



Widnes Waterfront

Supplementary Planning Document
July 2005



Widnes Waterfront Plan Supplementary Planning Document

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Planning Policy Context
- 3.0 The Widnes Waterfront Vision Economic Development Zone and Masterplan
- 4.0 Development Constraints - General
- 5.0 Development Framework
- 6.0 Design Guide - General Principles
- 7.0 Key Development Opportunities

Appendices

Appendix A Widnes Waterfront Landscape Strategy

Maps and Plans

- 1. Key Development Opportunities
- 2. NLUD sites
- 3. Constraints
- 4. Proposed route of the New Mersey Crossing
- 5. Transport Strategy
- 6. Design Concept plan

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Widnes Waterfront Plan

Supplementary Planning Document

I Introduction

- I.1 This is the adopted version of the Widnes Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document, approved by the Halton Borough Council's Executive Board on 21st April 2005.
- I.2 The document acts as a 'supplementary planning document' (SPD) to the existing policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The UDP identifies the Widnes Waterfront as one of six Action Areas in Halton that require comprehensive development or redevelopment in order to achieve their regeneration. The Action Area policies list the appropriate land uses for them and principles of development that should apply, but do not allocate particular sites within them for particular uses. The proposals of this SPD are therefore supplementary to the UDP policies and give greater detail and certainty to guide new development in the area.
- I.3 This SPD has been prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks.
- I.4 In addition to the policies of the UDP the proposals in this SPD are based on the content of the 'New Widnes Waterfront and Masterplan Delivery Strategy' that was



approved by the Halton Borough Council Executive Board on 22nd May 2003. An updated version was published in July 2004. Therefore, although the SPD stands alone it quotes extensively from the Masterplan. This SPD and the Masterplan are sister documents and should be read together to get a full picture of the regeneration of the area.

- I.5 Widnes Waterfront has been designated as one of the Economic Development Zones (EDZ) for European funding under Priority 3 of the North West England Objective 2 Programme. It is important therefore, that the land-use proposals in this Action Area ensure that these outputs are secured to meet the objectives of the EDZ.

2 Planning Policy Context

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Status and Purpose

- 2.1 This SPD is supplementary to the policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and should be taken into account as a material consideration in deciding planning applications within the SPD Area.
- 2.2 The particular policies and proposals in the Halton UDP that this Document is supplementary to are described below, under the section 'Halton Unitary Development Plan'.

Halton Unitary Development Plan

- 2.3 Action Area Plans are prepared in accordance with the Aims and Objectives, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policy S1 (Regeneration), in Part 1 of the Halton UDP.

Policy RG3 Action Area 3 Widnes Waterfront

- 2.4 As described above, this SPD acts as supplementary to the policies of the UDP.

The main policy, which it supplements is Policy RG3. This states the following:

- 1 Within the Waterfront Action Area the following uses will be acceptable:-
 - Employment Uses (B1, B2 and B8);
 - Residential uses (C2 & C3);
 - Leisure uses (D2) where they comply with policy TC01(2)
 - Open Space;
 - Food and Drink (A3);
 - Bulky goods retail warehousing within Class A1, where it complies with Policy TC01(2)

Principles of Development

- 2 The nature and design of new development should take advantage of the waterside location beside the St Helens Canal and Mersey Estuary.
- 3 A significant improvement should be made to the waterside environment.
- 4 Provision should be made for increased public access to the waterside.
- 5 Access into the area should be improved particularly in relation to public transport access.
- 6 The visual quality of the built and natural environment should be enhanced including along routes into the area.
- 7 Development should not prejudice the overall objective of securing a further crossing of the Mersey east of the existing bridge.

- 8 Development should not be unsightly nor a source of noise, dust, odour or pollution that is considered to be detrimental to the future regeneration prospects of the area as set out in the Action Area Plan.
- 9 Provision should be made for improved pedestrian links from the Action Area to Widnes Town Centre.

Justification

- 10 The declining employment area used to be a major location for the chemical industry in Widnes. Various plant closures have taken place leaving behind a legacy of contaminated land. This forms a large and wide band of vacant land and a disused chemical tip, adjacent to the Mersey Estuary.
- 11 The opportunity exists to take advantage of the waterside location and regenerate the whole area. This may be by reclaiming the contaminated land for employment or open space uses, and for housing where this is possible. The creation of new waterside open spaces in this area will help to compensate for

open land that will be lost to development in the area allocated for housing and business uses in the proposed North Widnes Development Area.

- 12 The review of UDP Retail and Leisure Issues (Final Report Oct. 2002) identifies capacity for additional retail warehousing in Widnes over the period up to 2016 in excess of that likely to be accommodated within the defined town centre. On the basis of the sequential approach, the Widnes Eastern by Pass site and the northern part of this Action Area (north of the safeguarded Shell Green rail route) are seen as Widnes's best long term opportunities for the expansion of bulky goods retail warehousing to accommodate this quantitative need. This particular form of retail development would be likely to complement the current role and performance of Widnes town centre. A condition of planning permission will be used to restrict the use to the sale of bulky goods. It is considered that where quantitative or qualitative need for retail and/or leisure uses can be identified, the northern part of this



Action Area would be an appropriate location for the need to be fulfilled. This would be subject to the proposals being within walking distance of Widnes Town Centre and improved pedestrian and public transport links with the town centre. The development of the Venture Fields area for mixed retail warehousing, leisure and employment will enable the Widnes waterfront to be linked to the existing town centre."

- 2.5 The reference in Policy RG3 that Retail (A1) and Leisure(D2) uses will be acceptable where it complies with policy TC01 requires further explanation.
- 2.6 Policy TC01 of the UDP is a list of sites and locations allocated for new retail and leisure facilities in the Borough. Part 2 of the policy refers specifically to Action Area 3 (Widnes Waterfront), as shown on the Proposals Map. It states as follows:

' In addition to the above sites, bulky goods retail warehousing within class A1 and leisure uses will be permitted within the Widnes Waterfront Action area to the north of the Shell Green protected rail route where it can be demonstrated that there is a need for the development and where the use is within reasonable walking distance of Widnes primary Shopping area. It will also be permitted at the Warrington Road/Eastern Widnes Bypass site subject to compliance with the terms of policy TCNEW2.

- 2.7 The 'need' for retail warehouse development will have to be demonstrated in each case, as the land identified as being suitable for retail warehousing use within the northern part of the Action Area 3 is more extensive than required to accommodate the additional capacity identified for retail warehousing in the UDP's assessment of overall retail capacity. (See 'Review of UDP Retail and Leisure Issues. Final Report October 2002'. Chesterton)
- 2.8 It is important to understand that not all

the uses that are listed in this policy will be acceptable on every site within the SPD. These merely list those uses that should be distributed to suitable sites according to their location, accessibility and compatibility with surrounding uses and proximity to the town centre and public transport routes.

- 2.9 The boundary of the Action Area 3 in Policy RG3 of the UDP shown on the Proposals Map is different to the boundary of this SPD. This is because the design principles of the SPD extend to a wider area in order to ensure that development of surrounding sites match the quality of the area defined by Policy RG3. The two boundaries are shown on Map 1.

Adjoining Primarily Employment Area

- 2.10 The boundary of the SPD also includes land in existing industrial use around the Action Area 3 boundary that is subject to policies E3 Primarily Employment Areas and E4 Complementary Services and Facilities within Primarily Employment Areas.

- 2.11 These state the following:

E3 Primarily Employment Area

- 1 Development falling within Uses Classes B1 (Business), B2 (General Industry), B8 (Storage and Distribution) and industrial uses not falling within these classes will be permitted in the Primarily Employment Areas identified on the Proposal Map.
- 2 Industrial activities listed in Appendix 6 (of the UDP) will only be permitted in Primarily Employment Areas provided that:
 - a) The industrial process and operation is compatible with neighbouring industrial and commercial uses; and
 - b) The use already exists on site.

E4 Complementary Services and Facilities within Primarily Employment Areas

- 1 Development that provides a service or facility, which is complementary to and compatible with the surrounding industrial uses and for which there is a demonstrable need, will be permitted within a Primarily Employment Area.*
- 2 Housing, that forms an integral part of a mixed-use development, will be permitted within a Primarily Employment Area if it is located in or, adjacent to, a town centre.*

2.12 Regional spatial strategy.

The SPD relates to and conforms to the relevant saved policies in the Halton Unitary Development Plan as set out in Section 2 of the SPD, Planning Policy Context. The UDP, in turn conforms to Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the Northwest (formally RPG13) and the UDP has been tested through a public inquiry. Therefore the SPD is in general conformity with RSS.



3 The Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone and Masterplan

- 3.1 Widnes Waterfront has been designated as one of the Economic Development Zones for European funding under Priority 3 of the North West England Objective 2 Programme. It has attracted substantial financial support, to help deliver its regeneration, from the European Regional Development Fund. This funding is dependant on particular outputs to create significant numbers of jobs in key industrial sectors and make a significant contribution to the economic diversification of the sub-regional economy by realising the economic potential of natural, built, cultural and industrial heritage assets. It will also need to show that the employment benefits created by the EDZ flow to residents from 'communities in need'.
- 3.2 It is important therefore, that the land-use proposals in this Action Area ensure that these outputs are secured to meet the objectives of the EDZ. This means that the emphasis will be on new, higher quality employment development with complementary facilities such as public houses, restaurants and hotels. Larger-scale commercial leisure developments could also be accommodated where no suitable sites are available nearer the town centre.
- 3.3 Following the designation of the Widnes Waterfront EDZ, consultants Building Design Partnership in association with Jones Lang LaSalle and C&R Consulting were appointed to deliver a Masterplan and Delivery Strategy that will provide a framework to guide the sustainable regeneration of Widnes Waterfront, in partnership with key stakeholders and the local business community.
- 3.4 The Halton Borough Council Executive Board adopted the principles of the Masterplan and Delivery Strategy on 22nd May 2003.
- 3.5 The principles of the Masterplan focus on social, economic and physical regeneration to reflect the objectives of the EDZ. A key objective is to seek to target the economic benefits of the EDZ towards the Wards of Riverside and Kingsway that each exhibits high levels of deprivation.
- 3.6 The SPD will focus on the physical proposals for the area, particularly those that require planning permissions and works resulting from planning conditions. It will set out the site allocations and criteria that will be used to judge those planning applications and impose suitable conditions. It will also seek to improve the physical links between the area and the town centre and the residential areas of Riverside and Kingsway wards.



4 Development Constraints - General

- 4.1 The SPD is subject to a number of development constraints that need to be considered in preparing development schemes and determining planning applications.

Contaminated Land

- 4.2 All of the sites identified as suitable for development in the Action Area are subject to a degree of land contamination due to the legacy of past chemical works on the site.
- 4.3 Ground investigation work has been commissioned by Halton Borough Council for the Environmental Advice Centre to carry out extensive site investigations and analysis.
- 4.4 The developers should however, carry out their own site investigations in accordance with Policy PRI4 (Contaminated Land) of the Halton UDP before any planning application for development is determined.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Consultation Zones (Map 3)

- 4.5 Within or proximate to the Action Area are industrial sites where significant quantities of potentially hazardous chemicals are used or stored (Control of

Major Accident Hazards - COMAH - sites) and major accident hazard pipelines.

- 4.6 As a result, currently much of the land available for development in this Action Area is within consultation zones set by the HSE where the local planning authority is required to obtain HSE's advice on certain planning applications that are made within the consultation zone.
- 4.7 A map showing the HSE consultation zones is in the Appendix, Map 3. This is based on major hazard sites within or adjoining the action Area and two high-pressure gas pipelines.
- 4.8 Circular 04/2000 gives further Document on these matters. It states that, "Article 10/11 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 requires local planning authorities to consult with HSE in respect of certain proposals to develop land within an area notified to them by HSE because of the presence within the vicinity of toxic, highly reactive, explosive or flammable substances.
- 4.9 In order to apply the advice received by the HSE, the Halton UDP states that it is essential to reach a proper and satisfactory balance between society's concerns about safety standards and the economic future of Halton's important chemical industry.

- 4.10 The relevant UDP policy that will be applied to any development on land surrounding COMAH sites is as follows:

PR12 Development on Land Surrounding COMAH Sites

- I Development on land within consultation zones around notified COMAH sites will be permitted provided that all of the following criteria can be satisfied:*
- a) The likely accidental risk level from the COMAH site is not considered to be significant.*
 - b) Proposals are made by the developer that will mitigate the likely effects of a potential major accident so that they are not considered significant.*

Flooding

- 4.11 The Flood map affecting this area is available on the Environment Agency's web site <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>. Applicants for planning permission should carry out a flood risk assessment where relevant in accordance with advice in PPG 25 Flood Risk. Developers will need to consider any advice from the Environment Agency concerning flooding issues in the design of their development.

