



06 Constraints & Opportunities

6.1 Opportunities and Constraints

6.1.1 The assessment of the site and its surroundings has identified a number of constraints and opportunities which will be used to inform the development proposals.





Opportunities

- 6.1.2 The opportunities of the site and its context can be summarised as follows:
- The proximity and strong relationship with the existing urban edge to the north and east.
- The general lack of visibility of the site in the wider landscape;
- The distinct 'urban fringe' character of the site and its context;
- Lower lying, and visually discrete areas;
- Opportunities to provide new housing to meet local need;
- To provide new recreational activities for new and existing residents;
- Create a natural extension to the existing urban edge of St Helens
- The overall scale, which offers the potential for balanced development and retained open space;
- An existing woodland infrastructure that provides existing visual mitigation with a platform for extended visual mitigation consistent with the local landscape character, as well as boundary features.
- There are clear opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancement.

Constraints

- 6.1.3 The constraints of the site and its context can be summarised as follows:
- The mature trees and hedges on the site;
- Limited long range views to and from the site;
- Potential location of water attenuation features;
- Western boundary adjacent to the open countryside.
- The perception of 'gap' or 'separation' between the urban areas to the north and south along Burrows Lane; and
- Limited longer distance views across the site to the wider landscape to the north.



7.1 Vision

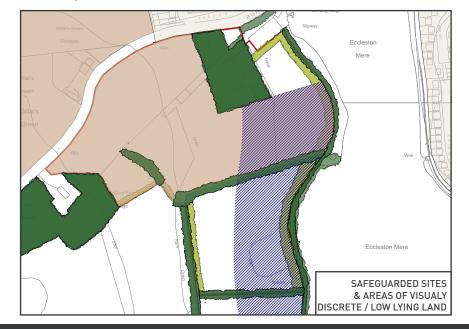
- 7.1.1 An attractive housing development with distinctive local character offering a choice of high quality homes to meet local needs.
- 7.1.2 Redrow's vision for the site seeks to meet the following goals:
 - Delivery of quality new family homes which make best use of available land and meet the housing needs of St Helens;
 - Achieve a choice of housing with a mix of house types, tenures and sizes to meet identified local needs;
 - Respect the character of the site and its setting;

- Provide high quality, accessible green spaces for the benefit of existing and future residents;
- Provide pedestrian and cycle connections through the site to enable access to green infrastructure within the site and wider Green Belt area (in line with the revised NPPF);
- Invest in the community with the creation of additional direct and indirect employment both during construction and after completion of the development;
- Create a safe and desirable place to live with a safe and attractive environment that builds upon the strength of the local community; and
- Protect existing residential amenity.

7.2 Approach

7.2.1 Redrow have developed an aspirational masterplan that meets these objectives and is presented later in this section. It demonstrates how the design and form of the development will respond sensitively to the characteristics of the site and the wider area, and explains the contribution that the site could make to Eccleston. It is intended that these ideas will evolve further in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders at the appropriate time.





7.3 Development Concept

- 7.3.1 A series of good design principles have been established to underpin the concept for the site.
- 7.3.2 The masterplan for the site sets out an indicative structure for the streets and development blocks based on a network of high quality, connected green spaces with new defensible green belt boundaries.
- 7.3.3 Hedgerows and trees have been retained where practicable and incorporated into meaningful landscaped areas and spaces.
- 7.3.4 A legible network of streets and lanes will create a permeable layout that will be easily navigable.

7.4 Working with the Contours

- 7.4.1 There are areas of the site that present topographical challenges due to views from outside of the site.
- 7.4.2 The Concept Plan has been designed to ensure that development parcels follow contours, keeping development within areas which are visually discreet.

7.5 Green Corridors

- 7.5.1 A series of Green Corridors run through the development, providing space for existing drainage and ditches where technically feasible, and the retention of existing hedgerows and trees where possible.
- 7.5.2 Non-vehicular routes will also be incorporated into the masterplan for the site, providing dedicated pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 7.5.3 Development blocks should be arranged so as to allow houses to positively address these corridors, ensuring they are well overlooked.









