

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

**Justification Document
Working Draft**

Peel Land & Property & Peel Ports
(Part of the Peel Group)

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5 March 2019

Executive Summary

Specific Points		Evidence
<p>1. Port Warrington:</p>	<p>Port Warrington is an established facility, which lies within the heart of the Liverpool – Manchester corridor and benefits from a fixed and unique geographical location on The Manchester Ship Canal (MSC) and has the ability to be connected to the West Coast Main Line railway.</p> <p>There is clear evidence to support the need for the growth and expansion of Port Warrington, but existing constraints (such as HGV access, poor quality buildings, and constrained land availability) restricts the ability of the Peel Ports Group to secure growth and capitalise upon the Port’s unique advantages.</p> <p>To address these constraints, positive policy interventions will enable the Port to attract new occupiers, secure inward investment and maximise the economic potential of the MSC and the existing rail links.</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 3</p>
<p>2. Strategic Policy Alignment for Port Development</p>	<p>The expansion of Port Warrington is consistent with national policy expressed in the National Policy Statements for Ports and National Networks and the National Planning Policy Framework which clearly supports increasing the capacity of our ports and the delivery of employment development which is connected by alternative modes of transport other than just road to support the transfer of freight from road to rail and water.</p> <p>The expansion of Port Warrington is significantly supported by pan-northern and sub-regional economic, regeneration and LEP strategies. The principle for the growth and expansion of Port Warrington alongside the delivery of the wider Warrington Waterfront is also established in the Council’s Industrial Strategy, Local Economic Plan and Core Strategy.</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 4</p>
<p>3. Meeting Port Demand and</p>	<p>The presence of an expanded Port of Liverpool and the MSC creates the potential</p>	<p>This Justification Document,</p>

<p>the Peel Ports Group Port Strategy</p>	<p>for a 21st century hub with very significant economic advantages having a major hinterland and population alongside access to an existing industrial and commercial base which, in terms of size and scale, is second only to the London conurbation.</p> <p>The Mersey Ports (Port of Liverpool and the MSC) network is Britain’s third busiest port estuary and traffic forecasts to 2030 indicate an anticipated 70% growth in port traffic tonnage when compared against a base date of 2008. Significant growth is envisaged in container traffic following the opening of Liverpool2 the new deep sea container terminal at the Port of Liverpool.</p> <p>Growth forecasts to 2030 have been translated into an overall land requirement which has subsequently been disaggregated across the Peel Ports network.</p> <p>There is an unmet land requirement to deliver port related facilities to meet forecast demand as originally identified by the Mersey Ports Masterplan (MMP). An expanded Port Warrington (in addition to that which was originally envisaged in the MMP) can assist in addressing the shortfall and accommodate a large proportion of this growth to continue to drive economic growth in Warrington and across the sub-region.</p> <p>Since the publication of the Mersey Ports Masterplan, a number of third party research and evidence documents have been published to inform economic strategies and/or the preparation of development plans across the sub-region. This evidence validates the port forecasts set out in the Mersey Ports Masterplan. The conclusion that can be drawn from this evidence is that port growth is having, and will continue to have, a large impact on the demand for employment land throughout the sub-region (including Warrington).</p>	<p>Document, Chapters 5 Draft Peel Ports Masterplan (2011)</p>
<p>4. An Updated Need Case</p>	<p>MDS Transmodal (MDST) were commissioned by Peel to update the freight evidence for the expansion of Port Warrington and Warrington Commercial Park taking into account maritime traffic,</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 6</p>

road and rail freight traffic and associated storage requirements. It confirms that Port Warrington is an appropriate and sustainable spatial response to meet employment needs arising generally and from needs arising from port freight growth.

The report confirms that Port Warrington is one of the very few places in the region that has significant potential to be a tri-modal logistics site providing access to the River Mersey (via the Manchester Ship Canal) to the Port of Liverpool and the Irish Sea and to the West Coast Main Line which is the most important route for intermodal rail freight in Great Britain. It is the type of development proposition which national and local Government policy seeks to encourage ensuring the greatest potential for transfer of freight from road to rail and harnessing port-centric distribution to deliver greater environmental benefits and economic growth. The report shows that there are very few sites within the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor which share the same locational characteristics and advantages of Port Warrington and all would need to be brought forward to meet anticipated demand in distribution warehousing to 2035.

A review of potential port traffic shows that it remains in line with expectations as envisaged in the Mersey Ports Masterplan and that Port Warrington can act as an inland extension of the Port of Liverpool for port-centric distribution, handling container traffic, dry bulk, and construction materials and other general cargo (such as steel products) that would be transhipped at the Port of Liverpool and then transported along the MSC on barges or small coastal and feeder container ships.

Assessment work in respect of rail connectivity at Port Warrington has concluded that a direct connection can be

achieved to the West Coast Main Line, part of Network Rail's Strategic Freight Network which can handle the most efficient combination of containers and wagons that can be accommodated on the British rail network. An initial timetabling assessment has concluded that there is capacity on the network sufficient for Port Warrington to be served by one freight path per hour per direction which would be commercially attractive to the rail freight industry. Future network interventions by the public sector will only increase rail capacity in the future.

