VISION DOCUMENT

LAND TO THE EAST OF FORMBY

Prepared by
GRASSCROFT
HOME & PROPERTY
LIMITED
VISION DOCUMENT

LAND TO THE EAST OF FORMBY
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The site forms a sustainable and natural extension to Formby and offers an opportunity to deliver in the order of 180 new homes, substantial areas of open space and wildlife habitat improvements.
Grasscroft has under its control a 9.84 hectare self-contained site to the east of Formby which is bordered to the north and west by existing built development and to the south by the Formby Strategic Employment Allocation. Downholland Brook to the east forms a natural defendable boundary.

**PURPOSE**

1.1 This Vision Document has been prepared by Grasscroft Homes & Property Limited (hereafter referred to as Grasscroft) to support future submissions to Sefton Council and Formby and Little Altcar Parish Council regarding the need to release further greenfield land located within the Green Belt around Formby to meet future strategic housing needs.

1.2 This Vision Document has been prepared with input from the following consultancies:

- Hourigan Connolly who deal with planning and development matters.
- TPM Landscape who deal with landscape and visual impact.
- Croft Transport Solutions who deal with access, highways and transportation matters.
- BWB - who deal with noise, floodrisk and surface water drainage.
- e3p – who deal with ground conditions.
- Nicol Thomas – who deal with masterplanning.
- Rachel Hacking Ecology.

1.3 Relevant technical documents from the above-mentioned consultants are contained within a separate Technical Appendix.

**THE PROPOSALS**

1.4 Grasscroft has under its control a 9.84 hectare self-contained site to the east of Formby which is bordered to the north and west by existing built development and to the south by the Formby Strategic Employment Allocation. The eastern boundary is formed by Downholland Brook. The site has very few constraints that cannot be overcome by standard mitigation measures. The site forms a sustainable and natural extension to Formby and offers an opportunity to deliver in the order of 180 new homes (both open market and affordable and a range of types of dwellings to meet a broad range of needs) set within generous areas of open space for the benefit of existing as well as new residents. Importantly the site has convenient access to shops, services and employment areas to meet day-to-day needs and it is located in close proximity to the public transport network so as to encourage alternative means of travel to the private motor vehicle.

**NEED**

1.5 At the outset, it must be acknowledged that Sefton Council only adopted the current version of the Local Plan at a meeting of the Full Council on 20 April 2017. Hence future promotion of land to the east of Formby is contingent upon a further review of Green Belt being triggered by a requirement for further housing land to be identified. The recently adopted Local Plan contains a mechanism for this to occur should on-going work within the Liverpool City Region identify such a need. Accordingly, this document is a precursor to such need being identified but it has been prepared at this time to enable meaningful discussions to take place between Grasscroft, Sefton Council and the Parish Council about the prospects of the site being released from the Green Belt in the future and allocated for residential development in order to meet any revised housing needs that may materialise.

**FORMAT**

1.6 This Vision Document considers the mechanisms for a future Local Plan review but primarily it focuses on:

- The sustainability of Formby as a location for future residential development.
- The suitability of the site for release from the Green Belt and its allocation for residential development.
- The viability of residential development.
- The availability of the site.
- The potential deliverability of a proposed residential development.

1.7 The above matters have all been considered to inform the Vision for the site that appears at Chapter 8 and within that chapter are also listed the substantial benefits of this scheme.
Formby is located within Sefton Borough Council’s jurisdiction. It can be found approximately 16km west of the centre of Ormskirk, 12km south of Southport and 22km to the north of the centre of Liverpool.
LOCATION

2.1 Formby is located within Sefton Borough Council’s jurisdiction. It can be found approximately 16km west of the centre of Ormskirk, 12km south of Southport and 22km to the north of the centre of Liverpool. Figure 2.1 sets out the context of Formby within the local area.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

2.2 Formby also has a Parish Council. The Parish Council together with Little Altcar Parish Council is in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan which is dealt with later in this document.

2.3 Figure 2.2 indicates the extent of the Parish boundaries.

2.4 Formby is split into two Metropolitan Wards, known as Harington and Ravenmeols. The site is located within the latter. Figure 2.3 indicates the extent of the Metropolitan Ward boundaries.

SETTLEMENT HISTORY

2.5 According to the Parish Council website, Formby has a long history, with the area recorded in the Doomsday book, dating back to the Vikings. The word Formby was originally spelt ‘fornebei’ which translates as ‘village belonging to Forni’, Forni being a well-known Norse family name. St Luke’s Church was built in 1858, the building and its surrounds contain a 12th century fort, a 1407 gravestone, the steps from the original Cross Green, the oldest street light in Formby and the table top graves of the Formby family.

2.6 Formby lighthouse was built in 1719, becoming a ‘lighthouse’ in 1834 until 1839 and again between 1851 and 1856. It is thought to be the first ever lighthouse in the UK. Similarly the first lifeboat station in the UK was established at Formby point in 1776 and Formby Golf Club was established in 1884.

2.7 Formby is renowned for its pinewoods which were planted by the Blundell and Formby families from the late 19th Century and are now home to the nationally scarce red squirrel. Formby dunes is one of the largest areas of dune habitats in the UK which provides a home for rare and endangered species.

2.8 The majority of growth in the settlement has been during the 20th Century following the opening of the RAF station on the outskirts of the town during the Second World War, known as RAF Woodvale.

BUILT FORM

2.9 The settlement as a whole has no overriding character in terms of residential style, with a mix of housing types and ages being seen throughout the town. Larger dwellings sit alongside smaller bungalows and there is a reasonable amount of local authority-owned housing stock in the settlement.

DEMOGRAPHICS

2.10 Formby town had a population of 23,329 at the time of the 2011 Census; but this had decreased by 1,149 from the 2001 Census.

2.11 In terms of the broader characteristics of the area, further Census data is available for the Ravenmeols ward within which the site lies. The average age of residents in Ravenmeols ward is 46, with 27.4% of the population being over 65. In Ravenmeols Ward 56.2% of the population comprise the working population (aged 16-59 for women and 16-64 for men) compared to 61.7% of the Sefton area.
LOCAL AMENITIES AND SERVICES

2.12 A range of community facilities and local services are available within the vicinity of the site, particularly along Chapel Lane, Halssall Lane and Three Tuns Lane.

2.13 Table 1 below identifies local services and should be read in conjunction with Appendix 9 of the Technical Appendix which provides an annotated map of Formby showing the location of local amenities in relation to the site.