St Helens Canal

- 4.12 British Waterways have a consultation zone 150 metres from the canal. They should be consulted on any applications involving work that affects the safety and structural integrity of the land and/or an increase in surface water discharge.
- 4.13 No development will be allowed that would prejudice the re-opening of the Canal for navigation.

Pipelines and Culvert (Map 3)

- 4.14 The Action Area is crossed by a number of pipelines that have consultation requirements for any development that may affect them. These are illustrated on Plan 3 and are as follows:

- 1 Filtrate Main. Shell Green
Consult: United Utilities.

There is a statutory easement requirement of 7 (seven) metres required for the North West Sludge Pipelines. These pipelines cross the EDZ from Shell Green to Liverpool (see map 3 for indicative location.) Moreover, prior to any proposed development or construction within 100 metres either side of this Pipeline, consultation should take place with United Utilities. A list of appropriate contacts at United Utilities is available from Halton Borough Council (Major Projects Team Tel. 0151 471 7347).

- 2 Transco high-pressure natural gas pipeline. Widnes Reinforcement (Brown Street)
Consult: Health & Safety Executive
Consultation Distance: 3 metres

- 3 Transco high-pressure natural gas pipeline. Warrington/Ditton, Widnes
Consult: Health & Safety Executive
Consultation Distance: 80 metres

- 4 Bowers Brook Culvert
Consult: Environment Agency
Easement: 8 metres

- 4.15 Developers will have to check with the organisations responsible for these pipelines concerning any development within their vicinity

5 Development Framework

- 5.1 The Strategic Objectives and Principles set out in the New Widnes Waterfront Vision Masterplan set the context for the main development framework of the SPD.
- 5.2 The Masterplan describes a vision for the area as a high quality environmental setting for commercial office and small and medium enterprise development accompanied by regionally significant visitor and leisure facilities. The whole area will be more accessible when the New Mersey Crossing is constructed.
- 5.3 The overall strategic objectives for the regeneration of Widnes Waterfront, are as follows:
- a) To create a development of truly regional significance.
 - b) To bring significant areas of brownfield land back into beneficial use.
 - c) To open up the untapped amenity of the canal and river frontage.
 - d) To generate sustainable employment in sectors identified as sub-regional priorities.
 - e) To improve access to and from Widnes Town Centre, and between the new Widnes Waterfront Vision area and the town's population, particularly those in the deprived wards of Riverside and Kingsway.

- f) To provide public transport options.
- g) To improve the competitiveness of existing employers in the area, retaining and sustaining employment.
- h) To improve the environmental quality of the whole project area.

National Planning Policies PPS1 Delivering Sustainability Development - key principles IV state the following:

"To promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area should not be accepted."

- 5.4 The means by which these will be achieved are described in the Masterplan in paragraphs 3.22 to 3.40. It covers the following principles that support the justification for the land use proposals in this Action Area SPD.

High quality environment

- 5.5 This will be achieved by:
- Developing unsightly areas and buildings,
 - Remediating and re-using contaminated land,

- Creating a high quality link between the attractive
- waterside environments and the town centre, and
- Ensuring that new development is of a high quality and creates a sense of place.
- Ensuring strict control of development at existing businesses to ensure improved environmental quality.

Urban Design

- 5.6 In terms of urban design, the ambition for the Widnes Waterfront area is to create a contemporary, high quality business and industrial park.

Landscaping

- 5.7 Another key element of the development framework is the implementation of comprehensive and consistent landscape strategy for the Action Area. This is attached as an appendix to the SPD. Development will need to conform to the landscape strategy when landscape schemes are being prepared as part of a planning application or to conform to a planning condition.

Railway Lines and New Railway Station

- 5.8 The corridor of the disused Shell Green rail link is to be safeguarded to allow for possible future re-opening of this line for passenger and freight. The Halton Local Transport Plan (Section 5.78) proposes the reopening of the route, which would allow improved opportunities for travel between Widnes and Warrington, and could form part of the Trans-Pennine linkage. Accordingly, the route is safeguarded by Policy TP3 (Disused Public Transport Facilities). This states that development will not be permitted that is likely to prejudice the re-opening of this line, as part of the wider rail network.

- 5.9 A 20 metre strip of land should be protected from development along the line of the disused railway. This corridor should be landscaped and include a pedestrian /cycleway through the area.

- 5.10 When this link was open to passenger services, Tanhouse Lane Station was located here, when the number of people who lived and worked in the area was significantly higher than it is now. There is every reason therefore, if the railway line was to re-open, and the area's workforce and visitor numbers were to increase, that a new station could be built, near the site of the old station. As such, land will be safeguarded in this vicinity to allow for this longer-term proposal.

Residential Development

- 5.11 As stated above, the future vision of the Action Area, is as a high quality environment for commercial office and small and medium enterprise development accompanied by visitor and leisure facilities. It is recognised however, that in the longer term, as the renaissance of Widnes and the wider waterfront environment is uplifted and its character has shifted away from its present heavy industrial character, there may be scope for an element of residential development to be brought forward.

- 5.12 Any proposals for new residential development in the meantime would have to be considered according to the constraints of land contamination, air and noise pollution, risk associated with nearby COMAH sites and flooding, and compatibility with existing or proposal uses. In general, proposals would also be assessed against the appropriate UDP policies.

6 Design Guide - General Principles

6.1 All new development in the Action Area should meet the key objectives for design in National Planning Policy PPSI - Delivering Sustainable Development. (para 36). These objectives should ensure that developments:

- are sustainable, durable and adaptable (including taking account of natural hazards such as flooding) and make efficient and prudent use of resources;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to their local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crimes does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
- address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

6.2 All new development in the Action Area will be expected to comply with the relevant built environment policies and Chapter 2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan, in particular Policy BE2 Quality of Design and Policy BE1 General Requirements for New Development.

6.3 The following key elements of urban design that should be applied to any new development to create a sense of place, identity and quality. These will be taken into account when assessing any planning applications for development in the area .

6.4 Prudent use of Natural Resources

In order to comply with National Planning Policy PPSI - Delivering Sustainable Development, development must show that it has been designed to minimise the need to consume new resources over the lifetime of the development by making more efficient use of existing resources, rather than making new demands on the environment, and should seek to maximise the use of renewable resources. In particular in order to comply with UDP Policy BE1 General Requirements for New Development para 6, Management of Resources:

- a) It must not prejudice the planned

development of a larger site or area for which comprehensive proposals have been approved or are in preparation.

- b) It must take into account the need for energy efficiency by means of building orientation, site layout and by use of passive and active energy saving designs.
- c) It must maximise the use of recycled materials within the development.
- d) It must minimise the amount of waste produced during construction and subsequent operation of the development.
- e) It must ensure that adequate on-site provision is made for waste storage and collection, in a suitably enclosed and screened area.
- f) It must promote means to reduce the demand for water, by making the best use of current resource.
- g) It must take into account the need and potential for sustainable drainage techniques.

6.5 Character

a place with its own identity

- a. The historic character and built form of the area has largely been lost. The footprint of buildings and street pattern responded to the industrial nature of land uses and the road and rail infrastructure, which served it. Elements of the historic infrastructure of the site, which remain include some stretches of road and rail alignments, which cross the site. Many of these older transport routes are retained within the Action Area. The area has little by way of built heritage and does not contain any listed buildings or conservation areas. The main heritage asset of the site is the canal. The waterside location is a key feature that the SPD seeks to build upon. The relationship to the estuary, views of the

existing and proposed bridge and the canal side environment are important assets of the site and features that will define its character.

- b. The boulevard link and areas of public realm such as the waterside park will also provide character and a sense of place for the area. These key areas will provide a setting for development, and will provide an opportunity to tie together a range of individual development opportunities to create a new 'neighbourhood'.
- c. The design of public realm, street furniture, lighting and signage, etc, should also be seen as opportunities to add to the sense of character and place within the Waterfront area.
- d. Specific attentions should be paid to the design of 'gateway' buildings and features at key junctions to the site, and also to the design of public realm at key spaces and intersections. Key public spaces include:
 - i. A557/Fiddlers Ferry/Earle Road roundabout/site access
 - ii. The focal point at the junction of the Boulevard and Tanhouse Lane.
 - iii. Tanhouse Lane /Fiddlers Ferry Road junction
 - iv. Gorsey Lane/Fiddlers Ferry road junction.
- e. the creation of a 'green public transport access ring', as shown on Map 5, to ensure that no building within the development, would be more than 400 metres walking distance from a bus stop or proposed railway station, in accordance with UDP Policy TPI (Public Transport Policies as part of New Development). This will ensure that new development is accessible to and from other parts of Widnes by public transport.

6.6 Ease of Movement (Map 5) *a place that is easy to get on and move through*

- a. A clearly defined network of routes and a 'street grid' structure, which will create a permeable neighbourhood, is identified. To supplement the improved street network, a signage scheme should be put in place that provided directions to individual business premises.
- b. Creating improved pedestrian linkages with the town centre will be a major challenge. Physical capacity of junctions may need to be altered. The existing dual carriageway road creates a major barrier to pedestrian movement. Consideration has been given to the creation of a grade-separated pedestrian crossing but this is not considered to be a viable option. The final design is likely to entail signal controlled, at grade crossings for both pedestrians and cyclists, which need to be considered at the very start of the implementation process because of their strategic influence on access into the site.
- c. The continuation of the boulevard route through to Shell Green will further improve the connectivity of the Waterfront with its surroundings.
- d. The SPD seeks to encourage 'heavier' industrial uses to locate to the east, with 'cleaner' industrial transport onto Fiddlers Ferry Road/Tan House Lane and maintain office and light industrial transport onto the new boulevard. It is envisaged that through signage for HGV access and layout and traffic management, a degree of segregation will be possible.
- e) the creation of a 'green public transport access ring', as shown on Map 5, to ensure that no building within the development, would be more than 400 metres walking distance from a bus stop or proposed railway station, in accordance with UDP Policy TPI (Public Transport Policies as part

of New Development). This will ensure that new development is accessible to and from other parts of Widnes by public transport.

6.7 Identity *a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand*

- e. In addition to the clear hierarchy of routes, which are described above, further legibility will be proved through the design of public realm and the use of landmark buildings and features. Principal routes (ie. The Boulevard and the Fiddlers Ferry/Tan House Lane axis) should be clearly identified as main thoroughfares, off which local access routes run.
- f. This hierarchy of routes should be reflected in design, signage and lighting.

6.8 Quality of the Public Realm *a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas*

- a. As noted above, the overall structure of the area and its open spaces will enable the creation of a high quality neighbourhood with its own character and sense of place. This quality will ultimately be determined through its detailed design and implementation.
- b. The contaminated nature of many areas of the site will require tree planting details to be carefully designed. In areas of high contamination, tree pits incorporating a barrier that will prevent pollutants entering the rhizome, whilst still providing for adequate drainage.
- c. Advanced planting is essential to the success of Widnes Waterfront because it will create an immediate impression on the image of the site. This will raise the level of confidence in the Waterfront and provide a sound basis for continued progress and regeneration activity. Advance planting will take place along Ashley Way and the entrance to the proposed boulevard.

6.9 Diversity and Adaptability

a place with variety and choice and a place that can change easily

- a. The development framework has been developed to ensure it has a high degree of flexibility to enable it to respond to demand for a range of uses and building types.
- b. Similarly, it is hoped that, in the longer term, there may be scope to introduce an element of residential development in some of the final phases of the plan. The structure of the road layout and public realm has been designed to allow this to happen.

6.10 Continuity and Enclosure

a place where public and private space are clearly distinguished

- a. The aspiration of the Widnes Waterfront Masterplan to set development within a high quality business park type environment. This approach is adopted by this SPD and relies to an extent, upon the quality of the landscaping and public realm to create a unifying, high quality environment.
- b. The architectural quality of new development must help the Waterfront area to achieve its full potential.

Site Specific Design Document

6.11 The following urban design framework considerations should be taken into account when bringing forward individual proposals. This will enable the Action Area SPD to retain a degree of flexibility. The Design Concept Plan (Plan 6), adapted from the Masterplan, illustrates these concepts.

6.12 The Boulevard

- a. The Boulevard links the A557/Fiddlers Ferry/Earle Road roundabout to the canalside and continues onwards towards Shell Green. The quality and form of the Boulevard is critical to

creating the required impressive environment.

- b. The boulevard will comprise a road, substantial tree lined verges, footpaths and cycleway, attractive street lighting, architectural signage and elements of public art.
- c. The overall urban design approach should seek to create a series of high quality, memorable spaces, buildings and environments-particularly at key junctions and gateways locations.
- d. 'Gateway features' should be created at key locations. In particular the,
 - i. A557/Fiddlers Ferry/Earle Road junction,
 - ii. Junctions at the top and bottom of the Boulevard and Tan House Lane and, to a lesser extent,
 - iii. Junction of the boulevard with the extension of Gorsey Lane.
 - iv. Junction of Gorsey lane and Fiddlers Ferry Road.

