

Warrington Borough Council Draft Statement of Common Ground

March 2019



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1. Introduction

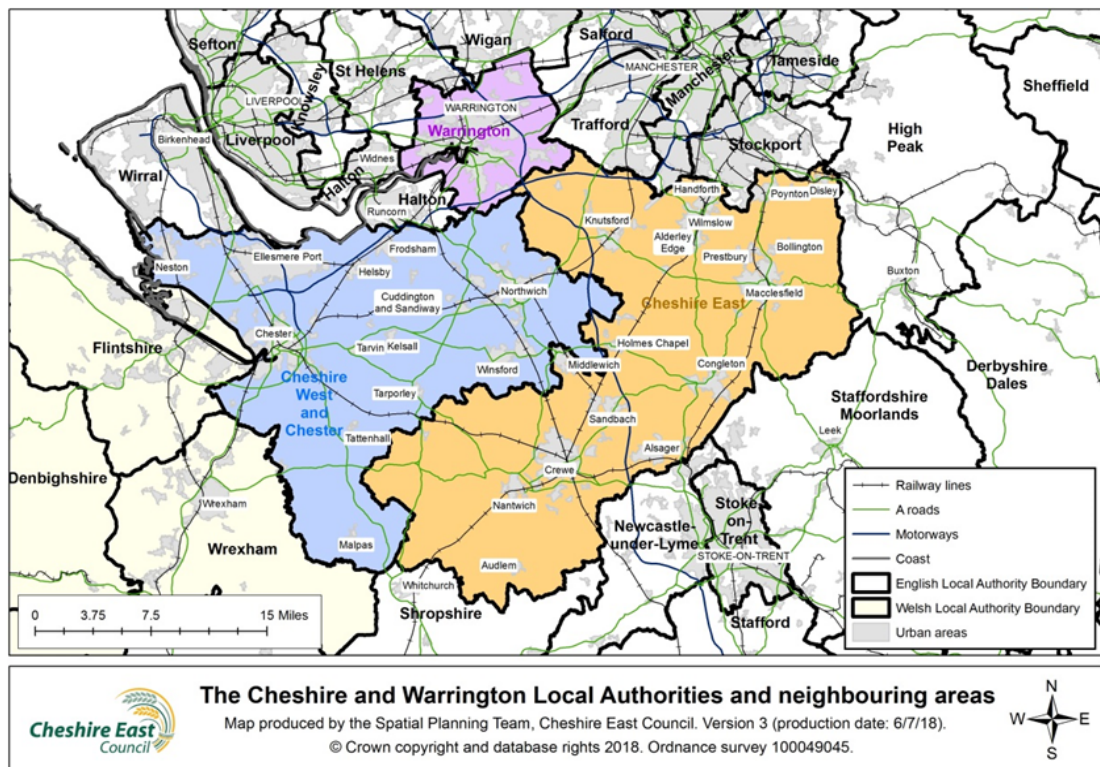
- 1.1 This draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared in support of the review of the Warrington Local Plan, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF).
- 1.2 The SoCG outlines the geographical area covered, the key strategic issues it addresses, the plan making authorities responsible for joint working and any additional signatories, and the management and governance arrangements for updating and agreeing the completed statement, in line with the guidance provided in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 1.3 Where strategic issues have been identified which require agreement or ongoing joint working with another local authority and/or statutory consultee, they are highlighted within Section 4 Strategic Planning Matters. A consolidated list of these issues is provided in Appendix 2.
- 1.4 It should be noted that whilst all strategic issues have been identified working with officers from the relevant authorities, as part of the Duty to Cooperate, no other authority has formally signed the Statement of Common Ground at this stage. The final Statement of Common Ground, with the required additional signatures, will be completed following the consultation on the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan and prior to submission to the Secretary of State for Examination.

2. Administrative area covered by the statement

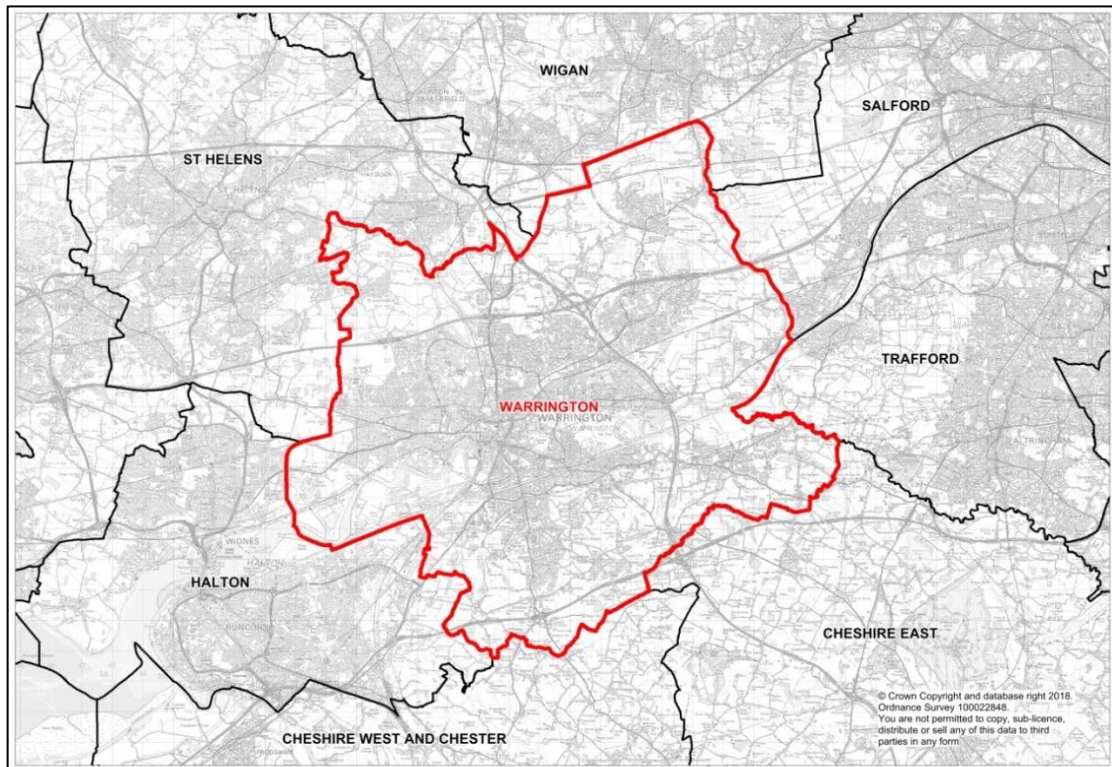
- 2.1 Warrington has a number of geographies. It shares boundaries with Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West & Chester Council, Halton Borough Council, Salford City Council, St Helens Council, Trafford Council and Wigan Council, and lies between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). Warrington Borough Council (WBC) is also part of an economic partnership with Cheshire East Council and Chester West and Chester Council through the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). WBC shares a housing market with Halton Borough Council and St Helens Council as part of the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area (Mid-Mersey HMA) although these authorities are now part of the Liverpool City Region.
- 2.2 The SoCG covers the administrative area of WBC. This is considered to be appropriate given the varied and functional relationships it has with a number of authorities and the fact that WBC is not preparing any joint statutory Plans. It does however identify specific allocation sites in St Helens which either will contribute to meeting Warrington's employment needs and / or which will impact on key infrastructure in Warrington.

