

# **Sustainability Appraisal**

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

November 2021

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## **Client**

Peel Ports Group

## **Turley Reference**

PEEM3083

## **Document Status**

Final

## **Date**

November 2021

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# 1. Introduction

This Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Peel Ports Group (hereafter referred to as Peel) to demonstrate how Warrington Waterfront could deliver valuable employment and open space in a sustainable location.

This report has been structured to support the extension of Port Warrington and a new business park, Warrington Commercial Park and the new Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park. It identifies the sustainability of the proposed development, in the context of relevant national planning policies and to support the potential allocation of the site in the emerging Local Plan.

## Site and Surroundings

Port Warrington comprises 75 hectares, and proposed to be located within the major development intervention, Warrington Waterfront.

Warrington Waterfront lies approximately 3.5km west from Warrington town centre. The site is bounded to the north by the River Mersey, and residential and industrial development beyond this. Arable land, the West Coast Mainline Route, further industrial and residential development associated with the town of Latchford extend to the east of the site, with farmland and the River Mersey Estuary to the west and Manchester Ship Canal to the south.

## Site Opportunity

A Vision Document has been prepared to set out the vision for the development of Warrington Waterfront, including the expansion of Port Warrington. The Vision Document focuses on the following aspects of the proposal at Warrington Waterfront:

- Port Warrington;
- Warrington Commercial Park; and
- Remediation of Arpley Landfill Site and creation of Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park.

It is evident that the site offers a unique and extensive opportunity to create a sustainable business space, whilst also creating a space for recreational use for nearby residents.



**Figure 1: Illustrative Masterplan**

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

The Appraisal is set out under the following section headings which demonstrate how the proposed development site can deliver sustainable employment land, reflecting the objectives and requirements of both local and national planning policy.

**1. Policy Context** – This section sets out planning policy with regards to the principles and objectives relating to sustainable development in Warrington Borough Council.

**2. Sustainability Appraisal Methodology** – This section provides details on the methodology adopted for the following sections of this assessment.

**3. Delivering Sustainable Development at Warrington Waterfront** – Includes a review of the impact of the development against Warrington

Borough Council’s Sustainability Appraisal objectives.

## 2. Policy Context

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant planning policy and guidance regarding Climate Change and carbon emissions for new non-domestic developments from a national and local perspective.

### National Policy and Guidance

This section sets out a summary of current national guidance and policy in relation to sustainable development.

#### UK Sustainable Development Strategy

In 2005, the Government published an updated strategy for implementing sustainable development across the UK.

This strategy acts as an overarching document from which a range of specific policies and legislation was derived. Although published in 2005, the strategy has taken a recently renewed focus in light of the government's definition of Sustainable Development in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

One of the key aims of this strategy is to recognise the threats of climate change and ensure that the UK develops a strategy to mitigate and adapt to this phenomenon.

The document established five key principles that will underpin the national sustainable development strategy:

- Living within Environmental Limits;
- Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society;

- Achieving a Sustainable Economy;
- Promoting Good Governance; and
- Using sound science responsibly.

The strategy will be implemented at a national level through the development of more specific strategies at a government department or sector level.

With regards to planning and the built environment, this document sets the basis for the development of plans and Policies that promotes development that mitigates and adapts to climate change.

#### Climate Change Act

The Climate Change Act (2008) sets a legally binding target for reducing UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by least 80% on 1990 levels by 2050.

At the end of June 2016, the Government published the Fifth Carbon Budget. The budget sets a target for emission cuts of 57% from 1990 levels by 2030.

In June 2019 the Government announced the extension of the carbon reduction target to net zero, including maritime and aviation emissions for the first time, committing the UK to a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050.

#### UK Carbon Plan

In 2011, the Government published an updated Carbon Plan setting out how the UK will achieve decarbonisation and make the transition to a low carbon economy. It sets this objective within a framework of mitigating and adapting to climate change and maintaining energy security in a way that minimises costs and maximises benefits to the economy.

With regards to development, the Carbon Plan presents the Government's approach to promoting



the delivery of low carbon, resilient and adaptive buildings and enabling sustainable transportation as positive contributions to aid national carbon reduction targets.

In 2013, the Green Construction Board published, Low Carbon Routemap for the Built Environment. This sets out a trajectory aimed at delivering an 80% cut in UK built environment carbon emissions by 2050 compared to 1990 levels.

In 2015, a progress report was published which found that annual emissions relating to the built environment in the UK had actually increased since 2009, primarily due to an increase in gas consumption from heating. The report states: *“There has been a growing divergence occurring over just a few years (2009 through 2013). Given the steepness of the trajectory required to meet the ambition for built environment carbon reductions (and statutory targets for the UK as a whole), a significant transformation from the ongoing ‘status quo’ trajectory is needed”.*

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Most recently updated in July 2021 the NPPF provides a frame work for the development of locally-prepared plans and the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that: ‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’.

It states clearly that in order to deliver sustainable development, the planning system must perform three distinct objectives, aligned to the three pillars of sustainability, which must not be taken in isolation and should be pursued jointly:

An **economic** objective to contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

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

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

These objectives are key to the preparation of local plans and the NPPF sets out a number of key themes for consideration which guide the preparation of local plans and policies, ensuring the delivery of sustainable development.

### **Planning Policy Guidance**

The revised Planning Practice Guidance (PPG / The Guidance) provides further advice on various planning issues associated with development, including those linked to sustainability and renewable energy and underpins the policies within the NPPF.

