



Wigan♥
Council

Wigan Borough Local Plan

**Site selection assessment of sites
promoted for employment uses in
the Green Belt**

April 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Eight sites have been identified as having potential to meet need and demand within the borough for employment uses. These sites are:

- Land north of M6 Junction 26, Wigan
- Moss Industrial Estate Extension, Aspull Common, Leigh
- Bridgewater West, Astley
- Land west of Winwick Lane, Lowton
- Land east of Warrington Road, Hawkley
- Land at Wigan Road and Drummers Lane, Bryn
- Land south of Pennington, Leigh
- Land South of Astley Point, Astley

1.2 Each site has been considered against a site selection assessment and the test of grey belt. Those sites that are considered to be grey belt have then been subject to a Green Belt harm assessment. The outline of the approach to these assessments is set out below, with individual site assessments set out in Chapters 9-16.

2. Site selection assessment

2.1 Seven site selection criteria have been identified. These have been informed by the Greater Manchester-site selection criteria set out in the Places for Everyone Plan Site Selection Background Paper – July 2021. The seven site selection criteria are:

1. Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity.
2. Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated.
3. Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough,

4. Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton-in-Makerfield, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas.
 5. Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).
 6. Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan.
 7. Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.
- 2.2 When assessing sites against criterion 5, the 3 most deprived deciles from IMD 2019 have been applied. However, sites are only scored positively where the deprived communities are easily identified from the mapped data and where those communities are either adjacent to, or genuinely accessible to/from, the land parcel.
- 2.3 The site selection criteria have been developed to identify the most sustainable sites in the Green Belt. Sites that do not meet any of these criteria would not normally be recommended for further assessment, however all 8 sites identified as potential employment allocations have been considered for grey belt assessment.

3. Planning policy and guidance

- 3.1 Paragraph 143 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) sets out that the Green Belt serves the following five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- and

- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.2 New Planning Practice Guidance on the Green Belt, published in February 2025, makes clear that for purpose a) villages should not be considered as large built-up areas. In considering purpose b), this relates to the merging of towns, not villages. The towns in the borough include Wigan, Leigh, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish and Tyldesley.
- 3.3 In addition, all adjoining districts, and Trafford Borough, have towns that are adjacent to, or influenced by, the Green Belt in Wigan Borough, including:
- In Bolton Borough – Blackrod, Horwich, Farnworth and Westhoughton
 - In Chorley Borough – Chorley
 - In the City of Salford – Eccles, Swinton and Walkden
 - In St Helens Borough – St Helens and Newton-le-Willows (incorporating Earlestown)
 - In Warrington Borough – Warrington
 - In West Lancashire Borough - Ormskirk and Skelmersdale.
 - In Trafford Borough – Urmston and Partington
- 3.4 In terms of purpose d) the definition of historic towns has been clarified by the Secretary of The State for the Environment in answer to a parliamentary question (Hansard in 1988) that the purpose of preserving the special character of historic towns is especially relevant to the Green Belts of York, Chester, Bath, Oxford and Cambridge.
- 3.5 For the purposes of this assessment no other historic settlements or villages will be considered as ‘historic towns’ in the context of Green Belt purpose d).

4. Grey belt assessment

- 4.1 The concept of grey belt was introduced in the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024. It is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d).
- 4.2 Planning Practice Guidance on the Green Belt, published in February 2025, provides advice on the role of the Green Belt in the planning system. It assists in making judgements as to whether land is ‘grey

belt' land, suggesting that consideration should be given to the contribution that assessment areas make to Green Belt purposes a), b) and d) only. It also assists with contribution descriptors and ratings; these are based on strong, moderate, weak or none. These are set out in Appendix 1.

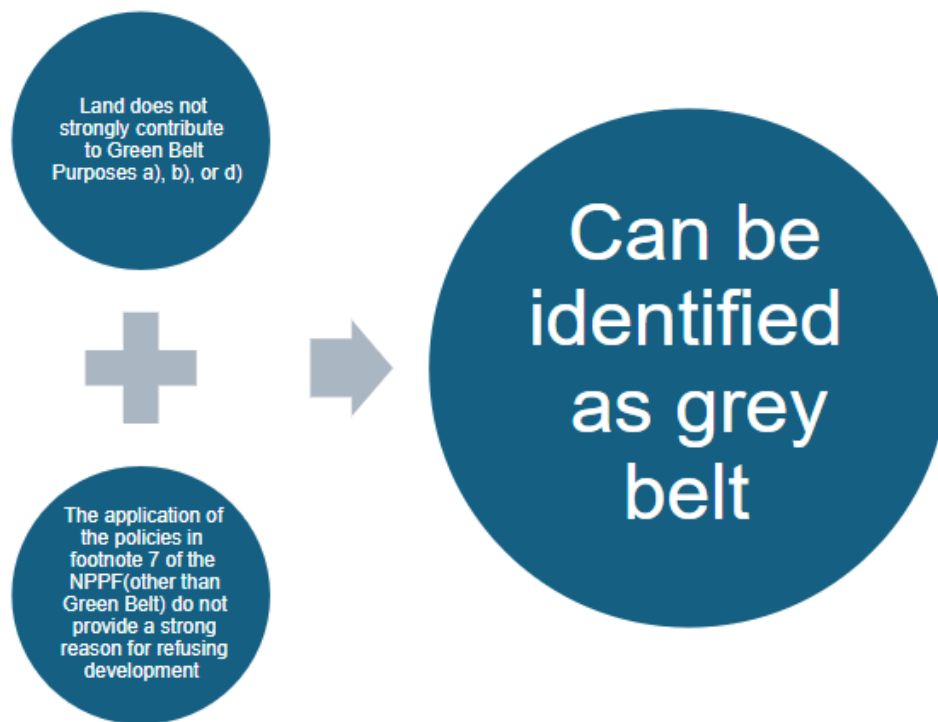
- 4.3 It also questions whether the site or parcel is known to be previously developed land and whether it is not considered to strongly contribute to any of the established Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d). Consideration is also given to any previous area wide Green Belt assessments undertaken.
- 4.4 Additionally, the PPG advises that the site or parcel should not include any areas or assets that are set in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt). If not, the site should be considered to meet the definition of grey belt.
- 4.5 Green Belt Purposes c) and e) are not considered when determining if land is grey belt so they have not been assessed or included here. Whilst consideration of Purpose d) is required, the guidance suggests that where there are no historic towns in the plan area, it may not be necessary to provide detailed assessments against this purpose. On this basis, a 'no contribution' has been applied to all parcels within the assessment, so it is not shown in the assessments set out in chapters 8-15.

