Wigan Council

Wigan Borough Local Plan

Site Allocation Assessment Report 4: East of Atherton

Author: Strategic Planning

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Note of changes made since the August 2026 version of this document:

Section	
1.5	Update to cover consultation on the Publication version

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of 6 site allocation assessment reports, each one relating directly to one of 6 site allocations in the Draft Wigan Borough Local Plan. This is Site Allocation Assessment Report 4 on East of Atherton.

1.1.2 The site allocation assessment reports distil the evidence base that has been collated and, where applicable, commissioned to support the site allocation, and set out the key messages to help demonstrate that the site is justified, appropriate, deliverable and effective, against national planning policy and relevant strategic planning policies.

1.1.3 The 6 reports need to be read alongside the 7 Topic Papers and the self-assessment toolkit reports. For more detailed information reference should be made to the source reports and studies.

1.2 Site details

1.2.1 The site extends to 39.2 hectares and is located adjacent to the eastern edge of Atherton. The allocation largely comprises poor semi-improved neutral grassland fields. Shams Farm and Livery Stables, located along Shakerley Lane, are also contained within the allocation. Hindsford Brook runs north-south in the north-eastern corner of the allocation and separates Shams Farm and Livery Stables from the remainder of the site.

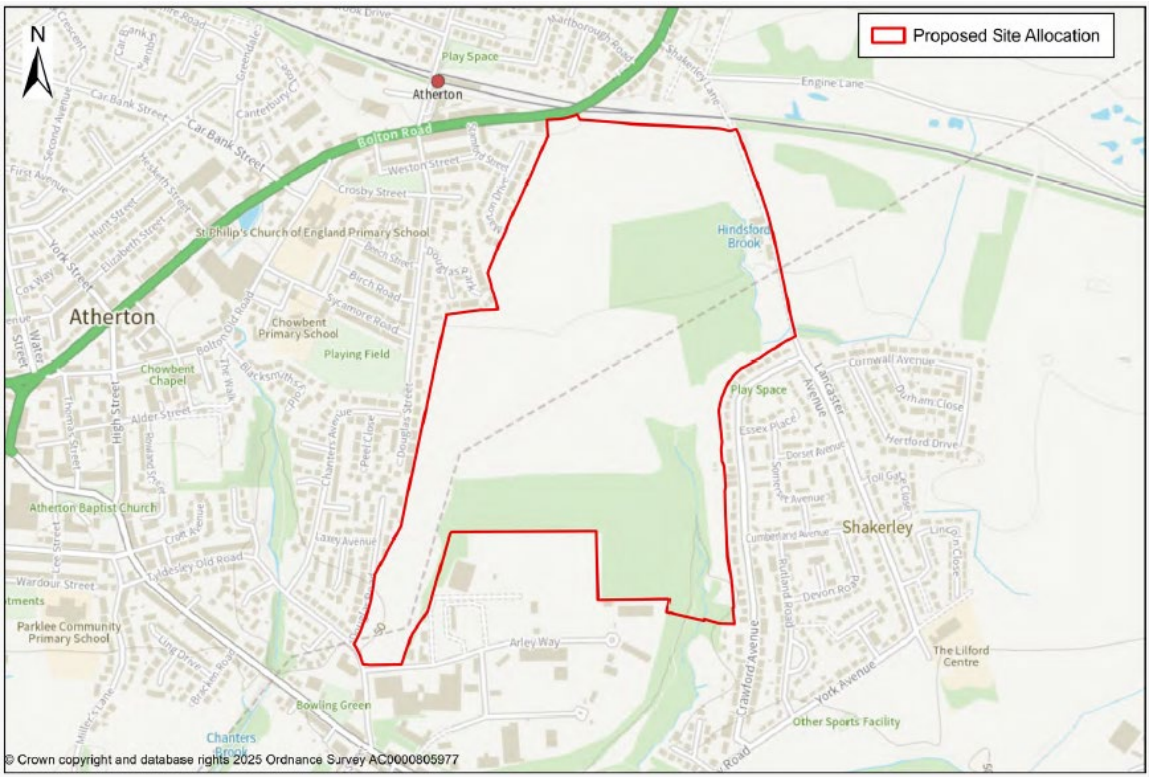
1.2.2 The site is owned by multiple landowners including Tarleton Estates, Bellway Homes and Wigan Council.

1.2.3 In terms of topography, the land generally slopes down from north-south, with steeper slopes on the northern extent.

1.2.4 The northern boundary of the site is defined by the Manchester to Wigan railway line and a section of the A579 Bolton Road. Atherton railway station is located close by providing the opportunity for sustainable transport connections from residential properties. The western boundary is defined by existing residential development within Atherton, namely Marton Drive and Douglas Street.