Table 1 - Hourigan Connolly Services Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Service Provision</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>A Tesco is located to the south of the site at Formby Business Park approximately 1.3km by road. Marks and Spencer, Waitrose and Iceland are located in the centre of Formby approximately 2.6km by road to the west of the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>Formby Post Office is located in Formby town centre approximately 2.6km to the west of the site by road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>Natwest, Lloyds Bank, HSBC Bank, Santander and Barclays are all located in Formby town centre on Chapel Lane approximately 2.6km to the west of the site by road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school Provision</td>
<td>Our Lady of Compassion Roman Catholic Primary School, Trinity St Peters Church of England Primary School, Freshfield Primary School and Redgate Primary School are all within a 1.5km radius of the site by road. There are other pre-school facilities further afield within Formby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>In addition to those referred to above Formby has the following primary schools, St Luke's Church of England Primary School and Woodlands County Primary School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>Clarence High School, Range High School and Formby High School are within a 4km radius of the site by road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public House/Social Club</td>
<td>There are various pubs, restaurants and bars in and around Formby town centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>The Chapel Lane surgery, Freshfield Surgery, The Hollies Surgery and the Village Surgery are located within Formby and within close proximity to Rowlands Pharmacy, Boots and Superdrug.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Beauty</td>
<td>Hairdressers and beauty salons can be found in Formby town centre. Formby Pool and Leisure Centre are located at the far end of Chapel Lane in the town centre approximately 2.6km by road from the appraisable site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community facilities</td>
<td>Guild Hall and Formby Holy Trinity Hall can be found in Formby town centre. Formby Library is located just west of Formby town centre. Formby Cricket, Hockey and Squash Club is in the north of Formby approximately 2.7km from the site by road.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEALTHCARE - CAPACITY

2.14 As identified at Table 1 Formby has numerous doctor’s surgeries. According to the NHS website [http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/GP/Formby/Results/6/-/5.067/55.339/4/79361/distance=25](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/GP/Formby/Results/6/-/5.067/55.339/4/79361/distance=25) Chapel Lane Surgery has 7,985 registered patients and 4 doctors and The Village Surgery has 9,813 registered patients and 6 doctors both of which are accepting new patients.

2.15 There are several dental practices in Formby, the nearest include; Azure Dental, Elbow Lane Dental and Same Day Smiles.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKAGES

2.16 Formby is served by numerous bus services the routes with stops closest to the site are detailed in Table 2 below and a map showing the location of nearby bus stops is provided at Figure 2.4.

Table 2 - Local Bus Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bus Service No.</th>
<th>Bus Route</th>
<th>Frequency of service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Southport - Formby</td>
<td>Operating daily this route runs approximately 3 services every hour at peak times and daytime with a service operating every hour during the evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Southport - Formby</td>
<td>This survey operates every half hour for 7 days a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Crossens - Formby - Liverpool</td>
<td>Operating daily this route runs approximately 3 services every hour at peak times and daytime with a service operating every hour during the evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1/F2/F3</td>
<td>Formby Village Circular</td>
<td>One service an hour at peak times and daytime. One service an hour during Saturday daytime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>760</td>
<td>Formby - Ainsdale</td>
<td>School bus service from Range High School to Ainsdale.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.17 Formby is served by two train stations; Freshfield and Formby. Both of these stations are operated by Merseyrail and provide services to Southport in the north and Liverpool in the south, running approximately every 15 minutes.
2.18 It is now commonplace that households have a broadband internet connection as it plays such an important role in modern day life. According to www.uswitch.com Formby currently receives standard broadband at up to 17Mb and fibre optic broadband at up to 76Mb (based on the postcode L37 9BE) which would allow online users to stream catch-up TV, take part in multi-player gaming, or enable multiple devices to download material or share files all at the same time.

2.19 There are a wide range of employment opportunities within Formby, the town centre offers retail and health and beauty services while Formby Business Park provides a range of business uses. To the south of the site is the Formby Strategic Employment Allocation that features in the recently adopted Local Plan.

2.20 In addition to the employment opportunities available in Formby, Southport, Bootle and Liverpool are all within commutable distance from the site and offer a wider and more diverse employment opportunity.

2.21 Formby is a large and accessible town with a range of facilities and services within the settlement itself to meet day to day needs.
THE SITE

3.1 The site lies to the immediate east of Formby along the Formby Bypass (A565) which provides the main access to Southport to the north and other settlements to the south; Ince Blundell, Hightown and Crosby. Figure 3.1

THE SITE

3.2 The site extends to circa 9.84 hectares and can be accessed via various points.

3.3 A narrow private road exists between two existing residential properties to the north (located on Moss Side) which is currently used as access to the West Lancashire Canine Centre. The West Lancashire Canine Centre can also be accessed via Formby Bypass.

3.4 Access to the site can also be gained further east along Downholland Moss Lane at the north eastern part of the site.

3.5 The above access points represent the existing position whereas the proposed development would take access from the Formby bypass as detailed later in this Vision Document.

3.6 The eastern section of the site has been sub divided into paddocks generally with post and wire fencing and comprises an agricultural small holding with various farm animals.

3.7 The western section of the site is mainly laid to pasture and is used for horse grazing. Four acres of the western section of the site is occupied by West Lancashire Canine Centre mentioned above.

3.8 The site has numerous mature trees and hedgerows with the majority being located along the western boundary; additionally there is a small copse within the eastern part of the site.

3.9 A public right of way crosses the site as detailed Chapter 5.

THE SURROUNDING AREA

3.10 To the north of the site are residential properties along Moss Side/Downholland Moss Lane and Clarke’s Golf Driving Range and a plant nursery (with extensive glasshouses) extending further north beyond the residential properties.

3.11 Downholland Brook forms the majority of the eastern boundary of the site with open countryside extending further east. The Brook includes raised earthworks to minimise flooding. Downholland Moss Brook drains into the River Alt. The brook comprises the boundary between West Lancashire and Sefton. The nearest settlement to the east is Downholland which is 4.59 km away (as the crow flies).

3.12 Bridge Inn Community Farm is also located beyond the eastern boundary.

3.13 The southern boundary of the site is formed by a ditch beyond which is land allocated for strategic employment purposes (MN2.49) in the recently adopted Sefton Local Plan beyond which is Formby Business Park.

3.14 Adjacent to Formby Bypass (A565) to the west there is an area of open space including the provision of playing fields with residential development and Formby town extending west. The area is connected to the wider highway network through the A565, which provides excellent connections to the M58 and M6 motorways.

3.15 A footpath link across the A565 joins the south-westerly point of the site and the south of the playing fields.

3.16 Moss Side is subject to a 30 mph speed limit, it has a footpath and is lit by streetlights. Formby Bypass is subject to a 60 mph speed limit and is also well lit. The bypass also has a separate footpath/cycleway within the verge on both sides of the road.