Assessing whether land is grey belt

- 4.6 As set out in the latest Green Belt Planning Practice Guidance: Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 64-007-20250225
- 4.7 In accordance with Planning Practice Guidance, any assessment area that is not judged to strongly contribute to any one of purposes a), b), or d) can be identified as grey belt land, subject to the exclusion of land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development. This is illustrated in Figure 1.
- 4.8 Footnote 7 relates to habitats sites; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

- 4.9 Our grey belt assessment of the sites against purposes a) and b) have been based on the guidance set out in Planning Practice Guidance and informed, where relevant, by the Greater Manchester-wide Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment 2016, undertaken by LUC in support of the Places for Everyone Plan.

Figure 1: When land can be identified as grey belt



5. Green Belt harm assessment

- 5.1 Only those promoted sites that meet at least one of the site selection criteria and meet the test of grey belt will be taken forward and assessed for Green Belt harm.
- 5.2 Our assessment of those promoted sites against Green Belt harm has been informed by the Stage 2 Greater Manchester Green Belt Study September 2020 undertaken by LUC in support of the Places for Everyone Plan.

6. Consideration of 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt

- 6.1 As made clear in NPPF paragraph 155, meeting the grey belt definition does not make its development appropriate in the Green Belt, unless the following also apply:

- It would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
- There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.
- The development is in a sustainable location.
- For major developments including the provision of land for housing, the development proposed meets the 'golden rules' requirement set out in paragraphs 156-157.

6.2 The case for each proposed site allocation resulting in Green Belt release will be set out in the respective site allocation Topic Paper which will be published alongside the Publication version of the Local Plan.

7. Summary of site selection assessments for the promoted employment sites

- 7.1 A summary of the site selection, grey belt and green belt harm assessment outcomes for the 8 sites promoted for employment is set out in Figure 2. The individual site assessments are set out in chapters 8-15.

Figure 2: Summary of site selection, grey belt and site selection assessments of the sites promoted for employment

Promoted Site	Site Selection Met	Site Selection Criteria Met (1-7)	Previously Developed land	Grey Belt	Green Belt Harm rating (where assessed)
M6 Junction 26	Yes	3, 4, 5, 7	No	Yes	Moderate
Moss Industrial Estate Extension	Yes	7	No	Yes	Moderate
Bridgewater West	Yes	3	No	Yes	Moderate
West of Winwick Lane	Yes	3, 7	No	Yes	Moderate - High
Land east of Warrington Road	No	-	No	No	N/A
Land at Wigan Road and Drummers Lane	Yes	1, 2, 5	Yes	No	N/A
Land south of Pennington	No	-	No	No	N/A
Land south of Astley Point	No	-	No	No	N/A

8. Site assessment: Land north of M6 Junction 26, Wigan

Site description

- 8.1 The proposed site consists of 61.40 ha of land which is bounded to the west by the M6 motorway, to the north by Spring Road, to south by Orrell Road at its junction with the M6 Junction 26/ M58 slip road and, to the east by the communities of Kitt Green and Lamberhead Green.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	This parcel is largely a greenfield site. Historic mapping (1930s) shows one old mine shaft recorded on the site.	No
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	There are existing bus services close to the site along Orrell Road and Spring Road and Latham Lane, serving Wigan, Skelmersdale and St. Helens but there is no commitment for a bus service to run through the site, at present. The nearest rail stations are at Gathurst to the north and at Orrell to the south. Both are more than 1.1km as the crow flies and not considered to be easily accessible by walking.	No
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough	This is a large parcel of land with immediate access to the M6 Junction 26/ M58 slip road and with strong connections to the M6 corridor. The parcel boasts the attributes needed to attract a high-quality employment development for manufacturing and logistics, as set out in the Wigan	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
	Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment.	
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	Approximately one third of the site is within 800m of Pemberton town centre.	Yes
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	This parcel is located close to two Lower Super Output Areas - Wigan 011C Kitt Green and Wigan 011D The Bell - which are both identified as being within the 11-20% most deprived areas in the country in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation.	Yes
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	The parcel would not facilitate the delivery of transport infrastructure projects identified in these strategies.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.	The development of the parcel is contingent on there being a link road from the A577 Orrell Road, at its junction with the M6 motorway at Junction 26, to Spring Road, Kitt Green. This would alleviate congestion on the local road network and will be of a standard suitable to serve the whole development and the Heinz and Martland Park	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
	employment area to the north-east. It will be expected to support bus access as well as walking, wheeling and cycling.	