- 2.3 The statement sets out how WBC is working with the relevant authorities to address strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. It will also enable these matters to be reflected, where appropriate, in neighbouring Councils' SoCGs to which WBC will be a signatory.

2.4 **Figure 1: Cheshire and Warrington Local Authority Areas**



2.5 Figure 2: Warrington Borough Council and Neighbouring Authorities



3. Strategic Context

3.1 WBC Development Plan

Document	Stage	Date
Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 - 2027 ¹	Adopted	21 July 2014
Appleton Thorn Ward Neighbourhood Development Plan ²	Made	19 June 2017
Warrington Borough Council Local Plan 2017 – 2037	Proposed Submission Version	April 2019

3.2 The Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted on 21 July 2014, is the overarching strategic policy document in the Local Planning Framework guiding development in the borough up to 2027. However, following its adoption, a legal challenge was made by a landowner with respect to the housing policies contained within the Strategy which was successful and the High Court decision resulted in the Plan no longer having a housing target. Consequently, WBC is currently progressing with a full Local Plan Review.

3.3 WBC completed its Preferred Development Option³ (PDO) Regulation 18, Part 2 Consultation in September 2017. The responses received from this consultation have been taken into account in the preparation of the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan. The Local Plan is intended to guide development in Warrington from 2017 to 2037 and, when adopted, it will replace the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy. It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted in 2020.

3.4 WBC has worked and continues to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to address the cross-boundary strategic matters arising as part of the Local Plan Review. These matters are addressed within this SoCG.

3.5 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

WBC together with Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council are part of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. It is accepted by all the constituent LEP authorities that the LEP area is not a single Functional Economic Area for the purposes of the NPPF. Nonetheless, the LEP aspires

¹ Available at https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200564/planning_policy/1903/local_plan

² Available at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/201369/neighbourhood-planning/2380/adopted-neighbourhood-plans>

³ Warrington's PDO is available at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/201368/local-plan-2017/2274/local-plan-review>

to grow Cheshire and Warrington's GVA to £50 billion per annum by 2040 and published a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) in 2014 intended as a road map to achieving this growth. The SEP was later updated in 2017⁴ and the update outlines that a further series of delivery plans and strategies that will cover Transport, Skills and Education, Energy, Quality of Place, Digital, Housing, and Science and Innovation will be produced that will guide development within the LEP.

3.6 Transport for the North (TfN)

TfN, comprising WBC and 18 other transport authorities in the North of England, was created as a pan-Northern Partnership Board of civic and business leaders. On April 2018 the Sub-national Transport Body (Transport for the North) Regulations 2017 came into force, establishing TfN as the first Sub-National Transport Body in the country. It aims to create a thriving North of England, where modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life. TfN published its Strategic Transport Plan (STP) in early 2019. This is a statutory document.

- 3.7 The STP is centred on seven Strategic Development Corridors, and Warrington is part of two of these. The Central Pennines Corridor aims to improve east-west transport connectivity in order to support economic growth. It will also support, align and integrate with pre-existing Local Transport Plans. The Wales and West Corridor aims to improve connectivity and support the growth of Manchester Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zones, Atlantic Gateway, North Wales Arc, Port of Liverpool and Crewe HS2 Hub.

3.8 Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area (Mid-Mersey HMA)

WBC along with Halton Borough Council and St Helens Council form the Mid-Mersey HMA. These authorities work in partnership and published a Mid Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (January 2016)⁵ to establish the housing market and need in the three boroughs. Warrington's SHMA was updated in 2017⁶ to inform the Preferred Development Option consultation (Mid-Mersey SHMA Update – Warrington Addendum) taking into account updated population and household projections.

- 3.9 WBC has subsequently prepared a Local Housing Need Assessment in support of the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan. This reflects the new

⁴ Available at <http://www.871candwep.co.uk/content/uploads/2017/07/Revised-SEP.pdf>

⁵ Available at <https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/planning/policyguidance/pdf/newdalp/evidence/SHMA-Mid-Mersey.pdf>

⁶ Available at https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/201368/local_plan_review/2347/local_plan_review_-_supporting_documents

planning policy context established in the updated NPPF and NPPG, but still considers the context of the Mid-Mersey HMA.

- 3.10 St Helens Council and Halton Borough Council now form part of the Liverpool City Region. A housing needs assessment has been undertaken for the Liverpool City Region as a whole. This still recognises the Mid-Mersey HMA and the need for close working with WBC. St Helens have subsequently prepared a Local Housing Need Assessment in support of their Local Plan Review.

4. Strategic Planning Matters

4.1 Housing

The Proposed Submission Version Local Plan sets a minimum housing requirement of 18,600 new homes for the period between 2017 and 2037. This requirement is derived from the Council's Local Housing Need Assessment, published in April 2019. The Proposed Submission Version Local Plan provides sufficient land for an additional 10% on top of this requirement to ensure flexibility of supply.

- 4.2 The majority of new homes will be delivered within the existing main urban area of Warrington, the existing inset settlements and other sites identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which together have identified deliverable capacity for a minimum of 13,817 new homes.
- 4.3 In order to meeting Warrington's housing requirement, the following sites will be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for development:
- Garden Suburb – minimum capacity of 6,490 homes of which a minimum of 4,201 homes will be delivered in the Plan Period. This is in addition to the 930 homes within the allocation which already have consent and are included in the capacity of the existing urban area set out above.
 - South West Warrington Garden Village – minimum capacity of 1,631 homes to be delivered in full in the Plan Period.
 - Sites adjacent to the borough's outlying settlements - minimum of 1,085 homes.
- 4.4 Other authorities in the Mid-Mersey HMA are also progressing with the preparation of their Local Plans and together, it was agreed that each authority will either meet or exceed its objectively assessed need for housing within its boundary. The authorities will keep housing need under review and address any issues arising in the future through the Duty to Co-operate.

4.5 WBC has also indicated that it is not able to accommodate any unmet housing need from other adjacent Local Authorities given it requires release of Green Belt to meet its own housing requirement. Similarly, WBC will not be seeking for any other adjacent authorities to contribute to meeting its own needs in recognition of their respective Local Plans either having released Green Belt, or proposing to release Green Belt, to meet their own requirements.

4.6 The Cheshire and Warrington LEP is also working on a Housing Delivery Plan and Strategy which will support growth and the delivery of housing within the LEP⁷. WBC will continue to work with Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils within the LEP to enable housing delivery to meet the needs identified through their respective Local Plans.

1. WBC, Halton Borough Council and St Helens Council, authorities which are part of the Mid-Mersey HMA, agree to meet their Objectively Assessed Need for Housing within their boroughs. The authorities will however keep housing need under review as they progress with their Local Plans and address any issues arising in the future through the Duty to Co-operate.
2. WBC is unable to accommodate any unmet housing need from other adjacent Local Authorities and will not be seeking for these authorities to meet any of its own need.