<p>5. Warrington Commercial Park</p>	<p>The new Warrington Commercial Park will enable the creation of a variety of new employment floorspace for a mix of potential businesses. The Commercial Park is a development proposition that can assist in meeting the quantitative and qualitative employment land requirements in the borough across the plan period. Notably, this site benefits from a unique local advantage, notably its location close to Warrington town centre and excellent transport links that sets it apart from any alternative non-Green Belt location elsewhere in the Borough.</p> <p>Hence, there are clear exceptional circumstances to justify release of the site from its Green Belt designation.</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 7</p>
<p>6. Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park</p>	<p>The Nature Reserve and Country Park will create significant new additional recreational opportunities and ecological enhancements.</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 8</p>
<p>7. A Unique Opportunity</p>	<p>The wider Warrington Waterfront initiative and the delivery of the Western Link Road infrastructure will provide a unique opportunity to unlock an unrivalled growth opportunity at Port Warrington and the Commercial Park.</p> <p>Port Warrington presents a unique opportunity to deliver significant port expansion and a critical mass of development land and floorspace to</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 9 Development Framework Document</p>

harness the full potential of its multi-modal connectivity while being positioned at the heart of a major consumer market. Port Warrington has a clear and competitive advantage over other sites within Warrington or indeed the wider sub-region which cannot offer the same characteristics or benefits that Port Warrington can provide.

A Development Framework has been prepared to illustrate how Port Warrington may be delivered during the emerging Warrington Local Plan period to meet anticipated growth in port related traffic and active markets. The Development Framework also sets out a vision for the Commercial Park and Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park.

<p>8. Green Belt</p>	<p>The site is presently located within the Green Belt, though it is proposed to remove the majority of the land (including the land associated with Port Warrington and its expansion and the Warrington Commercial Park) and deallocate it for employment purposes. The remaining land at Arpley Meadows will be retained within the Green Belt and turned into a Country Park.</p> <p>This section considers the site's contribution to the Green Belt, taking account of the Framework's five purposes of Green Belt land and considering the effect of the land's proposed removal from the Green Belt.</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 10</p>
<p>9. Benefits</p>	<p>The expansion of Port Warrington, including the delivery of an accompanying business park and a new Nature Reserve and Country Park will deliver considerable and tangible social, economic and environmental benefits at a regional, borough and local community level.</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 11</p>
<p>10. Conclusion</p>	<p>The proposed allocation for an expanded Port Warrington, the Commercial Park and Nature Reserve and Country Park is justified and sound.</p>	<p>This Justification Document, Chapter 12</p>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Justification Report (“report”) has been prepared by Turley on behalf of Peel Land & Property and Peel Ports (“Peel”) subsidiaries of the Peel Group, a leading regeneration, infrastructure, and real estate company in the UK.
- 1.2 The report has been prepared to support the Warrington Local Plan. It demonstrates that the removal of part of the land at Warrington Waterfront from the Green Belt and its allocation for expanded port infrastructure, along with a new employment business hub, in the draft Plan is exceptionally justified and ‘sound’. It also confirms that the Arpley Meadows former landfill site (c. 90ha) which is intended to be transformed into a new Nature Reserve and Country Park (c. 181ha) should be retained within the Green Belt, but will convey significant benefits.
- 1.3 This report should be read alongside the (working draft) Development Framework which sets out the overall vision and development opportunity for Warrington Waterfront.
- 1.4 To summarise, the proposed expansion of Port Warrington and the new Warrington Commercial Park (WCP) could deliver around 288,350 sqm (3.1 million sqft) for employment development, split as follows:
 - 205,850 sqm of development (2.2 million sqft) immediately to the north of The Manchester Ship Canal (Port Warrington) for port centric employment uses (B2/B8) alongside the introduction of a second berth, turning vessel basin and rail connection to the West Coast Mainline; and
 - 82,500 sqm of employment development (0.9million sqft) at WCP which could be developed for port centric employment uses (B2/B8) and other business uses (B1, B2 and B8 uses), plus complementary uses to support the business park environment.
- 1.5 The overall proposals also include:
 - New access arrangements to the Port, WCP and the Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park, which will seek to divert traffic away from Moore village, with associated amenity benefits;
 - The creation of the Nature Reserve and Country Park (c. 181ha), to reflect its retention within the Green Belt and reflective of the role it will play in the wider development, including woodland planting, open space, habitat creation, recreational/cultural provision and pedestrian/cycle routes; and
 - Long term management of the Nature Reserve and Country Park.
- 1.6 The above elements, which are identified within Warrington Borough Council’s wider Warrington Waterfront Masterplan, comprise around 296 ha of land. Peel, along with Warrington Borough Council are the major landowners. This land has a draft allocation

in the emerging Local Plan. This allocation for future development is supported by Peel and this report presents the case for the proposals.

