The Homes and Communities Agency are developing proposals to deliver new homes on surplus public sector land off Walton Road. The thoughts of the local community are important in further developing the design and we would welcome your feedback.

WIDER CONTEXT PLAN

SITE LOCATION

The site is located off Walton Road in the parish of Thorp Arch and comprises 5.33 hectares of rough grassland. The nearest settlements are Thorp Arch village 1.6km to the south west, and north of the River Wharfe; and Walton village within 0.5km to the north. The closest local amenities (secondary school, doctors surgery, shops etc.) are in Boston Spa situated less than 2.5km south west of the site, south of the River Wharfe. The site is well connected to Wetherby and the local motorway network.

SITE PHOTOS

Photo 1 - View from the northern bund looking south across the site towards the Site of Ecological Interest and HMP Wealstun Prison, with Rudgate Park to the west

Photo 2 – View from Grange Avenue looking southeast towards Rudgate Park, the site of already approved housing and existing bungalows on Grange Avenue

Photo 3 – View from Street 5 along the eastern site boundary, looking north towards Wighill Lane, with the British Library boundary to the east

Photo 4 – View from Grange Avenue, adjacent number 16 and the western site boundary, looking southeast across the site towards HMP Wealstun Prison and the British Library on Street 5

Photo 5 – View from Street 5 along the eastern site boundary, looking south towards Thorp Arch Trading Estate and the Site of Ecological Interest

Photo 6 – View from the southern boundary of the site, looking north west towards Grange Avenue and housing at Woodland Drive and Walton Chase

Photo 7 - View from Grange Avenue, adjacent the western site boundary, looking southeast across the site towards Rudgate Park and Street 5

THE SITE

The site is off Walton Road between Grange Avenue, Rudgate Park, Street 5, and to the north of HMP Wealstun Prison. The site is mainly open grassland with a raised bund to the north and young woodland planting on a bund to the southern boundary adjacent HMP Wealstun. To the south east is a designated Site of Ecological Interest which is unmanaged young woodland and scrub on a raised bund.

Residential development, with varying house styles, is located to the north on Rudgate Park and Grange Avenue, and west at The Woodlands and Walton Chase, off Walton Road.

Thorp Arch Grange and Leeds United FC Training Ground are to the south west. The British Library and Thorp Arch Trading Estate are to the east on Street 5

ALREADY APPROVED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have recently secured outline planning permission for 23 homes on land off Rudgate Park, on the site of the former HMP Wealstun Prison Officers Social Club. The buildings have now been demolished and the site is generally level, with a number of mounds that have been tested by recent intrusive Ground Investigations and found not to contain hazardous materials. The HCA intends to sell the land and the purchaser will then develop detailed plans for the house types and layouts, which will be submitted to Leeds Planning Authority for approval. The community will be consulted again at this stage.
THE NEED FOR NEW HOUSING

There is a wealth of evidence from figures at the highest levels of Government that demonstrate a clear and pressing need to build more homes to meet the significant levels of demand, particularly for homes that are affordable.

As a Government body, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is developing accelerated delivery mechanisms for taking sites out the house building market where the appointed contractor will build at a pace prescribed by the HCA. This model seeks to increase the overall delivery of homes, encourage new entrants to the market and promote the increase of house building activity for the wider social and economic benefits.

WHY IS THE SITE SUITABLE?

The Application Site is in the emerging Leeds City Council Site Allocations Plan (SAP) due to it being suitable, available and achievable for housing delivery. It can be brought forward to provide much needed housing, including affordable housing, on a vacant site with good access to a wide range of services. Bus stops are located adjacent to the proposed site accesses (Walton Road and Street 5) and the proximity to Thorp Arch Trading Estate provides local employment opportunities, also reducing the need for future residents to travel by car.

The Application Site includes previously developed land and Local and National Planning Policy encourages the use of this land for additional housing. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to list those projects and aspirations that relate to delivering the Plan’s policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan for the area provides policies which will guide development through to 2033.