4.7 Employment

4.8 *WBC Employment Development Needs Assessment (EDNA):*

WBC commissioned an Employment Development Needs Assessment in 2016 which has subsequently been updated in 2019 to support the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan. This indicates that the Borough has a further employment land need of 362 ha to 2037.

4.9 The Council can demonstrate a realistic supply of 91 hectares in the urban area. The Council's masterplanning work demonstrates the potential for a further 27 hectares of employment land, primary within and in proximity to the Town Centre.

4.10 The Proposed Submission Version Local Plan proposes the following new employment locations to be removed from the Green Belt:

- land at M56 Junction 9 within the Garden Suburb - 116ha;
- Land at Warrington Waterfront comprising of Port Warrington and wider land within the waterfront - together providing 99.8ha; and

⁷ <http://www.871candwep.co.uk/content/uploads/2017/07/Revised-SEP.pdf>

- a westward extension of Omega within St Helens -31.2 ha.

4.11 All of the proposed employment sites are within WBC's administrative area, apart from the westward extension of Omega which will be within St Helens. WBC has agreed with St Helens in principle that this site should contribute to meeting Warrington's employment needs, subject to resolving access issues. Further detail is provided under section 4.20 within the Strategic Sites section below.

3. WBC has agreed, in principle that the western extension of Omega in St Helens will contribute to meeting Warrington's employment needs subject to resolving access issues.

4.12 *The Cheshire and Warrington LEP:*

The SEP (2017) published by the Cheshire and Warrington LEP identifies the key opportunities that will drive the ambition to grow the sub-region economy's GVA to £50 billion per annum by 2040. These include the Cheshire Science Corridor, which lies partially in Warrington, and the opportunity to create 'Warrington New City'. This reflects the prospect for further growth within the borough and builds on Warrington's original New Town status. The LEP intends to publish a series of plans and strategies that will aid to achieve this growth. WBC will continue to work collaboratively with the partners of the LEP in order to support economic growth in the sub-region.

4.13 *Atlantic Gateway:*

WBC along with other authorities in the Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and Greater Manchester are part of the Atlantic Gateway, a privately driven initiative focused on driving growth and productivity along the corridor between Liverpool and Manchester (Atlantic Gateway and the Northern Powerhouse). The Atlantic Gateway published its Business Plan in 2012⁸ which seeks to attract investment in infrastructure, and logistics and science and innovation in order to promote sustainable economic growth in the corridor. WBC will continue to work collaboratively with the partners of the Atlantic Gateway in order to support economic growth.

4.14 Green Belt

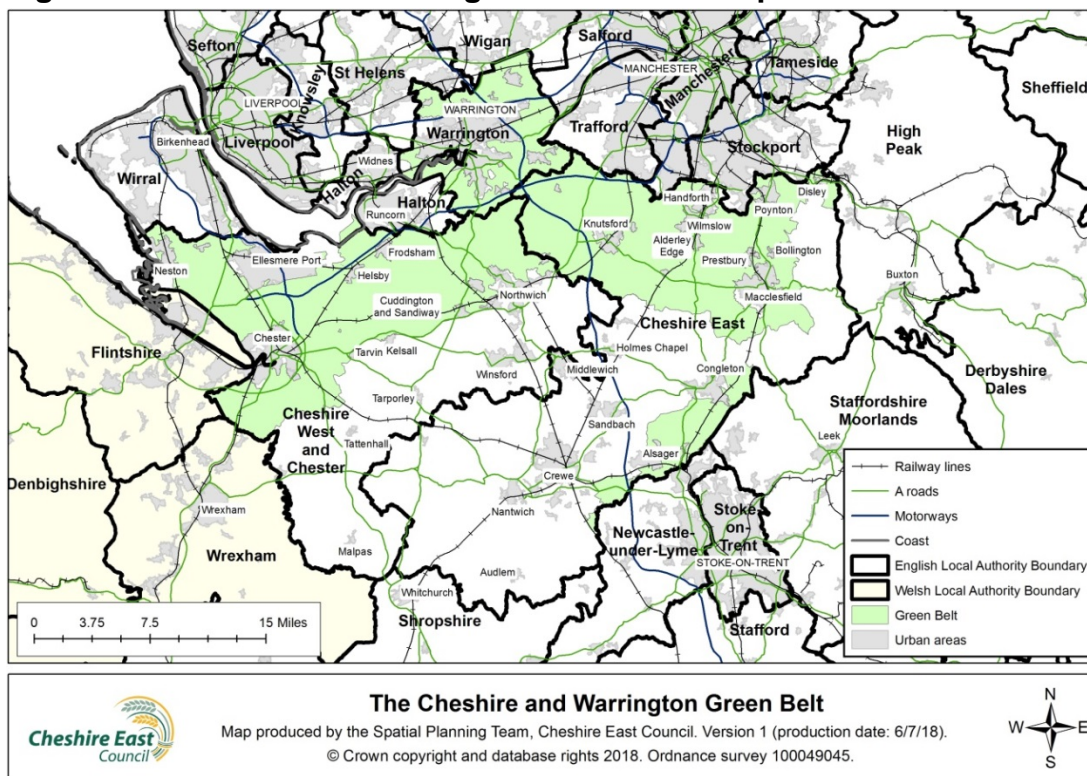
WBC shares its Green Belt boundaries with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Salford, St Helens, Trafford and Wigan Councils. As part of WBC's Local Plan review, it became increasingly apparent that WBC is

⁸ Available at http://www.atlanticgateway.co.uk/_assets/downloads/ag-businessplan.pdf

not able to identify sufficient land to meet its housing and employment needs in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework without the release of Green Belt land. This meant that the Council undertook a review of its Green Belt boundaries which forms key evidence for its Local Plan Review.

- 4.15 Co-operative working is an essential part of the Green Belt review as other parcels are adjoined to the Green Belt in neighbouring authorities and for the role that the Green Belt plays in preventing the merging between towns. WBC informed neighbouring authorities of the intention to undertake a Green Belt Assessment in regular Duty to Co-operate meetings and also consulted with them regarding the methodology. All adjacent Local Authorities consulted considered WBC's Green Belt methodology to be an appropriate basis to undertake the Green Belt review. The one exception is with regard to Halton Borough Council where detailed comments will need to be addressed as part of Duty to Co-operate discussions.
- 4.16 During the Duty to Co-operate discussions, it also became clear that both WBC and Halton Borough Council are proposing adjacent Green Belt release for development which may compromise the function of the Green Belt. In Warrington's case, this is in relation to the South West Urban Extension (proposed Green Belt release for around 1,600 homes) which is situated adjacent to the Green Belt land in Halton proposed for Green Belt release. Therefore, there is a requirement for Halton Borough Council and WBC to ensure appropriate separation between the proposed Green Belt releases adjacent to the boundary between the two boroughs. WBC will continue to work with Halton Borough Council to resolve this matter as it progresses on with its Local Plan Review.

