

# Consultation on the Revised Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)

## Representations

**on behalf of Redrow Homes Limited**

March 2019

### Relevant Site Submissions:

Bolton - Former Bolton Open Golf Course, Harwood (Suggested New Allocation)

Bury – Land at Walshaw Road, Bury (GM Allocation 9 'Walshaw')

Bury – Old Hall Lane, Whitefield (Suggested New Allocation)

Oldham – Beal Valley, Shaw (GM Allocation 14 'Beal Valley')

Rochdale – Land at Manchester Road, Rochdale (GM Allocation 2 'Stakehill')



# Manchester Road, Rochdale



## Development Statement

March 2019



# Contents

1.	Introduction	04
2.	Site Location and Description	05
3.	Planning Context	08
4.	Green Belt Assessment	11
5.	Sustainable Location	16
6.	A Deliverable Site	21
7.	Design Principles	24
8.	Summary and Conclusion	29



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# 1. Introduction

**This Development Statement has been prepared by Nexus Planning on behalf of Redrow Homes Ltd ('Redrow') in relation to land at Manchester Road, Stakehill, Rochdale. The statement relates to the northern parcel of the mixed use GM2 allocation, which logically should provide the housing element of the allocation. The site is allocated in the revised draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (January 2019).**

The Manchester Road site extends to approximately 85 hectares. The draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) confirms that the northern part Manchester Road allocation has potential to accommodate in the order of 900 homes. Development of the site for new homes would form a high quality, sustainable extension to the urban area within clear, defined boundaries.

Redrow support the residential allocation of the northern part of the allocation at Manchester Road. This land should be identified for predominantly residential development to provide greater clarity.

This Development Statement, drawing on the draft GMSF and the associated evidence base as well as masterplanning and other technical delivery work undertaken by Redrow, confirms that the site is a wholly appropriate and sustainable location for residential development. As proposed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority through the preparation of the GMSF, the northern part of the site should be released from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development. The site offers a significant, strategic opportunity in contributing towards meeting the housing needs of Rochdale

and thereby Greater Manchester.

This Statement is submitted to inform the preparation of the GMSF and to demonstrate that the site is in an appropriate and sustainable location for housing. It demonstrates that the site is deliverable due to the lack of any constraints which would prevent the site from coming forward. As such it is being promoted for Green Belt release and a residential allocation in the emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

## Purpose of this Document

This document describes the development opportunities presented by the Manchester Road site, alongside an overview of the key technical considerations, demonstrating that the site is available, suitable and achievable and can therefore be considered deliverable.

The document is structured as follows:

- Site Location and Description
- Planning Context
- Green Belt Assessment
- Available, Suitable, Achievable Housing Site
- Design Principles
- Summary and Conclusion

# 2. Site Location and Description

The allocated part of the site, north of the A627 (m) spur extends to approximately 85 hectares and is in a consortium ownership who are working in co-operation with Redrow. The site comprises a series of fields, some of which are used for pasture. The site is enclosed by existing urban development on Manchester Road, the A627 and Thornham Lane.

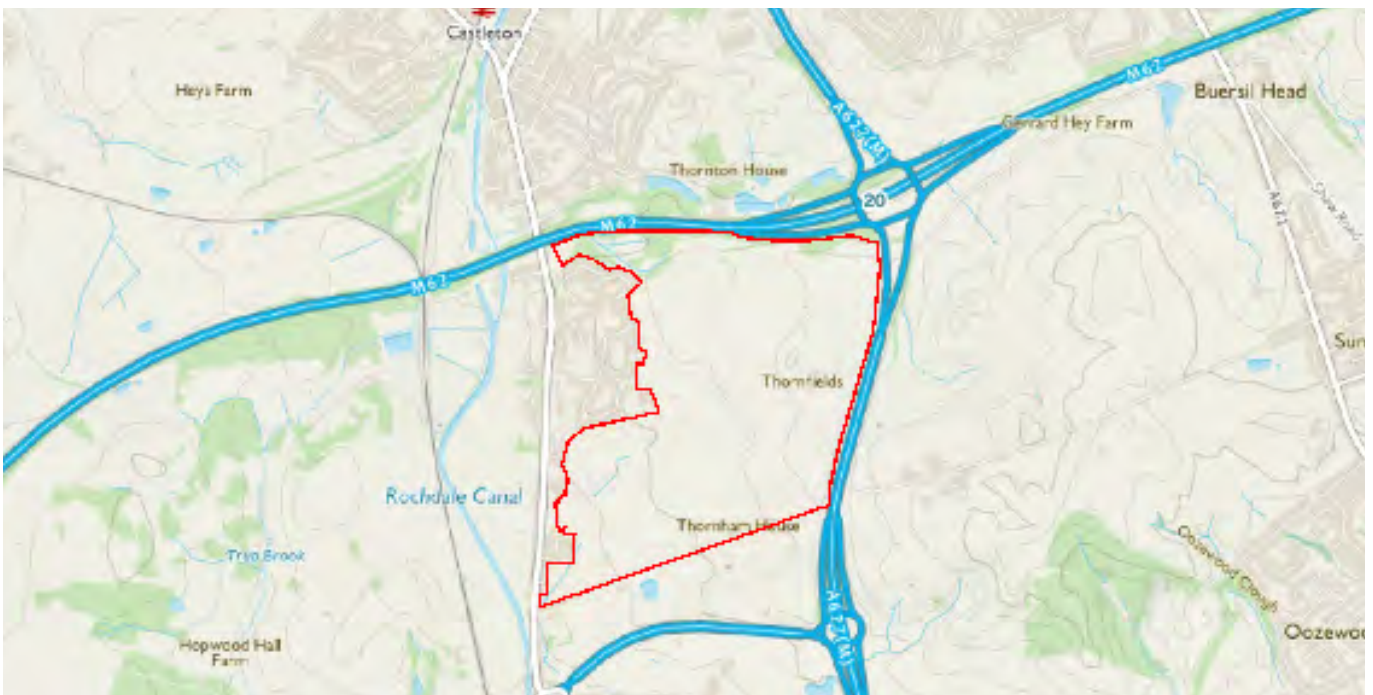


Figure 1: Site Location

## The Site

Field boundaries comprise hedgerows, trees or cuttings and there are several public footpaths and bridleways which traverse the site. A single-lane road, Thornham New Road, forms the northern boundary of the site. A country track splits off this to extend in a south-easterly direction towards Thornfields, a residential property and collection of farm buildings situated in the easterly portion of the site. Two ponds are located at the south of the site above St John's CE VA Primary School Thornham which lies on the southern boundary of the site. Further into the south-western corner of the site lies St John Thornham Church and the Thornham War Memorial, both Grade II listed. An informal path links the church with Church Avenue in Slattocks.

