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Council

Wigan Council

Land Market Paper

September 2025

Quality Assurance

Date of Report	30 th September 2025
Version	V6
Filename and path	S:_Client Projects\2507 Wigan Local Plan Viability_Wigan BC\Reports\Land Market Paper\251028 DRAFT Wigan Land Market Paper V2.docx
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The (benchmark) land value assumption(s) are fundamental in terms of Local Plan Viability. This land value paper sets out our approach to land values for the wider viability assessment. The viability assessment is discussed in our separate, main viability report.
- 1.2 This report sets out the evidence of Existing Use Values across Wigan and our opinion of Benchmark Land Values (BLV). This report acts as an addendum to our main viability appraisal report. We set out below our approach to land values for the viability assessment, before reviewing land values across the borough in order to inform our assumptions for the BLV used in the appraisals.
- 1.3 The purpose of this study is to assess the viability of the Council's draft Local Plan. This has regard to the cumulative impact of policy costs and other development value and cost assumptions, including land value.
- 1.4 This paper includes the following sections:

Land Value Approach	Summarises our approach to the BLV. It should be read in conjunction with the more detailed discussion and analysis in the main Viability Report.
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UK Land Context	Provides contextualised land values at a national and regional level. This includes development land as well as agricultural land to gain a better understanding of Benchmark Land Values.
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Existing Evidence Base Review	Reviews the existing evidence base with regard to land values from previous viability studies.
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Agricultural Land Values	Sets out the market information for agricultural land values across the borough.
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Residential Development Land Values	Sets out residential development land value evidence (i.e. from land that has either obtained planning permission or has outline planning consent for
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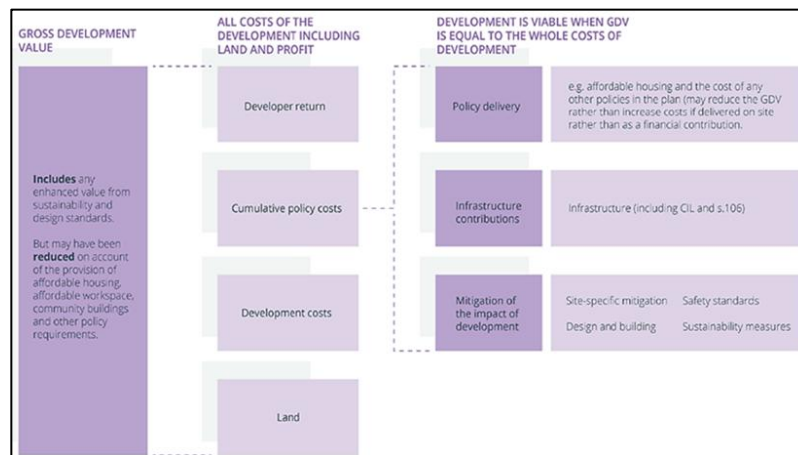
residential use and/or is allocated for residential development).

Benchmark Land Value Assumptions	Sets out our BLV assumptions.
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2 Land Value Approach

- 2.1 In a development context, the land value is calculated using a residual approach – the Residual Land Value (RLV).
- 2.2 The RLV is calculated by the summation of the total value of the development, less the development costs, planning obligations, developers return/profit to give the land value. This is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 – Development Viability



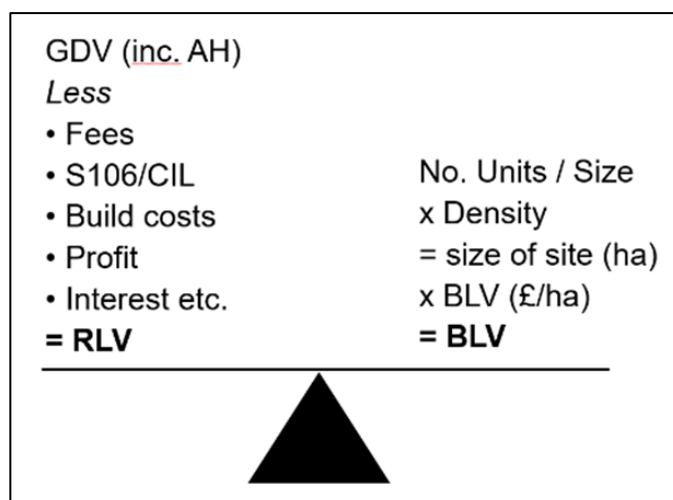
Source: RICS - Assessing viability in planning under the NPPF 2019 for England – March 2021

- 2.3 The above figure illustrates that development is only viable on a policy compliant basis if the cumulative policy costs (i.e., affordable housing, policy delivery, infrastructure contributions and mitigation measures) have sufficient 'headroom'.
- 2.4 In order to determine whether development is viable in the context of area-wide studies, the NPPF is silent on the requirements of landowners and developers. It now simply states that, 'all viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available'.
- 2.5 The PPG Viability provides guidance on the land values and particularly benchmark land values for the purposes of viability assessment:
 - How should land value be defined for the purpose of viability assessment? – 'a benchmark land value should be established on the basis of the existing use

value (EUV) of the land, plus a premium for the landowner'. Paragraph: 0013
Reference ID: 10-013-20190509 Revision date: 09 05 2019

- What factors should be considered to establish benchmark land value? – 'In plan making, the landowner premium should be tested and balanced against emerging policies.' Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 10-014-20190509, Revision date: 09 05 2019
 - What is meant by existing use value in viability? 'EUV is the value of the land in its existing use. Existing use value is not the price paid and should disregard hope value. Existing use values will vary depending on the type of site and development types. EUV can be established in collaboration between plan makers, developers and landowners by assessing the value of the specific site or type of site using published sources of information such as agricultural or industrial land values, or if appropriate capitalised rental levels at an appropriate yield (excluding any hope value for development)'. Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 10-015-20190509, Revision date: 09 05 2019
 - How should the premium to the landowner be defined for viability assessment? – 'The premium should provide a reasonable incentive for a land owner to bring forward land for development while allowing a sufficient contribution to comply with policy requirements.' Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 10-016-20190509, Revision date: 09 05 2019
- 2.6 The above PPG guidance is described in detail in the main report (section on National Policy Context). The PPG does not provide any guidance on the quantum of premiums. One therefore has to 'triangulate' the Benchmark Land Value based on market evidence.
- 2.7 Hence for plans and schemes to be viable, the Residual Land Value has to be tested against the benchmark which would enable sites to come forward – the Benchmark Land Value (BLV). This is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

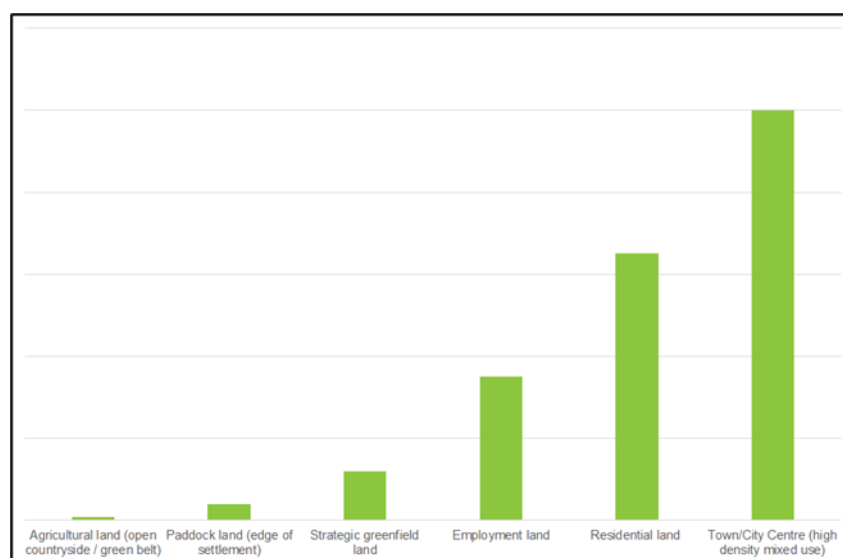
Figure 2.2 – Balance Between RLV and BLV



Source: AspinallVerdi (© Copyright)

- 2.8 A key consideration in the assessment is determining the appropriate Benchmark Land Value. While the land market is inherently imperfect, there exists a broadly accepted hierarchy of land values driven by the relative supply and demand for various land uses. This is illustrated on an indicative basis in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 – Indicative Land Value Hierarchy



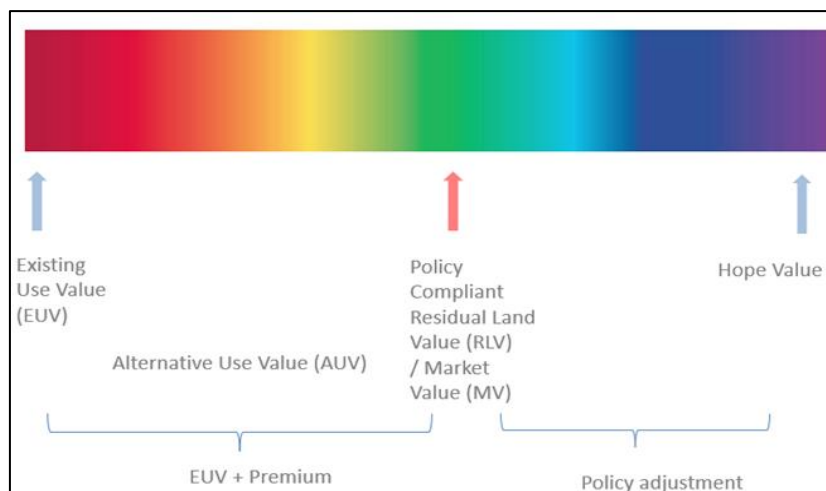
Source: AspinallVerdi (© Copyright)

- 2.9 Note that the value of individual sites depends on the specific location and site characteristics. In order for development to take place (particularly in the brownfield land context) the value of the alternative land use has to be significantly above the existing use value to cover the costs of site acquisition and all the cost of

redevelopment (including demolition and construction costs) and developers profit / return for risk. In an area-wide context we can only be broad-brush in terms of the BLV as we can only appraise a representative sample of hypothetical development typologies.

- 2.10 It is also important to recognise that landowner motivations can vary significantly. Some vendors, such as institutional investors, may adopt a long-term view on returns and land value growth. In contrast, others may be under financial pressure to sell, for example in cases involving bank foreclosures or distressed assets.
- 2.11 Finally, 'hope value' plays a significant role in influencing land prices. It refers to the uplift in value above existing use value (EUV), based on the anticipation of future, higher-value development. While the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that hope value and price paid should be excluded from the EUV, it nonetheless remains a fundamental component of market behaviour and is therefore relevant when considering the premium above EUV.
- 2.12 The diagram below (Figure 2.4) illustrates these principles. It is widely accepted that a premium above Existing Use Value (EUV) is required to provide a reasonable incentive for a landowner to release land for development. This approach functions effectively in the context of greenfield agricultural land, where existing use values are typically well-defined. However, its application becomes more complex in urban settings, where land is subject to competing alternative uses. This raises the question: EUV for which specific use? In practice, it is not feasible to appraise every potential variation of existing use, particularly when accounting for legacy costs or latent development potential.