7.6 Spaces As Landmarks

- 7.6.1 The Concept Plan creates a number of opportunities for the formation of spaces along or adjacent to the primary streets that will act as memorable places.
- 7.6.2 A strong vista could be created from the arrival node along Burrows Lane towards the Public Open Space beyond, established by the natural alignment of the road and existing site constraints.
- 7.6.3 Legible nodes could also be formed where there are junctions and where streets cross green corridors.

7.7 Open Space

- 7.7.1 The Concept Plan outlines potential areas of public amenity space along the south and western edge of the site, adjacent to the existing countryside edge.
- 7.7.2 This will create a degree of separation from the open countryside to the west and create opportunities to provide a soft transition from rural to urban character.

7.8 Character

- 7.8.1 The character of the development is defined by the transition from urban to rural edge.
- 7.8.2 The high density parcels may have a formal structure of traditional perimeter blocks and back to back gardens, using a consistent building line to inform the arrival experience when entering the site.
- 7.8.3 The medium density areas of the development should help to create a formal development pattern which will make up the main body of the site.
- 7.8.4 The low density parcels will address areas of open space and the adjacent countryside in an informal, organic pattern. It is envisaged that this will create soft, crumbly edges to the development as viewed from beyond the site. Buildings could be less formally arranged with a looser urban grain, creating opportunities for incidental landscaping.





Illustrative Masterplan

- 7.9.1 The Illustrative Masterplan for the site proposes a development area of 6.15ha hectares and could deliver around 210 new dwellings at 34 dwellings per hectare.
- 7.9.2 The location of the site has had a considerable impact on the design of the Illustrative Masterplan. The aim is to provide a bespoke, high quality development that creates a new edge to the existing urban extent of St Helens.
- 7.9.3 The development could take an approach that allows for larger detached units to be placed along the edge of the site to help create an appropriate transition from the edge of settlement to rural character.
- 7.9.4 The illustrated urban form acts as a guide to inform the potential arrangement of perimeter blocks. The development parcels have been arranged to allow for defensible private gardens creating a clear demarcation between public and private realm. The layout also responds to the pattern of existing properties that lie within the local area

7.10 Green Infrastructure

- 7.10.1 The green infrastructure strategy for the Illustrative Masterplan is based on a multifunctional and connected landscape setting for the development.
- 7.10.2 This is based on a combination of new and existing vegetation along a series of green corridors and open spaces.
- 7.10.3 The site will also include the introduction of new areas of buffer planting along the eastern and western boundaries, to create a new, robust Green Belt boundary.
- 7.10.4 The illustrative strategy consists of the following key design features that underpin the proposals:
 - Existing hedgerows and mature trees to be retained and enhanced;
 - Proposed native hedgerow and native landscape buffer to the western and eastern boundaries;
 - Street trees on the primary route and ornamental and native trees within the public open spaces;
 - Ornamental planting to front gardens;
 - Focal points within the site to enhance legibility.