These 'gateways features' could comprise a strong architectural presence at the entrance route or public art features.

6.13 Riverside Park

- a. The 'Riverside Park' is the open space which runs alongside the canal, and which will play a key role in uplifting the environment of the area.
- b. The 'park' will comprise a mixture of hard and soft landscaping and will act as a continuation of the major restoration work which has been undertaken at Spike Island. It is hoped that the investment in uplifting the environment quality of this area of the Action Area will be accompanied by the restoration and reopening of a stretch of the St Helens Canal in the long term.
- c. As part of the creation of the riverside park, the former ICI tip to the east of Widnes Waterfront could be used for

recreational open space if it is practical and feasible given the problems of contamination present.

- d. Two canal crossing points could be developed at either end of the area as a means of encouraging pedestrians and cyclists to utilise the area and form circular routes, linking the Riverside Park to the canal towpath.
- e. The Riverside Park should also encompass improved habitat management on Widnes Warth itself. This may include consideration of grazing and mowing regimes, monitoring of ground conditions and pollution levels and other measures targeted at increasing the bird population. It also has potential as a visitor attraction with provision for visitor facilities including parking and a suitable canal and rail crossing. This will raise management issues that will need to be addressed when developments are brought forward.
- f. Discussions should be held with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Environment Agency, English Nature and others regarding the potential of incorporating bird hides and interpretation as part of the overall recreational strategy for this area.

6.14 'Quality Zone'

- a. It is important that development that faces onto publicly prominent highway frontages and the canal side and riverside environments is of a high quality in accordance with the Landscape strategy and this Design Guide. This will maximise the benefit to new development on the site and will significantly raise the image and profile of Widnes Waterfront.
- b. This zone will incorporate the whole of the central 'boulevard', running from the A557/Fiddlers Ferry/Earle Road roundabout down to the waterfront and up to its connection with Gorsey Lane. The whole of the riverside park area will

also be included. The urban design principles that have been identified above must be strictly applied within this zone.

6.15 Informal Zoning Strategy

- a. The design concept plan reinforces the 'quality zone', illustrating that the 'higher' quality end users such as office, retail and leisure operators should be located along the boulevard and A557 frontage. This will provide a 'quality' gateway into the site and 'quality' route down to the canal and River Mersey.
- b. This strategy sees the heavier industrial users located in area behind this 'quality zone' accessed from Fiddlers Ferry Road and Tanhouse Lane. This heavy industrial zone is encouraged to develop across the site in a north easterly direction towards Shell Green. This will negate any conflict between the mix of uses on the site, allowing each element of the area to function effectively and efficiently."

6.16 Parking

In order to discourage on-street parking, adequate on-site parking will be required in accordance with standards set out in the Halton Unitary Development Plan

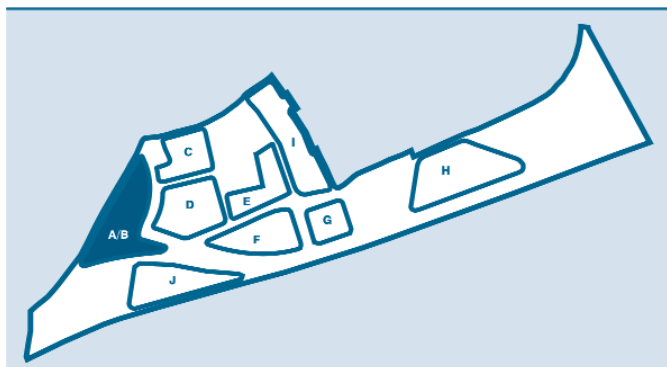
6.17 Control of Development at Existing Businesses

Where existing businesses adjoin the development sites in the Action Area, the UDP policies that control the quality and impact of new development will be applied strictly in order to achieve the strategic objective in 5.3, 'to improve the environmental quality of the whole project area'. This will apply particularly to the application of Policies E5 New Industrial and Commercial Development, BE1(2) General Requirements for New Development (Environmental Quality), BE2 Quality of Design, PR1 Air Quality and PR2 Noise Nuisance.

7 Key Development Opportunities (Map 1)

- 7.1 In this section individual sites are identified for a particular uses and principles of development are described that proposals for each site must follow.
- 7.2 The general principles of the design guide in the previous section has been interpreted and applied to each site. Development must also take account of the constraints that are listed for each site. All developers must satisfy themselves about the development constraints on each site and the measures required to deal with them. The purpose of their inclusion is this Action Area SPD is to provide developers with a starting point for their own investigations.
- 7.3 Where a site is suitable for a range of uses then these are listed. This gives a clear choice to developers and provides flexibility in achieving the regeneration of the Action Area whilst ensuring that the range of uses for a particular site is compatible with the overall development framework of the Action Area and the policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.
- 7.4 Some sites are already identified in whole or in part as National Land Use Database (NLUD) sites of previously used land. Reference to this database will reveal useful information about each site. (Map 2)
- 7.5 A summary of the illustrative market appraisal for each site is shown, although this need not be taken in the preferred form of development on the site, as it was done for valuation purposes as part of the Masterplan exercise.

Sites A and B Land off Earle Road (Venture Fields)



NLUD Ref.

65,000,003

65,000,002

Current Use

Previously developed land, now vacant

Most Appropriate Uses:

Business (use Class B1)

Assembly and leisure (use Class D2) and bulky goods retail warehousing (use Class A1) - that is compliant with policy TC01 (see note below)

Food and drink (use Class A3)

Hotels (Use Class C1)

Note:

UDP Policy TC1 (Provision for New Retail Development) allocates sites for new retail, food and drink and leisure development in accordance with the capacity for new floorspace and the 'sequential test' for site selection to favour town centre sites. For an explanation of how this policy affects the SPD refer to section 2-Planning Policy Context above.

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP Policy PR14 (Contaminated land) applies.

COMAH

The sites lay largely outside the current COMAH consultation zones, except the far southwest corner of Site A. See development constraints: General.

Pipelines

The Bowers Brook culvert runs through the site. It has an easement of 8 metres. Any works will require the consent of the Environment Agency.

Principles of Development /Design Guide

This site was serviced in a reclamation scheme in the mid-1980's. Since then a retail warehouse, car wash and public house/restaurant have been built on the reclaimed land. The remainder of the Venture Field site should now be developed to create a high quality gateway to the Widnes Waterfront Action Area and be complementary to Widnes Town Centre.

The design and appearance of the development when viewed from Ashley Way and Earle Road/new boulevard, should be of a high architectural and design quality. New development should face onto the roads. Service yards and car parking should be located to the rear. These service and parking areas should be screened and have a high quality landscape treatment.

Spaces in front of buildings facing onto Earle Road/new boulevard should incorporate high quality landscape and materials in conformity with the Widnes Waterfront Landscape Strategy (Appendix A).

The site could be extended by re-development of the existing retail warehouse, and car wash, by a building of distinct architectural quality, that could act as a landmark and gateway to the Widnes Waterfront area.

Land should be reserved as necessary for junction improvement at Earle Road/Ashley way/Fiddlers Ferry Road junction.

Land should also be reserved for the proposal boulevard route through the site. The line of the Shell Green railway corridor should also be safeguarded.

All new development should be accessed from the Ashley Road/new boulevard route.

Justification/Explanation

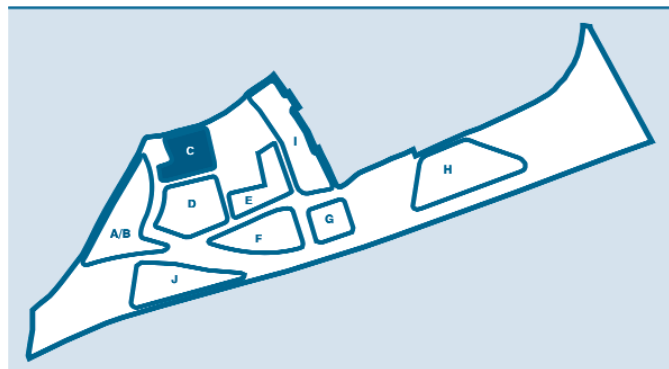
The policy justification for allowing retail

warehousing and leisure development on this site has already been explained by reference to Policy TC1 of the UDP.

Illustrative Market Appraisal

Site A. Industrial/Nursery Units. A range of single storey industrial units varying between 2,500sq ft and 10,000sq ft, arranged in terraces, capable of sub-division and with say, 10% office content.

Site C North of Dennis Road



NLUD ref

65,000,14 (part of site C).

Current Use

Previously development land now vacant (part) industrial premises.

Most appropriate uses

Business uses (B1 and B2 and B8).

Assembly and leisure (D2) - compliant with UDP policy TC01.

Hotels (C1).

Bulky goods retail warehousing class A1 (compliant with UDP policy TC01)

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP Policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

COMAH

The site is within a COMAH consultation zone. (See Development Constraints - General).

Principles of Development/Design Guide

Vehicle access to the site should be off Dennis Road for service vehicles. Cars and light vehicles will be permitted access off Earle Road.

New development must protect the amenity of the public house/family restaurant adjoining the site.

The Masterplan illustrates a mixture of office and light/general industrial accommodation on this site. Office development should be focused onto 'Earle Road' as it passes the site, offering potential for a strong, high quality built edge to the new boulevard. A landscaped edge should still be maintained to provide continuity to the proposed boulevard.

Where industrial developments are proposed in locations that are prominent from one of the main access roads, it will be a requirement that any office or administration component of the development should be located on the most prominent frontage. The design of the buildings should ensure that these offices are extensively glazed to increase visual interest and opportunities for natural surveillance.

Parking for these office uses should primarily be located behind the development.

The existing public house adjacent to the A557/Fiddlers Ferry/Earle Road roundabout is retained within the Masterplan, although the site could be redeveloped within the context of this Masterplan, in the longer term.

The Masterplan illustrates industrial development to the rear of the office blocks, although this part of the site may be appropriate for office development if sufficient demand is forthcoming.

Buildings should respond to a consistent building line and tree planting should be used to provide visual quality and continuity to the street scene. Areas of servicing and open storage areas should not be located in prominent locations, and only limited areas of well-landscaped car parking should be permitted in areas visible from the surrounding roads.

Justification/Explanation

This site currently comprises of land occupied by a vacant factory and adjoining vacant land and has been identified as an opportunity for

redevelopment. The site is bounded by Fiddlers Ferry Road to the north, Earle Road to the West and Dennis Road to the South. At the north west corner is a public house/family restaurant with on-site parking.

Any bulky goods retail warehousing on this site should comply with UDP policies RG3 Action Area 3 Widnes Waterfront and TCI Provision for Retail Development.

The 'most appropriate uses' listed above of small-scale office and industrial units are compatible with this policy. However it is recognised that due to its roadside location, potentially accessible by public transport (in accordance with the Masterplan transport proposals), part of the site could be developed for a hotel use. This could be permissible under policy E4 (Complementary Services and Facilities). There may also be scope, exceptionally, for a major single user leisure development on this site if it can be proved that it cannot be located on the sites allocated for leisure development in Policy TCI of the Halton UDP, that have been allocated in accordance with the 'sequential approach' as required by Planning Policy Document Note 6 (Town Centres and Retail Development).

Illustrative Market Appraisal

Small scale office scheme (units of two and three storey) and industrial (single storey). Offices between 3,000 - 8,000 sq ft.

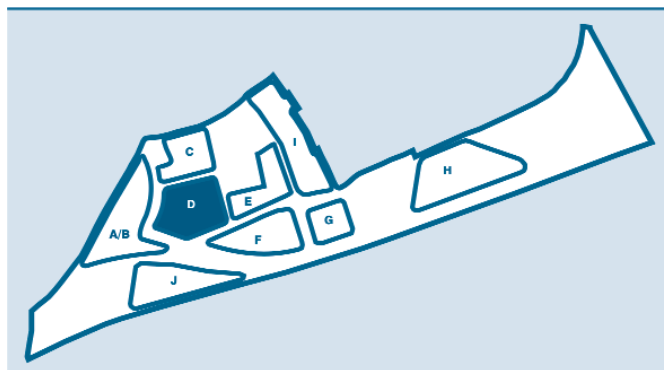
Industrial units 10,000 - 30,000 sq ft.

Major tourism development opportunity incorporating retail and leisure provision.

Site D

Land to east of 'Earle Road'

South of Dennis Road



NLUD ref

65,000,15

Current Use

Part vacant, part industrial use.

Most appropriate uses

Office and light industrial (Use Classes B1).
General industry (Use Classes B2).
Storage and Distribution (Use Classes B8).
Assembly and leisure (Use class D2) and bulky goods retail warehousing (use class A1) that is compliant with UDP Policy TCI.

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

COMAH

The site is within a COMAH consultation zone. (See Development Constraints - General).

Principles of Development/Design Guide

Office development should face onto Earle Road with parking to the rear, offering potential for a strong, high quality built edge to the proposed Boulevard. A landscaped edge should be provided to provide continuity to the Boulevard in conforming with the Widnes Waterfront Landscape Strategy (See Appendix A).

