



# Warrington Waterfront: Port Warrington, Warrington Commercial Park and Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park

## Development Framework

November 2021

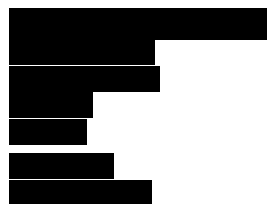






Telephone

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**Turley**

*2-Transport*



- Planning
- Design
- Economics
- Heritage
- Sustainability
- Transport and Highways
- Flood Risk / Geo-environmental
- Agricultural Land



- Masterplanning
- Freight Transport
- Nature Reserve and Country Park Vision & Masterplan
- Arboricultural Landscape Appraisal
- Ecology
- Noise





View across Manchester Ship Canal

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# 01 Introduction

This Development Framework sets out a vision and concept masterplan for the sustainable development of the expansion of Port Warrington, the enhanced Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park, a new business hub, and associated infrastructure as part of the proposed Warrington Waterfront development, which is seeking a site allocation in the emerging Warrington Local Plan. This document has been prepared on behalf of Peel L&P Holdings (UK) ('Peel').

**1.1** This document focuses on the following aspects of the Warrington Waterfront vision (together 'the proposals', and the land which they cover 'the Site'):

- The expansion of Port Warrington with key connections to Port Salford and Liverpool, including a container handling area with loading cranes, extended shipping berths, potential for a rail freight connection, warehousing for manufacturing, distribution and storage purposes, potential turning basin to the south of the Manchester Ship Canal and open storage and hardstanding areas.
- Enhanced Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park to provide additional recreational facilities for Warrington, alongside ecological enhancement and green infrastructure.
- A new business hub ('Warrington Commercial Park') which can contribute towards port-centric uses and / or to meeting Warrington's employment and business needs close to Warrington town centre
- New infrastructure works and road access to support the proposals and link to the wider Western Link Road scheme.

**1.2** This document has been produced in consultation with Warrington Borough Council. It seeks to help inform and support the wider Warrington Waterfront development which has previously been identified for mixed-use development.

**1.3** It sets out an overall vision and development opportunity for the sustainable development of the Site. It should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Case Making Document which fully outlines the reasoning for the proposal. Both documents are provided to Warrington Borough Council in response to the emerging Local Plan and will be subject to further input as the proposal progresses.

**1.4** The Development Framework outlines the key baseline and survey work which has been assembled to identify the constraints and opportunities, and to inform the development potential of the Site. It also considers the overall strategic locational advantages of Port Warrington and its relationship to the West Coast Mainline Railway, the Manchester Ship Canal and the Western Link Road proposals. It presents an overall spatial response within a development framework masterplan. It has sought to respond to the various representations from local authorities and key stakeholders which were made in response to previous consultations on the emerging Local Plan.

**1.5** The Case Making Document sets out the planning case for the development of the Site, and sets out the exceptional circumstances to amend Green Belt boundary which is required in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

**1.6** This Development Framework and the Case Making Document are supported by the following environmental and technical surveys:

- Case Making Document and its Appendices:
- This Illustrative Development Framework

- Illustrative Development Framework Appendix 1: Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Vision Document
- Case Making Document
- Case Making Document Appendix 1: Freight Transport Case
- Transport Appraisal
- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal
- Ecological Assessments comprising:
  - Overarching Biodiversity Report
  - Ecological Assessment
  - Biodiversity Mitigation Strategy
  - Biodiversity Net Gain Report
  - Outline Habitat and Landscape Management Plan
  - Tree Survey and Preliminary Impact Assessment
  - Noise Assessment
  - Air Quality Assessment
  - Heritage Appraisal
  - Preliminary FRA, Drainage, Utilities and Hazards.

**1.7** The remainder of this Document is structured as follows:

- Strategic context and development needs
- Existing site context
- Site constraints and opportunities
- Details of proposal, including an overview of the suitability, achievability, sustainability and the impact of the proposal
- Benefits
- Summary and conclusions.





Liverpool Rd

A57

A6

Lingley Green

Great Sankey

Warrington Town Centre

Latchford

A562

Penketh

Sewage Works

Warrington Waterfront

River Mersey

The Site

West Coast Main line (Railway)

Stockton Heath

Walton

Manchester Ship Canal

Moore Lane

A56

Higher Walton

Appleton

Runcorn

Moore



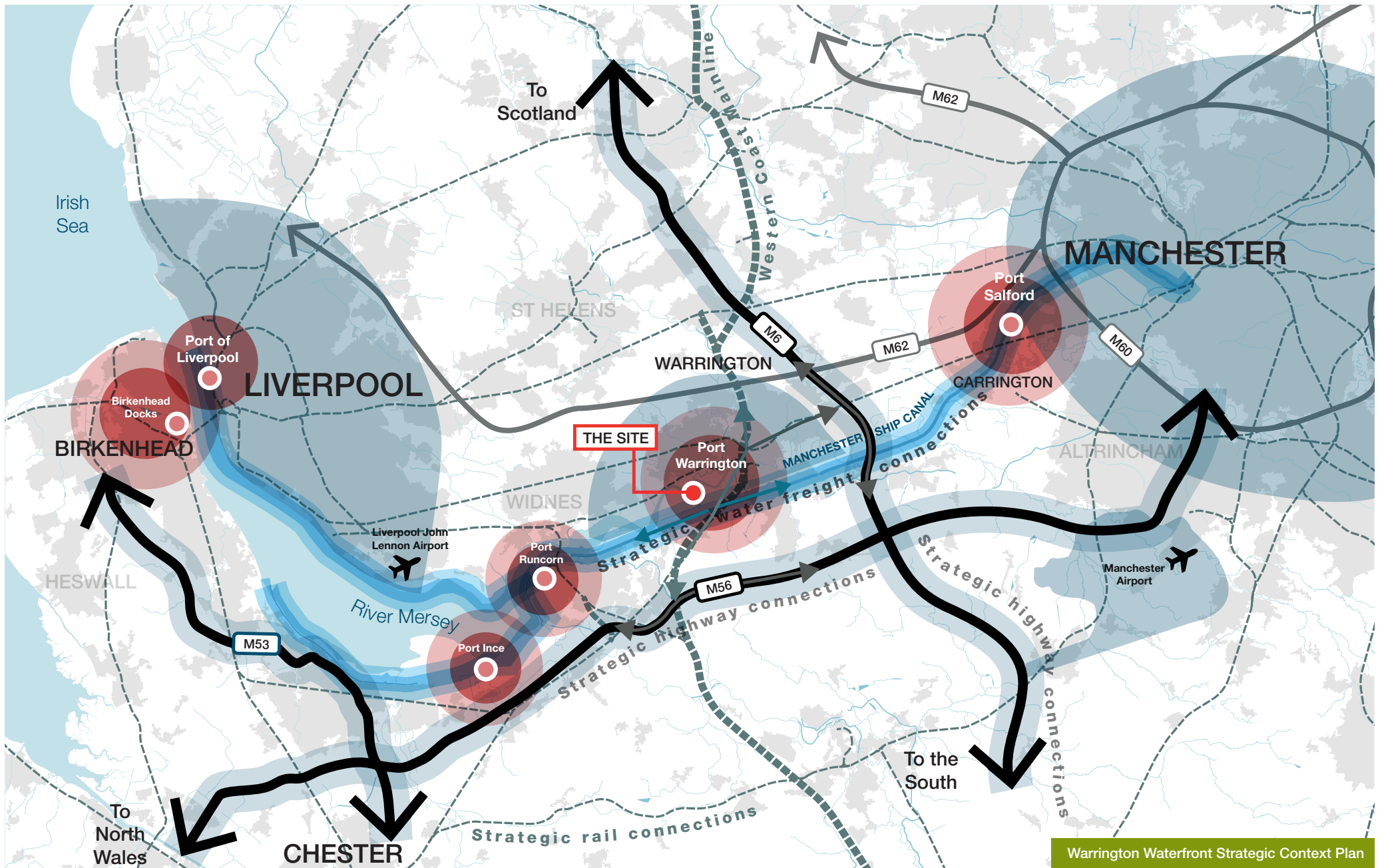
# 02 Strategic Context

This Section outlines the strategic locational context, the growth ambitions for Warrington and the Warrington Waterfront proposals.

**2.1** As illustrated in the Warrington Waterfront Strategic Context Plan on the following page, the Site is located between Warrington town centre, the River Mersey to the north, Manchester Ship Canal to the south (between Runcorn Docks and Port Salford) and the West Coast mainline to the east. It has strong connections to the strategic transport network (the M56, for example, is approximately 2.5km from the Site) and it is well placed to capitalise on the North West growth aspirations.

**2.2** It is located within the Warrington borough, 3km to the west of the Warrington town centre and 5km and 6km from Widnes and Runcorn, respectively.







## Strategic Growth of Warrington

**2.3** Warrington lies at the heart of the North-West region, Atlantic Gateway and Northern Powerhouse. The M6, M56 and M62 motorways intersect within the borough, providing excellent access to all parts of the region and beyond. Warrington also lies on the region's main North-South (West Coast Mainline) and East-West (Trans-Pennine) rail routes and is traversed by the Manchester Ship Canal – an important commercial waterway linking the Port of Liverpool to the Manchester conurbation. Future infrastructure proposals have the opportunity to further reinforce the borough's connectivity in the future. In short, Warrington is one of the best connected places in the region, benefitting from its proximity to Liverpool and Manchester conurbations and their respective markets.

**2.4** Its spatial position, infrastructure and inherent connectivity have resulted in Warrington becoming one of the most successful towns in the UK. Over the last 40 years, Warrington has grown from a town with a population of around 70,000 to one which is now over 200,000. A working age population of around 2.5 million live within a 30 minute drive of Warrington; this is the largest working catchment in the UK outside London and its recent performance is bettered only by Aberdeen and London. Warrington is now viewed and widely recognised as a key economic contributor to the North West economy and a major growth area. This economic strength is only expected to continue and this will result in ongoing opportunity but also development pressure.

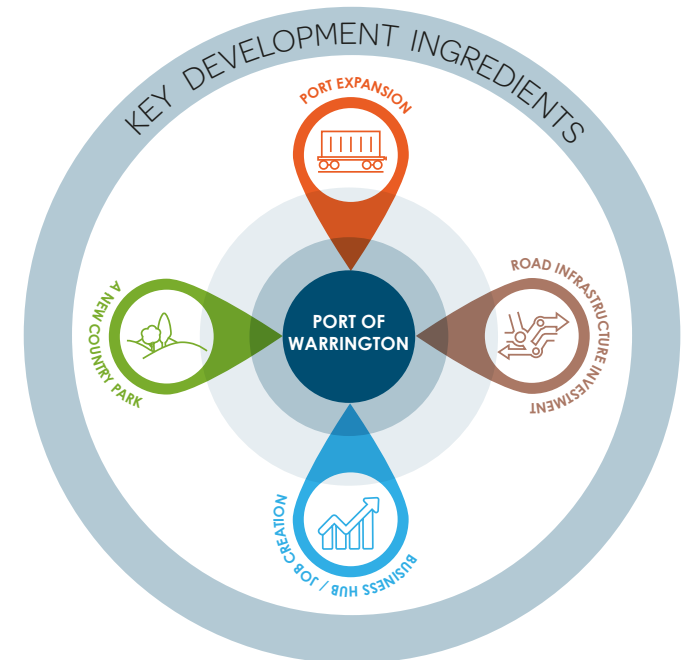
**2.5** Warrington wishes to further capitalise on its position and assets and to accelerate economic growth. However, despite its economic strength, its potential is at threat of being limited through the availability of land, lack of infrastructure and congestion. The need to unlock these constraints and capitalise upon Warrington's economic potential is a key focus of the Council's Industrial Strategy and expressed spatially through its emerging Local Plan, which includes the release of Green Belt to meet increasing development needs for the next 18 years,

during the Plan period of these key areas of focus is Warrington Waterfront, as illustrated on the following page, which was previously expected to create a new part of Warrington town centre. This will be facilitated by the construction of a new link road to open up swathes of under-utilised and inaccessible land and to deliver 1,700 homes,

**2.6** Port Warrington is an existing asset which is underutilised. Whilst an existing facility, it currently does not take advantage of its position on the Manchester Ship Canal and its close proximity to the West Coast Main Line. The potential therefore to create a sustainable inland port hub of significance which takes advantage of its unique multi-modal and key locational opportunities should be fully exploited. The economic, social, and environment benefits derived from the expansion of Port Warrington cannot be delivered anywhere else in the Borough.

**2.7** The expanded Port is required to meet the shortfall in land requirement to meet port needs and would take advantage of the increased use of the Manchester Ship Canal for freight activity linked to investments at the Port of Liverpool and opportunities for cargo handling, port related manufacturing and port-centric logistics and distribution. It will attract businesses that wish to benefit from a port-side location. In the longer term, there is opportunity to connect the Ship Canal to the rail network, as well as the strategic road network providing a truly multi-modal facility (water, rail and road) which distinguishes it as an unrivalled development opportunity in the borough and the wider region. It also offers a more sustainable long term solution to freight distribution, as reflected in national policy which seeks to harness port-centric distribution to deliver greater environmental benefits and economic growth. The principle of expanding Port Warrington has been established in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy.

**2.8** The Warrington Waterfront proposals also include the delivery of a new Commercial Park, which would offer flexible employment space for further port-centric uses. It would also be suitable for businesses wishing to be close to the town centre or proximate to the Port, and the restoration of the former Arpley landfill site to create a nature reserve and country park of sub-regional importance.