The vision for Walton states that “New homes will have social, economic and environmental benefits, as detailed below:

• To be a welcoming community which promotes the interest of all.

Social

• Provision of much needed housing, including policy compliant (35%) affordable housing.

• Provision of around 1.2 hectares of public open space (green space) including a children’s play area.

• Access enhancements for walking and cycling linking to local amenities and providing increased recreation opportunities.

• Site in good proximity to local employment opportunities via sustainable transport methods.

• Site is well linked to a range of local amenities.

Economic

• Provision of construction jobs and also indirect jobs in the supply chain.

ECONOMIC

• The future residents of the development could be expected to spend some £3,718,496 per year in the Leeds area, based on data from the Family Expenditure Survey (2014) (£509 average spend per house per week).

• The development could earn approximately £1,369,000 over a 5 year period for the Local Authority through the New Homes Bonus.

• The development will also secure Council Tax returns. Applying the Leeds City Council Tax 2017/2018 Band D (middle band) price £1,488.05 for each dwelling, generates £211,303.10 per annum.

ENVIRONMENTAL

• Green infrastructure links and the integration of the site with links to other greenspaces and recreation opportunities.

• Ecological enhancement measures and opportunity to improve the Site of Ecological/Geological Interest.

• Recreation space.

There is an opportunity for the Application Site to help contribute toward the visions presented in the Thorp Arch and Walton Neighbourhood Plans.

EMERGING THORP ARCH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017-2028

The emerging Thorp Arch Neighbourhood Plan will guide development through to 2028, with a vision for the parish including an aspiration to be:

“an attractive place to live, work and visit, with a thriving village community and strong connectivity between all parts of the parish.”

To achieve the vision of the document, the following objectives are set out:

• To maintain and enhance historic character of Thorp Arch.

• To maintain and enhance key landscapes, natural habitats and biodiversity.

• To identify an area (or areas) for appropriate small scale residential development.

• To create an improved and safer environment for moving around the parish.

• To maintain and improve accessibility, to improve and increase recreational and social amenities.

• To support local businesses and improve opportunities for new business development.

The Plan recognises the lack of available housing, as well as the “difficulty for those starting on the property ladder”, requiring parishioners “to look outside to buy or rent homes outside the parish”.

EMERGING WALTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017-2033

The Walton Neighbourhood Area is located close to the site, the Neighbourhood Plan for the area provides policies which will guide development through to 2033.

The vision for Walton states that “New homes will have attracted new residents as well as enabling existing residents to remain in the community. Transformed transport and communications infrastructure will have made Walton an even better place to live and work in today.”

Objectives within the plan are outlined as:

• To support future development that will ensure parcel sustainability and a thriving community.

• To maintain, respect and enhance the historical prominence and distinctive character of the parish.

• To have good access to community facilities.

• To be a welcoming community which promotes the interest of all.

• To support businesses and local employment that contributes to the vitality and sustainability of the parish.

• To mitigate the adverse impacts of traffic.

Policies state that new housing proposals should, seek to improve the quantity/quality of green space and connect to residential areas, community facilities and the surrounding countryside. It is stated that the best of the current design in the parish should inspire, and be reflected and respected by new developments.

Development which features access directly onto Wighill Lane should make provision of nearby traffic calming and control measures, while development should contribute to non-motorised access to the village, countryside and facilities, while new housing developments should provide adequate off street parking.

PROPOSALS FOR TAKING SITES OUT OF THE HOUSE BUILDING MARKET

As a Government body, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is developing accelerated delivery mechanisms for taking sites out the house building market where the appointed contractor will build at a pace prescribed by the HCA. This model seeks to increase the overall delivery of homes, encourage new entrants to the market and promote the increase of house building activity for the wider social and economic benefits.