- 8.2 The parcel meets at least one of the selection criteria (3, 4, 5 and 7) and as such it merits consideration against the purposes of the Green Belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>This parcel is adjacent to a large built-up area and includes features that weaken the land's contribution to purpose a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some existing development contained within the parcel – a row of houses and a farmstead. • There are urbanising features surrounding the parcel, including the M6 motorway, Spring Road and Orrell Road, and Latham Lane which cuts through the parcel. • The parcel is partially enclosed by existing development or these urbanising features, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development. <p>The parcel has some potential for urban sprawl to occur within the parcel.</p>	Moderate
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The parcel forms a finger or wedge of Green Belt between Wigan and the northern section of Orrell. The M6 motorway provides a firm barrier preventing the sprawl of the Orrell community eastwards.	Moderate

	<p>The parcel forms a small element of a wider Green Belt parcel separating Wigan and the town of Skelmersdale.</p> <p>The parcel is capable of development without the loss of visual separation between these towns because the Orrell urban area already forms the outer urban edge of Wigan along with the M6 motorway, which provides the physical barrier preventing the further merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between these towns.</p>	
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Test of 'grey belt'

- 8.3 This parcel is not known to be previously developed land; however, based on the purposes of Green Belt assessment undertaken above, the parcel is not considered to strongly contribute to any of the established Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d).
- 8.4 However, the parcel of land does include any area or asset that is set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt), which is an issue regarding potential for flooding. In the central area of the parcel and the northeast corner, flood maps indicate narrow bands of zones 2 and 3 which generally follow ordinary water courses; with a wider area of flood zone 2, to the rear of properties along Latham Lane. While the parcel does include areas at risk of flooding, the application of relevant policies relating to flooding and in scheme design can mitigate this risk. This is not considered to provide a strong reason for refusing or significantly restricting development due to the limited nature of the areas of flood risk.
- 8.5 The site is considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 8.6 This promoted site has been assessed to meet at least one of the site selection criteria and meet the test of grey belt so it will be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

Impact of proposed allocation on Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Harm Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel forms part of the Wigan urban edge. There are existing urbanising features within the site, including some small areas of ribbon development south of Latham Lane and Spring Road, plus allotments and school playing fields to the south-east.</p> <p>The M6 motorway runs along the western border providing a significant barrier feature that plays a strong role in inhibiting urban sprawl occurring beyond the area of the site.</p> <p>There is a sense of openness within the site but there are some few urbanising features, including along the south side of Spring Road, 105-121 Latham and some farm properties, which are set within a relatively flat predominately open farmland landscape, with hedgerows and some trees.</p> <p>The parcel is relatively self-contained area of open land, bordered by the existing urban edge on two sides (to the east and south) and the M6 motorway to the west and as such there is only the potential for further sprawl to occur to the north, and north-west beyond Spring Road.</p>	Relatively limited contribution to purpose
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The parcel consists of a narrow v-shaped wedge of land between the neighbouring communities of Kitt Green and Lamberhead Green to the east, Orrell Road to the south, with the communities of Orrell Post/along Gathurst	Moderate contribution to purpose

	<p>Road to the east, which is separated from the site by the M6 motorway. Given the level of coalescence that already exists between these settlements, particularly to the south of the proposed allocation, it does not play a significant role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between these settlements at this location.</p> <p>Release would result in closing the v-shaped wedge of Green Belt, which currently runs southwards to just short of Orrell Road. Urbanisation would be contained within the M6 motorway corridor and by Spring Road to the north. With a weak distinction from the urban edge and with existing linkages between settlements in the locality mean that the land has a stronger association with the urban area than the wider Green Belt.</p>	
Purpose c): Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>The parcel contains some characteristics of open countryside but has a relationship with the settlements of Kitt Green, Lamberhead Green and the communities to the south along Orrell Road. It also contains some urbanising development that compromises openness.</p> <p>Spring Road would provide a new clearly delineated boundary which would serve to safeguard the countryside from encroachment to the north and north-west.</p>	Relatively limited contribution to purpose

Purpose d): Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	This parcel does not make a significant contribution to the setting of any historic town.	No contribution to purpose
Purpose e): To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All Green Belt land is considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose	N/a

Impact on adjacent Green Belt

- 8.7 Negligible impact - development has no or negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt as it does not lead to the containment of any adjacent retained Green Belt land. There is however a small area between the parcel and the urban edge in the southeastern corner that comprises school playing fields, allotments and sports playing fields that is proposed for consequential Green Belt change through the Local Plan. It would otherwise result in a small 'island' of Green Belt. The result is a clearer or more consistent distinction between the remaining settlements and the Green Belt - resulting in a clearer or more consistent Green Belt boundary.

Potential to mitigate harm

- 8.8 Design and locate buildings, landscaping and green spaces to minimise intrusion on settlement settings, as well as creating a transition from urban to rural, using built density, height, materials and landscaping to create a more permeable edge.

Overall harm of release of proposed land:

Harm Rating	Moderate harm
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- 8.9 Release of land from the Green Belt would mean a moderate loss of contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes and a less significant loss of contribution to others and would cause a minor weakening of the integrity of land that remains designated as Green Belt.

9. Site Assessment: Moss Industrial Estate Extension, Aspull Common, Leigh

Site description

- 9.1 The proposed site consists of 10.80 ha of land to the north of Moss Industrial Estate at Lowton and is intended to be an extension of the existing industrial estate. The site is not adjacent to any residential communities but to the north is Pennington Flash, part of the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	There is no known significant previously developed land. 1930s historic mapping shows a sewage tank in a field in the southwest corner adjacent to Sandy Lane, but there is no evidence of this on 1920s map.	No
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	Bus services are available on St. Helens Road / Newton Road, but this is at least 500m from the nearest bus stop to the extension site.	No
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough	Whilst the parcel is not expected to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough, the site will help to accommodate need and demand for new small and medium sized industrial sites, as evidenced in the EMELA, and is close to the	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
	A580 East Lancashire Road corridor.	
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	The parcel is not within 800m catchment of any town centre.	No
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	Hesketh Meadows, an area immediately to the west of the parcel, is in the third decile of IMD. Other areas further to the north and east are in the first, second and third deciles but communities within these areas do not have a strong connection with the parcel.	No
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	There are no significant new transport infrastructure projects identified in this location.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide opportunity to extend site significantly	The parcel is considered as an extension to the existing employment site, which would help accommodate identified need and demand for small and medium sized industrial uses without causing any major disbenefits.	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
without causing any major disbenefits.		

