



## 4 KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Previous masterplanning, the wider context and site analysis combine to highlight several issues and objectives, summarised in Sections 2 and 3. Section 4 develops these previous sections through reference to broader sustainable development and placemaking considerations, expressed as Key Opportunities under three strategic themes;

- a. Sustaining new and existing communities**
- b. Facilitating sustainable, active travel**
- c. Delivering distinctive neighbourhoods**

These key opportunities drive the spatial masterplan set out in Section 5. Section 6 (delivery) and the appended Infrastructure Delivery Strategy provide more detail on how some of these key opportunities can be realised.



## A. SUSTAINING NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITIES

41. Development will be planned, designed, and constructed in a way that reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions, and minimises impact on climate change. Development will align with key national and local policy, including Policy ENV7, DC6 and MD3 of the Warrington Local Plan.

42. The appended Sustainability Statement sets out further detail on the approach to sustainable design and construction.

*The key opportunities are to...*

### A1. Deliver wide-reaching economic benefits

43. Development will make a significant contribution to meeting Warrington's future employment land needs, creating jobs and economic benefits of sub-regional significance and impact.

44. Employment development will provide a significant contribution to the supply of logistics and manufacturing space in the north west region which market evidence confirms is currently experiencing a significant under supply of immediately available large, land parcels and premises to meet long term trends in the level of demand. The Cheshire and Warrington LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) identifies logistics and manufacturing as key growth sectors for the local economy.

### A2. Maximise the potential of mixed-use

45. The accessible location and proximity of existing residential areas will drive the development of large floor plate distribution / logistics businesses as well as manufacturing, light industrial and associated office space. It is anticipated that 101ha will lead to approximately 4m sq ft of employment floorspace. The transformational scale of development will also open up a much broader land use mix, including at least 860 new homes and new social infrastructure.

46. This mixed-use approach will include a local centre, new 1FE primary school and other community uses that will help create sustainable neighbourhoods whilst helping to further diversify business space and employment opportunities.

### A3. Enhance and create diverse green and blue infrastructure

47. The site's existing environmental diversity will allow future development to integrate a wide range of green and blue infrastructure functions and characteristics within a single connected network. There is an opportunity for development to be supported by exemplar SuDS, as stated in Policy MD3.

48. Delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure will be based on a strategic and integrated approach that balances the needs of people and nature, with green spaces and corridors coordinated with urban structure, movement network and surface water drainage. The green infrastructure network will strengthen existing assets and maximise biodiversity value through the delivery of at least 10% biodiversity net gain within each phase of development, including the management and maintenance of existing and provision of new semi-natural, ecologically rich green spaces.

49. Blue infrastructure will include retained water bodies in the nature reserve, retained water courses and new sustainable surface water drainage features. There is also potential to create water bodies within the lagoon area as part of phased restoration agreed by the Lagoon Management Plan. Sustainable surface water drainage will be designed on a site-wide basis, integrate SuDS features and utilise existing water courses and channels.