The Application Site is in the emerging Leeds City Council Site Allocations Plan (SAP) due to it being suitable, available and achievable for housing delivery. It can be brought forward to provide much needed housing, including affordable housing, on a vacant site with good access to a wide range of services. Bus stops are located adjacent to the proposed site accesses (Walton Road and Street 5) and the proximity to Thorp Arch Trading Estate provides local employment opportunities, also reducing the need for future residents to travel by car.

The Application Site includes previously developed land and Local and National Planning Policy encourages the use of this land for additional housing. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to list those projects and aspirations that relate to delivering the Plan’s policies.

Projects outlined that are relevant to the proposed development site include:

• P1. Children’s play area and equipment

• P2. New cycle track

• P3. New sports facilities including a new playing field and new allotments

• P6. Rudgate Park

Aspirations

• A1. Improve the functionality of Green Spaces

• A4. New cycle tracks within Walton parish
of the approved residential development for 23 homes.

Homes and Communities Agency’s ownership in recent years.

The site included a social club, sports pitch and associated workers’ footpath.

The site was transferred from the Ministry of Justice into the Homes and Communities Agency’s ownership in recent years.

The HMP Wakeston Social Club was recently demolished as part of the approved residential development for 23 homes.

**DRAINAGE & UTILITIES**

The site was originally developed as part of the campus of the former Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) campus from the 1940s onwards.

The main operations of this became the Thorp Arch Trading Estate, while the site became part of the wider HMP Wakeston area.

Former workers cottages were originally located on Grange Avenue and subsequently demolished.

The site included a social club, sports pitch and associated workers’ footpath.

The site was transferred from the Ministry of Justice into the Homes and Communities Agency’s ownership in recent years.

The HMP Wakeston Social Club was recently demolished as part of the approved residential development for 23 homes.

**HISTORIC MAP 1978**

**HERITAGE ASSETS**

The surrounding areas have many attractive buildings. However, there are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the proposed development site.

There is one Grade I and three Grade II listed buildings within the 500 metre study area. The development site is not within the immediate surroundings in which these listed buildings are experienced and not within the setting of the listed buildings and is therefore not considered to have a direct impact on these assets.

Although there are no known heritage assets within the development area the surrounding study area is well represented from the Iron Age to the modern periods, indicating that there may be some potential for as yet unknown buried archaeological remains within the development area.

Further investigation work is being undertaken, in consultation with West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service, to determine the potential for as yet unknown buried archaeological remains. If we discover any potential for buried archaeology we will mitigate for this through a scheme of targeted investigation works.

**LANDFORM & GROUND ENVIRONMENT**

This is a largely flat site very well suited to housing development. The north and east of the Application Site is around 32m above ordnance datum (AOD) with the western boundary 33m AOD and the southern boundary 31m AOD.

To the south east of the site is a 3m high earth bund with steep slopes forming the Site of Ecological Interest.

The 3m high earth bund to the north of the site will need to be removed to enable development.

An assessment of existing information (Desk based) and from tests carried out on the ground (intrusive investigations) have been undertaken to determine the potential for contamination on the site.

The risk to future residents from contamination has been assessed as low, because the tests have not found any concerning results relating to the proposed residential development.

Therefore contamination is not a constraint to the development of the Application Site subject to the usual appropriate design and best practice measures being set out at the detailed planning stage (Reserved Matters).

**TREE SURVEY**

Trees add to the quality of a place and a total of 20 individual trees and 9 groups of trees were surveyed and mapped within the site boundaries.

These trees are generally broadleafed species. A large number of trees are within groups that have been recently planted.

The majority of individual trees recorded (TE7-T17) are around the former social club and along the access road, Rudgate Park.

No trees on or immediately adjacent to the site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Area status.

Two trees may be suitable to support roosting bats.

Foremost consideration will be given to the retention of Category A and B trees during development design with removal of trees only being justified by sound design rationale.

Replacement tree planting is likely to be required in the event trees are lost as a result of development.