The Peel Group

- 1.7 The Peel Group is a major investment company and is one of the leading infrastructure, real estate, transport and investment enterprises in the UK. Peel is a major investor, infrastructure provider, landowner and developer with major interests and assets across the United Kingdom. Its diverse network of businesses ranges from ports to airports; land to leisure; media to hotels; wind farms to shopping centres, nature parks to canals, residential sites to agricultural uses.
- 1.8 Peel's track record is one of delivering transformation and creating vibrant places through regeneration and innovation. The company invests for the long term. For example, at MediaCityUK in Salford Peel delivered a £650 million investment in Europe's largest construction project during the recession. Its investment of £400 million into Liverpool2 a new deep-sea container terminal at the Port of Liverpool will open up new import and export markets for the North.
- 1.9 Peel's vision is to create sustainable environments where people and businesses can flourish. This vision is realised through a constant cycle of reinvestment, regenerating places, innovating in new development sectors and creating positive legacies. This vision is a key driver of Peel's Ocean Gateway ambition. The Ocean Gateway will deliver an unprecedented scale of co-ordinated private sector investment across the North West of England along a strategic corridor encompassing the route from Liverpool, through Warrington and Cheshire to Greater Manchester, over 50 years with £50 billion of investment. Ocean Gateway projects embrace ports; logistics; retail and leisure; residential; commercial development; media infrastructure and renewable energy. Warrington Waterfront is one of over 50 Ocean Gateway Schemes across the strategic corridor. Since the launch in 2008 Ocean Gateway projects within Cheshire and Warrington have attracted over £500 million of capital investments.
- 1.10 Peel Ports (part of the Peel Group) is one of the largest port operators in the United Kingdom handling more than 70 million tonnes of cargo a year. Peel Ports includes the Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal (serving the largest cargo generating region outside of London), the Lancashire Port of Heysham, the Port of Great Yarmouth, and the Medway Ports of Sheerness and Chatham in the South East of England. In Scotland, Peel Ports Clydeport operates the key ports of Glasgow, Greenock, Ardrossan and Hunterston. Peel Ports also operates a container terminal in Dublin and a container shipping line BG Freight.
- 1.11 At its heart, the Peel Ports network comprises the Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal – an all water route which forms a comprehensive range of ports facilities over its 44 mile length which handles more than 40 million tonnes of cargo and 16,000 shipping movements a year, making it Britain's third busiest estuary.
- 1.12 The report is set out in the following manner:
 - Chapter 2: Sets out the site and surroundings comprising the proposed development

- **Section A – Port Warrington**

Provides the overall justification and case for the expansion of Port Warrington comprising:

- Chapter 3: Provides an overview of the historical development of Port Warrington; its operational extent today; and prevailing constraints restricting its potential
- Chapter 4: Sets out the strategic policy alignment supporting the expansion of Port Warrington
- Chapter 5 and 6: Sets out the market demand for the expansion of Port Warrington

- **Section B – Warrington Commercial Park**

- Chapter 7: Sets out the justification for Warrington Commercial Park specifically in respect of a stand-alone business park (including a mix of B1, B2 and B8 and complementary uses)

- **Section C - Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park**

- Chapter 8: Explains the Nature Reserve and Country Park proposition

- **Section D – The Unique Opportunity, Green Belt matters and Benefits**

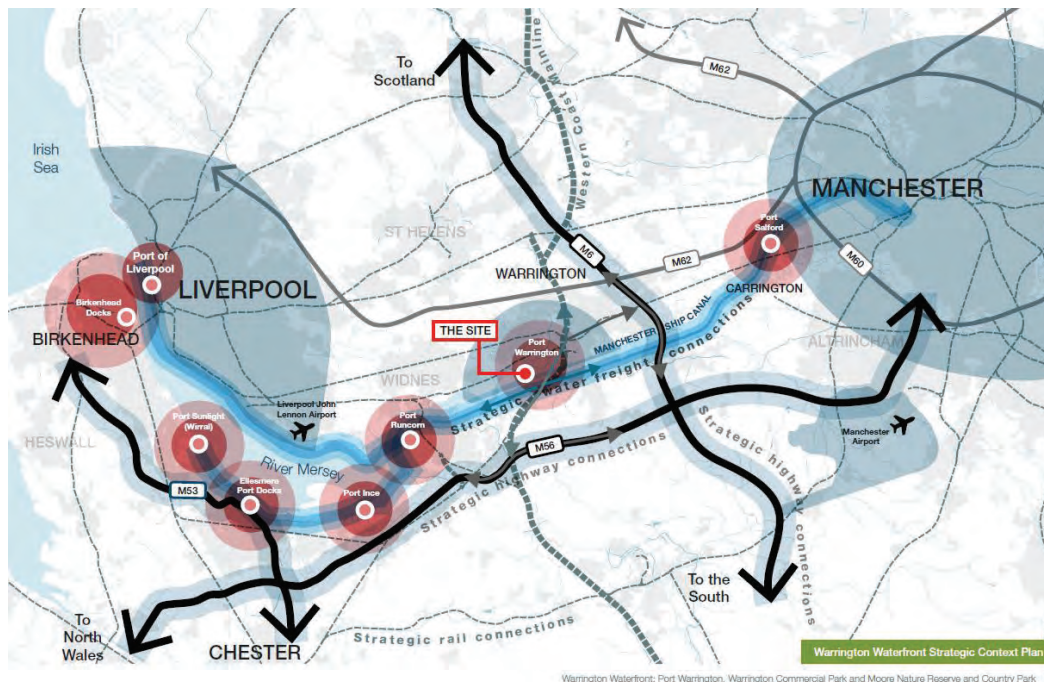
- Chapter 9: Presents the strategic opportunity afforded by the area and the illustrates the multiple opportunities associated with Port Warrington and the Commercial Park
- Chapter 10: Outlines the Green Belt matters of relevance to the site
- Chapter 11: Sets out the economic, social, environmental, transportation and recreational benefits that will arise from the development proposals
- Chapter 12: Presents a summary and conclusions

2. Site Context

Strategic Context

- 2.1 Warrington lies at the heart of the North West region, Atlantic Gateway and Northern Powerhouse. The M6, M56 and M62 motorways intersect within the borough providing excellent access to all ports of the region and beyond. Warrington also lies on the region's main North-South (West Coast Main Line) and East-West (Trans-Pennine) rail routes and is traversed by The Manchester Ship Canal – an important commercial waterway linking the Port of Liverpool to the Manchester conurbation. Future infrastructure proposals such as HS2 have the opportunity to further reinforce the borough's connectivity in the future. In short, Warrington is one of the best connected places in the North West and also benefits from the proximity to Liverpool and Manchester conurbations and markets.