1.2.5 To the south of the site is the existing Chanters Industrial Estate. Hindsford Brook defines the southeast of the site, with Crawford Avenue and Lancaster Avenue (part of Shakerley) beyond. The remaining eastern boundary is provided by the unadopted Shakerley Lane as far as the railway line.

1.2.6 The site allocation boundary is shown on the following page.



1.3 Proposed development

1.3.1 Land at East of Atherton is allocated for a residential and employment development comprising around 600 homes with a mix of house types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, and the potential extension of Chanters Industrial Estate to the south for industrial development.

1.3.2 The development will be required to provide good quality vehicular access from A579 Bolton Road, deliver or contribute towards improved walking, wheeling and cycling access to Atherton rail station and nearby bus stops, and provide a green infrastructure corridor between the housing and employment development.

1.3.3 The site is currently subject to a planning application (as detailed in section 1.4 below), which demonstrates the interest in developing the site for residential uses.

1.4 Planning history

1.4.1 Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan policy GB2 identifies this site as Safeguarded Land. The allocation of this site in the Local Plan will replace its safeguarded land status. Further information on the de-designation of all the safeguarded land shown on the existing policies map can be found in the Safeguarded Land Report that accompanies the Local Plan.

1.4.2 A large part of the site is currently subject to a planning application:

- A/25/099087/OUTMES - Outline planning application for the development of up to 550 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated open space, road infrastructure and landscaping with all matters reserved, except for access from Bolton Road; and,

1.4.3 This application was validated in August 2025 and is pending determination.

1.4.4 An outline planning application for up to 31 homes on land at Old Shams Farm on Shakerley Lane in the northeast of the allocation (A/23/95864/OUTMAJ), was refused in November 2024 on the grounds of highway safety concerns. An appeal (ref: APP/V4250/W/25/3365202) was lodged against the refusal, however, this was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate in September 2025.

1.4.5 A full planning application (A/25/098899) by Bellway Homes for 83 homes on land at Douglas Road, Atherton in the south-west of the allocation, was refused in January 2026 because the proposed development could not be satisfactorily delivered due to its proximity to Chanters Industrial Estate, and the resulting impact on the amenity of future occupants.

1.5 Summary of consultation responses

1.5.1 Comments were received in response to the proposed allocation in the Initial Draft Local Plan from 34 respondents, including National Highways, Sport England, NHS Property Services, United Utilities, Jo Platt MP, landowners Tarleton Estates and Bellway Homes, and 25 residents.

1.5.2 A summary of the comments received, and the council's response, can be viewed in the Consultation Report. In summary, there was support for the allocation from landowners and developers, and broad support for the site from bodies / organisations, with some amendments suggested to strengthen the policy in terms of managing its impact on the natural environment, on existing sport provision, and in relation to infrastructure delivery.

1.5.3 Comments were received in response to the proposed allocation in the Publication and Submission version of the plan in Autumn 2026 from 65 respondents, including United Utilities, NHS Property Services, Sport England, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, landowners Tarleton Estates and Bellway Homes, Ward Councillors and around 55 residents.

1.5.4 Residents raised concerns across various themes, including:

- Capacity of existing public transport and road network to accommodate the allocation.
- Insufficient social infrastructure to cater for development of the allocation, and the need for additional health and education services.
- Loss of greenfield land over brownfield sites.
- The incompatibility of the allocation's mix of uses (residential and industrial).
- Unsuitability of site for development due to past mining activities and ground conditions.
- Loss of greenfield land and potential impacts on wildlife.
- Increased pollution associated with development of the site.
- Risk of flooding on site and increased flooding off-site.

1.6 Integrated assessment

1.6.1 The broad implications of policy H6 East of Atherton were assessed as part of the Integrated Assessment (IA) process. The policy was considered to have broadly positive implications in relation to housing, health and community, equality and diversity, biodiversity / geodiversity, transport and economy. The implications in terms of climate change, water, environment quality, historic environment, landscape / townscape, resource efficiency, land and soil and town centres were considered to be broadly neutral. No broadly negative implications were identified.

1.6.2 Following consultation on the Initial Draft Plan, changes were made to policies, including Policy H6. The integrated assessment has been updated to take account of the changes made to all policies (including further consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures), but no further mitigation and enhancement measures were identified as the changes made do not lead to significant negative effects.

2. Physical assessment

2.1 Transport

2.1.1 Planning application A/25/099087/OUTMES was accompanied by a Transport Assessment to fully understand the transport implications of the proposal.