SUMMARY

3.17 The site predominantly comprises an unremarkable looking parcel of greenfield land that is currently used, in part, for the grazing of horses, a small holding and a canine training centre.

3.18 The site is located in close proximity to shops and services and has the potential to form a logical and sustainable extension to Formby.

www.dogtrainer.co.uk

www.bridgeinncommunityfarm.co.uk
The site is located in close proximity to shops and services and has the potential to form a logical and sustainable extension to Formby.
4 PLANNING HISTORY

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS/DECISIONS**

4.1 The site has limited planning history primarily related to existing uses of the land.

4.2 The site has been the subject to the following planning applications:

- N/2001/1096 was submitted on 30/10/2001 and approved on 17/01/2002 for:
  “Erection of a polytunnel within existing training centre, change of use of land from agricultural to be used for dog training purposes and erection of boundary fencing”

- N/2002/0286 was submitted on 26/03/2002 and approved on 01/05/2002 for:
  “Erection of a detached single storey block of 4 stables to the rear of the existing farm buildings.”

- N/2004/1198 was submitted on 05/11/2004 and refused on 24/12/2004 for:
  “Change of use from a nursery to a water garden and aquatic centre. (alternative to N/2003/1330 refused 18/02/04)”

- S/2012/1147 was submitted on 13/09/2012 and approved with conditions on 28/11/2012 for:
  “Retention of a single storey hay storage building and a single-storey extension to the existing stables and a proposed single-storey extension to the hay storage building”

- S/2012/1147 was submitted on 13/09/2012 and approved with conditions on 28/11/2012 for:
  “Retention of a single storey hay storage building and a single-storey extension to the existing stables and a proposed single-storey extension to the hay storage building”

- N/2004/1198 was submitted on 05/11/2004 and refused on 24/12/2004 for:
  “Erection of a detached single storey block of 4 stables adjacent to the existing farm buildings”

- N/2004/0217 was submitted on 02/03/2004 and refused on 16/04/2004 for:
  “Erection of a detached single-storey block of 4 stables adjacent to the existing farm buildings”

- N/2005/1273 was submitted on 13/12/2005 and approved on 16/02/2006 for:
  “Retention of 16 day kennels and associated hardstanding area following removal of 5 kennels”

- N/2004/1284 was submitted on 05/11/2004 and refused on 27/01/2005 for:
  “Erection of a detached single storey block of 4 stables to the rear of the existing farm buildings.”

- DC/2014/00368 was submitted on 19/02/2014 for three dimensional (‘3D’) seismic survey (pre-application enquiry). This was deemed to be permitted development.

- DC/2016/00852 was submitted on 29/04/2016 for mixed source three dimensional (3D) seismic survey. The written notification sets out the intention of TESLA to carry out a three-dimensional seismic survey on behalf of Aurora Energy Resources Ltd. It was determined that permission to undertake this was not required.

- DC/2016/01308 was submitted on 23/06/2016 and approved with conditions on 07/09/2016 for:
  “Siting of a detached building to be used for lambing and hay storage after demolition of existing lamb and hay store building.”

- DC/2016/00386 was submitted on 19/03/2016 for three dimensional (‘3D’) seismic survey (pre-application enquiry). This was deemed to be permitted development.

- DC/2016/00852 was submitted on 29/04/2016 for mixed source three dimensional (3D) seismic survey. The written notification sets out the intention of TESLA to carry out a three-dimensional seismic survey on behalf of Aurora Energy Resources Ltd. It was determined that permission to undertake this was not required.

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  “Siting of a detached building to be used for lambing and hay storage after demolition of existing lamb and hay store building.”

4.3 The planning history of the site demonstrates that whilst this is predominantly a greenfield site it also includes elements of previously developed land and hence it should be treated as a mixed greenfield/brownfield site by the Council in considering this Vision Document.

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

4.4 The site has not been actively promoted in the past as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in either 2012, 2013 or 2014 or as part of the recently adopted Local Plan. However with the involvement of Grasscroft the site will now be actively promoted going forward.

4.5 Notably the site (including the area of greenfield land to the south of the site now allocated for strategic employment purposes) was assessed as part of the production of the Sefton Local Plan in a Site Assessment Form (SO44); it was concluded that the site is well contained and would not significantly impact upon any Green Belt purpose. The proforma went on to note in the conclusion section that:

“Just under half of the site (to the north) is not being promoted for development by the owners, and cannot therefore be allocated for development.”

4.6 The above assessment is an important material consideration in taking this site forward.
5.1 In this Chapter we deal with statutory and other designations.

**HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS**

5.2 The site does not contain or lie in close proximity to any listed buildings, there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments at or close to the site neither does the site lie within or near to any World Heritage Sites.

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

5.3 There is a public footpath crossing the site as shown in Figure 5.1.

5.4 The PRoW currently present on the site would be incorporated into the development of the scheme. The route may need to change slightly to provide the safest route through the site and this would be discussed through pre-application discussions with the Local Authority and if an altered route is required the PRoW would be amended via a Modification Order.

**FLOOD RISK AND SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE**

5.5 A review of the Environment Agency’s Flood Map (see extract of map at Figure 5.2) reveals that the majority of the site is in Flood Risk Zone 1 but part of the site is in Flood Risk Zone 2 which is land assessed as having up to a 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (0.1%).

5.6 A Flood Risk Assessment has undertaken by BWB (see Appendix 1 of the Technical Appendix). This report demonstrates that the proposed development is at an acceptable level of flood risk, subject to the recommended flood mitigation strategies being implemented.

To manage the potential risk from a breach or extreme flood events, it is recommended finished floor levels are set no lower than 4.80m AOD and a sequential approach to the layout is adopted, siting ‘More Vulnerable’ uses in areas of the site considered in Flood Zone 1. Surface water runoff from the development will also be controlled appropriately.

5.7 The report concludes the following:

“In compliance with the requirements of National Planning Policy Framework, and subject to the mitigation measures proposed, the development could proceed without being subject to significant flood risk. Moreover, the development will not increase flood risk to the wider catchment area as a result of suitable management of surface water runoff discharging from the site.”

5.8 An outline Surface Water Assessment has been prepared by BWB (see Appendix 1 of the Technical Appendix). This identifies several ways in which the site could be drained subject to further discussions with United Utilities and infiltration testing. Whilst detailed design work would be required to support a planning application the work undertaken to date adequately demonstrates that the site can be sustainably drained. That level of information is sufficient enough for Development Plan purposes with a formal Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy being required to be produced in order to accompany any subsequent planning application.
5.9 Rachel Hacking Ecology have produced an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey which appears at Appendix 2 of the Technical Appendix.