7.11 Streets

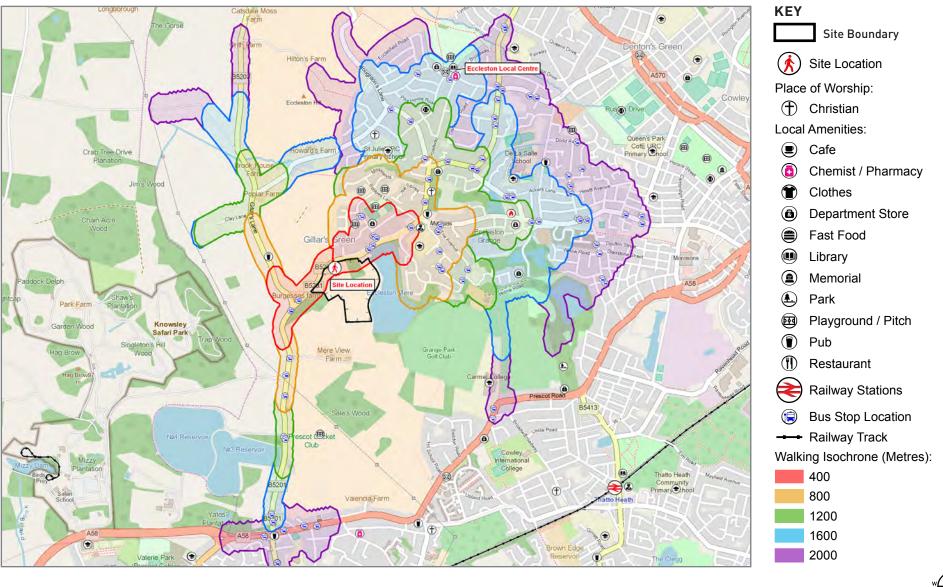
- 7.11.1 Streets have been conceived as social spaces. rather than as simply places for vehicles to drive through and park within.
- 7.11.2 The arrangement of buildings and spaces will act as a natural traffic calming features, offering the additional benefit of creating a place that includes visual interest and is pleasant for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 7.11.3 Cyclists are accommodated on the carriageway, as is recommended by Manual for Streets.

7.12 Play Space

- 7.12.1 A series of play areas could be delivered in the site, including a LEAP and areas of natural play.
- 7.12.2 The provision of formally equipped and natural areas of play as part of these proposals would enhance the facilities available in the area.









8.1.1 The land south of Burrows Lane site is located in a highly sustainable and suitable location at the south-western edge of Eccleston. Once developed, it will generate economic, social and environmental benefits in accordance with the three pillars of sustainable development, and will deliver the type, quality and quantity of new homes required to support the growth of St Helens over the Local Plan period.





Location and Accessibility

- 8.2.1 The site is located the south west of Eccleston, which is 2.8 km south west of St Helens Town Centre. The site is bound by the B5201 Burrows Lane to the north, which links to the local road network of St Helens to the east and with the A58 and national road network to the south west.
- 8.2.2 The plan opposite shows the locational sustainability of the proposed development, highlighting its accessibility to a range of key facilities and services. The plan indicates that the site is well connected by existing bus services, providing connections to local facilities and St Helens Town Centre, which has a range of employment, retail and leisure opportunities. There are also a range of local facilities within reasonable walking and cycling distance of the site.
- 8.2.3 The nearest bus stops to the site are on Burrows Lane, within 110m and 200m of the site, and these offer regular services to Eccleston and other higher order centres including Sutton Oak and St Helens. Eccleston Park train station is approximately 3km to the south, which links to Wigan and Liverpool.

Community Facilities

- The plan opposite illustrates the extensive range of key facilities and services located within the vicinity of the proposed development at Burrows Lane. The figure also highlights a 2km walking catchment around the site, considered an acceptable walking distance to many facilities, equating to a 25-minute walk. This catchment encompasses many local facilities, including schools, convenience stores, medical centre, and other facilities
- 8.3.2 In terms of retail uses, a Sainsbury's Local convenience store is located within 1.1 km of the site, and Eccleston Local Centre contains a pharmacy, Post Office and other unit shops. Beyond that there are Morrison and Asda Superstores located within 3km of the site, along with a range of other national multiples in St Helens Town Centre.
- 8.3.3 In respect of community facilities, Eccleston contains two primary schools, a secondary school, medical surgery, pub, and churches; whilst the urban area of St Helens contains 11 primary schools and 2 secondary schools.
- 8.3.4 Eccleston Mere provides a key recreation facility, which is directly adjacent to the site, offering sailing and angling. There are several other sport and leisure facilities within the vicinity including Burrows Riding School, Prescot and Odyssey Cricket Club, Taylor Park and Grange Park Golf Club.