The topography of the site is varied yet broadly level. The highest points are in the north-east of the site. Trees are broadly limited to scattered on field boundaries and there are two small wooded copses at the north-east of the site.

The site is bounded to the east by the A627 motorway, which is in a deep cutting at this point, beyond which lies additional open fields. To the west of the site are existing residential properties off Manchester Road, the All-in-One Garden Centre and Thornham Cricket Club. To the south the land is bounded by the A627 (M) spur, which is also in a deep cutting and crossed by a road bridge.

The site can be accessed via car from a number of existing points, including at Thornham Lane and Church Avenue to the south and at Thornham New Road from the north. Pedestrian links abound, including from the roads which provide access to the site, in addition to a footpath from Thornham Lane adjacent to St John's C of E VA Primary School which runs in a northerly direction to Newhey Farm and loops back in a south-westerly direction.

## Surrounding Area

The settlement of Slattocks, an extension of Castleton, is located to the immediate west of the site while Castleton centre lies approximately 2 kilometres to the north. Rochdale Town Centre is approximately 4 kilometres to the north while Middleton is located approximately 5.5 kilometres to the south-west. In addition, Oldham Town Centre is located approximately 9 kilometres to the south-east.

The site is bounded on all four sides by urban features. The site is surrounded to the west by

existing residential development at Slattocks. To the north lies the M62 while to the east is the A627. These roads meet at Junction 20 to the north-east of the site.

The surrounding area is mixed, comprising countryside, Manchester Golf Club to the west and Stakehill Industrial and Distribution Park beyond the A627 (M) spur to the south.

This Statement demonstrates that the site is in a sustainable location for a major new residential development. The site is well located to enjoy excellent access to local services and the surrounding countryside via pedestrian links. The nearest local shop, Londis on Manchester Road, is within a 1,250 metre walk of the south of the site. Overall the site is well served by shops and services, in addition to healthcare and educational facilities and open space.

The area is well served by public transport, with Castleton Train Station located a 20 minute walk away or a 15 minute bus ride via the number 17 bus which stops on Manchester Road. The bus also provides access to key local destinations including



Figure 2: The all-in-one garden centre in Slattocks

Middleton, Rochdale, Collyhurst and Manchester. Manchester City Centre can be reached via train in less than 20 minutes. Regular daily trains also run to Rochdale (within 4 minutes), Clitheroe, Leeds and Blackburn.



Figure 3: View towards properties on Grange Road



Figure 4: View from the centre of the site looking south-west



Figure 5: View from the centre of the site towards Slattocks



# 3. Planning Context

## Adopted Development Plan

Rochdale's adopted development plan comprises the Core Strategy (adopted in October 2016) and the remaining saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in June 2006), including the UDP Proposals Map. The site is included in the Green Belt. The Green Belt in this area was last reviewed via the 1984 Greater Manchester Green Belt Local Plan and has not been reviewed again until preparation of the GMSF.

## Emerging Local Plan

Rochdale Borough Council has commenced work on an Allocations DPD, which will support the Core Strategy and when adopted, replace the Unitary Development Plan. The Allocations DPD proposes detailed planning policies, area designations and site allocations for specific types of development to meet the boroughs needs or new homes and jobs through to 2028. A Call for Sites process took place during July and August 2017. It is expected that Rochdale will resume work on the Allocations DPD after the publication of the second draft of the GMSF.