5.10 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The grassland habitats offer little ecological value. They are intensively managed, either by mowing or grazing. The grasslands are species-poor and homogenous. The drainage ditches on site are of poor quality. The majority of the length of them was dry during the survey. The wet ditches support extremely shallow water with limited aquatic vegetation. This land and the land to the south has been intensively managed and it appears that the ditches have degraded in quality. Only small pockets of reed bed remain.

5.11 No protected species have been found on the site.

5.12 The site is not subject to any statutory ecology related designations; there are no National Nature Reserves, Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Special Area of Conservation (SACs) within 1km of the site. Figure 5.3 is an extract from the Magic DEFRA website which shows the location of the nearby statutory ecological sites. There are numerous ecological land designations on the coast including Local Nature Reserves, Ramsar sites and SSSIs, although these designations should be noted they would not be affected by development potential of the site.

5.13 The site is designated as Formby Moss Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Rachel Hacking Ecology conclude that the LWS has degraded in ecological value since the original assessment in 2000. Two of the ditches, shown on OS maps, no longer exist and the existing ditches are of poor quality, with only a small pocket of reed bed, which is a qualifying feature of the LWS. The site has been intensively managed since the assessment. Under current guidelines and criteria, it is unlikely that the site would qualify for LWS status.
LANDSCAPE

5.14 The site comprises a flat piece of land which is contained by strong physical features including the Formby Bypass and the Downholland Brook as well as commercial and residential development to the north of the site accessed via Downholland Moss Lane.

5.15 The local landscape is not identified as being of particular significance by the Council and could not be considered an important landscape in relation to the provisions of the Framework.

5.16 The site has not been assessed within the Sefton Landscape Assessment as it did not comprise a draft allocation. The land to the south of the proposed site however, was considered within the Landscape Assessment as it is now an allocation for strategic employment (MN2.49) in the adopted Local Plan. This site was recorded as mostly medium scale and wider landscape character to be strongly influenced by the medium to large scale fields to the east of Downholland Brook.

5.17 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken by TPM Landscape and appears at Appendix 3 of the Technical Appendix.

5.18 The landscape impacts of the proposals are assessed as minimal with no notable effects recorded and the character areas around Formby expected to retain their integrity and all of their features and characteristics.

5.19 The visual impacts of the proposed development are also assessed as small with only locations immediately adjacent to, or within the site being assessed with significant effects. This level of change would be typical of any such development at the edge of settlement and is no different to that which will occur for the neighbouring sites to the south of the proposal site allocated for industrial development.

5.20 At even small distances from the site boundaries, the visual effects reduce. This combined with the relatively small number of potential locations where views can be gained towards the site lead to a very low level of actual visual change for the study area.

AGRICULTURAL LAND QUALITY

5.21 Land Research Associates has undertaken a Soils and Agricultural Land Quality Assessment (see Appendix 4 of the Technical Appendix). This confirms that the site comprises Grade 3a agricultural land limited by droughtiness or wetness. Whilst the presence of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land is a material consideration having regard to Paragraph 112 of the Framework this is not a determinative factor and it should also be considered that this land is in the lowest category of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, it is not a significant tract of such land in the national context (being just below 10 hectares) and large parts of the site are not in active agricultural use i.e. the dog training centre and paddocks used for the keeping of horses. Accordingly the site has limited economic benefit to agriculture.

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA

5.22 The site is not affected by an Air Quality Management Area according to the interactive mapping available on DEFRA’s web site.

UTILITIES

5.23 All necessary utilities required to serve the development are available locally.

NOISE

5.24 BWB has produced a Noise Assessment (see Appendix 5 of the Technical Appendix). Road noise from the Formby by-pass is currently the dominant noise source across the site but the Noise Assessment concludes that noise can be mitigated against through careful design and standard mitigation techniques. The recommendations of the Noise Assessment have been considered in drawing up the illustrative masterplan and vision for the site.

GROUND CONDITIONS

5.25 e3p has produced a Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment (see Appendix 6 of the Technical Appendix). No issues with regard to ground conditions have been identified.

ACCESS & TRANSPORTATION

5.26 Croft Transport Solutions has produced a Transport Issues Note (see Appendix 7 of the Technical Appendix). This demonstrates that the site is in a highly sustainable location with convenient access to shops and services by means other than the private motor vehicle.

5.27 The Transport Note also considers access and advises that access should be from Formby by-pass. The access arrangements are illustrated in Drawing 1468-FO1 (see Appendix 8 of the Technical Appendix). The proposed point of access has considered the proximity of access to the strategic employment site to the south and is considered wholly appropriate with no conflicts anticipated. The proposed junction arrangement will also assist existing and future pedestrians crossing the Formby by-pass.

5.28 In terms of traffic impact no material issues with regard to capacity on the local network have been identified although a formal Transport Assessment would need to be submitted in support of any subsequent planning application at the site.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

5.29 The site is not subject to any Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) but there are trees on the site and some will need to be felled to secure access.

5.30 The proposals seek to retain the vast majority of trees and hedgerows on site with only a small section of hedgerow bounding the A565 corridor needing to be removed to enable access. Elsewhere woodland and hedgerow areas will be maintained and enhanced with the indicative design illustrating new landscaping planting throughout the development. These proposals would seek to follow the pattern and species types outlined within the landscape character assessments to ensure that the integrity and character of the adjoining landscape areas are maintained.

SUMMARY

5.31 The site has limited constraints which subject to specialist surveys may be capable of being adequately addressed thereby enabling the site to be robustly promoted through the Development Plan.
In this Chapter we look at the relevant planning policy context for the site.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONTEXT

6.2 Paragraph 6 of the Framework establishes that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that the policies in Paragraphs 18 to 219 of the Framework, taken as a whole, constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

6.3 Paragraph 7 of the Framework outlines the three dimensions to sustainable development as economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

• an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

• a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing; and

• an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.4 Paragraph 8 of the Framework indicates that the three roles are mutually dependant.

6.5 Paragraph 47 of the Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing land, stating that local authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area.

6.6 Paragraph 55 of the Framework states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of settlements, development in one village may support services in a nearby village.

6.7 Paragraph 58 states the following:

“Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

• will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

• establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;

• optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;

• respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;

• create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and

• are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.”
6.8 Paragraph 80 of the Framework sets out the five purposes of Green Belt land as follows:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

6.9 Paragraph 83 goes on to state that local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

6.10 Paragraph 84 states when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

6.11 Paragraph 85 sets out that when defining new Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should:
- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
- where necessary, identify in their plans areas of ‘safeguarded land’ between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
- make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;
- satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and
- define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.
6.12 Paragraph 184 explains the role of Neighbourhood Planning and states: 

“Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.”