Figure 2.1: Warrington in its strategic context



- 2.2 Warrington's spatial position, infrastructure and inherent connectivity has enabled the borough to grow and develop a strong and resilient economy. Over the last 40 years, Warrington has grown from a town with a population of around 70,000 to one which is over 200,000. A working age population of around 2.5 million live within a 30 minute drive of Warrington. This is the largest workforce catchment in the UK outside London and its recent performance in economic growth is only bettered by Aberdeen and London. Warrington is now viewed and widely recognised as a key economic contributor to the North West economy and a major growth area. As such, the Council and its stakeholders consider that Warrington's economic strength and attractiveness will only continue and this will result in ongoing development pressure and new opportunities.

- 2.3 As is explained in Section 5 of this report, Warrington wishes to further capitalise on its assets and to accelerate economic growth. This is underpinned by the Council's Industrial Strategy and its emerging Local Plan and requires the release of Green Belt, through its new Local Plan, to meet increasing development needs for the next 30 years.

Site Context

- 2.4 The development proposals utilise lands which form Port Warrington and Arpley Meadows set within the wider context of the wider Warrington Waterfront initiative.

Port Warrington

- 2.5 Port Warrington is an existing warehousing and distribution facility located on the northern bank of The Manchester Ship Canal ("MSC"). It benefits from a direct frontage on to the canalside and benefits from an existing berth which is underutilised but operationally available.
- 2.6 The Port currently accommodates a range of road-based storage and distribution uses (c. 10 hectares), with the current vehicular access via Runcorn Road and Moore Lane.
- 2.7 The Port benefits from an extant planning permission for the extension of the existing operations onto adjoining land (c. 4 hectares) for open storage purposes together with the refurbishment and extension of the canalside berth and the reinstatement of a rail freight connection onto the West Coast Main Line.
- 2.8 The Port is adjacent to the Moore Nature Reserve, which consists of woodland areas, ponds and green space, and also to the Arpley Meadows landfill site.

Arpley Meadows

- 2.9 Arpley Meadows landfill site measures an area of approximately 176 ha and it has been in operation for waste disposal operations since 1986.
- 2.10 An application to extend the operational life of the facility to October 2018 and enable its restoration by October 2019, with a revised sequence of landfill phasing and restoration works, was approved after appeal in May 2015. The Inspector recognised that the benefits of the development outweighed the harm to the Green Belt and very special circumstances had been demonstrated. The majority of the site has now been filled and is in the process of being restored to grassland, with the final phases remaining in use.
- 2.11 The planning permission allowed for the restoration (and ongoing maintenance and funding via a s106 legal agreement) of those areas previously landfilled with a full landscaping restoration scheme of new topsoil, planting and seeding. New native woodland, scrubland and hedgerows are also proposed, alongside the creation of new usable greenspace. The approved Restoration Landscaping Scheme also incorporates a number of habitat creation measures to provide ecological enhancement measures, with the plantation of woodland habitats and new connections to the Moore Nature

Reserve to the south. A network of recreational footpaths is also proposed to be dispersed throughout the site to encourage access by members of the public.

Warrington Waterfront

- 2.12 Port Warrington and Arpley Meadows form a key component of Warrington Waterfront – a strategic regeneration programme to reinvigorate Warrington’s central waterfront along the River Mersey.
- 2.13 Warrington Waterfront will be a new urban quarter of Warrington, taking advantage of its waterside setting and unlocked by a new strategic access arrangement (the Western Link Road). This will link the A56 Chester Road in Higher Walton with the A57 Sankey Way in Great Sankey, and will also provide a new access to the Port from the new link road.
- 2.14 The draft Warrington Local Plan promotes the Warrington Waterfront area for major development, including the expansion of the existing operational land footprint at Port Warrington, a new business park, 2,500 new homes, social infrastructure (including a new school) and a major new country park through the restoration of the Arpley Meadows and Gateworth landfill sites, alongside wider environmental works. This policy allocation reflects the specific proposals which are supported and justified in this Document.

3. Port Warrington

Summary

- Port Warrington is an established facility, which benefits from a fixed geographical location on The Manchester Ship Canal and close proximity to the West Coast Main Line railway.
- There is clear evidence to support the growth and expansion of Port Warrington, but existing constraints (such as HGV access, poor quality buildings, and constrained land availability) thwart the ability to secure its growth and capitalise upon the Port's unique advantages.
- To address these constraints, positive policy interventions will enable the Port to attract new occupiers, secure inward investment and maximise the economic potential of the Ship Canal.