2.1.2 Vehicular access to the site will be provided from the A579 Bolton Road, through the introduction of a new priority-controlled ghost island right turn lane junction. The access road leading to the site will be 6.5m wide with a 3.5m shared facility for pedestrians and cyclists on the western side and a 2m footway on the eastern side.

2.1.3 The number of trips generated by the development is based on the TRICS database for surveys of similar sites. In total, the development is forecast to generate 287 two-way trips during the AM peak period and 270 two-way trips during the PM peak period.

2.1.4 The distribution of trips onto the highway network is based on data from the 2011 Census. The 2011 Census data is the most appropriate dataset to use given the 2021 information was taken during the Covid pandemic when travel patterns were affected.

2.1.5 Capacity assessments have been undertaken at the following junctions to determine the impact of the traffic generated by the development:

1. Proposed Site Access / A579 Wigan Road.
2. A579 Newbrook Road / A579 St Helens Road / A6 Manchester Road / A6 Salford Road.
3. A579 Bolton Road / Upton Road / Douglas Street.
4. A579 Bolton Road / Car Bank Street / Park Street.
5. A579 Bolton Road / High Street / York Street.
6. A577 Tyldesley Road / High Street.

2.1.6 The impact of the traffic arising from the scheme has been tested in detail at these key junctions on the local highway network. The assessments show that the junctions either have sufficient spare capacity to accommodate the proposed development, or the development will not have a material impact on their operation.

2.1.7 Pedestrian / cycle access to the site will be provided from the same location as the vehicular accesses. In addition, a network of footways / cycleways will be provided throughout the site which will link onto existing public rights of way and external network. The pedestrian and cycle links to the nearby Atherton Railway Station will be prioritised,

with the details to be provided as part of any reserved matters application.

2.1.8 A secondary pedestrian / cycle and emergency access will be provided on the western side of the site linking to Marton Drive.

2.1.9 Public transport accessibility for the site has been assessed and is of a high quality in terms of bus services. Frequent bus services run along Bolton Road to the northwest of the site, and Tyldesley Road to the southwest. The bus services along these routes provide direct access to destinations such as Wigan, Bolton, Manchester, the Trafford Centre, and other nearby areas such as Tyldesley, Astley and Walkden. The link road through the heart of the site has been designed to accommodate buses and new bus stops will be provided close to the local centre to serve the development.

2.1.10 The Leigh-Manchester Guided Busway provides frequent and fast bus services between Leigh and Atherton with Manchester city centre. Running along Tyldesley Road, these services can be accessed from the site within approximately 10-15 minutes' walk. The V2 busway service serving Atherton leaves the busway at Tyldesley and travels along the A577 Tyldesley Road to/from Atherton town centre calling at a number of stops.

2.1.11 Atherton railway station is located approximately 250 metres from the north of the site and provides services to locations including Wigan, Salford Crescent, Salford Central and Manchester Victoria.

2.1.12 On this basis, it is concluded that the proposed development would comply with paragraphs 109 to 118 of the NPPF, which requires safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all road users and that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network in terms of capacity and congestion, or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

2.2 Flood risk and drainage

2.2.1 The Greater Manchester Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1 SFRA) was completed in March 2019 as part of the evidence base for PfE Plan. This confirms that the entirety of the site is located within Flood Zone 1, i.e. at lowest risk from fluvial flooding. I t also confirms that the site as having a low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding across different parts.

2.2.2 The Level 1 SFRA assessed flood risk across Greater Manchester in order to apply the sequential test to existing land supply sites and PfE Plan allocations.

2.2.3 The site forms part of the existing identified development land supply in Wigan (SHLAA Ref: SHLAA0003) and has been identified and assessed in the Level 1 SFRA. The site has therefore already been subject to the sequential test during the PfE plan-making process.

2.2.4 A flood risk assessment (FRA) has been undertaken on behalf of the site promoter Tarleton Estates in support of their outline planning application, which was submitted in May 2025 (A/25/099087/OUTMES).

2.2.5 The FRA states that the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, indicating a low probability of flooding from rivers. The Sequential and Exception Tests are therefore not required. All other sources of flood risk - including surface water, groundwater, sewers, reservoirs, canals, and lakes - are assessed as low risk. Surface water mapping shows very low risk across most of the site, with isolated high-risk areas near Hindsford Brook and local depressions, which will be managed through overland flood risk management.

2.2.6 A surface water drainage strategy is proposed which will incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in line with national and local policy. The site is divided into four catchments, each with its own attenuation basin designed to accommodate runoff from a 1 in 100-year storm event plus 40% climate change allowance. Discharge rates are restricted to greenfield runoff rates, with basins discharging to Hindsford Brook. SuDS features include permeable paving, water butts, and landscaped basins to enhance water quality, biodiversity, and amenity.