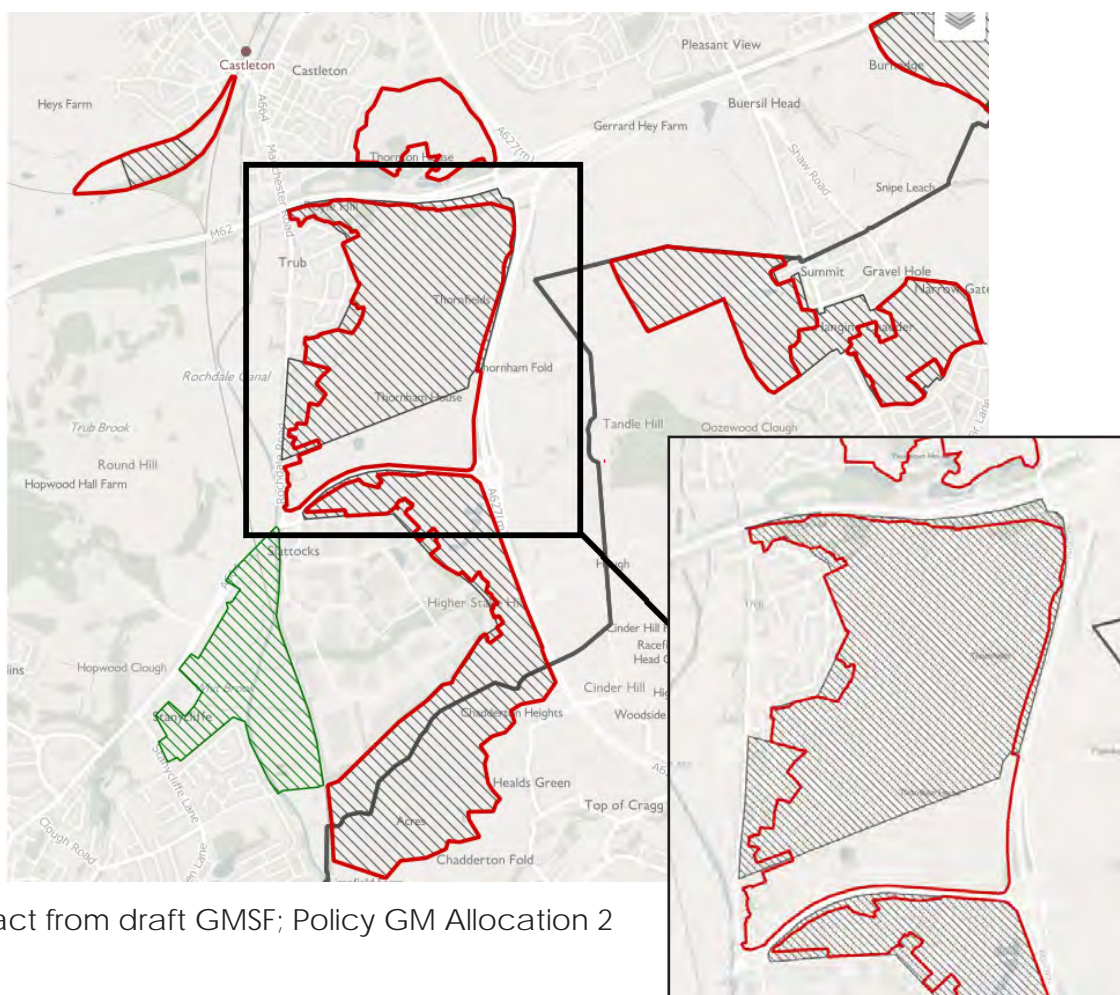


Figure 6; Extract from draft GMSF; Policy GM Allocation 2 'Stakehill'

## Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

Following public consultation, the approach to the spatial distribution of housing and the subsequent Green Belt review has been revised in the 2019 Revised Draft. The former housing and employment allocation (NG2) has been significantly reduced, however as previously, the Manchester Road site remains allocated within a wider strategic location mixed use development within the GM2 allocation.

The whole GM2 allocation is for around 900 new homes, as well as around 250,000 sq m of high quality, adaptable, employment floorspace. The extract from the draft GMSF shows the proposed allocation (P8).

Redrow supports the proposed allocation at Stakehill 'GM2' and the recognition in the revised draft GMSF that residential development here offers a significant opportunity to secure achievable growth in a highly sustainable location.

Policy GM Allocation 2: Stakehill establishes a series of development and design principles for development of the site:

- Provide around 900 high quality homes, including larger, higher value properties, to support the new jobs created along the M62 corridor and create a sustainable and high quality extension to the urban area;
- Achieve excellent design and sustainability through master-planning;
- Incorporate design codes to ensure comprehensive development;
- Ensure that the design of the scheme preserves or enhances the setting of the listed St John's Church and war memorial; and has regard



Figure 7: Looking across the site



Figure 8: View from above St John's Primary School



Figure 9: The site towards Manchester Road

to views from Tandle Hill Country Park in terms of design, landscaping and boundary treatment in order to minimise the visual impact as much as possible;

- Retain the parcel of land between Thornham Lane and the A627 to maintain separation between the urban areas of Rochdale and Middleton;
- Be designed to take advantage of a potential new rail station at Slattocks;
- Provide good quality walking and cycling routes to connect to new and existing residential areas and local transport hubs in order to encourage sustainable short journeys and promote healthier lifestyles;
- Ensure that existing settlements and pockets of housing are taken fully into account through the masterplanning of the area;
- Deliver high quality landscaping and green infrastructure within the site both to enhance the attractiveness of the scheme and provide opportunities for recreation to both residents and people working in the area;
- Provide good quality boundary treatment, particularly on the southern edge of the site to create an attractive defensible Green Belt boundary;
- Retain and enhance areas of biodiversity, including the Rochdale Canal Site of Scientific Interest;
- Ensure the provision of additional school places either through an expansion of existing primary and secondary schools or through new provision within the site, including the expansion of Thornham St John's Primary School;
- Deliver social infrastructure to ensure the needs of new and existing communities are met; and

- Incorporate appropriate noise and air quality mitigation taking account of the M62 and A627(M) motorway corridors.

**Redrow support the inclusion of Allocation GM-2 Stakehill. Land at Manchester Road represents a crucial opportunity to bring development of the strategic Stakehill allocation forward in a timely manner.**

# 4. Green Belt Assessment

The evidence base supporting the production of the Draft GMSF includes a Green Belt Assessment (GBA) undertaken by LUC (July 2016). The purposes of Green Belt have been long established in planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) confirms that the purposes of Green Belt are to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; 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.

The LUC assessment considers the contribution of sites to the purposes of Green Belt against the following aligned to the first four purposes of Green Belt:

*1a – Does the parcel exhibit evidence of existing urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness?*

*1b - Does the parcel protect open land from the potential for urban sprawl to occur?*

*2 - Does the parcel prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between neighbouring settlements?*

*3. Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?*

*4. Does the parcel contribute to the setting and 'special character' of a historic town(s)*

The role of individual parcels in assisting urban regeneration as not considered.

The Manchester Road site (GB-2) was assessed

by LUC as part of a larger parcel 'RD56' which importantly included land to the south of Thornham Lane abutting the A627M spur to the south, and beyond that the Stakehill Industrial Estate. The land between the A627 (M) spur and Thornham Lane is proposed to remain within the Green Belt. Figure 10 illustrates the difference between the allocation and parcel RD56. This is significant in considering the contribution of this area to the purposes of a Green Belt and the LUC findings should be considered in that context.

This section considers the findings of the 2016 Green Belt Review in more detail and demonstrates that the site, in this case the land north of Thornham Lane, makes a less significant contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt than the parcel as a whole. As such Redrow support the draft GMSF in their conclusion that it is suitable for being taken out of the Green Belt.

## Purposes of the Green Belt

Paragraph 133 of the Framework establishes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

Paragraph 134 of the Green Belt identifies that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by

encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

### Redrow's Review of GBA Findings

The following is a summary of LUC's findings (for the larger parcel RD56) and Redrow's view specifically in relation to the Manchester Road allocation.