History

- 3.1 Port Warrington is an established distribution facility which has its origins following the opening of The Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, through the provision of a dedicated wharf at a strategic location adjoining the main railway line. At the time, the Port Warrington site presented a unique location enabling goods to be loaded and unloaded from the canal for onward distribution via the railway network.
- 3.2 The Haydock Colliery Company first recognised these unique characteristics when it developed a wharf and railhead at the site. This multi-modal infrastructure enabled them to import 'pit props' via the canal and distribute them by rail to its collieries across the North West. At its peak, the wider area was one of the UK's richest areas of coal mining activity with up to 13 collieries operating at any one time. The site, in terms of its strategic geographic advantages and multi-modal potential as well as its operation, has therefore been present for over a century which pre-dates both the planning system and the designation of the Green Belt.
- 3.3 Eventually coal mining declined in the area and the Port was adapted to facilitate the movement of goods and produce to support the chemical industry which was a burgeoning sector at the time and one which supported Warrington's economic growth and expansion as a New Town in 1968. Between the 1960s and 1980s, DuPont Chemicals owned the Port and utilised it to import chemicals from its plant in Northern Ireland and to facilitate distribution by road.
- 3.4 In 1979, the entire Port Warrington site was designated as Green Belt through the Cheshire Structure Plan despite it being operational and a fixed strategic asset. As a result of more stringent planning policies this arguably contributed to the Port's unattractiveness and ultimate decline in later years.
- 3.5 From the mid-1980s, different operators maintained the Port's berth, operated warehouses, and distributed goods via the nearby motorway network but its successful operation declined during the economic recession of the 1990's. During this time the sites connectivity to the railway network was also lost and the berth became unused.

Port Warrington Today

- 3.6 Port Warrington comprises an existing warehouse complex of some 8 hectares and operates primarily as a road to road based distribution centre (comprising some 9,000 sqm of warehousing space) with insufficient utilisation of the Ship Canal for the movement of goods.
- 3.7 Having acquired Port Warrington in 2007, Peel Ports Group has always held the long-term aspiration to reconfigure the existing site to become an inland multi-modal Port facility utilising the Ship Canal through the refurbishment of the existing berth and the re-integration of a rail freight connection onto the West Coast Main Line via the Arpley Sidings.
- 3.8 To kick-start the delivery of this, planning permission was granted by Warrington Borough Council (WBC) in March 2010 for the extension upon an adjoining 5.4 hectares immediately adjacent to the east of the existing Port, facilitated by the in-filling of the site, the refurbishment and extension of the canalside berth and the reinstatement of a rail freight connection. In respect of the principle of development and in demonstrating very special circumstances to justify development in the Green Belt, Warrington Borough Council's Officer Committee Report notes the following:

(a) Principle:

"It is accepted – as part of the case for "very special circumstances" below – that there are no alternative sites which have the required infrastructure to deliver a multi-modal inland port to serve Warrington and its surrounding area. It should also be borne strongly in mind that no national, regional or local policy requires a need to be demonstrated for the type of facility proposed. It should also be noted that the proposal is not a strategic rail freight interchange – so would not operate with the same high volumes of rail freight. Instead, the proposed rail connection to the ship canal would mean the use of rail would be driven by users or operators of the site and also by the size and limited capacity of the site (i.e. a single berth). Provided the port operations are able to expand – and crucially to be well served by water barges – then it is considered that the principle of the proposed use in this location is acceptable, and is a principle well supported by national, regional and local planning policy and guidance."

(b) Green Belt and Very Special Circumstances:

"The application is considered to constitute inappropriate development in the green belt by definition. The proposal therefore needs to show that harm by way of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by very special circumstances. Harm to the openness of green belt and to the objectives of green belt policy is considered to be limited in this case. The site is sandwiched between existing warehouses at Acton Grange to the west, and the west coast mainline and the large Solvay Intertox chemical plant complex to the east. Advice from WBC Planning Policy confirms that the combination of the following factors amount to very special circumstances in the case:

- national, regional and local polices all encourage modal shift via provision inter-modal freight facilities. The area to the south west of Warrington with access to the Ship Canal and rail links is identified as a location for such a facility, particularly where use can be made of existing infrastructure;

- it is doubtful that there are any better connected sites in the Borough that benefit from both rail and canal access;

- there is genuine potential to achieve significant environmental benefits if the port fully utilises its assets and affects a modal shift to rail as well as to water barge;

- there are likely to be few financial implications for freight operators wishing to switch from road to barge, and this is likely to occur if the facilities are made available here.”

(WBC Officers Committee Report, Item 4.1, Application Ref: 2009/15222, 3rd March 2010)

3.9 The planning permission has been partially implemented by way of the infilling of the site to establish ground levels for the open storage area. However, to date, the rail freight connection has not been delivered and the canal berth has yet to be reinstated and extended.

3.10 There are a number of reasons for this:

- Notwithstanding the benefit of additional open storage land, the scale and extent of Port Warrington and its operational capacity ultimately remains relatively modest comprising warehousing space of some 9,000 sqm. The extent of space is no longer befitting the needs and requirements of potential occupiers who are requiring larger and more flexible floorspace nor is sufficient to generate a critical mass of occupier presence to viably deliver a rail head connection. The existing scale of Port Warrington is not large enough to make best use of the tri-modal opportunity Port Warrington presents;
- The quality of existing warehousing space is poor and no longer fit for modern standards; this further stymies market attractiveness for occupiers;
- The current vehicular access arrangement (via the village of Moore) is constraining, requiring HGV drivers to navigate narrow roads, tight corners and a swing bridge. This limits the market attractiveness of the site and it means alternative locations are likely to be more attractive to investors, despite the site’s advantages in respect of potential water and rail connection

3.11 Port Warrington is an existing facility which could harness water and rail connectivity in a unique geographical location, placed within the heart of Warrington and the North West. However, Port Warrington’s ability to viably deliver upon any growth to maximise its advantages and to maximise the economic potential of the Manchester Ship Canal, is currently constrained by a series of factors that diminishes its attractiveness to the market.