At this stage we are not proposing to remove any trees, but the more detailed design stage (Reserved Matters application) will confirm this and would include any proposals for new trees.

**ECOLOGY**

The site is predominantly amenity grassland with boundary trees of varying quality.

The Application site is not within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone and there are no statutory designated sites within 3km of the Application Site boundaries.

There are nine locally designated sites including the Site of Ecological/Geological Interest (SEGI) adjacent the south eastern site boundary.

The proposed development site can be developed with the incorporation of ecological enhancement measures to replace grassland habitat features to be lost.
The site is 4km east of Junction 45 of the A1M, which is accessible from the A659 through Thorpe Arch or the A168 via Wetherby.

The site is less than 2.5km to the north east of Boston Spa.

The A659 also provides eastward strategic links to the A64 trunk road, which provides connections to York and Scarborough.

Access to the site’s location is gained from these routes via Springs Lane, Wetherby Road and Walton Road.

Local vehicular access is available from Walton Road and Wighill Lane, via Grange Avenue and Rudgate Park to the west; and Street 5 to east.

The closest bus stops to the site on Walton Road (to the west of the site) and Street 5 (to the east) provide direct connections across Yorkshire to destinations including Garforth, Wakefield, York, Wetherby, Tadcaster, Otley, Leeds and Harrogate.

In particular the 70 and 71 service runs between Leeds and Harrogate (via Walton and Wetherby) approximately every 30 minutes during peak hours (c. 0630 – 1900 Monday to Saturday) and hourly services during off peak hours (c. 1900 – 2330 Monday to Saturday and c. 0900 – 2300 Sundays).

There are no designated public rights of way, bridleways or cyclelanes in the vicinity of the site.

Pedestrian access to the site is available from Grange Avenue, Rudgate Park, Northfields and Street 5.

Footpath links are available to the village centres, surrounding bus stops and the local primary school on Dowkell Lane.

To the south of HMP Wakefield Prison is Cycle Network 665 Wetherby Railway Path from Spofforth to Thorp Arch, linking the Thorp Arch Trading Estate with Wetherby.

Wood Lane, a local route to the west of the site, forms part of the West Yorkshire Route and connects Bramham to Wetherby.

Thorp Arch Circular is an 84 mile route around York, starting and ending at Thorp Arch. The route starts on Church Causeway and passes the site on Walton Road.

An assessment was undertaken after the scope was agreed with the Local Highway Authority.

We estimate the development will generate up to 90 two way car trips in the AM (08:00 – 09:00) and PM (17:00-18:00) peak times of travel.

This is the equivalent to three new trips every two minutes at the proposed site accesses.

We have then used data from Leeds City Council about how these journeys are likely to be distributed (based on previous local traffic surveys).

A Travel Plan will be prepared encouraging future residents of the site to travel via sustainable modes of transportation (walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing) with targets set to help achieve this.

During the morning and evening peak hours, the data forecasts 40 two way car trips over Thorp Arch Bridge, 40 along Wetherby Road to and from Wetherby and the remainder to and from the east along Wight Lane.

Whilst additional traffic is undesirable in any area, the size of the proposed development is unlikely to cause more than a negligible impact on the local network, including Thorp Arch Bridge.

Any mitigation measures proposed or required will be discussed with the Local Highway Authority.
We have collated information from a variety of sources and the analysis of the site and planning policy context has set the principles for the proposed Development Framework shown below. This identifies access points and movement through the site, areas of residential development, housing density, public open space provision, landscaping and development constraints. This will be used to inform the Residential Masterplan for the site.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the proposed Development Framework prior to the Masterplan being developed and submitted to the Planning Authority.