Figure 2.4 – Benchmark Land Value Approaches



Source: AspinallVerdi © (Copyright)

2.13 There is very little specific guidance on premiums. The main guidance and references are set out in the main report - Guidance on Premiums/Land Value Adjustments. The main references are:

- RICS, Assessing Viability in Planning under the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 for England, March 2021 (effective from 01 July 2021)
- Local Housing Delivery Group Chaired by Sir John Harman, 20 June 2012, Viability Testing Local Plans, Advice for planning practitioners (The Harman Report)
- HCA Transparent Viability Assumptions (August 2010)
- Planning Inspectorate, 15 May 2020, Examination of the Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan - North Essex Authorities, Inspector's Post-Hearing Letter to North Essex Authorities
- Parkhurst Road v SSCLG & LBI, Before MR JUSTICE HOLGATE Between: Parkhurst Road Limited Claimant - and - Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and The Council of the London Borough of Islington Defendant/s, Case No: CO/3528/2017
- House of Commons Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee Land Value Capture Tenth Report of Session 2017–19 HC 766 Published on 13 September 2018 by authority of the House of Commons

- Appeal Decision, Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/W/19/3243720, Land at Warburton Lane, Trafford by Christina Downes BSc DipTP MRTPI an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Decision date: 25th January 2021
- 2.14 In this context, the Harman report *‘allows realistic scope to provide for policy requirements and is capable of adjusting to local circumstances by altering the percentage of premium used in the model. The precise figure that should be used as an appropriate premium above current use value should be determined locally. But it is important that there is [Market Value] evidence that it represents a sufficient premium to persuade landowners to sell’*.¹
- 2.15 The HCA Area Wide Viability Model (Annex 1 Transparent Viability Assumptions) is the only source of specific guidance on the size of the premium. The guidance states:
- There is some practitioner convention on the required premium above EUV, but this is some way short of consensus and the views of Planning Inspectors at Examination of Core Strategy have varied. Benchmarks and evidence from planning appeals tend to be in a range of **10% to 30% above EUV in urban areas. For greenfield land, benchmarks tend to be in a range of 10 to 20 times agricultural value***²
- 2.16 This guidance is national therefore the same thresholds are used across all areas.
- 2.17 Greater emphasis is now being placed on the Existing Use Value (EUV) + premium approach to planning viability to break the circularity of ever-increasing land values. Due to increasing land values (partly driven by developers negotiating a reduction in policy obligations on grounds of ‘viability’), we are finding that the range between existing use value (EUV) and ‘Market Values’ and especially asking prices is getting larger. Therefore (say) 20 x EUV and (say) 25% reduction from ‘Market Value’ may not ‘meet in the middle’ and it is therefore a matter of professional judgement what the BLV should be (based on the evidence).
- 2.18 In order to provide comprehensive analysis, we also set out a variety of sensitivities in terms of changes to the BLV (and other) assumptions. These are shown for each of

¹Viability Testing Local Plans Advice for planning practitioners - Local Housing Delivery Group - Chaired by Sir John Harman (June 2012), page 29

² HCA Area Wide Viability Model (Annex 1 Transparent Viability Assumptions), August 2010, Transparent Assumptions v3.2 06/08/10

the typologies on the appraisals appended (with an explanation of how to interpret the sensitivities in the Main Viability Assessment report).

Green Belt Development

2.19 We note the changes to the NPPF in December 2024 regarding the release of land from the Green Belt and development of 'Grey Belt land'.

2.20 Paragraphs 67-68 of the December 2024 NPPF sets out the following regarding Green Belt development:

As part of the 'Golden Rules' for Green Belt development set out in paragraphs 156-157 of this Framework, a specific affordable housing requirement (or requirements) should be set for major development involving the provision of housing, either on land which is proposed to be released from the Green Belt or which may be permitted on land within the Green Belt. This requirement should:

- a) be set at a higher level than that which would otherwise apply to land which is not within or proposed to be released from the Green Belt; and*
- b) require at least 50% of the housing to be affordable, unless this would make the development of these sites unviable (when tested in accordance with national planning practice guidance on viability).*

2.21 Further, we set out below the Golden Rules for Green Belt development, as found in Paragraph 156-157 of the NPPF.

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:

- a. affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;*
- b. necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and*
- c. the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality*

green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

Before development plan policies for affordable housing are updated in line with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework, the affordable housing contribution required to satisfy the Golden Rules is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50%⁶⁰. In the absence of a pre-existing requirement for affordable housing, a 50% affordable housing contribution should apply by default. The use of site-specific viability assessment for land within or released from the Green Belt should be subject to the approach set out in national planning practice guidance on viability.

- 2.22 In summary, the changes to the NPPF for Green Belt development mean that a target of 50% should be sought for Green Belt release sites, subject to viability testing at the plan-making stage. The affordable housing threshold for Green Belt development should also be set above the level for non-Green Belt release sites.
- 2.23 As a result of the changes to NPPF, the Viability PPG was also updated. Regarding the 'Golden Rules' for Green Belt development, Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 10-029-20241212 of the PPG states:

'Where development takes place on land situated in, or released from, the Green Belt and is subject to the 'Golden Rules' set out in paragraph 156 of the National Planning Policy Framework, site specific viability assessment should not be undertaken or taken into account for the purpose of reducing developer contributions, including affordable housing. The government intends to review this Viability Guidance and will be considering whether there are circumstances in which site-specific viability assessment may be taken into account, for example, on large sites and Previously Developed Land.'

- 2.24 It is currently unclear as to how this policy expectation is going to impact land values. Due to the increased contributions/rules required for Green Belt sites to enable development to come forward, it is likely to drive land values down.
- 2.25 Given the nature of Wigan, a proportion of the Borough is located within the Green Belt. Furthermore, a number of the potential allocations are likely to be Green Belt release sites, which will be subject to the Golden Rules set out within the revised NPPF, and referenced in the Viability PPG.

- 2.26 We have had explicit regard to this within our BLV assumptions, particularly relating to the appropriate premium / multiplier associated with Green Belt release sites.

3 UK Land Context

- 3.1 This section provides some background context to land values at a national and regional level. We focus on development land but have also included a section on agricultural land for the greenfield typologies.

Development Land

- 3.2 The Savills "Market in Minutes: Residential Development Land – Q2 2025³" report indicates that the UK residential development land market remains stable with little change in land values over the last quarter.
- 3.3 Since the start of 2025, there has been a shift in the dynamics of the residential development land market. Savills development agents report an increase in the number of sites being brought forward, providing developers with greater choice and allowing them to be more selective in their acquisitions.
- 3.4 In terms of pricing, UK greenfield land values have remained broadly stable, recording a marginal softening of –0.2% in Q2 2025. On an annual basis, this equates to growth of 0.6%, with similar trends evident across all regions. This annual growth is similar to the pattern of steadier land value growth seen before Covid-19, indicating that we're reaching a new plateau in the land market, with an increase in the supply of sites alongside steady demand for land. However, demand is currently being dampened by the muted wider market outlook
- 3.5 The revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced in December 2024 are beginning to influence the development land market, with a noticeable increase in supply coming through. A net balance of 27% of Savills development agents reported more sites being brought to market, creating a broader range of opportunities for developers. This represents a significant shift from recent years, when the market was defined by restricted supply.
- 3.6 With more choice now available, developers are adopting a more selective approach to land acquisition. Limited capacity within some organisations has led to a preference for

³ Savills, Market in Minutes: Residential Development Land – Q2 2025 - [Savills UK | Market in Minutes: Residential Development Land – Q2 2025](#)

oven-ready and straightforward sites, while others are prepared to wait for opportunities in core locations rather than compromising on strategic priorities.

- 3.7 Although planning policy reforms have generated optimism, momentum in the land market has been weaker than anticipated. Market sentiment eased in Q2 2025, with a net balance of 47% of Savills development agents reporting positive conditions, down from 63% in Q1. While the number and value of bids have remained broadly unchanged, transactions are taking longer to complete, reflecting continued planning delays and a more cautious approach from purchasers.
- 3.8 Demand for land is being held back by uncertainty in the wider housing market and economy. UK house prices fell by –0.8% in June, bringing annual growth to 2.1% in the year to June 2025, according to Nationwide. Labour market pressures are also evident, with unemployment rising to 4.6% in April, the highest level in four years. Sales rates for new homes have remained steady at around 0.6 sales per outlet per week over the year to March 2025, as reported by major housebuilders, highlighting that the demand for land is stable.
- 3.9 The brownfield land market is facing pronounced challenges, with demand for high-density residential schemes remaining very limited across all regions. UK urban land values fell by –0.7% in Q2 2025, contributing to an annual decline of –2.3%. However, this figure is based on relatively few transactions, making it difficult to establish a clear picture of urban land value trends.
- 3.10 Persistent pressures continue to weigh heavily on brownfield development. Rising build costs and the additional expenses associated with meeting building safety regulations have placed significant strain on scheme viability. For high-rise projects in particular, uncertainty around the length of time required to secure Gateway 2 approval is deterring many housebuilders from pursuing flatted developments.
- 3.11 Strategic land remains the most active segment of the development land market, with many developers concentrating on these opportunities given the supportive planning environment and increased political will for local authorities to approve applications.
- 3.12 In many areas, strategic land is attracting notable premiums, with PLC housebuilders especially aggressive in securing opportunities to strengthen their pipelines. A key focus among larger developers is grey belt land, where parties are moving quickly to secure sites and advance planning applications in the short term. However, as case

law and precedents clarify the definition of grey belt, demand for these sites may moderate over time.

- 3.13 By contrast, smaller developers are largely concentrating on progressing their existing pipelines. With fewer resources to absorb planning delays or bid competitively against larger players, their participation in the strategic land market is more limited.
- 3.14 The major housebuilders are currently the most active participants in the land market, pursuing both strategic and immediate opportunities across all regions. Their activity reflects a focus on maintaining pipelines and positioning for future growth.
- 3.15 While the medium-term outlook is supported by planning reforms and remains broadly positive, short-term conditions are more challenging. Sales rates for PLC housebuilders have remained flat, and in some markets greater reliance is being placed on buyer incentives to sustain demand. At the same time, elevated build cost inflation continues to apply pressure on margins.
- 3.16 The outlook for SMEs in the land market is markedly different from that of larger housebuilders. Smaller developers are disproportionately affected by elevated build costs and have less capacity to absorb these pressures, which is significantly undermining scheme viability. As a result, many SMEs have withdrawn from active land acquisition and are instead concentrating on delivering their existing pipelines. While debt finance remains available, lenders are increasingly risk averse, meaning the SMEs still active in the market are targeting only the most straightforward sites with limited planning risk.
- 3.17 However, conditions may improve. In May 2025, the Government introduced proposals under the Planning and Infrastructure Bill aimed at streamlining the planning system and easing regulatory burdens for SMEs. Measures include exempting small sites from affordable housing obligations, the building safety levy, and biodiversity net gain requirements. If implemented, these changes could provide a significant boost to SME participation in the land market.
- 3.18 The recent Spending Review has delivered a significant boost for Housing Associations, with £39 billion allocated to social and affordable housing through a new 10-year Affordable Homes Programme. The programme is expected to deliver 300,000 homes, of which 60% will be for Social Rent. In addition, the Government has

confirmed a long-term rent settlement and launched a consultation on rent convergence, both of which will strengthen the financial capacity of the sector.