3.12 In light of this, a series of positive interventions are needed to maximise the economic opportunity of Port Warrington, capitalise on its rail and water potential, and make the Port attractive to inward investment to the benefit of Warrington and the wider region.

4. Strategic Policy Alignment

Summary

- National Policy Statements are a material consideration in decision making and plan making. The National Policy Statement for Ports establishes national Government policy for ports, including the importance of an operative and successful port network to the UK economy and confirms that there is a need to substantially increase port capacity over the next 20-30 years. An alternative to this proposition would be against the public interest.
- The expansion of Port Warrington is entirely consistent with Government policy expressed in the National Policy Statement for National Networks which seeks to deliver more employment development which is rail connected.
- The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors – this includes the location of storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.
- The expansion of Port Warrington is supported by pan-northern and sub-regional economic and regeneration strategies which fully support economic initiatives to rebalance the economic disparity between north and south and the delivery of Atlantic Gateway and the Superport which has a successful port network at its heart and an increase in the delivery of development sites with multi-modal capability.
- The principle for the growth and expansion of Port Warrington alongside the delivery of Warrington Waterfront is also enshrined in existing local development plan policy confirming that further expansion may be capable of demonstrating the ‘*very special circumstances*’ by virtue of; (a) the fixed location of the infrastructure within the Green Belt; and (b) the potential for multi-modal sustainable transport benefits and contributing to promoting wider sustainable growth.

National

National Policy Statement for Ports

- 4.1 The National Policy Statement for Ports (“NPSP”) provides the direction on decisions on new port development and is a relevant consideration for local planning authorities¹.
- 4.2 The expansion of Port Warrington aligns closely with the NPSP policies and guidance. In summary:
- The upward trajectory of the Peel Ports Group’s growth forecasts align with the NPSP, which explains that UK Government’s policies on sustainable economic growth and achieving rising prosperity will drive increased trade in goods and, to a lesser extent commodities.²

¹ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 1.2.1

² National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 3.4.2

- The NPSP confirms that there is a compelling need³ for substantial additional port capacity over the next 20–30 years. In particular, to exclude the possibility of additional port capacity would accept limits on economic growth and on the price, choice, and availability of goods; as well as to limit the local and regional economic benefits that new port developments might bring. Such an outcome would be strongly against the public interest.⁴
- The NPSP encourages sustainable port development to cater for long-term forecast growth in volumes of imports and exports by sea⁵, and recognises that developers will need to bring forward proposals (alongside committed developments) to meet anticipated long-term growth and introduce further competition, flexibility and resilience in the market.⁶
- The NPSP is clear that capacity must be in the right places to serve the needs of import and export markets.⁷ The NPSP states that port development must be responsive to changing commercial demands, and the Government considers that the market is the best mechanism for getting this right, with developers bringing forward applications for port developments where they consider them commercially viable.⁸
- The NPSP recognises the direct and indirect economic benefits of port development. In particular, bringing together groups of related businesses within and around ports can create a cluster effect, which supports economic growth by encouraging innovation and the creation and development of new business opportunities.
- In assessing the need for additional capacity, the NPSP invites the decision maker to accept the need for more port capacity is demonstrated by the Government's demand forecasts. The Government expects that ultimately all of the demand forecast in the 2006 ports policy review is likely to arise, though, in the light of the recession that began in 2008, not necessarily by 2030. It also expects the decision maker to accept that additional port capacity is required to offer a sufficiently wide range of facilities at a variety of locations to meet existing and future demand; to introduce further resilience and competitiveness to our national infrastructure and; to take into account both the potential contribution port developments might make to regional and local economies.
- Given the level and urgency of need of infrastructure, the decision maker should start with the presumption in favour of granting consent to applications for ports development.

³ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 3.4.16

⁴ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 3.4.16

⁵ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 3.3.1

⁶ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 3.4.9

⁷ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 3.4.11

⁸ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 3.4.12

- The NPSP confirms that, from a policy perspective, it does not contain any general requirement to consider alternatives or whether the proposed project represents the best option⁹.
- As a general principle, port development should aim to avoid significant harm to biodiversity through mitigation; where significant harm cannot be avoided, then appropriate compensation should be sought. In respect of regional and local sites of biodiversity interest, the NPSP indicates that the decision-maker should give due consideration to such designations. However, given the need for new infrastructure, these designations should not be used in themselves to refuse development consent.

National Policy Statement for National Networks

4.3 The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) was published in December 2014 and sets out the need for, and Government's policies to deliver, development of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) on the national road and rail networks in England. This includes developments consisting of new rail terminal facilities and rail-served warehousing, which are referred to as Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs) in the NPSNN.

4.4 While Port Warrington is not seeking to deliver an SRFI, the NPSNN is relevant in that it is clear Government policy which seeks to deliver more rail-connected warehousing. The NPSNN identifies that transferring more freight from road to rail will have clear environmental benefits, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deliver upon economic benefits¹⁰.