- 9.2 The site meets at least one of the selection criteria (7) and as such it merits consideration against the purposes of the Green Belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel is adjacent to a large built-up area, including the existing industrial estate, and includes features that weaken the land's contribution to purpose a), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Nature Reserve at Pennington Flash, which is in close proximity to the north of the parcel, has a physical feature that would restrict and contain any future development. • Existing development including farmhouses and other buildings, both within and adjacent to the parcel. • The existing industrial estate to the south is also an urbanising influence on the parcel. 	Moderate
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>Development within this parcel would constitute a small extension to the existing industrial estate. The parcel only marginally forms part of a gap between the towns of Golborne / Lowton East and Leigh and does not make a significant contribution to visual separation. Pennington Flash and associated areas serve to maintain the openness in this location.</p>	Weak

Test of 'grey belt'

- 9.3 This site is not known to be previously developed land; however, based on the purposes of the Green Belt assessments undertaken above, the site/ parcel is not considered to strongly contribute to any of the established Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d).
- 9.4 Additionally, the parcel of land does not include any areas or assets that are set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt), therefore, the site is considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 9.5 This promoted site has been assessed to meet at least one of the site selection criteria and meet the test of grey belt, so it has been taken forward to be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

Impact of promoted site on Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Harm Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	This parcel is adjacent to the urban edge at Aspull Common, Lowton. The parcel plays a very limited role in maintaining the separation between Lowton and Abram communities due to the presence of significant separating features i.e. Pennington Flash and the significant distances between the Lowton and Abram.	Limited contribution
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Development would result in a limited narrowing of a wide gap between Lowton and Abram communities.	Relatively limited contribution
Purpose c): Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel is open but has a proposed usage that will strengthen its relationship with the settlement. There is also some limited urbanising development (farmhouses and associated buildings) along the eastern boundary of the site.	Moderate

Purpose d): Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	This parcel does not make a significant contribution to the setting of any historic town.	No contribution
Purpose e): To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All Green Belt land is considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose	N/a

Impact on adjacent Green Belt

- 9.6 Development has no or negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt as it does not lead to the containment of any adjacent retained Green Belt land and it results in no significant change in strength of distinction other land in the Green Belt (i.e. resulting in no significant change in strength of Green Belt boundary).

Potential to mitigate harm

- 9.7 Define the Green Belt edge using a strong, natural element which forms a visual barrier – e.g. a woodland belt and hedgerows, and by creating a transition from urban to rural, using built density, height, materials and landscaping to create a more permeable edge.

Overall harm of release of proposed land

Harm Rating	Moderate Harm
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- 9.8 Release of land from the Green Belt would likely result in a moderate loss of contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes and a less significant loss of contribution to others and would cause a minor weakening of the integrity of land that remains designated as Green Belt.

10. Site Assessment: Bridgewater West, Astley

Site description

- 10.1 The proposed site consists of 77.72 hectares of land south of the East Lancashire Road (A580) to the northern edge of the Bridgewater Canal and between Astley Green and the borough boundary with Salford, close to the urban edge of Boothstown.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	This is largely a greenfield site. However historic mapping (1920s) shows that the south-western corner of the site was the site of the former Astley Green Colliery, including a rail line and sidings.	No
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	The site is not well served by public transport, with limited opportunities identified.	No
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough	<p>Large site with direct access to the A580 in close proximity and with strong connections to the Regional Centre.</p> <p>The site boasts the attributes needed to attract a high-quality employment development for research and development and professional, scientific and technical sectors, as set out in the Wigan Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment.</p>	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	This land is not located within 800 metres of a town centre.	No
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	This land is located close to LSOA Wigan 029D Mosley Common / Sale Lane, which is one of the 11-20% most deprived areas in the country in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation. However, this deprived community is relatively small and detached from the site by the A580 and the surrounding LSOAs are more affluent.	No
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	Whilst the proposal itself does recognise the potential for opening up the Bridgewater Canal to visitors, with a potential marina identified as part of the concept masterplanning, there are no significant new transport infrastructure projects identified in this location.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.	The development of this land would not resolve any significant local issues.	No

- 10.2 The site meets at least one of the selection criteria (3) and as such it merits consideration against the purposes of the Green Belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Higher Green, Astley and Boothstown, which it is partially enclosed by.</p> <p>The parcel contains some urban sprawl which compromises its sense of openness in the northwestern and western part. Development exists along the A580 and adjacent to the Higher Green community; along with landfill, restoration and associated infrastructure to the south of the parcel, south of the Bridgewater canal.</p> <p>The parcel is adjacent to urbanising features of the A580 dual carriageway to the north and the Bridgewater Canal to the south which reduces the potential for urban sprawl to occur.</p>	Moderate
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The parcel, which has development on three sides, forms a very small part of the gap between the towns of Tyldesley in the north, Swinton and Eccles in the east, Irlam and Urmston to the south and Warrington to the southwest.</p> <p>Development within the parcel would result in a marginal impact on the visual or physical distances between these towns.</p>	Moderate

Test of ‘grey belt’

- 10.3 This site is not known to be previously developed land; however, based on the purposes of the Green Belt assessment undertaken above, the site/ parcel is not considered to strongly contribute to any of the established Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d).
- 10.4 Additionally, the parcel of land does not include any areas or assets that are set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt), except for a small area of land at the eastern most part of the parcel, associated with Whitehead Brook which is identified on the flood maps as zone 2. This area is not likely to subject to hard development therefore, the site is considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 10.5 This promoted site has been assessed to meet at least one of the site selection criteria and meet the test of grey belt so it will be taken forward to be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

