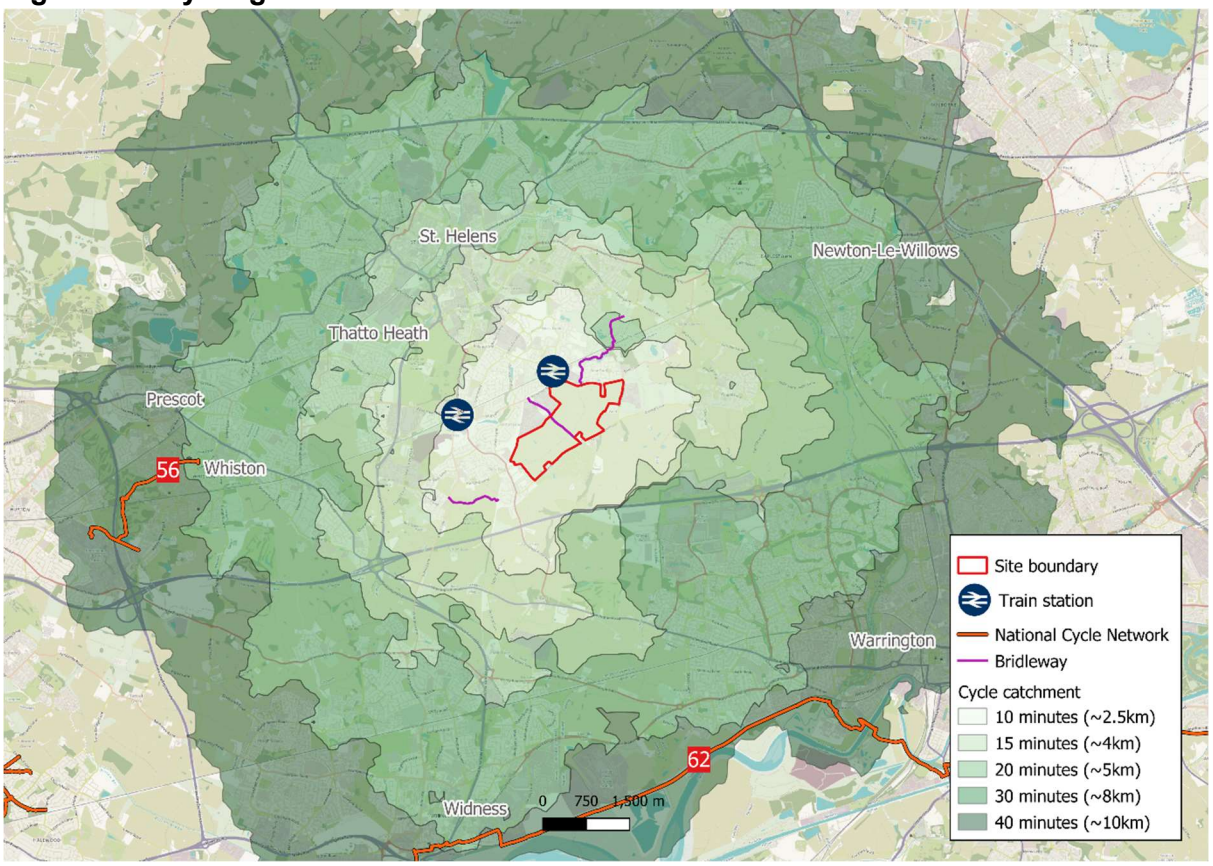
5.19 Cycling is becoming an increasingly popular mode of transport and is a viable alternative to the car for some short trips.

5.20 The Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Transport Note 1/20 highlights that many utility cycle journeys are under 3 miles (5km) although for commuters a trip distance of over 5 miles (8km) is not uncommon.

5.21 With this in mind,

5.22 **Figure 5.3** shows a 5km cycle catchment, representing a journey time of 20 minutes based on a leisurely cycle speed of 10mph (16kph).

Figure 5.3: Cycling Catchments



Opportunities:

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. Whilst 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 potential to deliver cycle infrastructure as part of the scheme also supports the ethos of a garden village and is key to development in this area.

Constraints:

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.

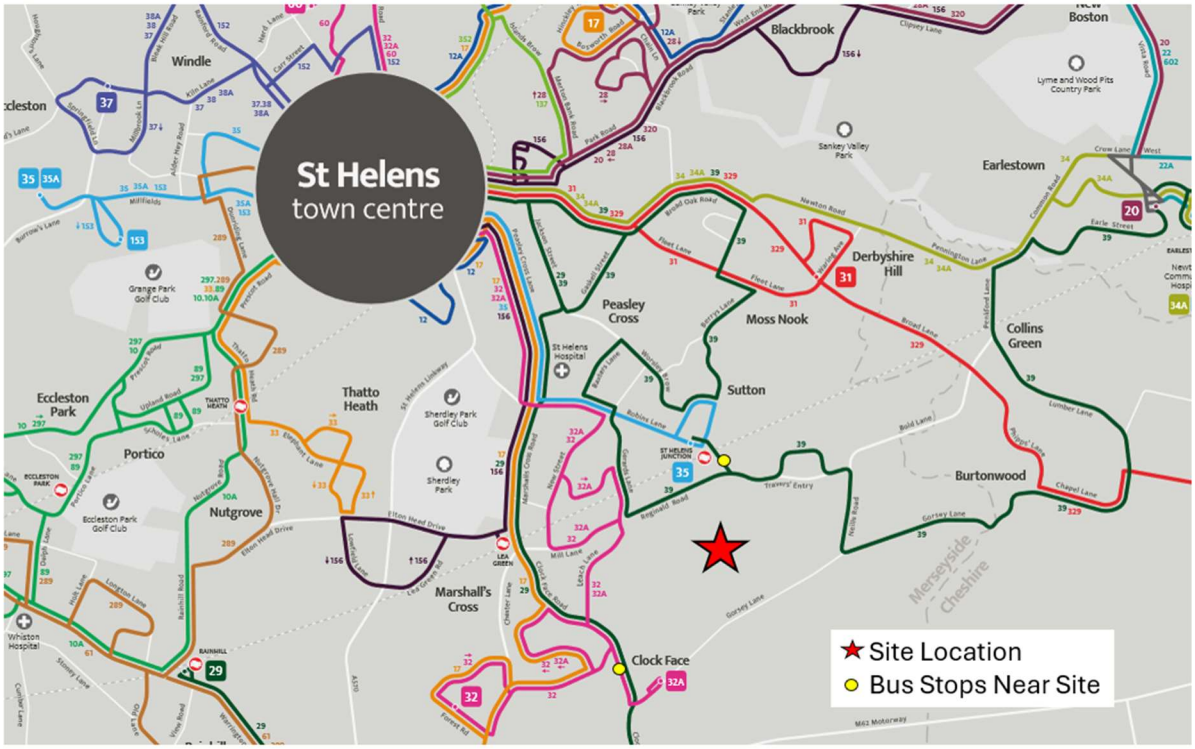
Cycle parking is also poor, particularly at St Helens Junction and Lea Green stations is not secure and this results in the current stands being underused.