- 3.19 Although it is too early to fully assess the impact of these measures, the increased certainty provided should encourage greater Housing Association activity in the land market. Nevertheless, rebuilding financial capacity and expanding development programmes will take time. This applies both to land-led schemes and opportunities delivered through Section 106 agreements, meaning the effect of the policy shift is likely to be gradual rather than immediate.
- 3.20 Despite an improvement in land supply during the first half of 2025, the performance of the development land market has fallen short of expectations. Uncertainty in the wider economy, alongside persistent cost pressures and viability challenges, continues to weigh on housing delivery and limit momentum in the market.
- 3.21 However, the market appears to be entering a more stable phase. Greenfield land values have remained broadly static, supported by increased site availability and steady demand. As the pipeline of land coming forward expands further, competition may begin to ease, potentially leading to some softening in values.
- 3.22 In the housing market, demand has yet to show a notable recovery. Buyer affordability has improved slightly due to falling mortgage rates and changes to mortgage regulation, but this has not translated into stronger sales rates for new homes, which remain subdued.
- 3.23 The Government has reinforced its commitment to boosting housing delivery, with new funding for affordable housing, targeted measures to support SMEs, and the creation of a National Housing Bank to unlock large sites. These initiatives should encourage greater participation from a wider range of players in the land market. However, the impact will take time to materialise, and completions are forecast to decline from around 199,000 homes in 2023/24 to approximately 160,000 in 2025/26, according to Savills' latest research.
- 3.24 The Knight Frank Residential Development Land Index - Q2 2025⁴ found that UK residential development land values weakened further in Q2 2025 as planning delays, Gateway 2 bottlenecks, viability pressures, and subdued demand continued to weigh

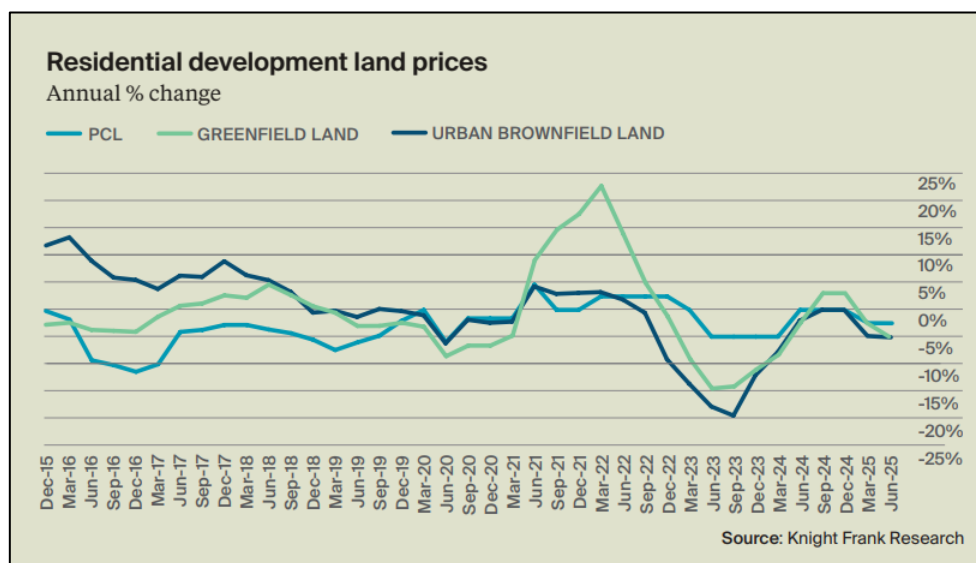
⁴ Knight Frank, Residential Development Land Index, Q2 2025 - [Residential Development Land Index Q2 2025](#)

on the market. Urban brownfield land values fell during the quarter, bringing annual declines to -5%. Greenfield land values also declined, bringing the annual decline to 5%.

- 3.25 The slowdown in land values reflects sharp reductions in housing output, particularly in urban areas. In London, only 731 private housing starts were recorded between April and June 2025, the lowest quarterly figure on record. Knight Frank's quarterly survey also revealed that conditions have deteriorated for both SMEs and volume housebuilders, with nearly three-quarters of respondents citing planning delays as their greatest challenge, up from 60% in Q1. Buyer sentiment was the next most pressing concern at 37%, while limited Registered Provider (RP) activity for Section 106 affordable homes was also noted.
- 3.26 Despite the near-term challenges, there is some cautious optimism that recently announced reforms will improve conditions over time. The reinstatement of mandatory housing targets, flexibility around greenfield and grey belt delivery, and additional resources for local authority planning teams are expected to ease constraints. National housebuilders such as Persimmon, Barratt, Redrow and Bellway have expressed optimism that these reforms, alongside the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, will support delivery in the medium term.
- 3.27 However, significant issues remain for higher-density developments. The Gateway 2 process under the Building Safety Act has created major uncertainty for schemes above 18m in height, with more than 6,600 homes currently in the system. Almost half of affected developers reported that Gateway 2 is adding over 12 months to timelines, while late-stage viability reviews continue to dampen appetite for urban schemes.
- 3.28 Knight Frank Residential Development Land Index (Q2 2025) reported that, the Bank of England has turned somewhat more "dovish" in recent weeks, with policymakers, including Governor Andrew Bailey, placing greater emphasis on weakness in the jobs market rather than the threat of inflation. Developers hope that easing mortgage rates will offer some relief. More than half of respondents said falling mortgage costs would most help sales through the remainder of 2025, followed by bulk sales to build to rent operators or single-family housing investors (21.4%) and looser mortgage affordability criteria (14%).

- 3.29 Knight Frank also reports that if the Bank of England (BoE) continues with its current pace of one cut per quarter, leading fixed rates may drop to around 3.7% by the year end, which is unlikely to unlock delivery at the scale the government is seeking.
- 3.30 Figure 3.1 below shows that residential development land prices have varied across land types over the past decade. Prime Central London land values have been the most stable, generally fluctuating around flat growth with only modest declines. Greenfield land saw the strongest growth, peaking at c.20% annual growth in 2021-22, before moderating back towards zero by 2023-24. Urban brownfield land has been the weakest performer, experiencing sharp declines of c.-20% during 2022-23, with only a partial recovery since. By mid-2025, annual changes for both greenfield and brownfield land are hovering around flat to slightly negative, pointing to a market that has stabilised but remains under pressure.

Figure 3.1 – Knight Frank Residential Development Land Prices



Source: Knight Frank Residential Development Land Index, Q2 2025

Agricultural Land

- 3.31 The RICS - RAU Farmland Market Directory of Land Sales⁵ is generated from information provided by land agents from across the country. The Directory provides a

⁵ RICS ~ RAU Farmland Market Directory of Land Sales - [RICS/RAU Farmland Market Report and Farmland Market Directory of Land Prices](#)

detailed list of land transactions, representing c.500 individual transactions per annum ranging from small areas of bare land to large estates.

3.32 The Directory is normally produced twice yearly, covering the periods January to June and July to December in each year. This report provides a summary of the data for the period from the 1st of July to 31st of December 2024. This is the most recent report at the time of writing. The key takeaways reported were:

- A total of 277 transactions in this period (H2 2024) - compared to 219 transactions from the previous survey (H1 2024).
- The total area of transactions submitted to the survey was approximately 12,000 acres, down by 4,300 acres from H1 2024. This does seem to buck the normal trend of previous years when more transactions tend to take place in the second half of the year.
- 82% of the transactions were for sales of 50 acres or less (small)
- 14% for sales of between 51 and 200 acres (medium)
- 4% for sales of more than 200 acres (large)
- 70% of the transactions in the sample were Bare Land (greenfield or agricultural)
- 12% of the transactions in the sample were Land and Buildings
- 18% of the transactions in the sample were Dwelling(s) Land and Buildings

3.33 The RICS report the average transaction prices reported by property type, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – H2 2024 Average Prices All Reported Transactions by Property Type

Property Type	Land Value (£ per acre)	England	Wales
Bare Land	£12,769	£13,145	£9,811
Land and Buildings	£17,051	£17,722	£10,979
Dwelling(s), Land and Buildings	£18,736	£18,185	£32,318

Source: RICS - RAU Farmland Market Directory of Land Sales Summary July to Dec 2024

- 3.34 Savills 'Spotlight: The Farmland Market' (January 2025) ⁶reported that during 2024, the farmland market in Great Britain was at its most active since 2018. Over 187,500 acres were marketed, 19% more than in 2023 and 14% above the average for 2012-2016 (our pre-Brexit and Covid reference point). Savills noted that as forecasted last year, the national agricultural transition continues to encourage restructuring and generate more market activity, with recent challenging weather conditions and farming economics likely to be contributing factors too. In 2024, 8% of sales were due to retirement and 27% were due to debt and financial restructuring.
- 3.35 Savills reported that more properties were on the market in 2024 and they were, on average, bigger. In total, 1,008 farms were publicly marketed – an 8% increase from 2023, and they averaged 186 acres in size, whereas the average unit size across the last five years has been 168 acres. This was because of an increase in the number of farms and estates marketed that exceeded 1,000 acres in size. In 2024, these properties accounted for 18% of the land area marketed, which was a significant increase as the average for the previous five years was 9%
- 3.36 The national average farmland value increased by less than 1% during 2024, but the strength of competition and prices achieved varied widely between and within regions. There were hotspots where limited supply or the desirability of the location drove prices up and sales progressed rapidly – while, in other areas, properties took longer to sell. In these cases, setting realistic guide prices helped to build momentum; analysis of Savills sales in 2024 shows properties exceeded their guide price by an average of 14%.
- 3.37 Compared to 2023 more land was marketed in every region of England. The East Midlands region was at its most active since 2011, with 21,900 acres marketed during 2024. This was largely due to an increase in the number of properties over 1,000 acres. In the neighbouring West Midlands region supply was 5% higher than in 2023 at 11,900 acres.
- 3.38 Activity in the North of England exceeded the 2012–2016 average by 22% and there was a noticeable increase in the amount of land marketed in Cumbria. Farmers were the primary buyer type in the North of England and average values fell slightly, by

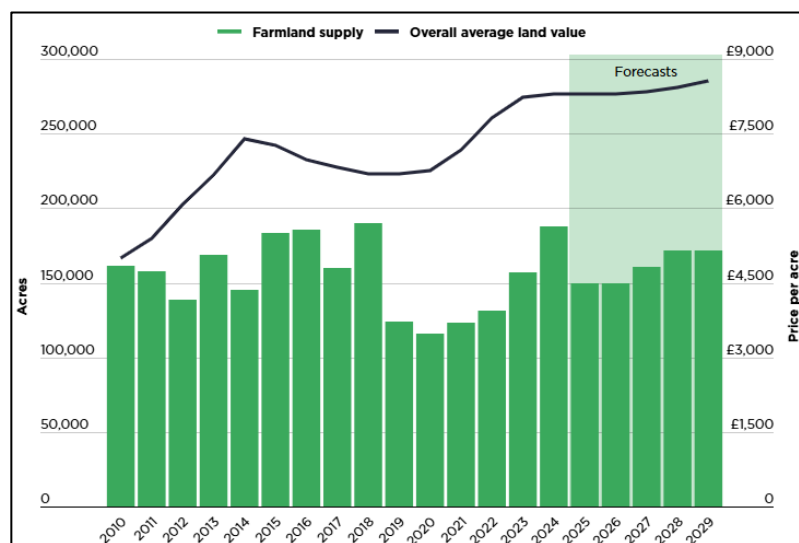
⁶ [Savills UK | Spotlight: The Farmland Market – 2025](#)

0.5% overall. Sellers included retirees, families restructuring their ownership and some farmers selling part of their holdings to help manage debts.

3.39 Savills "The Outlook for Land Use and Values" (January 2025⁷) reported that values are forecast to hold for the next five years with marginal growth towards the latter end of the period, resulting in a compound annual growth rate of 0.6% over the next five years. It will take time to see how the market and pricing react to the changes. From 2027, growth will be driven by market activity as a range of purchaser types compete, informed by greater clarity on land use priorities, opportunities and increased development activity. Local, regional and national variations in land supply and values will continue, and Savills Rural Agency colleagues are confident that the "best-in-class" will continue to sell well.