4.17 **Figure 3: Cheshire and Warrington Green Belt Map**



4. All adjacent Local Authorities have been consulted on Warrington's Green Belt methodology and consider it an appropriate basis to undertake the Green Belt review.

The one exception is with regard to Halton where detailed concerns will need to be addressed as part of Duty to Cooperate discussions.

5. As WBC and Halton Borough Council progress with their Local Plans, there is a requirement for joint co-operative working to ensure adequate separation between the proposed Green Belt releases between the two boroughs and to address any matters arising from both authorities' Green Belt reviews.

4.18 Strategic Housing and Employment Sites

4.19 *Garden City Suburb:*

The Proposed Submission Version Local Plan identifies the Garden Suburb as one of the areas of growth within the Preferred Development Option. It is proposed to comprise Green Belt release to provide for a new suburb of around 7,000 homes, a new neighbourhood centre and a major employment site at the junction of the M6 and M56. This site has the potential to have implications on the M6 and M56 motorway as identified by Highways England and on the road network in Cheshire East and in Cheshire West and Chester.

The southern extent of the Garden Suburb lies close to the boundary between Warrington and Cheshire East.

- 4.20 WBC has undertaken transport modelling work as recommended by Highways England to identify the likely impacts of the development on the road networks. Together with Highways England's own modelling, this has identified key mitigation requirements which have been reflected in the draft Local Plan policy wording. WBC will continue to work with Highways England as the Garden Suburb proposals are worked up in more detail to ensure that there is a full understanding of the impact of proposed development (both cumulative and individual); to agree the detail of the required mitigation measures; and to ensure that these measures are both feasible and deliverable. WBC will share the output from that work and continue to work with neighbouring authorities, including Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, to address any issues arising from the allocation of the site in the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan through the Duty to Cooperate.

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| 6. | WBC will continue to work with Highways England to ensure there is a full understanding of the impact of the proposed Garden Suburb development (both cumulative and individual) and to agree the detail of the required mitigation measures. |
| 7. | WBC will share the output from the modelling work and seek to address any issues arising from the allocation of the Garden Suburb in Cheshire East and in Cheshire West and Chester, including agreeing the mechanisms by which any mitigation measures within Cheshire East will be carried out, and in Cheshire West and Chester if required. WBC will provide information on the potential changes to commuting and migration flows arising as a result of the overall development proposed through the Local Plan particularly as they relate to Cheshire East, and provide greater clarity on their likely consequences for the transport infrastructure and networks within Cheshire East. This will form part of the same Duty to Co-operate discussions. |

4.21 *Waterfront/Port Warrington/South-West Urban Extension:*

WBC has identified the Waterfront (which would open up new development in an area predominantly within the existing urban area but with Green Belt release to facilitate employment development at Port Warrington) and the South West Urban Extension (which would facilitate Green Belt release to provide a new urban extension of around 1,600 homes) as areas for development in the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan.

- 4.22 When considered with the proposed allocations in the emerging Halton Local Plan, it is apparent there are potential issues with regard to the local transport network and potential issues in respect of the relationship between residential

and employment uses. This is in addition to the Green Belt issue identified in the Green Belt section above.

- 4.23 The Council has undertaken transport modelling work to assess the impacts of the development on the transport network and will continue to work with Halton to resolve any issues arising from the allocation of these sites for development in both Local Plans through Duty to Co-operate discussions.

8.	There is a requirement for Halton Borough Council and WBC to ensure strategic allocations on either side of the boundary in proximity to the Manchester Ship Canal do not prejudice key objectives of the respective local Plans.
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4.24 *Omega and future employment site served by J8 M62:*

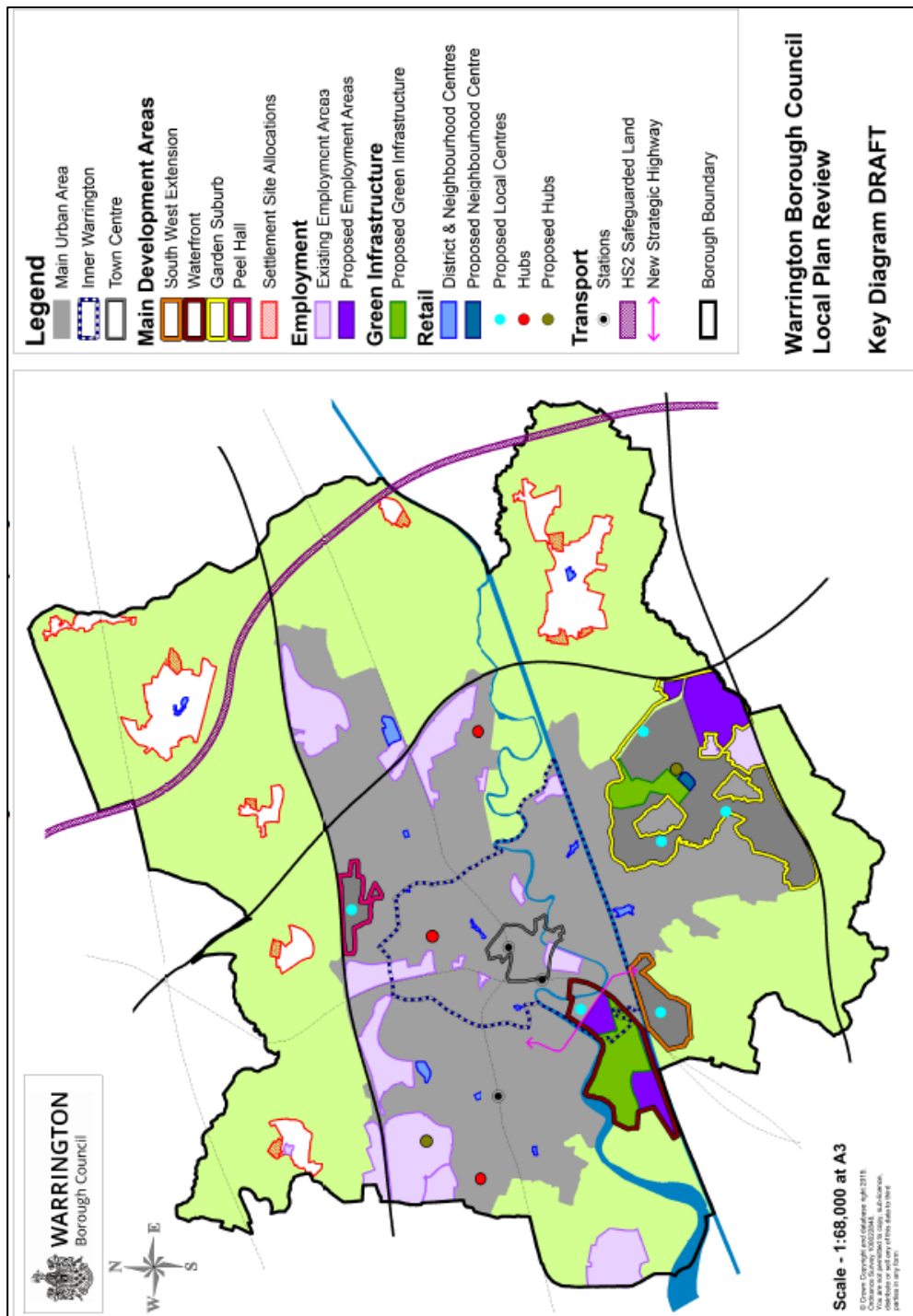
St Helens Council is currently progressing with its new Local Plan intended to guide development for the period 2020-2035. St Helens' Submission Draft Local Plan was subject to an eight week period of public consultation between January 2018 and March 2018. St Helens' Submission Draft Local Plan includes a proposal to extend Omega, an employment and housing site within WBC, westward into St Helens' boundary for employment purposes. WBC responded to this consultation agreeing that the western extension can, in principle, be part of the WBC's employment land supply in the forthcoming new Warrington Local Plan. However as the Council had undertaken a programme of improving local and strategic highway networks and the public transport network to facilitate the sustainable growth of Omega as a strategic employment and housing location, any future expansion from St Helens will need to address any additional highway issues arising. WBC is concerned about further growth at Omega over and above this extension and considers that this would require significant infrastructure improvements to the local and Strategic Road network. WBC will continue to work with St Helens, in liaison with Highways England, in order to address any matters arising from the potential allocation of this site in St Helens' Local Plan and has taken account of the proposed western extension of Omega in its transport modelling work.