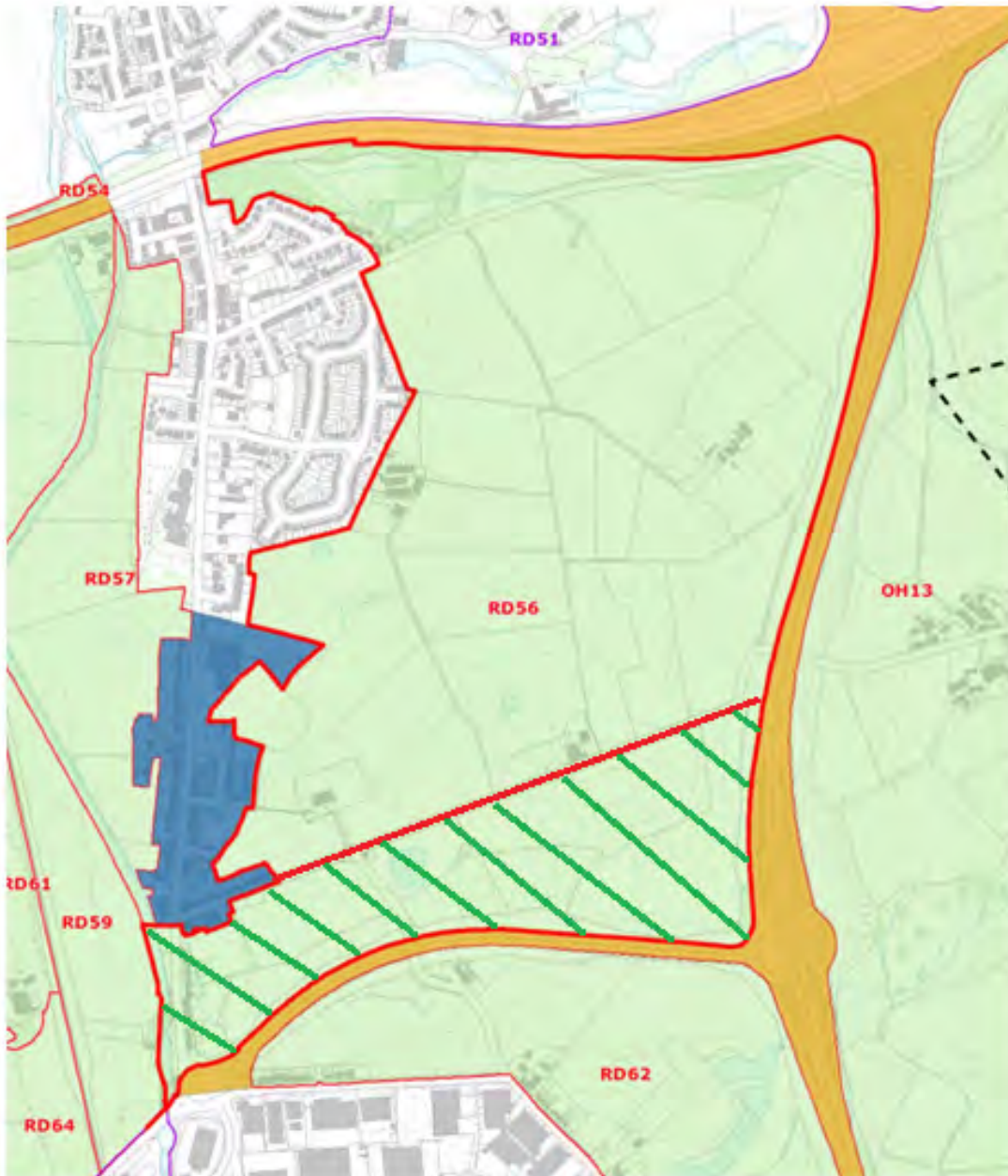


Figure 10: The Manchester Road site within the wider allocation

Source: Greater Manchester Green Belt Assessment (LUC, July 2016)

## Purpose 1a

### Does the parcel exhibit evidence of existing urban sprawl and consequent loss of openness ?

LUC Assessment	<p>The parcel is adjacent to Slattocks between Castleton and Middleton. There are existing urbanising features within the parcel; development includes a number of terraced houses to the north-west and south-west, and a church to the south. Urbanising features have limited influence within the parcel and there is a strong sense of openness because built features are set within an undulating farmland landscape. The parcel plays a strong role towards checking the unrestricted sprawl of Castleton.</p> <p>Conclusion: Strong Contribution</p>
Redrow Assessment	<p>The site is adjacent to Slattocks between Castleton and Middleton. A number of urbanising features lie within and immediately adjacent to the site, limiting the site's sense of openness at the edges. This includes four major roads (the A627(M), the M62 and Manchester Road) which have a significant impact on its character and sense of openness. The presence of Thornham St John's Primary School and St John's Thornham Church which are urbanising features that also detract from the sense of openness. The site plays a less important role in preventing the urban sprawl of Castleton due to the presence of very strong and durable boundary features which would prevent additional encroachment into the countryside.</p> <p>Conclusion: Moderate Contribution</p>

## Purpose 1b

### Does the parcel protect open land from the potential for urban sprawl to occur?

LUC Assessment	<p>The parcel is adjacent to Slattocks between Castleton and Middleton. The parcel has significant and durable barrier features with the M62 motorway on the northern border and the A627 (M) on the eastern and southern border. These play a strong role inhibiting urban sprawl occurring within the parcel. However they do not prevent potential for urban sprawl from the urban edge to the west. The parcel plays a strong role in inhibiting ribbon development along Thornham New Road to the north and Thornham Lane to the south.</p> <p>Conclusion: Moderate Contribution</p>
Redrow Assessment	<p>The site is adjacent to the settlement of Slattocks and south Castleton. There is existing ribbon development adjacent to the site, so it plays a role in preventing ribbon development along roads within the parcel. However, development of the site would 'round off' the uneven settlement edge of Slattocks. The site has significant and durable barrier features with the M62 motorway bounding to the north of the site and the A627 (M) spur to the west and south. The site is therefore at risk from urban sprawl yet there is little potential for sprawl to occur beyond the site.</p> <p>Conclusion: Weak/Moderate Contribution</p>

## Purpose 2

### Does the parcel prevent the merging or erosion of the visual or physical gap between neighbouring settlements?

LUC Assessment	<p>The parcel lies between the settlements of Castleton to the north and Middleton to the south. The more linear projection of development along the Manchester Road (Slattocks) means that the settlements are in very close proximity (within approximately 300m of each other across the parcel). The parcel prevents the physical coalescence or a clearly recognisable perception of merging that would erode the distinct separate identify of Castleton from the more urban settlement of Middleton.</p> <p>Conclusion: Strong Contribution</p>
Redrow Assessment	<p>The site lies broadly between the settlements of Castleton to the north and Middleton to the south. There is a wedge of land that is proposed to remain in the Green Belt to provide separation between Castleton and Middleton to the south. Development of the site would not result in the visual or physical merging of settlements.</p> <p>Conclusion: Moderate Contribution</p>

## Purpose 3

### Does the parcel have the characteristics of the countryside and/or connect to land with the characteristics of the countryside? Has the parcel already been affected by encroachment of urbanised built development?