The Guidance is an important material consideration in planning decisions and should generally be followed unless there are clear reasons not to. It sets out how local authorities should include policies that protect the local environment and strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change and supports developments that are functional and adaptable for the future.

The Guidance reiterates that local authorities should set sustainability policies for new housing that are in line with the government’s Housing Standards Review.

The latest update to the PPG in April 2016 confirms Local Authorities have the option to set technical requirements exceeding the minimum requirements of the Building Regulations in respect

of access, water and space where sufficient evidence is produced to justify the target.

The Guidance also states that the distribution and design of new development, and the potential for servicing sites through sustainable transport solutions, are particularly important considerations.

### National Design Guide

The National Design Guide published in October 2019 forms part of PPG and supports the objective for good design as set out in the NPPF. The Guide introduces ten characteristics of well-designed places which work together to create development character and community, while positively addressing environmental issues affecting climate.

### Local Planning Framework

Warrington Borough Council's Adopted Development Plan consists of a suite of documents to guide decisions in the Borough. It comprises the following documents:

- Local Plan Core Strategy (2014);
- Interactive Policies Map
- Topic-Based SPDs (2010-2015); and
- Planning Development Briefs.

### Adopted Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-2027 (Adopted 2014)

The Council's Core Strategy is the overarching strategic policy document for the Borough, identifying the location and level of development up to 2027.

**Policy CS1: Overall Spatial Strategy – Delivering Sustainable Development** – The Policy states that the Council will welcome and approve sustainable development proposals.

**Policy CS2: Overall Spatial Strategy – Quantity and Distribution of Development** – The Policy states that up to 277 hectares of land for business, industrial and storage/distribution uses is available over the plan period. Development will be determined by several principles, including:

- Major warehousing and distribution developments will be located away from areas sensitive to heavy vehicle movements, with direct access to the primary road network, and where possible with access to rail and/or the Ship Canal.

**Policy CS10: Strategic Proposal – Waterfront & Arpley Meadows** – The Policy states that the Waterfront/Arpley Meadows area presents a sizeable opportunity for mixed development including housing in a sustainable location. The strategic development proposal will consider:

- The need to protect its value as a habitat for biodiversity;
- The potential to enhance Green Infrastructure links; and
- The potential to create a significant country park in close proximity to the Town Centre, including the Arpley tip area when landfill operations have finished and restoration is complete.

**Policy CS11: Strategic Opportunity – Port Warrington** – The Policy states that the Council will support sustainable economic activity generated and sustained by the Manchester Ship Canal. It is noted that account should be taken of:

- The effect of the proposed development on the health and wellbeing of local communities;
- Impacts on the openness of the Green Belt and the character of the countryside; and
- Any adverse effects on other sites of nature conservation importance or water quality, to ensure that these effects are



avoided, mitigated or compensated as appropriate.

The Council recognises that further development at Port Warrington beyond the permitted site may be capable of justifying a departure from Green Belt policy by virtue of the fixed location of the infrastructure within the Green Belt and the potential for multi-modal sustainable transport benefits and contributing to promoting wider sustainable growth.

The Policy states that Peel, in partnership with the Council and others, will develop a plan to accommodate existing and projected freight traffic, to address in particular local congestion at swing bridges.

**Policy SN7: Enhancing Health and Wellbeing – The** Policy states that the Council and its partners will seek to ensure that planning helps to promote healthy lifestyles across all of the Borough's communities. The Council will require all development proposals to give full and proper consideration to:

- Ensuring good and convenient access to employment and training opportunities as well as social and community services and facilities;
- Maximising opportunities for contact with nature, cultural activities, exercise and active travel; and
- Maximising opportunities for renewable and decentralised energy.

**Policy QE1: Decentralised Energy Networks and Low Carbon Development –** The Policy states that within strategic locations, proposals and opportunities will be required to:

- Meet a proportion (at least 10%) of their energy needs from renewable or low carbon sources;
- Establish a connect to an existing decentralised energy network where appropriate or available; or

- Make provisions to enable future connectivity in terms of site layout, heating design and site-wide infrastructure design.

Development proposals in all locations should be in compliance with the energy hierarchy, as follows:

- 1) Reducing the need for energy consumption;
- 2) Using energy as efficiently as possible;
- 3) Using renewable and low carbon energy where possible; and
- 4) Using fossil fuels and/or nuclear power.

**Policy QE3: Green Infrastructure** – The Policy states that the assessment of applications will be focussed on improving the quality of existing provision including local networks and corridors to increase its attractiveness as a sport, leisure and recreation opportunity and its value as a habitat for biodiversity.

**Policy QE4: Flood Risk** – The Policy states that an FRA will be required for proposals for new development in Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3.

**Policy QE5: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** – The Policy states that the Council will work with partners to protect and where possible, enhance sites of recognised nature and ecological value.

**Policy QE6: Environment and Amenity Protection** – The Policy states that the Council will only support development which would not lead to an adverse impact on the environment or amenity of future occupiers or those currently occupying or adjoining nearby properties. The following will be considered:

- The integrity and continuity of tidal and fluvial flood defences;
- The quality of water bodies;
- Land and air quality;
- Noise and vibration levels;
- Levels of pollution; and
- Effect and timing of traffic movement to, from and within the site.

#### Policy MP1: General Transport Principles – The

Policy states that the Council will support proposals that:

- Reduce the need for private car use; and
- Manage development in favour of public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.