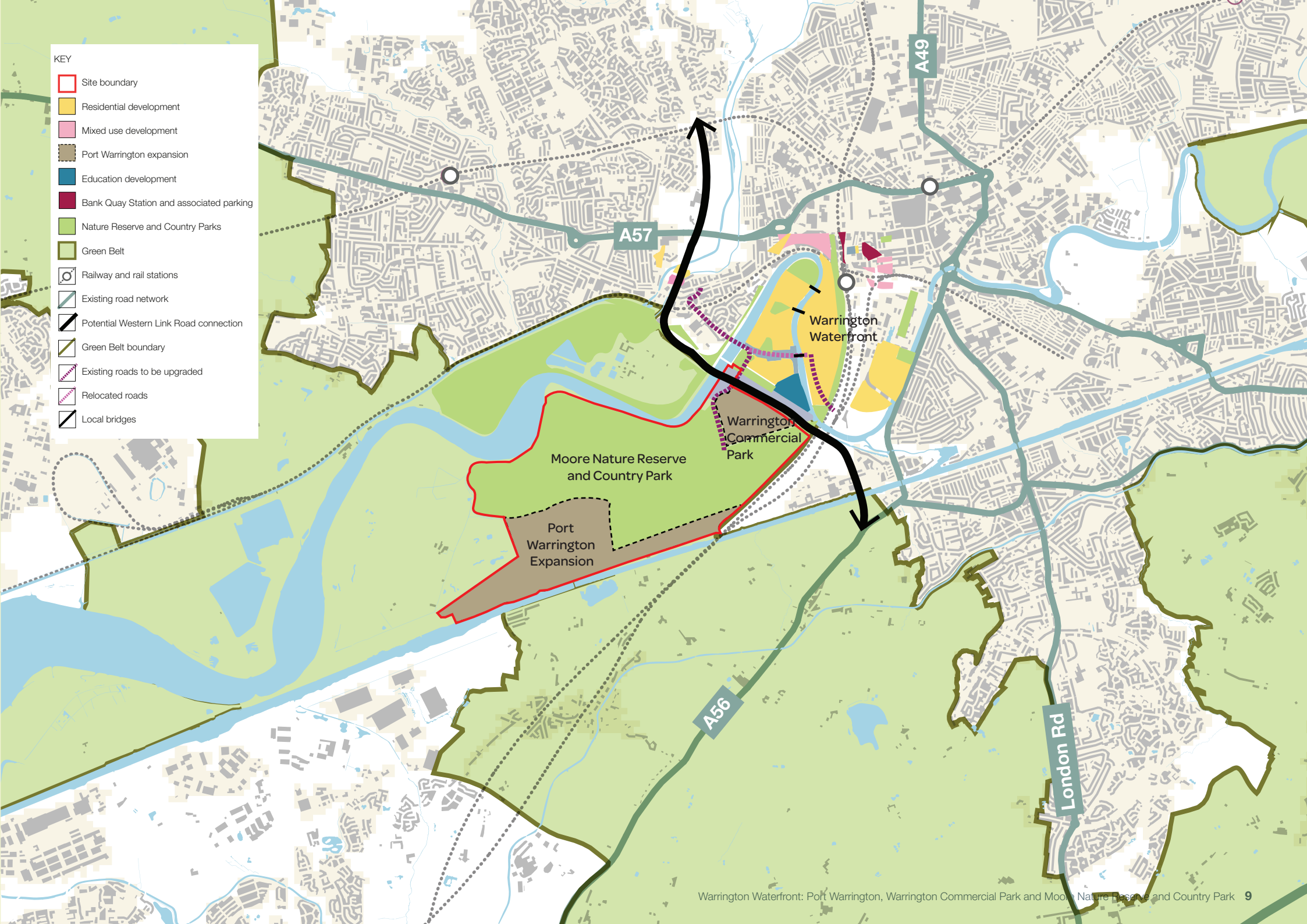


Port of Warrington Key Ingredients



KEY

- Site boundary
- Residential development
- Mixed use development
- Port Warrington expansion
- Education development
- Bank Quay Station and associated parking
- Nature Reserve and Country Parks
- Green Belt
- Railway and rail stations
- Existing road network
- Potential Western Link Road connection
- Green Belt boundary
- Existing roads to be upgraded
- Relocated roads
- Local bridges





# 03 Existing Site Context

This Section summarises the current local context, highlighting the Site's position within Warrington, key transport links and main features. This has been informed by a range of technical assessments which Peel commissioned to demonstrate the suitability of the Site for development.

**3.1** These assessments have identified that there are no significant constraints to development at the Site which cannot be addressed through careful masterplanning and typical mitigation measures.



View showing the immediate local context, adjacent to Moore Lane bridge





View looking towards Moore Lane bridge



## The Site and its Surroundings

**3.2** The Site measures an area of approximately 296 hectares (ha) and it currently accommodates existing storage and distribution warehousing at Port Warrington (14ha), Arpley landfill site which is partly restored (176ha), the Moore Nature Reserve (90ha) and outlying woodland areas and several lakes which are fully accessible to members of the public (16ha).

**3.3** The Site is in a highly sustainable location, with potential for trimodal connectivity and access to local services and amenities. The proposals will take advantage of the Site's trimodal access (by road, rail and ship) and will bring further investment from businesses looking for a strategic location.

**3.4** It is located within the Warrington borough, 3km to the west of the Warrington town centre and 5 and 6km from Widnes and Runcorn, respectively.

**3.5** As illustrated in the Neighbourhood Connectivity and Movement Plan on the following page, the Site is bounded by the River Mersey to the north, the Canal to the south and the Westcoast mainline railway to the southeast. It is accessed by the A56 and A49 from the south and the A57 and A49 from the north. Port Warrington has direct frontage to the northern bank of the Manchester Ship Canal, with the current vehicular access via Moore Lane and Birchwood Lane. The Western Link is a proposed major highways improvement, connecting the A56 and A57 to the west of the town centre, reducing levels of traffic through the town and also providing access to development sites. The Western Link Road has broad governmental support and has been recently granted for funding.

**3.6** The levels on the Site range between 10-20m AOD. The topography generally falls towards the onsite waterbodies and the Manchester Ship Canal.

**3.7** Key parts of the Site such as Port Warrington and Arpley landfill are industrial in nature, comprising a mix of previously developed land, historic large scale warehouse units, access roads and leachate treatment facilities.

**3.8** A range of public parks, playing fields, and sports facilities are located within a 2km radius of the Site, meeting the immediate local needs of residents.

## Planning History

**3.9** The Port Warrington site has been in operational use for over a century, which pre-dates both the planning system and the designation of the Green Belt. Several parts of Site were once used as canal deposit grounds for the disposal of dredgings, with the western area of the landfill operations site also previously consented for waste disposal.

**3.10** There have been a number of major applications on the land, including for the development of the existing warehousing, storage and distribution buildings which was approved in 1994. Planning permission was then obtained in March 2010 for a £20m development and engineering operations and to create a multi-modal (water, rail and road) port facility, including the infilling of the Site to the previous levels, the re-instatement of the rail freight line and an extension to the existing canal side berth, on a 5.4ha site immediately to the east of the existing warehouse distribution centre. The planning permission has been partially implemented by way of the infilling of the Site to establish ground levels for the open storage area. However, to date, the rail freight connection has not been delivered and the canal berth has yet to be extended, although the existing berth is available for use.

**3.11** The Arpley landfill has been in operation since 1986. An application to extend the operational life of the facility to October 2018 and enable its restoration by October 2019, with a revised sequence of landfill phasing and restoration works, approved in May 2015. The permission allows for the restoration of those areas previously landfilled with a full landscaping proposal to transform it into an area of usable greenspace, with connections to the Moore Nature Reserve to the south.

**3.12** The financial obligations to manage Moore Nature Reserve end in 2021.

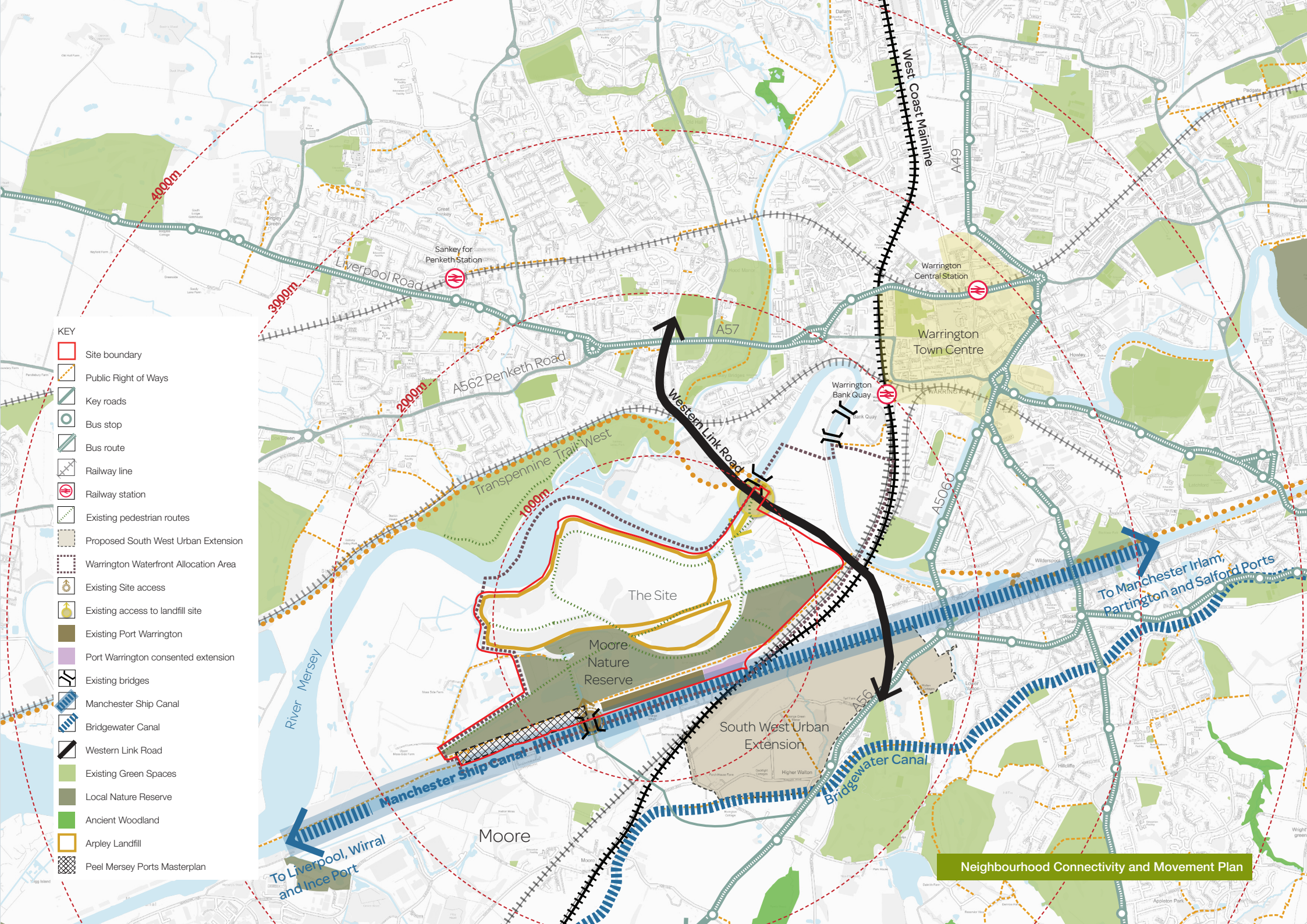
**3.13** The restoration of Arpley landfill is split into 5 phases: 3 phases are complete and are in their aftercare period; the final two phases will be complete in 2021. Aftercare obligations will cease in 2031.

## Mersey Ports Master Plan

**3.14** Under a Department of Transport publication in 2008 "Guidance on the Preparation of Port Master Plans", the Government recommends that all major ports produce Port Masterplans and to consult upon them with stakeholders – including local planning authorities in order to clarify the port's own strategic planning and development needs but also to assist local planning bodies in preparing and revising their own development strategies.

**3.15** Peel Ports Group published its draft Mersey Ports Master Plan (MPMP) in 2011. This Plan sets a strategy to harness the economic potential of Port of Liverpool and the development of a network of inland ports, including Port Warrington. The Masterplan outlines that the integration of the Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal offers the unique opportunity to drive transformational shift in the behaviour of supply chains beyond the UK, by developing a key logistics platform allied to the development of water freight solutions.





- KEY**
- Site boundary
  - Public Right of Ways
  - Key roads
  - Bus stop
  - Bus route
  - Railway line
  - Railway station
  - Existing pedestrian routes
  - Proposed South West Urban Extension
  - Warrington Waterfront Allocation Area
  - Existing Site access
  - Existing access to landfill site
  - Existing Port Warrington
  - Port Warrington consented extension
  - Existing bridges
  - Manchester Ship Canal
  - Bridgewater Canal
  - Western Link Road
  - Existing Green Spaces
  - Local Nature Reserve
  - Ancient Woodland
  - Arpley Landfill
  - Peel Mersey Ports Masterplan

Neighbourhood Connectivity and Movement Plan



**3.16** The Masterplan sets out how the Mersey Ports network is expected to grow and develop its business over time and identifies a land strategy response for its respective ports to meet anticipated forecast in demand. In terms of Port Warrington, in addition to an expansion to the west which benefits from planning permission (4.5ha), the Masterplan also envisages the Port expanding westwards beyond Moore Lane Swing Bridge (9.7ha). The Masterplan notes (at paragraph 6.40) that Port Warrington offers a strategic mid-point upon the Manchester Ship Canal to develop port-centric warehousing which could benefit from the operation of a regular barge shuttle between the Container Terminal at the Port of Liverpool and Irlam Container Terminal. The Case Making Document demonstrates that the Port needs more land to transact cargo and serve its customers.



## Understanding the Site

**3.17** The following images of the Site will help to understand the character and nature of the Site within its wider and local context.

**3.18** A detailed technical assessment of the Site itself has been undertaken to determine key constraints and opportunities which require consideration in the design of the proposal.

**3.19** The key technical characteristics of the Site which are deemed to be most relevant to the proposal are summarised in the next pages.



Top right: View from landfill site

Bottom right: View along footpath in Moore Nature Reserve showing mix of woodland and grassland between two of the lakes





Top left: View along the tree lined Lapwing Lane in Moore Nature Reserve looking toward the north of the Site.  
Top middle: View along the access road to the Port Warrington buildings  
Top right: Existing buildings at Port Warrington

Bottom left: View of Arpley landfill site  
Bottom right: View of Fiddler's Ferry Power Station



## Environmental Condition of the Site

**3.20** The following summary explains the findings from the technical reports, and are shown on the plans on the following pages.