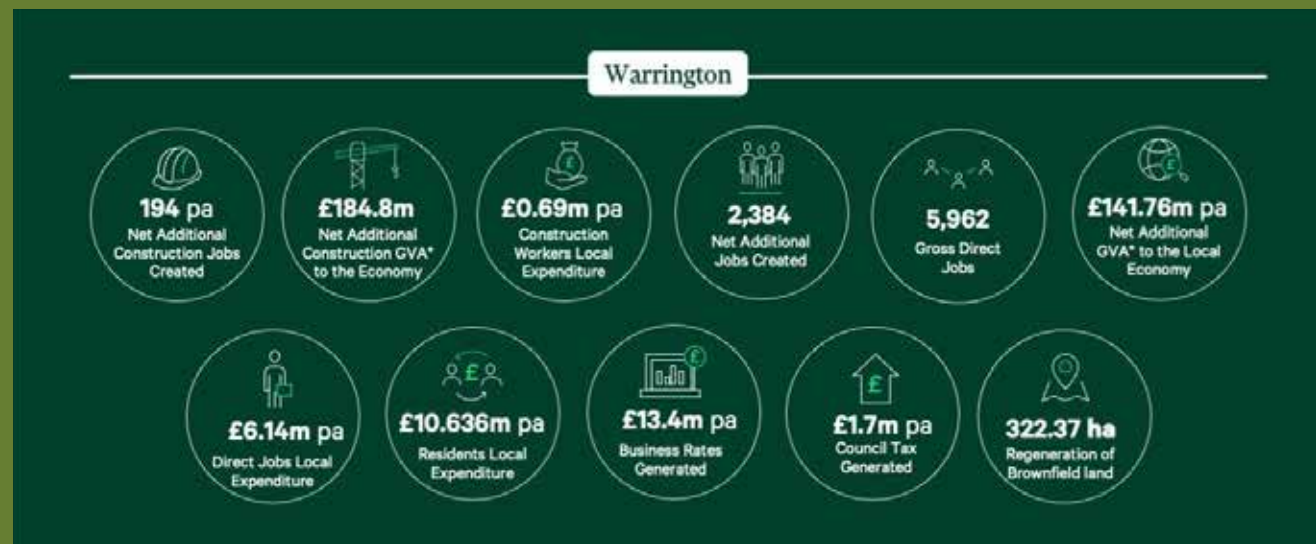
### A4. Deliver energy efficient, low carbon development

410. Future employment development will deliver energy efficient, low carbon buildings through sustainable design that reduces primary energy demand through energy efficient fabric and services. Proposals will achieve at least BREEAM 'Very Good' (with a target to reach 'Excellent'), reduce energy needs, reduce waste, mitigate against climate change, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

411. Future residential development proposals will meet the Future Homes Standard benefiting from efficient and low carbon technologies including air source heat pumps, solar PV, battery storage and EV charging. This standard requires a minimum 75% CO2 emissions performance beyond Building Regulations Part L 2013 which will be achieved via a 'fabric first' approach, all-electric energy strategy and innovative low carbon technologies.

412. The extraction of ash from the lagoons remains ongoing as part of the restoration. Ash is used in building products and land reclamation, replacing primary aggregates reduces environmental impacts and CO2 emissions. This will positively address sustainability and climate change, and following extraction phased restoration will maximise short term opportunities for nature conservation and ecology benefits.

Analysis completed by CBRE has identified significant economic and regeneration benefits for the whole scheme.



(Source: Fiddlers Ferry, Warrington - Economic and Regeneration Impact Statement by CBRE, March 2023)





## B. ENCOURAGING AND FACILITATING SUSTAINABLE, ACTIVE TRAVEL

4.13. As a centrally located and accessible site, and as a large-scale mixed-use development in close proximity to existing major urban conurbations, development will inherently encourage active travel and sustainable travel choices. The redevelopment of the site will transform local connectivity; changing Fiddlers Ferry from an insular and defensive site to a connected and permeable urban area.

*The key opportunities are to...*

### **B1. Enable sustainable movement patterns**

4.14. Development will form around a new network of streets and paths planned strategically to;

- Integrate clear and safe walking and cycling routes through the development area, including connections to existing Public Rights of Way and the Trans Pennine Trail beyond the site boundaries.
- Integrate public transport services, including enhancements to existing bus services along Widnes Road and/or new bus services routed through the site.
- Contribute to wider transport and highway improvements in Warrington and Halton.

### **B2. Create people-friendly, human scale street spaces**

4.15. The size of the site and its existing structures are on a substantial scale. The development process will transform this into a place of human scale environments that are welcoming, connected and accessible, including;

- A legible sequence of streets and spaces that incorporate both green space / soft landscape and hard landscaped spaces.
- Built form character areas influenced by the form and function of streets and spaces.
- Opening up a combination of urban and 'rural edge' views that help to break down the scale of the site and reinforce the sense of connection to surrounding environments.