**Policy MP3: Active Travel** – The Policy states that new development should contribute to enhancing and developing integrated networks of continuous, attractive and safe routes for walking and cycling. Enhancements and improvements should look to increase accessibility and make the most of potential environmental, social and health benefits.

**Policy MP4: Public Transport** – The Policy states that development should aim to make public transport a viable and attractive alternative by:

- Integrating with existing public transport infrastructure and services as far as possible; and
- Providing additional public transport infrastructure and services reasonably related in scale of the proposed development where existing facilities are not available.

**Policy MP5: Freight Transport** – The Policy states that proposals for freight related development will be supported where they achieve a reduction in road traffic kilometres through their location and/or where they reduce the impact of freight traffic on local or inappropriate routes.

The Council will encourage development which generates significant movement of freight to locate to sites served by rail and/or water.

**Policy MP8: Waste** – The Policy states that the Council will encourage waste minimisation in new developments, the use of recycled materials, the sustainable transportation of waste and the preparation of site waste management plans.

### Emerging Local Plan

Warrington Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will guide the future development of the Borough. Warrington are currently consulting on the draft Local Plan (Updated Proposed Submission Version; September 2021). The relevant emerging policies from the draft Local Plan are summarised below.

### **Warrington Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021-2038 (September 2021)**

The Updated Submission Version Local Plan contains the vision, emerging objectives and overall strategy for development across Warrington Borough Council. The following objectives and policies are relevant to the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront.

**Policy GB1: Green Belt** – The Policy states that land at part of Warrington Waterfront has been removed from the Green Belt, and the boundaries have been amended.

**Policy INF1: Sustainable Travel and Transport** – The Policy states that development is expected to be located in sustainable and accessible locations, or in locations that can be made sustainable and accessible. Priority should be given to walking, cycling and public transport within its design, and it should aim to reduce the need to travel by private car. Improvements to public transport infrastructure and services are welcomed.

**Policy DC6: Quality of Place** – The Policy states that good design should be at the core of all development proposals, with regard to various principles, including:

- Design and layout – new open space which enhances and/or provides mitigation against loss of biodiversity;
- Energy efficiency – encourage environmental design principles; reduce energy water and use; encourage the use of renewable/low carbon technology as appropriate.

**Policy ENV1: Waste Management** – The Policy states that the Council will promote sustainable

waste management in accordance with the Waste Hierarchy.

**Policy ENV2: Flood Risk and Water Management** – The policy states that the Council will only support development proposals where the risk of flooding has been fully assessed, understood and justified, with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures where necessary.

**Policy ENV7: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development** – The Policy states that proposals for new development for housing, employment or other uses will be required to minimise carbon emissions.

**Policy ENV8: Environmental and Amenity Protection** – The policy states that all development is required so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact on the natural and built environment, and/or general levels of amenity.

### **Planning Policy Summary**

Both local and national policy aims to ensure the delivery of sustainable development.

The Updated Submission Version Local Plan indicates a focus on the promotion of growth within Warrington – specifically siting the need for Green Belt release, the development of infrastructure and the provision of employment land. Collectively, this feeds into the vision for Warrington to become a locally-led New City at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse.

The following sections of this Sustainability Appraisal demonstrate that the development of Warrington Waterfront, including the expansion of Port Warrington is a sustainable option for delivering much needed industrial land and a new country park in Warrington Borough.

# 3. Sustainability Appraisal Methodology

To be sustainable, development should be in a sustainable location and provide local economic, social and environmental benefits in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF.

The following sections illustrate that the proposed development site is in a sustainable location and supports the sustainability objectives of the emerging Local Plan.

This Appraisal consists of the following:

**3. Delivering Sustainable Development at Port Warrington** – To assess the development against the sustainability objectives identified through the SEA/SA process which will be used to assess the Local Plan.

To support this assessment, a range of evidence has been used which includes:

- Technical studies in support of the site, including:
  - Port Warrington Transport Appraisal, i-Transport, November 2021;
  - Port Warrington and Arpley Meadows, Warrington – Initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal, The Environment Partnership, March 2018;
  - Ecological Assessment: Port Warrington Extension Moore,

Warrington, The Environment Partnership, March 2018;

- Warrington Waterfront - Port Warrington Preliminary Planning Advice Statement, Shepherd Gilmour Consulting Engineers, March 2018;
- Air Quality Assessment: Warrington Waterfront Miller Goodall, August 2019;
- Warrington Waterfront Development Framework, Peel, November 2021.

- The professional expertise of Turley Sustainability;

- Reference to the policies of:

- The Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2014);
- Warrington Borough Council Local Plan: Updated Preferred Development Option Consultation, Warrington Borough Council, September 2021;
- Warrington Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal: Interim SA Report, AECOM, August 2021

## 4. Delivering Sustainable Development at Warrington Waterfront

The local sustainability appraisal objectives can be used to demonstrate the sustainability positives of the site's location in relation to the allocation for employment / industrial / business use.

To demonstrate that Warrington Waterfront constitutes sustainable development, it has been assessed against the SA objectives of the Local Plan Review (August 2021).

The following section demonstrates how the development responds to the Council's objectives as defined in the SA. Warrington Borough Council's Site Appraisal Framework indicates themes, objectives and specific criteria against which sites have been appraised. As such, this section will deliver the same level of assessment, responding to the criteria related to each specific objective, and will include commentary at a more strategic level related to each SA objective.