4.5 The NPSNN reminds us that logistics is predominately a road-based industry and the continuation of a predominately road-to-road logistics sector is neither viable nor desirable (paragraph 2.55). However it states that the users and buyers of warehousing and distribution services are increasingly looking to develop new facilities that need to be located alongside major rail routes, close to major trunk roads, as well as near the conurbations that consume the goods¹¹. The NPSNN therefore confirms that there is a 'compelling need' to deliver a network of SRFIs across the regions while accepting that the need for effective connections for both road and rail will restrict the scope for developers to identify viable alternative sites¹².

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

4.6 The new Framework confirms that the overall purpose of planning is to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development¹³ and so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development¹⁴.

4.7 It also instructs planning policies should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and significant weight should be placed on the need to

⁹ National Policy Statement for Ports, paragraph 4.9.1

¹⁰ National Policy for National Networks, paragraph 2.40

¹¹ National Policy for National Networks, paragraph 2.45

¹² National Policy for National Networks, paragraph 2.56

¹³ National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 7

¹⁴ National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 10

support economic growth and productivity taking into account business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build upon its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future¹⁵. Planning policies should also recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors – this includes storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2017)

- 4.8 The white paper outlines the Government’s long-term strategy to help boost productivity and enable businesses to invest in the skills, infrastructure, transport and industries of the future. In particular, it seeks to encourage a competitive economy, boost productivity and encourages inward investment, with an emphasis on promoting regional growth and the expansion of existing employment facilities to drive productivity.
- 4.9 Port Warrington benefits from unique attributes (water, rail and road) that distinguish it as an unrivalled development opportunity in the borough and region. The Port has the ability to deliver crucial port-related facilities that will underpin growth in the borough and wider sub-region; and can attract inward investment and create new jobs. There is no other site in the borough which can offer the same opportunities and benefits.

Regional

- 4.10 The expansion of Port Warrington aligns with regional regeneration, economic and transport initiatives and policies. In summary:
- The **Northern Powerhouse**¹⁶ initiative seeks to boost economic growth across the North of England to rebalance the economy. Specific focus is being placed on opportunities for growth and jobs with the logistics and freight sector identified as helping to deliver this. More specifically, the Northern Powerhouse supports increasing capacity in transport and port-centric warehousing needs arising from the Liverpool2 and SuperPort projects.
 - The **Atlantic Gateway** initiative is a partnership between the Liverpool, Manchester and Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The initiative seeks to prioritise high growth opportunities, which have the greatest ability to transform in the corridor between the regions. It is recognised that the Atlantic Gateway area is in a strong position to capitalise on this shift in global markets to expand its port operations and develop a more integrated transport network with the Port of Liverpool, Port of Salford, Port Warrington and Port Wirral at its core.¹⁷
 - The **Cheshire & Warrington Strategic Economic Plan**¹⁸ outlines the growth ambitions across the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region and the aim to grow its economy’s GVA to £50 billion per annum by 2040. To achieve this, the Plan

¹⁵ National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 80

¹⁶ Northern Powerhouse Strategy, November 2016

¹⁷ Atlantic Gateway Business Plan, July 2012; page 17; Atlantic Gateway

¹⁸ Cheshire and Warrington Strategic Economic Plan, Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, July 2017

recognises that the area's strategic location between Liverpool and Manchester, and that its reputation as a centre for logistics and development should be exploited further. It specifically notes that the development of large-scale port facilities, including at Port Warrington, will be ideally placed to capitalise on the new, post-Brexit trading relationship with the world. It also recognises that the enlargement of the Port would help remove heavy goods vehicles from the local road and motorway networks and also provide direct employment in the form of greater logistics and distribution capacity.

- The **Northern Transport Strategy**¹⁹ confirms that regional ports have potential to support economic activity and provide additional capacity, reducing pressure elsewhere. In particular, Transport for the North (TfN) is looking at the following strategies which will align with the expansion proposals at Port Warrington:
 - the proposed development of a rail and water-connected distribution network;
 - investment in the port and hinterland connections and infrastructure; the utilisation of capacity released on the rail network by HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail for freight services; and
 - a package of infrastructure solutions that would facilitate new Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges in the North and would allow larger and longer freight trains to access these interchanges, including gauge clearance where necessary.
- The **SuperPort** concept is an initiative being led by the Liverpool City Region LEP supported by local authorities (including the immediate hinterland authorities of West Lancashire, Warrington and Cheshire), Peel Ports, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Stobart Group, Unipart Logistics, Mersey Maritime, Merseytravel and a wealth of retail, manufacturing, maritime, logistics and professional services operations. SuperPort is an integrated cluster of logistics assets and expertise that will deliver faster, greener global market access for business to and from the northern UK and Ireland via the deep water container terminal at the Port of Liverpool. Amongst the key assets are the Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal as a means of linking Liverpool and freight traffic with major distribution hubs around the North West. Evidence²⁰ prepared on behalf of the Liverpool LEP demonstrates that the SuperPort will create additional employment need and sub-regional demand for 634 ha of B2 and B8 uses with the majority of demand being for large scale sites in locations with good access to the strategic road network and rail hubs. This evidence is informing the preparation of development plans across the sub-region.

More details in respect of this evidence base is presented in Section 4 of this Report.