LUC Assessment	<p>There is limited/no sense of encroachment with the parcel being generally free of urbanised built development. The landscape within this parcel remains largely unspoilt by urbanising influences located outside its boundaries. It has an intact and rural in character and displays characteristics of the countryside.</p> <p>Conclusion: Strong Contribution</p>
Redrow Assessment	<p>The presence of development within the site is considered to be acceptable. There is limited urban development with the site, however the proximity of the M62, A627 (M) and A627 (M) spur do have a significant urbanising effect over large parts of the site. The ribbon development along Manchester Road also detracts from the rural nature of the site.</p> <p>Conclusion: Moderate Contribution</p>

## Purpose 4

Does the parcel contribute to the setting and 'special character' of a historic town(s)	
LUC Assessment	Digital analysis, based on bare earth height data, indicates that this new parcel is theoretically visible from the historic settlements of Chadderton, Middleton (Town Centre) and Milnrow. In practice, the parcel has no relationship (visual or physical) with any of the historic settlements due to intervening features; and the relatively large distance between the parcel and nearest historic settlement (Middleton (Town Centre) 2km away).  Conclusion: Weak Contribution
Redrow Assessment	Redrow agree that the site makes a key limited, if any, contribution to the preservation or setting of a historic town. No further comments are made in respect of this Purpose as per the GBA.  Conclusion: Weak Contribution

Due to difficulty in distinguishing the extent to which each Green Belt parcel delivers against Purpose 5, parcels are not assessed against their contribution to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict or urban land.

## Green Belt Assessment Summary

The following table provides a comparison between the conclusions reached in the GMSF GBA prepared by LUC and those reached by Redrow when assessing the site. As stated earlier, Parcel RD56 is a larger parcel, and so the individual site assessment undertaken by Redrow is considered to be of more relevance when considering the contribution the site currently makes against the purposes for including land within the Green Belt.

Parcel	Contribution of the parcel towards each Green Belt purpose					Overall
	1a	1b	2	3	4	
RD56	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Weak	Moderate
Manchester Road site	Moderate	Weak/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Weak/Moderate

This assessment demonstrates that the site makes an overall weak to moderate contribution towards the assessed purposes of including land within the Green Belt, and can therefore be considered suitable for a sustainable urban extension. This assessment, alongside exceptional circumstances that exist to release land from the Green Belt in order to meet objectively assessed housing needs, justifies the site's identification as a residential allocation in the GMSF. Redrow therefore support allocation of the northern parcel of the site for residential development within the draft GMSF, yet identify that the residential allocation should be separate from the employment allocation.



# 5. Sustainable Location

The site at Manchester Road is sustainably located in relation to existing services, key facilities, substantial employment opportunities and public transport routes. The Local Facilities Plan (Figure 11) illustrates the location of existing and planned facilities in relation to the site. The accessibility of the site to key facilities is considered below, which complements the Site Selection assessment set out in the Site Selection Topic Paper (January 2019). This assessment focuses on the existing provision with reference to planned investment. The emerging Masterplan for the site (considered in Section 7 of this Statement) identifies in line with Allocation

GM 2 the scope to create an 'Urban Hub' and provides for expansion of St John's Church of England Primary School. This will further enhance accessibility to services for existing and future residents. In addition, it is proposed to provide a primary school at Trows Farm which is 400 metres from the north of the site (GM Allocation 29); while appropriate health and community facilities are proposed to be located at Thornham Old Road 1.5 kilometres from the eastern edge of the site (GM Allocation 21). These additional facilities will contribute to enhancing community services in the local area.