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

6.13 Sefton is working jointly with the other Liverpool City Region local planning authorities and the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership on a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) to establish, objectively, the level of long-term growth in housing and employment needs appropriate in Sefton. This may result in an early review of the recently adopted Sefton Local Plan as detailed below.

THE SEFTON LOCAL PLAN (2012 – 2027)

6.14 The Local Plan and Policy Maps were adopted by Full Council on 20 April 2017.

Figure 6.2

Sefton Local Plan - Formby Policy Map Extract – The site is shown as being located in the Green Belt (green shading) and part of a Local Wildlife Site (Green Dots – note also this planning designation also affects the strategic employment site (purple shading) to the south). The brown dots along the western boundary refer to Policy EQ9 and in the context of this site it refers to the potential to establish a strategic path along the eastern boundary.
POLICY MN1

6.15 Policy MN1 provides the Housing and Employment Requirements for the Borough stating that during the period 2012 – 2030 the provision will be made for 11,520 new homes in Sefton. The housing requirement will be met at the following average annual rates:

- 2012-2017: 500 dwellings per annum.

6.16 Policy MN1 goes on to state that the employment requirement for the period 2012-2030 will be made for a total of 91.59 ha of employment land. Section 5 of policy MN1 states the following:

“Sefton is working jointly with the other Liverpool City Region local planning authorities and the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership to undertake the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) to establish, objectively, the level of long-term growth in housing and employment needs appropriate in Sefton. In the event that it is demonstrated that further housing or employment provision is required in Sefton, an immediate review or partial review of the Sefton Local Plan will be brought forward to address these matters. The review will commence following the adoption of the Sefton Local Plan. It will take into account the findings of the SHELMA, and will be submitted within two years from the date of the Local Plan adoption.”

6.17 Paragraph 4.42 to 4.44 of the adopted Local Plan identifies the possible and early need for a review of the Local Plan and states the following:

“It is acknowledged that the expansion of the Port of Liverpool is likely to generate significant additional demand for distribution and other port-related uses across Merseyside. This is likely to be such a significant issue that it will need to be reviewed comprehensively at a subregional level. The Liverpool City Region authorities have agreed in principle to carry out a study focusing on addressing the land needs arising from port expansion. It is proposed to review the Plan if required to take account of the results of this study in a co-ordinated subregional manner.

This review will also reflect the conclusions of the Port of Liverpool Options Identification and Assessment commissioned by Highways England in relation to proposals for major road improvements. Public engagement as part of this work took place early in 2017. The Options assessment work is expected to be completed in summer 2017. The Council is committed to an immediate review of the Plan if the publication of the subregional Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) identifies a need for more housing or employment including land for logistics associated with the Port of Liverpool (see part 5 of policy MN1 ‘Housing and Employment Land Requirements’). To this end, and as part of the Duty to Co-operate, it is collaborating with the other Liverpool City Region authorities to carry this study out.”

6.18 This is supported within section 5 of Policy MN1 of the adopted Local Plan which states:

“...in the event that it is demonstrated that further housing or employment provision is required in Sefton, an immediate review or partial review of the Sefton Local Plan will be brought forward to address these matters. The review will commence following the adoption of the Sefton Local Plan. It will take into account the findings of the SHELMA, and will be submitted within two years from the date of the Local Plan adoption.”

6.19 Clearly if a need to review the Plan is identified through SHELMA the Council will need to act quickly (and have it submitted for Examination by April 2019) if it is to honour the commitment made in the Local Plan. With that in mind the consideration of land to the East of Formby is timely as the site could quickly meet any further identified housing need.

POLICY HC1

6.20 There is a significant need for more affordable housing in Sefton equating to 434 dwellings per annum. In Formby alone the need is 64 dwellings per annum. Put simply the affordable housing need in Sefton is a significant proportion of the annual housing requirement as set out in Policy MN1 and in our view it simply isn’t going to be met on the basis of the requirements of Policy HC1.

6.21 Policy HC1 of the Local Plan identifies an affordable housing requirement of 30% of total scheme (measured by bedspaces). The tenure mix specified in the policy is: 80% social rented/affordable rented and 20% intermediate.

6.22 This is a site that could viably deliver the affordable housing requirements of Policy HC1 with such housing being delivered in a timely fashion.

6.23 This is a significant benefit to the existing and future population of Formby through meeting the identified local affordable housing need.

POLICY HC2

6.24 Policy HC2 of the Local Plan requires the following dwelling mix unless precluded by site specific constraints, economic viability or prevailing neighbourhood characteristics:

- 25% 1 or 2 bedroom properties
- 40% 3 bedroom properties
- 35% 4+ properties

6.25 The mix required by Policy HC2 has been adopted within the illustrative masterplan submitted with this Vision Document, thus demonstrating that any housing in this location would be able to meet local housing needs. This would be of great benefit to Sefton and the wider Liverpool area.

6.26 Furthermore Criterion 2 of Policy HC2 requires that in developments of 50 or more dwellings, at least 20% of new market properties must be designed to meet Building Regulation Requirement M4(2) ‘accessible and adaptable dwellings’. Development here can meet these requirements.
Policy EQ2 identifies the design requirements for the Borough. The Illustrative masterplan accords with Policy EQ2 because:

- In relation to site context the proposal responds positively to the character, local distinctiveness and form of its surroundings.

- In relation to site design, layout and access:
  - The arrangement of buildings, structures and spaces within the site, including density and layout, and the alignment and orientation of buildings, relates positively to the character and form of the surroundings, achieves a high quality of design and meets all of the following criteria:
    - Ensures safe and easy movement into, out of, and within the site for everyone, including pedestrians, cyclists and those with limited mobility.
    - Integrates well with existing street patterns.
    - Protects the amenity of those within and adjacent to the site.
    - Ensures the safety and security of those within and outside the development through natural surveillance and the creation of active frontages.
    - Creates well-connected attractive outdoor areas which fulfil their purpose well.

- In relation to the design of buildings and structures:
  - The proposals make a positive contribution to their surroundings through the quality of their design in terms of scale, height, form, massing, style, detailing, landscaping and use of materials.
  - The proposals adequately deal with the adaptability of new homes to meet the long term needs of residents.
  - The proposals are designed to take advantage of natural solar gain.