### Agricultural Land

**3.21** The eastern section of the Site and the proposed location for the Warrington Commercial Park comprises Grade 3b agricultural land which is deemed to be of moderate quality. The wider site is unfavourable for agricultural purposes due to its topography and soil type.

### Biodiversity and Ecology

**3.22** There are no internationally or nationally designated sites on the Site. The Moore Nature Reserve, which was established in 1991, is designated as a Local Wildlife Site for its woodland, grassland and reedbed habitats and for the bird species it contains, and is located in the southern extent of the Site.

**3.23** The Moss Side Farm Local Nature Reserve and Upper Mersey Estuary Local Wildlife Site are also located immediately adjacent to the west and northwest of the Site. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2km though it is within the Impact Risk Zone of three SSSIs. The Site contains a number of notable features including a variety of flora species, non-native invasive species and there have been records of several bat species, invertebrates, badgers, water vole, designated birds and noted amphibians and mammals.

### Arpley Landfill

**3.24** As previously described, Arpley Landfill is undergoing phased restoration. The use of this land is limited due to contaminants arising from its former use as a landfill. As such it is not possible to expand Port Warrington into this area. The undevelopable boundary of Arpley Landfill will help to create a permanence to the revised Green Belt Boundary (described further in the Case Making Document).

## Landscape and Views

**3.25** The Site is in the centre of the National Character Area (NCA) 60 Mersey Valley. The NCA is described as a wide, low lying river valley landscape focusing on the River Mersey, its estuary and associated tributaries and waterways. The Site falls within the Mersey Estuary Regional Landscape Character Area (RLCA) which comprises the broad and distinctive river valley of the River Mersey and its tributaries.

**3.26** Locally, the Site lies within the Marine Levels LCA and is described as a 'low lying flat, open and pastoral landscape.' The Site also falls within Local Landscape Character Type 5 Flood Plain and 5A River Mersey/Bollin West Character Area which is characterised by heavily developed residential and industrial uses.

**3.27** The landscape of the Site comprises a varied mix of land uses. The topography of the southern parts of the Site is predominantly flat. The Arpley Landfill in the north of the Site has introduced slopes and elevation which contrast with the natural topography. To the south there are two large warehouse sheds comprising Port Warrington. To the south east of the Site, the boundary is formed and contained by the West Coast Main Line railway.

**3.28** The Site is fairly contained, with the landfill site helping to effectively screen the majority of views from the north and north east. The woodland along the western side of the landfill also helps to screen views, though there are several viewpoints into the Site from nearby elevated positions.

### Trees

**3.29** The Site comprises a diverse range and quality of trees (including 55 ha of large broadleaved specimens and some woodland of exceptional quality and veteran trees, notably within the Nature Reserve), species poor hedgerows, scrubland and plantations, including on the landfill site. There are no ancient moorland or Tree Preservation Orders within or adjacent to the Site. There are eight veteran trees within the Site.

## Flood Risk

**3.30** The majority of the Site is within Flood Zone 1 (and is therefore deemed to be at low risk of flooding, according to the Environment Agency), there are also several areas which are within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and are at a higher risk of flooding.

### Heritage

**3.31** The Site does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets, though there are a number of listed and locally listed buildings and Conservation Areas nearby. The Bank Quay Transporter Bridge, to the east of the Site, is a scheduled monument and grade II\* listed. It was constructed in 1913 – 1914 and is deemed to be one of only three major transporter bridges in Britain. Other heritage features within the immediate vicinity of the Site include Moore Lane Bridge to the south (grade II listed) and Monks Siding Signal Box (grade II listed).

### Noise

**3.32** There are several existing sources of background noise to the Site, including noise from the West Coast Main Line, activity noise from the existing Port Warrington site and road traffic noise from the existing road network, including the A56.
















### Hazards

**3.33** There is a high pressure ethylene gas pipeline which runs through the eastern section of the Site and the Solvay Interlox Chemical Works are located outside of the Site boundary.

**3.34** Electricity overhead lines run through the Site.





-  Site boundary
-  Railway
-  Road network
-  Public Rights of Way
-  Transpennine Trail West
-  Water courses
-  Existing water bodies
-  Moore Nature Reserve Area
-  Existing green spaces
-  Existing woodland and trees
-  Veteran trees
-  Disused Runcorn & Latchford canal walk
-  Ecologically significant reed beds
-  Existing access point to the site
-  Existing access point to the landfill site



## Site Constraints and Opportunities

**3.35** The baseline evidence has identified the overall constraints and opportunities of the Site, as illustrated in the following plans. This confirms that its overall sensitivity varies, with the Moore Nature Reserve providing a strong landscape feature and accommodating a variety of key ecological qualities which makes it more sensitive to the emerging proposals.

**3.36** In contrast, the land to the north east where the Commercial Park is proposed, performs a more limited role with more moderate biodiversity features which is less susceptible to future proposals, though the wider allocation and proposal for housing and the Western Link Road also brings further considerations, for example in terms of noise and traffic implications.

**3.37** In the following pages, the diagrams illustrate the key constraints and opportunities for the Site. The following section of this Framework demonstrates how these and other technical considerations have been carefully reviewed and where necessary, the proposal has been designed to respond to these matters.



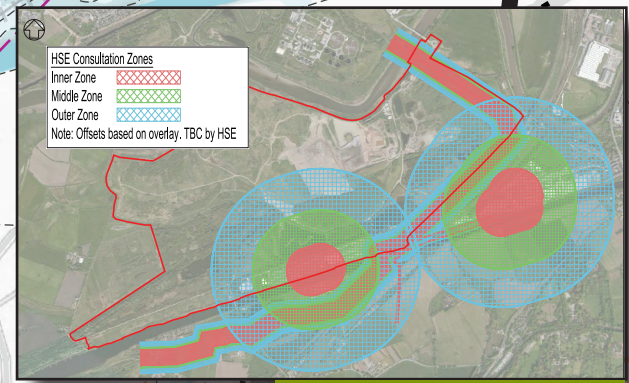
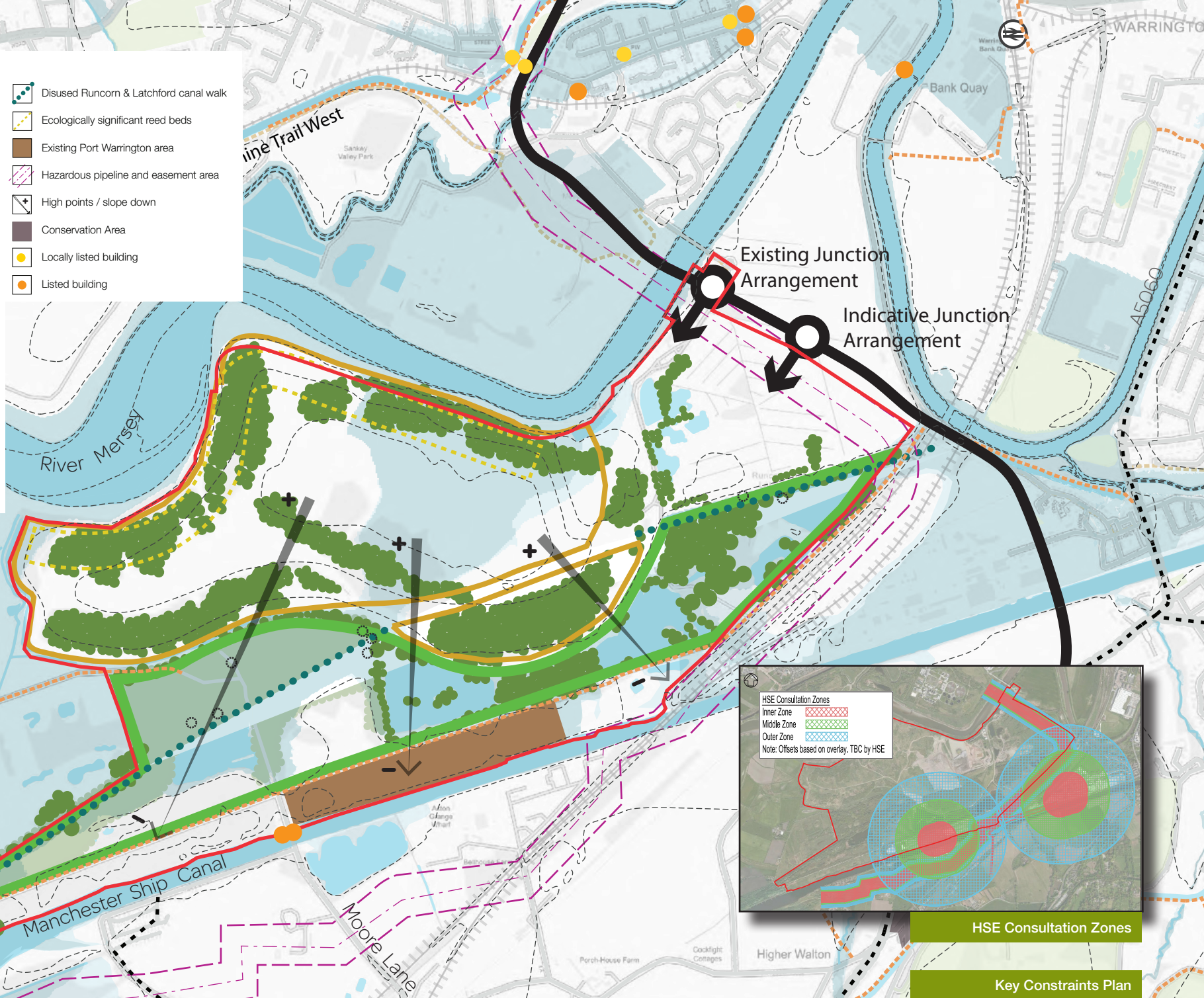
Top: Image of the existing landfill site



**KEY**

**Constraints**

- Site boundary
- Railway
- Road network
- Public Rights of Way
- Bus route
- Proposed road - Western Link Road
- Potential access point
- Water courses
- Existing water bodies
- Flood risk zone 2
- Flood risk zone 3
- Moore Nature Reserve Area
- Existing vegetation
- Veteran trees
- Former Arpley Landfill
- Disused Runcorn & Latchford canal walk
- Ecologically significant reed beds
- Existing Port Warrington area
- Hazardous pipeline and easement area
- High points / slope down
- Conservation Area
- Locally listed building
- Listed building



HSE Consultation Zones

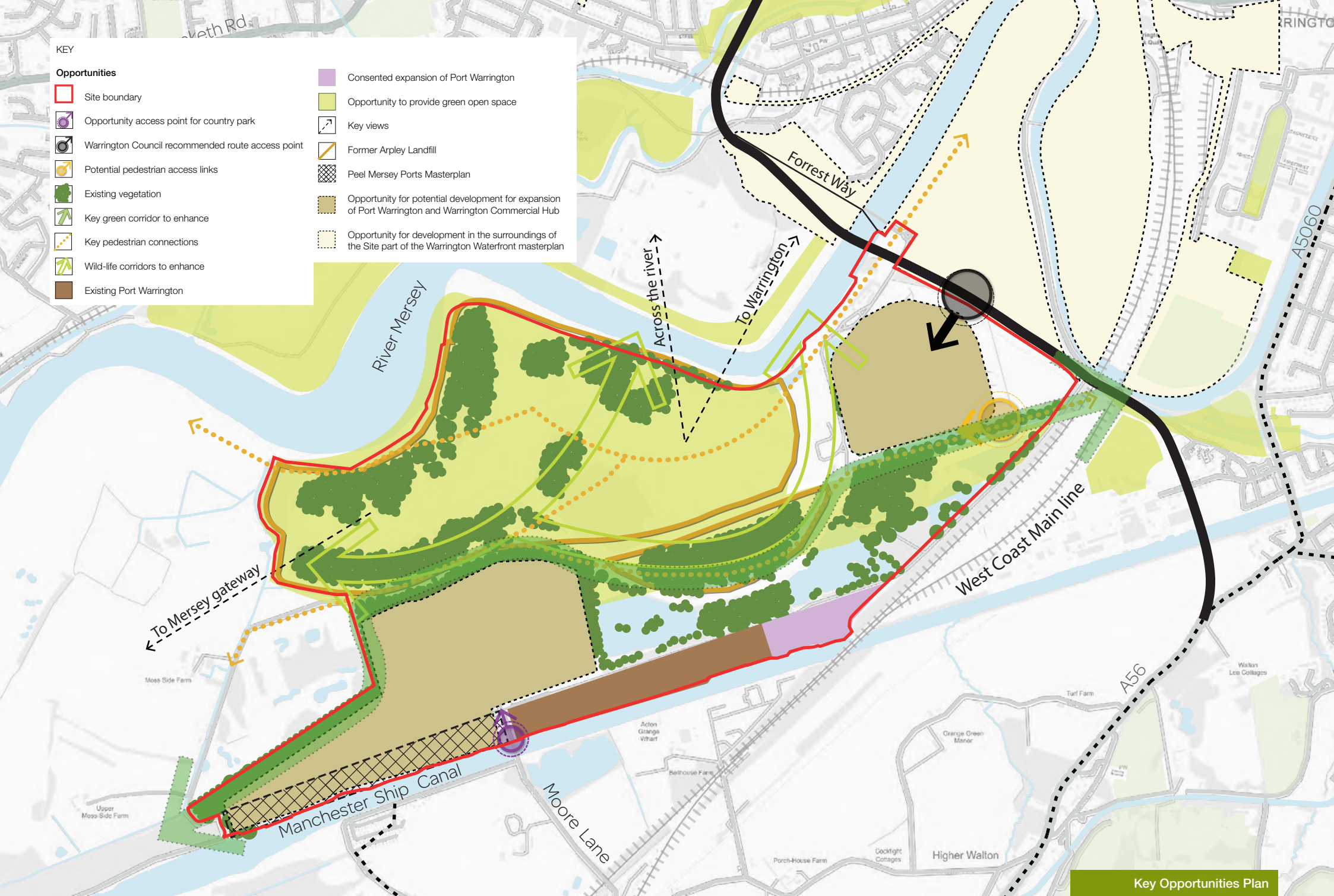
Key Constraints Plan



KEY

Opportunities

- Site boundary
- Opportunity access point for country park
- Warrington Council recommended route access point
- Potential pedestrian access links
- Existing vegetation
- Key green corridor to enhance
- Key pedestrian connections
- Wild-life corridors to enhance
- Existing Port Warrington
- Consented expansion of Port Warrington
- Opportunity to provide green open space
- Key views
- Former Arpley Landfill
- Peel Mersey Ports Masterplan
- Opportunity for potential development for expansion of Port Warrington and Warrington Commercial Hub
- Opportunity for development in the surroundings of the Site part of the Warrington Waterfront masterplan



Key Opportunities Plan





View from the Site towards the Mersey gateway



# 04 The Proposal

This Section of the Framework outlines how the proposal has evolved and been informed by the findings from the detailed technical reports, notably from an ecological perspective which have identified the overall development constraints and the opportunities which the proposal presents.