For industrial developments, only the office component of the development should be located on the most prominent elevations. The design of these buildings should ensure that these offices are extensively glazed to increase visual interest

and opportunities for natural surveillance, particularly over Dennis Road and the 'greenway' cycle and pedestrian route that is proposed along the southern boundary of the site following and safeguarding the route of the former railway line. Although road access may not be economical along the route of the greenway, development should not completely 'turn its back' upon this route. Some frontage development will aid natural surveillance and increase the visual amenity of this route.

Access for heavy goods and other vehicles should be off Dennis Road. Cars and light vehicles will be permitted access from Earle Road (new boulevard).

Justification/Explanation

The site is bounded by Dennis Road to the north, Earle Road to the east and the line of the disused railway south of Cornubia Road. It currently comprises land occupied by a building in employment use off Dennis Road and adjoining vacant land. The whole site has been identified as an opportunity for redevelopment.

The vacant part of the site is included within the Action Area defined by Policy RG3 of the Halton UDP. As this site falls within the northern part of Action Area 3, according to Policy TC1 of the UDP, bulky goods retail warehousing and leisure uses will be permitted, where it can be demonstrated that there is a need for the development and where the use is within reasonable walking distance of Widnes Primary Shopping Area. For an explanation of how policy TC1 effects the SPD, refer to section 2, Planning Policy Context above.

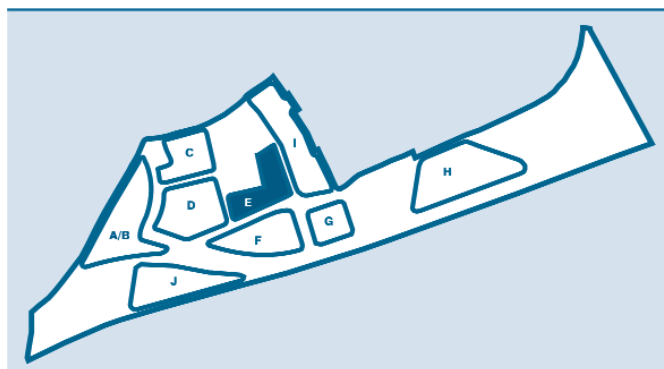
The eastern part is within a primarily employment area (under UDP Policy E3) where employment is and will continue to be the predominant land use. Policy E3 seeks to retain land for business and industrial use and to restrict the development of non-industrial users.

Illustrative Market Appraisal

Small scale office scheme (mix of two and three storey) and industrial (single storey). Offices between 3,000 - 8,000 sq ft and industrial between 10,000 - 30,000 sq ft.

Site E

Land north of Cornubia Road and West of Tan House Lane



Current Use

Existing industrial units, car breakers and scrap metal.

Most appropriate uses

Offices and light industrial (Use Class B1).
General industry (Use Class B2).
Storage and Distribution (Use Class B8).

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP Policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

COMAH

The site is within a COMAH consultation zone. (See Development Constraints - General).

Principles of Development/Design Guide

The southern edge of this site forms part of the boundary with the Earle Road to Gorsey Lane 'greenway' cycle and pedestrian route that runs along the protected railway corridor. Although road access may not be economical along the route of the greenway, development should not completely 'turn its back' upon this route. Some frontage development will aid natural surveillance and increase the visual amenity of this route.

Access for heavy goods vehicles and other vehicles should be off Dennis Road, via a new access through site D and via the existing Cornubia Road.

Any new development that fronts onto Tanhouse

Lane should include appropriate landscaping in accordance with a scheme of enhancement for this route. Buildings should be set back along a defined building line which allows for a generous landscaped treatment along the highway.

Justification/Explanation

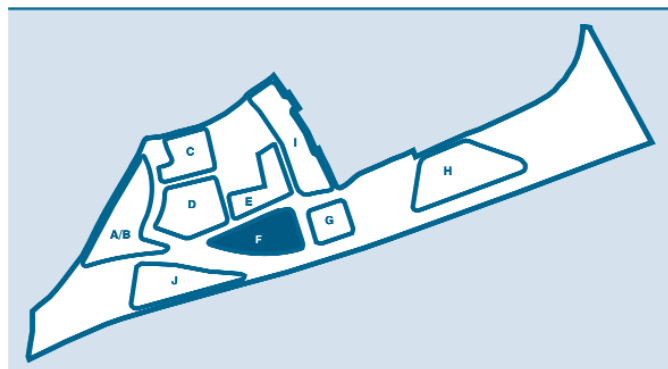
This site is currently occupied by industrial units and a scrap metal business. The whole site has been identified as an opportunity for redevelopment, in order to help achieve the objectives and outputs of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone.

The whole site is within a primarily employment area (under UDP policy E3) where employment is and will continue to be, the predominant land use. Policy E3 seeks to retain land for business and industrial use and to restrict the development of non-industrial uses.

Illustrative Market Appraisal

Mix of office (two and three storey) and individual (single storey).

Site F Land west of Tan House Lane (South) and North of St. Helens Canal



NLUD ref
65,000,65

Current Use

Vacant land and industrial buildings.

Most appropriate uses

Offices and light industrial (Use Class B1).

General industry (Use Class B2).

Storage and distribution (Use Class B8).

Assembly and leisure (Use Class D2) - compliant with UDP policy TC01.

Food and drink (Use Class A3).

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP Policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

Utilities/Pipelines

The Health and Safety Executive has identified two major accident hazard pipelines that are located in the vicinity of Site F, G, H and J.

A high-pressure natural gas (TRANSCO) pipeline passes up Tanhouse Lane from St. Helens Canal. This is subject to a consultation distance of 3 metres, either side of the pipeline. For any proposed development within this zone the HSE are a statutory consultee.

This is linked to another high pressure (TRANSCO) natural gas pipeline that runs along the towpath of the St. Helens Canal. This is subject to a consultation distance of 80 metres either side of the pipeline. For any proposed development within this zone, the Health and Safety Executive is a statutory consultee.

The approximate routes of these pipelines are shown on the map 3

COMAH

The site is within a COMAH consultation zone. (See Development Constraints - General).

St. Helens Canal

The British Waterways Consultation zone is 150 metres for applications involving work that affects the safety or structural integrity of the canal or applications involving an increase in surface water discharge.

Principles of Development/Design Guide

The site was occupied by a chemical works that has now been demolished and the site partially reclaimed. It is bounded by the freight railway line and St. Helens Canal to the south, an unused railway line to the north and the unadopted

southern part of Tanhouse Lane to the east. The office building on Tanhouse lane is occupied. The whole of the site is suitable for redevelopment.

The northern boundary of the site forms part of the boundary with the Earle Road - Gorsey Lane 'greenway' cycle and pedestrian route that runs along the protected railway corridor. Development of this site should not 'turn its back' upon this route. Some frontage development will aid natural surveillance and increase the visual amenity of the route.

Access to this site for service vehicles should be off Tan House lane.

The site will be linked to Fiddlers Ferry Road/Ashley Way via the proposed 'boulevard' route. This will be the main public transport, car and pedestrian access to the site. As the site will provide the Boulevard link from East to west, development proposals should include provision for this.

The Boulevard will comprise a road, substantial tree lined verge, footpaths and cycleways, attractive street lighting, architectural signage and elements of street art. It is essential therefore, those buildings on site F that front onto this route should be the quality element of any development, such as offices, and are of the highest architectural standard. Spaces in front of these buildings should incorporate high quality landscapes and materials, in conforming with the Widnes Waterfront Landscape Strategy (See Appendix).

The car parks and service areas for these Boulevard office buildings should be predominantly accessed from the rear. Industrial uses on the site should also be at the rear of the office frontage, and serviced off Tan House lane.

The alternative use of this site is for a leisure use that would require a building of considerable scale and is not suitable for the sites allocated for leisure use in the UDP. To reduce the bulk of such a building, opportunities to introduce glazed facades and architectural detailing in order to give visual interest must be considered at an early stage.

The site will also front onto and frame a proposed focal public space at the junction of the proposed boulevard and Tan House Lane giving access across the railway and St. Helens Canal to Widnes Warth beyond and providing views of the Estuary. Any development on this part of the site must front onto the focal space and must be of the highest quality. A high quality office building would be suitable fronting onto the public space. Alternatively a family public house/restaurant would also be acceptable.

Justification/Explanation

This site, together with adjoining site G are either side of the proposed public space and focal point formed by the junctions of Tan House Lane, the new boulevard route the proposed Riverside Park and proposed new pedestrian cycle access across the existing railway and the St Helens Canal to the Trans Pennine Trail. As such it will become a visitor attraction and a convenient stop along the Trans Pennine Trail. Therefore this would be an ideal location for a family pub/restaurant taking advantage of waterside views and also providing an amenity for people working in the area in existing and new employment developments. It would also be a complementary use for any large size leisure use on site F.

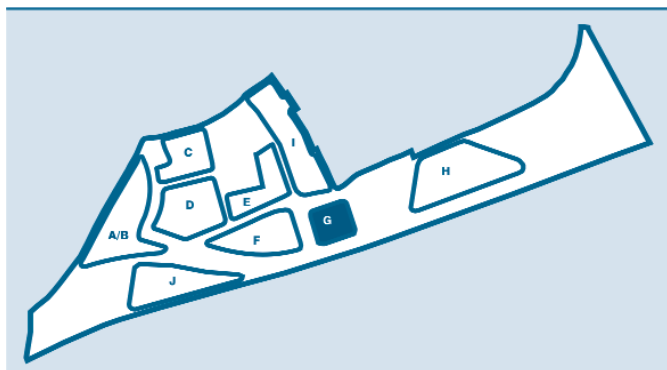
Illustrative Market Appraisal

Mix of offices (two and three storey) and industrial (single storey).

Alternative site for location of a large scale commercial leisure development that could not be accommodated on site allocated for leisure development in the Halton UDP.

Site G

Land, North of St Helens Canal, West of Saffil Plant



NLUD ref

65000064 (western part)

Current uses

Vacant previously used industrial land.

Most appropriate uses

Offices and light industrial use (Use Class B1)

General industry (Use Class B2)

Storage and Distribution (Use Class B8)

Food and Drink (Use Class A3)

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP Policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

Utilities/Pipelines

The Health and Safety Executive has identified two major accident hazards pipelines that are located in the vicinity of sites F, G, H and J. These are high-pressure natural gas pipelines and shown on map 3.

The consultation zones associated with these pipelines is described in site F, and apply equally to site G.

The transformer substation on this site will be retained.

COMAH

This site lies within a COMAH consultation zone, see Development Constraints: General St Helens Canal: British Waterways consultation zone 150 metres for applications involving work

that affects the safety or structural integrity of the canal or application involving an increase in surface water drainage.

Principles of Development/Design Guide

This site forms the western part of an extensive area of vacant land north of the St Helens Canal that has been cleared of all structures above ground, yet retains much of the foundations of previous chemical works that once occupied this site.

Adjoining the site is the Saffil works, a general industrial use that is currently a source of noise and emissions to air. Any sensitive developments proposed on this site will have to take this into account for siting and design.

The northern boundary of this site forms part of the boundary with the "Greenway" cycle and pedestrian route that runs along the protected railway corridor. Development of this site should not 'turn its back' onto this route. Some frontage development will aid natural surveillance and increase the visual amenity of the route.

Access to the site for service and other vehicles should be off Tan House Lane. Access to the site from the boulevard route should be for cars and other light vehicles only. A traffic management scheme will be put in place to achieve this.

It is essential that buildings on site G that front onto this route should be the office element of any development and that they are of the highest architectural quality. This is especially important in this location because of their canal/riverside location. Spaces in front of these buildings should incorporate high quality landscaping and materials in conformity with the Widnes Waterfront Landscaping Strategy.

The site will also front onto and frame a proposed focal public space at the junctions of the Boulevard and Tanhouse Lane. The same principal applies to the siting and design of development fronting these spaces as designated for site F.

Provisions should also be made within this site for the extension of the boulevard route link east to

site H, linking with the junction with Gorsey Lane/Moss Bank Road.

In addition provision should be made within the development of site G for a new entrance to the existing Saffil Plant off Moss Bank Road. The current access runs through the land reserved for the Greenway that protects the Shell Green railway corridor. Development of this site should also have regard to the operational needs of the existing Saffil Plant.