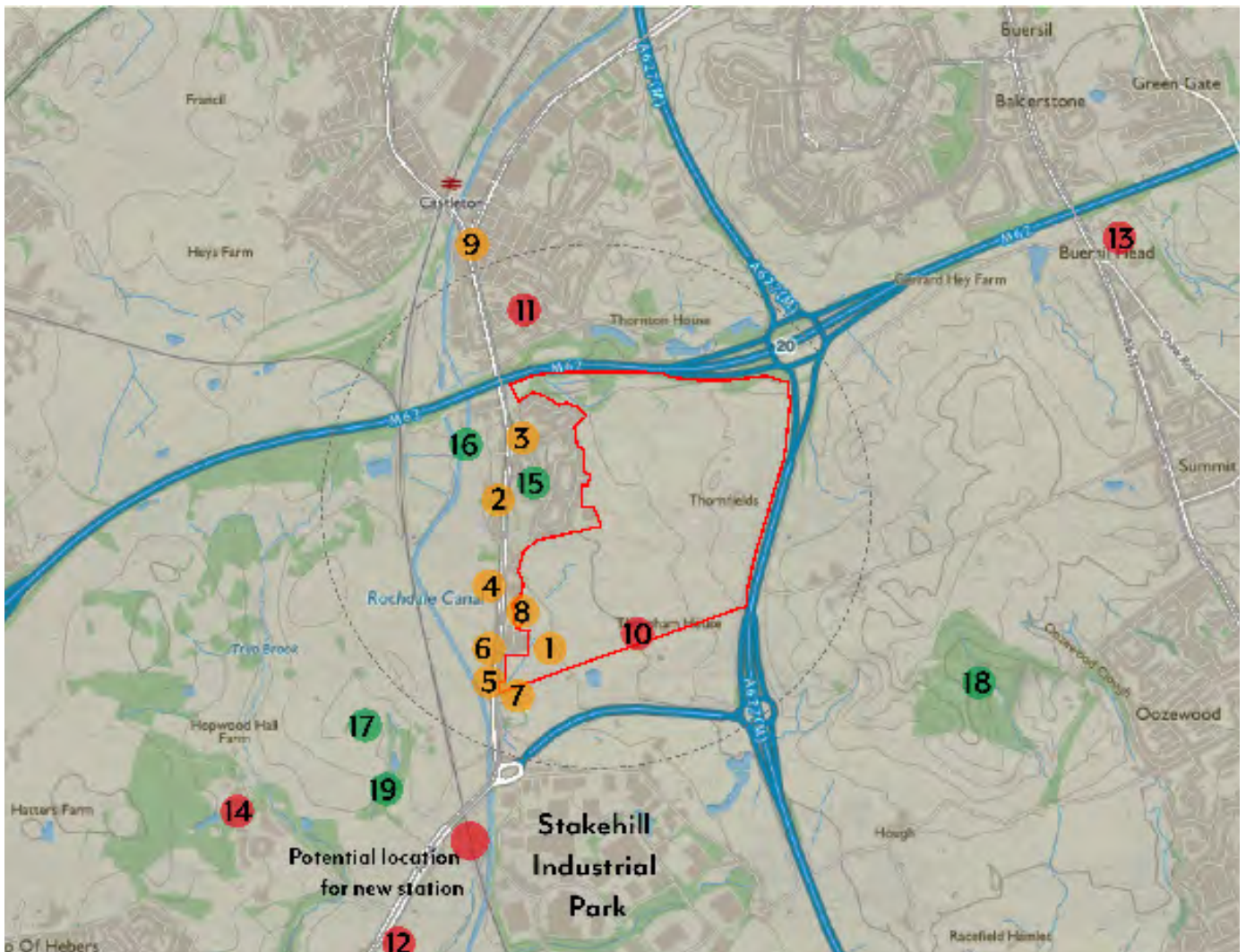


Figure 11: Local Facilities and Services surrounding the site

## Site Location

The site at Manchester Road is immediately adjacent to the settlement of Slattocks, which functions as an extension to Castleton – a suburb of Rochdale. The site is very sustainably located for an urban extension, with St John's Church of England Primary School located immediately adjacent to the southern border of the site, along Thornham Lane. Public footpaths which will be incorporated into the development strategy provide links through the site and directly to the school, as well as to the strategically important Stakehill Industrial Estate around 1 kilometre south of the site.

## Public Transport

The site is also well located in respect of public transport, and this is set to improve through planned investment. Castleton train station lies one kilometre to the north of the site, readily accessed via foot along Manchester Road or via public footpaths directly to Castleton (around a 20 minute walk or 8 minute cycle ride). The high frequency bus route 17 serves the A664 Manchester Road to the west of the site and links to Castleton Train Station in around 5 minutes. Regular trains reach Rochdale in 4 minutes, Manchester Victoria in 18 minutes, and additional destinations across the north including Clitheroe, Leeds and Blackburn. The nearest bus stop to the site, within 400 metres of the western edge, is on Chesham Drive adjacent to Carnforth Avenue, and served by one daily bus into Greave via Rochdale City Centre and to the north of Rochdale. The site has good cycle access to Rochdale, within a 20 minute ride, and Oldham can be reached in 30 minutes. The area benefits from pedestrian links to local services and facilities.

The nearest existing Metrolink Station is at Rochdale Interchange and around 20 minutes from the site by bus (or train from Castleton Station). The planned Metrolink extension to Middleton will also improve the site's sustainability further by adding a new station which has scope to reduce the journey time into Manchester City Centre by up to 20 minutes. The Metrolink provides a full range of links to destinations across Greater Manchester, including Manchester City Centre, Salford

Quays and Manchester Airport as well as the extension to Trafford Park and the Trafford Centre which is under construction.

The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 Draft Delivery Plan identifies Slattocks (close to the Stakehill Industrial and Distribution Park) as a location for a new train station. This is also referenced in the Stakehill GM2 Allocation policy wording of the Draft Revised GMSF. This new station will provide access to services between Rochdale and Manchester and is expected to be around a 1000 metre walk from the south-west of the site.

## Strategic Road Network

The site is also extremely well placed to access the motorway network via the A627(M) and M62 junction just to the north of the site. Stakehill Industrial Estate.

## Employment

The site is clearly well situated in respect of employment opportunities, being within walking distance of the strategically important Stakehill Industrial Estate which is planned to grow further. The GM2 Stakehill allocates up to land for around 250,000 sq m of new 'high quality, adaptable, employment floorspace...with a focus on suitable provision for advanced manufacturing, logistics and other growth industries, taking advantage of its accessible location and proximity to Junction 20 of the M62, and complementing the other opportunities within the M62 North East corridor."

## Local Facilities

The site is within walking distance of a variety of shops, services and community facilities including those along Manchester Road in Slattocks and in Castleton. St John's Thornham Church is within the site while Londis, the nearest supermarket, is a 500 metre walk away from the southern edge of the site.

No.	Service	Walking Distance from north of site (m)	Walking Distance from south of site (m)
1	St John Thornham Church	0	0
2	Pickwick Bistro	400	540
3	Lost & Found at The Junction (Restaurant and Public House)	600	860
4	Mercure Manchester Norton Grange Hotel and Spa	680	720
5	Londis	1,100	400
6	The Hopwood Arms (Public House)	1,000	600
7	Richard Bentley Smalley Memorial Hall (Village Hall)	980	300
8	Thornham Cricket Club	650	200
9	The Co-operative Food	1,650	2,800

\*Due to the site's size, distances have been taken from both the centre of the north and south of the parcel and reflect the emerging masterplan for the site considered later in this Development Statement.

\*The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) document entitled 'Providing for Journeys on Foot' suggest that for community and school trips distances of 500 metres, 1,000 metres and 2,000 metres are term 'Desirable' 'Acceptable' and the 'Preferred Maximum'.

## Education

The site is immediately adjacent to the St John's Church of England VA Primary School on Thornham Lane, which is proposed to be expanded or a new school provided. Secondary school provision is available nearby in Middleton and Royton, with post-sixteen options available in Middleton. School bus routes 17 and 781 serve Cardinal Langley High School in 10 minutes while St Cuthbert's RC High School is served by Service 873 and 887 from Albion Street in Castleton, a 10 minute walk from the north of the site. A new primary school is also proposed at the Trows Farm Allocation 400 metres to the north of the site.

Level	No	Name	Walking Distance from north of site (m)	Walking Distance from south of site (m)
Primary	10	St John's Church of England VA Primary School	490	0
	11	St Gabriels RC Primary School, Castleton	1,400	1,900
Secondary	12	Cardinal Langley Roman Catholic High School, Stanycliffe	3,000	2,200
	13	St Cuthberts RC High School, Rochdale	2,600	3,200
Post-16 Education	14	Hopwood Hall College Middleton Campus, Middleton	3,300	2,500

## Public Open Space

The site has good access to both informal and formal open greenspace and as noted earlier Thornham Lane forms part of the Rochdale Way which links to the Pennine Moors. The masterplan approach to the development of the site will also create additional public open space resources and children's play areas.