- As this is an urban edge site it is also relevant to note that:
  - New gateway features provided, to ensure a locally distinctive development.
  - Structural planting is provided to soften the urban edge and provide a suitable transition to the wider open countryside lying beyond Downholland Brook.
  - A clear road hierarchy is set out, and different character areas within the development are provided, to assist navigation through and around the development.
POLICY EQ9

6.28 Policy EQ9 of the Local Plan identifies that 40 sqm of public open space must be provided for each residential property proposed. The illustrative masterplan accords with Policy EQ9 through the provision of 14,269 sqm of Open Space, which is a substantial increase on the requirement in Policy EQ9.

6.29 The provision of high quality open space is also of significant social benefit to existing and proposed residents.

6.30 In accordance with Policy EQ9 any trees loss as a result of this development will be replaced on a 1:1 basis but clearly the proposals have significant potential for new tree planting.

6.31 The illustrative masterplan also shows how a high quality landscape scheme can be delivered which is also a requirement of the policy.

6.32 The proposals would not prejudice the Council’s desire to establish a strategic path along the eastern boundary of the site. From the scale of the Policy Map this appears to relate to land within the flood defence bund which is not proposed for development as part of these proposals.

DRAFT FORMBY AND LITTLE ALTCAR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN


Policy ESD2

6.34 Neighbourhood Plan Policy ESD2 identifies that land for SUDs will not be seen as accessible open greenspace.

6.35 Policy ESD10 of the emerging Neighbourhood plan identifies criteria for garden spaces at the following:
   - 60 sq m for properties of 3 people or more
   - 30 sq m for properties of 2 people or more
   - For flats or maisonettes, a private balcony or garden space of 10 sq m.

6.36 The illustrative masterplan demonstrates that proposed development in this location could be delivered in accordance with Policy ESD2. The illustrative masterplan provides in excess of the garden sizes required within Policy ESD2 ensuring that the dwellings would be in keeping with the existing surrounding vernacular and create a desirable place to live.

POLICIES HS AND H6

6.37 Policy H5 of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan identifies that the provision of affordable housing in the form of starter homes with a 20% discount to market value will be supported.

6.38 Policy H6 of the Neighbourhood Plan identifies a desire for developments of 50 or more dwellings to comprise 20% of new dwellings to be suitable for older persons.

6.39 The illustrative masterplan includes a scheme which would provide 30% affordable housing in accordance with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The illustrative masterplan could include a number of properties which could be suitable for older persons housing through the meeting of increased housing specifications. This is a feature of the development which would be considered in greater detail at a detailed design stage.

POLICIES H9 AND H10

6.40 Policy H9 of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan identifies that all new dwellings must provide off road parking and dwellings with two bedrooms or more must provide at least 2 car-parking spaces.

6.41 Policy H10 States:
   “Design car parking so that it fits in with the character of the proposed development and where possible and appropriate, take opportunities to provide parking between houses, rather than in front. The provision of off-road parking should take into account the following:
   a) garages must be large enough to be useable internal dimensions of 6.5m x 3m are required
   b) garages should be designed to reflect the architectural style of the house they serve
   c) set garages back from the street frontage
   d) locate parking in between houses (rather than in front) so that it does not dominate the street scene where possible
   e) where parking is located in front of houses, design the street and the landscape to minimise their visual impact e.g. incorporate planting between front gardens.”

6.42 The illustrative masterplan is in full conformity with this draft policy as 2 car-parking spaces are provided for each property.

6.43 The parking has been designed to accommodate the desires of the Neighbourhood Plan where possible, providing a cohesive and well considered layout.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - NEXT STEPS

6.44 Given that the Local Plan may well be subject to an early review to address any increased housing and employment land requirements identified within the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) and having regard to the fact the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the Local Plan progression of the Neighbourhood Plan any further at this time may ultimately prove to be abortive as it may quickly become out-of-date if a Local Plan review signals a need to find further housing and employment land in the Neighbourhood Area.
At the outset, it must be acknowledged that Sefton Council only adopted the current version of the Local Plan at a meeting of the Full Council on 20 April 2017. Hence future promotion of land to the east of Formby is contingent upon a further review of Green Belt being triggered by a requirement for further housing land to be identified (see above). The recently adopted Local Plan contains a mechanism for this to occur should on-going work within the Liverpool City Region identify such a need. Accordingly, this document is a precursor to such need being identified but it has been prepared at this time to enable meaningful discussions to take place between Grasscroft, Sefton Council and the Parish Council about the prospects of the site being released from the Green Belt in the future and allocated for residential development in order to meet any revised housing needs that may materialise.

The site is located within the Green Belt in the recently adopted Local Plan.

As part of the Local Plan evidence base a Green Belt Study (2013) was completed by Ryder Landscape on behalf of Sefton Borough Council. This considered the site proposed within this document and site MN2.49 (the allocated strategic employment site to the south) as one parcel (Parcel Number: S044).

The Green Belt Study considered the site subject of this Vision Document prior to the removal of MN2.49 from Green Belt and therefore the Ryder Study now has limited reference to consideration of the site as part of a future Local Plan review; we have therefore undertaken our own review of the Green belt in this location having regard to the provisions of Paragraph 80 of the Framework.

The site has been actively promoted in the past as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in either 2012, 2013 or 2014 or as part of the recently adopted Local Plan.

Notably the site (including the area of greenfield land to the south of the site now allocated for strategic employment purposes) was assessed as part of the production of the Sefton Local Plan in a Site Assessment Form (SO44); it was concluded that the site is well contained and would not significantly impact upon any Green Belt purpose. The proforma went on to note that in the conclusion section that:

"Just under half of the site (to the north) is not being promoted for development by the owners, and cannot therefore be allocated for development."

The above assessment is an important material consideration in taking this site forward.

The site has not been actively promoted in the past as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in either 2012, 2013 or 2014 or as part of the recently adopted Local Plan.

The above assessment is an important material consideration in taking this site forward.
The site is clearly bounded on four sides by defendable features or existing development. The realignment of the Green Belt boundaries resulting in the removal of the proposed site from Green Belt would accord with Paragraph 85 of the Framework.
ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE FIVE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND WITHIN THE GREEN BELT – PARAGRAPH 80 OF THE FRAMEWORK

7.8 We now assess the prospect of releasing the site from the Green Belt having regard to Paragraph 80 of the Framework:

PURPOSE 1
TO CHECK THE UNRESTRICTED SPRAWL OF LARGE BUILT-UP AREAS

7.9 The Green Belt study undertaken by Sefton concluded that in terms of Purpose 1 the site is well contained on all sides by durable boundaries and therefore development of this site would ensure that the Green Belt boundaries beyond Downholland Brook to the east would endure. Clearly release of this site would not result in unchecked urban sprawl as development would terminate at the brook.