**Appendix 1** provides the full list of themes, objectives and criteria which gives additional detail on the criteria used to assess the sustainability performance of the site in accordance with the Council's methodology. It should be noted that the proposed development has only been independently scored against criteria outlined by the Council which is appropriate for 'employment' development. Each criteria is then assessed to give wider strategic commentary in relation to each wider, Sustainability Appraisal Objective. Where appropriate, reference has been made to supporting technical evidence.

This assessment utilises all of the technical information listed in Section 2, along with the professional expertise of Turley Sustainability.

### SA Objective: Economy & Regeneration

*EC1: Would site development lead to the loss of employment land?*

Through the expansion of the already-consented Port Warrington site and the provision of Warrington Commercial Park, the development has the potential to provide approximately 40ha of employment land.

This would help to meet employment land needs/targets within the Warrington Waterfront development, and the Plan area more widely.

As such, the development will have a significant positive effect on this Criterion.

*EC2: Distance to Principle Road Network*

Warrington Waterfront is well located in relation to its proximity to the principle road network.

The development of the Western Link Road, connecting the A56 Chester Road in Higher Walton with the A57 Sankey Way in Great Sankey will provide new access to the port, reduce traffic through the town and enhance the accessibility of the site for future use of the development. Sustainable travel options are highlighted in SA Objective: Accessibility.

As such, the development will have a significant positive effect on this Criterion.

*EC3: How close is the site to key employment sites?*

The site will contribute positively to the availability of employment sites across Warrington; the proposed development will feature an additional approximate 26ha of employment land that will serve Warrington and the wider region.

The Sustainability Appraisal indicates that this criterion is relevant only to housing developments.



Due to its proximity to and easy accessibility however, Warrington Waterfront will help to create a live-work environment for residents and users of the proposed development. Through the provision of employment opportunities near residential areas such as Lower Walton, Sankey Bridges, Penketh, Higher Walton and beyond, the development will contribute to the relief of levels of deprivation.

In this context, the proposed development will have a significant positive effect on this criterion.

#### *Strategic Commentary*

More widely, the site will contribute to positive economic growth for Warrington Borough through the construction and occupation of new employment space, creating a range of direct and indirect employment opportunities and economic benefits to Warrington and the region more broadly.

In this context, the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront is scored as having a significant positive effect on economy and regeneration.

### **SA Objective: Health & Wellbeing**

The SA states that a site allocation can only affect health and wellbeing if it is developed for housing. The development at Warrington Waterfront challenges this, with the site integrating features contributing to a healthier lifestyle.

The responses to the following criteria highlight how Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park will have a positive effect upon this Objective, with HW2 and HW3 answered with one response.

*HW2: Is the area supported by community facilities?*

*HW3: Access to local natural greenspace?*

The development proposals of Warrington Waterfront include the remediation of Arpley

Meadows Landfill Site, and the creation of Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park in its place. The country park will include existing woodland zones and will feature dedicated activity zones for local residents and future users to help improve health and wellbeing.

The country park will be a major contribution to the city centre parklands or 'green necklace' - green route linkages of open space around Warrington Centre<sup>1</sup>.

The Site Appraisal Framework states that where access to greenspace meets the following criteria, it will be considered as having a positive effect on the SA objective:

- At least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300metres from home; and
- One accessible 20 hectare greenspace site within 2km.

Using these measures, it can be established that Warrington Waterfront will have a significant positive effect on this criterion.

#### *HW4: Access to formal play space*

A component of the proposed development includes a country park, which will comprise opportunities for recreation and play, including the creation of a country park.

In this context it is considered that the proposed development will have a significant positive effect on this criterion.

#### *Strategic Commentary*

In addition to the effects outlined in relation to each criterion, health and wellbeing will be positively impacted upon from this development in other ways.

As identified in the SA, the provision of development of land for employment opportunities will help to reduce unemployment and elements of deprivation in the long term.

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<sup>1</sup> City Centre Masterplan, Warrington Borough Council et al, November 2016

There is also the opportunity for the development of active travel to the site, which is further explored in SA Objective Accessibility.

In this context, the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront is scored as having a significant positive effect on health and wellbeing.

### SA Objective: Accessibility

The SA highlights a range of key services and facilities that are deemed key for the allocation of housing and employment sites. Though this aspect of Warrington Waterfront will be an employment site only, the services and facilities that have been specified within the SA report with an assigned 'housing and jobs' use have been included within the parameters of this Sustainability Appraisal. The following two criteria and the appraisal of the site in relation to them respond only to the employment or jobs-related criteria within this objective.

#### *ACC3: How well served is the site by a bus service?*

Warrington Waterfront is acknowledged as not currently accessible by public transport. The future development proposals will be accompanied by a Bus Access Strategy. This will consider the parameters of the existing network, the impact and utilisation of phased development and nature and bespoke operations of the 24/7 port usage.

To be regarded as having a significant positive effect on this SA objective, Warrington Borough Council has stated that a regular bus service must be within 200m of the site.

Policy guidance by the Institute of Highways and Transport (IHT) includes suggested acceptable walking distances and recommends a preferred maximum distances for specific services. The following distances are classified as reasonable and walkable from a given site, or location:

- Within easy walking distance (800m); and
- Up to 2km maximum walking distance.

In addition, the Transport Appraisal<sup>2</sup> notes that a framework will be established for the provision of bus services and a mechanism to fund such services. The Framework will include details of destinations to be served, operating times and service frequencies.

In *this* context, it is considered the development will have a positive effect upon this criterion.