No.	Name	Description	Walking Distance from north of site (m)	Walking Distance from south of site (m)
15	Park on Chesham Avenue	Park with play area	600	750
16	Rochdale Canal Towpath	Canal-side walks	1,100	1,200
17	Lords Woods	Nature reserve	1,900	1,600
18	Tandle Hill Country Park	Country park with woodland and grassland areas	2,100	1,800
19	Hopwood Woods	Nature reserve	2,500	2,100

## Summary

The site at Manchester Road is in a highly sustainable location with easily accessible existing and planned local services, health facilities, community facilities, parks and educational facilities. The site is already well served by public transport which provides excellent access to key destinations with a range of employment, shopping and leisure destinations. These links are planned to be improved further. It is therefore considered that the site is a suitable location for residential development.

# 6. A Deliverable Site

Appendix 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') states that to be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on site within five years. This section of the Development Statement considers the site at Manchester Road to confirm its deliverability.

## Available

The site at Manchester Road is in a number of ownerships but the owners have formed a consortium and are working with Redrow. All the owners are committed to bringing the site forward for the development at the earliest practical opportunity. The landowners are aware of this Development Statement and are supportive of development of the site for residential development.

Redrow are one of the country's leading housebuilders with a long established proven track record in delivering new homes within the North West. They confirm that the site can be delivered for housing within the short term



of the GMSF plan period. The land is not subject to any ransom strips or covenants that would restrict its development for new housing. The site can therefore be considered to be available.

## Suitable

It has been demonstrated in Section 5 of this Development Statement that the site is in a sustainable location for residential development. The suitability of the site for residential development has been identified through its proposed allocation in the Revised Draft GMSF.

The Green Belt Assessment carried out by Redrow in Section 4 of this Statement confirms that the site makes a 'Weak/Moderate' contribution towards the purposes of the Green Belt – a less important contribution than the wider parcel in which it was assessed by LUC in their 2016 GBA. Therefore, Redrow support the release of the site from the Green Belt development.

There are no physical or legal constraints that would prevent the site from coming forward for housing.



## Achievable

Redrow have assessed the physical characteristics of the site along with any other technical considerations and in their view, informed by their extensive experience in bringing sites forward for housing, they are confident that development of the site is commercially viable. The site could be developed for a minimum of 900 homes, taking the site's characteristics, settings and revised draft GMSF allocation guidelines into account. The following is a summary of the technical factors associated with development of the site.

## Access & Highways

The principal vehicular access to the site will be from Manchester Road on land currently occupied by the All-in-One Garden Centre. However, secondary and emergency access can be provided from other roads, including Thornham New Road, as indicated on the illustrative masterplan. It is anticipated that any necessary off-site highways improvements will be agreed with the Highway Authority / TfGM.

A number of Public Right of Ways and informal footpaths run within the site, making the site highly accessible by foot. These routes will be maintained through the development and will continue to provide excellent pedestrian links to surrounding residential / employment areas.

## Landscape Character

LUC produced a Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Study in August 2018. The site is located within the Landscape Character Area 'Siminister, Slattocks and Healds Green', within the

Urban Fringe Farmland Greater Manchester Landscape Character Type, where 2-3 storey residential development would have a moderate sensitivity. The Manchester Road site is located within a moderately sensitive area between Middleton and Heywood as it lies adjacent to existing large industrial development (Stakehill Industrial & Distribution Park). The large road infrastructure such as the M62 and the A627(M) has a strong influence, detracting from the rural qualities of the landscape. The Study identifies that the area of higher land around to the north of Thornfields Farms is more sensitive, which is considered as part of the masterplanning approach in section 7.

## Trees & Ecology

There a number of trees and hedgerows within the site. These will be incorporated as appropriate in the masterplanning strategy.

There are a number of ponds in the site which may have ecological value and will require further investigation.

The site is approximately 750 metres from the Rochdale Canal. And therefore within an Impact Risk Zone for the Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However a number of physical obstacles and boundaries lie between the site and the SSSI which prevent the site from having an impact on this.

## Flood Risk & Drainage

The entirety of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 with reference to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning. The site is at low risk of flooding from both rivers and surface water and residential development would therefore be entirely acceptable in flood risk terms. It is anticipated that green infrastructure within the site will also provide

appropriate sustainable urban drainage features.

### Utilities

Evidently there are utility networks within the area due to the presence of residential properties bordering the site to the west. It is anticipated that residential development on the site would be able to connect to the existing utilities networks that currently serve Slattocks.

### Green Infrastructure

There are a number of trees and hedgerows across the site, primarily located at field boundaries. Through careful master-planning the best quality trees and hedgerows will be maintained. Appropriate types of new planting will be introduced as part of a wider landscaping strategy for the site.

With regard to agricultural land, the entirety of the site is located in a 'Less Favourable Area' and in Grade 4 Agricultural Land Classification. As such its development is consistent with Paragraph 170 of the Framework which states that where significant development of agricultural land is necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.

Overall there are no overriding constraints in relation to development of the site in respect of biodiversity and it is considered that housing and any associated landscaping can be delivered in a manner which provides appropriate mitigation and enhancements.

### Heritage

Two heritage assets lie within the site; the Grade II Listed Church of St John and the Thornham Parish War Memorial. The War Memorial is designated for its historic and social interest. Taken together these assets have significant

group value and their significance and setting should be protected. It is anticipated that development of the site for housing, as illustrated by the masterplan, would be sympathetic in order to ensure the setting and significance of the Church and War Memorial is not significantly harmed.

### *Relationship with Surrounding Uses*

The site is bounded to the west by predominantly residential properties whose gardens back onto the site. Particular attention will need to be paid to residential amenity, including separation distances. Thornham Cricket Club is immediately adjacent to the south-west of the site. It is therefore possible that protection will be required at an appropriate level for community cricket.

A review of technical considerations has confirmed that there are no physical characteristics or other constraints that would prevent the delivery of housing at the site. It has been demonstrated that the Manchester Road site is suitable, available and achievable and can therefore be considered deliverable.



# 7. Design Principles

A Preliminary Illustrative Masterplan has been produced by Redrow Homes to demonstrate how the site could be delivered for residential development in a manner which responds appropriately to the specific opportunities and constraints of the site and in addition to relating well to the surrounding area. It also allows for the provision of an urban hub and expansion of St Johns Church of England VA Primary School.

## Context of Surrounding Area

The surrounding area is characterised by the suburban housing development of Slattocks and ribbon development along Manchester Road interspersed with local shops, services and community facilities. The residential properties adjacent to the site are from the 20th Century and predominantly detached and semi-detached family housing of 2 storeys high, constructed with modern style and materials.