Fconomic Benefits

- 8.4.1 The development of the Burrows Lane site will support the local labour market and will generate the following specific benefits:
- 8.4.2 The main economic benefits from the scheme can be summarised as:
 - Direct construction-related employment: The proposed development could support around 253-person years of direct employment within the construction sector. This translates into 42 full time equivalent jobs per annum over the estimated six year build programme.
- Construction impact in the supply chain: A further 78 jobs could be supported each year locally and across the wider region through indirect and induced effects during the construction phase.
- Contribution of the construction phase to economic output: The proposed development could generate an additional £40.5million of gross value added (GVA) for the regional economy during the construction period.
- Growing labour force: Approximately 229 economically active and employed residents are estimated to live in the new dwellings once the site is fully built and occupied. These residents, along with those who are not economically active, will be spending money in the local economy, as outlined in the next finding.
- Household spend: Once fully built and occupied, the households are estimated to generate expenditure in the region of £5.4million per annum.
- New Homes Bonus revenue: The proposed development also has the potential to generate in the region of £1.4million in New Homes Bonus revenue for St Helens Council
- Increased Council Tax income: The construction of the 210 new homes could generate around £351,000 per annum in additional Council Tax revenue for St Helens Council, once fully developed and occupied. When taken over 10 years, this site could generate an additional £3.5milion in Council tax receipts (at 2018/19 prices). Data published by Land Registry suggests average new build house prices in Eccleston are 70% above the St Helens average, which may generate elevated Council tax revenues.

[Land Registry Data accessed on July 2018 – comparing average house prices in Eccleston postcode area WA10 (£214,407) to St Helens district (£125,278)]

CONSTRUCTION BENEFITS

£28.3million

Estimated construction investment over a 6-year build programme





Direct construction roles and indirect/ induced iobs supported per annum during build phase



Economic Investment

- 8.5.1 The development of the Land south of Burrows Lane, Eccleston site would help to deliver significant benefits to the local economy. Notably, the development of up to 210 dwellings on site would secure a number of economic benefits including job creation, tax revenues to the Council and increased expenditure in the local economy.
- 8.5.2 Housing supply can also play a key role in the flexibility of the local labour market, which is an important component in local economic competitiveness and maintaining a dynamic economy. A shortage of housing or lack of affordability can act as a barrier to people accessing employment opportunities or result in long distance commuting and associated sustainability impacts.

Summary of Community Benefits

- The development of the site will also perform a social role by generating the following community benefits:
 - Provide a range of open market housing comprising various types to meet the needs of the local community.
 - Provide policy compliant affordable housing, which is 30% in St Helens. This would equate to the provision of 63 affordable dwellings on site.

- The provision of over 5 hectares of public open space for future residents and the wider community. The proposals for the site can deliver well integrated open space which is well connected to the existing settlement of Eccleston. This could also include the provision of play space, such as Locally Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP).
- The retention and preservation of the existing woodland area on site, which provides an important recreational role to existing residents in the local area.

The development proposals will assist in the provision of other facilities where there is an identified need, in accordance with development plan policies.

Redrow Community Benefits

8.7.1 As a well-established national housebuilder, Redrow Homes is committed to making a difference to the local communities where their sites are located. This includes ensuring that employment generated from their developments is sourced from and directly benefits the local area

OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

Economically active and employed residents estimated to live in the new housing



£5.4million

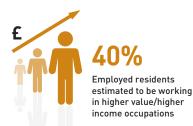
Annual household expenditure



£1.4million

Potential New Homes Bonus revenue to St Helens Council



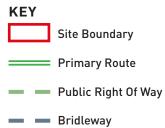


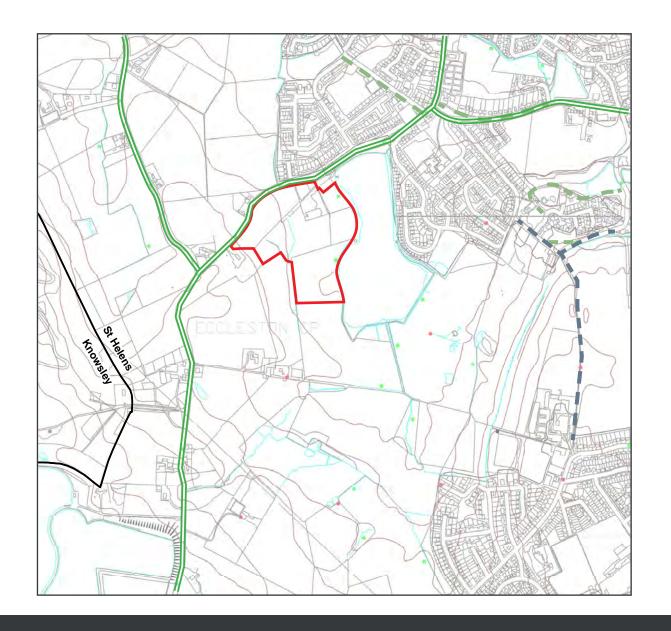


Estimated annual increase in Council Tax revenue

8.8 Highways

- 8.8.1 Initial assessments of the adjoining highway network undertaken by AT Transport Planning, confirm that there is sufficient capacity within the existing strategic highway network to accommodate this development of approximately 210 homes, with minimal highway improvements required within the highway boundary. Redrow will consult with the local highway authority on appropriate mitigation to the local highway network.
- 8.8.2 The site can take direct vehicular access
 Burrows Lane, to the north of the site, and
 there are also opportunities for footpath or
 cycle links with the Golf Club to the south
 east and Mere View to the south west, which
 would also improve accessibility to the
 services in Thatto Heath.
- 8.8.3 There are no existing highways constraints preventing the site coming forward. However, where required, off-site highway improvements will be undertaken in agreement with the Highway Authority.





8.9 Summary of Environmental Considerations

Landscape & Visual Impact

- 8.9.1 As confirmed within the landscape analysis, the site is not subject to any formal landscape designations, other than its location in the Green Belt which is addressed in Chapter 5.
- 8.9.2 Furthermore there are a number urbanising features within the wider landscape to the south and west of the site, which influence its character, including isolated residential dwellings; highways infrastructure; pylon lines; intense grazing pastures; and sport and recreational facilities (including the golf course; cricket club; and adjacent sailing/angling club).
- 8.9.3 In terms of visual impacts, the combination of the urban edges, lower lying undulations and wooded horizons serves to limit the overall visibility of the site in the wider landscape and its contribution to openness. Whilst there are a number of short distance views into the site, and a perceived gap between settlements when travelling along Burrows Lane, these can be maintained and mitigated through sensitive masterplanning.
- 8.9.4 As such, it is not anticipated that the development of the site will have a significant impact on landscape character or visual amenity.

Ecology and Trees

- 8.9.5 Development of this site will not impact upon any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. In addition, the site does not contain any ponds or other key habitat features and is instead characterised by habitats of low ecological value including arable fields, species poor hedgerows and semi-improved grasslands.
- 8.9.6 That said, initial surveys, undertaken by REC, indicate that the site offers potential habitats for bats, breeding birds, reptiles and other species and recommends that further survey work is undertaken to support any application at the site.
- 8.9.7 The site is not subject to any Tree
 Preservation Orders (TPO's), with the
 majority of trees and vegetation around the
 perimeter of the site, and between the large
 fields within the site. These existing trees
 will be retained and incorporated into the
 layout, whilst significant new planting will
 be proposed as part of the development, for
 biodiversity purposes as well as screening
 and landscaping.
- 8.9.8 Therefore, there are no ecological or arboricultural constraints preventing the development of the site and further survey work and appropriate mitigation will be provided where necessary.