Justification/Explanation

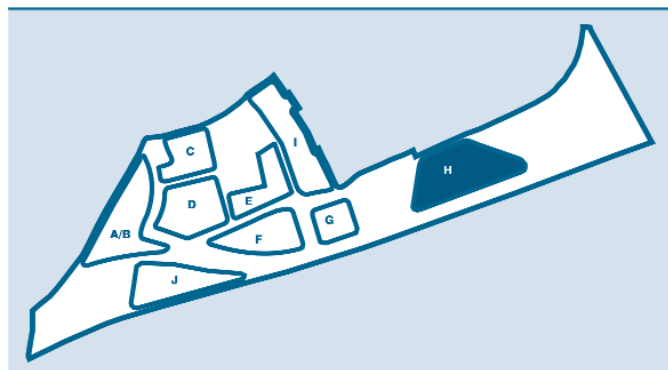
Same as applies to Site F

Master Plan Development Appraisal

Mix of offices (two and three storey) and industrial (single storey)

Site H

North of St Helens Canal, East of Saffil Plant



NLUD ref

65000064 (eastern part)

Current uses

Vacant previously used industrial land

Most appropriate uses

Offices and light industrial use (Use Class B1)

General industrial (Use Class B2)

Storage and Distribution (Use Class B8)

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP Policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

COMAH

The site lies within a COMAH consultation zone. See Development Constraints: General

St Helens Canal

British Waterways consultation zone 150 metres for applications involving work that affects the safety or structural integrity of the Canal or applications involving an increase in surface water discharge.

Pipelines

High-pressure natural gas (TRANSCO) pipeline runs along St Helens Canal footpath. Health and Safety Executive Consultation distance 8 metres.

Principles of Development/Design Guides

This site forms the eastern part of the extensive area of vacant land north of the St Helens Canal that has been cleared of all structures above ground, yet retains much of the foundations of previous chemical works that once occupied this site.

To the west the site is bounded by the Saffil works and to the east by a disused chemical waste tip. These are extensive views from the site over the upper estuary and St Helens Canal. The southern boundary of the site adjoins the proposed Riverside Park. A new pedestrian and cyclists bridge across the canal is proposed to link the Park to the Trans Pennine Trail/Canal Towpath.

The Masterplan envisages a predominantly industrial development for this site. However, due to its prominent riverside location, it is important that development does not turn its back on the river frontage. Where buildings face the Riverside Park it would be appropriate for ancillary offices to be located on the prominent elevations of industrial buildings, bringing variety and animations to key facades. Overall, despite its remote location, there should be as high a quality of landscaping and building design as elsewhere in the Action Area, to ensure that the design quality standards required by this plan on other sites, is maintained.

Access to this site should be via a new road link from Moss Bank Road/Gorsey Lane to Tanhouse

Lane to run south of the Saffil Plant and site G, as an extension to the proposed boulevard. This will also form part of a public transport route through the area.

Justification/Explanation

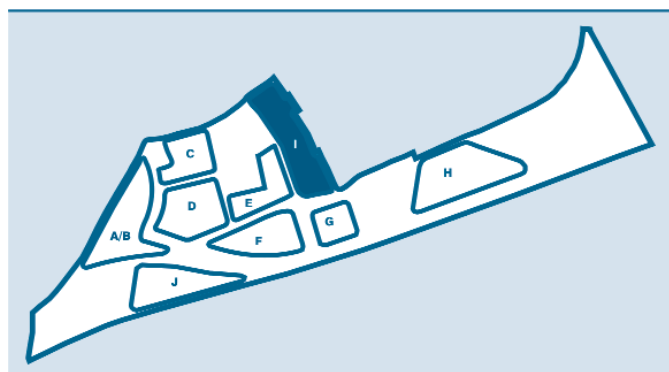
The most appropriate use on this site should contribute to the outputs of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone in terms of industrial and office accommodation and the creation of jobs.

The site is considered too remote from the town centre for commercial leisure and recreation uses.

Illustrative Market Appraisal

Mix of offices (two and three storey) and industrial (single storey)

Site I Sites east of Tan House Lane



NLUD ref

65000039 (Adjacent Brown Street)

Current Uses

Industrial premises and vacant previously used industrial land

Most appropriate uses

Office and light industrial use (Class B1)
General Industrial (Use Class B2)
Storage and Distribution (Use Class B8)

Development Constraints

Contaminated site. UDP Policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

COMAH

The site lies within a COMAH consultation zone. See Development Constraints: General

Utilities/Pipelines

A high pressure natural gas (TRANSCO) pipeline passes up Tan House Lane from the St Helens Canal onto vacant land between Brown Street and Tan House Lane. This is subject to a consultation distance of 3 metres either side of the pipeline. For any proposed development within this zone, the HSE are a statutory consultee. The approximate route of this pipeline is shown on map 3.

Railway Siding

A former railway siding gives access to this area, serving the former cement works. This has a level crossing over Tan House Lane. As stated under 'Principles of Development' it is not considered beneficial to the comprehensive development of this site and the Action Area as a whole that this railway siding should be kept open. Proposals to close this siding will need to seek regulatory approval from Network Rail.

Principles of Development/Design Guide

Tan House Lane could retain a more industrial character, as office development should be focused more to the west of the area and adjacent to the boulevard.

The objective is to achieve a much higher quality of industrial development in this area than currently exists and to deliver a high quality environment and landscaping scheme along Tan House Lane, which supports these objectives. Industrial units of between 10,000 and 30,000sq ft are envisaged. These units should be set behind a defined building line which allows for a generous landscaped treatment along the cycle way.

The existing railway siding that gives access to this site is considered an impediment to the comprehensive redevelopment of this area. The existing level crossing over Tan House Lane would also be a considerable constraint to vehicle access to the development sites along the waterfront, should the siding line be re-used. It is therefore

proposed that the railway siding be closed and the level crossing removed. Planning permission will not be granted for any use that could rely on rail freight access to the site as this would perpetuate the use of the railway sidings.

Any development on the corner of Tan House Lane/Fiddlers Ferry Road should be of a high architectural quality and act as a gateway feature for the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone. This should include high quality hard and soft landscaping according to the Document in the landscaping strategy for the area.

Justification/Explanation

In order to achieve the objectives and outputs of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone, the whole site has been identified as an opportunity for redevelopment.

The majority of the site is within a primarily employment area (under UDP Policy E3) , where employment is and will continue to be the predominant land use. Policy E3 seeks to retain land for business and industrial use and to restrict the development of non industrial uses. Vacant land off Brown Street is identified by site 196 in Policy E1 (Provision for New Employment Development) as suitable for B1, B2 and B8 employment uses.

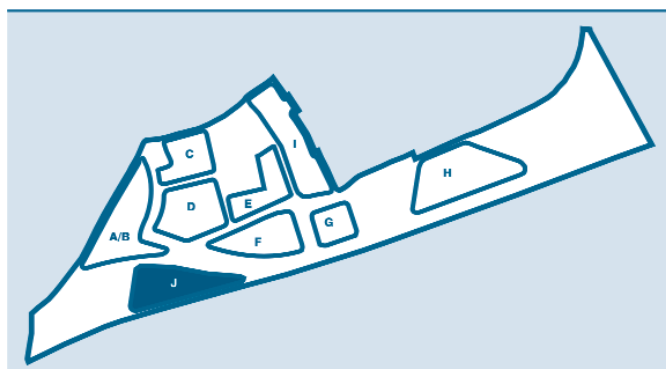
The part of Site I on the junction of Tan House Lane and Fiddlers Ferry Road is currently occupied by a car tyre and exhaust fitter that is a 'sui generic' use. Redevelopment of the site for a roadside hotel or food and drink premises would be acceptable under Policy E4 (Complementary Services and Facilities) as it would be available for use by employees of new businesses in the area as well as passing trade. It would also be an opportunity to construct a high quality building to act as a gateway to the area.

Illustrative Market Appraisal

Larger scale industrial or leisure development.

Site J

Former Muspratt Site, Ann Street East, off Earle Road



Current Uses

Vacant previously used industrial land

Most appropriate uses

Short Term - Landscaped open space, or other leisure use requiring an extensive site.

Long Term - The long-term future of this site depends largely on the future of the adjoining factory currently operated by Rhodia. This is because of its proximity and the problem of shared access. If this factory were to re-locate, then the site would be suitable for residential and leisure uses, taking advantage for the canal side location and links to Spike Island.

In accordance with UDP policy RG3, no planning permission will be given for any temporary or permanent uses, that are unsightly, nor a source of noise, dust, odour or pollution that is considered to be detrimental to the future regeneration prospects of the area as set out in this SPD.

Development Constraints

Rhodia Factory

Noise and industrial emissions to air.

Contaminated site

UDP Policy PR14 (contaminated land) applies.

COMAH

This site does not lie within any COMAH consultation zone, but the adjoining Rhodia factory site does.

Utilities/Pipelines

High-pressure natural gas TRANSCO pipeline runs along the St Helens canal towpath. Health and Safety Executive consultation distance 80m. Bowers Brook culvert, easement 8 metres. Consult Environment Agency.

St Helens Canal

British Waterways consultation zone 150 metres.

Principles of Development

The site has very poor access at present, being via a railway arch that also serves as access to the adjacent Rhodia factory. The site is cut off from any new access by the railway and the St Helens Canal. There are disused railway sidings along the canal bank from the Ditton, Warrington line.

A temporary 5 year planning permission for soil screening and stone crushing on the site expired in June 2003. Remaining tips of imported soil and stone need to be removed from the site by the current owners.

The advantages of this site are its ready access to the canal side, (unlike sites further east where access to the canal is blocked by the railway line), and its extensive views over the estuary and the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. The proposed route of the New Mersey Crossing will be highly visible from this site.

Due to its current restricted access, the site is difficult to develop for industrial or office development in the short term. Its waterside location lends itself to open air recreation, leisure and sports uses whilst the access constraints and the presence of the Rhodia factory on the adjoining site remain. A commercial leisure use requiring an extensive site in predominantly open air activities could also be appropriate, for example, a dog racing track, go-carting, golf driving range, etc. All developments would be required to provide public access to the canal bank for walking and fishing activities, with a link to the existing Carters Bridge at the bottom of Tan House Lane.

If the existing Rhodia factory were to close, then the development prospects of this site and

redevelopment of the factory site would be enhanced. This would then be one of the most attractive waterside site in Widnes given its unrestricted canal side frontage and extensive river and estuary views. The proximity of the site to the route of the proposed New Mersey Crossing would be an added visual attraction. Subject to the detailed design of the New Mersey Crossing, a new road access into the site could be a possibility. Reconstruction to widen the existing access beneath the railway would also be desirable.

In these circumstances, and subject to the extensive contamination problems on this site being resolved, then in the longer term this site could be suitable for new housing, leisure or commercial office/light industrial development. Until these development opportunities are realised, it is important that the amenity of this site is restored with a landscape scheme as an open space use. No planning permission will be granted for any short-term use that would be detrimental to the future regeneration prospects of the area. This restoration work would in turn contribute to the strategy for a Merseyside Waterfront Regional Park.

Justification and Explanation

The whole of Site J lies within the Widnes Waterfront Action Area 3 and is subject to Policy RG3 of the Halton UDP. In addition, it is identified as a 'priority employment redevelopment area' under Policy E2 of the UDP as a site suitable for employment redevelopment as and when they become vacant. However appropriate uses identified for this site, in the context of the SPD could include recreation, leisure and ultimately housing uses as well. New employment uses in Class B1 (Business) could be incorporated as part of a mixed-use development.

Appendix A

Widnes Waterfront Plan SPD

Landscape Strategy

1 Introduction

The Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone (EDZ) is a major initiative which will transform 80 hectares of low quality industrial land on the banks of the River Mersey and Sankey Canal, to the south of Widnes Town Centre. A master plan was produced by consultants in April 2003, which sets out a vision, regeneration framework and delivery strategy for the creation of one of the North West's main economic development zones. The Waterfront will become a focus for commercial, office, tourism and industrial development, creating around 2,700 new jobs within a high quality waterfront setting. The proposed improvements aim to provide a high quality, attractive landscape setting to attract new businesses, boost economic development and optimise Halton's natural assets. Elements within the overall landscape framework include improved frontages on to existing major roads, new boulevards and improved internal spine roads, landscape corridors, open spaces, a waterside park, and links with other greenways, such as the Trans Pennine Trail. This document sets out the framework Landscape Strategy for the proposed development. At the time of writing, a conceptual plan showing the different elements has been produced, but issues such as road alignments, configuration of buildings, precise after-uses etc are still being worked up in more detail. The project is not yet in a position to produce a more up to date and detailed master plan, and so this document aims to set the tone for future landscape development and offer guidance for the preparation of planning briefs and advance landscape works.

2 Existing Landscape Character

The EDZ site is characterised strongly by its current land uses, its industrial past which has led to large areas of underused and derelict land, and its riverside location.

Prior to development, the site would have been salt marsh or mossland associated with the Mersey Valley, until the construction of the St Helens Canal and filling of the land behind it prevented the estuarine waters flooding the area. Two centuries of industrial development have led to the state of the land today.

Topographically, the land generally now appears fairly flat, although it slopes gradually down to the canal. There are also several man-made mounds of spoil and bunds alongside roads and site boundaries. There are a variety of 'detractors' which affect the landscape quality of the site, including

- the tall buildings and chimneys of Rhodia to the west,
- lower industrial buildings to the east, over which are medium range views of the landmark structures of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station,
- the busy A557 with light retail and industrial units to the north.