Bus

5.23 The site is positioned to access St Helen's bus network. The closest stop to the proposed northern access is Eliza Street on Helena Road, approximately 50m north of the site. This stop is serviced by the regular No. 39 service to Newton-le-Willows and the less frequent services No. 920 to Haydock Industrial Estate and the No. 921 to the Omega Business Park. In addition, the stop is serviced by school buses No. 40 to Riverside College and the No.755 to De La Salle School.

5.24 Field Road, on the A569 Clock Face Road, is the closest bus stop to the western proposed access, located 500m (a 7-minute walk) to the west of the site. This stop is serviced by the No. 32A local service to Clinkham Wood and the less frequent No. 29 service to Rainhill Station. The school buses, No. 720 to St Cuthbert's High School and No. 755 to De La Salle School also service this stop. Both of these stops are a flag and pole arrangement and provide timetable information.

Figure 5.4 Bus Route Map



5.25 The frequency of a number of bus services provided in the vicinity of the site have been summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Bus Frequency

Route	Destination	Frequency (Mins)					
		Monday – Friday				Sat	Sun
		AM Peak	Daytime	PM Peak	Evening		
Regular Services							
32A	Clock Face – Clinkham Wood	30	30	30	60	60	
39	St Helens Bus Station – Newton-le-Willows	60	120	60	120	120	
Services to Industrial Units							
29	St Helens Bus Station – Rainhill Station	No service			3 PM services	3 PM services	120
920	St Helens - Haydock Industrial Estate	2 services per day (05:24, 21:21)					

921	Omega Business Park - St Helens - Gillars Green	3 services per day (05:10, 13:10, 21:10)	
School Buses			
40	Haydock – Riverside College	1 service per day (08:23)	No service
720	Clock Face Road - St Cuthbert's High School	2 services per day (07:33, 07:55)	No service
755	St Helens Junction - De La Salle School	1 service per day (07:43)	No service

Opportunities:

The site is connected by bus to local employment, education, leisure and retail centres.

A bus route through the site may enable a direct connection through the site that benefits journey times for services as well as supporting future residents.

Constraints:

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.

Rail

5.26 The nearest rail stations to the site are St Helens Junction and Lea Green which offer direct services to Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, as summarised in **Table 5.3**.

5.27 St Helens Junction Railway Station is located 300m (3-minute walk) from the proposed northern entrance to the site. The walking route to the station from the northern entrance includes crossing the B5204 Bold Road using the pedestrian island refuge crossing and continuing northwards, using the lit footways along Helena Road. Alternatively, a walking route via Lionel Street to the west of Helena Road can also be used to access St Helens Junction Railway Station.

5.28 There is a downward slope towards the Helena Road entrance to the station which includes a ramp with no lighting provided. Alternatively, pedestrians can continue northward to the Station Road entrance which is lit and provides footways along to the main entrance.

5.29 Lea Green Railway Station is located 2.1 km (30 minute walk) from the proposed western access to the site. The station is also accessible by bicycle (approx. 8- minute cycle) with segregated cycle lanes provided on for an approximate 600m section of the A569 Clock Face Road to facilitate journeys.

5.30 Typical services provided from the rail stations discussed above have been provided within **Table 5.3** below.

Table 5.3 Direct Services from St Helens Junction and Lea Green

Direct Service	Journey Time (Mins)	Frequency
St Helens Junction		
Liverpool Lime Street	30	1-2 per hour
Manchester Piccadilly	34	Hourly
Lea Green		
Liverpool Lime Street	20	1-2 per hour
Manchester Victoria	22	Hourly
Manchester Piccadilly	37	Hourly
Newcastle	190	Hourly

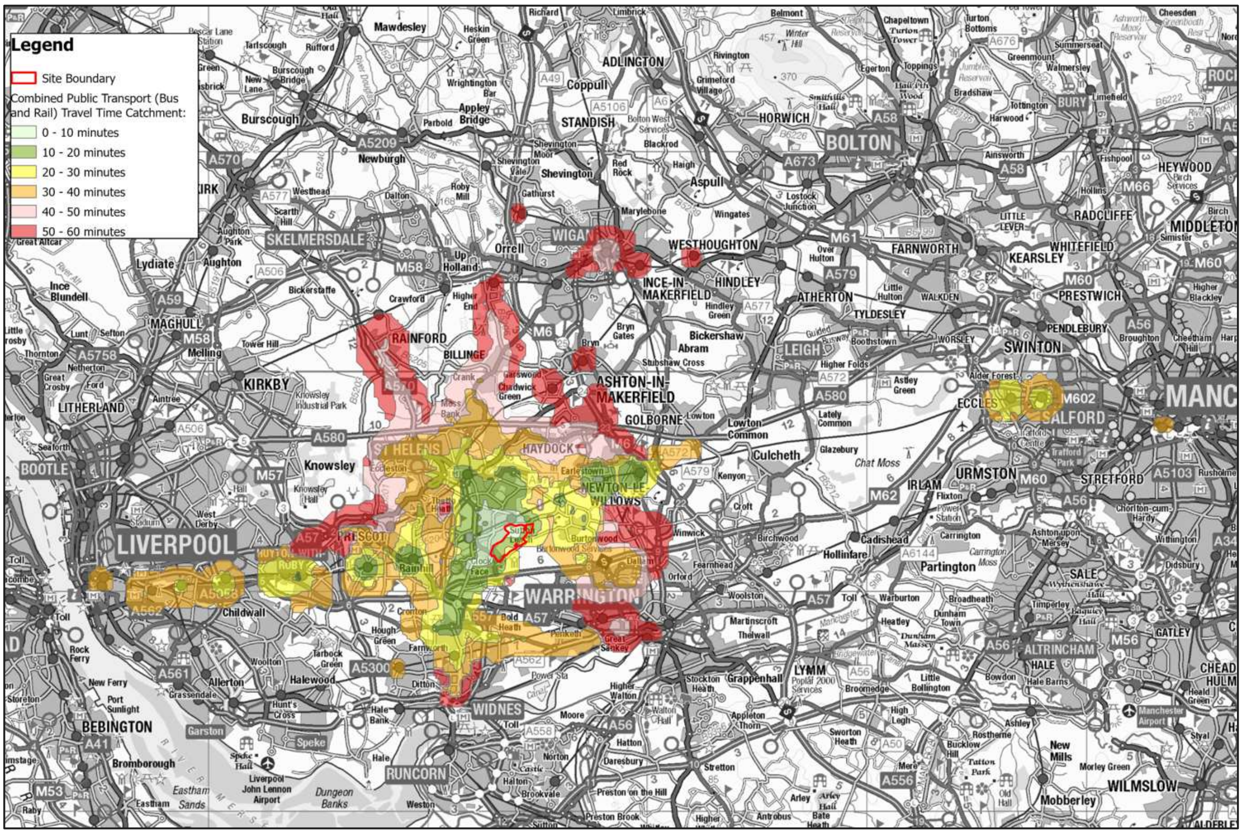
5.31 St Helens Junction provides 12 cycle spaces in the form of cycle stands. Lea Green station also provides cycle parking in a compound.