The design approach aims to:
- provide separate vehicle access from Street 5 and Grange Avenue (with most dwellings accessed from Street 5);
- prevent "rat runs" through the site by separating it into two development plots, between Street 5 and Grange Avenue;
- provide an attractive landscape led design that is sensitive to the surrounding context in terms of scale, mass and density;
- create a place that is in keeping with the character of Thorp Arch, and recent development off Walton Road;
- provide green space to enhance recreation and play opportunities;
- create green links through the development connecting to surrounding greenspace at Woodland Drive and Thorp Arch Grange;
- re-establish the old workers footpath through the site;
- enhance connections to surrounding housing and industry on Street 5;
- position houses to provide active streets and overlook open space for children’s safety, and maximise views;
- provide buffer planting to development edges and develop new homes with reasonable distances from existing dwellings and HMP Wealstun; and
- retain high quality trees and minimise the need for lower quality trees to be removed.

**OPTION 1: 119-139 dwellings (30-35 dph)**

- Main access to development from Street 5
- Development of between 115-139 new homes with housing areas split so most homes accessed from Street 5, keeping traffic off Grange Avenue
- Front of homes to face onto Street 5
- Tree planting to improve screening and enhance Street 5
- Green links through development to enhance connections to existing homes and public open space
- Central public open space with recreation opportunities and play provision next to Site of Ecological Interest
- New homes overlooking public open space
- Front of new homes to face onto Grange Avenue
- Green buffer to existing homes
- Access to development from Grange Avenue
- New homes to back onto existing homes
- New crossings connecting existing homes and public open space
- Re-establish the old workers’ footpath through the site and connecting to the public open space

**OPTION 2: 126-147 dwellings (30-35 dph)**

- Option 2 with access to development directly from Walton Road
- Development on Grange Avenue and existing grass verge with front of new homes to face Walton Road, providing between 126-147 new homes
- Grange Avenue traffic diverted through development
- Vehicle connection to already approved housing at Rudgate Park
- Separate access to prison car park
POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

WIDER COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- The development is anticipated to generate a Community Infrastructure Levy contribution for the Local Authority which will help to deliver wider community and infrastructure facilities. This contribution would be then directed by Leeds City Council into local schemes.
- As part of this consultation, we would be interested to hear your views on where financial contributions would be best spent within the community.
- We have tried to identify some of the potential projects and aspirations that we could possibly contribute towards.
- What would you like to see come forward?

WALKING AND CYCLING

- Access for pedestrians and cyclists through to the wider area is proposed to be improved, including by re-establishing the old workers’ footpath to the green space within the site.
- The development could potentially contribute towards a new cycle links between the site and the surrounding area.
- We would welcome your views on the types of pedestrian and cycle connections which could come forward in the site and surrounding area.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- The development framework which has been put forward has been subject to a masterplanning process which will maximise community benefits.
- The development has been designed to accommodate residential layout which features built-in safety and crime prevention measures, through the principles of overlooked spaces and ‘public fronts and private backs’.
- Movement networks within the site have been designed to relate to existing movements while providing a legible layout which defines both open space and built areas of the site.

LOCAL RETAIL

- It is acknowledged that Thorp Arch and Walton both lack a local centre and shop albeit local services are highly accessible.
- We are undertaking market testing to determine whether there is potential for a small-scale shop to be included within the development proposals to service Thorp Arch and Walton, leading to wider community benefit.
- We are keen to understand if local residents would welcome this type of facility.
- It must be acknowledged that ultimately the provision of this would be based upon viability.

GREEN SPACES AND PLAY PROVISION

- There is a policy requirement (dependent on final dwelling numbers) to provide in the region of 1.2 hectares of green space.
- The Masterplan has been designed to accommodate play provision which is safe, overlooked, away from significant vehicular movements.
- Play provision could provide benefits for prospective residents as well as the existing community.
- The proposed green spaces within the site offer the potential for informal recreation. We would welcome your views on the form this might take.

ALLOTMENTS

- There is potential allotments on the proposed green spaces within the site or existing green space surrounding the Grange Avenue estate.
- We would welcome views on whether these areas are considered suitable for allotments.