Impact of proposed allocation on Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	This land is adjacent to the urban edge. Astley/Mosley Common, Astley Green and Boothstown (Salford) form parts of the built-up area of Greater Manchester, so development expanding this area would constitute sprawl. This land is largely open to the south but is generally contained by surrounding urbanising development to the north, east and west.	Moderate
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The proposed allocation lies broadly between the settlements of Higher Green to the west, Astley and Mosley Common to the north and Boothstown and Ellenbrook to the east. Given the level of coalescence which has already occurred between these settlements particularly to the north-east of the proposed allocation it does not play a significant role in preventing the	Moderate

	merging or erosion of the visual and physical gap between these settlements at this location.	
Purpose c): Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The land contains the characteristics of open countryside but has a relationship with the adjacent settlements. The Bridgewater Canal would provide a new clearly delineated boundary to the south.	Moderate
Purpose d): Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	This land does not make a significant contribution to the setting of any historic town.	No contribution
Purpose e): To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All Green Belt land is considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose	N/a

Impact on adjacent Green Belt

- 10.6 Moderate impact - Development has a moderate impact on adjacent Green Belt as it significantly increases the containment of adjacent retained Green Belt land that plays a stronger role in relation to the Green Belt purposes than the land being released.

Potential to mitigate harm

- 10.7 Design and locate buildings, landscaping and green spaces to minimise intrusion on settlement settings, as well as creating a transition from urban to rural, using built density, height, materials and landscaping to create a more permeable edge.

Overall harm of release of proposed land:

Harm Rating	Moderate harm
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- 10.8 Release of land from the Green Belt would mean a moderate loss of contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes and a less significant loss of contribution to others and would cause a minor weakening of the integrity of land that remains designated as Green Belt.

11. Site Assessment: Land west of Winwick Lane, Lowton

Site description

- 11.1 The proposed site consists of 72.80 ha of land at the southernmost boundary of the borough, bordering the boroughs of St. Helens Council and Warrington Council. Along the south-western boundary of the site is the Parkside East employment allocation which includes proposals for a strategic rail freight interchange.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	This is a greenfield parcel. Grade 3A agricultural land, possibly with a small area of Grade 2 to the west of the site.	No
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	No public transport serves this parcel.	No
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough	The parcel would form an extension of the proposed Parkside East strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) and logistics site adjacent in St Helens. Located adjacent to the M6 at Junction 22 and with direct access to the SRFI, the parcel has the necessary attributes to address needs identified in the Wigan Economic Market and Employment Land Assessment for more sites in the right place for the logistics sector.	Yes

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	The parcel is not within 800 metres of a town centre.	No
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	This parcel is not located close to the most deprived areas in the country in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation.	No
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	There is no transport infrastructure currently identified in any transport strategy or investment plans.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.	The development of the parcel is contingent on there being a committed delivery strategy for a bypass for Lane Head South. This parcel and the remaining permissions at Parkside will be expected to contribute to the provision of the bypass, with the landowners actively participating in the delivery strategy for that bypass, with the three councils and other partners as applicable.	Yes

- 11.2 The site meets at least one of the selection criteria (3 and 7) and as such it merits consideration against the purposes of the Green Belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel is not adjacent to any large built-up areas and contains very limited existing development - a small area of agricultural buildings in the northeast corner of the parcel. However, the parcel is adjacent to the Parkside East employment allocation (established in the St Helens Local Plan) which, together with this parcel, is currently under consideration through a Development Consent Order process as a strategic rail freight interchange.</p> <p>As the parcel is not adjacent to any urban areas at present, it can be described as making a weak contribution to preventing urban sprawl.</p>	Weak
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The parcel forms only a very small part of the gap between the towns of Golborne to the north, Newton-le-Willows in the west and Warrington in the south.</p> <p>The parcel plays a very limited role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between these towns.</p> <p>Development of this parcel would not be perceived as reducing the visual separation between these towns. The M6 motorway, the railway lines and the A579 Winwick Lane would also play a prominent role in preventing the merging or erosion of the gap between the towns in this location.</p>	Moderate - weak

Test of 'grey belt'

- 11.3 This parcel is not known to be previously developed land; however, based on the purposes of the Green Belt assessment undertaken above, the parcel it is not considered to strongly contribute to any of the established Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d).
- 11.4 Additionally, the parcel of land does not include any areas or assets that are set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt), therefore, the site is considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 11.5 This promoted site has been assessed to meet at least one of the site selection criteria and meet the test of grey belt so it will be taken forward to be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

Impact of proposed allocation on Green Belt purposes

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>This parcel is not adjacent to the urban edge but is largely open so development in this area would constitute sprawl but as it is bounded by rail and road infrastructure to the north and east, with the proposed Parkside East Employment allocation to the south and west, this sprawl would likely be restricted.</p> <p>There are small hamlets and farmhouses close by but there are no built-up areas at present. Parkside West (where development has started) and Parkside East could form a substantial built area comprising of employment uses, including warehousing and a strategic rail freight interchange, over the next few years which could be viewed as an extension to the Newton-le- Willows built up area.</p>	Moderate

Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The parcel makes a small contribution to the gap between Golborne to the north, Warrington to the south and Newton-le-Willows to the west. Development of this land together with that proposed at Parkside West and East would result in a moderate narrowing of a wider gap, principally between the urban areas of Newton-le-Willows and the Lane Head, Lowton area.	Moderate
Purpose c): Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel contains the characteristics of open countryside and has no relationship with any settlement/town. The A579 Winwick Lane to the east and the rail line to the north provide new clearly delineated boundaries. While to the southwest, the site would adjoin the proposed Parkside East development, as identified in the adopted St. Helens Local Plan.	Relatively significant contribution
Purpose d): Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	This parcel does not make a significant contribution to the setting of any historic town.	No contribution
Purpose e): To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All Green Belt land is considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose	N/a

Impact on adjacent Green Belt

- 11.6 **Minor impact:** as the land whilst viewed as open countryside is defined and bounded by road and rail infrastructure. As such it moderately increases the containment of adjacent retained Green Belt land that plays a stronger role in relation to the Green Belt purposes than the land being released.