#### *ACC4: How accessible is the site to the nearest train station?*

Warrington Bank Quay Station is located approximately 2.2km from the development site. It lies on the West Coast Main Line and offers easy access to Glasgow Central, Edinburgh Waverley, London Euston, Manchester Airport and Liverpool Lime Street. The station is accessible by foot and contains 36 cycle storage cycles.

Within the Waterfront area there are several cycle enabling features connecting the area to the city centre, including:

- An unsurfaced cycle path running from the river to the existing Port Warrington;
- A road running along the western bank of the Mersey, which as identified by the Council has a high level of cycle ability; and
- The Trans Pennine Trail and National Cycle Network Route 62 crosses the site, running along the edge of what will become the Warrington Commercial Park.

Should the site be allocated, the potential for a bus service connecting the site to the train station, and as such enhancing its accessibility as an employment site, will be further investigated.

Additional local train stations include Sankey for Penketh and Warrington Central, both approximately 3km from the site.

The SA states that where the nearest station is between 1.2km and 3km from the site, it is determined to have a positive effect on the criterion. In this context, Warrington Waterfront

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<sup>2</sup> Port Warrington Transport Appraisal, i-Transport, November 2021

will have a positive effect on this aspect of accessibility.

### *Strategic Commentary*

As the site is in close proximity to residential areas, the enhancement of opportunities to access the site sustainably is a key consideration.

The integration of sustainable links will be considered to a further extent at detailed design stage, including the following:

- The assessment of current access provision from nearby residential areas;
- Consideration of the proposed cycle route along Birchwood Lane; and
- A review of the existing PRoW network, including the coast to coast route – the Trans-Pennine Trail, and the identification of improvements or diversions will be undertaken.

In this context, the proposed development will have a positive effect on this SA objective.

## **SA Objective: Natural Resources**

### *NR1: What are the potential impacts on air quality?*

The Air Quality Assessment<sup>3</sup> states that the short-term air quality objectives are not expected to be exceeded at the development site, and it is thus considered suitable for its proposed allocated use and the impact of air quality is not a constraint to the delivery of the proposals.

Port Warrington is strategically well located in terms of the road network, particularly upon consideration of the planned/proposed Western Link Road.

Whilst development at the site has the potential to increase traffic through the increased use of the site, mitigation measures will be in place. These will include access to public transport and the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes to reduce congestion issues, contributing to the reduction of private vehicle use and its impact on air quality.

Additionally, the site sits outside of the Warrington Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and Motorway AQMA.

The development at Port Warrington contributes to the broader national Governmental vision to reduce road haulage and its associated emissions through the provision or transfer of emissions to sustainable rail and water links, fostering a low carbon system that reduces road haulage, and leads to improved air quality.

In this context, the proposed development has the potential to deliver positive effect against this criterion.

### *NR2: Could development of the site lead to the remediation of land potentially affected by contamination?*

Whilst the site itself is not affected by contamination, its current uses include Arpley Meadows Landfill, which is adjacent to the Moore Nature Reserve. The Arpley Landfill site has now been capped and is in the process of being remediated with new areas of woodland and grassland creation.

Considering that the remediation is not specifically in relation to contamination, the proposed development will deliver a neutral effect against this criterion.

### *NR3: Would allocation of the site result in the loss of High Quality Agricultural Land?*

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.

In this regard, the proposed development has the potential to deliver a positive effect in relation to this criterion.

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<sup>3</sup> Air Quality Assessment: Warrington Waterfront Miller Goodall, August 2019

*NR4: Does the site fall within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone, as identified by the Environment Agency?*

As identified by the Environment Agency, the site falls outside of any groundwater source protection zones.

The Site Appraisal Framework indicates that where this is the case, the site will have a positive effect on the SA criterion, the highest outcome possible in regards to this.

*NR5: Is the site within an identified flood zone?*

The Environment Agency Flood Map shows that Warrington Waterfront is mainly within Flood Zones 1 and 3. The Site Appraisal Framework recognises that where a site is not “wholly within flood zone 2/3 it should be possible to avoid and/or mitigate impacts.”

The Preliminary Flood Risk Advice<sup>4</sup> notes prepared for both the Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park and Port Warrington sites separately indicate that Arpley Meadows is located within Flood Zone 1 and is thus at low probability of flooding. The Port Warrington assessed site is within Flood Zones 1,2 and 3. The Flood Risk Advice Note indicates that the land uses at Port Warrington will be either Port Use, which is water compatible and/or industrial units, classified as less vulnerable.

In accordance with the rationale in the Site Appraisal Framework illustrated above, it is recommended that buildings are located in Flood Zones 1 and 2, and parking or yards are located in Flood Zone 3, minimising the risk and exposure to flooding.

Whilst the development is in its preliminary stage, due consideration is being given to inclusion of the following:

- Flood resistance and resilience;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems; and

- Flood warning and evacuation plans.

Although flood risk will be mitigated, the Site Appraisal Framework indicates that sites with more than 30% in Flood Zones 2 or 3, must be scored as having a likely negative effect on the criterion. It is however commented that appropriate mitigation will be in place to avoid any negative impacts.

In this context, the development will have a neutral effect on this criterion.

*RU3: Is there potential for safeguarded or identified mineral reserves to be sterilised?*

Warrington Waterfront is scored as having a likely neutral effect on this criterion as it does not sit within an identified area.

*Strategic Commentary*

As the proposed development will see appropriate mitigation to manage the potential effects of or on natural resources, the proposed development will have a neutral effect on this objective.