9.	WBC has agreed, in principle that the western extension of Omega in St Helens will contribute to meeting Warrington's employment needs, subject to addressing access issues, in liaison with Highways England. Consideration of any additional sites will require cumulative traffic assessment of the impact on J8 M62 and will require a consistent approach between the two Local Plans.
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4.25 Peel Hall

WBC is proposing to allocate Peel Hall, a Green Field site but within the existing urban area, to provide a residential led development of 1,200 homes, supported by a local centre and local employment development.

4.26 **Figure 4: WBC Proposed Submission Version Local Plan Key Diagram Showing Strategic Housing and Employment Sites**



4.27 *Parkside (St Helens)*

The sites at Parkside West and East lie within St Helens Borough immediately abutting the boundary with Warrington. They have a combined area of over 200 hectares and benefit from a location at the heart of the north-west motorway network, a skilled local labour supply, and the scope for direct rail access to the West Coast Main Line and the east-west ('Chat Moss') line.

4.28 The St Helens Submission Draft Local Plan proposes to remove the Parkside sites from the Green Belt and to allocate them for a range of employment uses. Proposals have been developed to create a new link road to provide access from the sites onto junction 22 of the M6. The Submission Draft Local Plan for St Helens contains a range of policies to address the effects of the development at Parkside for example on infrastructure, local heritage and the environment.

4.29 The development will impact on key infrastructure within WBC, including the local and strategic highway network. It is therefore essential that WBC and SHBC work to ensure that these impacts are appropriately mitigated, in liaison with Highways England.

10. WBC and SHBC agree to work together, in liaison with Highways England, to consider any cross boundary infrastructure or other issues related to the development of the sites at Parkside West for a range of employment uses and Parkside East for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange and any other rail served employment development.

4.30 *Bold Urban Extension (St Helens)*

The emerging St Helens Local Plan identifies the potential to remove over 140 hectares of land at Bold from the Green Belt, to enable it to form a future new Urban Extension, with capacity for over 2,400 new dwellings. Whilst this area is within the Borough of St Helens, it is (at its nearest point) about 1 kilometre from the border with Warrington. It is expected that the development of the site would be informed by a master plan exercise. This would consider (amongst other matters) any effects of the development on transport infrastructure in Warrington (including junction 8 of the M62), in liaison with Highways England.

11. WBC and SHBC agree to work together, in liaison with Highways England, to consider any cross boundary infrastructure or other issues related to the development of the proposed Bold Urban Extension.

4.31 Transport

4.32 *Highways England:*

Highways England is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads. WBC has been co-operating with Highways England in preparation of its Local Plan Review and consulted them on WBC's PDO. Highways England raised concerns regarding the breadth and depth of available transport evidence, although they noted that the Plan was in its early stages. Since then work to develop WBC Multi Modal Transport Model has been completed and WBC is working positively with Highways England on key allocations for the Local Plan, particularly the Garden Suburb. Together with Highways England's own modelling, this work has identified key mitigation requirements which have been reflected in the draft Local Plan policy wording. WBC will continue to work with Highways England as the Plan's development proposals are worked up in more detail to ensure that there is a full understanding of the impact of proposed development (both cumulative and individual); to agree the detail of the required mitigation measures; and to ensure that these measures are both feasible and deliverable.

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| 12. WBC will continue to work with Highways England to ensure there is a full understanding of the impact of the development proposed in the draft Local Plan (both cumulative and individual) and to agree the detail of the required mitigation measures. |
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4.33 *Government's Road Investment Strategy: Post-2020 (RIS 2):*

The first Road Investment Strategy: 2015 to 2020 (RIS 1)⁹ covered investment in England's motorways and major roads (the 'strategic road network') during the 2015 to 2020 period. This was the initial step in a long-term programme to improve England's motorways and major roads. Highways England also published a Strategic Business Plan 2015 to 2020¹⁰ setting out how they would deliver the investment plan and performance requirements set out within the Government's RIS 1.

4.34 The Government is now in the process of developing a second RIS — known as RIS 2 — covering the period post- 2020 to continue long-term improvements to motorways and major roads. This includes commissioning a series of six new strategic studies to address the biggest challenges facing the road network. One of the studies announced was the Manchester North-

⁹ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-investment-strategy>

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/highways-england-strategic-business-plan-2015-to-2020>

West Quadrant study, covering junctions 8 to 18 of the M60. The study objectives were developed to assess and form a preliminary strategic case for improving the transport network in the region; define the intervention specific objectives that the study should seek to address; identify a long list of interventions which could meet the intervention specific objectives and undertake a high level assessment of the potential value for money, benefits and impacts of the different options; short list the better performing interventions; and prepare a Strategic Outline Business Case for the better performing interventions for consideration in the development of the second RIS.

4.35 *HS2/Northern Powerhouse Rail*

In autumn 2016 the government confirmed the alignment of HS2, which included the Hoo Green to Bamfurlong spur connecting the route to the West Coast Main Line (WCML) north of Culcheth. This was despite the councils continued opposition to this alignment due to it bypassing Warrington as an economic centre and the environmental impact on settlements to the east of the borough.

- 4.36 The council continues to lobby strongly for an upgrade of the WCML as an alternative to the route through the east of the borough and dialogue continues with HS2 and Department for Transport on these matters. However HS2 Ltd are currently working on the detail of the route in east Warrington in preparation for the Hybrid Bill planned for 2020. To this end the council is working with HS2 to make the case for the highest level of mitigation for residents in these areas on issues such as noise, visual impact and local accessibility of routes, should the route be constructed as the government still plan.
- 4.37 Recent announcements from Government and TfN on 'touchpoints' where HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) services could meet, were potentially significant steps forward in the long term aim of achieving a stop on NPR around Warrington. The emerging vision for NPR which sees a stop in Warrington is set out in TfN's recently published Draft Strategic Transport Plan as illustrated in Figure 5 below.
- 4.38 The council's preferred outcome is for a hub station located at an enhanced Warrington Bank Quay station serving both NPR and HS2 services.