**4.1** The Site has the essential components of a high quality place. It is strategically well-located and connected to immediate surroundings; has a strong landscape setting; and will bring social, economic and environmental benefits to the community.

## Masterplanning Principles

**4.2** A series of themed design principles are presented across the following pages to demonstrate how the overall ambition for the Site can be delivered. The themes are:

1. Create an integrated green infrastructure network including the enhancement of Arpley Meadows as a regionally significant ecological and recreational asset.
2. Protect and enhance parts of the existing Moore Nature Reserve to remain and create a new area of Nature Reserve
3. Create a well-connected place
4. Create an employment offer which will meet existing and future occupier needs.



### 1. Create an integrated green infrastructure network

Retain where possible, existing well-established landscape features including mature trees and woodland, hedgerows and Public Right of Ways. Natural assets to be integrated within the proposal and enhanced across the proposal forming part of rich value habitats and wildlife corridors.





## 2. Protect and enhance parts of the existing Moore Nature Reserve to remain and create a new area of Nature Reserve

Create green wildlife corridors and connected biodiversity habitats through the addition of further planting and the restoration of the landfill in the northern part of the Site – these will form a dual purpose by encouraging the existing and new ecological features and also attract new visitors to appreciate the improved recreational areas. A number of new watercourses, swales and ponds will contribute to mitigate the drainage of the proposal.



## 3. Create a well-connected place

Create a responsive, functional and well-structured movement network across the Site. A number of footpaths and cycle routes will be created to be used by employees, the public and the community. These will provide good connections to the forthcoming residential and mixed use proposal in the wider Warrington Waterfront development.



## 4. Create an employment offer which will meet existing and future occupier needs

Create an attractive and well-connected employment area and port in the form of flexible parcels that sit within a sustainable landscape-led proposal. The structure of the proposal will reflect the particular and distinct requirements of the Port and the Commercial Park, creating separate and different working environments. The Commercial Park could also include uses complementary to employment and residential development located within Warrington Waterfront.



## Development Framework

4.3 The Development Framework which is presented in this Document has been progressed through an iterative process having regard to technical site considerations and comments from key stakeholders.

4.4 These have been taken into account during the initial design stage of the emerging proposal, in particular:

- **Biodiversity, Ecology and Trees** – The proposal due to the fixed location of the port next to the Manchester Ship Canal, will result in the loss of part of the existing Moore Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site. However, this will be mitigated against by the creation of the new Nature Reserve and Country Park, circa 186ha site which will incorporate the former landfill site and the enhancement of the existing woodlands and lakes.

The existing species on the Site will be protected where possible and, where necessary, enhancements on site will be supplemented by enhancements off site to ensure there is an overall net gain. A biodiversity offsetting strategy has been developed to address the loss of part of the Moore Nature Reserve.

- **Flood Risk** - A preliminary flood risk appraisal has been completed for the Site. It confirms that the existing Port Warrington and the majority of its proposed expansion is located within flood zone 1 with small elements being located within flood zone 2 and 3. The type of development uses at the expanded Port are consistent with national policy and guidance with regards to compatibility and vulnerability. In addition, the inclusion of suitably designed surface water and foul water drainage systems within the proposal and the retention of the existing onsite water bodies will reduce the risk of flooding and can discharge any surface water runoff which could be generated from the proposal.

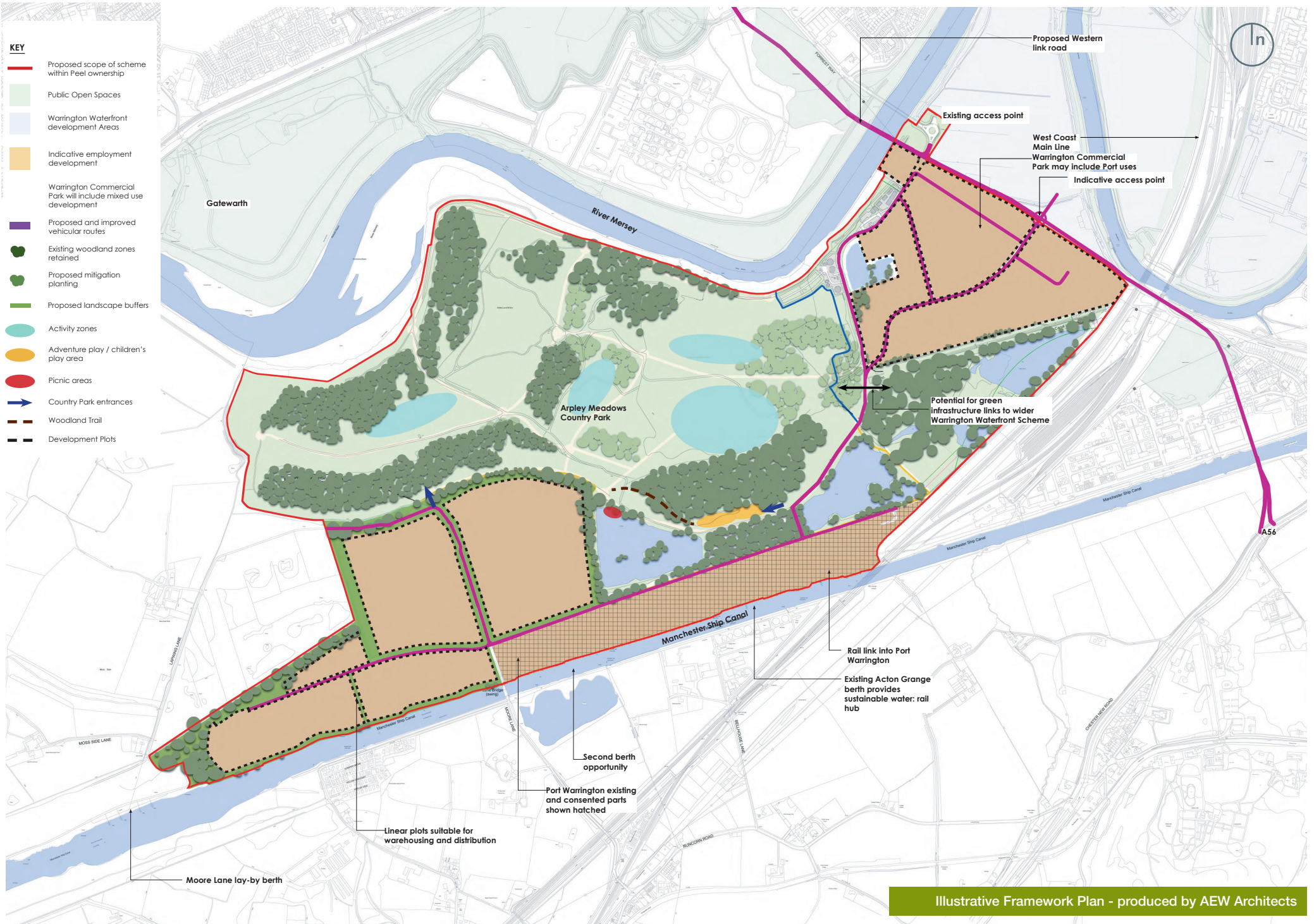
- **Landscape and Views** – The proposal will retain as many of the existing trees and woodland features on the Site– these will help to effectively screen the proposal and provide an attractive environment for visitors and users. The use of suitable and standard measures, for example, the implementation of new planting and the incorporation of buildings within the proposals which will be of an appropriate scale and massing will help reduce the visual impact on its local surroundings.
- **Noise** – The proposal has been carefully designed to minimise adverse noise impact on the amenity of existing and future residents and users of the Site and surrounding area, including at Moore village to the south and the proposed housing which is proposed within the wider Warrington Waterfront area to the north. Additionally, the detailed design of the scheme will give further consideration to the specific location and design of noisy activities.

In particular, noise sources near these locations will be carefully monitored, for example the potential implications during the construction and operational phase, including the loading and unloading of goods, and will be fully controlled, for example via the incorporation of acoustic barriers and noise bunds within the proposal where necessary and the use of appropriate control measures to ensure that the proposal is acceptable, which will be detailed in a Noise Management Plan.

4.5 The overall design of the proposal will also take into account the nearby heritage and hazards features, working closely with the key stakeholders and interest bodies (for example Historic England and the Health and Safety Executive) to progress with an appropriate proposal.

4.6 In summary, the Site offers the potential to develop a significant new employment-led proposal at Port Warrington and the new Commercial Park, alongside an extensive new Nature Reserve and Country Park. The Site represents the optimum scale and location to contribute to exceptional circumstances case which needs to be demonstrated to justify its part- release from the Green Belt. It is a major sustainable development opportunity site and strategically placed adjoining the Manchester Ship Canal and the West Coast Mainline, in an accessible location to accommodate and meet the port demand arising from the sub-region and local employment demand.







## Port Warrington

4.7 The proposal for Port Warrington reflects the scale of opportunity and need to cater for Port-centric freight movement. The existing Port Warrington site operates entirely as a road-based distribution centre with ineffective utilisation of the Ship Canal for the movement of goods; the proposals will deliver a unique opportunity to drive a transformational shift and develop a new multi-modal inland port. To fulfil its potential, Port Warrington needs to be able to offer large warehousing with flexibility for cross docking capacity, be accessible and on the strategic highway network to allow multi-directional movements and connectivity within markets, and in close proximity to main population centres for speed of delivery and business.

4.8 The Site's strategic and accessible location, close to the road, rail and port network, along with its relationship with major population areas, means that it is well placed to meet the high level of market demand and capitalise on the growth potential of various freight sectors as identified within the Mersey Ports Masterplan and, more recently, the Freight Demand Study by MDST. The overall vision is to create a sustainable inland port of significance which fully exploits these key locational advantages.

4.9 The re-development of Port Warrington will take advantage of the strategic opportunities which large scale port-led and infrastructure development can bring. As a result, a number of different elements could be accommodated on site, including a cluster of new manufacturing and assembly, logistics, industrial processing, storage (bulk liquids) and distribution uses. The vision is to develop a new multi-modal inland port facility delivering flexible floorspace of around 2.2m sqft / 205,850 sqm with permitted development rights to reflect the existing long established / authorised port activity on part of the Site which will be able to accommodate a cluster of new uses.

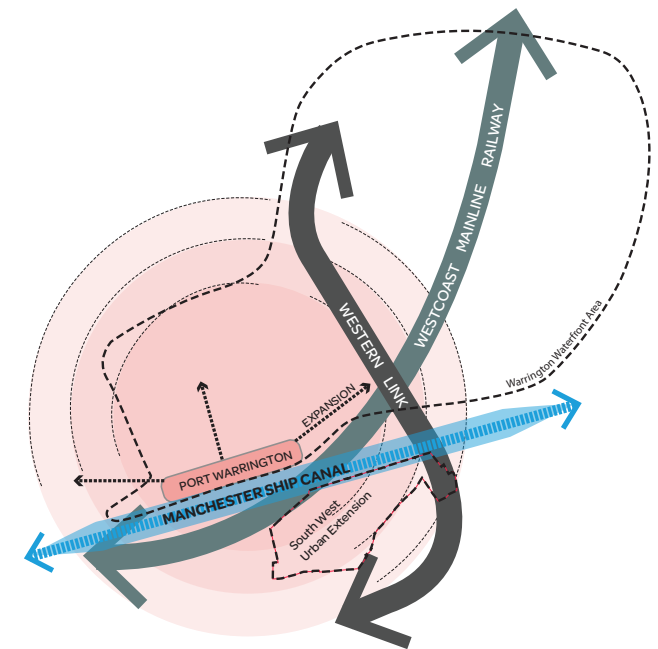
4.10 The proposal will seek to reconfigure the existing site to fully utilise the Ship Canal and enable a direct freight link to the West Coast Mainline. This would reflect the recent planning permission which was granted for the extension of the existing site, the refurbishment and extension of the canalside berth and the reinstatement of a rail freight connection. The proposal will expand this further to make the most effective use of its transport and infrastructure links on an enlarged operational land footprint to accommodate a range of industrial units. This will exploit the existing berth facility and warehouse development and the good rail access opportunities.

4.11 Container handling facilities at Port Warrington will be developed and other business opportunities / commodities with an extended port frontage to take advantage of its strategic location. The vision to directly connect to the West Coast Mainline will also offer a more efficient connection to the national rail freight network reducing road traffic level of movements to the Site and enable potential occupiers to remove a significant element of road transit from their supply chain.

4.12 The Development Framework includes extended berths and rail connection. Vehicular access is illustrated to be from a new roundabout off the Western Link, close to the existing Forrest Way roundabout and bridge.

4.13 The Development Framework will provide a degree of flexibility and as the delivery of Port Warrington will be market-led. Peel Ports will promote the opportunity and co-ordinate occupier requirements with the necessary site preparation and infrastructure works.

4.14 The proposal will be delivered in phases, according to occupier requirements. The existing local industrial operators within Warrington currently working with Peel Ports, for example Solvay Interox and Unilever, could form part of the wider ports supply chain. The spatial phasing will also need to be flexible to market needs. It is important that this flexibility is available such that operators are not lost to other locations.



Multimodal Port Proposition



## Port Warrington Deliverability

### Available

**4.15** The land forming the proposed allocation is available for development over the course of the Plan period. It is in the single ownership of Peel Group companies who are keen to bring forward development in a timely and co-ordinated way.