2.2.7 Foul water will discharge to the existing combined sewer in Douglas Street at an unrestricted rate. United Utilities has confirmed that network capacity is available, and any required reinforcement will be funded by them if pipe diameters remain unchanged.

2.2.8 In conclusion, the information submitted in support of the outline planning application demonstrates that the proposed allocation is acceptable in flood risk terms, with robust mitigation and drainage design ensuring compliance with national and local planning policy. The strategy will ensure the site remains safe from flooding and does not increase flood risk elsewhere.

2.3 Ground conditions

2.3.1 The site has experienced deep mine, shallow mine and open cast extraction historically. It has not been subject to any formal restoration and so, in accordance with the definition in Annex 2 of the NPPF, the site forms previously developed land. The open cast mining activity ceased in circa 1966. Since then, the land has been restored and is in use for grazing purposes.

2.3.2 The planning applications provide an indication of the expected ground conditions and environmental constraints across the allocation through the submission of Geoenvironmental Site Assessment work.

2.3.3 The assessment works confirms that the site has historically been subject to extensive mineral-related activity, including open cast coal mining, the presence of a mineral railway, and the infilling of historic ponds. This legacy of extraction and land disturbance has resulted in variable ground conditions, with the potential for contamination, ground gas and subsidence risks.

2.3.4 The allocation is situated within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone but does not fall within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone or a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone. It is underlain by a Secondary A bedrock aquifer and, in certain areas, the absence of drift deposits increases the potential for contaminant migration towards the aquifer and nearby watercourses. Hindsford Brook lies immediately east of the allocation, and the closest groundwater abstraction point is recorded approximately 1km to the west, indicating a need for robust protection measures during redevelopment.

2.3.5 Landfill history also influences ground conditions in this location. Part of the southern part of the allocation is on a nominated landfill site – (A048 Swan Island) and an area associated with it. Records suggest inert, commercial, household, special waste and liquid sludge were deposited between 1965 and 1977. This legacy requires that ground gas migration and other contamination must be appropriately assessed and mitigated. The possible presence of unrecorded shallow coal mining activity further increases ground gas potential and adds to the complexity of ground stability risks.

2.3.6 Parts of the site are within Radon Class 3 Affected Areas. New properties within this area will require basic radon protection measures.

2.3.7 Another constraint for the allocation is the potential for unrecorded shallow coal workings, with three seams identified and evidence that most of the site has already been subject to open cast mining. Whilst shallow workings present risks of settlement, deeper coal workings are

considered to pose a higher level of risk to redevelopment. Rotary borehole investigations will be required to establish the presence and nature of coal, together with drill and grouting works where shallow unrecorded workings are suspected. Additional probing will also be required to confirm the location of the opencast high wall within the site boundary.

2.3.8 On this basis, the main contaminant sources identified for the allocation are made ground from previous mineral and industrial uses (with potential for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, heavy metals, asbestos-containing materials and ground gases); shallow coal mine workings (methane and carbon dioxide); and residual impacts of historic agricultural and railway activity, such as fuel spillages.

2.3.9 While these constraints are noted, they are not unusual in the Wigan Borough context and can be addressed through phased, intrusive geo-environmental investigations to quantify risk, alongside appropriate mitigation and remediation secured through the planning process.

2.3.10 The Phase 2 Geoenvironmental Site Assessment for LPA Ref: A/25/098899/MAJOR has been undertaken to determine potential contaminated land liabilities, remediation requirements and geotechnical engineering works that will be required as part of the proposed site redevelopment. The detailed investigative work confirms that the following additional work is required:

- Remediation and Enabling Works Strategy
- Geotechnical Design Report
- Materials Management Plan
- Earthworks modelling.
- Performance Specification for the Consolidation of Abandoned Mine Workings
- Plot-specific foundation design.
- Ground Gas Protection Design Report.

2.3.11 For the other applications further intrusive ground investigation works will therefore be required to confirm the extent of contamination, identify additional works required and secure remediation strategies.

2.3.12 With such measures in place, and appropriate mitigation and remediation measures also in place it is concluded that the East of Atherton allocation can be delivered in a manner consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's requirements to ensure land is suitable for its proposed use, and does not pose unacceptable risks to human health, controlled waters, or the wider environment.

2.4 Utilities

2.4.1 The site is immediately adjacent to established urban areas to the north and west where a full range of services are already available. This includes mains water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications infrastructure. The proposed development can therefore be readily connected to these key utilities, with any upgrades required to accommodate growth capable of being delivered alongside the development.