To the south, however, the landscape is much more attractive, with immediate views up and down the St Helens Canal and towpath, middle distance views over the Widnes Warth salt-marsh and the Mersey Estuary, and long-range views to north and east Runcorn, which appears as a well-wooded, hilly landscape.

The flat, open wilderness of the salt marsh and estuary is the defining character of the natural landscape of the area.

3 Proposed Landscape Character

It is important when planning the landscape infrastructure of quality new developments to consider the landscape character of the area and to try to reflect this in the design principles and philosophy. This concept is as applicable to a Business Park as it is to a new housing area or major town centre retail development, and will help to give the area a sense of place and distinctiveness. This can ultimately pay dividends in the economic success and marketability of the development, and increase the sense of pride and ownership by the local community and business community.

This 'sense of place' can be reflected in the character of the landscape by:

- The overall design philosophy
- Using appropriate hard surfacing
- Selection of appropriate plant species
- Site furniture, fencing, signage, lighting
- Gateway features and Public art
- Special attention to key areas (e.g. Frontage to A557, Gateway features, Canal side and Waterfront Park)

As well as the need to reflect a 'sense of place', the landscape also needs to create a contemporary, high quality infrastructure which will place the Widnes Waterfront EDZ equal or superior to other similar scale developments in the region. A high quality design is required which will give distinctiveness, cohesion and structure to the development.

4. Design Philosophy

There is perhaps some conflict between creating an attractive, high quality 'business park' landscape on one hand, and reflecting the local landscape character of flat, wide open salt marsh and estuary on the other. The end result will need to be a compromise, to produce a landscape which is clean, crisp and unfussy, but has an attractive human scale to it and is capable of screening visual

detractors such as adjacent large industrial developments.

Topographically, the natural flatness of the site and surrounding area will help to create the formal, crisp effect. Where mounding or changes in level are absolutely necessary (e.g. due to level changes between plots etc), this should be achieved by regular, smooth gradients and geometric mounds, rather than less formal, undulating contours.

As it is intended that the new buildings within the EDZ will be of a high quality, planting should be used to 'set off' or frame these buildings, rather than to screen them. Large specimen trees planted in groups or avenues will provide vertical interest and directional views, but wider spacing will permit views into the individual plots. Mass planting of low ground cover shrubs, grass or hard surfacing will maintain the 'clean edge' and views through. This is to be a formal, rather than naturalistic landscape, with planting generally in same-species groups and regular spacing. There is still plenty of opportunity for variety, however, with species chosen for shape and form, leaf and stem colour and texture, autumn colour, flowers and berries etc. Different areas can be given a slightly different character by the choice of plants and materials etc. Each road, for example, could have its own 'menu' of tree and shrub species, each one distinct but with some commonality between them. The formality can be graduated, with the frontage on to the A557 and the main spine roads being most formal, giving way to a less formal landscape around the edges, particularly where screening is needed, and towards the salt marsh / canal.

The need for an 'instant' landscape solution is another issue that needs to be considered. Although it can be more cost-effective and successful in the long term to plant smaller specimens of trees, which are easier to establish and which grow faster, a more immediate solution will be required, so that the landscape looks well established and 'marketable' from early on. One approach to this conflict may be to plant two different sizes of trees; larger semi-matures which will give the immediate impact, and smaller standards which stand more chance of long-term

success and can act as a 'back-up' in case some of the larger trees do not survive. This would have to be designed into the scheme, however, so that the different sizes of trees fit in with the overall design principles.

A further consideration is the maintenance. A high quality landscape will require significant resources to maintain it in this style. Some maintenance-reducing elements can be built in at the design stage, such as fixed irrigation systems, mulching on shrub beds and lower maintenance grass mixes. However, it will be necessary to ensure that there is a commitment to fund the necessary on-going maintenance of the prestigious site.

The general formality of the landscape character needs to be varied at certain points; for example towards the canal and river, where a gradation towards a more natural approach is required. This frontage will be high profile, particularly when the New Mersey Crossing is constructed, and it forms an important part of the Mersey Waterfront, hence contributing strongly to the image of the Borough. Waterside planting, such as weeping willows, will help to set the scene of an upmarket, high quality, but less formal image.

A less formal landscape is also required at certain locations to accommodate dense and tall thickets of planting to screen unsightly developments (e.g. Rhodia, Saffil, Pilk/Sullivan tip). This planting will need to be fast growing, but with a structure to enable it to be thinned out in future, should their screening properties no longer be required.

5 Hard Surfacing

The emphasis in selecting materials for roads, pavements, pathways etc, should be on:

- high quality materials and workmanship,
- suitability for the use they will get, and
- achieving the aims of the design principles to create a cohesive, contemporary landscape.

In order to get a visual cohesiveness to the overall layout, a comprehensive material and colour scheme should be adopted, in discussion with

Highways Engineers. It is proposed that vehicular routes / main pedestrian footways / informal landscape footpaths all have a different but complementary set of materials and colours which identify the hierarchy of the surface, and add a sense of unity to the site.

Vehicular roadways should be in the most appropriate and hard-wearing surfacing for the traffic they will receive, which will presumably be an asphalt system. If possible, a different coloured aggregate should be incorporated into the surface to create a different effect from the standard 'blacktop' on the approaching trunk roads. Gateway 'strips' in a different coloured and textured material (e.g. imprinted, coloured tarmac) could be used to define the entrance to the EDZ, and other locations such as junctions, pedestrian crossing points etc. A quality kerb (such as the rough textured 'Conservation kerb') should be used to tie in with adjacent pedestrian paving.

The main pedestrian footways should be in a smaller unit paving, such as 450 x 450mm flag, or block paving. A 'buff' / 'harvest' colour might be appropriate, with a rough texture.

Informal landscape paths, such as the 'waterside park' / greenways should be in resin-bonded or coloured asphalt surface in a buff or golden colour which is similar but not identical to the main footpaths, with timber edgings to achieve smooth curves.

Areas of more distinctive surfacing can be employed in key areas e.g. gateways, sitting areas, focal points. Colours and / or materials can be used to tie in with the adjacent canal towpath surfacing, and the proposed boardwalk on to the salt marsh.

6 Planting

Specimen Trees

Trees are an important element in the design, and species need to be selected which not only fit in with the Design Principles, but also will survive and thrive in the conditions on site. The estuarine location means that plants will be exposed to strong winds. Ground contamination and air pollution will also have limiting effects on plant

growth. The success of tree planting can be increased by good ground preparation, with large tree pits excavated and filled with a good quality, well drained growing medium. Irrigation systems and intensive maintenance during initial years will also help to promote successful establishment in a harsh environment.

Trees which generally cope well with moderate exposure and atmospheric pollution and would be suited to an estuarine location include the following groups:

- Limes (Tilia)
- Willows (Salix)
- Maples (Acer)
- Crataegus (Hawthorns)
- Rowans / Whitebeams (Sorbus)
- Pines (Pinus)
- Ashes (Fraxinus)

A selection of species from these groups of trees is included in Appendix 1. These were selected for a number of different qualities which will help to provide an attractive and varied landscape.

Trees and Shrubs for Structure Planting

Where a less formal effect is needed, and a denser structure is required for screening purposes, it is more appropriate to use a mix of predominantly native trees and shrubs, planted in a matrix to form a varied multi-species thicket. The composition of this can be varied to suit different purposes. Appendix 2 gives examples of two typical mixes; one which will create a fairly rapid screen to hide unsightly adjacent developments, and another, more 'scrubby' and ornamental mix which would be suitable for greenways and landscape corridors nearer towards the salt marsh and estuary.

Ground preparation for shrub planting should include importation of topsoil where necessary, incorporation of organic materials, and mulching. Species should be chosen which will thrive in the local conditions. Some non-native, semi-ornamental species can be included to provide highlights in the planting scheme, and there should

be a variety of different sizes within the planting mix to provide more texture and visual interest. Some measures to reduce potential damage by rabbits will probably have to be considered in some locations.

Shrub Planting

As described previously for trees and structure planting, selection of species for local conditions, ground preparation, and control of rabbit damage are all issues that need to be considered. Mass-planting of groups of ground-cover shrubs of the same species should be used to reinforce the design principles of simplicity and formality along frontages to the site and main vehicular routes. More varied and ornate planting can be used at gateways and important nodes within the site. Species should be co-ordinated to give subtle effects using flower and foliage colour and texture, and this should be used with the tree planting to give a different character to different areas.

Appendix 3 illustrates some of the shrubs which would be suitable for mass planting and for more varied ornamental 'gateway' areas.

Other Planting

It is proposed that ornamental grasses be used at key points around the site. These would tie in with the flat salt-marsh landscape beyond the EDZ and provide a variety of texture and form to the planting. It would also mirror several other planting schemes that have been completed recently, particularly on town centre roundabouts. Careful placement of sandstone rocks and recycled timber could further help to create landscape features which reflect the sense of place.

Bulb planting should be used strategically around the site to create a highlight in the spring. Again, different species / varieties can be used to reinforce zones of different character. Appendix 4 shows some of the ornamental grass and spring bulb species that could be used.

Grass / Wildflower Areas

In most of the roadside areas, the aim will be to keep the grass short to create a smooth, clean, well maintained image. Mixes containing short,

finer grasses which need cutting less often and recover well from drought will be used. Reinforcement meshes and matting can be used with grass where necessary to create geometric forms and smooth slopes which will maintain the clean, contemporary image.

There may also be opportunities to create and maintain a more attractive and diverse sward in places, for example by including low-growing flowering species such as camomile, birdsfoot trefoil, veronica, speedwell etc. The sward could still be maintained at a low height, but would provide additional colour if the mowing regime was altered slightly at different times of the year. Again, this would help to create a 'managed' impression of the wilder landscape of the salt-marsh and beyond.

In less formal areas along landscape corridors and areas near to the canal, mixes of native grasses and wildflowers can be used to create longer meadow areas, which grade naturally into scrub and structure planting areas.

Appendix 5 shows examples of suitable grass / wildflower mixes.

7 Temporary Landscape Treatment.

Although the landscape treatment within individual development plots is to reflect the formal nature and character described in the Design Philosophy and elsewhere in this document, there may be situations where land has been reclaimed and is left vacant for a period of time. It may be appropriate here to apply a temporary landscape treatment which will show the land off to its best advantage and prevent it becoming overgrown and unsightly. There are three possible approaches, depending on the situation and location:

- Seed with a low maintenance grass mix, and maintain grass to a certain height (e.g. 6 cuts per annum). This is appropriate on a formal, key location, and requires the ground to be even and fairly fertile (i.e. topsoiled).
- Seed with a wildflower / grass mix, and

maintain as necessary (e.g. 2 cuts per annum). This will give an attractive but less formal appearance and is appropriate for a medium-term treatment (e.g. 2 or more years). It requires a fairly even substrate which is infertile (i.e. subsoil or poor quality topsoil) so that the grass and pernicious weed growth does not become too vigorous.

- Plant with fast growing tree whips, for example willow and poplar, which will provide a lush green plantation. This is appropriate as a medium to long-term treatment (e.g. 3 or more years) and will create a strong landscape structure to the site. In some cases, it may be possible to retain some of the planting in the long-term to create a shelter belt / screen, depending on the eventual requirements of the development. The willow and poplar can be cropped at various intervals, producing some financial return on the land.

These three treatments will all help the visual appearance and improve the marketability of the sites, and the second and third options in particular will be of short, medium or long-term benefit to wildlife.

8 Site furniture, signage, lighting.

These elements should be co-ordinated to provide a unified solution which contributes to the aims of a high quality, distinctive landscape.

Site furniture (seating, bins, cycle racks, bollards), signage and lighting should all be in a matching style. It is proposed to use a contemporary and durable material such as stainless steel, or where appropriate a combination of stainless steel and timber. This style, although comparatively costly initially, would be low in maintenance, and easier than coated steel or timber to keep looking fresh. A tubular design of seating and bins, such as the furniture which has recently been installed in Victoria Square, Widnes, would create the necessary contemporary feel. Further work needs to be done to source appropriate signage and lighting columns which tie in with the furniture.

Towards the canal and the salt marsh, the style should graduate to a more rural character, using thick sectioned timber furniture instead of stainless steel, but still, if possible, using some of the elements of the more formal style.

9 Public Art.

Public art is an important tool in achieving a distinctive landscape which interprets the history and sense of place of an area. Business Parks characteristically opt for large 'corporate' metal sculptures; although these do create a distinctive focal point, they often bear little or no relation to the site or the surroundings, and could have been commissioned for any high quality commercial development around the world. A separate brief is being written for the provision of art-work which will be an integral part of the landscape, and will help achieve the landscape design aims.

Art features could include single or linked sculptures. Appropriate locations include gateways, open spaces, the waterside park and the canal side.