**4.16** The existing Port Warrington site is long established and whilst currently operating on a solely road based manner does benefit from an existing canalside berth. The existing 15 Ha operational footprint is largely occupied and planning permission for a modest extension has been secured as part of the development of a multi-modal port facility.

**4.17** The proposed expansion of Port Warrington would result in 205,850 sqm of development (c.2.2 million sqft) immediately to the north of The Manchester Ship Canal (Port Warrington) for port centric employment uses (B2/B8) alongside the introduction of a second berth, interchange storage areas for loading/unloading and rail connection to the West Coast Mainline. The development would be brought forward on a phased basis subject to planning permission and occupier / market demand.

**4.18** There are no insurmountable technical or environmental constraints to the delivery of the proposal.

### Achievable

**4.19** The Site is not affected by any technical constraints that cannot be addressed through the planning and design process and appropriate mitigation measures will be employed where necessary in respect of flood risk and drainage, ecology and biodiversity, noise, landscape and visual, and heritage.

**4.20** The intention is for the proposal to be served from the Western Link and for the existing routes to the Port (via Moore) to be down-graded to discourage their use for port related activity (though access will still be maintained for public recreational use). This will be beneficial for the residents of Moore as it will reduce HGV traffic movements through the village and within the surrounding area.

**4.21** Any new utilities or infrastructure needed to enable the delivery of the proposal in a planned and co-ordinated way, including the re-instatement of the rail freight connection and canalside berth improvements could be secured and delivered as part of the proposal. Improved road capacity and connectivity to an expanded Port Warrington is subject to the delivery of Warrington's Western Link Road.

## Warrington Commercial Park

**4.22** A range of new business and commercial units are proposed on this part of the Site which will take advantage of the Site's location close to Warrington town centre, the proposed Western Link Road and Port Warrington.

**4.23** The Warrington Commercial Park will offer in the region of 82,500 sqm of employment development (c.0.9million sqft) which could be developed for port centric employment uses (B2/B8) and other business uses (B1, B2 and B8 uses), plus complementary uses to support the business park environment and the wider Warrington Waterfront regeneration initiative. The broad distribution of buildings as indicated is in response to the constraints of the overhead power lines, SABIC ethylene pipeline, gas pipeline and the PADHI zones that relate to them. The Development Framework shows the effect on layout and floorspace while retaining a number of existing further water bodies in this part of the Site.

**4.24** It is proposed that the Commercial Park will be delivered to market by Peel Land and Property; depending on the final form and uses it may either be developed in-house or delivery partners will be brought in.

## Viability

**4.25** The land is solely in the ownership of the Peel Group which is committed to delivering the proposals. A viability appraisal has been prepared and submitted which demonstrates the proposals are financially viable.

## Access / Public Transport

**4.26** The delivery of the proposed Western Link Road will enhance the Site's access to Warrington and the wider national motorway network; the Port Warrington expansion and Warrington Commercial Park proposals will be able to take advantage of this as demonstrated by the Transport Appraisal. The Western Link Road is a major highways improvement connecting the A56 and A57 to the west of the town centre, reducing the levels of traffic through the town and also providing access to development sites.

**4.27** The intention is for the proposal to be served directly from the Western Link and for the existing routes to the Port (via Moore to the south) to be down-graded to discourage their use for port-related activity (though access will still be maintained for public recreational use) – this will also limit traffic and HGV access through Moore village. It is envisaged that the first phases of the Commercial Park would be served off Forrest Way or via the existing road network.

**4.28** The Traffic Assessment confirms that there is some potential to serve initial phases of development (Port Warrington and WCP) from the existing road network without resulting in severe traffic impacts. This could allow development to progress before the WLR is opened.

**4.29** Cumulatively, the Manchester Ship Canal, good motorway and public transport links and West Coast Main Line, along with Warrington's location at the heart of the North West economy give the Site a strong, fixed, strategic location for warehousing, manufacturing and distribution development. Peel's emerging proposals will also fully exploit the Site's location next to the Manchester Ship Canal and the vision for a new multi-modal (port / rail / road) proposal.

**4.30** New footpaths and cycle way routes will be created throughout the Site to encourage public access and employee movement via sustainable modes of transport. The proposal will also enable sufficient new parking (car, HGV, cycle, motorcycle and disabled spaces) for businesses and visitors.



## Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park

4.31 As demonstrated in the Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Vision appended to this Development Framework, the proposals present the opportunity to enhance Moore Nature Reserve, reinforcing the existing green infrastructure, and ensuring future management and funding of the Nature Reserve.

4.32 The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park will provide the ideal habitat environment for ecological features for existing and new specimens. It will contribute to the regeneration of inaccessible and under-utilised land, alongside the enhancement of connections between Warrington town centre, the Waterfront proposal and existing communities. It will be accessible by different modes of travel from a wide catchment area.









4.33 The Development Framework has been designed to retain as many of the existing well-established and veteran trees where possible and to ensure that a strong green infrastructure network is created. It will also encourage public access and ensure that the existing users of the Moore Nature Reserve, including dog walkers, the forest school and bird watchers, will be able to take advantage of the expanded area and improved facilities.

4.34 The existing Nature Reserve is managed by FCC, this funding stream is coming to an end. The expansion of Port Warrington would lead to the loss of part of the existing Moore Nature Reserve.




4.35 The former Arpley landfill site and outlying areas in particular will be enhanced via the creation of further biodiversity resources, alongside additional green infrastructure and new hedgerow and tree planting. The new attractive recreational areas (including new play areas and picnic spots) will be fully accessible to members of the public, with connections into the wider Waterfront proposal to residential areas and education facilities. The existing lakes on-site will be retained where possible to offer new landscaped areas and for flood attenuation purposes.

### Landscape Masterplan Legend





#### Consented Scheme Proposals

	Existing Woodland Planting Retained		Existing Footpaths & Tracks Resurfaced
	Proposed Woodland Planting		Existing Green Open Spaces
	Conservation Grassland		Pedestrian Routes into Site
	Existing Reed Beds / Aquatic Habitat		Existing Water Bodies Retained

#### Ecological Off-setting Within the Country Park

	Additional Native Woodland Planting
	Additional Scrub Planting
	Additional Species Rich Grassland
	Additional Reed Planting

#### Enhanced Recreation Within the Country Park

	Additional Viewing Platforms
	Additional Bouldering/Climbing area
	Additional Grass Mounds
	Additional Picnic Areas

#### Additional Infrastructure Within the Country Park

	Additional Footpath Infrastructure
	Additional Node Spaces
	Additional Car Parking
	Proposed and Improved Vehicular Routes Within the Country Park

#### The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Proposals

	Site Boundary
	Proposed & Improved Vehicular Routes
	Indicative Employment Developments
	Proposed Landscape Buffers/Mitigation Planting

 Existing and Consented Port Warrington Development



1

**Nature Conservation Zone**  
Restricted / supervised access mainly educational

2

**Passive Zone**  
Quieter recreational activities

3

**Family Zone**  
Including central core and picnic areas

4

**Active Activity Zone**  
Activities than engage with the environment and improves health and well-being



Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park indicative Masterplan - produced by LUC

4.36 The Nature Reserve and Country Park could be delivered in phases over the Plan period. Additional discussions will be required with the Council and other stakeholders to review how it will be delivered and ongoing funding for management of the Country Park and Nature Reserve. One option could be a service charge on the proposed business residence as part of Warrington Waterfront.

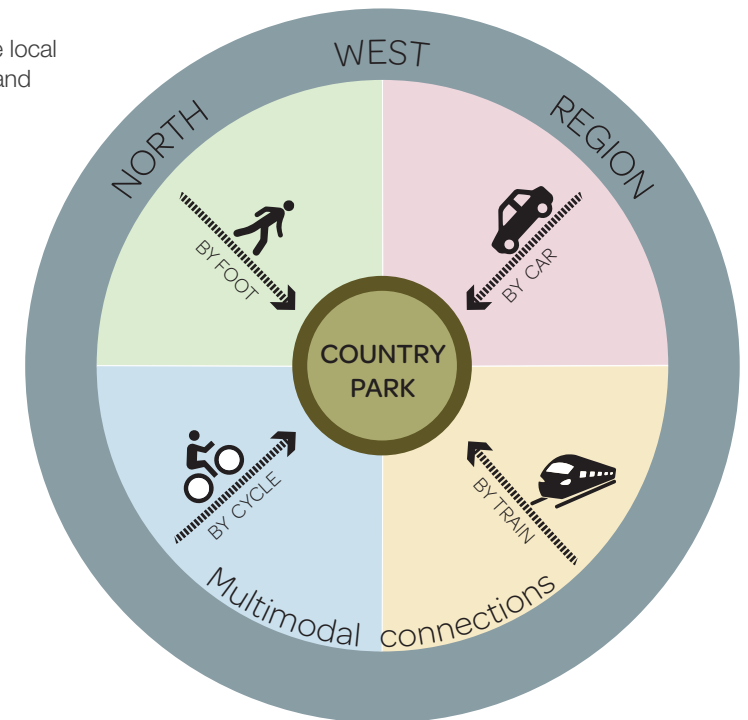
4.37 A Biodiversity Mitigation Strategy has been created which establishes how the habitats and species would be affected and describes measures to minimise and compensate for adverse effects and achieve biodiversity net gain.

4.38 The proposal offers opportunity for linear habitat creation, including bioswales and woodland corridors which will assist in provision of “stepping-stone habitats” between retained Moore Nature Reserve and Arpley Landfill and the wider network of habitats between the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Mersey.

4.39 The proposal will enable creation of a wildlife-friendly landscape including boundary woodlands and plot landscapes with a reasonable diversity of pollinator-friendly grasslands and native-species woodland groups.

4.40 A long-term Landscape and Habitat Management Plan (LHMP) would be implemented and funded. It is envisaged the LHMP would include the following measures:

- Woodland Management to promote habitats for wet woodland bird species, veteran trees, bluebells and control of invasive species
- Grassland management
- Re-wetting some dry parts of the defunct Runcorn – Latchford Canal to create opportunities for wetland birds and amphibians
- Funding of long-term management, including wardening and education
- Promoting conservation and recolonization of signature local species such as kingfisher, willow tit, water vole, otter and round leaved winter green.



A Country Park with multimodal connections





Image of the existing landfill site

# 05 Benefits

**5.1** The proposals, as part of the wider Warrington Waterfront vision, will bring community, environmental and economic benefits. It will be accessible by a wide range of public transport and highway routes. The scale of the proposal will allow the delivery of significant benefits for the local area.

**5.2** This Section reviews the social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposals.

**5.3** The Peel Group companies are committed to delivering a lasting social and economic legacy and implementing a Local Employment Strategy to optimise the benefits of the proposal for the residents and businesses of Warrington. The companies are also committed to minimising and mitigating the impacts of the proposals on the local area, including in relation to transport and traffic, ecology, landscape and other potential impacts. This will be achieved in partnership with the Council and other key stakeholders.

**5.4** Proposals will support the on-going growth of Warrington's economy and lead to lasting social and economic benefits locally. In addition, it will assist in addressing local social and economic need, whilst also delivering wider environmental benefits. These benefits are reviewed in further detail below.

## Economic Benefits

**5.5** The proposals will attract investment that might not otherwise come to Warrington and in doing so would contribute directly to the Government's objectives of rebalancing the UK economy. This also reflects the wider emphasis on economic growth, as reflected in the Northern Powerhouse initiative and reflects Warrington's overall growth and importance as one of the fastest growing centres in the country.

**5.6** Multi-modal operations are becoming more important to occupiers who see rail operations and port-centric operations increasing in significance. The significant opportunities which Port Warrington offers, as a multimodal site within a large urban catchment area at the heart of an urbanised region, needs to be fully exploited.

**5.7** The proposal will stimulate further business linkages and provide a significant opportunity to create a significant number of new jobs and training for local people. The proposal represents a significant financial investment by Peel in the Borough. It will deliver a wide range of jobs during the construction and operational phases and make a significant contribution to local GVA.

**5.8** The substantial economic benefits that arise from the delivery of an inland port and commercial park is supported by national planning policy. Both in terms of supporting further throughput capacity and multi-modal provision at ports (which are the main conduit for the country's imports and exports) and through provision of business hubs with access to the strategic road network and rail (which would offer choice to customers and facilitate the prompt movement of goods for manufacturers, retailers and consumers).