2.4.2 Two pylons with high-voltage overhead power lines cross the site on a south-west to north-east alignment. An appropriate easement will be required beneath these lines to ensure safe development and continued access for maintenance.

2.4.3 A public sewer runs across the southern portion of the site. An easement will be required to safeguard this infrastructure, with unrestricted access maintained at all times for maintenance and replacement. Development proposals must ensure this access is not compromised.

2.4.4 In relation to electricity, National Grid has advised that site-specific development proposals within Wigan Borough are unlikely to have a significant direct effect upon the electricity transmission system. Improvements to the system are generally driven by overall regional demand growth rather than site-specific developments. Local distribution connections will therefore be sufficient to support development at East of Atherton.

2.4.5 With respect to gas, National Grid owns and operates the high-pressure gas transmission system in England, while Cadent Gas is responsible for the local distribution network. Further engagement will be required to confirm network capacity and connection requirements.

2.4.6 United Utilities has confirmed that it has a statutory duty to connect all new homes to the water network. They strongly encourage early engagement with developers to ensure masterplanning of the allocation addresses water supply and wastewater capacity requirements. They have also emphasised the importance of preparing a detailed drainage strategy to accompany proposals to avoid delays, ensure infrastructure compatibility, secure long-term maintenance, promote sustainable drainage, and meet environmental objectives. Early consultation prevents potential clashes with the public sewer network, allows for integration with their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP), and helps secure the adoption of drainage systems.

3. Environmental assessment

3.1 Recreation

3.1.1 The Wigan Borough Open Space Report (2025) identifies one area of natural / semi-natural greenspace within the site allocation boundary alongside Hindsford Brook off Westleigh Lane, rated as poor quality.

3.1.2 This would be protected by criterion 7 of policy H6 which requires the development to ensure the provision of a green infrastructure corridor between the employment and residential development, which also incorporates the corridor of Hindsford Brook to the east.

3.1.3 There is one amenity greenspace within the site allocation boundary in the southeast at Nel Pan Lane, rated good quality, and Melrose Playing Field is situated in the northeast, rated average quality.

3.1.4 The Open Space Report observes that Leigh West and Hindley Green Wards both have a small shortfall in parks and gardens (-0.18 and 0.48 hectares per 1,000 population respectively). Hindley Green also has a shortfall in natural / semi-natural greenspace (-6.57 hectares per 1,000 population) and amenity greenspace (-0.50 hectares per 1,000 population) whereas Leigh West has a surplus in both typologies.

3.1.5 The proposed site allocation policy also requires the development to ensure good walking, wheeling and cycling provision within the site and to adjacent areas.

3.1.6 Public Right of Way (PRoW) 004/77/10 runs centrally, from east to west, through the site. PRoW 004/78/10 also runs from Douglas Road to the west of the site and interconnects with PRoW 004/77/10. There are also informal footpaths within the site, and trees and mature vegetation are present across the site, particularly along the site boundaries. None of the existing trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

3.1.7 The Wigan Borough Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) – Strategy and Action Plan Report (September 2025) provides a number of scenarios as a guide to show the potential additional demand for pitch sports that could be generated from housing growth in Wigan, including for each of the proposed site allocations.

3.1.8 Assuming an occupancy rating of 2.44 people per household (based on a national average), the PPOSS Strategy and Action Plan estimates that a development of 600 homes at East of Atherton would generate an additional 1,464 people, which would equate to an additional demand for 2.49 pitches.

3.1.9 Informed by this, the development will need to contribute accordingly to meeting the needs of open space, sport and recreation provision in the locality in accordance with proposed policy PE5.

3.2 Landscape

3.2.1 As set out in the Greater Manchester Landscape Character Assessment (2018), the proposed allocation is within the Lever Edge and Tyldesley landscape character area and identified as landscape character type: reclaimed land/wetlands.

3.2.2 The assessment identifies that the overall sensitivity of this landscape type is low to moderate for 2-3 storey high residential development, and moderate for commercial development. This is a rural landscape but one which remains influenced by its industrial legacy and proximity to surrounding urban and industrial areas, which is the case for this proposed allocation given the proximity of the urban area of Atherton to the west, Chanters Industrial Estate to the south and Shakerley to the south-east.

3.2.3 As previously mentioned, the proposed allocation site is subject to an outline planning application submitted in 2025. As such, a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken as part of an environmental impact assessment for the proposed development.

3.2.4 Due to the outline nature of the application, detailed design and landscaping are reserved for future approval. However, the site is considered as having a low-quality landscape and limited external visibility, which reduces its sensitivity to change.