5.32 As noted, the council are seeking support from the LCRCA to further fund and develop travel options to bring a disused railway line that runs between St Helens Central and St Helens Junction as part of the Sutton Oak Line study. The Sutton Oak line is regarded as key to improve connectivity in the borough and surrounding areas and provides a strategic opportunity of to connect the proposed scheme with St Helens town centre and various amenities within in the vicinity (St Helens hospital etc).

Public Transport Accessibility Catchment

5.33 Taking into account bus and rail services, the public transport accessibility catchment is shown in **Figure 5.5**, which considers accessibility up to 60 minutes total journey time from the centre of the site (including the time travelled to a bus stop or rail station).

Figure 5.5 Public Transport Accessibility Catchment



Opportunities:

The proposed development 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, Prescot, Warrington, Widnes, Huyton, Liverpool and Manchester

The potential reopening of the Sutton Oak Line would also present a real strategic opportunity to improve the accessibility of the site.

Constraints:

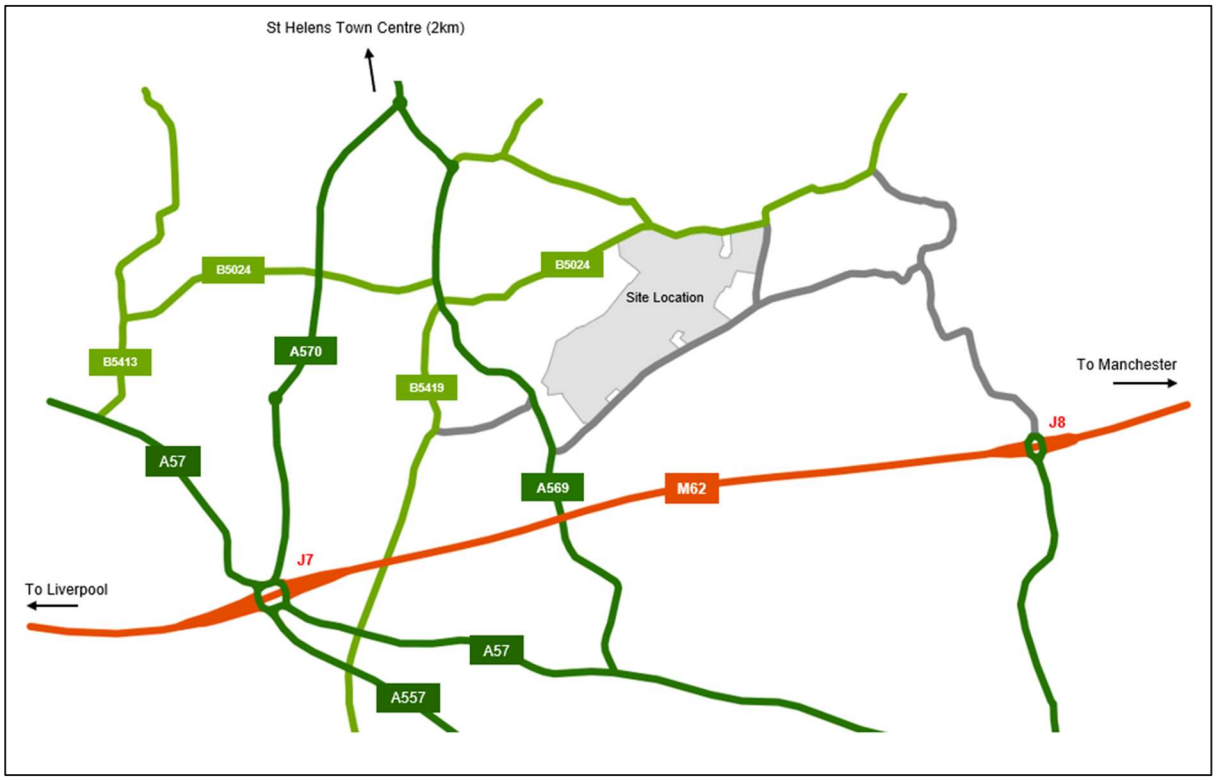
There are no direct train services to St Helens town centre from St Helens Junction or Lea Green.

The WSP review (2019) noted that parking was an issue at Lea Green station with overspill occurring on adjacent roads and parking on pavements and in the taxi stand (thought to be misuse by staff and parents of the Sutton Academy but could also reflect more people travelling west towards Liverpool). Whereas, the car park at St Helens Junction is underused and signage to the station is poor.