Agricultural Land Classification

8.9.9 An initial Agricultural Land Assessment prepared by ADAS 5 confirms that the site is predominantly Grade 3b or non-agricultural. There is an area of Grade 3a land to the north of the parcel fronting Burrows Lane, albeit this shows evidence of historical disturbance and includes areas of Grade 3b where there is evidence of landfill or old mining activity. As such this is not considered to be a significant constraint, particularly given that much of the land surrounding St Helens is Grade 3 or higher, and therefore agricultural land issues will not prevent development of this site.

Archaeology and Heritage

- 8.9.10 There are no Conservation Areas or designated archaeological features either within or directly adjacent to the site boundary. The nearest Listed Building, the Grade II Listed Christ Church, is located approximately 600m to the north-east of the site. This heritage asset is some distance away from the Burrows Lane site, and is not readily visible from the site. Therefore, development proposals would not impact on this heritage asset.
- 8.9.11 A full archaeological assessment will be undertaken at the planning application stage, in order to identify if any mitigation measures are required, albeit at this stage there are no archaeological constraints that would prevent development going forward.









Ground Conditions

- 8.9.12 A desktop assessment suggests that the site has not been subject to intensive development, reflective of its use as agricultural pasture land, albeit there is evidence of potential historic industrial works in the northern part of the site; which will require further intrusive investigation at planning application stage, although this will not prevent development of the site.
- 8.9.13 A large part of the site is located in a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA), however this covers much of the authority, and does not prohibit development subject to the criteria of Policy LPC 14.

Flooding & Drainage

8.9.14 The site is entirely within Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of fluvial flooding and is suitable for all types of land use, including residential, in accordance with the NPPF, and therefore there are no flooding constraints preventing the development of this site.

Noise

8.9.15 Initial assessments suggest that noise will not be major constraint on this site, with the main source coming from the adjacent B5201 Burrows Lane, which is already well screened by hedgerows and planting, and will be strengthened within the proposed development. As such, there are no noise constraints preventing the development of the site.

Utilities

8.9.16 An initial assessment suggests that the development can utilise existing infrastructure surrounding the site without generating utilities or drainage issues.

Therefore, the provision of services will not constrain the development of the site.

8.10 Sustainability Conclusions

8.10.1 There is a compelling need to deliver the emerging development requirements of St Helens in an appropriate manner. The development of the Burrows Lane site would deliver a range of sustainability benefits, whilst creating no adverse local impacts. This section has demonstrated that the site benefits from no site constraints which would prevent the site coming forward for residential development and should accordingly be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing in the emerging St Helens Local Plan.





09 Deliverability

9.1 Deliverability

9.1.1 The site will make a valuable contribution with the delivery of up to 210 dwellings to meet the Borough's housing needs requirements as well as meeting the qualitative need to provide family and affordable housing within the area. It is therefore important that the site is deliverable in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.

9.2 Deliverability Criteria

- 9.2.1 The NPPF and NPPG outline how local authorities should identify specific, deliverable sites in the first 5 years of a Local Plan. To be considered deliverable, sites should, at the point of adoption of the relevant local development document:
 - Be available: there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership problems.
- Be suitable: offer a suitable location for development and would contribute to the development of sustainable and mixed communities.
- Be achievable: there is reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site at a particular point in time.
- 9.2.2 Achievability comprises a judgement about the economic viability of a site and the capability of a developer to provide housing within a defined period, taking into account marketing, cost and deliverability factors.
- 9.2.3 The revised NPPF further emphasises the importance of deliverability, with paragraph 83 stating that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns. The Burrows Lane site would present as a sustainable urban extension to Eccleston.

9.3 Available

- 9.3.1 Redrow Homes have legal control of the Burrows Lane site through a development option with the landowner, and are seeking to develop the site at the earliest opportunity. The site is therefore in the control of a major national housebuilder and could deliver 210 new homes that will be critical to meeting housing need during the Plan Period.
- 9.3.2 If the site were to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for housing, Redrow Homes would seek to develop the site immediately, which would contribute considerably to the Borough's 5-year housing land supply and deliver highly anticipated new homes early in the Plan Period. This commitment to delivery is demonstrated by Redrow's track record of the efficient delivery of high quality greenfield housing schemes across the North West.