3.2.5 Mitigation measures would be embedded through good design principles and landscaping, supported by a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

3.2.6 In conclusion, the LVIA states that the proposed housing development for the site is expected to result in negligible to minor long-term impacts on landscape character and visual amenity. The proposal offers an opportunity to enhance the site's visual setting, and impacts are not considered significant in EIA terms.

3.3 Ecology and biodiversity

3.3.1 As previously mentioned, the proposed allocation site is subject to an outline planning application which was submitted in 2025. As such, an ecological assessment has been undertaken as part of an environmental impact assessment for the proposed development. The proposed allocation is not within an Impact Risk Zone for Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

3.3.2 The ecological impact assessment included desk-based studies and field surveys conducted in 2024, covering habitat mapping, condition assessments and protected species surveys. The site supports typical woodland and hedgerow habitats and a locally important assemblage of breeding birds, including nine species of conservation concern.

3.3.3 In terms of protected species, the ecological assessment states that the site has negligible potential for roosting bats but offers moderate suitability for foraging and commuting. Water voles are likely absent along the stretch of Hindsford Brook adjacent to the site. Amphibians and reptiles are also likely to be absent due to the lack of standing water and significant dispersal barriers. However, hedgehogs and brown hares—both UK Biodiversity Action Plan species—are likely present within the site prior to development.

3.3.4 The assessment states that mitigation measures are proposed which, alongside mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, will result in most ecological receptors experiencing negligible to minor beneficial effects. A minor adverse residual impact may remain for breeding birds due to habitat loss and predation risk. Enhancements include hedgerow gapping, woodland ground flora improvements and additional habitats.

3.3.5 The ecological impact assessment and overall EIA conclude that the development is ecologically acceptable and aligns with national and local policy. All mitigation measures can be secured via planning conditions and applied to a phased development.

3.3.6 The proposed site is within the Nature Network as identified in the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy with priority actions for grassland. These will need to be considered alongside biodiversity net gain for future detailed design.

3.4 Habitats Regulation Assessment

3.4.1 The proposed site allocation has been considered in the Habitats Regulation Assessment carried out by the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. The key recommendations and mitigations suggested in the HRA are to apply the Holcroft Moss Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2025) to all relevant allocations to mitigate traffic-related nitrogen oxide pollution and ensure that collaboration takes place with United Utilities to ensure wastewater treatment capacity keeps pace with development. The HRA also concludes that the local plan contains many policies which are designed to reduce or eliminate risks to European sites by embedding environmental safeguards, in particular Policies EN1-3, EN5-7 and EN10-13.

3.5 Agricultural Land Classification

3.5.1 The proposed allocation site comprises primarily agricultural land in use for grazing. It was created in the 1980s following the reclamation of the site and wider areas of mined land. Due to the historical use of the site, in agricultural terms it is only appropriate to use the land for grazing purposes. It is therefore considered of low quality in terms of agricultural land classification.

3.6 Historic Environment Assessment

3.6.1 There are no designated heritage assets within the site allocation. The nearest heritage asset is the Grade II Listed Rosehill, situated c. 380m west of the site.

3.6.2 Within the site there are three non-designated heritage assets comprising of a parcel of historic landscape character, hedgerows and possible archaeological remains of a 20th century mineral railway, all of which are of a low significance.

3.6.3 Within the wider landscape there are 11 built heritage assets in the form of six Listed Buildings; four buildings/structures are recorded on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record as 'monuments' and, for the purposes of reporting, identified as non-designated assets; and one historic.

3.6.4 Consideration has been given to heritage and archaeological of the allocation in respect of application submissions. The Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment and Environmental Statement supporting planning application A/25/099087/OUTMES concludes that development of the site will have no direct impact upon the identified designated heritage assets within proximity to the site.

3.6.5 It goes on to state that the proposed development would not harm the significance of the non-designated heritage assets.

3.6.6 The assessment work also considers the likelihood of archaeological remains within the site. Using secondary and published information on the site and surrounding area, and by supplementing this with a site walk over, it is concluded that there is a low potential for below ground archaeological remains to be present on the site given the past coal mining and reclamation legacy of the site, which has been confirmed by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service.

3.6.7 Overall, the assessment work concludes that there will be no direct impact upon the designated heritage assets through development, and it is considered that the proposed development is not in conflict

with the requirements of the NPPF in respect of conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

3.7 Air quality

3.7.1 Consideration will need to be given to potential air quality impacts arising from existing and future sources, including traffic along the A579 Bolton Road, local roads within Atherton and emissions from the adjacent Chanters Industrial Estate as future development comes forward within the allocation.