Key Strategic Roads

5.34 The site is well connected by road as shown in **Figure 5.6**.

Figure 5.6 Key Strategic Roads



5.35 The M62 is located to the south of the site providing access to Liverpool and Manchester.

5.36 Junction 7 to the southwest of the site is a signalised gyratory junction which also provides connection to the A570 James Roby Way (towards St Helens town centre), the A557 Watkinson Way (towards Widnes and Runcorn) and the A57 Warrington Road (towards Rainhill, Whiston Hospital and Prescot).

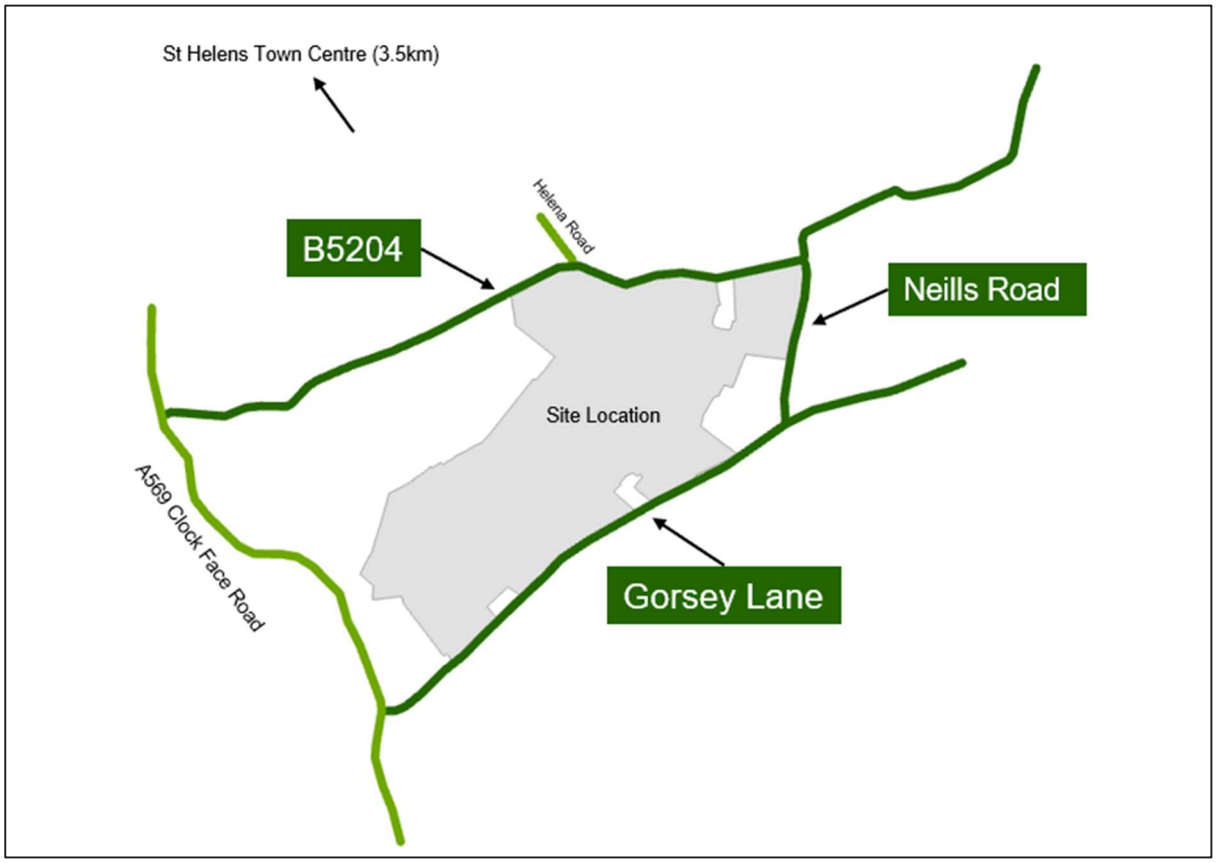
5.37 The A569 Clock Face Road is also directly southwest of the site and connects with the A570 James Roby Way to the north and the A57 Warrington Road to the south.

5.38 Junction 8, the Burtonwood roundabout, is a signalised gyratory to the southeast of the site and provides connection to Skyline Drive (Omega Business Park), and Charon Way (Gemini Retail Park).

Key Local Roads

5.39 The site is bound by three local roads, the B5024 Bold Road to the north, Neills Road to the east and Gorsey Lane to the west as shown in **Figure 5.7**.

Figure 5.7 Local Roads



B5204 Bold Road / Reginald Road

5.40 The B5204 Bold Road / Reginald Road borders the northern edge of the site and can be considered as two varying types of road.

5.41 The western section is fronted by residential properties and is subject to a 30 mph speed restriction with adequate footway provision on both sides of the road and occasional dropped kerb crossing facilities.

5.42 The eastern section (east of the Alumasc Roofing industrial unit) is more of a higher order road. Whilst it still provides some access to residential properties, there are no frontages along this section – properties are set back from the road separated by a grass verge with metal railings – and there is very limited footway provision. The road along this section is subject to

a 40 mph speed restriction increasing to 50 mph on the approach to the junction with Neill's road.

Opportunities:

There are pedestrian refuge islands along the western section of Bold Road in the vicinity of the site, including Helena's Road, which will connect future residents to St Helens Junction rail station. However, the suitability of these existing refuges will need to be assessed given the potential demand associated with the proposals.

Constraints:

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.

Sections of Bold Road are underwater/impassable during heavy downpours.

Neills Road

5.43 Neills Road borders the eastern edge of the site and has a speed limit of 40 mph. The road serves as access to Bold Industrial Estate as well as a few residential properties on the southern section.

5.44 Neill's Road has some footway provision in the vicinity of the residential properties (western side only) and the industrial estate (on both sides). There are a couple of bus stops on this section but these are without shelters.

Opportunities:

Bus stops on Neill's Road could provide future residents in the east of BGFV with access to existing bus services.

Constraints:

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 WSP Review (2019) highlighted the lack of hedgerow maintenance can lead to poor visibility at the junctions with Bold Road and Gorsey Lane.

Sections of Neill's Road are underwater/impassable during heavy downpours.

Gorsey Lane

5.45 Gorsey Lane is a rural lane which runs along the southern border of the site and provides access to a few farms (including the Northfield Riding Centre), residential properties and the Clock Face Country Park.

5.46 It is subject to a 40mph speed limit along the edge of the site from Neill's Road and decreases to 30mph approaching the residential areas on Clock Face.