3.40 Figure 3.2 below shows the GB Farmland supply and value forecasts for 2025-2029.

Figure 3.2 – GB Farmland Supply and Land Value Forecast



Source: Savills, January 2025

3.41 Figure 3.2 shows the relationship between farmland supply and overall average land value in Great Britain from 2010 to 2029, with forecasts included from 2025 onwards. Farmland supply has fluctuated over the past decade, peaking in 2018 at c.190,000 acres before falling back to around 120,000 acres in 2019–2020. Supply rose again in 2024 but is forecast to contract in 2025 before stabilising at lower levels of c.£150,000 an acre. In contrast, average land values have shown a steady upward trend, rising

⁷ Savills 'The Outlook for land use and Values' - [Savills UK | The outlook for land use and values](#)

from c.£4,500 per acre in 2010 to c.£8,500 by 2025, with only minor dips. Forecasts suggest that values will remain broadly stable with modest growth through to 2029, despite the reduced supply expected in the near term. This highlights a long-term resilience in farmland values, underpinned by strong demand, even when supply levels fluctuate.

- 3.42 Additionally, Carter Jonas publishes a quarterly report titled "Farmland Market Update Q2 2025⁸," which provides insights into the latest trends and developments in the farmland market. Their most recent report (Q2 2025) found that average farmland values across England and Wales softened in the second quarter of the year amid increased caution in parts of the market. An adjustment in values reflects easing buyer appetite for some assets, as market polarisation intensifies.
- 3.43 In the three months to the end of Q2 2025, average arable land values fell by 1.1% to £9,700/acre, while average pasture land values edged down by a more moderate 0.7% to £7,900/acre.
- 3.44 Carter Jonas found that year-on-year, average arable land values are a modest 0.3% higher and average pasture land values are up by 0.9%. Over the longer term, growth remains robust. Looking back twenty years to the start of Carter Jonas' land value index, average arable land values have increased 241.1% and average pasture land values are up by 162.5%. This reflects an annualised growth rate of 6.3% and 4.9%, respectively, and significantly outstrips CPI inflation over this period.
- 3.45 Supply has also increased, with publicly marketed farmland reaching almost 58,000 acres in the first half of 2025, 8.6% higher than the same period in 2024 and above both the five- and ten-year averages. However, this growth in availability is uneven across regions. Some areas are showing signs of oversupply, requiring sharper pricing strategies, while others continue to see demand outstrip supply. This divergence reflects the influence of local dynamics, buyer profiles, and the relative quality of land being offered.
- 3.46 The increase in supply is linked to a combination of pressures on landowners, including volatile commodity markets, extreme weather conditions, rising employment costs, tax changes, and adjustments in agricultural policy. These challenges are

⁸ Carter Jonas Farmland Market Update Q2 2025 - [Farmland Market Update Q2 2025 | Carter Jonas](#)

prompting some to reassess business strategies, leading to sales, while also making buyers more selective.

- 3.47 The table below, taken from the Carter Jonas Report, shows the average values for land in the North West.

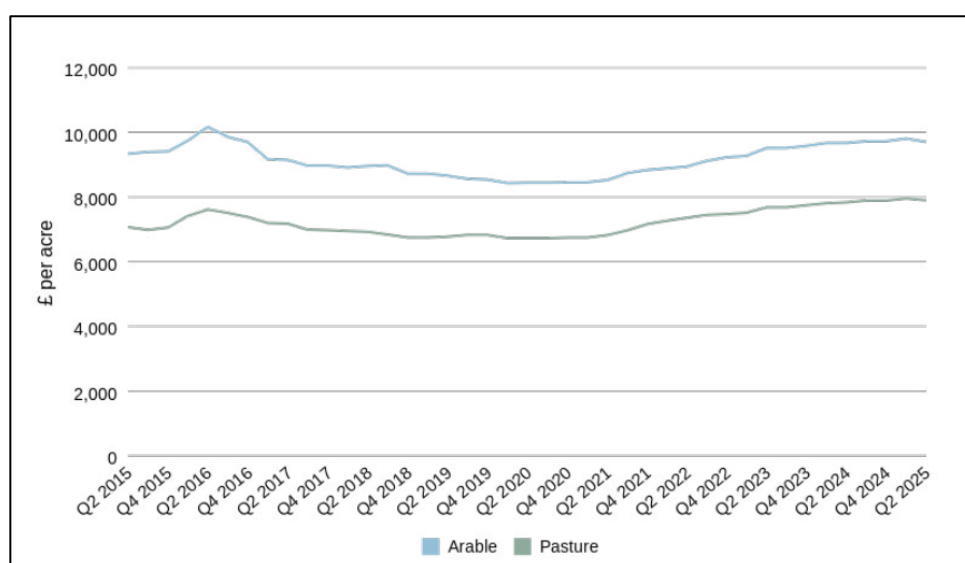
Table 3.2 – Carter Jonas North West Agricultural Values (Q2 2025)

Land Type	Low (£ per acre)	Prime (£ per acre)	Average (£ per acre)
Arable	£8,200	£12,300	£10,250
Pasture	£6,750	£10,250	£8,200
Hill	£1,100	£2,500	£1,800

Source: Carter Jonas, Farmland Market Update Q2 2025

- 3.48 Secondly, the Figure 3.4 below shows the average land value change for arable and pasture land since 2015 in England and Wales.

Figure 3.4 – Average Land Values in England and Wales



Source: Carter Jonas Farmland Market Update Q2 2025

- 3.49 Figure 3.4 shows the trend in average arable and pasture land values in England and Wales between Q2 2015 and Q2 2025. Arable land values peaked at over £10,000 per acre in 2016 before softening and remaining relatively flat between 2017 and 2020, at around £8,500 per acre. Since 2021, values have recovered steadily, reaching close to £10,000 per acre again by mid-2025. Pasture land values followed a similar, though less pronounced, pattern. They rose to almost £8,000 per acre in 2016 before dipping below £7,000 between 2017 and 2019, then gradually strengthening from 2020

onwards. By Q2 2025, pasture values stand at around £8,000 per acre, reflecting steady long-term growth.

4 Existing Evidence Base Review

- 4.1 As part of our existing evidence base review, we have considered surrounding Local Authority Local Plan Viability Assessments to inform an appropriate Benchmark Land Value; however, as many Greater Manchester boroughs have outdated plans or are in the process of updating them, there are limited recent assessments available, and we have therefore looked to the surrounding boroughs of Warrington, St Helens and West Lancashire.
- 4.2 We have reviewed the following documentation:
- Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment (March 2019)⁹
 - Warrington Borough Council Emerging Local Plan Viability Assessment, Cushman & Wakefield¹⁰ (August 2021)
 - St Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment (December 2018)¹¹
 - West Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment, Keppie Massie (2018)¹²
 - Central Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment, AspinallVerdi (February, 2025)¹³

Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment, March 2019

- 4.3 Warrington Borough Council ('the Council') commissioned BNP Paribas Real Estate to provide a Local Plan Viability Assessment to support the Warrington Local Plan. The Local Plan focuses on strategic planning requirements in the borough between 2017 and 2037. The Local Plan focuses on housing requirements; the distribution of new housing and employment land; and identify strategic infrastructure to support the scale of development envisaged.

⁹ Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment (March 2019) [Warrington Local Plan viability assessment final](#)

¹⁰ Warrington Borough Council Emerging Local Plan Viability Assessment, Cushman & Wakefield (August 2021) [Emerging Local Plan Viability Assessment](#)

¹¹ St Helens Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment (December 2018) [via001-st-helens-economic-viability-assessment-2018.pdf](#)

¹² West Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment, Keppie Massie (2018) [Viability Assessment - West Lancashire Borough Council](#)

¹³ Central Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment (February 2025) <https://centrallocalplan.lancashire.gov.uk/media/1482/cd13-central-lancashire-local-plan-viability-main-viability-report.pdf>

- 4.4 BNP Paribas Real Estate reported that, given the scale of housing sites expected to come forward, the majority will be on land that has not been previously developed.
- 4.5 BNP Paribas Real Estate reported that open, greenfield or other forms of previously undeveloped land have very low existing use values, with typical agricultural land values the region of £21,000 per hectare (c.£8,500 per acre).
- 4.6 The report found that residential development generates significantly higher values, and Benchmark Land Values for greenfield sites are typically 10–15 times agricultural values. Research from DCLG suggests a range of £247,000–£371,000 per gross hectare (£100,000–£150,000 per acre), which aligns with the evidence adopted in viability assessments nationally.
- 4.7 The 2018 PPG requires Benchmark Land Values to be based on Existing Use Value plus a premium, disregarding hope value. In 2018, BNP Paribas initially suggested £210,000 per gross hectare (c.£85,000 per acre); following consultation with site promoters and the VOA, higher benchmarks were adopted, with £250,000 and £371,000 per gross hectare used for testing purposes (c.£100,000 – c.£150,000 per acre respectively). This represents 11–17 times EUV, balancing incentives to landowners with the need to meet planning obligations.
- 4.8 BNP Paribas noted that while higher prices are sometimes paid for land across the north west, these cannot be relied upon across the board, as the PPG requires a balance between landowner incentives and delivery of policy requirements. For Town Centre sites, predominantly on previously developed land with varied existing uses, Benchmark Land Values were assumed at £370,000–£865,000 per hectare (c.£150,000 – c.£350,000 per acre respectively).

Warrington Borough Council Emerging Local Plan Viability Assessment, Cushman & Wakefield (August 2021)

- 4.9 Cushman & Wakefield ('C&W') were instructed by Warrington Borough Council ('the Council') to prepare a viability assessment to inform the emerging Warrington Local Plan (2021 – 2038). The purpose of this LPVA is to assess the total cumulative impact of all relevant emerging policies within the Local Plan to determine whether the plan is viable and deliverable, and to therefore inform the setting of plan policy. The Council previously commissioned BNP Paribas Real Estate ('BNPPRE') to undertake a viability assessment of the emerging Local Plan in 2018. The overall methodology adopted in

the BNPPRE LPVA was considered reasonable, as were some of the key assumptions and appraisal inputs. Notwithstanding this, several issues were identified in the BNPPRE LPVA which led the Council to instruct C&W to prepare a refreshed viability assessment of the Local Plan.