3.7.2 Future residential development should include measures to protect occupants from potential air quality impacts. This may include strategic site layout to separate sensitive uses from industrial or high-traffic areas, the provision of green infrastructure and tree planting to function as natural buffers, and the use of low-emission vehicle infrastructure, such as electric vehicle charging points, to reduce on-site transport emissions.

3.7.3 Construction-phase emissions should also be managed through best practice mitigation measures, including dust control, low-emission construction equipment, and adherence to construction management plans. Future development will need to be supported by Construction Environmental Management Plans which seek to minimise disruption to existing residents and surrounding businesses.

3.7.4 Air quality assessments will be required at the planning application stage or via reserved matters applications to ensure compliance with national and local air quality guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework and local air quality management objectives. Mitigation measures should aim to ensure that residential amenity and environmental quality are safeguarded while enabling the ongoing operation and future expansion of Chanters Industrial Estate and other employment uses within the allocation.

3.7.5 The air quality assessment supporting the refused planning application (ref: A/25/098899/MAJOR) concluded that during the operational phase of residential development, air quality impacts generated by traffic from the development were predicted to be negligible. The air quality assessment work supporting the two outline applications also concludes that the development would not have any unacceptable or insurmountable impacts in relation to air quality. Accordingly, air quality factors are not considered to be an insurmountable constraint to the development of the allocation.

3.7.6 Given the relationship with the adjacent Chanters Industrial Estate (and associated uses) consideration should also be given to the odour impacts arising from potential sources.

3.7.7 In summary, the East of Atherton allocation can accommodate residential and employment development in a manner that protects air quality, provided that mitigation is incorporated into the masterplan and detailed design, and that assessments and monitoring are undertaken at the planning application stages.

3.8 Noise

3.8.1 Future residential development within the allocation will need to be designed to recognise and respond appropriately to potential noise sources. The site lies adjacent to the existing Chanters Industrial Estate to the south, and the allocation also provides for the potential northward expansion of employment uses within the same area. Both existing and future industrial activity have the potential to generate noise impacts that could affect residential amenity.

3.8.2 Identified noise sources include, but are not limited to road traffic noise, rail traffic noise and vibration from use of the Wigan to Manchester railway line, industrial/commercial/waste transfer activities/uses associated with Chanters Industrial Estate, farming activities, electricity pylons and utilities.

3.8.3 Development proposals should incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to address potential noise issues. This may include layout design considerations, strategic positioning of residential plots and the provision of acoustic mitigation or landscaped buffers between residential areas and industrial uses as appropriate.

3.8.4 Consideration should also be given to construction related noise impacts. Future development will need to be supported by Construction Environmental Management Plans that seek to minimise disruption to existing residents and surrounding businesses. Phasing plans should reflect both construction sequencing and operational noise management, particularly where residential development is adjacent to the industrial estate.

3.8.5 Site-specific noise assessments should be undertaken as part of future planning applications to ensure compliance with national planning guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant British Standards for noise. Mitigation measures should aim to protect long-term residential amenity while accommodating the operational requirements and future development of the industrial estate.

3.8.6 In summary, it is considered that the site allocation can deliver a well-designed mixed-use development comprising of residential and employment use provided that noise is appropriately considered in masterplanning, layout, and design, ensuring compatibility between uses and a high-quality living environment for future residents.

4. Social assessment

4.1 Access to local shops and services

4.1.1 The site is located about a 10-12 minute walk from the centre of Atherton, a key town centre in the northeast of the borough, which provides a wide range of shops, goods and services, including supermarkets, a bank, and a post office.

4.1.2 The site is also within the catchment of two local centres, Shakerley to the east and Bolton Road to the north. Shakerley is an underperforming local centre, so there is some scope for this development to contribute towards its improvement and upgrade.

4.1.3 The site is also within convenient distances of other key community services and facilities including sports, recreation and amenity spaces, primary and secondary schools, and medical facilities, all of which are located within the site's setting.

4.1.4 Tyldesley Town Centre is located approximately 1.3km from the site and can be accessed within a 15-minute walk.

4.2 Education and skills

4.2.1 Criterion 10 of the site allocation policy requires the development to provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including for education, in accordance with policy PE6. The level of contribution required, and whether it is for on-site or off-site provision, will be determined at the planning application stage based on evidence of need at that time.

4.2.2 In line with Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan policy JP-J1(F), the development will also need to address the requirements for local training and employment as part of the construction phase, and for employment development, when operational.

4.3 Health

4.3.1 As with education, criterion 10 of the site allocation policy requires the development to provide, or contribute towards the provision of, the infrastructure needed to mitigate its adverse impact including for health and care, in accordance with policy PE6.