PURPOSE 2
TO PREVENT NEIGHBOURING TOWNS MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER

7.10 With regard to Purpose 2 the site is located within a wide gap between built up parts of an existing settlement and therefore the development of this site would not cause two settlements to merge. Moreover the gap will narrow once the strategic employment site to the south is developed.

7.11 The nearest settlement to the east is Downholland which is 4.59 km away (as the crow flies). Clearly the release of this site will not result in neighbouring settlements merging into one another.

PURPOSE 3
TO ASSIST IN SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM ENCROACHMENT

7.12 In terms of Purpose 3 we consider that the site has a close physical relationship with the built up area rather than with the wider open countryside located further to the east. Developing here would not result in unacceptable encroachment because development would terminate at the brook thereby safeguarding the wider countryside from encroachment.

PURPOSE 4
TO PRESERVE THE SETTING AND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF HISTORIC TOWNS

7.13 In terms of Purpose 4, there is no historic setting to preserve in this location.

PURPOSE 5
TO ASSIST IN URBAN REGENERATION, BY ENCOURAGING THE RECYCLING OF DERELICT AND OTHER URBAN LAND

7.14 In terms of Purpose 5 there is no longer any significant urban brownfield land available within Formby to meet any significant development needs arising as a result of the review of the Local Plan, which has resulted in the proposed realignment of the Green Belt. Release of this land would not offend Purpose 5.

GREEN BELT BOUNDARIES

7.15 Paragraph 85 of the Framework discusses the definition of Green Belt boundaries (see above) and in that respect if a need is identified for further housing:

• Release of the site would ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;

• It is unnecessary to keep the land permanently open, it is already bound on 2 sides by development and the third boundary will be built up upon completion of the strategic employment site;

• If an allocation is unsuccessful the land should at least be safeguarded in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period; as the site lies between the urban area and the wider Green Belt.

• The boundary of the Green Belt could be clearly defined along the brook, a physical feature that is readily recognisable and permanent. This is also the local authority boundary with West Lancashire.

7.16 In summary the site is clearly bounded on four sides by defendable features or existing development. The realignment of the Green Belt boundaries resulting in the removal of the proposed site from Green Belt would therefore accord with Paragraph 85 of the Framework.

7.17 The assessment work carried out by the Local Authority as part of its Green Belt review and subsequent land allocations work is considered in more detail within the LVIA from section 3.4 onwards. The overall conclusions of this work and a review of this carried out as part of the LVIA confirms that the proposal site demonstrates little in support of the purposes of Green Belt and that the Green Belt without the proposal site land would retain its integrity.

7.18 Through development at the proposal site the boundaries of the Green Belt would be set against boundaries that the Council, during their initial assessment work, considered to be robust and a logical rounding off of the settlement.
JUSTIFICATION FOR FURTHER HOUSING IN FORMBY

7.19 Formby is clearly a sustainable location for development as evidenced by the allocation of housing and employment sites in the recently adopted Local Plan and the evidence contained within this Vision Document. In our view there is no reason why Formby could not accommodate further growth should a Local Plan review signal there is a need to find more land for housing.

7.20 The Sefton Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2014) was completed by JG consulting to support the now adopted Local Plan. Paragraph 3.4 states that there are higher levels of owner occupation within Formby than in Southport and Bootle. The proportion of households living in social rented stock is lower within Formby than the Sefton average. Paragraph 3.7 identifies that there are higher numbers of detached (42%) and semi-detached homes at in Formby (46.5%). Paragraph 4.4 identifies that Formby has an ageing population with 35% of the population aged 60 or over.

7.21 Page 79 of the SHMA identifies a need for 434 affordable dwellings per annum between 2012 and 2030. This section of the report also recommends an affordable tenure split of 80% affordable/social rented and 20% intermediate housing. Table 7.11 of the SHMA established that Formby has an affordable housing need of 64 units per annum.

7.22 Clearly Formby has some challenges ahead in terms of an aging population and affordability issues; the release of further land for housing would help to rebalance some of these problems.

7.23 Paragraph 4.13 of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2014) states the following:

“It was not considered appropriate to assume a windfall allowance in Netherton, Formby, and Maghull in years 6-15, as these areas have historically delivered few windfalls. In addition, no windfall assumption was made in Bootle for years 6-15, as historic windfall permissions in this area have been very uneven. In addition, the 2014 ‘Local Plan & Community Infrastructure Levy Economic Viability Study’ found that the viability of small housing schemes in Bootle was generally negative”

7.24 Section 5 of Policy MN1 of the adopted Local Plan states:

“...In the event that it is demonstrated that further housing or employment provision is required in Sefton, an immediate review or partial review of the Sefton Local Plan will be brought forward to address these matters. The review will commence following the adoption of the Sefton Local Plan. It will take into account the findings of the SHELMA, and will be submitted within two years from the date of the Local Plan adoption.”

7.25 Clearly then with no prospect of windfall sites meeting needs locally the release of land in the Green Belt will be necessary if further land needs to be found for housing. In that respect land to the east of Formby is a prime site for residential allocation.
Proposed signalled access as per Croft Transport Solutions proposals 1468-F01
**KEY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

**Access**
The development is proposed to be serviced via a new signalled access with new right turn along Formby Bypass which will be formed utilizing the central reservation and left turn utilizing the existing verge.

The development will have a road hierarchy which is clear and simple an avenue will act as the primary spine from which a series of secondary and tertiary roads will branch from. The development will be serviced from within the site.

The development proposes a network of new pedestrian footpaths to promote sustainable modes of transport and connections to adjacent residential neighbourhoods, public open spaces, play facilities and informal landscaped areas.

**Built form and character areas**
The development comprises a series of connecting development zones which extend from the bypass to the brook adjacent to an informal arrangement of the buildings accessed from Downholland Moss Lane. To enable the development to interact with the local settlement context, development zones have similar densities and patterns and take the form of housing blocks, generally ‘back to back’ or linear housing arrangements.

**Green gateway in to site**
A linear housing frontage is proposed along the bypass boundary of the site which is set back to address acoustic issues from the highway and allow for retention of the existing native hedgerow.

**Residential streets**
Linear streets aligned with housing frontages having a reduced street cross section to the avenue.

**Green streets**
Lower densities and looser residential patterns with low key frontages that overlook public open spaces and green corridors.

Character areas are realised by building patterns, materials, road layout hierarchy and landscaping.

**Public open spaces**
A main area of public open space is proposed adjacent to the brook, this is an area which has been identified as part of the flood plain. This area acts as a break between the proposed new residential development and the green belt on the opposite side of Downholland Brook. This area is an informal recreation area which links to other linear routes and green corridors.