4.39 **Figure 5: Northern Powerhouse Rail Network (Draft Strategic Transport Plan)**



4.40 *The Wales and West Strategic Rail Prospectus:*

The Wales and West Strategic Rail Prospectus outlines a vision for rail investment across the North West and North Wales that builds on work by the Constellation Partnership and Growth Track 360¹¹. The vision was created by public and private sector leads from Cheshire West and Chester, North Wales, Warrington and Cheshire East, with the backing of Liverpool City Region and Manchester City Region. The ambitions in the prospectus, to provide additional rail capacity and improve connectivity, are also identified in the LEP Transport Strategy.

4.41 *Rail Services Studies*

WBC has been working with partners including Transport for Greater Manchester and Merseytravel on studies to identify improvements to services on existing rail infrastructure. The recommendations of this work are intended to inform future Transport for the North or Department for Transport investment decisions. An area of this work that is nearing completion considers the Cheshire Lines Committee line that connects Liverpool and Manchester via Sankey for Penketh, Warrington West (new station opening 2019), Warrington Central, Padgate, Birchwood, and Glazebrook stations. This is currently a very busy line suffering regular delays and overcrowding and is expected to become more so with growth proposed in both Warrington

¹¹ Available at <http://www.871candwep.co.uk/content/uploads/2018/01/AI-8-HS2-West-and-Wales-strategic-rail-prospectus-NEW-DRAFT-v11.pdf>

and Greater Manchester. The study proposes a stopping pattern that would retain semi fast services to Liverpool, Manchester and beyond and provide a metro-like service across the Borough, increasing overall capacity and improving reliability on the line.

- 4.42 A similar study is currently being undertaken to identify service improvements on the Chat Moss and West Coast Main Lines.

4.43 *Cheshire and Warrington LEP:*

The Cheshire and Warrington LEP has published a draft Transport Strategy¹² which sets out the priority transport investments at a local and strategic level required to support the needs of a £50 billion a year economy. This includes improvements and additions to the road and rail network and better, more co-ordinated public transport services within the LEP area. WBC will continue to work with Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils to support the improvement of transport connectivity in order to support the LEP's growth aims.

4.44 Flood Risk and Water Management

4.45 *Warrington Borough Council as lead local flood authority:*

WBC is designated a lead local flood authority (LLFA) under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and has published a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2017 – 2023¹³. The Strategy sets out how WBC will endeavour to manage flood risk and ensures that WBC, the Environment Agency, United Utilities, other partners and neighbouring authorities work together to protect communities and business and other infrastructure from flooding. WBC will continue with its role in order to better understand and better manage flood risk within the Borough alongside other key risk management authorities

4.46 *Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009):*

The Environment Agency published the Mersey Estuary Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009)¹⁴ which gives an overview of the flood risk in the Mersey Estuary catchment (which includes Warrington, Liverpool, Wirral and St Helens) and sets out their preferred plan for sustainable flood risk management over the next 50 to 100 years. It also establishes flood risk

¹² Available on <http://www.871candwep.co.uk/content/uploads/2018/05/FINAL-Draft-Transport-Strategy-14.05.2018.pdf>

¹³ Available on <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/201080/streets-and-transport/2037/flood-risk-and-water-management>

¹⁴ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mersey-estuary-catchment-flood-management-plan>

management policies which will deliver sustainable flood risk management for the long term.

4.47 *Sankey Catchment Action Plan:*

WBC has worked with Halton Borough Council and St Helens Council to create the Sankey Catchment Action Plan which focuses on water management, water quality improvements and water dependent biodiversity within these authorities. The Plan provides for a long term integrated water management approach across the Sankey catchment. WBC will continue to work with these partners towards an integrated approach to Flood Risk Management and both authorities will include reference to this work in their respective Local Plans.

4.48 Environmental and Green Infrastructure

4.49 *Mersey Forest Partnership:*

WBC along with Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St. Helens, Cheshire West and Chester Councils are part of the Mersey Forest Partnership among other various organisations, community groups and businesses. The partnership continues to deliver an ambitious strategy benefitting the economy and businesses, natural environment, health and wellbeing and the local community of Merseyside and north Cheshire. The Mersey Forest team has been working with colleagues from Woodland Trust and the other Community Forests in the North of England to prepare the plan for the Northern Forest. This is a 25 year vision to plant 50 million trees across the North of England, stretching from Liverpool to Hull; delivering up to £2.2bn of GVA in an area home to 13 million people. The Mersey Forest has also facilitated a common commitment to green infrastructure across the City Region, across the local authorities and a range of businesses, local organisations and other partners. WBC will continue to work with the Mersey Forest Partnership.

4.50 *Great Manchester Nature Improvement Area (NIA):*

The Great Manchester Wetland is a diverse landscape of water, fen, wet grassland, wet woodland and lowland raised bog. It is a Nature Improvement Area covering some 48,000 hectares, focusing on the Wetlands of Wigan (The Flashes), the mosslands of Chat Moss and Risley Moss to the west and south west of Manchester and the Mersey Wetlands corridor stretching from Rixton to Warrington. A section of the NIA stretches from Warrington into Salford. Given the cross boundary nature of the designation, there is a requirement for co-operative working between WBC, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Salford City Council, Trafford Borough Council and Wigan Borough Council in order to preserve and enhance this ecological network.

13. A section of the Greater Manchester Nature Improvement Area stretches from Warrington into Greater Manchester. Given the cross- boundary nature of the designation, there is a requirement for co-operative working between WBC, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Salford City Council, Trafford Borough Council and Wigan Borough Council, together with Natural England, in order to preserve and enhance this ecological network.

4.51 *Cheshire Local Nature Partnership:*

WBC along with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Wirral Councils are part of the Cheshire Local Nature Partnership which along with other partners, seeks to create a vision and plan of action of how the natural environment can be taken into account in decision making. The LNP is currently undertaking a review of its strategic function and operation. WBC will continue to work within the partnership in order to improve the natural environment within the Cheshire region.

14. The Cheshire Local Nature Partnership is currently undertaking a review of its strategic function and operation. WBC is contributing to this review and is committed to strengthening its relations with the Cheshire LNP and ensuring effective strategic planning relating to nature conservation.

4.52 *Air Quality:*

The majority of Warrington has good air quality but there are areas close to the major roads and around the town centre that exceed national limits for nitrogen dioxide where two Air Quality Management Areas have been designated. In addition, there is growing concern over exposure to fine particulates (PM2.5), which meet the national targets but where levels are close to, and have marginally exceeded, the World Health Organization guideline value. An Air Quality Action Plan has been developed by WBC to try to improve nitrogen dioxide levels within problem areas and is expected to improve concentrations of PM2.5. Whilst actions mainly revolve around local transport and planning policies it is recognised that there are regional and transboundary sources outside of WBC control and that wider actions at regional and national levels can assist in improving local air quality and public health. WBC will continue dialogue with neighbouring authorities and national bodies, as appropriate, in the future in order to address air quality issues in the area.