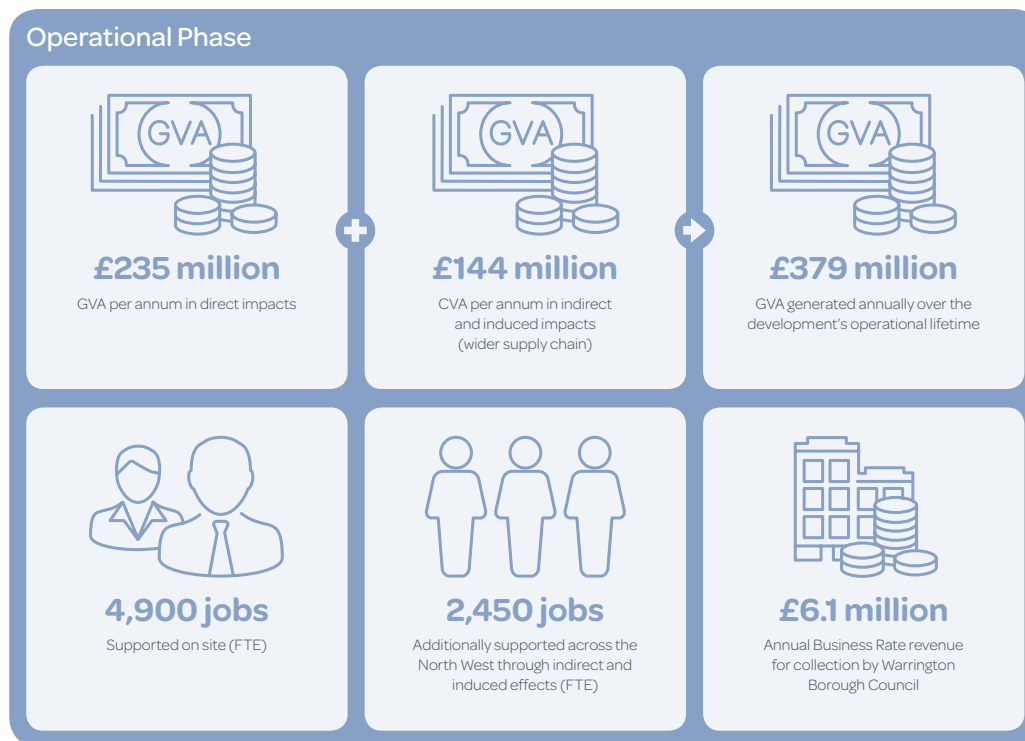
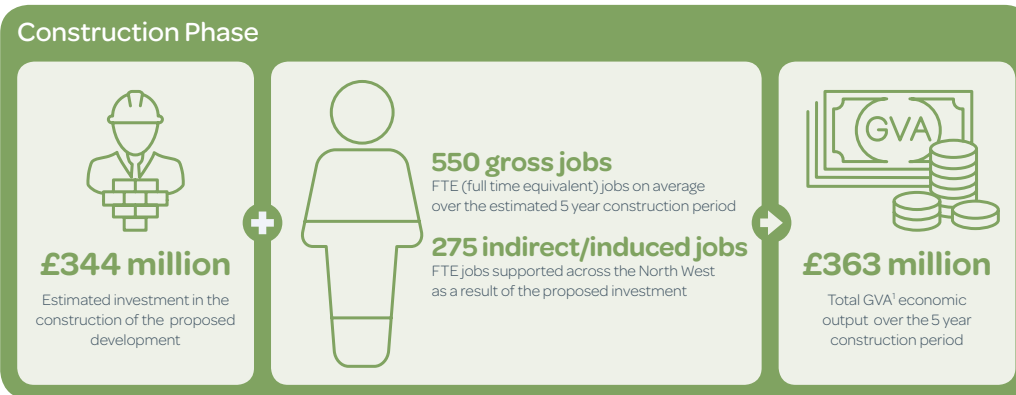
**5.9** The proposal will offer potential occupiers with maximum choice and flexibility to utilise the most sustainable and competitive forms of transport in a location close to markets. This combination would make it a sustainable and logical location for logistics businesses serving the central and northern parts of the UK and offer an attractive location from which to base a UK wide logistics operation. Securing such developments would provide a significant boost to the region's economy and will include direct and indirect opportunities for local suppliers and workers.

**5.10** A bespoke economic impact model has been created in order to assess the potential effects of the scheme. This initial assessment uses scheme-specific data and assumptions in order to consider the quantifiable impacts of the proposal, both during its construction and operational (or 'lifetime') phases.

**5.11** The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Additionality Guide, published in January 2014, provides guidance to practitioners on the standard methodology associated with assessing the additional effects of an intervention or development. The HCA guidance has informed this assessment in order to ensure conformity to nationally accepted standards for assessing potential socio-economic effects.

**5.12** Given the early stage of the project, all effects are presented as gross impacts. Once the Development Framework has been finalised and the full economic impact assessment has been carried out, impacts will be presented as net additional impacts accruing to the local area (Warrington) and the wider North West region.





<sup>1</sup> GVA (Gross Value Added) measure the value of output created (i.e. turnover) net of inputs used to produce a good or service (i.e. production of outputs). It provides a key measure of economic productivity. Put simply the GVA is the total of all revenue into businesses, which is used to fund wages, profits and taxes.

## Construction Phase

**5.13** It is estimated that investment in the construction of the options under consideration will total £344 million.

**5.14** Investment of this scale could be expected to support around 2,650 person-years of direct employment over the construction period, based on the average turnover per employee in the construction industry in the North West. This indicates that the proposed development will directly support an annual average of 550 temporary full-time equivalent (FTE) gross jobs over potential construction period. Approximately 275 further jobs could also be induced or indirectly supported across the North West as a result of the proposed investment.

**5.15** Construction of the proposed development will contribute significantly to economic output, measured in gross value added (GVA). GVA measures the value output created (i.e. turnover) net of inputs purchased, and is used to produce a good or service (i.e. production of the output). Put simply, GVA is the total of all revenue into businesses, which is used to fund wages, profits and taxes and therefore provides a measure of economic productivity.

**5.16** The construction phase of the proposed development is expected to generate a total of between £363 million GVA over the construction period.

## Operational Phase

**5.17** Upon completion, the proposed development will generate a range of economic impacts through its operation. Unlike the temporary construction impacts presented above, these economic impacts will continue over the long-term, supporting local, regional and national economic growth objectives.

**5.18** The operational phase could be expected to directly support circa 4,900 gross jobs on site. In addition, the operation of the proposed development could support additional indirect and induced employment, equating to a further 2,450 jobs across the North West. Total additional employment supported by the operation of the proposed development is therefore calculated as 7,350 FTE jobs.

**5.19** The proposed development is expected to generate £379 million gross GVA per annum over its operational lifetime. This comprises direct impacts of £235 million, and indirect and induced impacts (those accruing in the wider supply chain) of £144 million per annum.

**5.20** Additionally, it is estimated that the proposed development will generate business rates payments to Warrington Borough Council equating to approximately £6.1 million per annum.

## Environmental Benefits

**5.21** The proposals will generate other significant sustainability and environmental benefits for the local area and wider region.

**5.22** The Development Framework strongly supports the Government's vision for a low carbon, sustainable transport system through the transfer of road haulage and its associated emissions to sustainable rail and water based transportation. The movement of freight and goods to and from the regional economy will continue to rise significantly in line with economic growth and therefore there is a need to ensure the presence of the necessary infrastructure to ensure a growing percentage of these goods can be transported via sustainable modes of transportation.

**5.23** By encouraging a shift from road to water and rail based transport, Port Warrington has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of road haulage across the region, including amending the existing route via country roads and Moore Village. This would deliver significant reductions in carbon emissions and could ease congestion. The benefits of this would be felt across the highway network. Particular benefits would occur in areas of high HGV concentrations and areas of congestion. This would include the urban area around the Port, the motorway links to Port Warrington and outlying areas.

**5.24** The emerging proposals will provide opportunities for informal access for members of the public, to improved habitat areas that are of improved visual quality and biodiversity (an overall 'biodiversity net gain') to the current use of the Site. If a biodiversity net gain is not achievable directly on-site, this would be secured off-site in the locality.



**5.25** The Nature Reserve and Country Park presents an exciting opportunity to create a significant new publically accessible area for local residents and visitors. The current users of the existing Nature Reserve, including bird watchers and dog walkers, will be well catered for in the new area, with the expanded routes and improved facilities key benefits which will attract a wider range of new users. The development of Arpley Meadows therefore directly supports the national policy emphasis to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt by providing access to Green Belt, to enhance and retain existing landscapes and to improve damaged or derelict land.

**5.26** The proposal will be designed in accordance with high standards of sustainable design and construction which is fully supportive of Policy QE1 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 4.12.7 of the NPS. The buildings and infrastructure will be designed to minimise resource consumption (such as water), waste generation and carbon emissions through the use of sustainable design and construction best practice. The use of renewable and / or low carbon sources will be investigated with a focus on solutions that are future proofed in response to a changing climate and smart grid energy supply. An assessment will also be undertaken to identify the need for suitable resilience measures to be included within the proposals in response to future climate change.

**5.27** Port Warrington will fully support the proposed Western Link Road by ensuring that it is integrated with the existing road network. Development of the Western Link Road will also reduce traffic volumes travelling between Port Warrington and the outlying area, thereby reducing HGV movements through Moore Village.

## Social Benefits

**5.28** There is a proven link between economic growth and an improvement in health and wellbeing of workers and local communities. The proposal will provide significant economic benefits which, through an active local benefits and Social Value programme will seek to maximise health and wellbeing benefits. New buildings will be designed with measures to promote health and wellbeing of occupants and workers such as maximising the use of natural ventilation and light.

**5.29** The proposal will provide additional revenues for the Council to spend on necessary social infrastructure such as health care, education and community facilities. The creation of thousands of new employment opportunities will provide significant financial support for local shops and facilities nearby.

**5.30** The inclusion of the Country Park which will provide opportunities for recreational activities and therefore health and wellbeing benefits through the provision of open space and recreational facilities which are available to both the public and workers. Health and wellbeing benefits will also be encouraged through the exploration of opportunities for active and more sustainable modes of travel to and from the Site including walking and cycling; the proposed cycle route along Birchwood Lane could enhance cycle provision to the Site, for example.

**5.31** A management strategy will be developed in partnership with the Council to ensure the future management of the Country Park.



Top: Images of potential environmental and social benefits including recreational activities, such as walking and bird watching

# 06 Summary and Conclusion

This Development Framework demonstrates that as part of the wider Warrington Waterfront vision, the proposals represents an exceptional opportunity to create a significant mixed-use development which will generate major economic, social and environmental benefits, including to the local area and wider region.

**6.1** The proposals have been carefully designed to respond to the overall growth aspirations within the local, regional and national growth-agenda, including from within the Framework and the National Policy Statement for Ports. This Development Framework, and the accompanying documents demonstrate that there is clear justification for the Site to be allocated in the Local Plan and removed from the Green Belt.

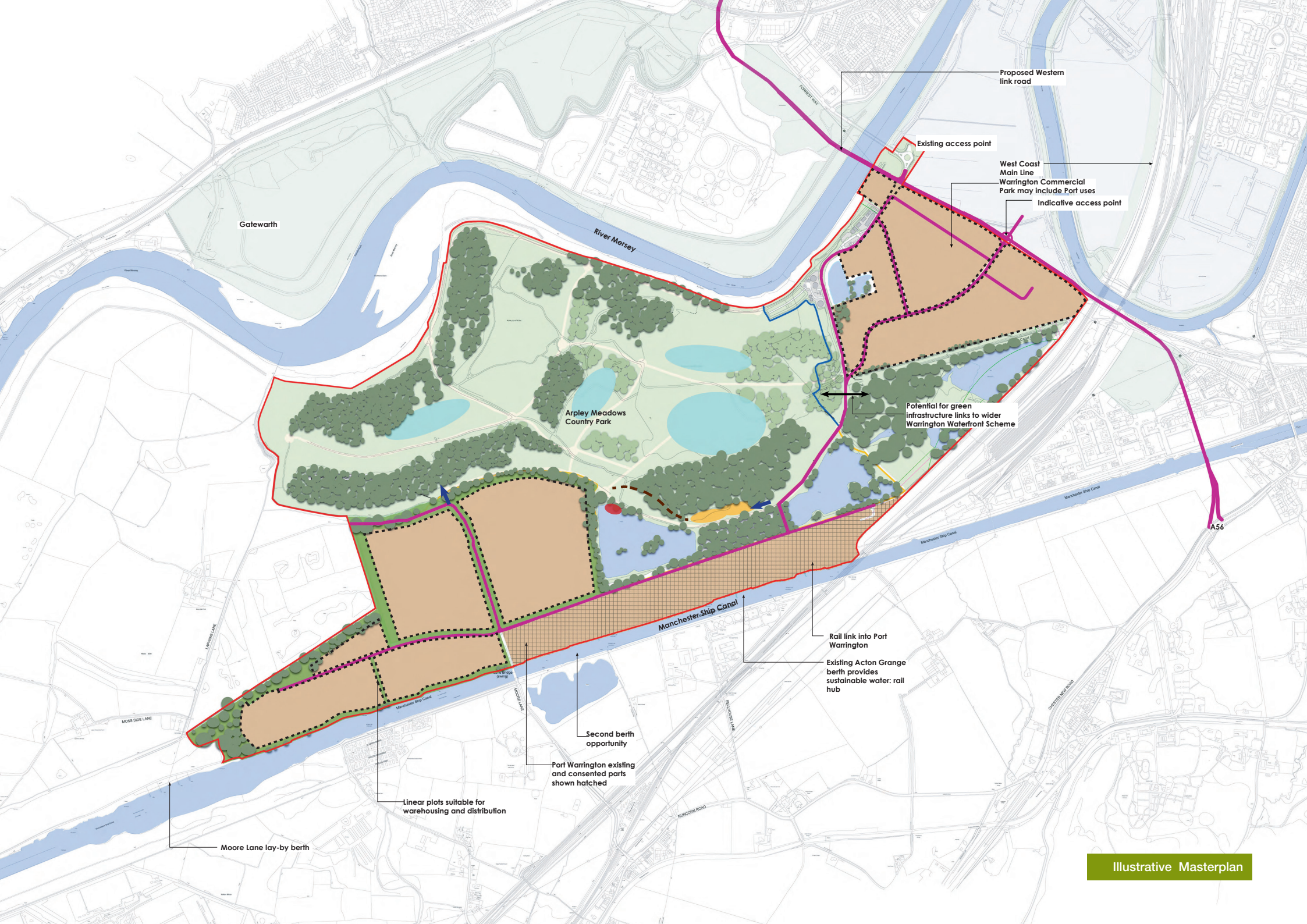
**6.2** As outlined in the previous sections, there are considerable benefits (aligned with regional priorities) for enabling the development of Port Warrington; the creation of a new Commercial Park and the enhanced Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park. In particular, it has been demonstrated that:

- The proposal will deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits to the local area and wider region
- It will enable the creation of a high quality proposal which will make a significant contribution to the supply of employment floorspace which is required in Warrington and the wider region
- The delivery of the proposal will support the economic growth ambitions of Warrington and generate major employment and expenditure benefits during the construction and operational phases
- There is strong national and local planning policy support for the proposal and the removal of the Port Warrington and Commercial Park land from the Green Belt is appropriate and acceptable
- It will make the most effective use of the land and enable the creation of an extensive Nature Reserve and Country Park for ecological and recreational purposes and an overall biodiversity net gain. 6.3

The allocation of the site for new development and its removal out of the Green Belt would be fully supported by Peel. The draft proposals will be progressed further in liaison with Warrington Council and other key stakeholders to enable its timely and sustainable delivery.

**6.3** Peel fully supports the proposed allocation of land for new development and its removal out of the Green Belt within the Site. The draft proposals will be progressed further in liaison with Warrington Council and other key stakeholders to enable its timely and sustainable delivery.