- 4.10 The C&W viability assessment reported the following assumptions:

Brownfield Land

- 4.11 *To determine an appropriate EUV for brownfield land outside of the Town Centre, we have researched industrial land values within the region and we have consulted our industrial agents who have extensive experience in the industrial land market across both Warrington and the wider North West.*
- 4.12 *A schedule of industrial land transactions in Warrington and the wider regional market is presented at Appendix 14. We do not have full knowledge of the terms of each transaction as this information is not in the public domain and therefore assumptions have to be made. We have assumed that the prices paid reflect the existing use only and do not include any hope value.*
- 4.13 *Our agents have advised that industrial land values vary quite significantly across the district, with prime locations in Warrington currently achieving land values at, or in excess of, approximately £1,730,000 per ha (£700,000 per acre) as shown by the most recent transactions at Gemini8, Omega and the Former Shearings and Travis Perkins sites both in Appleton Thorn.*
- 4.14 *Elsewhere in the district, industrial land values can be much more modest depending on the quality of the land, accessibility and location. We are aware of brownfield land transacting for approximately £247,000 per ha (£100,000 per acre) or less in certain locations.*
- 4.15 *In light of the above evidence, and having assessed evidence of brownfield EUVs in site-specific FVAs and area-wide FVAs in other authorities across the North West, it is our view that an appropriate district-wide EUV figure for brownfield land beyond the Town Centre would be £495,000 per ha (£200,000 per acre).*
- 4.16 *We have adopted a different brownfield EUV for the Town Centre typologies to reflect that these sites may comprise conversion and/or redevelopment of existing commercial buildings with a potentially higher EUV*

- 4.17 *For the purposes of this assessment, we consider the figure of £865,000 per ha (£350,000 per acre) to represent an appropriate uplift from the assumed EUV for other brownfield sites beyond Warrington Town Centre. We have therefore adopted this EUV figure for the brownfield Town Centre typologies.*

Greenfield

- 4.18 *The greenfield land sales / asking prices predominantly suggest land values in the order of £20,000 – £30,000 per ha / £8,000 – 12,000 per acre for greenfield land in nearby surrounding areas, although we note that some of the recent sales sold well above or substantially above the guide prices according to the RICS.*
- 4.19 *Having assessed evidence of greenfield EUVs in site-specific FVAs and area-wide FVAs in authorities across the North West, we have observed greenfield sites with EUVs at similar levels indicated by the market evidence, in the order of £20,000 – £30,000 per ha (c. £8,000 – £12,000 per acre).*
- 4.20 *Lower EUVs would be appropriate for poor quality agricultural land. In light of the available evidence, we consider that a figure of £22,250 per ha (£9,000 per acre) represents a reasonable EUV for greenfield land across the district. We have therefore adopted this figure for the purposes of our assessment.*

St Helen's Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment, December 2018

- 4.21 St Helens Council ('the Council') commissioned Keppie Massie to provide an Economic Viability Assessment (EVA) relating to new development in St Helens Borough which considers the viability of the site allocations and policies contained in the Local Plan.
- 4.22 The EVA forms part of the evidence base to support the Local Plan and is intended to assist the Council in allocating sites within the Borough and to guide future policy. The aim is to ensure that the adopted Local Plan policies are realistic and can deliver sustainable development without putting the delivery of the Plan at risk.
- 4.23 The Local Plan sets out a framework for the growth and development of St Helens Borough and where new development and regeneration should take place. It identifies a vision and objectives for the development of the Borough over the period 2020 to 2035 and provides strategic policies guiding the amount, form and location of new development. The Plan contains site allocations for new housing and employment

together with the local policies containing requirements to guide the consideration of planning applications for new development.

- 4.24 Having regard to the likely characteristics of development within the Borough, Keppie Massie identified a number of possible development scenarios on both previously developed and Greenfield sites.
- 4.25 Keppie Massie reported that within St Helens they would expect values for previously developed land in the settlement's areas with extant planning consents for commercial development to be in the range of £247,000 per hectare (£100,000 per acre) to £495,000 per hectare (£200,000 per acre) and possibly less in some cases.
- 4.26 Keppie Massie found that previously developed land (brownfield land) to be in the region of £864,500 per hectare (£350,000 per acre) for the highest value area in the Borough and a figure of £370,500 per hectare (£150,000 per acre) for the lowest value locations.
- 4.27 Keppie Massie found that for Greenfield locations it would be reasonable to assume a Benchmark Land Value in the region of £370,500 per hectare (£150,000 per acre) to £617,500 per hectare (£250,000 per acre) dependent on site size and location as being the level at which a landowner would consider releasing a site for development.
- 4.28 Table 4.1 below shows the Benchmark Land Value assumptions that were adopted.

Table 4.1 – St Helen's Local Plan Viability Assessment – Benchmark Land Values

Affordable Housing Zone	Previously Developed		Greenfield	
	(£ per ha)	(£/acre)	(£/ha)	(£/acre)
1	370,500	150,000	370,500	150,000
2	617,500	250,000	370,500	150,000
3	864,500	350,000	617,500	250,000

Type	Land Value (price/ha)	Land Value (price/acre)	Rationale
Industrial (B1b, B1c, B2, B8)	£370,500	£150,000	Located outside of Town Centre locations. Use requires fairly accessible location, although does not usually require significant frontage.

Source: Keppie Massie - St Helen's Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment

West Lancashire Local Plan Viability, Keppie Massie (2018)

4.29 The West Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment Consultation document, prepared by Keppie Massie in September 2018, outlines the methodology, assumptions, and approach for assessing the economic viability of development policies and site allocations in the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027). It evaluates residential and non-residential development scenarios, incorporating land values, affordable housing targets, and cost implications for local plan policies. The document invites stakeholder feedback to refine the viability assumptions and ensure the policies are realistic, deliverable, and compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

4.30 Table 4.2 details the Benchmark Land Values for Greenfield and Brownfield land.

Table 4.2 – West Lancashire Local Plan Viability BLV Assumptions

Zone	Location	Brownfield	Greenfield
1	Ormskirk, Aughton, Remaining Rural Areas	£500,000	£300,000
2	Burscough, Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Banks, Halsall, Haskayne	£400,000	£250,000
3	Outer Skelmersdale, Up Holland	£300,000	£200,000
4	Inner Skelmersdale	£200,000	£150,000

Source: West Lancashire Local Plan Viability, Keppie Massie (2018)

Central Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment (February 2025)

4.31 The Central Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment (Central Lancashire includes Preston, South Ribble and Chorley) prepared by AspinallVerdi in February 2025 adopted the following assumptions:

- For greenfield typologies we adopt a bottom-up approach based on the net value per acre / hectare for agricultural land (existing use value (EUV)). This EUV is 'grossed up' to reflect a net developable to gross site area ratio. Based on existing evidence of greenfield land transactions within Central Lancashire we have applied an EUV of £10,000 per acre across all the zones, with a multiplier of 10.3 – 17.8 resulting in a BLV's ranging from of £150,000 - £250,000 per acre.
- For brownfield typologies the starting EUV is higher than for greenfield site. The working assumption is that all of the brownfield land is redeveloped (100% - net to gross). The uplift multiplier, expressed as a percentage, depending on value zone (lower to higher). The following EUV's were adopted:
 - Residential Low Value Area - £140,000
 - Residential Medium Value Area - £190,000
 - Residential High Value Area - £240,000
- These are the benchmark values that we would assume for the purpose of our hypothetical viability appraisals, and they act as the benchmark to test the RLV's of schemes to determine whether sites would come forward for development.

5 Agricultural Land Market

- 5.1 In determining a value per acre/hectare for agricultural land, we have undertaken a search for current listed prices using Rightmove and achieved prices using CoStar, Rightmove and Nimbus within the last five years.
- 5.2 We have also considered evidence from surrounding boroughs to assess the EUV for agricultural land in Wigan.
- 5.3 The transactions below show achieved prices for agricultural land in Wigan and the surrounding boroughs.

Lot 2 - Garswood Gates Farm, Liverpool Road, Haydock, Ashton-In-Makerfield

- 5.4 The land at Garswood Gates Farm, Liverpool Road, Ashton-In-Makerfield is listed as sold STC on Rightmove for £1,000,000, equating to £11,072 per acre. The site is Grade 3 arable land (under the Agricultural Land Classification¹⁴) extending to 90.32 acre (c.36.55 ha). The land is located off Liverpool Road (A58), minutes away from the M6 which runs through Wigan. Ashton-In-Makerfield is c.5 miles (8km) south of Wigan.

Land Off Hall Lane, Aspull, Wigan

- 5.5 The land off Hall Lane, Aspull, Wigan is listed at STC on Rightmove for £210,000, equating to £12,375 per acre. The site is grassland (Grade 3 under the Agricultural Land Classification) extending to 16.97 acres (6.87 ha). The land is located off Hall Lane in the village of Aspull and is c.1.5 miles (c.2km) to the A557 Manchester Road.

Land to the west of Sennicar Lane, Haigh, Wigan (WN1 2SN)

- 5.6 UK Land and Farms reported that the land to the west of Sennicar Lane, Haigh, Wigan (WN1 2SN) was sold for £510,000, equating to c.£12,300 per acre. The site is Grade 3 grassland extending to circa 41.15 acres (c.16.65 ha). The land is located off Sennicar Lane but also benefits from access off Pendlebury Lane. Wigan is located circa 10 miles to the south; Standish is located c.3 miles to the west and Junction 6 of the M61 is located c.4 miles to the east.

¹⁴ [Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land - GOV.UK](#)

Lot 4 - Garswood Gates Farm, Liverpool Road, Haydock, Ashton-In-Makerfield

- 5.7 The land at Lot 4 Garswood Gates Farm, Liverpool Road, Ashton-In-Makerfield is listed as sold STC on Rightmove for £65,000, equating to £15,046 per acre. The site is Grade 3 arable land extending to 4.32 acres (c.1.75 ha). The land is located off Liverpool Road (A58), minutes away from the M6 which runs through Wigan. Ashton-In-Makerfield is c.5 miles (8km) south of Wigan.

Martin Mere, West Lancashire, PR9 8AJ

- 5.8 The land at Martin Mere, West Lancashire is listed as sold STC on Farms to Market for £491,000, equating to £15,000 per acre. The site is Grade 1 agricultural land (Excellent quality land with no or very minor limitations. A very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops can be grown here¹⁴) extending to 32.76 acres (13.26 Ha). The land is located in Southport, c.5km from the A259 which runs through Wigan.

Summary

- 5.9 Across the comparable agricultural land transactions reviewed, values range from c.£11,000 - c.£15,000 per acre. These transactions reflect sales of agricultural land in Wigan and the surrounding area, providing an appropriate benchmark for Existing Use Values in the area.
- 5.10 Table 5.1 below shows asking prices for agricultural land in Wigan.

Table 5.1 – Asking Prices for Agricultural Land in Wigan

Address	Size (Acres)	Size (ha)	Asking Price (£)	£ per acre	Photo
Sennicar Lane, Wigan	17	6.87	£280,000	£16,470	
Spout Fold Farm, Over Hulton, BL5 1BS	20.55	8.31	£450,000	£21,897	
Land off School Lane, Mawdesley, Chorley, Lancashire, L40 3TG	9.44	3.82	£225,000	£23,834	

Source: Rightmove, Prime Location and On The Market, September 2025

- 5.11 Table 5.1 shows asking prices ranging from £225,000 - £280,000, equating to a £23,834 - £16,740 per acre respectively.

6 Development Land Market

- 6.1 In this section we review values for both residential and commercial development land across Wigan. As with agricultural land, we have utilised CoStar for transaction-based evidence. We have also consulted Rightmove to determine a value per acre / hectare and a value on a per unit basis for sites currently listed on the market. Dependent upon the availability of information and stakeholder engagement, this process attempts to triangulate what typical market values are for development land (greenfield and/or brownfield).
- 6.2 Careful consideration has to be given to whether the values are aspirational and / or may not represent policy compliant market values. It should be noted that within our database of evidence we have carried out background research wherever possible into the planning consent the site has, and whether that is policy compliant (i.e. it includes affordable housing & and other 106 contributions as required by current local planning policies) or not. More weight is given to evidence which is policy compliant. However, it is difficult to be certain that developers have not offered values (and landowners have not asked for values) which are not sustainable in planning policy terms and therefore challenge viability at detailed planning stage. This practice is contrary to the NPPF/PPG (February 2024).
- 6.3 We also recognise that it is difficult to generalise what a 'typical' greenfield or brownfield development site is worth across an area given that all sites are unique. It is therefore important to reiterate that this is a plan-wide study and thus the purpose of our research is to establish a suitable Benchmark Land Value for the respective typologies of development to be appraised, utilising both existing use and market values for greenfield and brownfield land. The BLV does not mean that this is the price that land has to transact in the Wigan Council area – it is simply the benchmark for Plan viability purposes.

Residential Development Land

- 6.4 Based on the sales transactions we have identified and analysed in Wigan, residential development land values vary significantly depending on factors such as location and planning permissions. Recent transactions highlight a range of prices reflective of these variables.