There is limited footway provision along Gorsey Lane with a footway on the southern side of the road only.

Opportunities:

Gorsey Lane can provide future residents with direct connection to green space at Clock Face Country Park.

Constraints:

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 scheme.

The WSP Review (2019) highlighted congestion issues occurred at the junction with Clock Face Road.

Sections of Gorsey Lane are underwater/impassable during heavy downpours.

Collision Analysis

5.47 **Figure 5.8** shows the location of collisions within the vicinity of the site for the latest 5-year period available in The Department for Transport's Mapping Application for Visualising Road Injury Casualties (MAVRIC) tool (January 2019 to December 2023). A summary of Personal Injury Collision (PICs) is shown in **Table 5.4**.

Figure 5.8 Personal Injury Collision Record

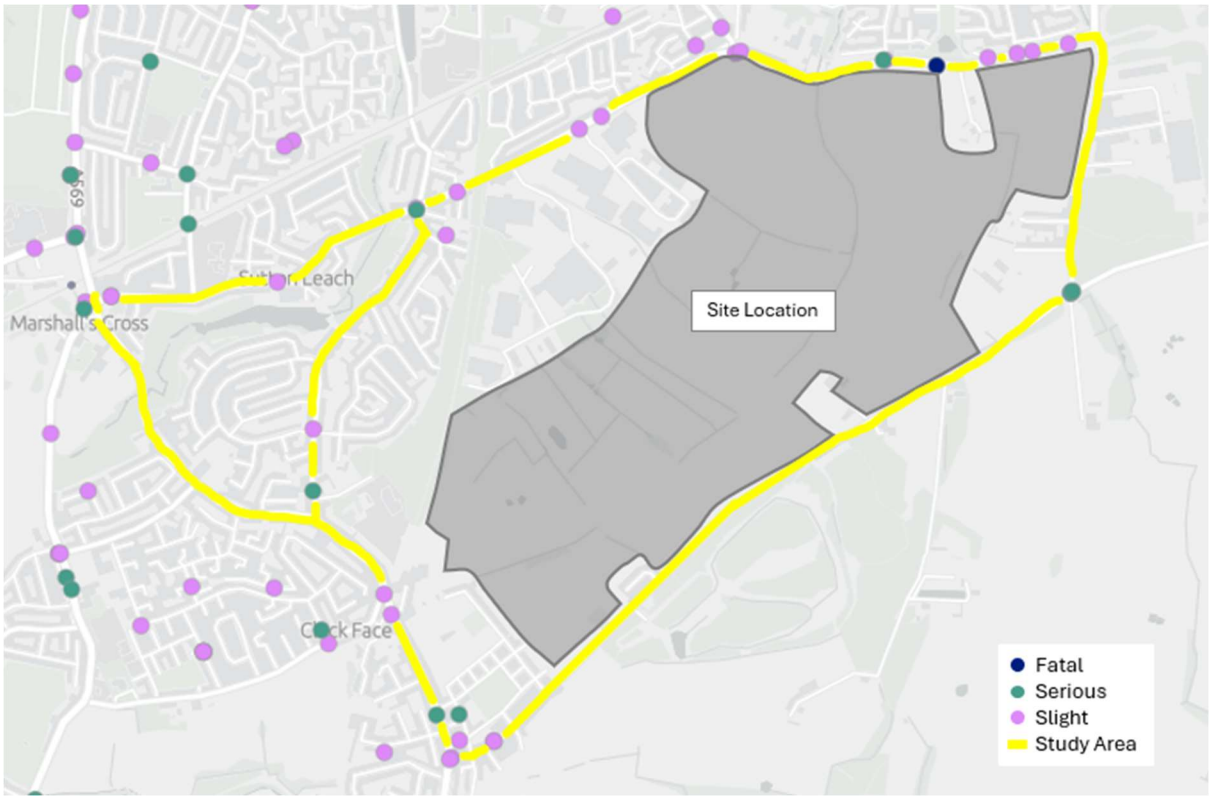


Table 5.4 Recorded Personal Injury Collisions (2019-2023) (*source: MAVRIC*)

Link / Junction	Incident Severity			Total	Notes
	Slight	Serious	Fatal		
B5204	13	2	1	16	
B5204 Travers' Entry	5	1	1	7	The fatal incident occurred between 2 vehicles in 2021. The serious incident occurred in 2021 and involved a pedestrian - car collision at the junction with The Pastures. The other incidences involved vehicles only.
B5204 Bold Rd	2	0	0	2	One incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2021. The other involved a motorcycle-car collision.
B5204 Reginald Rd	3	0	0	3	Vehicles only.
B5204 Mill Lane	3	1	0	4	The serious incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2023.
Other Key Roads	8	4	0	12	
A569 Clock Face Road	3	1	0	4	2 pedestrian casualties. One serious opposite the Hall Street junction and one slight slight at Tunstall's Way junction.
Gorsey Lane	2	1	0	3	One slight incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2019 at the junction with A569.
Neills Road	1	0	0	1	Vehicles only.
Helena Road	1	1	0	2	The slight incident occurred in 2020 and involved a pedestrian - car collision at the junction with Eliza St. The serious incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2021
Leach Lane	1	1	0	2	The serious incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2023.
Priority Junction	5	2	0	7	
A569 Clock Face Rd / Gorsey	2	0	0	2	One slight incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2019.
Gorsey / Neills Rd	1	2	0	3	Vehicles only.
B5204 / Neills Rd	0	0	0	0	No incidences.
B5204 / Helena Rd	2	0	0	2	One incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2021. The other involved a motorcycle-car collision.
Roundabout	2	1	0	3	
B5204 / Leach Ln	1	1	0	2	The serious incident involved a pedal cyclist - car collision in 2023.
A569 / B5419 / B5204	1	0	0	1	The slight incident occurred in 2023 and involved a pedestrian - car collision.

5.48 **Figure 5.8** shows there have been a total of 16 collisions along the B5204, one of these being fatal. Although the distribution of these incidents across this road section does not indicate a clear pattern of collisions, and over the five-year period this equates to 3 collisions per year.

Burtonwood – HGV Restriction

5.49 A Burtonwood Transport Study was undertaken in 2015 that identified the need for measures to manage HGV traffic through the village and reduce contraventions of weight restrictions.