Consideration should be given to the incorporation of artwork into functional items, such as site furniture, signage, fencing etc. This would help the items concerned be more distinctive and original. Also, artwork could form a trail along the landscape corridor / waterfront park, linking in with initiatives for a sculpture trail along the Trans Pennine Trail which runs along the Canal towpath.

10 Key Areas

Special attention needs to be given to the design of certain 'key areas' which will be the focal points and defining landscapes of the EDZ. The main areas to be considered are:

Frontage to A557

For most people, the A557 frontage will be the most commonly viewed part of the EDZ. It therefore plays a very important role in creating favourable first impressions, and giving a flavour of the quality and style of landscape within. Due to

the nature and scale of this frontage, the simple, smart approach is most suitable here, with specimen trees, mass ground cover planting, and a clean close-mown regular embankment to accommodate the change in level between the road and the adjacent 'Venture Fields' site.

Gateway Features, Roundabouts and Junctions

It is proposed to carry out a major re-design of the junction of the EDZ and the A557. The landscape around this new junction should set the scene for the overall landscape, with appropriate 'pointers' to the EDZ. Similarly, several road junctions, road / footpath junctions, roundabouts and focal points within the EDZ itself will require more intensive, 'high-spec' treatment.

Landscape Corridor and Open Spaces

The master plan for the EDZ shows a meandering path passing through a landscape corridor alongside the proposed boulevard. This links several smaller open spaces to form a pedestrian- and cyclist- friendly landscape network. The design should ensure that this network of spaces provides an efficient link between different sites on the EDZ, a pleasant place to wander, spaces for sitting outdoors, socialising and picnicking. It should create a high quality landscape which ties in with the style of other areas, but has its own distinctiveness.

Canal and Waterfront Areas

The canal side and waterfront areas, are really the 'key' or 'defining' landscapes within the development. All the routes and pathways ultimately appear to lead to this, and it needs to be a distinctive landscape of particularly high quality, incorporating the ideas and principles already discussed for the landscape as a whole. Of particular importance are its links to the natural landscape to the south of the canal, and to other recreational waterfront areas at Spike Island to the west.

There is an existing railway line to the north of the canal bank, which precludes direct public access on this side. A towpath is situated on south side of the canal, and this forms part of the strategically important Trans Pennine Trail footpath and cycleway. It is also a popular venue for anglers.

The canal towpath should be upgraded for its existing users, and also to encourage use by EDZ visitors and employees. The width of the towpath is restricted by a hawthorn hedgerow, which separates the path from the salt-marsh. The hedge gives important shelter from the estuarine winds and provides a wildlife habitat, and therefore should be retained. Native ground flora should also be retained and protected to enhance the appearance of the 'rural hedgerow', with some management to ensure access and a tidy appearance. There is potential for a parallel path / cycleway or promenade on the southern side of the hedgerow to lead to Spike Island, with extensive views over the estuary.

A particularly important 'node' is the point at the end of Tanhouse Lane, where it crosses the canal. Historically this was the location of the Carter's Bridge (later Carterhouse Bridge), a route for cattle to be driven on to the salt marsh for grazing. A new bridge is planned here, and connections to it are of prime importance. The canal narrows significantly at this point and there are opportunities here for waterside platforms on both sides of the canal, with view-points along the canal and across the salt-marsh and estuary. A good waterside design including interesting paving details, decking and railings, which relates well to the canal, bridge and salt-marsh will make this a key location for visitors and employees. This point will be the link with proposed boardwalks across the salt-marsh, which has the potential for future designation as a Local Nature Reserve.

The canal bridges themselves should be painted in the traditional black and white colours, with some use of mid-blue and mid-green colours underneath for contrast.

The treatment of the landscape around and on the Warth needs to reflect its potential designation as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), with a simple and plain character, utilising heavy timber furniture, boardwalks and native species of trees and shrubs. This should be consistent with the treatment to the Astmoor salt marsh and Wigg Island on the south side of the river as they will potentially all form part of the same LNR. The habitats of the Warth will need to be protected and enhanced,

particularly for the priority species in Halton's Biodiversity Action Plan.

The existing recreational parkland area at Spike Island links in closely with the EDZ, and therefore needs some improvements to ensure a consistent approach to the whole waterfront landscape. Additional planting on the mainland area of Spike Island, with weeping willows and more colourful trees, and improved woodland management on the Island itself will improve the 'visitor experience' and the general image of the Borough and the EDZ.

11 Summary

The landscape structure of the Widnes Waterfront EDZ is crucial in setting the scene for its future development, and is an important tool in ensuring its economic success and marketability. In summary, the style of landscape should achieve the following aims:

- reflect its location and sense of place;
- change perceptions about Halton's industrial legacy, and give good first impressions of the site as a whole;
- optimise its canal and estuarine location, and contribute to the wider network of open spaces and greenways in Halton, particularly along the Mersey Waterfront.
- create a sustainable and healthy environment which can be managed and maintained in top condition in the future.

In order to achieve these aims, this Landscape Strategy should be applied to all developments in the EDZ, and followed to ensure a cohesive approach.

Appendix I

Suggested Tree Species

Suitable for boulevard and wide verges (predominant species)

Tilia euchlora (Caucasian Lime)
Tilia tomentosa 'Brabant' (Silver Lime var.)

Suitable for large open spaces as specimens (few could be included in boulevard)

Acer pseudoplatanus 'Leopoldii' (Sycamore var.)
Acer pseudoplatanus 'Worleei' (Golden
sycamore)
Acer platanoides 'Emerald Queen' (Norway
Maple var.)
Betula jacquemontii (Himalayan Birch)
Fraxinus oxycarpa 'Raywood' (Claret Ash)
Prunus avium plena (Cherry var.)

Suitable for landscape diversity (narrower verges & where space is more limited)

Crataegus prunifolia (Cockspur Thorn)
Crataegus x lavalleyi (Lavalle Thorn)
Fraxinus ornus (Manna Ash)
Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer' (Pear var.)
Sorbus aria 'Majestica' (Whitebeam var.)
Sorbus commixta (Scarlet Rowan)
Tilia mongolica (Mongolian Lime)

Suitable for waterside planting (& estuarine exposure)

Pinus nigra austriaca (Austrian Pine)
Salix alba 'Liempde' (Willow var.)
Salix babylonica 'Pendula' (Weeping Willow)
Sorbus intermedia 'Brouwers' (Swedish
Whitebeam var.)
Ulmus lobel (Elm var.)

Appendix 2

Suggested Structure Planting Mixes

Suggested Mix for Fast-Growing Screen

Acer pseudoplatanus 'Atropurpureum' (Purple-
leaved Sycamore)
Alnus glutinosa (Common alder)
Cornus sanguinea (Dogwood)
Fraxinus excelsior (Ash)
Pinus nigra (Pine)
Populus nigra (Black poplar)
Prunus avium (Cherry)
Prunus spinosa (Blackthorn)
Rosa canina (Dog rose)
Salix alba 'Britzensis' (Willow)
Salix viminalis (Willow)

Suggested Semi-Ornamental Mix for Landscape Corridor / Waterside Park

Buddleia davidii
Buddleia globosa
Cornus alba 'Sibirica'
Cotoneaster cornubia
Eleagnus x ebbingei
Olearia macrodonta
Rosa Nevada
Rosa rubrifolia
Rosa rugosa 'Roseaie de l'Hay'
Salix eleagnos
Sambucus racemosa 'Sutherland Gold'

Appendix 3

Suggested Shrub Species

Suggested Species for Mass Planting

Ceanothus thyrsiflorus repens
Cistus 'Silver Pink'
Cistus x corbariensis
Cotoneaster 'Coral Beauty'
Cotoneaster microphyllus
Cytisus x beanii
Genista hispanica
Hebe pinguifolia
Juniperus media spp
Lavandula spica 'Hidcote'
Lonicera 'Maygreen'
Potentilla 'Dart's Goldigger'

Suggested Shrub Species for Ornamental / Gateway Planting

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Albrechii'

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Ellwoodii'
Cistus skanbergii
Cotinus coggygria
Hebe ochracea 'James Stirling'
Hebe rakaiensis
Juniperus squamata 'Blue Carpet'
Lavandula vera
Lonicera nitida 'Baggesen's Gold'
Osmanthus heterophyllus
Perovskia 'Blue Spire'
Phormium tenax
Pinus mugo
Salix lanata
Salix repens argentea
Salvia officinalis 'Purpurescens'
Santolina chamaecyparissus
Senecio 'Sunshine'
Tamarix pentandra
Yucca filamentosa

Appendix 4

Other Planting

Suggested Ornamental Grass Species

Cortaderia 'Pumila'
Festuca glauca
Stipa gigantea
Miscanthus sinensis 'Gracillimus'
Ophiopogon planiscarpus nigrescens *

Suggested Spring Bulb Species

Narcissus 'Golden Harvest'
Narcissus 'Mount Hood'
Narcissus 'King Alfred'
Narcissus 'Sempre Avanti'
Narcissus 'Jonquilla Waterperry'
Crocus 'Joan of Arc'
Crocus 'Yellow Mammoth'
Crocus 'Remembrance'
Galanthus nivalis

Appendix 5

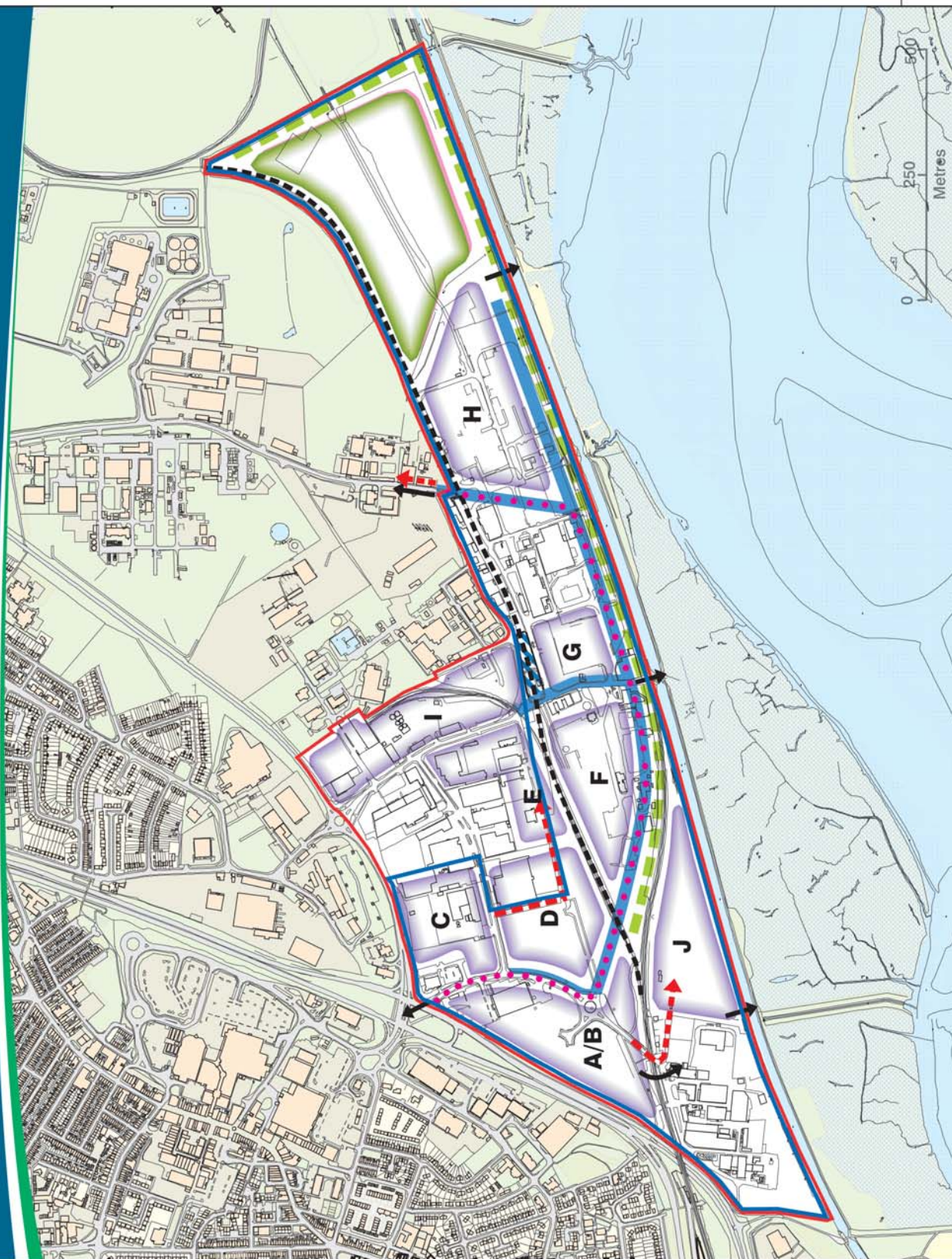
Grass and Wildflower Mixes

Suggested Mix:

Wild Carrot
Red Campion
Meadow Buttercup
Ox-eye Daisy
Lesser Knapweed
White Campion
Ribwort Plantain
Selfheal
Salad Burnet
Yellow Rattle
Musk Mallow
Cowslip
Browntop Bent
Red Fescue
Crested Dogstail
Meadow Fescue
Smooth Stalk Meadow Grass
Yorkshire Fog

Map I Key Development Opportunities

- UDP Policy RG3 Action Area 3 Boundary
- SPD Boundary
- Key Development Opportunities
- Protected disused railway route (UDP Policy Tp3) Proposed Footpath/ Cycleway Greenway
- Landscaped Boulevard
- Protected road line/ cycleway
- Vehicle Access
- Proposed Greenspace (UDP Policy GE5)
- Linear Park
- Pedestrian /cycle links
- Land safeguarded for railway station



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November 2004



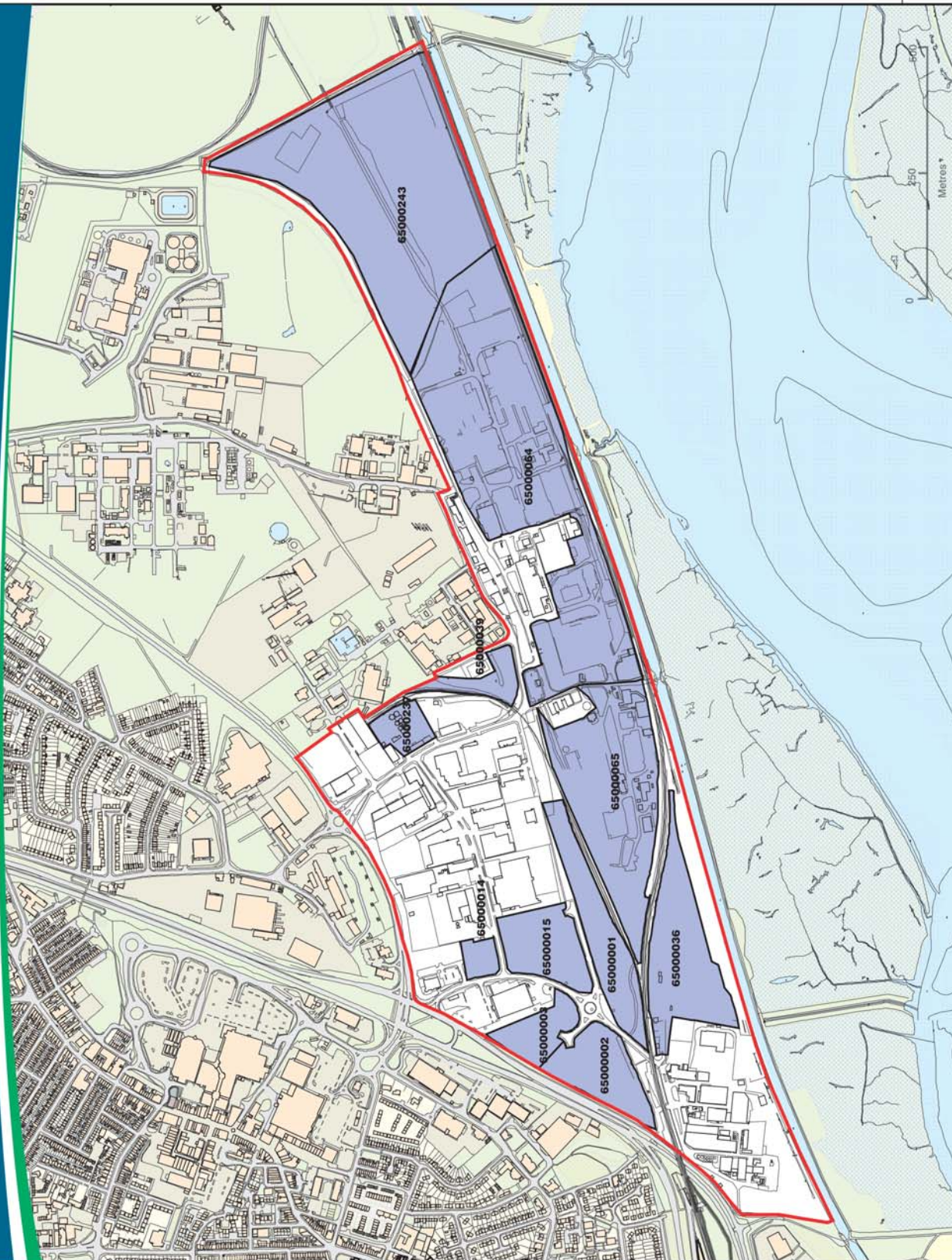
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Map 2 NLUD Sites

- SPD Boundary
- NLUD Sites
(National Land Use Database)



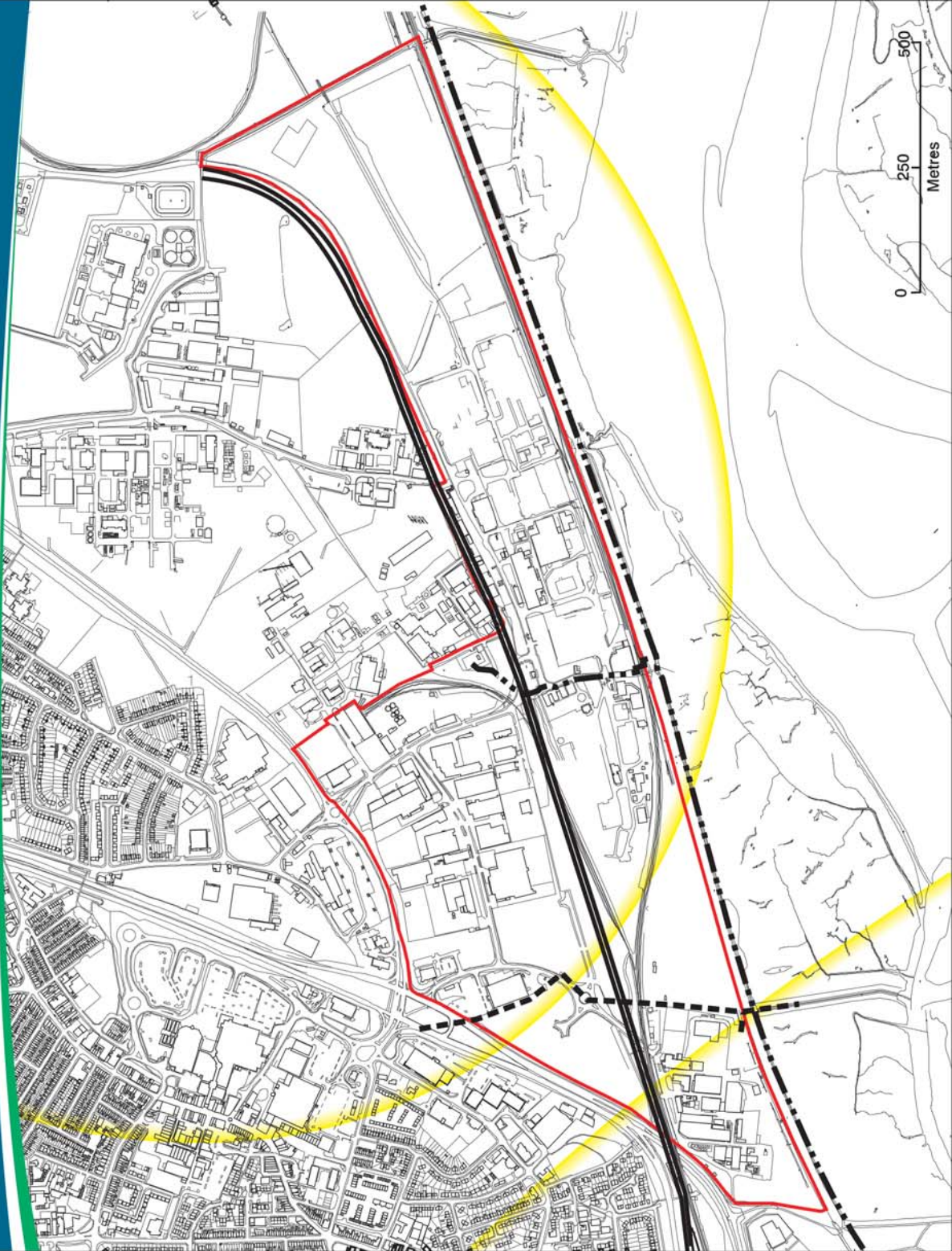
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- SPD Boundary
- COMAH Consultation Zone
- North West Water Sludge Pipeline to Shell Green
- - - Transco High Pressure Gas Pipeline
- - - Bowers Brook Culvert



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HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

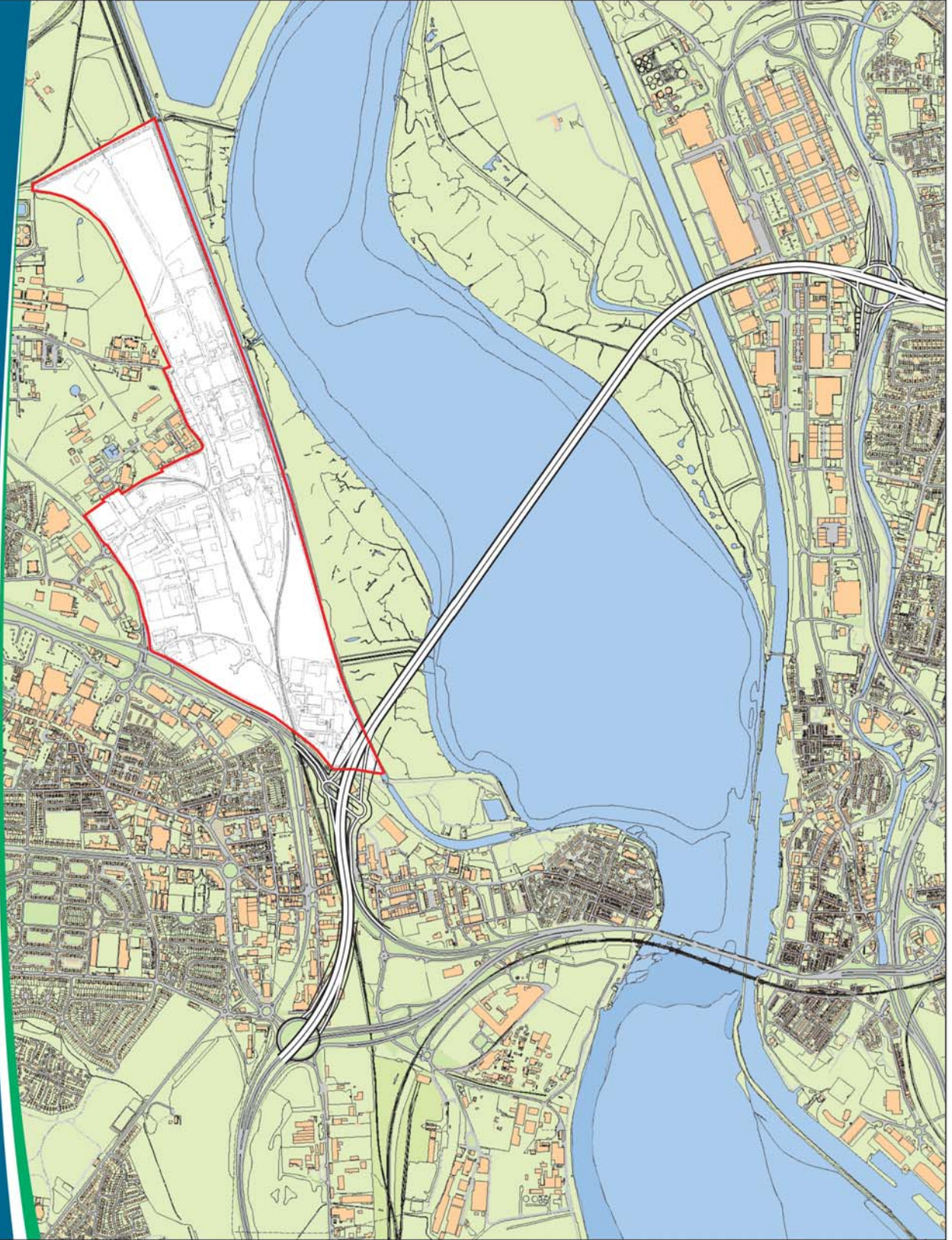
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Map 4 Proposed Route of the Second Mersey Crossing

SPD Boundary



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November 2004



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Map 5 Transport Strategy

- SPD Boundary
- - - Key Cycle/Pedestrian Routes
- HGV Priority Route
- Green Public Transport Access Ring
- Car Priority Route

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HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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