Potential to mitigate harm

- 11.7 Use landscaping to help integrate a new Green Belt boundary with the existing edge, aiming to maximise consistency over a longer distance which help to maintain a sense of separation between urban and open land.

Overall harm of release of proposed land

Harm Rating	Moderate - High harm
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- 11.8 Release of land from the Green Belt would mean a relatively significant loss of contribution to one of the Green Belt purposes (c) and a less significant loss of contribution to others, as such it would cause a minor weakening of the integrity of land that remains designated as Green Belt.

12. **Site Assessment: Land east of Warrington Road, Hawkley**

Site description

- 12.1 The proposed site consists of effectively 3 small parcels, totalling 5.06 hectares. It is on the southern edge of Hawkley, Wigan at the southernmost part of the Wigan urban area. The site comprises arable/ pastoral fields, with hedgerows and trees and field drains forming the southern boundary. A small pocket of woodland (Rough Wood) is located to the east beyond the site, with a small stream passing through it. To the north there are offices, vacant employment land and residential areas. To the west, along the A49 there is a small farmstead.
- 12.2 A natural gas pipeline (Lupton - Warburton (15 Feeder Crank/Warrington)) runs east-west to the south of the site, except in the southwest corner where it crosses the site.
- 12.3 There is no other development within the site.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	The parcel is not known to have been previously developed.	No
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	Bus services are available locally, but the nearest rail services are at Bryn, approximately 2km away.	No
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will	This is a relatively small parcel with little perceived scope to achieve transformational development.	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough		
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	There is no town centre within 800m of the parcel.	No
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	The parcel is adjacent to IMD 2019 Wigan 032A Landgate (11-20%). However, this parcel is detached from the main area of deprivation at the Landgate Estate.	No
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	There are no significant new transport infrastructure proposals within the locality of the parcel.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.	None known	No

- 12.4 The site does not meet any of the selection criteria but is considered against the purposes of the Green Belt to inform the test of grey belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel is adjacent to the Hawkley urban area and contains only one existing development adjacent to the it's boundary with the A49 Warrington Road. There is no other urban sprawl within the parcel.</p> <p>The parcel is an area of farmed land and has a strong sense of openness.</p> <p>Adjacent to a large built-up area, with little or strong defining features between the existing/ proposed employment and residential areas, the parcel has a high potential for urban sprawl to occur.</p>	Strong
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The parcel plays a significant role in preventing the reduction of the visual or physical distances between settlements of Wigan and Ashton-in-Makerfield. Development of this parcel would result in a partial loss of openness reducing the gap between the settlements from 390m to 250m.	Strong-moderate

Test of 'grey belt'

- 12.5 This site is not known to be previously developed land however, based on the purposes of Green Belt assessment undertaken above it is considered to strongly contribute to at least one of the established Green Belt purposes, (a).
- 12.6 While the parcel of land does not include any areas or assets that are set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt), the site is not considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 12.7 This promoted site has been assessed and does not meet any of the site selection criteria nor does it not meet the test of grey belt, so it will not be taken forward to be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

13. **Site Assessment: Land at Wigan Road and Drummers Lane, Bryn**

Site description

- 13.1 The parcel consists of up to 25.3 hectares of land promoted for employment-led mixed-use development. It is located on the north-western edge of Ashton-in-Makerfield in the southwest of the borough. The parcel consists of a number of large and open arable and pastoral fields. The parcel slopes from east to west towards the M6 motorway and slip road which forms the western boundary of the parcel. The eastern and southern boundaries are adjacent to a mix of residential, commercial and community facilities, built alongside Wigan Road, Souther's Lane and Downall Green Road. The parcel is crossed by a number of footpaths and narrow lanes, including Drummers Lane.
- 13.2 Development within the parcel consists mostly of a number of farm buildings.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	This is a greenfield site. 1930s mapping shows High Brook Colliery (disused) on part of this parcel with the former mineral railway line crossing the site (E-W). However, it is not known if this land has been significantly despoiled by this activity.	Yes
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	Bus services are available locally, but the nearest rail service is at Bryn, approximately 1km away.	Yes
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure	This parcel is located in the M6 corridor in close proximity to M6 Junction 25. However,	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough	parcel is smaller in scale than the larger site allocated for employment development to the north in the Places for Everyone Plan, which has the capability to deliver transformational development in this location.	
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	This parcel is not located within 800 metres of Ashton town centre.	No
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	This parcel is located within LSOA Wigan 032A Landgate, which is one of the 11-20% most deprived in the country in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation. This land is adjacent to the main area of deprivation at the Landgate Estate.	Yes
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	There are no significant transport infrastructure proposals near to this site.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide	The development of this land would not resolve any significant local issues.	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.		