5.50 In order to mitigate the ongoing issues a three-tiered strategy for HGV route guidance has been implemented, including advance HGV strategic signage, local route signage, and gateway signage. This strategy aims to encourage HGV drivers to use appropriate alternative routes and reduce the volume of HGVs in areas with weight restrictions.

5.51 Following the above Burtonwood now has specific HGV restrictions in place, with weight restrictions on Fir Tree Lane and Lumber Lane, with a limit of 7.5 tonnes. These restrictions are intended to manage traffic flow and protect residential areas. HGVs are encouraged to use strategic and primary roads like motorways and trunk roads and avoid local A and B roads unless absolutely necessary.

5.52 As part of the delivery and construction of the proposed development scheme, the management of these restrictions and routing of HGVs to / from the site will need to be considered in further detail.

Summary

5.53 A review of the site's accessibility 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.

5.54 Cycling connectivity also 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.

5.55 The site is also accessible by rail with St Helens Junction and Lea Green providing connections to Manchester and Liverpool.

5.56 By road, the M62 to the south, also links Liverpool and Manchester, and Junctions 7 and 8 provide local access to commercial hubs like Omega Business Park.

5.57 Local roads surrounding the site, including Travers’ Entry, Neills Road, and Gorsey Lane, also offer opportunities for new connections for all modes supporting the site’s excellent accessibility and potential for sustainable development, which will be considered in more detail in the next masterplanning phase.

6.0 Review of WSP Recommendations

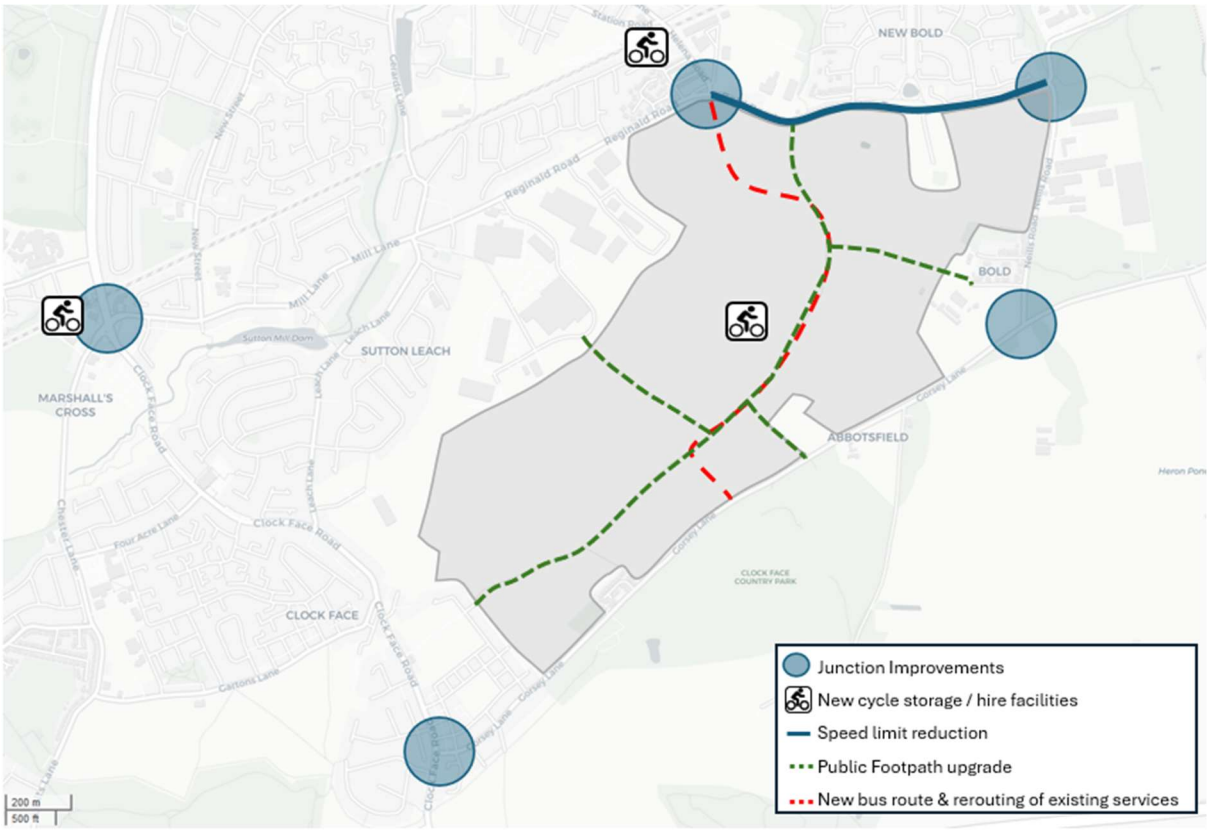
6.1 As briefly mentioned, in August 2019, WSP produced an initial report outlining the transport infrastructure considerations for BFGV titled *The Bold Forest Garden Suburb Transport Review*. The report highlighted the need for a strong vision and strategy, with zoning of landuse integrated with access and movement links for active travel, public transport connections, as well as vehicle access points.

6.2 The WSP transport review (2019) also identified some opportunities for improvements as BFGV comes forward:

- Improvements to Helena's Road/Bold Road junction (signalisation with introduction of pedestrian and cycle facilities);
- Reduction in speed limit on Bold Road (in the vicinity of Neill's Road) from 40 mph to 30 mph or 20 mph;
- New junction at Bold Road / Neill's Road to increase capacity and improve 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 provide pedestrian crossing facilities
- Improvements to Marshalls Cross Road / Mill Lane / Clock Face Road / Chester Lane junction (to provide pedestrian and cycle facilities).
- Introduction of segregated cycle lanes and pedestrian footpaths throughout the proposed development site and surrounding areas;
- Improvements to the existing public footpath that runs directly through the proposed development 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's Road by creating a new link within BFGV and increasing frequency of bus services, particularly to St Helens Junction.
- A new bus route looping between the town centre, Lea Green and St Helens Junction and BFGV to increase frequency.

6.3 An indicative plan of these recommendations is shown in **Figure 6.1**.These proposals will be considered in detail as part of the masterplanning process.