**Existing landscaping and ditches**
Existing ditches, hedgerows and trees along the existing boundaries are proposed to be retained wherever possible and supplemented as required. New native hedgerows are also proposed.

New landscaping (structural planting) is proposed around the perimeter and at low, medium and high points of the site to create a series of tiered ‘landscape layers’ that are inter-dispersed between development zones.

Swales and green corridors have been introduced where ditches are present on the site. This will add to the ecology value of the site providing connectivity between green spaces for wildlife.

**INTRODUCTION**

8.1 Subject to there being a need to identify further land for housing it is submitted that this site is suitable to help meet that need. We therefore look at how the site might be developed; although it is important to stress that the illustrative masterplan shows how the site could, rather than would be developed. In that respect Grasscroft is committed to early and meaningful engagement with all relevant stakeholders and hence the illustrative masterplan should, at this stage, be considered the starting point for discussions.

8.2 This is an exciting opportunity to deliver a plan-led, high quality residential development that will be attractive to all sections of the community. It would be a development with generous areas of open space fostering a feeling of well-being. The proposals present an opportunity to provide for future generations in a sustainable location and set a defensible Green Belt barrier along the eastern side of Formby.
The proposals could result in the creation of a high-quality living environment comprising a mix of dwellings and would support any future community’s health, social and cultural well-being. It would also facilitate the creation of jobs within the local labour pool, both during construction and the operational phase.
OTHER BENEFITS

ECONOMIC

8.3 The construction of the proposal would contribute to generating full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs within the construction industry over the build period, which would be a benefit to the economy of the local area.

8.4 Moreover, the proposals would also generate additional expenditure within the local economy, supporting local shops, services and businesses. This level of expenditure would in turn support jobs in the Borough as well as potentially creating additional public sector jobs (e.g. teachers, doctors etc.) as a direct consequence of the proposals and additional residents.

8.5 The development will supply a quantum of new affordable housing, helping to address substantial local affordable housing needs by providing opportunities for lower income households to own their own home or to secure rented accommodation.

8.6 New residents occupying the development would also generate demand for health, education and other services off the site (e.g. schools, hospitals, public administration), thus supporting further public sector employment.

8.7 Lastly, the proposals would generate an additional capital receipt for Sefton Council via New Homes Bonus payments, based on the properties adding to the net supply of housing in the Borough.

8.8 Overall it is evident that the application proposals are fully commensurate with the economic dimension of sustainable development and would represent a significant economic boost for the area.

SOCIAL

8.9 There is no doubt that this site would make a meaningful contribution to meeting housing need within the local community.

8.10 Indeed, increasing the overall supply of housing improves affordability by redressing supply/demand issues and reduces prices overall thereby allowing more people access to the housing market and enhanced social mobility, which is a positive social benefit.

8.11 The proposals could also result in the creation of a high-quality living environment comprising a mix of dwellings and would support any future community’s health, social and cultural well-being. It would also facilitate the creation of jobs within the local labour pool, both during construction and the operational phase.

8.12 The site is considered to be well located in relation to local services and has the potential to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposals would also be socially sustainable.

ENVIRONMENTAL ROLES

8.13 The accompanying ecological and environmental survey reports have shown that the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on the environment. Where mitigation is required, the accompanying reports demonstrate how these measures would be incorporated into the proposals. Given current uses of the site there are genuine prospects for bio diversity improvements to be secured which must be considered significant benefits of the scheme.
AVAILABILITY

9.1 The site is in freehold ownership.
9.2 There are no tenancies, including agricultural holding tenancies.
9.3 There are no covenants or other restrictions affecting the land that would preclude or delay residential development.
9.4 The land is clearly available for development and subject to the Green Belt designation being changed in favour of a residential allocation the Council could expect the submission of an outline planning application within 6 months.
9.5 Subject to the grant of outline planning permission the site would be marketed and sold to a residential developer.

SUITABILITY

9.6 The only impediment to the site being developed for housing is its current Green Belt designation.
9.7 As the Council’s Green Belt Assessment and this submission demonstrates the site makes a weak contribution when assessed against the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt as outlined within paragraph 80 of the Framework. Accordingly, the site is a prime candidate for release from the Green Belt.
9.8 In terms of accessibility the site is well placed to access shops and services on foot, by cycle and by bus thereby helping to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle.

ACHIEVABILITY

9.9 This predominantly greenfield site has no known viability issues.
9.10 Access can be achieved as can connections to the requisite utilities.
9.11 Surface water can be adequately dealt with by way of attenuation using a Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SuDS) that would discharge into the existing watercourse at appropriate rates.
9.12 As set out above an outline planning application could be expected within 6 months of a residential allocation being confirmed. Subject to the grant of outline planning permission the site would be marketed and sold to a residential developer. In that respect strong interest has already been made in the site from house builders.
9.13 Furthermore, given the absence of any viability issues any scheme would provide a policy compliant suite of planning obligations in respect of affordable housing etc.
The scheme will be brought forward on the principles of delivering a high quality development that the community will be proud of.
10.1 At the outset, it must be acknowledged that Sefton Council only adopted the current version of the Local Plan at a meeting of the Full Council on 20 April 2017. Hence future promotion of land to the east of Formby is contingent upon a further review of Green Belt being triggered by a requirement for further housing land to be identified. The recently adopted Local Plan contains a mechanism for this to occur should on-going work within the Liverpool City Region identify such a need. Accordingly, this document is a precursor to such need being identified but it has been prepared at this time to enable meaningful discussions to take place between Grasscroft, Sefton Council and the Parish Council about the prospects of the site being released from the Green Belt in the future and allocated for residential development in order to meet any revised housing needs that may materialise.

10.2 Formby is clearly a sustainable location for future development as has been evidenced by the allocation of employment and residential land in the recently adopted Local Plan.

10.3 Land to the east of Formby represents a suitable and sustainable location for future housing development subject to the land being removed from the Green Belt as part of a future Local Plan review. In that respect the land does not perform any of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 80 of the Framework.

10.4 This is an exciting opportunity to deliver a plan-led, high quality residential development that will be attractive to all sections of the community. It would be a development with generous areas of open space fostering a feeling of well-being. The proposals present an opportunity to provide for future generations in a sustainable location and set a defensible Green Belt barrier along the eastern side of Formby.

10.5 The site represents a logical and sustainable extension to Formby and it is recommended that this site be removed from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development at the next Sefton Local Plan review.

10.6 As established at the outset Grasscroft wish to work collaboratively with Sefton Council, the Parish Councils and the local community on these proposals. Accordingly, Grasscroft look forward to the possibility of early and meaningful engagement with all parties about these exciting proposals.

CONCLUSION