- 13.3 The site meets at least one of the selection criteria (1, 2 & 5) and merits consideration against the purposes of the Green Belt to inform the test of grey belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel is adjacent to a large built-up area of Bryn, Ashton-in-Makerfield and contains a limited number of existing developments, namely properties at 1 & 2 Doe Ridings (to the east of the parcel) and Park Lane Farm, close to Wigan Road. There is very limited urban sprawl which gives a strong sense of openness within the parcel. However, the M6 J25 slip road and Drummers Lane are physical features that would restrict and contain development from expanding beyond this parcel.</p> <p>The parcel is adjacent to a large built-up area and has a high potential for urban sprawl to occur, particularly to the rear of properties along Wigan Road.</p>	Moderate
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The larger parcel to the north of the M6 slip road is allocated for employment development in the Places for Everyone Plan (Policy JPA 31 M6 Junction 25). Development is expected on this site within the period of the Local Plan.</p> <p>As such, the parcel plays an essential role in preventing the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap</p>	Strong

	between settlements. Loss of openness would cause visual and physical coalescence and close-off the gap between the towns of Ashton-in-Makerfield and Wigan.	
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Test of 'grey belt'

- 13.4 This site is known to have been previously developed land, but the extent of the damage caused to the land is not known, however, based on the purposes of Green Belt assessment undertaken above it is considered to strongly contribute to at least one of the established Green Belt purposes (b).
- 13.5 While the parcel of land does not include any areas or assets that are set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt), the site is not considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 13.6 This promoted site has been assessed and whilst it does meet some of the site selection criteria, it does not meet the test of grey belt, so it will not be taken forward to be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

14. Site Assessment: Land south of Pennington, Leigh

Site description

- 14.1 This parcel of land is approximately 53 hectares. It is located on the southern edge of Leigh, close to Lowton Common. The site comprises of pastoral fields and a farmed landscape which are divided up by some hedgerows, as well as some built development including several farm settlements within the parcel, and some other small pockets of housing. There are also several small ponds within the site. Public rights of way criss-cross the parcel. A natural gas pipeline (Lupton - Warburton (15 Feeder Crank/Warrington)) runs northwest-southeast across the site. Most of the sites also sits within a notifiable installation (Orica UK Limited Glazebury Depot, Wilton Lane, Culcheth, Warrington) which is to the south of the site.
- 14.2 To the north is the Pennington residential community, the southern boundary comprises the A580 East Lancashire Road dual carriageway and the western boundary by the A579 Atherleigh bypass, while to the east there is a farm settlement separating the parcel from the Pennington residential community and beyond, separated by Pennington Brook, is Hope Carr Nature Reserve.
- 14.3 As the parcel is in multiple ownerships, and is not actively being promoted, it would most likely be very difficult to demonstrate that it is developable within the plan period.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	There is no previously developed land known in this parcel.	No
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	There is a bus service locally that runs along Landside South, but the nearest stop is over 500m from the site edge and there are no local train stations.	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough	There is no known scope to achieve transformational development within this parcel of land.	No
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	There are no town centres within 800m of this parcel.	No
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	There is an area of IMD2019 Wigan 034D Warrington Road West (11-20%) – is adjacent to the eastern edge of the site but there is no housing close by nor is it easily accessible.	No
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	There are no significant transport infrastructure proposals near to this site.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide	None known	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.		

- 14.4 The site does not meet any of the selection criteria but is considered against the purposes of the Green Belt to inform the test of grey belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel is near to but not immediately adjacent to the built-up area of Pennington / Leigh and Lowton Common / Pocket Nook. There are some houses and farmsteads within the parcel and there are existing urbanising features which shape the site, including its boundaries with the A580 East Lancashire Road dual carriageway to the south and the A579 Atherleigh bypass to the west.</p> <p>There is some sense of openness within the parcel because it is set within an open landscape of pastoral fields and a farmed landscape. Rugby pitches, some fields a farm settlement, service roads and a few detached houses separate the parcel from the built- up area of Pennington/Leigh. Therefore, the parcel is considered to play a strong role towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of adjacent urbanised development.</p>	Strong/ Moderate
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The parcel, whilst containing some existing development – mostly farmsteads, forms a substantial part of the gap between the towns of Golborne (Lowton) and Pennington, Leigh and plays a significant role in preventing the reduction of the visual	Strong

	<p>or physical distances between these settlements.</p> <p>Additionally, the site at Pocket Nook is allocated through the Places for Everyone Plan and has planning permission for housing on part of the site, presently. When fully developed, it is expected to extend the urban edge of Lowton eastwards, up to the western edge of this parcel, separated only by Atherleigh Way. As such, development of this parcel would likely result in the loss of openness, closing the gap between these settlements and affectively merging the towns of Golborne / Lowton and Pennington, Leigh.</p>	
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Test of 'grey belt'

- 14.5 This site is not known to be previously developed land however, based on the purposes of Green Belt assessment undertaken above it is considered to strongly contribute to at least one of the established Green Belt purposes, (b).
- 14.6 Additionally, the parcel of land does include an area or asset that is set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt) including Yew Tree Farm, Carr Lane, Leigh which is grade II listed (HE:1253277). Also, there is a small area to the southwest of the parcel that is identified as liable to flood, on the flood maps it is zone 2. Therefore, the site is not considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 14.7 This site has been assessed and does not meet any of the site selection criteria nor does it meet the test of grey belt, so it will not be taken forward to be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

15. Site Assessment: Land south of Astley Point, Astley

Site description

- 15.1 This is a small parcel of land, approximately 4.7 hectares. It is located on the southern edge of Astley in the south-east of the Wigan Borough. The site comprises of 2-3 fields of open ground which have a good covering in natural vegetation and are divided up by some hedgerows. There are also 2-3 ponds within the site.
- 15.2 The southern boundary comprises of hedgerows and trees and a small area of hard standing with some small agricultural buildings. Beyond the southern boundary there are pastoral fields and a farmed landscape, as well as some built development including a residential community and farmsteads, off Peel Lane. The western boundary is formed by the A580 East Lancashire Road dual carriageway, with Astley beyond this. A natural gas pipeline (Partington - Starling (Cadishead / Starling)) runs within the western boundary of the site. To the east are the rear gardens of the Higher Green settlement, whilst to the north, contained within the Green Belt, is Astley Point which consists of leisure facilities – including bars and restaurants. A public right of way follows the northern boundary of the site.
- 15.3 There is no urbanising development within the site.