## **SA Objective: Built & Natural Heritage**

*BHN1: Proximity to designated heritage assets*

*BHN2: Effects upon the significance and setting of heritage assets/the historic environment*

There are no designated or non-designated built heritage assets located within the Site. Due consideration has been given to the closest listed building; the Grade II Listed Moore Lane Swing Bridge, located to the south of the site, spanning the Manchester Ship Canal and forming part of the entrance to the site along Moore Lane. The Heritage Note indicates that redevelopment of the site will not alter or diminish the significance of the Swing Bridge, and that mitigation measures including landscape buffers would reduce any potential effect on this asset.

Representations made by Halton Borough Council<sup>5</sup> indicate concern around the impact of increased

<sup>4</sup> Warrington Waterfront - Port Warrington Preliminary Planning Advice Statement, Shepherd Gilmour Consulting Engineers, March 2018

<sup>5</sup> Response to Warrington Local Plan Consultation, Halton Borough Council, December 2017

traffic on Moore Lane Swing Bridge and show concern around whether the existing vehicular access will remain or be removed. It is deemed that traffic flows likely to be generated by the development can be accommodated by the surrounding highway network, and through the proposed Western Link.

In this context, the proposed development will have a positive effect on this SA criterion.

*BHN3: Capacity of the landscape to accommodate development, while respecting its character*

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal undertaken by TEP highlights that the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront will align with the prevailing pattern of development. Port Warrington and Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park will, in addition, add to the green infrastructure that provides the setting to the existing development.

Fundamentally, development would not alter landscape character to a degree that would change the key characteristics of the area.

In this context, the proposed development will deliver a neutral effect against this criterion.

*Strategic commentary*

As the site will not impact or disrupt any nearby heritage sites, and will respect the existing character of the area, it will overall have a neutral effect on this SA objective.

## SA Objective: Biodiversity & Geodiversity

*BG1: Could allocation of the site have a potential impact on a European Site, SPA or SAC?*

*BG2: Could allocation of the site have a potential impact on an SSSI?*

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<sup>6</sup> Ecological Assessment: Port Warrington Extension Moore, Warrington, The Environment Partnership, October 2019

<sup>7</sup> Port Warrington, Moore Nature Reserve and Arpley Meadows Arboricultural Walkover Survey and Desktop Assessment, TEP, March 2018

An Ecological Assessment has been undertaken by TEP in October 2019<sup>6</sup>, establishing the proximity of Warrington Waterfront to designated international, national and local sites.

The Warrington Waterfront site contains no international or national biodiversity or conservation designations. There are four internationally designated sites are located within 10km of the proposed development site, including the Mersey Estuary SPA and SSSI, and Manchester Mosses SAC. These are all outside of the 400m catchment area and so will be unaffected by the development. The Assessment states that mitigation measures must be adhered to at all times throughout the development

In this context, Warrington Waterfront will have a likely positive effect upon this criterion.

*BG3: Could allocation of the site have a potential adverse impact on designated Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserve, RIGs, Potential Wildlife Sites or any other site of wildlife or geodiversity value?*

An Arboricultural Walkover Survey and Desktop Assessment has been undertaken by TEP,<sup>7</sup> showing that there is no ancient woodland within or adjacent to the site.

The Ecological Assessment<sup>8</sup> indicates that the site adjoins one Local Nature Reserve – the Oxmoor Wood LNR along the Manchester Ship Canal. Additionally, the site is within 2km of another LNR and there are a further twenty one non-statutory LWS located within 2km of the proposed development site, including Moore Nature reserve which is within the site.

Assessments conducted by Warrington Borough Council in the Interim SA and representations made by Moore Parish Council and Halton Borough Council commented that the development will have a minor or significant negative effect on

<sup>8</sup> Ecological Assessment: Port Warrington Extension Moore, Warrington, The Environment Partnership, October 2019



landscape and biodiversity due to the loss of Moore Nature Reserve. Halton Borough Council state a concern about the potential loss of Moore Nature Reserve through the development of Warrington Waterfront<sup>9</sup> whilst Moore Parish Council state the site's environmental performance is particularly damaging to SA objectives concerning built and natural heritage/landscape, and biodiversity and geodiversity<sup>10</sup>.

These assessments however, do not contain reference to the remediation of Arpley Meadows landfill site and creation of a major new country park, which will include purpose built foot and cycle paths and visitor facilities. The inclusion of Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park to the north of the site will enable a number of landscape and biodiversity benefits<sup>11</sup>, including:

- Mitigation of the loss of Moore Nature Reserve<sup>12</sup>;
- The retention of trees and inclusion of landscape corridors to ensure appropriate buffering and screening across the site;
- The retention of woodland belts to the south of the site;
- Green linkages connecting to Moore Nature Reserve; and
- The creation of an area of conservation interest.

In this context, the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront will have a positive effect on this criterion.

#### *BG4: What is the potential impact on TPOs?*

An Arboricultural Walkover Survey and Desktop Assessment was undertaken by TEP in October 2019<sup>13</sup>. The site at Warrington Waterfront contains no TPOs.

It is noted that the site is within the recently announced Northern Forest, the strategic forest concept that aims to deliver improved biodiversity, health and wellbeing, air quality and flood management opportunities. Strategies around the provision, creation, integration and development of trees on site will give due consideration to the Northern Forest development.

In this context, Warrington Waterfront will have a positive effect in this criterion.

#### *Strategic Commentary*

The creation of Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park will enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within the Warrington Waterfront development.