4.53 Energy and Resources

4.54 *LEP Energy Plan:*

The Cheshire and Warrington LEP is preparing an Energy Plan which will provide a roadmap for the LEP and its partners to capitalise on the area's strengths in the Energy sector, address the challenges of transitioning successfully to a low carbon economy and putting Cheshire and Warrington at the forefront of the efforts to deliver affordable energy and clean growth as identified in the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper.

4.55 *Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study:*

WBC along with authorities in the Liverpool City Region, jointly prepared the Renewable Energy Capacity Study in 2011¹⁵. This study focussed on wind energy, and solely considered wind speeds and high-level constraints with a view to identifying areas suitable for multiple turbine installations.

4.56 *United Utilities Water Resources Management Plan and Revised Business Plan for 2015-2020*¹⁶

United Utilities published its Water Resources Management Plan and Revised business plan for 2015-2020 in 2015 which provides an assessment of the available water supplies and the demand for water by their customers over the period up to 2040. The business plan also sets out the proposed strategy for water resources and demand management to ensure that United Utilities have adequate water supplies to serve customers in the North West.

4.57 Minerals

WBC participates in the NW Aggregates Working Party and subscribes to the national Managed Aggregate Supply System through market monitoring and production of an annual Local Aggregates Assessment (LAA) in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in 2018. Matters related to minerals reserves and land banks are monitored and reported annually at this sub-regional level through the LAA. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), the Merseyside authorities, including Halton (working through Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS)), and the unitary authority of Warrington (known as the 'sub-region') are continuing to work together and have produced a combined LAA.

15. WBC agrees that it will meet its minerals apportionment target as identified in the latest annual Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Halton and Warrington – Joint Local Aggregate Assessment.

¹⁵ Part 1 available at

[http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/LC01_LiverpoolCityRegionRenewableEnergyCapacityStudy\(Stage%201\).pdf](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/LC01_LiverpoolCityRegionRenewableEnergyCapacityStudy(Stage%201).pdf)

and part 2 available at

[http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/LC02_LiverpoolCityRegionRenewableEnergyCapacityStudy\(Stage%202\).pdf](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/LC02_LiverpoolCityRegionRenewableEnergyCapacityStudy(Stage%202).pdf)

¹⁶ Available at <https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/water-resources/water-resources-management-plan/>

4.58 Waste

WBC participates in the North West Waste Network, which is a body of technical expertise that advises on implications of waste planning policy and guidance and monitors and keeps up-to-date a schedule of existing (and future) significant waste management facilities for the wider region. WBC commissioned a Waste Needs Assessment as part of the Local Plan review which was published in 2017¹⁷. The assessment forecasts the amount of waste arisings likely to occur through the Local Plan period up to 2037. It also identifies a need for some additional capacity for a range of waste streams. Where waste cannot be treated or disposed of within the borough and there is a need for it to be exported, the Council has liaised with other authorities under the Duty to Co-operate to ensure that this waste is accounted for elsewhere.

16. WBC's Waste Study and Policy Review (2017) indicated the need for additional capacity for waste streams for the Local Plan period 2017 – 2037. Where waste cannot be treated or disposed of within the borough and there is a need for it to be exported, WBC will continue to liaise with other authorities under the Duty to Co-operate to ensure that this waste is accounted for elsewhere.

4.59 Health and Well-being

4.60 *Cheshire and Merseyside Sustainability and Transformation Partnership:*

WBC is part of the Cheshire and Merseyside Sustainability and Transformation Partnership along with six Merseyside authorities, Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council. The partnership, among other things, is working together under Local Delivery Systems to improve the health and well-being of residents across these authorities.

4.61 *Warrington and Halton NHS Foundation Trust:*

Warrington and Halton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust provides health services within Warrington and Halton. WBC is engaging with and consulting with the Trust as it progresses on its Local Plan review.

4.62 The Trust, together with the Council and other health and social care partners who form 'Warrington Together', has confirmed the requirement for a new Hospital for Warrington. The current hospital is outdated and is not able to meet the future needs of Warrington's growing and aging population. It is

¹⁷ Available at https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/201368/local_plan_review/2347/local_plan_review_-_supporting_documents

currently reviewing the business plan for the hospital in the context of wider NHS service delivery across the north west region and in terms of its relationship with the Warrington CCG.

- 4.63 The Council is committed to working with the NHS Hospital Trust to deliver the new hospital either through redevelopment of the existing Lovely Lane Site or on a new site. This will be confirmed through a future review of the Local Plan.

4.64 *North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust*

The North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust provides health services in fifteen boroughs of North West England including Warrington. WBC is engaging with and consulting with the Trust as it progresses on its Local Plan review.

4.65 Digital Inclusion

4.66 *LEP Digital Plan:*

The Cheshire and Warrington LEP is preparing a Digital Plan which seeks to ensure that the sub-region has access to the digital infrastructure (superfast fibre broadband, 4G / 5G, etc) and the skills needed to use them.

4.67 *Connecting Cheshire:*

The Connecting Cheshire Partnership, made up of the four local authorities across Cheshire – Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington Councils was established to deliver faster broadband to areas where it had not been commercially viable to invest previously.

4.68 Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The Cheshire Partnership comprises Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Halton Councils who work in partnership on Gypsy and Traveller issues. The group agreed in 2017 to update the Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) to replace the 2014 version. The revised GTAA has now been published and it provides an evidence base to enable each local authority to comply with their requirements towards Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing Act 2004, the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015. There is an agreement from all the Authorities in the Cheshire Partnership that they will meet the need identified by borough in the GTAA.

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| 17. All Authorities within the Cheshire Partnership agree to meet their needs as identified within the Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2018 |
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4.69 Retail

The current retail hierarchy for the borough as recognised in WBC's Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 – 2027 identifies Warrington Town Centre as a sub-regional centre, and Birchwood, Stockton Heath and Westbrook as district centres. Chapelford; Honiton Square, Penketh; Culcheth Village; Orford Lane; Lovely Lane; Latchford Village; Fearnhead Cross; Poplars Avenue/Capesthorpe Road and Lymm Village are Neighbourhood Centres and there are also various Local Centres within the borough. The 2015 Retail and Leisure Study which provided supporting evidence for Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 – 2027¹⁸, indicated that borough's retail centres had no significant detrimental impacts on neighbouring town centres.

- 4.70 WBC commissioned a Retail and Leisure Study Update to support its Local Plan Review. The Study Area, which comprises 10 separate zones, stretches beyond the WBC's administrative boundaries to incorporate outlying areas, including zones within Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and St Helens. The updated study confirms there is no need for any significant additional retail provision in addition to local provision required to support the proposed strategic allocation sites – Garden Suburb; Waterfront; South West Urban Extension; and Peel Hall.
- 4.71 WBC will consult these neighbouring authorities at the publication of the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan along with the associated supporting documents including the Retail and Leisure Study Update in order to allow any issues arising from the findings of the study to be addressed as part of future Duty to Co-Operate discussions.