Site selection assessment

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 1: Previously developed land or land that is significantly despoiled by past mining or industrial activity	There is no previously developed land known in this parcel.	No
Criterion 2: Land which is well served by public transport and opportunities for active travel such that good alternative travel options would be available for a large proportion of the trips that would be generated	There is a bus service locally but no local train stations.	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
Criterion 3: Land that has significant attributes and capability to secure investment to deliver transformational development that will boost the competitiveness of Wigan Borough	This is a relatively small parcel with little perceived scope to achieve transformational development.	No
Criterion 4: Land within 800 metres of Wigan or Leigh town centre core area boundaries or 800 metres from the centroids of either Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Platt Bridge, Standish or Tyldesley town centre core areas	There are no town centres close to the parcel.	No
Criterion 5: Land where development or redevelopment could deliver benefits for inclusive growth or regeneration to neighbouring places and communities identified as in deprivation need (IMD2019).	There is an area of IMD 2019 Wigan 028A Blackmoor / Gin Pit 21-30% - to the north of the parcel, across and beyond the A580.	No
Criterion 6: Land where development could help deliver significant new transport infrastructure in line with the Wigan Transport Strategy or Greater Manchester Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan	There are no significant transport infrastructure proposals near to this site.	No
Criterion 7: Land where development could resolve a significant local issue (which could be secured through planning) or provide	None known	No

Criteria	Assessment	Criteria Met
opportunity to extend site significantly without causing any major disbenefits.		

- 15.4 The site does not meet any of the selection criteria but is considered against the purposes of the Green Belt to inform the test of grey belt.

Grey belt assessment

Green Belt Purpose	Green Belt Assessment	Rating
Purpose a): Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The parcel is adjacent to the large built-up area of Astley and the village settlement of Higher Green, settlements within Tyldesley. While there are no existing urbanising features within the parcel, it is close to the built-up areas of Astley and Higher Green, Tyldesley. Also, there are urbanising features close by. Within the Green Belt to the north of the parcel is Astley Point – a small scale leisure development, as well some housing and farmsteads, beyond the parcel, to the south.</p> <p>There is a sense of openness within the parcel because it does not itself contain any urbanising features and is set within an open landscape, with a mixed landscape of relatively open fields to the south. As such, the parcel plays a strong role towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of adjacent built-up areas.</p> <p>This parcel and the land to the south has a high potential for urban sprawl to occur which could</p>	Strong

	result in an incongruous pattern of development.	
Purpose b): Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	The parcel forms a very small part of the gap between the town of Tyldesley and the towns of Warrington, Eccles and Urmston and if developed it would play a very limited role in preventing the reduction of the visual or physical separation between these towns.	Weak

Test of 'grey belt'

- 15.5 This site is not known to be previously developed land however, based on the purposes of Green Belt assessment undertaken above it is considered to strongly contribute to at least one of the established Green Belt purposes, (a).
- 15.6 While the parcel of land does not include any areas or assets that are set out in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt), the parcel is not considered to meet the definition of grey belt.

Green Belt harm assessment

- 15.7 This promoted site has been assessed and does not meet any of the site selection criteria nor does it meet the test of grey belt, so it will not be taken forward to be assessed for Green Belt Harm.

Appendix 1

Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 64-005-20250225) sets out considerations for informing judgement, including for purposes a), b) and d), as set out below:

Purpose A – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

This purpose relates to the sprawl of large built-up areas. Villages should not be considered large built-up areas.

Contribution	Illustrative features
Strong	<p>Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. They are also likely to include all the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be adjacent or near to a large built-up area. • if developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended “finger” of development into the Green Belt).
Moderate	<p>Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be adjacent or near to a large built-up area, but include one or more features that weaken the land’s contribution to this purpose a, such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. • be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development contain existing development being subject to other urbanising influences
Weak or none	<p>Assessment areas that make only a weak or no contribution are likely to include those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are not adjacent to or near to a large built-up area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are adjacent to or near to a large built-up area, but containing or being largely enclosed by significant existing development.
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Purpose B – To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

This purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages.

Contribution	Illustrative features
Strong	<p>Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development and include all of the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> forming a substantial part of a gap between towns the development of which would be likely to result in the loss of visual separation of towns
Moderate	<p>Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be located in a gap between towns, but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> forming a small part of the gap between towns being able to be developed without the loss of visual separation between towns. This could be (but is not limited to) due to the presence or the close proximity of structures, natural landscape elements or topography that preserve visual separation

Weak or none	<p>Assessment areas that contribute weakly are likely to include those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not form part of a gap between towns, or form part of a gap between towns, but only a very small part of this gap, without making a contribution to visual separation
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Purpose D – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

This purpose relates to historic towns, not villages. Where there are no historic towns in the plan area, it may not be necessary to provide detailed assessments against this purpose.

Contribution	Illustrative features
Strong	<p>Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely be free of existing development and to include all of the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> form part of the setting of the historic town make a considerable contribution to the special character of a historic town. This could be (but is not limited to) as a result of being within, adjacent to, or of significant visual importance to the historic aspects of the town
Moderate	<p>Assessment areas that perform moderately are likely to form part of the setting and/or contribute to the special character of a historic town but include one or more features that weaken their</p>

	<p>contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being separated to some extent from historic aspects of the town by existing development or topography • containing existing development • not having an important visual, physical, or experiential relationship to historic aspects of the town
Weak or none	<p>Assessment areas that make no or only a weak contribution are likely to include those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not form part of the setting of a historic town • have no visual, physical, or experiential connection to the historic aspects of the town