Consideration will be given to the inclusion of the following to ensure the enhancement of biodiversity on-site:

- Bat roosting boxes on retained trees within the site and on buildings if appropriate;
- Native woodland and scrub planting;
- A bird mitigation strategy that will incorporate:
  - The creation of new bird habitats;
  - Disturbance avoidance measures during development;
  - Timing works to avoid nesting season.
- Suitable mitigation for amphibians will be developed and will include:
  - The production of a CEMP to minimise indirect effects on local fish populations within waterbodies;
  - The translocation of invertebrates, water voles and reptiles to suitable habitats.

<sup>9</sup> Response to Warrington Local Plan Consultation, Halton Borough Council, December 2017

<sup>10</sup> Response from Moore Parish Council, Moore Parish Council, September 2017

<sup>11</sup> Port Warrington and Arpley Meadows, Warrington – Initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal, The Environment Partnership, March 2018

<sup>12</sup> Ecological Assessment: Port Warrington Extension Moore, Warrington, The Environment Partnership, March 2018

<sup>13</sup> Port Warrington, Moore Nature Reserve and Arpley Meadows Arboricultural Walkover Survey and Desktop Assessment, TEP, October 2019



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.

Warrington Waterfront will incorporate features to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. In this context, it will have a positive effect on this objective.

## SA Objective: Climate Change & Resource Use

The development at Warrington Waterfront will be designed to reduce energy use. Opportunities for the implementation of renewable energies will be explored during design development but it is likely that some provision for renewable or low carbon technologies will be made.

Due consideration will additionally be given to establishing if a decentralised energy network would be feasible for the site.

The following criterion is posed in the SA in reference to climate change and resource for developments concerning housing and jobs. The final criterion within this objective surrounds access to household recycling facilities, and as such, has been excluded from this appraisal. The impact of the development on climate change and resource use more widely will then be established.

### *RU1: Would allocation of the site result in the use of previously developed land?*

The development proposals at Port Warrington include the remediation and redevelopment of Arpley Landfill Site into Warrington Commercial Park.

The SA indicates that where a site will deliver 30% of development or more on brownfield land, it can be considered as having a positive effect on the criterion. Warrington Waterfront will incorporate the reuse of previously developed land and as such, will have a positive effect on this criterion.

### *Strategic commentary*

As stated in SA Objective: Natural Resources, the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront will feed into 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 transport.

Ultimately this will deliver reductions in carbon emissions and contribute to the mitigation of climate change impacts. How the proposed development will adapt to the impact of climate change is referenced in this SA in relation to flooding mitigation, biodiversity enhancements and net gains and the provision of green space.

In this context, development is likely to have a positive effect on the impacts of climate change and resource use.

### Summary

The assessment of the sustainability performance of Warrington Waterfront has been undertaken using current technical evidence.

**Table 1** below summarises the sustainability performance of Warrington Waterfront, highlighting the enhanced sustainability performance of the proposals should the whole site be allocated for development.

As noted, an appraisal detailing the full sustainability objectives, criteria and their scores is provided in **Appendix 1**.

Details of the objectives, criteria and the scoring requirements are available in **Appendix 1**.

Based upon the current technical evidence, the assessment has identified the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront as having several beneficial sustainability impacts, with a number of significant positive and positive effects acknowledged.

**Table 1: Scoring of Port Warrington against SA Criteria and SA Objectives**

Objective		Criteria	R18/121 Arpley Meadows (WBC 2019)	R18/133 Port Warrington (WBC 2019)	Criteria Score (Turley Sustainability)	Objective Score (Turley Sustainability)
1	Economy & Regeneration	EC1: Loss of employment land	Green	Green	Green	Green
		EC2: Distance to Principle Road Network	Light Green	Light Green	Green	
		EC3: Close to key employment sites	Green	Green	Green	
2	Health & Well Being	HW2: Community facilities	White	White	Green	Green
		HW3: Natural greenspace	White	White	Green	
		HW4: Formal play space	White	White	Green	
3	Accessibility	ACC3: Bus service	Red	Red	Light Green	Light Green
		ACC4: Train station	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	
5	Natural Resources	NR1: Air quality	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	0
		NR2: Remediation of contaminated land	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	
		NR3: Loss of agricultural land	Green	Green	Light Green	
		NR4: Groundwater Source Protection Zone	Yellow	Light Green	Light Green	
		NR5: Flood Zone	Light Green	Red	0	
		RU3: Minerals	Light Green	Yellow	0	
6	Built & Natural Heritage	BHN1: Proximity to assets	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	0
		BHN2: Effect on assets	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	
		BHN3: Capacity of landscape	Yellow	Red	0	
7	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	BG1: Impacts on European Site/SPA/SAC	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green
		BG2: Impact on SSSI	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	
		BG3: Impact on Local Wildlife Site	Yellow	Red	Light Green	
		BG4: Potential impact on TPOs	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	
8	Climate Change & Resource Use	RU1: Use of previously developed land	Light Green	Yellow	Light Green	Green

**Table 2: Sustainability Appraisal Key**

Symbol	Meaning
	Mitigation likely to be required/unavoidable impacts. Major negative effect.
	Mitigation may be required/unavoidable impacts. Minor negative effect.
0	Neutral effect
	Unlikely to have a major impact on trends. Minor positive effect.
	Promotes sustainable growth. Major positive effect.
/	Assumed unknown effect



## 5. Conclusion

**This Sustainability Appraisal considers that the proposed development at Warrington Waterfront is a sustainable location to deliver much needed employment land within Warrington.**

To demonstrate that Warrington Waterfront supports the sustainability objectives of the emerging Local Plan, an assessment of the site was carried out against the relevant sustainability appraisal criteria and objectives developed by the SA of the adopted and emerging Local Plan.