5. Governance and Management

- 5.1 WBC's first Statement of Common Ground will be approved by its Executive Board at the same time as the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan is published for consultation. Due to the need for other authorities to obtain the necessary formal approval to become additional signatories and to enable them to review the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan, the SoCG will be initially approved as a draft document. Delegated authority will be given to the the Lead Member responsible for Planning to approve the final version which will be published when the Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination, subject to their being no substantive issues arising following the consultation.

¹⁸ Available at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200564/planning-policy/1905/evidence-base/11>

- 5.2 The Statement will then be kept under ongoing review and will be updated at key stages of the Plan making process and/or when new key strategic issues arise which require amendments to the Statement.
- 5.3 The approval of minor amendments will be delegated to the Lead Member responsible for Planning. Updates at key stages of Plan preparation and any other significant amendments will be approved by Executive Board.
- 5.4 WBC is committed to working with neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders, which are listed in Appendix 1. The Statement of Common Ground will form a basis for this engagement and it will also be updated to reflect ongoing Duty to Co-operate discussions.

Appendix 1

Working with Partners

The Council is committed to working with neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders in the strategic matters outlined within this SoCG. These partners include:

- Adjoining and other neighbouring Local Authorities - Cheshire West and Chester Council; Cheshire East Council; Halton Borough Council; Wigan Council; Trafford Council; Salford City Council, St Helens Council; Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- Highways England
- The Environment Agency
- Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Mersey Forest Partnership
- Cheshire Local Nature Partnership
- United Utilities
- NW Aggregates Working Party
- North West Waste Network
- Cheshire and Merseyside Sustainability and Transformation Partnership
- Warrington and Halton NHS Foundation Trust
- The North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.
- Connecting Cheshire Partnership
- The Cheshire Partnership
- Transport for the North
- Department for Transport
- Atlantic Gateway
- The Constellation Partnership
- Growth Track 360

Appendix 2

Warrington Borough Council's Key Strategic Matters

Key Strategic Matter	Agreement or outstanding issues	Partner Bodies
1. Housing Need within the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area	WBC, Halton Borough Council and St Helens Council, authorities which are part of the Mid-Mersey HMA, agree to meet their Objectively Assessed Need for Housing within their boroughs. The authorities will however keep housing need under review as they progress with their Local Plans and address any issues arising in the future through the Duty to Co-operate.	Halton Borough Council St Helens Council
2. Housing Need across adjacent Local Authority Areas	WBC is unable to accommodate any unmet housing need from other adjacent Local Authorities and will not be seeking for these authorities to meet any of its own need.	Cheshire East Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Salford City Council Trafford Council Wigan Council Greater Manchester Combined Authority Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
3. Employment	WBC has agreed, in principle that the western extension of Omega in St Helens will contribute to meeting Warrington's employment needs subject to resolving access issues.	St Helens Council
4. Green Belt	All adjacent Local Authorities have been consulted on Warrington's Green Belt methodology and consider it an appropriate basis to undertake the Green Belt review. The one exception is with regard to Halton where detailed concerns will need to be addressed as part of Duty to Cooperate discussions.	Cheshire East Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Halton Borough Council St Helens Council

		<p>Salford City Council</p> <p>Trafford Council</p> <p>Wigan Council</p> <p>Greater Manchester Combined Authority</p>
5. Green Belt	As WBC and Halton Borough Council progress with their Local Plans, there is a requirement for joint co-operative working to ensure adequate separation between the proposed Green Belt releases between the two boroughs and to address any matters arising from both authorities' Green Belt reviews.	Halton Borough Council
6. Proposed Strategic Site Allocation - Garden Suburb	WBC will continue to work with Highways England to ensure there is a full understanding of the impact of the proposed Garden Suburb development (both cumulative and individual) and to agree the detail of the required mitigation measures.	Highways England
7. Proposed Strategic Site Allocation - Garden Suburb	WBC will address any issues arising from the allocation of the Garden Suburb in Cheshire East and in Cheshire West and Chester through Duty to Co-operate discussions.	<p>Cheshire East Council</p> <p>Cheshire West and Chester Council</p>
8. Proposed Strategic Site Allocation – Waterfront/Port Warrington/South-West Urban Extension	There is a requirement for Halton Borough Council and WBC to ensure strategic allocations on either side of the boundary in proximity to the Manchester Ship Canal do not prejudice key objectives of the respective local Plans.	Halton Borough Council
9. Proposed Strategic Site Allocation – Omega and future employment site served by J8 M62	WBC has agreed, in principle that the western extension of Omega in St Helens will contribute to meeting Warrington's employment needs, subject to addressing access issues, in liaison with Highways England. Consideration of any additional sites will require cumulative traffic assessment of the impact on J8 M62 and will require a consistent	<p>St Helens Council</p> <p>Highways England</p>

	approach between the two Local Plans.	
10. Proposed St Helens Local Plan allocation at Parkside	WBC and SHBC agree to work together, in liaison with Highways England, to consider any cross boundary infrastructure or other issues related to the development of the sites at Parkside West for a range of employment uses and Parkside East for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange and any other rail served employment development.	St Helens Council Highways England
11. Proposed St Helens Local Plan allocation at Bold	WBC and SHBC agree to work together, in liaison with Highways England, to consider any cross boundary infrastructure or other issues related to the development of the proposed Bold Urban Extension.	St Helens Council Highways England
12. Working with Highways England	WBC will continue to work with Highways England to ensure there is a full understanding of the impact of the development proposed in the draft Local Plan (both cumulative and individual) and to agree the detail of the required mitigation measures.	Highways England
13. Great Manchester Nature Improvement Area (NIA):	A section of the Greater Manchester Nature Improvement Area stretches from Warrington into Salford. Given the cross- boundary nature of the designation, there is a requirement for co-operative working between WBC and Salford City Council in order to preserve and enhance this ecological network.	Salford City Council Greater Manchester Combined Authority Natural England
14. Engagement with Cheshire Local Nature Partnership	The Cheshire Local Nature Partnership is currently undertaking a review of its strategic function and operation. WBC is contributing to this review and is committed to strengthening its relations with the Cheshire LNP and ensuring effective strategic planning relating to nature conservation.	Cheshire Local Nature Partnership
15. Minerals	WBC agrees that it will meet its minerals apportionment target as identified in the latest annual Greater	Greater Manchester Combined Authority

	Manchester, Merseyside, Halton and Warrington – Joint Local Aggregate Assessment.	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Merseyside Local Authorities and Halton Borough Council
16. Waste	WBC's Waste Study and Policy Review (2017) indicated the need additional capacity for waste streams for the Local Plan period 2017 – 2037. Where waste cannot be treated or disposed of within the borough and there is a need for it to be exported, WBC will continue to liaise with other authorities under the Duty to Co-operate to ensure that this waste is accounted for elsewhere.	To be confirmed
17. Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs within Cheshire	All Authorities within the Cheshire Partnership agree to meet their needs as identified within the Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2018	Cheshire East Cheshire West and Chester Halton Borough Council