- 6.5 Over the past five years, we have identified some transactions which we have analysed to assess achieved land values in the local area. We have looked at transacted data on CoStar, Rightmove and Auction Houses active in the local area.
- 6.6 The transactions below show achieved prices for residential land within Wigan and the surrounding towns including St Helen's, Chorley.

Land Adjacent to Blainscough Hall, Coppull Lancashire, PR7 5HT

- 6.7 CoStar reported that the land at Blainscough Lane, Chorley (PR7 5FH) was sold to Story Homes in October 2023 for £5,500,000, equating to £401,167 per acre. The site consists of two irregular shaped fields extending to 13.71 acres (c.5.5ha) that are currently used for agricultural purposes. The land was sold with outline planning consent for 123 dwellings. The land is a short distance from the A49 which leads north to Chorley and Preston, with junction 29 of the M6 a 15-minute drive away. Heading south on the A49 towards Wigan, junction 27 of the M6 is a c.10-minute drive.

Stoney Lane, South Ribble (PR5 5XQ)

- 6.8 CoStar reported that the Land at Stoney Lane, Preston, South Ribble (PR5 5XQ) was sold in November 2024 to Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for £18,000,000, equating to £473,684 per acre. The site is farmland extending to approximately 38 acres (c.15.4 ha). The land runs between Stanfield Lane and Wigan Road to the south of Stoney Lane. CoStar reported that the site is to be developed as the Royal Preston Hospital's replacement site.

Manor St, St Helens, Merseyside (WA9 3AX)

- 6.9 CoStar reported that the land at Manor Street, St Helens (WA9 3AX) was sold in April 2023 to Your Housing Group for £1,100,000, equating to £478,260 per acre. The site consists of an irregular shaped parcel of land extending to 2.3 acres (c.0.93 ha) which previously benefitted from outline planning consent for 37 residential dwellings; however, this has now lapsed. The land fronts onto Manor Street and Jackson Street with the rear elevation backing onto the railway line. The site has excellent transport links to the East Lancs A580 and is c.4-miles to the M6 and c.4.25 miles to the M57.

Nixons Lane, Skelmersdale (WN8 9BE)

- 6.10 Rightmove reported that the land at Nixons Lane, Skelmersdale, (WN8 9BE) is sold STC for £160,000, equating to £533,333 per acre. The site consists of a parcel of land extending to 0.3 acres (c.0.12 ha) and a 2-bedroom detached bungalow. The land was sold with planning permission for 1 detached property and 4 semi-detached properties (Planning Application Number: 2020/1154/FUL). The site is c.1km to the M58 and c.2.2 miles (c.3.5km) to the M6.

Morris St, St Helens, Merseyside (WA9 3EX)

- 6.11 CoStar reported that the land at Morris Street, St Helens (WA9 3EX) was sold in December 2021 to Taylor Wimpey for £9,200,000, equating to £540,223 per acre. The site consists of an irregular parcel of brownfield land extending to 17.03 acres (c.6.89 ha). There were no details if the land was sold with planning permission. The site has good transport links to the East Lancs A580 (c.2.5 miles) and is c.3.8-miles to the M6 and c.5 miles to the M57.

Atlas St, St Helens, Merseyside (WA9 1JH)

- 6.12 CoStar reported that the land at Atlas Street, St Helen's (WA9 1JH) was sold in February 2024 to Westchurch Homes Ltd for £1,600,000, equating to £610,687 per acre. The site consists of 2.62 acres (c.1.06 ha) of brownfield land. The land was sold with planning permission for 42 houses, 24 apartments and sub-station together with associated landscaping, car parking and highway works. The grant was permitted subject to works beginning within 3 years of decision notice. The site is c.2-miles to the A580 and c.3.6 miles to the M6.

Carr Mill Road, Billinge, St Helens (WN5 7TY)

- 6.13 Rightmove reported that the land at Carr Mill Road, Billinge (WN5 7TY) is sold STC for £175,000, equating to £833,333 per acre. The site consists of development land extending c.0.21 acres (c.0.08 hectares). The site was sold with planning permission in principle for the erection of one dwelling. The land is situated off Carr Mill Road, accessed via Main Street which runs through the Centre of Billinge and is c.2.2 miles to the M6.

Summary

- 6.14 Across the residential land transactions reviewed, achieved values range from £401,167 - £833,333 per acre, varying considerably by the size of the land. These transactions reflect sales of residential land in Wigan and the surrounding areas, providing an appropriate benchmark for existing use values in the area.
- 6.15 Table 6.1 below summaries achieved prices for residential development land in Wigan and the surrounding areas.

Table 6.1 – Sold Residential Development Sites

Address	Size (Acres)	Size (ha)	Sold Price (£)	£ per acre	Photo
Land Adjacent to Blainscough Hall, Coppull Lancashire, PR7 5HT	13.71	5.54	£5,500,000	£401,167	
Manor St, St Helens, Merseyside (WA9 3AX)	2.3	0.93	£1,100,000	£478,261	
Nixons Lane, Skelmersdale (WN8 9BE)	0.3	0.12	£160,000	£533,333	

Address	Size (Acres)	Size (ha)	Sold Price (£)	£ per acre	Photo
Morris St, St Helens, Merseyside (WA9 3EX)	17.03	6.89	£9,200,000	£540,223	
Atlas St, St Helens, Merseyside (WA9 1JH)	2.62	1.06	£1,600,000	£610,687	
Carr Mill Road, Billinge, St Helens (WN5 7TY)	0.21	0.08	£175,000	£833,333	

Source: CoStar and Rightmove, September 2025

Asking Prices for Residential Development Land

- 6.16 While asking prices are not definitive evidence of value, they serve as a useful indicator, particularly in locations where transactional evidence in Wigan is limited. Asking prices reflect vendor expectations. When considered alongside achieved sale prices, they help to establish a more comprehensive understanding of local land value benchmarks and market positioning. Using Rightmove, CoStar and Nimbus Maps we have reviewed asking prices for development land in Wigan and the surrounding boroughs.

St Peter & Pauls Church Site, Woodlands Road, Haresfinch, St Helens, WA11 9AQ

- 6.17 The land at St Peter & Pauls Church Site, Woodlands Road, Haresfinch, St Helens, (WA11 9AQ) is listed on CoStar for £695,000, equating to £579,167 per acre. The site is a cleared L-shaped site which was the former St Peter & Pauls Church and Presbytery.
- 6.18 The site is c.1.2 acres (c.0.48ha) and has been subject to a pre-app with St Helens Council. They consider it to be suitable for the development of up to 10 residential units. The site is situated in the Haresfinch area of St Helens, approximately 1.5 miles (2.5 km) north of St Helens Town Centre. It is situated at the junction of Woodlands Road and Derwent Road, within a predominantly residential area. Access is from Derwent Road and Green Leach Lane (A571) which links with the A580 East Lancashire Road, approximately 0.25 miles (0.4 km) north of the site.
- 6.19 As the site has only been subject to a pre-app rather than full planning permission, the £ per acre values are lower than those typically seen for sites with full planning consent.

Ulleswater Street, Leigh, WN7

- 6.20 The land at Ulleswater Street, Leigh, WN7 is listed on Rightmove for £900,000, equating to £666,666 per acre. The site is c.1.35 acres (c.0.54ha) and is being sold with planning permission for 20 new residential dwellings (Planning application

number: A/22/94743/MAJOR). The site is located in the town of Leigh, c.200m to the A578 and c.250m to Atherleigh Way which joins the A557.

Langtree Hall Farm Barns, Langtree Lane, Standish, WN6 0QQ

- 6.21 The land at Langtree Hall Farm Barns, Langtree Lane, Standish (WN6 0QQ) is listed on Rightmove for £700,000, equating to £700,000 an acre. The site is c.1 acre (c.0.40ha) and is being sold with planning permission for the conversion of two large barns. The site is located to the north of Standish, just off Preston Road and is c.0.9 miles (c.1.5km) to the M6.

101 Gathurst Lane, Shevington, Wigan

- 6.22 The land at 101 Gathurst Lane, Shevington, Wigan is listed on Rightmove for £250,000, equating to £1,041,666 per acre. The site is 0.24 acre (c.0.09 ha) and is being sold with outline planning permission 2 detached residential properties (planning application number: A/23/95730/OUT). The site is located in Shevington which c.1.5 miles (c.2.5km) to Junction 27 of the M6.

Brentwood, 251 Wigan Lane, Wigan, WN1 2NT

- 6.23 The land at Brentwood, 251 Wigan Lane, Wigan, Lancashire (WN1 2NT) is listed on CoStar for £1,200,000, equating to £1,200,000 per acre. The site is c.1 acre (c.0.4ha) and is being sold with planning permission for the conversion of the existing dwelling into 3 apartments and the construction of 33 new build apartments with associated parking and landscaping (planning application number: A/20/89097/MAJOR). The site is on Wigan Lane, c.500m to the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, in between the towns of Standish to the north and Ince-in-Makerfield to the south.

Summary

- 6.24 Across the residential land asking prices reviewed, values range from £579,166 - £1,200,000 per acre. Values vary considerably, reflecting factors including but not limited to: location, local market strength, size, status of planning consent, site specific abnormalities and infrastructure costs.

6.25 Table 6.2 below summaries asking prices for residential development land in Wigan and the surrounding areas.

Table 6.2 – Residential Development Land Asking Prices

Address	Acres	Hectares (Ha)	Asking Price (£)	Land Value (£ per Acre)	Image
St Peter & Pauls Church Site, Woodlands Road, Haresfinch, St Helens, WA11 9AQ	1.2	0.48	£695,000	£579,166	
Ulleswater Street, Leigh, WN7	1.35	0.54	£900,000	£666,666	
Langtree Hall Farm Barns, Langtree Lane, Standish, WN6 0QQ	1	0.40	£700,000	£700,000	

101 Gathurst Lane, Shevington, Wigan	0.24	0.09	£250,000	£1,041,666	
Brentwood, 251 Wigan Lane, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 2NT	1	0.40	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	

Source: AspinallVerdi analysis of Rightmove and Nimbus Maps, September 2025

Commercial Development Land

- 6.26 In this section we review land listed as ‘commercial’ on CoStar for values across Wigan. The commercial use refers to any type of commercial land and does not distinguish between different types of commercial.
- 6.27 For the purpose of this research, commercial development land is land which is listed as ‘commercial land’, has either obtained planning permission, has outline planning consent for commercial use and/or is allocated for commercial development within the Council’s adopted policy documents.
- 6.28 Using CoStar, we have looked at commercial development land sold within a 7-mile radius of Wigan in the last 5 years. This search radius has been extended to include evidence from neighbouring areas including Newton Le Willows and Warrington due to the limited amount of sold commercial data available.
- 6.29 The sold commercial land transactions are detailed below:

Land at Millfield Ln, St Helens, WA11 9TH

- 6.30 CoStar reported that the land at Millfield Ln, St Helens, (WA11 9TH) sold in September 2024 for £14,750,000, equating to £295,000 per acre. The site extends to c.50 acres (c.20.23 ha), and CoStar noted that it is to be developed for industrial units with associated office space. The proposed scheme (planning application number: P/2024/0045/FUL) was granted planning permission in May 2025 for “Construction of new employment units for flexible use across Classes E (g) (iii), B2 and B8, with ancillary offices, car parking, service yards, infrastructure, landscaping, ancillary structures and associated works plus the provision of access to the site from Millfield Lane and Liverpool Road¹⁵.” Despite the location’s proximity to the A580 East Lancashire Road and M6 motorway, the reported price per acre is at the lower end of values typically achieved for commercial development land in the North West.