Figure 6.1 Summary of WSP Recommendations



Potential Future Gateways

6.4 The WSP report also identifies potential locations for gateways to BFGV at:

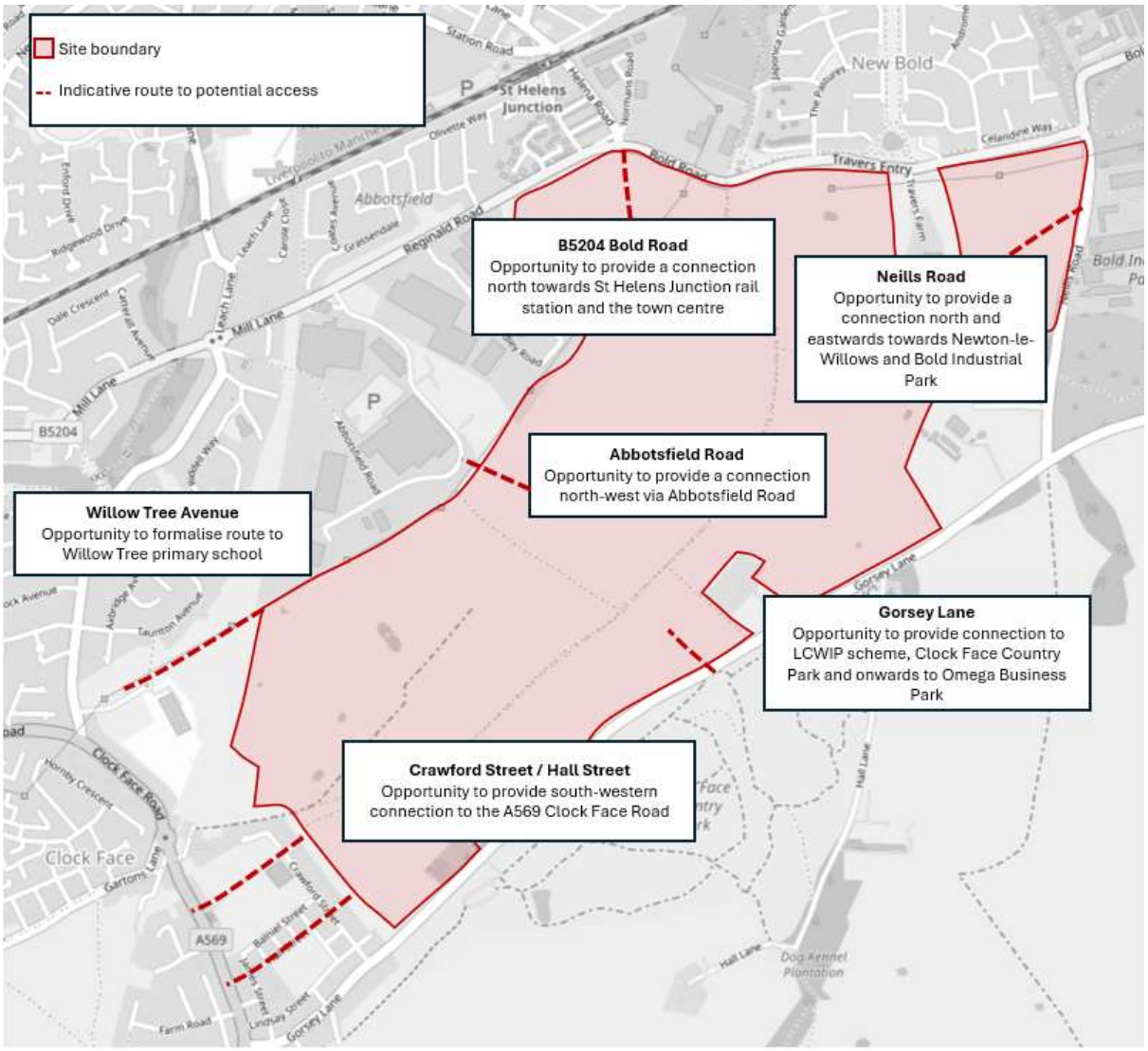
- Helena's Road (to provide a northern connection and support links to St Helen's Junction);
- Gorsey Lane with a through route to Helena's Road (to provide a connection to and from the south of the site);
- Hall Street off Clock Face Road (to provide a western access point without the need for land acquisition);
- Willow Tree Avenue off Leach Lane (to provide a western access point with connection to Willow Tree Primary School (may require land acquisition as former mineral line is privately owned) ;
- Taunton Avenue off Leech Lane (to provide a western access point although would require land acquisition).

6.5 Upon initial review, these access points seem logical with the exception of Taunton Avenue.

6.6 Additional access locations will be considered at Neills Road, Abbotsfield Road, Crawford Street/Hall Street.

6.7 A plan showing potential locations of access has been shown in **Figure 6.2**. It should be noted that the access points shown on the plan are for discussion highlighting the roads / links where potential connections could be provided along their length and will be explored further at the next stage in the process.

Figure 6.2 Potential Access Connections



7.0 Summary and Next Steps

Summary

7.1 A review of the site's travel options highlights convenient access to amenities like schools, community facilities, parks, supermarkets, and healthcare services, which will be essential for future residents of BFGV. A wide range of amenities are within a 20-minute walk from the site's edge. This accessibility promotes local living by providing opportunities for employment, retail, and leisure within walking distance.

7.2 Pedestrian movements around the site are supported by existing infrastructure, including footways with dropped kerbs on nearby residential streets and PRoW. These PRoWs traverse the site and connect to the broader local network.

7.3 There is also potential for cycle connectivity, with St Helens Junction and Lea Green rail stations, St Helens town centre, and Thatto Heath all reachable within a 20-minute cycle. Additionally, locations such as Omega, Newton-Le-Willows, Widnes, and Whiston can be accessed within a 30-minute cycle.

7.4 The site is connected by bus services with connections to local employment, education, leisure, and retail centres. St Helen’s Bus Station, located approximately 3.7km northeast of the site, serves as a hub for local and regional bus connections to destinations including Earlestown, Warrington, Wigan, Leigh, Liverpool, Widnes, and Southport. This extensive transport network enhances the site’s accessibility and supports sustainable travel options.

7.5 The proposed development has a high level of public transport accessibility within a 1-hour travel time. Residents can reach key locations such as St Helens town centre, Newton-Le-Willows, Thatto Heath, Prescot, Warrington, Widnes, Huyton, and Liverpool, making it an excellent choice for sustainable commuting.