**Table 1** contains a summary of this assessment and it illustrates that the proposed development would result in a number of strong and positive sustainability benefits in relation to the following SA Objectives:

- Economy and Regeneration;
- Health & Wellbeing;
- Accessibility;
- Biodiversity & Geodiversity; and
- Climate Change & Resource Use.

The development at Warrington Waterfront will help to meet the need for employment land across Warrington Borough Council, through the provision of industrial space, a commercial park, alongside community and greenspace provision through Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park.

It is submitted that Warrington Waterfront is a sustainable development and would make a strong contribution to the sustainability objectives of Warrington Borough.

# Appendix 1: Employment Site Appraisal Framework (Warrington Borough Council)

SA Objectives	Criteria	Significant Positive Effects Likely	Positive Effects Likely	Negative Effects Likely	Significant Effects Likely
<b>Economy and Regeneration</b>	EC1: Would site development lead to the loss of employment land?	Employment development proposed	Not allocated for employment	Yes – low quality employment site	Yes – High quality employment site
	EC2: Distance to Principle Road Network by vehicle	<1mile	<3miles	>3miles	>4miles
	EC3: How close is the site to key employment sites?	<1200m away	1.2km – 3km away	3km-5km	>5km away
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	HW2: Is the area supported by community facilities?	New facilities could be delivered (only applicable for large scale development that creates critical mass)	Community facilities within 1200m	Community facilities within 1200m-2000m	Loss of community facilities. No community facilities within 2000m
	HW3: Access to local natural greenspace?	Standards met for both criteria	Standards met for 1 criteria only	Standards not met for either criteria.	N/A
	HW4: Access to formal greenspace	<200m /On site facilities	<400m	<800m	>800m
<b>Accessibility</b>	ACC3: How well served is the site by a bus service?	Regular bus service within 200m	Low frequency bus service within 200m Regular bus service within 200m-400m	Low frequency bus service within 200m-400m Regular bus service within 400m-800m	Low frequency bus service more than 400m away Regular bus service more than 800m away
	ACC4: How accessible is the site to the nearest train station?	<1200m away	12km-3km away	3km – 5km	>5km away
<b>Housing</b>					
<b>Natural Resources</b>	NR1: What are the potential impacts on air quality?	-	Development more than 1km from AQMA	Housing development within 1km of an AQMA	Development within 75m of AQMA



	NR2: Could development of the site lead to the remediation of land potentially affected by contamination?	Site is potentially contaminated and could be remediated	Site is not thought to be contaminated	Site is potentially contaminated but may be difficult to remediate	-
	NR3: Would allocation of the site result in the loss of High Agricultural Land?	Does not contain any agricultural land grade 1-3b	Contains less than 10 hectares of agricultural land 1-3	Contains more than 10 hectares of agricultural land class 1-2 or a total of 20 hectares 1-3	Contains more than 20 hectares of agricultural land class 1-2
	NR4: Does the site fall within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone, as identified by the Environment Agency?	-	Falls outside	Site falls within Zone 2 or 3	Site falls within zone 1 (inner protection zone)
	NR5: Is the site (or part of) within an identified flood zone?	-	Site predominantly within flood zone 1 (>70%)	Contains areas of flood zone 2/3(>30%)	Site contains large areas within flood zone 2/3 (>80%)
	RU3: Is there potential for safeguarded or identified mineral reserves to be sterilised?	-	Not within identified areas / no effects	Within safeguarded / identified areas of importance, but unlikely to be a significant issues / losses	Within safeguarded / identified areas of importance
<b>Built and Natural Heritage</b>	BNH1: Proximity to designated heritage assets	Opportunity to protect and / or enhance heritage assets	No heritage assets within or adjacent (50m) to the sites	Site contains or is within 50m from: Grade II heritage features Conservation area Registered park or garden	Site contains or is within 50m from: Grade 1 and II* heritage assets Registered park or garden
	BNH2: Effects upon the significance and setting of heritage assets/the historic environment	Opportunity to enhance heritage the historic environment	The historic environment is unlikely to change from its baseline position	Development could have negative effects on the historic environment but mitigation ought to be possible	Development likely to have significant effects upon the historic environment that cannot be mitigate
	BNH3: Capacity of the landscape to accommodate development, while respecting its character	High	Medium – High Medium	Medium – Low	Low
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	BG1: Could allocation of the site have a potential impact on a	-	Outside catchment area	Within catchment area	Within 400m

	European Site SSSI, SPA or SAC?				
	BG2: Could allocation of the site have a potential adverse impact on designated Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, RIGs, Potential Wildlife Sites or any other site of wildlife or geodiversity value?	-	< 200m No priority habitats or species recorded	Contains or is adjacent to (50m) a local wildlife site / priority habitats or species have been recorded within 50m of the site. Suitable for biodiversity offsetting.	Contains a locally important site not suitable for biodiversity offsetting
	BG3: What is the potential impact on TPOs?	-	No TPOs on site	TPOs present that could potentially be protected (i.e. confined to boundaries)	Multiple TPOs that would be difficult to protect (i.e. scattered throughout)
<b>Climate Change and Resource Use</b>	RU1: Would allocation of the site result in the use of previously developed land?	Predominantly brownfield (>70%)	Partial Brownfield (>30%)	Site is predominantly Greenfield (>70%)	-

Turley Birmingham