### **B3. Connect wider neighbourhoods**

4.16. The site is a complex industrial site, previously operated to be entirely insular and disconnected from its surroundings. The development process will transform this to an outward facing, connected and inclusive place; creating new pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that connects to existing communities and existing active travel routes in Warrington and Widnes. This will include;

- A new network of connected streets, spaces and paths that provide continuous links through different neighbourhoods, connecting back into Widnes Road and the existing Public Right of Way network, including the Trans Pennine Trail via Station Road. The feasibility of a foot and cycle link via Johnsons Lane is being explored as a potential opportunity and a route reserved should it be deliverable in the future. There are also aspirations for an additional link via the existing bridge providing access to the Lagoons subject to its condition and ash extraction operations with the final details of public access confirmed within the lagoon restoration plan.
- Maximising the role of Widnes Road both as a 'community connector' that links Fiddlers Ferry with Widnes and Warrington, and as a key public transport corridor.
- Weaving green spaces through the development areas with a diverse range of landscape functions (recreation, amenity, parks, and gardens, semi-natural).
- Designing streets and spaces to be attractive, safe, and pleasant for pedestrians and cyclists, encouraging and facilitating active travel.
- Health and well-being maximised through a substantial network of green spaces and outdoor recreation resources, including connections to the wider natural environment.
- Considering future access for equestrians as the network of active travel routes within the site expands over time.





## C. CREATING DISTINCTIVE MIXED-USE NEIGHBOURHOODS

417. The site will undergo major redevelopment involving the demolition of power station structures that have been a distinctive feature of the local skyline. This brings with it a responsibility to deliver a positive and distinctive new environment: the transformation of Fiddlers Ferry will not just be a strategically important economic driver, but must become an attractive and valued working and living environment for generations to come.

*The key opportunities are to...*

### C1. Integrate green spaces for people and nature

418. New development will enhance and connect existing semi-natural environments and green spaces by physically connecting green infrastructure within and around the site. Connected green infrastructure will be a defining characteristic of the development, putting the 'park at the heart', for employees, residents and wildlife, including;

- Integrating the existing Fiddlers Ferry nature reserve (making this a publicly accessible, nature and recreation asset).
- Retaining the aqueduct green corridor as a distinctive feature and enhancing its habitat value (whilst ensuring no negative impact on the aqueduct infrastructure).
- Ensuring that new open spaces incorporate active and passive recreation and meet relevant Local Plan standards.
- Restoration of the lagoon areas – an evolution from engineered, man-made infrastructure to self-sustaining, more naturalised environments.

### C2. Set the foundation to an active, animated place

419. The proposed variety of uses and spaces can create a thriving and dynamic place at all times of the week. The varied land use mix will be planned as distinctive neighbourhoods within a logical urban structure, including;

- A clear 'sense of centre', both for employment and residential communities, formed around community infrastructure, local retail and food and beverage uses.
- Connecting residential and employment development areas through walkable, safe, and attractive green corridors.
- 30% affordable housing.
- A wide variety of house types that provide choice.

### C3. Coordinate the relationship between employment and residential uses

420. Employment uses and residential development can be mutually beneficial and can work well together located in close proximity. Development will carefully consider the visual and functional relationship between employment and residential areas, including;

- A coordinated transition in urban grain, built form, scale and height.
- Using green spaces and soft landscape to provide attractive visual breaks and 'mediating' environmental elements.
- Locating non-residential, 'local centre' uses in parts of the site that provide a focus for employment and residential areas and helps to manage the transition between them.
- Managing traffic generated by the employment development (including heavy goods vehicles), keeping this away from residential areas.

### C4. Plan for a phased urban structure

421. Development will be driven by the vision and will contribute to the spatial masterplan. As a large-scale development that will take time to deliver, proposals will ensure that individual phases not only form part of a wider masterplan, but that they can be coherent and functional 'places' in their own right. Individual phases of development will be planned to include;

- A coordinated response to all known constraints.
- Physical infrastructure that is aligned to connect seamlessly with subsequent planned phases.
- Edges and boundaries that provide attractive and functional frontages in the short-medium term whilst subsequent phases of development are awaited.
- Meaningful, accessible and useable green spaces and integrated surface water drainage features.