7.6 The M62 to the south provides access to Liverpool and Manchester by road, with Junction 7 offering connections to the A570, A557, and A57, facilitating travel to St Helens town centre, Widnes, Runcorn, Rainhill, and Prescot. Junction 8, the Burtonwood roundabout, connects to major commercial hubs like Omega Business Park and Gemini Retail Park.

7.7 Local roads surrounding the site also enhance connectivity. An initial analysis has identified potential access points to enhance these connections further and these will be evaluated in the next masterplanning phase, with a focus on integrating vehicle, pedestrian, and cyclist access.

Next Steps

7.8 The next steps are to continue to progress the transport strategy for BFGV, which after the baseline review will follow following key stages: design, influence and manage.

7.9 As part of the design stage, several scenarios will be tested using the ‘vision and validate’ model with an iterative approach between urban design, place-making and trip forecasting. It will place a greater importance on sustainable mobility and reflects the changes in travel behaviour that are already occurring.

7.10 It is anticipated that through design interventions, walking, cycling and public transport can be the modes of choice for the majority of future residents, particularly to access local services. Although, for those who are reliant on private car, such as those with mobility impairments, will still be catered for by ensuring the designs are disability compliant, including providing disabled parking.

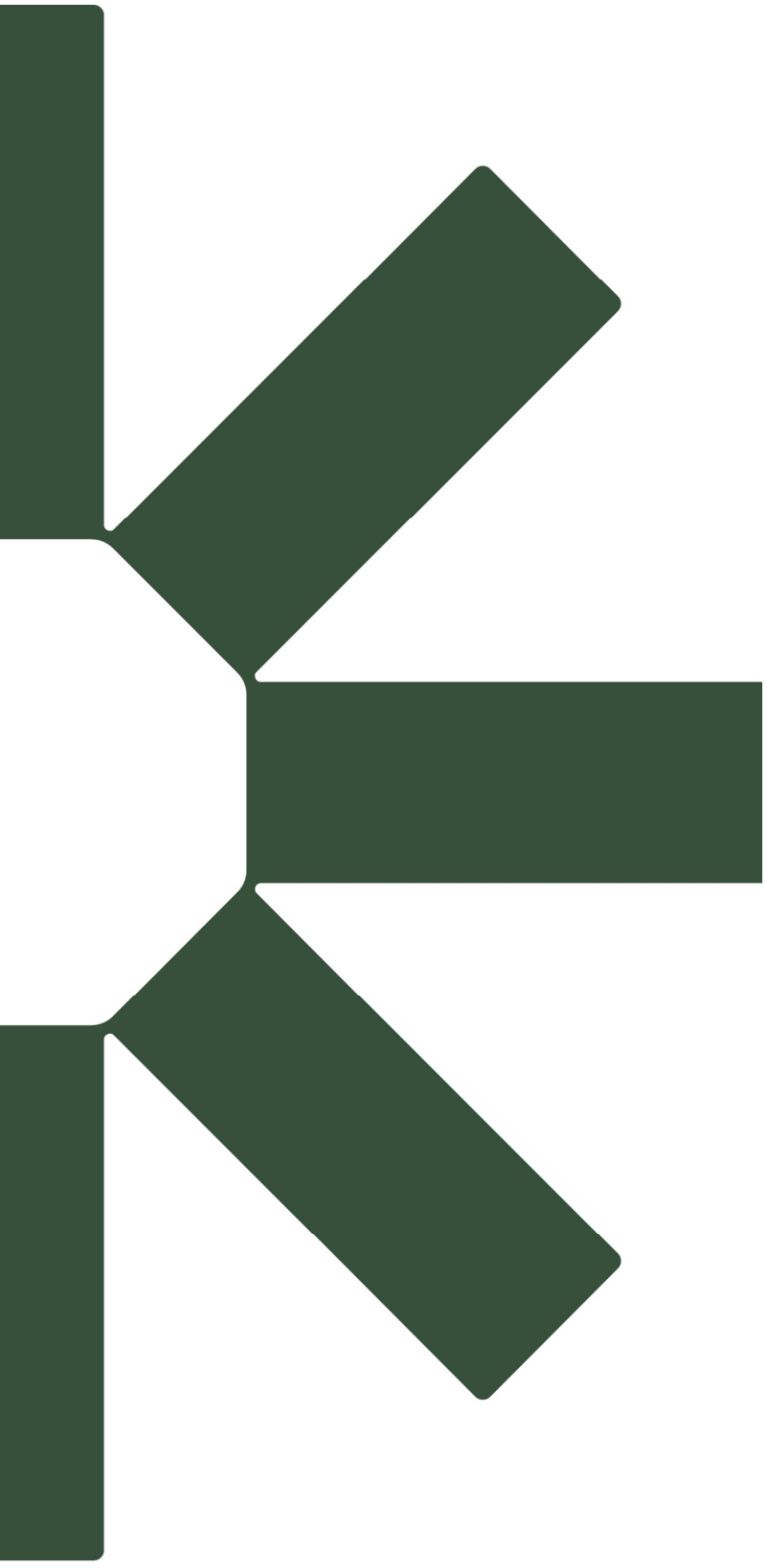
7.11 The strategy will therefore ensure access is provided by priority:

- Pedestrians and wheelchair users, cyclists, and equestrians; followed by
- Public transport users (bus and rail); and then
- Car drivers.

7.12 Design considerations will include:

- Gateways to the development for people and vehicles;
- Active travel corridors making walking, cycling, eScooters and eBikes the preferred way to get around and to connect to onward destinations;
- Street hierarchy including legible network of routes for multi-modal connectivity, emergency service access, delivery and servicing access;
- Existing and future amenity and community provision, including connectivity to existing communities;
- A potential Mobility Hub network providing convenient access to shared mobility and public transport services;
- EV charging infrastructure;
- Consideration given to horse riding as part of the design;
- Travel Planning opportunities and responsibilities for implementation and monitoring of the overarching mobility plan for the site;
- Deliveries, refuse collection and servicing; and
- Maintenance (highways or third-party utility companies).

7.13 Overall, the site is already accessibly by a range of modes, and the next stage of the masterplan will consider how accessibility is maximised through building upon these existing connections to PRoW, cycling routes, public transport, and strategic and local roads in the immediate vicinity of the site.



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