Gatewarth

River Mersey

Arpley Meadows Country Park

Manchester Ship Canal

Proposed Western link road

Existing access point

West Coast Main Line  
Warrington Commercial Park may include Port uses

Indicative access point

Potential for green infrastructure links to wider Warrington Waterfront Scheme

A56

Rail link into Port Warrington

Existing Acton Grange berth provides sustainable water: rail hub

Second berth opportunity

Port Warrington existing and consented parts shown hatched

Linear plots suitable for warehousing and distribution

Moore Lane lay-by berth

Illustrative Masterplan



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**Telephone**

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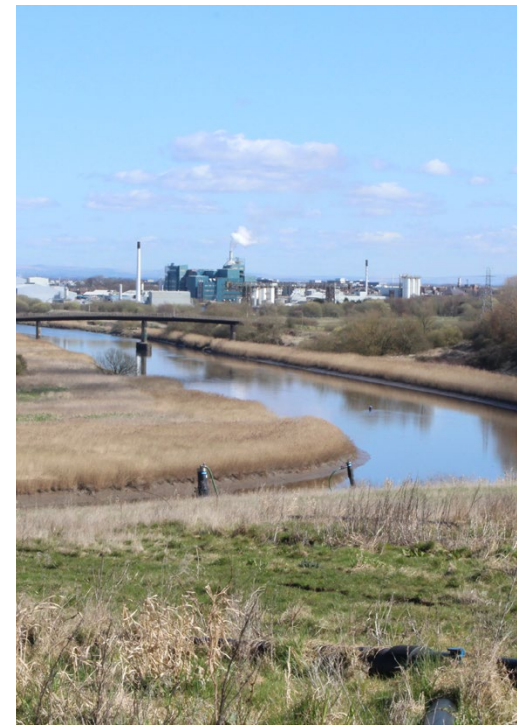
**Date of Issue**

April 2020



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## Warrington Waterfront : Port Warrington, Warrington Commercial Park, Moore Nature Reserve & Country Park

### MOORE NATURE RESERVE & COUNTRY PARK VISION DOCUMENT

Prepared by LUC February 2019



Land & Property





## REVISION SCHEDULE

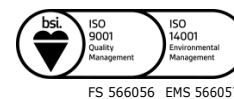
Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
1	17.04.18	Draft issue to client	JWA	TJ	TJ
2	19.04.18	Final issue	JWA	TJ	TJ
3	07.09.18	Final issue	JWA	TJ	TJ
4	02.11.18	Final issue	CC	TJ	TJ
5	21.12.18	Final issue	BW	TJ	TJ
6	21.02.19	Final issue	BW	TJ	TJ
7	04.03.19	Final issue	BW	TJ	TJ
8	06.03.19	Final issue	BW	TJ	TJ

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PART I: ANALYSIS	6
PART II: DEVELOPMENT OF VISION	12
PART III: PROPOSALS	14

## Purpose of the Report

LUC is commissioned by Peel to develop the vision for proposals for a New Country Park at Arpley. The Country Park will form part of the major development opportunity known as Warrington Waterfront, which will connect the centre of Warrington to the Mersey and the Ship Canal. The Warrington Waterfront area has been identified by Warrington Council as a key area for growth in the emerging Local Plan.

The Waterfront proposals include:

- Expansion to the existing Port Warrington site to create a multi modal port facility;
- Residential Development (around 2500 new homes);
- Commercial Development; and
- Western Link Road, which will provide a new link between A56 to A57.

The Country Park will include the Arpley Landfill site, which is currently undergoing restoration, and part of the existing Moore Nature Reserve. The proposals will provide a new Country Park for communities of Warrington and the wider area.

The document sets out the vision for the Country Park, the proposals presented will be refined as the detail of the Waterfront scheme is developed through the planning process working in partnership with the Council and other interested parties.

The objectives of this document are:

- To establish a baseline relating to the site which will form an evidence base on which to develop the Landscape Masterplan Proposals. This will involve determining the planning framework relating to the existing site and immediate surroundings, incorporating future development proposals; identifying wider site constraints such as pedestrian access including local and national trails, and the local road network; and mapping green infrastructure within the locality to review the existing offer;
- To summarise this information on a suite of site analysis drawings for ease of reference;

- To develop a vision for the Landscape Masterplan Proposals, influenced by identified deficiencies within the existing open space network (such as a lack of a large regional Country Park that can accommodate a variety of vision experiences); mitigate the loss of ecological habitats within Moore Nature Reserve and present precedent examples of successful country parks; and

- To present the Illustrative Masterplan for the proposed country park.

## Wider Context

The vision document should be read in conjunction with the Waterfront Development Framework Document by Turley.

Figure 1 below shows the study area in red and the wider Waterfront area and southwest Urban Extension allocation south of the Manchester Ship Canal in yellow.

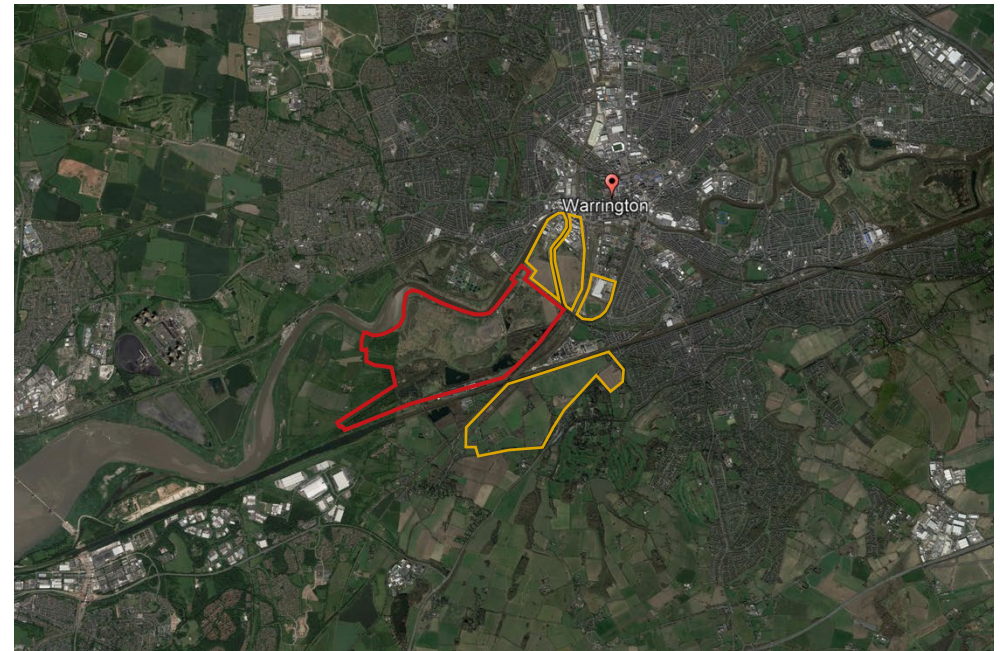


Figure 1 Study area and wider Waterfront Scheme Area & Southwest Urban Extension Residence Allocation



## Study Area

The Arpley Meadows Landfill site is located to the south west of Warrington Town Centre. It is bounded to the north by the meandering River Mersey and the Gateworth Industrial Estate beyond; to the east and south by Moore Nature Reserve and the Port of Warrington beyond; and agricultural land to the west.

## Planning context

The following policies within the Warrington Local Plan (July 2014) are applicable to the study area and immediate environs:

### *Policy CS 10 Strategic Proposal Waterfront & Arpley Meadow:*

A strategic policy for the wider area surrounding and inclusive of the landfill site to support mixed development, including housing. The policy highlights the need to protect its value as a habitat for biodiversity; the potential to enhance Green Infrastructure links, especially between the Town Centre, waterfront and wider Green Infrastructure network; and the potential to create a significant country park in close proximity to the Town Centre.

### *Policy SN 7 Enhancing Health and Well-being:*

The Council is seeking to reduce health inequalities within the borough by supporting the development of new, or the co-location and co-ordination of existing, health, social, cultural and community facilities. Where possible such facilities should be located in defined centres or neighbourhood hubs. The Council will require all development proposals to give full and proper consideration to maximising opportunities for contact with nature, cultural activities, exercise and active travel improving access to and promoting opportunities for 'grow your own' food.

### *Policy QE 3 Green Infrastructure*

The Council is working to protect existing GI provision and the functions this performs; increasing the functionality and improving the quality of existing / planned provision, including local networks and corridors; protecting and improving access to and connectivity between existing and planned provision to develop a continuous right of way and greenway network and integrated ecological system; securing new provision in order to cater for increases in demand arising from development particularly in areas where there are existing deficiencies assessed against standards set by the Council.

### *Policy QE 5 Biodiversity and Geodiversity*

The Council will work with partners to protect and where possible enhance sites of recognised nature and geological value. These efforts will be guided by the principles set out in National Planning Policy and those which underpin the strategic approach to the care and management of the borough's Green Infrastructure in its widest sense.

### *Policy QE 7 Ensuring a High Quality Place:*

The Council will look positively upon proposals that are designed to; be sustainable, durable, adaptable and energy efficient; create inclusive, accessible and safe environments; function well in relation to existing patterns of movement and activity; maintain and respect the landscape character and, where appropriate, distinctiveness of the surrounding countryside; and be visually attractive as a result of the inclusion of appropriate public space. Additional guidance to support the implementation of this policy is provided in the Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

### *Policy MP 3 Active Travel:*

The Council will expect that a high priority will be given to the needs and safety of pedestrians and cyclists in new development. New development should not compromise and should contribute to enhancing and developing integrated networks of continuous, attractive and safe routes for walking and cycling including improvements to roads, Rights of Way and the Greenway Network. This should include appropriate segregation of users and appropriate priority should be given to users at junctions.

### **Open Space and Recreation Provision SPD:**

An open space audit was undertaken in 2015 to analyse how the borough's open space is performing against the Fields in Trust (FiT) Planning & Design for Outdoor Sports and Play standards. The audit assessed open space provision across the 22 wards, working within established typologies including Equipped Play, Informal Play, Outdoor Sports, Parks and Gardens and Natural - Semi-natural Green Space. The findings related to the study area can be summarised as follows:

- Equipped Play: All four adjoining wards of Appleton, Bewsey & Whitecross, Great Sankey South and Penketh & Cuerdley are heavily deficient in their offer;
- Informal Play: Bewsey & Whitecross and Great Sankey South are below standard;
- Outdoor Sports: Bewsey & Whitecross is deficient by 0.6ha/1000 population;
- Parks and Gardens: Penketh & Cuerdley is deficient by 1.56ha/1000 population;
- Natural and Semi-natural Green Space: Bewsey & Whitecross and Great Sankey South are below standard.

WIDER SITE ANALYSIS

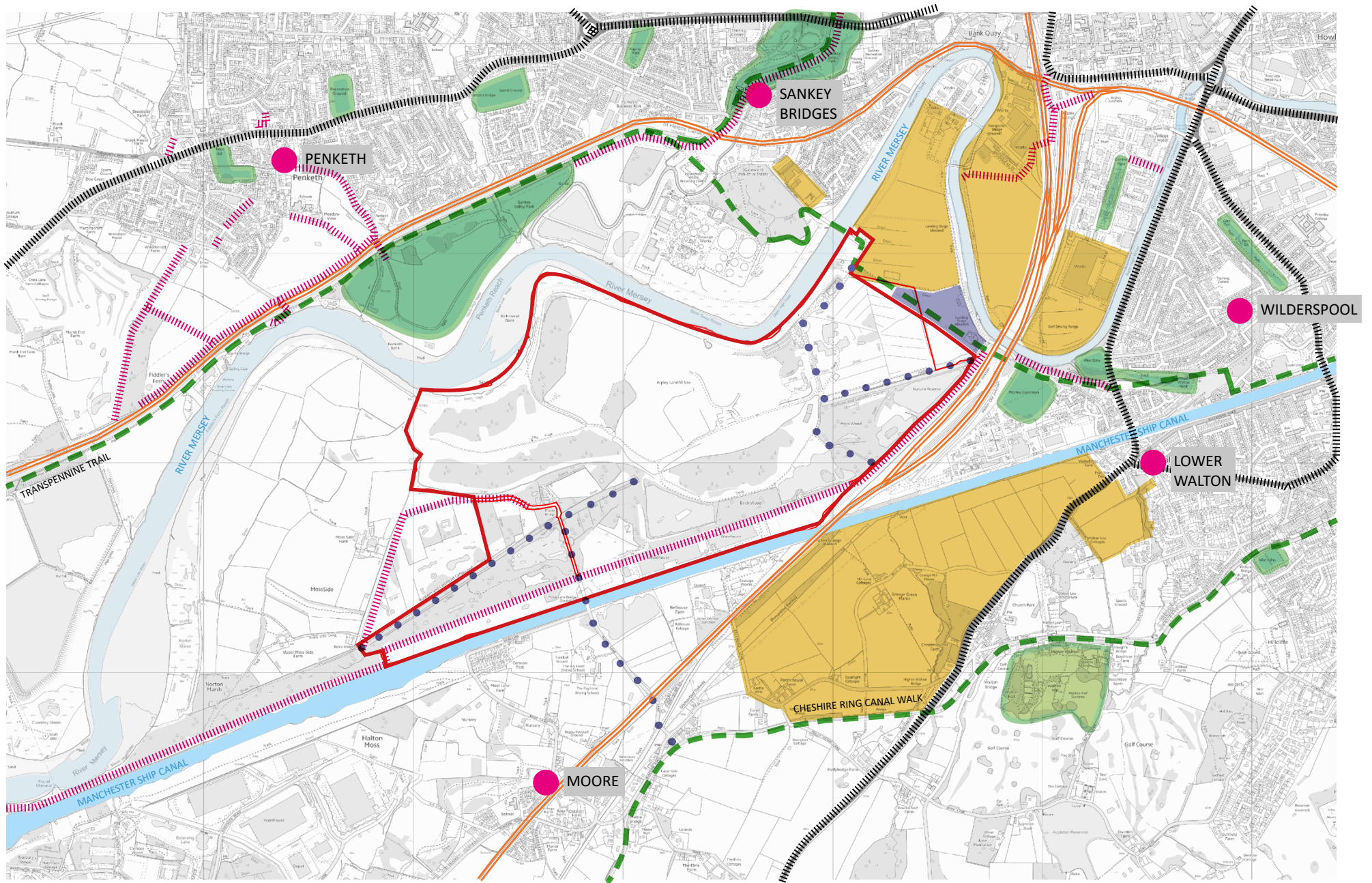













Figure 2 - Wider Site Analysis



**Figure 2 - Legend**

	Site Boundary
	Existing Open Green Space Provision
	Primary Vehicular Routes
	Cross Country Trails
	Existing PRoW
	Existing Pedestrian Links into Site Boundary
	Existing Residential Centres
	Proposed Residential-led Allocations in Warrington Local Plan
	Existing Rail Network
	Manchester Ship Canal
	Mixed Use Allocations in Warrington Local Plan

**Wider Site Analysis**

Site analysis work has been undertaken in order to better understand what the study area and wider surroundings comprise and the factors affecting how the existing landfill site will function as a country park.