Crow Lane West, Newton Le Willows, WA12

¹⁵ P/2024/0045/FUL | Construction of new employment units for flexible use across Classes E (g) (iii), B2 and B8, with ancillary offices, car parking, service yards, infrastructure, landscaping, ancillary structures and associated works plus the provision of access to the site from Millfield Lane and Liverpool Road. | Land To The West Of Millfield Lane And South Of Liverpool Road Haydock St Helens

- 6.31 Rightmove reported that the land at Crow Lane West, Newton Le Willows (WA12) sold for £275,000, equating to £528,846 per acre. The site is c.0.52 acres (c.0.21ha). The site is cleared hardstanding that was previously used as a commercial builder's yard. The site is located off Crow Lane, c.1.2 miles (c.1.75km) to the M6 and c.2.7 miles (c.4.3km) to the M62.

West Bridgewater St, Leigh (WN7 4HB)

- 6.32 CoStar reported that the land at West Bridgewater Street, Leigh (WN7 4HB) sold in March 2024 for £500,000, equating to £600,343 per acre. The land is currently open storage land and is c.1 mile (c.1.5km) to the A580 and c.5 miles (c.8km) to the M6.

Land at Bridge St, Warrington (WA3 3PX)

- 6.33 CoStar reported that the land at Bridge Street (WA3 3PX), sold in August 2022 for £3,500,000 equating to £527,903 per acre. The land at Millingford Industrial Estate is c.6.63 acres (c.2.6 ha). The land is south of Goldborne, c.100m from the A580 East Lancashire Road. CoStar note that this transaction comprised both commercial open storage land and an industrial unit as part of a wider portfolio transaction, rather than solely vacant land, and hence the reported £ per acre figure may be higher than would be expected for land alone.

Land at Bold Rd, St Helens, WA9 4JG

- 6.34 CoStar reported that the land at Bold Rd (WA9 4JG), sold in September 2025 for £775,000, equating to £582,707 per acre. The subject property is situated on Bold Road in Sutton, St Helens, Merseyside. The surrounding area is mixed use comprising of industrial/warehouse, open storage land, self-contained offices, small workshop units and residential housing. The property is located approximately 2.5 miles from Junction 8 of the M62 motorway, providing direct routes to major cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. Additionally, the A580 East Lancashire Road is located c. 4 miles to the north, facilitating easy access to the M6 and the wider motorway network.

Table 6.3 – Sold Commercial Development Land

Address	Acres	(Ha)	Achieved Price (£)	Land Value (£ per Acre)	Photo
Land at Millfield Ln, St Helens, WA11 9TH	50	20.23	£14,750,000	£295,000	
Land at Crow Lane West, Newton Le Willows, WA12	0.52	0.21	£275,000	£528,846	
Land at West Bridgewater St, Leigh (WN7 4HB)	5.83	2.35	£3,500,000	£600,343	
Land at Bridge St, Warrington (WA3 3PX)	6.63	2.68	£3,500,000	£527,903	
Land at 1 Bold Road, Sutton, St Helens WA9 4JG	1.33	0.53	£775,000	£582,707	

Source: CoStar, September 2025

6.35 We also searched for availabilities on the market to understand current asking prices for commercial development land in Wigan.

Land at Scot Lane, Wigan, (WN5 0UA)

6.36 CoStar reported the land at Scot Lane, is listed as under offer for £450,000, equating to £608,108 per acre. The land is listed as commercial land, situated c.1 mile (c.1.6 km) to the west of Wigan Town Centre, and within 0.5 miles (0.8 km) north east of Robin Retail Park.

Land Rear Of 60-62 Wallgate, Wigan, WN1

6.37 The land at the rear of 60-62 Wallgate is listed on Prime Location for £150,000, equating to £629,032 per acre. The site is c.0.31 acres (c.0.12ha) and is currently used

as surface car parking. The site is located in Wigan town centre, next to Wigan Wallgate station.

7 Benchmark Land Value Assumptions

- 7.1 The context for our approach to land value is set out in the Land Value Approach section of the report (Section 2). We emphasise that Existing Use Value (EUV) is the fundamental starting point for determining Benchmark Land Value (BLV). As noted in the previous section, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on viability supports an 'EUV plus premium' approach as set out above.

Existing Use Values

- 7.2 Determining land value is complex. Unlike intrinsic value, land value is derived from its potential use, particularly its development potential. Consequently, assessing land value requires a nuanced approach that takes into account a variety of factors, many of which are site-specific and subject to change.
- 7.3 Factors such as density, land size, local authority, topography, ground conditions, and local authority obligations all influence land value, making direct comparisons between sites difficult. The land market has also been impacted by economic factors, such as rising finance costs and increased construction material prices.
- 7.4 Comparing land values based on prices paid for different sites can be challenging due to numerous site-specific variables. For example, the extent of remediation or other abnormal costs will vary from site to site.
- 7.5 As highlighted in section 3 of this report, Paragraph 014 of the PPG Viability¹⁶ (Reference ID: 10-014-20190509) states that Existing Use Value (EUV) should be informed by market evidence of current uses, costs, and values. While market evidence can be used as a cross-check for Benchmark Land Value (BLV), it should not replace BLV.
- 7.6 Paragraph 014 of the PPG notes that there may be a divergence between BLVs and market evidence, cautioning that this could be due to different assumptions and methodologies used by individual developers, site promoters, and landowners.
- 7.7 Any market evidence used to cross-check the BLV should come from developments that are fully compliant with emerging or up-to-date plan policies, including affordable housing requirements at the relevant levels set out in the plan.

¹⁶ [Viability - GOV.UK](#)

- 7.8 We would emphasise that the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Paragraph: 015 Reference ID: 10-015-20190509) outlines specific modalities for the assessment of Existing Use Value (EUV). We quote the PPG:

Existing use value (EUV) is the first component of calculating benchmark land value. EUV is the value of the land in its existing use. Existing use value is not the price paid and should disregard hope value. Existing use values will vary depending on the type of site and development types. EUV can be established in collaboration between plan makers, developers and landowners by assessing the value of the specific site or type of site using published sources of information such as agricultural or industrial land values, or if appropriate capitalised rental levels at an appropriate yield (excluding any hope value for development).

Sources of data can include (but are not limited to): land registry records of transactions; real estate licensed software packages; real estate market reports; real estate research; estate agent websites; property auction results; valuation office agency data; public sector estate/property teams' locally held evidence.

- 7.9 The principles outlined in the PPG are adopted in the RICS Professional Standard "Assessing Viability in Planning under the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (for England)." The standard states that a Benchmark Land Value (BLV) is "not a price to be paid in the marketplace; it is a mechanism by which the viability of the site to provide developers' contributions can be assessed. It should be set at a level that provides the minimum return at which a reasonable landowner would be willing to sell."
- 7.10 Given this background, we understand the importance of approaching transactions related to residential development with caution and subjectivity. Adjustments to comparables may be necessary to account for factors such as abnormal site conditions, contamination, and development density.
- 7.11 We have assessed the Existing Use Value (EUV) for agricultural, residential, and commercial uses below. It is also important to note that the price paid for consented development land often includes a hope value. As established above, it is not advisable to assess EUV based on transactions that are likely to incorporate hope value.

- 7.12 In arriving at our assessments of existing use values in Wigan, we have had regard to available transactional evidence both in Wigan, and also in the wider North West area where relevant and similar market conditions exist.
- 7.13 We have also had regard to a range of site-specific viability assessments undertaken on behalf of Wigan Council. These provide a useful indication of the EUV and BLVs that have been applied in practice within the borough, and we have considered them in forming our own judgements. However, as some of the individual assessments are confidential, we are unable to publish the detailed figures or assumptions adopted.
- 7.14 In addition, we have taken into account the EUVs and BLVs adopted in Local Plan Viability Assessments for neighbouring authorities, including St Helens, Warrington and West Lancashire and Central Lancashire, together with the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Strategic Viability Assessment.

St Helens Economic Viability Assessment (December 2018)

- 7.15 St Helens 'Economic Viability Assessment' produced by Keppie Massie (December 2018)¹¹ states the following:

"In order to deliver the growth proposed in the emerging Local Plan, it is likely that some large Greenfield development sites on the edge of the existing built-up areas will need to be developed over the Local Plan period as part of the Site Allocations."

"At the present time, these sites will normally be used for agricultural and grazing purposes or informal open space with site values on this basis typically in the region of £25,000 - £50,000 per hectare (£10,000 - £20,000 per acre) or less."

Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment (March 2019)

- 7.16 The Warrington 'Local Plan Viability Assessment' produced by BNP Paribas Real Estate (March 2019)⁹ stated the following:

"Given the scale of the housing sites that the Council anticipates bringing forward, a majority will be brought forward on land that has not been previously developed. Open, greenfield or other forms of previously undeveloped land have very low existing use values. Typical agricultural land values are in the region of £21,000 per hectare (c.£8,500 per acre)."

Warrington Borough Council Emerging Local Plan Viability Assessment, Cushman & Wakefield (August 2021)

7.17 The Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment produced by Cushman & Wakefield (August 2021) stated the following:

“The greenfield land sales / asking prices predominantly suggest land values in the order of £20,000 – £30,000 per ha / £8,000 – 12,000 per acre for greenfield land in nearby surrounding areas, although we note that some of the recent sales sold well above or substantially above the guide prices according to the RICS”

“Having assessed evidence of greenfield EUVs in site-specific FVAs and area-wide FVAs in authorities across the North West, we have observed greenfield sites with EUVs at similar levels indicated by the market evidence, in the order of £20,000 – £30,000 per ha (c. £8,000 – £12,000 per acre).”

“Lower EUVs would be appropriate for poor quality agricultural land. In light of the available evidence, we consider that a figure of £22,250 per ha (£9,000 per acre) represents a reasonable EUV for greenfield land across the district. We have therefore adopted this figure for the purposes of our assessment.”

West Lancashire Local Plan Viability, Keppie Massie (2018)

7.18 West Lancashire Local Plan Viability produced by Keppie Massie (2018) identified the following Benchmark Land Values:

Greenfield

- Zone 1 – Ormskirk, Aughton, Remaining Rural Areas: £300,000
- Zone 2 – Burscough, Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Banks, Halsall, Haskayne: £250,000
- Zone 3 – Outer Skelmersdale, Up Holland: £200,000
- Zone 4 – Inner Skelmersdale: £150,000

Central Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment (February 2025)

- 7.19 The Central Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment (Central Lancashire includes Preston, South Ribble and Chorley) prepared by AspinallVerdi in February 2025 stated the following:

“For greenfield typologies we adopt a bottom-up approach based on the net value per acre / hectare for agricultural land (existing use value (EUV)). This EUV is ‘grossed up’ to reflect a net developable to gross site area ratio. Based on existing evidence of greenfield land transactions within Central Lancashire we have applied an EUV of £10,000 per acre across all the zones, with a multiplier of 10.3 – 17.8 resulting in a BLV’s ranging from of £150,000 - £250,000 per acre.”

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, Strategic Viability Assessment (September 2020)

- 7.20 The GMSF ‘Strategic Viability Report’ produced by Three Dragons Ward Williams Associates Troy Planning + Design (September 2020) stated the following:

“MHCLG estimates that agricultural land in Greater Manchester is £22,500/ha, and separate valuations of greenfield development sites suggests greenfield land existing use is generally £17,300 to £22,200/ha (c.£7,000 - £9,000 per acre).