09 Deliverability

9.4 Suitable

- 9.4.1 The Land south of Burrows Lane site is entirely suitable for housing development because it:
 - Is located within a sustainable and suitable location and can be developed now;
 - The site benefits from strong, durable boundaries to the north and east which will help to ensure that a permanent Green Belt boundary can be achieved. Additionally, a comprehensive landscaping strategy can be implemented on site to further strengthen the southern and western boundaries and round off the settlement to the south west of Eccleston:
 - Can accommodate satisfactory vehicular access, as well as providing pedestrian links to the existing infrastructure and facilities in the area;
 - Will deliver generous areas of open space for use by residents and the existing local community;
 - Is not subject to any ecological or environmental constraints which would prevent development on site; and
 - Is sustainably located in relation to nearby local facilities, within walking distance of high frequency bus services and local shops.
- 9.4.2 The site is therefore suitable, in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF.

9.5 Achievable

- 9.5.1 The delivery of up to 210 dwellings on the Burrows Lane site would make a significant contribution to the housing needs of the Borough, and help to contribute towards rectifying historic issues of under delivery since 2003. An assessment of the site constraints has been undertaken which illustrates that delivery of the entire site is achievable and deliverable, and a team of technical experts has been appointed to underpin this assessment and support the delivery of the site moving forward. Where any potential constraints are identified, Redrow has considered the necessary mitigation measures and required investment in order to overcome any deliverability barriers.
- 9.5.2 Redrow Homes have reviewed the economic viability of the proposal in terms of land value, attractiveness of the locality, potential market demand and the projected rate of sales for the Eccleston area. Additionally, they have also carefully considered the cost factors associated with the site including preparation costs and site constraints.

- 9.5.3 After undertaking this exercise, Redrow Homes can confirm that the development of the site is economically viable in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and NPPG. Indeed, the production of this Delivery Statement further demonstrates the confidence Redrow Homes have in this site being highly deliverable and achievable.
- 9.5.4 Consequently, Redrow Homes are committed to investing in the site and are confident that residential development can start to be delivered on site within 5 years.



10 Conclusion

10.1 Conclusion

- 10.1.1 The Burrows Lane, Eccleston site presents an exceptional opportunity to meet the future housing needs of St Helens in a location that would not undermine the purpose and function of the Green Belt. This Delivery Statement sets out the case for allocating the site for housing development within the emerging plan period, as well as the exceptional circumstances that support the alteration of the Green Belt in the Borough, a position the Council support.
- 10.1.2 The allocation of this site for residential development will deliver open market and affordable housing of a type, quantity and quality that will make a significant contribution to the future growth needs of St Helens.

10.2 Key Benefits

- 10.2.1 Accordingly, this Development Statement has demonstrated that the Burrows Lane site:
 - is entirely suitable, deliverable and viable for housing development; and will deliver a mix of housing types, including both market and affordable homes;
 - is sustainably located in proximity to a range of amenities, services and facilities;
 - is supported by clear exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release, including an urgent need for new market and affordable homes, and a shortage of available land within existing urban areas;
 - is entirely appropriate for Green Belt release and allocation as a residential development site, as it is well contained by existing physical features and forms a logical extension to Eccleston, without compromising the core purposes of the Green Belt;
 - is not subject to any technical or environmental constraints that would prevent the delivery of housing;

- can deliver a landscape led masterplan that complements the surrounding site context, and creates a high quality housing development;
- will provide a network of high quality open spaces, whilst also strengthening links to the existing open land to the south and west, improving accessibility to the wider Green Belt;
- will create a more defensible Green Belt boundary to the south west of Eccleston; and
- generates significant socio-economic benefits by providing housing choice, and stimulating job creation and economic investment. Increased consumer spending will also help to support additional shops and services within Eccleston, which could elevate its role as a Local Centre.

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