Figure 2 identifies the existing open green space provision alongside existing residential centres and proposed residential-led development as part of the The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Masterplan. This enables us to visualise the future need for green space within this locality.

Figure 2 also highlights:

- Key vehicular routes within the wider area;
- Key pedestrian routes such as National Trails, Public Rights of Way; and
- Pedestrian routes providing access into the landfill site/Moore Nature Reserve.

Understanding the wider pedestrian footpath network, alongside existing and proposed residential development will ensure that future access points are identified and embedded into the Landscape Masterplan Proposals.

INTERNAL SITE ANALYSIS

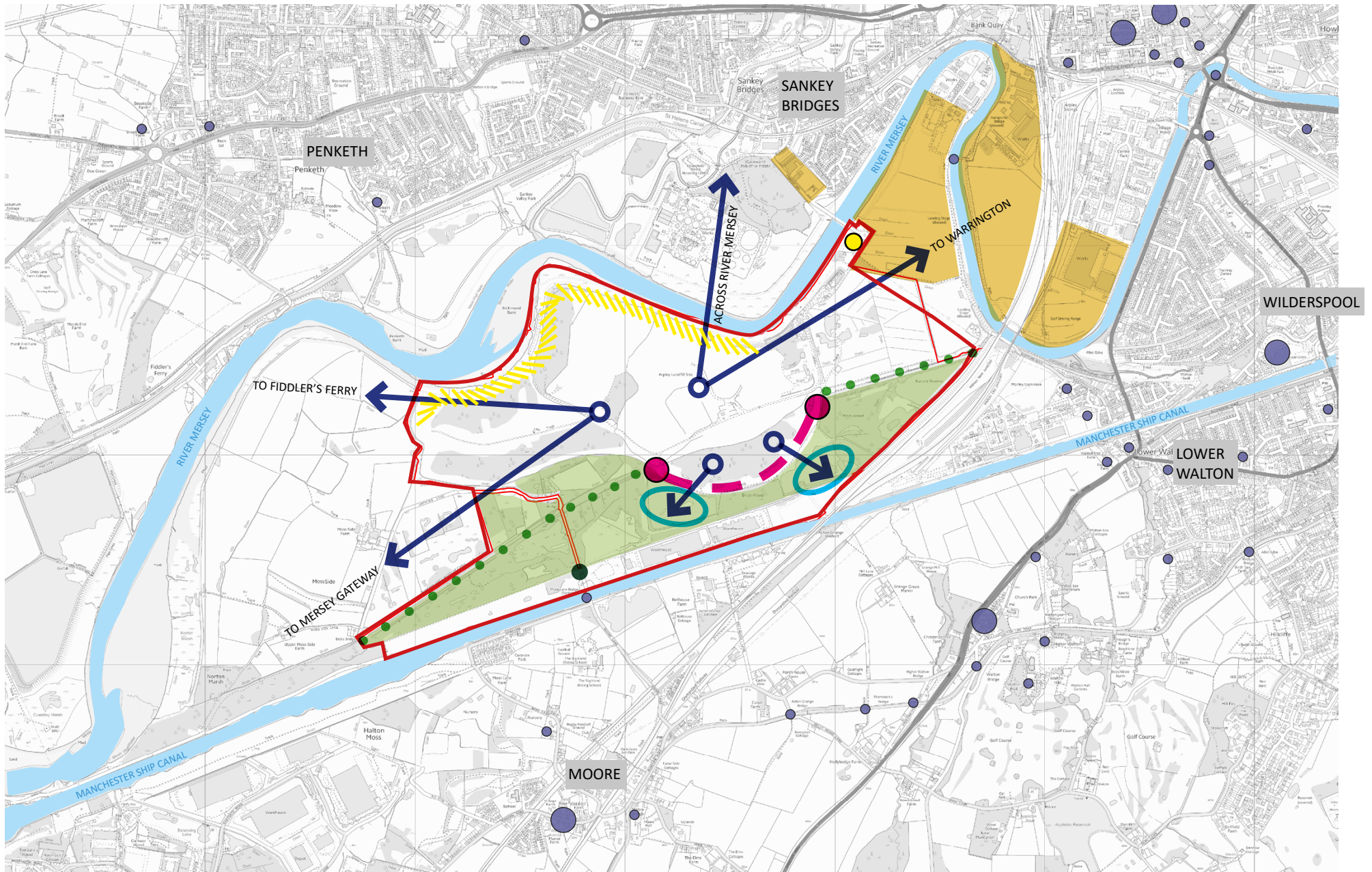















Figure 3 - Internal Site Analysis



**Figure 3 - Legend**

	Site Boundary
	Landfill Site Entrance
	Local Wildlife Site: Moore Nature Reserve
	Existing Moore Nature Reserve Entrance
	Key Connectivity Route
	Key Nodes
	Disused Runcorn & Latchford Canal walk
	Key Views
	River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal
	Focal Points
	Ecologically significant reed beds
	Proposed Residential-led Allocations in Warrington Local Plan
	Listed Buildings / Structures

**Internal Site Analysis**

Figure 3 identifies:

- The main entrances into Arpley Landfill Site and Moore Nature Reserve;
- Key nodes at junctions between the landfill site and nature reserve, along with a key connectivity route;
- Existing walking routes which have the potential to offer alternative access points into the site (disused Runcorn & Latchford Canal);
- Focal points, Listed Buildings and local landmarks which form the destination point of key views from the landfill’s distinctive landform;
- Site-specific features of character such as the proximity of the River Mersey and the potential this would offer as a riverside route connecting with the wider area; and
- Ecological habitats which require a degree of protection and which may present a barrier to pedestrian access.

### FCC Arpley Landfill Site Closure Landscape Scheme

The Arpley Landfill Site is currently subject to a restoration scheme (figure 4), which will introduce a network of 4-5m wide footpaths, along with areas of woodland and species rich grassland. The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Landscape Masterplan will make use of these and enhance the existing layers of footpath and woodland infrastructure.

### Ecological Considerations

The northern part of the site forms one large reedbed interspersed with woodland blocks, and this habitat forms part of the important green corridor which runs along the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal.

The reedbed and woodland habitat provides good linkages between the Mersey corridor and Moore Nature Reserve for bird species, and it is important that this habitat linkage is retained and not impeded by multi-user activities within the Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park.



View looking west to Fiddler's Ferry Power Station



View looking northwest to Warrington North Wastewater Treatment Works



# Part II : DEVELOPMENT OF VISION

Figure 4 - Arpley Landfill Restoration Scheme



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### Country Park Spatial Concepts

The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park provides approximately 165 hectares of Country Park and Nature Reserve for use by the local community of Warrington as well as the wider northwest region. These could range from passive activities such as guided walks, bike hire and orienteering to more active recreational activities such as high level adventure courses, bouldering and mountain biking for example. The activity areas will be set within a woodland framework where wildlife is encouraged to flourish. Viewing areas situated along circular walks will allow panoramic views out over the River Mersey and Cheshire Landscape. A family zone with picnic areas, boardwalks and childrens play areas will be located close to existing water-bodies.

A new Country Park drive will be created to allow easy access to the new Country Park, with new parking facilities that will be provided at convenient locations within the Country Park. A nature conservation zone will be created for mainly educational uses. In these areas ecological diversity will be maximised and access to these areas supervised in order to minimise the disturbance to local wildlife.

In order to better understand the potential range of activities that can be supported within a former landfill environment, we have undertaken site visits to landfill sites which have been developed into country parks within the region (Allyn Waters, Wrexham) and key wildlife sites such as Brockholes Nature Reserve.

Figure 5 identifies the range of zones that could be achieved within the country park environment, alongside visual precedents aligned to specific activities. These zones include:

- ① A **Nature Conservation Zone** for ecologically sensitive areas. Access would be restricted within these areas with a primary purpose for education;
- ② A **Passive Zone** which would feature quieter recreational activities such as bike riding and guided walks;
- ③ A **Family Zone** within a central hub area, with picnic table amenities and children's play facilities; and
- ④ An **Active Activity Zone** in carefully sited areas of the park, suited to high energy sports.



## SPATIAL CONCEPTS



Figure 5 - Spatial Concepts



# SPATIAL CONCEPTS











Figure 6 - The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Indicative Masterplan Proposal







# Landscape Masterplan Legend





## Consented Scheme Proposals

	Existing Woodland Planting Retained		Existing Footpaths & Tracks Resurfaced
	Proposed Woodland Planting		Existing Green Open Spaces
	Conservation Grassland		Pedestrian Routes into Site
	Existing Reed Beds / Aquatic Habitat		Existing Water Bodies Retained




## Ecological Off-setting Within the Country Park

	Additional Native Woodland Planting
	Additional Scrub Planting
	Additional Species Rich Grassland
	Additional Reed Planting



## Enhanced Recreation Within the Country Park

	Additional Viewing Platforms
	Additional Bouldering/Climbing area
	Additional Grass Mounds
	Additional Picnic Areas

## Additional Infrastructure Within the Country Park

	Additional Footpath Infrastructure
	Additional Node Spaces
	Additional Car Parking
	Proposed and Improved Vehicular Routes Within the Country Park

## The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Proposals

	Site Boundary		Existing and Consented Port Warrington Development
	Proposed & Improved Vehicular Routes		
	Indicative Employment Developments		
	Proposed Landscape Buffers/Mitigation Planting		

# Part II : DEVELOPMENT OF VISION

Warrington Waterfront : Port Warrington, Warrington Commercial Park & Moore Nature Reserve & Country Park

## The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Landscape Masterplan

The proposals for The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park include:

- 2no. Main Country Park Entrances located close to the former Moore Nature Reserve entrance and at a central node within the existing landfill site;
- Secondary Pedestrian Entrances along the disused Runcorn and Latchford canal and accessed from the existing PRoW;
- Proposed Car Parking at Main Entrances;
- Picnic Areas within the main Family Zone and adjacent to existing water-bodies, to make use of the ambient atmosphere;
- Outdoor Performance Area and Grass Mounds for informal seating;
- Young Children’s Play and Adventure Play Area which makes the most of the existing woodland setting;
- Woodland Trails within existing woodland areas;
- A Sculpture Trail;
- Bouldering / Rock Climbing;
- An opportunity for a central Sculptural Feature; and
- Viewing points to take in the panoramic views across open grassland towards the northeast and southwest.

## Ecological Off-Setting

The proposed expansion of Port Warrington would lead to the loss of part of the existing Moore Nature Reserve. The Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designated in 1991 for its woodland, grassland and reed bed habitats as well as for the bird species, invertebrate population, variety of plant species and large amphibian population that are present at the reserve. The reserve is dominated by a mix of woodland habitats, including wet woodland, broadleaved woodland and semi-natural broad leaved woodland. There are also numerous water bodies, swamp land and areas of grassland habitat.

Ecologists TEP have undertaken an Ecological Assessment of the Nature Reserve and an offsetting strategy will be implemented to offset for habitat loss through the expansion of Port Warrington.

Biodiversity offsetting will therefore be required to replace habitats that will be lost to the development and to ensure that there is a net gain in biodiversity. The majority of this biodiversity offsetting will form part of the The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Proposals. In addition to the replacement of lost woodland habitats, additional mitigation measures to encourage invertebrates, bats, water vole, badger, fish, reptiles, red squirrel, polecat, hedgehog and brown hare to become established within The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park will also be required.

The majority of the tree cover within the nature reserve is broadleaved woodland, with some wet woodland and scrub. Broadleaf woodland species include cherry, field maple, oak, birch and willow species. Wet woodland species include alder, downy birch, and willow species. Scrub or shrub species include blackthorn, hawthorn, gorse and elder. Therefore the biodiversity offsetting proposals that form part of the The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park scheme will seek to mirror the type and mix of woodland that is currently present at Moore Nature Reserve. The majority of the planting that forms part of the additional enhancements will therefore be broadleaf woodland with some areas of wet woodland, scrub and reed beds. Additional species rich grassland is also proposed in order to provide additional habitat for birds, mammals, and invertebrates

as well as to increase the variety of plant species within Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park.

The indicative Country Park Masterplan includes the following areas to enhance and habitats which will include:

- C. 33 hectares of additional Native Woodland;
- C. 6 hectares of additional scrub planting;
- C. 12 hectares of additional wildflower species rich grasslands; and
- C. 1 hectare of additional reed planting.



## Aims of Proposals

This document sets out the vision for the Country Park. The proposals will be refined as the detail of the Waterfront scheme develops. The aim of the Country Park Proposal is to provide a Country Park for the residents of Warrington and beyond that significantly enhances the biodiversity of the site as well as its landscape character. The new Country Park has the potential to become a facility of regional significance providing a range of recreational uses and visitor experiences. Currently a facility of this kind does not exist in the northwest at this scale. The proposals will serve to 'relocate' part of the Moore Nature Reserve into the wider Country Park provide and overall ecological net gain. The new Country Park will provide facilities for a variety of different visitors undertaking a range of activities. This will include quieter recreational uses such as bird watching and also studying the flora and fauna within the native conservation zone area. Peel will work with the Council to secure the emerging funding scheme for the future maintenance of the Country Park.



Local signpost to Colin's Hide and Trans Pennine Trail



Pathway running alongside the Runcorn and Latchford Canal





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