This is like the national average (£22,355/ha). PPG expects that there is a premium above existing use to incentivise land release for development and previous work suggests that for greenfield land, benchmarks tend to be in the range of 10-20 times agricultural value. This would suggest that a greenfield benchmark of between £173,000/ha and £450,000/ha may be appropriate (c.£70,000–£182,000 per acre).

For the purposes of this testing the reported options minimum of £250,000/ha (c.£101,000 per acre) has been used for large scale greenfield sites. This is approximately 12.5 times existing use value.

There may be some greenfield sites on higher value land on small sites around the edge of settlements (e.g. paddock or amenity land) and taking the mid-point of the greenfield range noted above may be an appropriate response to these circumstances. This is £310,000/ha (c.£125,500 per acre), which is slightly over 15 times agricultural use.

- 7.21 Based on the analysis of comparable evidence and the surrounding boroughs Local Plan Viability Assessments, we have adopted £12,000 per acre as the EUV for greenfield land.

Brownfield Land

- 7.22 We have considered recent FVAs submitted in support of planning applications within the Borough.

St Helens Economic Viability Assessment (December 2018)

- 7.23 The St Helens 'Economic Viability Assessment' produced by Keppie Massie (December 2018)¹¹ states the following:

"Within St Helens we would expect current values for previously developed land in the settlement areas with extant planning consents for commercial development to be in the range of £247,000 per hectare (£100,000 per acre) to £495,000 per hectare (£200,000 per acre) and possibly less in some cases."

"The definition of viability in the context of planning recognises the issue of a landowner receiving an appropriate site value, which whilst being less than full residential value is likely to be higher than current use value. Having regard to this we have considered the level of site value at which a landowner is likely to release a site for development in the towns and settlement areas. This will also be influenced by the supply of competing residential development sites available in the area. A large number of sites will have a limiting effect on value, and conversely a limited number of sites is likely to increase the landowners' expectations of a value uplift."

- 7.24 The BLV assumptions for St Helens Local Plan Viability assessment for Greenfield and Brownfield sites are detailed in Figure 7.1 below:

Figure 7.1 – St Helens BLV Assumptions

Affordable Housing Zone	Previously Developed		Greenfield	
	(£ per ha)	(£/acre)	(£/ha)	(£/acre)
1	370,500	150,000	370,500	150,000
2	617,500	250,000	370,500	150,000
3	864,500	350,000	617,500	250,000

Source: St Helens Local Plan Viability Assessment (December 2018)

Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment (March 2019)

- 7.25 Warrington 'Local Plan Viability Assessment' produced by BNP Paribas Real Estate (March 2019)⁹ stated the following:

"The Town Centre site is predominantly on previously developed land. The types of existing uses on the site are diverse and it is not possible within the confines of an area-wide viability assessment to undertake a detailed analysis of the likely value of each site. For the purposes of the exercise, we have assumed that a hectare of land has a benchmark land value ranging from £370,000 to £865,000" (c.£150,000 to c.£350,000 per acre).

Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment, Cushman & Wakefield (August, 2021)

- 7.26 The Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment produced by Cushman & Wakefield (August 2021) proposed the following BLVs could be deemed appropriate for the area-wide generic typology testing.

Figure 7.2 – Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment (2021) BLV Assumptions

Typology	Site Type	EUV (per ha)	EUV (per acre)	BLV (per net ha)	BLV (per net acre)
Town Centre	Brownfield	£865,000	£350,000	£1,297,000	£525,000
Inner Warrington (North)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£593,000	£240,000
Inner Warrington (South)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£680,000	£275,000
Settlement (High Value)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£803,000	£325,000
Settlement (Mid Value)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£680,000	£275,000
Settlement (Low Value)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£593,000	£240,000
Suburbs (High Value)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£803,000	£325,000
Suburbs (Mid Value)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£680,000	£275,000
Suburbs (Low Value)	Brownfield	£495,000	£200,000	£593,000	£240,000

Source: Warrington Local Plan Viability Assessment, Cushman & Wakefield (August, 2021)

West Lancashire Local Plan Viability, Keppie Massie (2018)

7.27 West Lancashire Local Plan Viability produced by Keppie Massie (2018) identified the following Benchmark Land Values:

Brownfield

- Zone 1 – Ormskirk, Aughton, Remaining Rural Areas: £500,000
- Zone 2 – Burscough, Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Banks, Halsall, Haskayne: £400,000
- Zone 3 – Outer Skelmersdale, Up Holland: £300,000
- Zone 4 – Inner Skelmersdale: £200,000

Central Lancashire Local Plan Viability Assessment (February 2025)

7.28 Central Lancashire ‘Local Plan Viability Assessment’ produced by AspinallVerdi (February 2025) stated the following

- For brownfield typologies the starting EUV is higher than for greenfield site. The working assumption is that all of the brownfield land is redeveloped (100% - net to gross). The uplift multiplier, expressed as a percentage, depending on value zone (lower to higher). The following EUV’s were adopted:
 - Residential Low Value Area - £140,000
 - Residential Medium Value Area - £190,000
 - Residential High Value Area - £240,000

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, Strategic Viability Assessment (September 2020)

7.29 In the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Viability Report (September 2020) Three Dragons assessed Benchmark Land Values. The report states:

“Brownfield sites for development will include a variety of circumstances. Sites identified in the SHLAAs and the site-specific viability appraisals include former commercial buildings, car parks, filling stations, retail units and vacant plots of land.

Some of the sites have current uses while others are unoccupied with the likelihood that there will need to be some investment before the consented uses can be resumed.

In addition, some employment sites are in demand from commercial users (such as space for B8 development on motorway junctions) while others are in locations and configurations no longer suitable for most commercial occupiers (such as some of the poorly located former mills and other commercial buildings in Greater Manchester). All of this suggests that the range of potential circumstances for re-use of brownfield land for housing development will vary considerably and that a range of benchmarks will be needed.

- 7.30 The GMSF Viability Report identified the following BLV's (inclusive of a landowner premium), with brownfield sites ranging from £430,000 - £660,000 per hectare (c.£174,000 – £267,200 per acre).

Figure 7.3 – GMSF Viability Report, BLV Assumptions

Site type	BLV/gross ha
Strategic greenfield	£250,000
Edge of settlement greenfield	£310,000
Brownfield industrial site - lower	£430,000
Brownfield industrial site - upper	£660,000
Town centre/high value existing use brownfield	£1,038,000
Manchester City Centre high density CBD residential site	£15,000,000

Source: Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, Strategic Viability Assessment (September 2020)

- 7.31 Based on the analysis of comparable evidence, we have adopted £250,000 per acre as the EUV for brownfield land in the area.

Commercial Land

- 7.32 Sourcing evidence of commercial land transactions can be challenging, especially for older industrial sites typically sold with the expectation of redevelopment for other purposes, such as residential use. This often results in a "hope value" being reflected in the price paid. Furthermore, when transactional evidence is available, detailed

information about potential abnormal costs associated with the site is usually not fully disclosed.

- 7.33 Based on the analysis of commercial land transactions within Wigan and the surrounding area, achieved land values typically range between £295,000 and £582,707 per acre.
- 7.34 In the Viability Assessment for Cale Lane, Aspull, Wigan, (WN2 1HB) prepared by Roger Hannah (February 2024), a 1.96 acres (0.79 hectares) site comprising two industrial warehouse buildings stated: *“In our experience, despite limited levels of viability for commercial development, brownfield land values generally range between £300,000 - £450,000 per acre. For the purpose of this assessment, we have adopted a minimal land value (EUV) of £300,000 per acre.”*
- 7.35 Having regard to this evidence, we consider that the Existing Use Value (EUV) for commercial land in Wigan should reasonably fall towards the mid-point of the observed transactional range, reflecting both the local market context and the nature of the sites analysed. We have therefore adopted an EUV of £325,000 per acre for commercial land, which we consider to be a fair and balanced assumption that aligns with local market evidence.

Landowner Premium

- 7.36 The premium (or the ‘plus’ in EUV+), is the amount above EUV that goes to the landowner. The PPG (Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 10-016-20190509) states that:
- “The premium should provide a reasonable incentive for a land owner to bring forward land for development while allowing a sufficient contribution to fully comply with policy requirements.”
- 7.37 Benchmark land values have been determined based on net developable areas and follow the guidelines set by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 7.38 The benchmark land values for residential greenfield sites reflect specific assumptions about the EUV of these lands. For greenfield land, the EUV assumptions are based on the expectation that residential development will likely occur on land at the periphery of settlements, positioning the values between typical agricultural and paddock land prices.

- 7.39 In our residential paper, we have established three distinct value zones: High Value, Medium Value and Lower Value. Accordingly, we have adopted these spatial areas to categorise the zones. The benchmark land values for residential typologies have been assessed based on these adopted spatial areas.
- 7.40 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): Paragraph 014 (Reference ID: 10-014-20190509) mandates the use of an "EUV plus premium" approach to determine BLVs. The premium should provide a fair incentive for landowners to bring land forward for development while ensuring that the contributions required by policies are achievable. Additionally, Paragraph 016 (Reference ID: 10-016-20190509) emphasises that the premium added to the EUV must be reflective of the land's characteristics and market conditions to ensure it remains attractive for development.
- 7.41 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underscores the importance of balancing aspiration with realism in planning. Paragraph 34 emphasises that plans should be ambitious yet practical, ensuring that development viability is maintained and policy requirements are met without impeding progress. Additionally, Paragraph 57 stipulates that planning policies must be deliverable, with the costs associated with planning obligations appropriately incorporated into viability assessments.

Benchmark Land Values

- 7.42 The existing use values must be based on brownfield land as it is in its current state.
- 7.43 The existing use values for the brownfield sites are at £250,000 per acre with multipliers between 5 – 10%.
- 7.44 For commercial land, the EUV is adopted at £325,000 per acre, with a 5% premium applied to reflect the Benchmark Land Value assumption.
- 7.45 For greenfield, the existing use values are based on agricultural land and we have adopted a rate of £12,000 per acre with a multiplier between 10 – 15 times the EUV.
- 7.46 We have also adopted a reduced multiplier of 5 times for Green Belt sites generally. This reflects the higher policy expectations and increased planning risk associated with bringing these sites forward.

Table 7.4 – Benchmark Land Values

Typology	Location	Greenfield /Brownfield	EUV -					Uplift Multiplier	BLV -	
			(per acre) (gross)	(per ha) (gross)	Net: Gross (%)	(per acre) (net)	(per ha) (net)		(per acre) (net developable) (rounded)	(per ha) (net developable) (rounded)
Residential	Low Value Area	Greenfield	£12,000	£29,652	80%	£15,000	£37,065	10.0	£150,000	£370,650
Residential	Medium Value Area	Greenfield	£12,000	£29,652	80%	£15,000	£37,065	12.5	£187,500	£463,313
Residential	High Value Area	Greenfield	£12,000	£29,652	80%	£15,000	£37,065	15.0	£225,000	£555,975
Residential	Low Value Area	Brownfield	£250,000	£617,750	100%	£250,000	£617,750	5.00%	£262,500	£648,638
Residential	Medium Value Area	Brownfield	£250,000	£617,750	100%	£250,000	£617,750	7.50%	£268,750	£664,081
Residential	High Value Area	Brownfield	£250,000	£617,750	100%	£250,000	£617,750	10.00%	£275,000	£679,525
Commercial	All Areas	Brownfield	£325,000	£803,075	100%	£325,000	£803,075	5.0%	£341,250	£843,229

Residential	All Areas	Green Belt	£12,000	£29,652	80%	£15,000	£37,065	5.0	£75,000	£185,325
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Source: AspinallVerdi, September 2025

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