4.3.2 The level of contribution required, and whether it is for on-site or off-site provision, will be determined at the planning application stage based on evidence of need at that time.

4.3.3 Future planning applications on the site will also need to be supported, where appropriate, by a Health Impact Assessment in accordance with PfE policy JP-P6 and proposed Local Plan policy PE1.

4.3.4 A Health Impact Assessment will help ensure that the effects of development on both health and wellbeing are considered and responded to during the planning process. They should aim to enhance the potential positive aspects of a proposal while avoiding or minimising any negative impacts, with particular emphasis on disadvantaged sections of communities that may be affected. This is detailed in the Council's Planning for Health Supplementary Planning Document.

4.3.5 A Health Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of planning application A/25/099087/OUTMES.

5. Deliverability

5.1 Viability

5.1.1 AspinallVerdi are undertaking a high-level viability assessment using broad, non-site-specific assumptions. Detailed costs for the proposed development are not available and therefore significant variation from this high-level work should be expected. A viability assessment has been provided in support of planning application A/25/099087/OUTMES and is being considered as part of the planning application process.

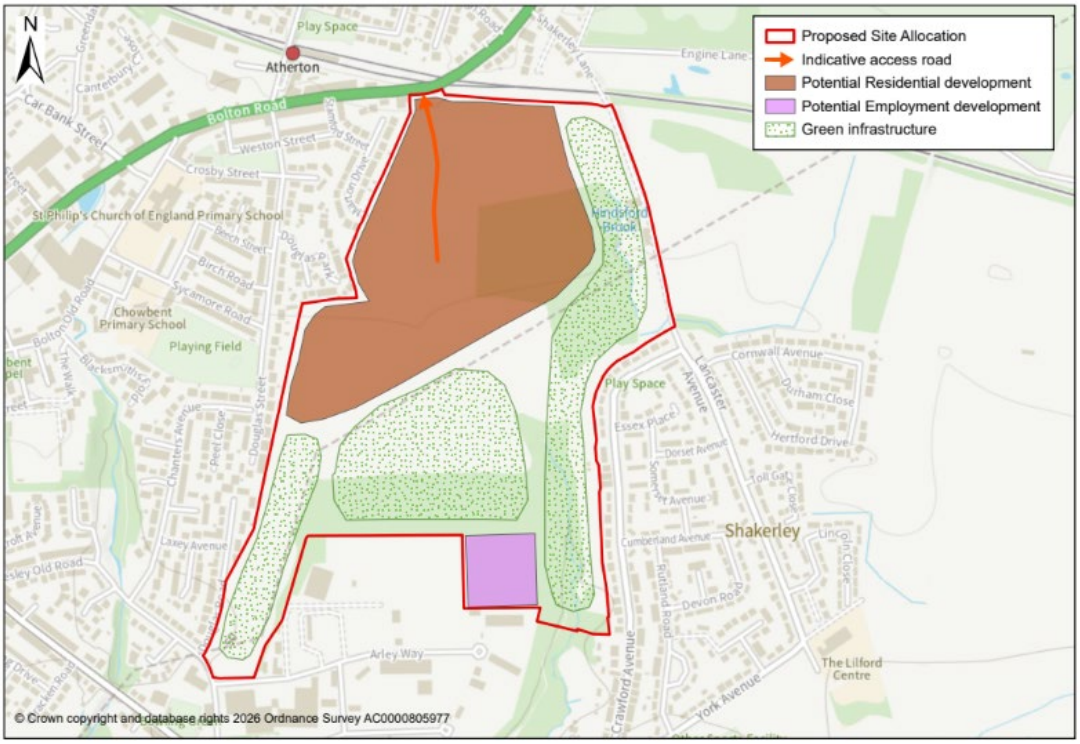
5.2 Phasing

5.2.1 It is anticipated that the site allocation will be fully delivered within the plan period. The site is not located within the Green Belt and has previously been safeguarded for housing development through earlier iterations of the Development Plan. There is clear evidence of active developer interest, demonstrated by the current outline planning application for up to 550 homes, and the recently refused full planning application submitted by Bellway for the southwestern part of the allocation.

5.2.2 Tarleton Estates have also confirmed that they anticipate the delivery of their sites in the short to medium term with all 550 homes within the plan period.

5.3 Indicative concept plan

A concept plan prepared by the council is included below. This provides a spatial representation of the allocation policy and shows an indicative layout of the potential development of the site.


N
Proposed Site Allocation
Indicative access road
Potential Residential development
Potential Employment development
Green infrastructure
Atherton
Bolton Road
Play Space
Shakerley
Playing Field
Chowbent Primary School
St Philip's Church of England Primary School
Arley Way
The Lilford Centre
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