The majority of the site is located in a moderate sensitivity landscape character area and so proposals for new housing would not be out of place with the character of the area. It is important that development takes into account views from Tandle Hill Country Park – particularly at the higher elevations in the north-west. Careful master-planning of the site has ensured that the design, boundary treatments and landscaping will endeavour to minimise the visual impact when viewed from the east as much as possible.

## Site Constraints

As set out in Section 6, there are no known technical constraints which would preclude the proposed residential-led development of the site. The following physical features will be important considerations in the design of the development:

- The site is bounded by the A627 (M) to the east and the M62 motorway to the north. The incorporation of appropriate noise and air quality mitigation is required.
- The Grade II\* Listed St John's Church and War Memorial are located within the site. Development proposals will need describe the significance of these heritage assets, including any contribution to their setting. It should then be ensured that the design of the proposals mitigates any potential harm to their significance or setting.
- Two ponds are present in the south-central portion of the site.
- A number of trees and hedgerows are located within the site, but are of varying quality and so only the best quality specimens will be retained as part of the masterplanning exercise for the site;
- The site is bordered to the west by existing residential areas and therefore regard will need to be had to both boundary treatments and views into the site.
- Thornham New Road is present in the north of the site. A number of Public Right of Ways run through the site that will need to be integrated into any future development of the site.

## Site Opportunities

There are also many opportunities afforded by the site which masterplanning will maximise for the benefit of future and existing residents:

- **Satisfying local housing need** – The site can accommodate a minimum of 900 dwellings. This document demonstrates that the site is well placed to meet the identified housing needs for Rochdale, and more broadly, Greater Manchester. The site is capable of providing a genuine

range of housing types and sizes, including larger family homes, to contribute towards the diversity of the housing market in Rochdale.

- **Promoting sustainable living:** The site is situated in a highly sustainable location for an urban extension. Good quality walking and cycling routes will be integrated into the masterplan to connect to
- **Providing Green Infrastructure** – good quality boundary treatment to the south of the site to provide an attractive durable boundary to the Green Belt.
- **Protecting and enhancing biodiversity**
- **Provision of new community facilities** – Development of the site will contribute towards the provision of new community facilities for the benefit of future and existing residents, including the potential expansion of Thornham St John’s Primary School.
- **Enhancing the setting of the St John’s Thornham Church**

## Illustrative Masterplan

Whilst the masterplan is purely indicative at this stage, it demonstrates Redrow's vision for the site and builds upon the opportunities identified in order to create a high quality, sustainable extension to the existing urban area at Slattocks. The key elements of the Indicative Masterplan can be described as follows:

- **A Primary Spine Road** looping through the site from Manchester Road providing a main circular route to connect development parcels. This road will serve as the primary access to the site, with a secondary and / or emergency accesses from Thornham New Road and other routes.
- **Provision of community facilities** appropriate to the scale of development that is planned for, including an extension or proposed new school adjacent to St John's Church of England VA Primary School. A small urban hub is proposed to include shops and community amenities at the south of the site. New community facilities including children's play areas and the provision of open green spaces and footpaths will benefit existing and future residents.
- **A safe and legible development layout** that includes a road pattern designed to create an interesting and legible streetscene with variations in road alignment and width adding to a sense of place and also acting as traffic calming measures. The internal road network will comprise a series of primary, secondary and tertiary vehicular routes. Areas of amenity landscaping, new tree planting and small pocket green space will be integrated throughout the development, to create a safe and attractive environment and enhance the existing and proposed footpaths which run through the site.
- **Soft landscaping** is shown on the Masterplan at the south of the site adjacent to the Green Belt boundary. This will shield views across the site from the south and reduce the impact of the development upon the portion of Green Belt that is proposed to be kept. This will create a durable boundary and prevent encroachment. A soft landscaped buffer is

also to be provided at the site's eastern boundary with the A627 Motorway in order to protect residential amenity and soften the impact of the development from distant views.

- **New pedestrian and cycle routes** are proposed across the site, in addition to the existing footpaths which have been retained. These footpath and cycle routes will provide a network with wide coverage
- **High quality coherent greenspace** will be integrated throughout the development. The Indicative Masterplan makes provision for green infrastructure corridors running from the south of the site at Thornham Primary School to the north, integrating existing pedestrian rights of way. Further areas of open space are provided at the south of the site, utilising the portion of Green Belt that is to be retained, alongside an area of public open space adjacent to St John Thornham Church. Greenspace and landscape is also provided along the eastern boundary and rear Thornfields Farm to screen distant views from the east.
- **Enhancement of St John Thornham Church** will be achieved through the siting of an area of public open space around the church, retaining and enhancing the setting of this Grade II Listed Building by maintaining unobstructed views to the Church from both Thornham Lane and the PROW from Church Avenue.

In conclusion, residential development at the site can be brought forward in a manner which is sympathetic to its local landscape and townscape context. It has been demonstrated how any visual effects on the landscape can be offset by a green infrastructure and landscaping strategy which will capitalise on the opportunities afforded by the sites characteristics.



Figure 12: Illustrative Masterplan

# 8. Summary and Conclusion

The Development Statement has demonstrated the following:

- Land at Manchester Road is well related to the existing settlement of Slattocks and Castleton and surrounded on three sides by urban features.
- When considered against the purposes for including land within the Green Belt with the site it is considered to make a weak-moderate contribution at best.
- The site is in a sustainable location, close to existing and planned transport routes and infrastructure and within walking distance of the Stakehill Industrial Estate which, at over 2.8 million sq ft of employment floorspace, is one of the largest distribution and employment sites in the North West and hosts a wide range of manufacturing and distribution companies.
- There are no physical or technical constraints which would prevent the development of the site for housing.
- The site has a number of characteristics which lend itself to housing development. Opportunities can be capitalised upon to deliver a sustainable urban extension comprising of high quality family housing through a landscape led approach to masterplanning that capitalises upon the natural green infrastructure assets that exist within and around the site.
- The Indicative Masterplan demonstrates the key design principles that have been followed, which accords with the principles set out in the draft allocation text, including excellent design and sustainability; high quality landscaping

and green infrastructure within the site; the preservation and enhancement of the listed St John's Church and war memorial; boundary treatment to minimise the visual impact as much as possible; and retaining areas of biodiversity within the area.

# Manchester Road, Rochdale Development Statement

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