¹⁹ Northern Transport Strategy, Spring 2017; page 48; Transport for the North, and HM Government

²⁰ SuperPort – Market Analysis, Land and Property, NAI Global, March 2014

- The draft **Strategic Transport Plan for the North**²¹ sets out the case for strategic transport infrastructure investment through to 2050 and the expansion of Port Warrington has the potential to contribute positively to this Plan. In particular:
 - TfN recognises that the connectivity of goods moved in the North can be improved, particularly with the interchange between road and rail. TfN sees the benefit of developing sites with multimodal access (such as Port Warrington) which can accommodate the efficient transfer of goods between modes for storage and onward distribution.²²
 - It also recognises that the North West experiences significant congestion, efficiency, capacity, and reliability impacts on the road and rail networks (such as on parts of the West Coast Main Line and M6 Motorway) which is constraining economic growth. The freight and logistics industry require enhanced connectivity on both the road and rail networks, as well as exploring opportunities for greater use of waterborne and intermodal freight.²³

Local

- 4.11 In 2017, Warrington & Co published an **Economic Growth and Regeneration Programme**²⁴ (EGRP) for the next ten years. In essence, it is Warrington’s Industrial Strategy, which is to sit along its emerging Local Plan to facilitate further economic growth and development. It identifies the characteristics that have made Warrington successful in becoming one of the best economically performing areas in the UK and that investment and market interest in Warrington is strong and is getting stronger. However, the availability of land, lack of infrastructure and congestion are now starting to limit Warrington’s growth potential and this is a key focus of the EGRP and the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.12 The EGRP sets out the case for Warrington’s growth with an ambition to deliver 26,000 new homes and 31,000 jobs through regeneration and expansion across key areas of the borough. One of these identified key areas is Warrington Waterfront which is expected to be a new part of Warrington including the major expansion of Port Warrington for large scale port logistics and manufacturing tri-modal facility.
- 4.13 The principle of expanding Port Warrington also has broad support in Warrington Borough Council’s adopted development plan. In summary:
- The adopted Warrington Core Strategy recognises, through strategic objectives and formal policy²⁵ that there is a sizable strategic opportunity to regenerate land close to the town centre and inner Warrington comprising the Warrington Waterfront and Arpley Meadows to create a new quarter consisting of residential and employment development, transport infrastructure, green infrastructure and a country park.

²¹ Draft Strategic Transport Plan for the North, 2017; Transport for the North

²² Draft Strategic Transport Plan for the North, 2017, page 35; Transport for the North

²³ Draft Strategic Transport Plan for the North; 2017, page 65; Transport for the North

²⁴ Warrington Means Business, Warrington’s Economic Growth & Regeneration Programme, 2017

²⁵ Adopted Local Plan, 2014; Policy CS10, Page 38; Warrington Borough Council

- Core Strategy policy CS11²⁶ recognises that Port Warrington has the capability to become a multi modal port facility utilising the ship canal with an opportunity for rail freight recognising the extant planning permission in place to extend the existing operation and reinstate that rail freight connection and the Mersey Ports Masterplan proposing a further expansion to meet anticipated forecast demand arising from the growth of the Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal. The policy confirms the Council will support sustainable economic activity generated and sustained by the Manchester Ship Canal taking into account a range of factors including impacts upon the openness of the Green Belt and nature conservation.
- While the Core Strategy was not informed by a detailed Green Belt review to justify any significant de-allocations and the Port therefore remained within the Green Belt boundary, policy CS10 expressly states that the expansion of Port Warrington may be capable of demonstrating the ‘*very special circumstances*’ by virtue of; (a) the fixed location of the infrastructure within the Green Belt; and (b) the potential for multi-modal sustainable transport benefits and contributing to promoting wider sustainable growth.
- The Core Strategy²⁷ also notes that major warehousing and distribution developments should ideally be located away from areas sensitive to heavy vehicle movement and have direct access to the Primary Road Network, rail or the Ship Canal where possible.

Warrington Local Plan

- 4.14 As explained above, Warrington wishes to further capitalise on its position and assets and to accelerate economic growth. However, despite its economic strength, its potential is at threat of being stymied through the availability of land, lack of infrastructure and congestion. The need to unlock these constraints and capitalise upon Warrington’s economic potential is expressed spatially through its emerging Local Plan which proposes the release of Green Belt to meet increasing development needs for the next 30 years.
- 4.15 The Local Plan’s ambition is to deliver approximately 26,000 new homes and 31,000 jobs (supported by 381ha of employment land²⁸) through the regeneration and expansion across key areas of the borough. One of these key areas is Warrington Waterfront which is expected to create a new part of Warrington town centre, facilitated by the construction of a new link road to open up swathes of under-utilised and inaccessible land to deliver new homes, community facilities, a major expansion of Port Warrington and new WCP (both located within Green Belt)²⁹.

Exceptional Circumstances

²⁶ Adopted Local Plan, 2014; Warrington Borough Council

²⁷ Adopted Local Plan, 2014; Policy CS2, Page 28; Warrington Borough Council

²⁸ Preferred Development Options Plan, 2017, Page 6, Warrington Borough Council

²⁹ Preferred Development Option Plan, 2017, pages 38 – 39, Warrington Borough Council

- 4.16 The Council considers there are exceptional circumstances that justify release of Green Belt. Green Belt review and release is intended to form part of a comprehensive plan for Warrington which will work in parallel with maximising brownfield development and infrastructure delivery. The Plan *“will enable the creation of new sustainable communities but in a manner which will unlock strategic infrastructure to support the growth of Warrington as a whole, addressing existing issues of congestion and unlocking major development sites with significant brownfield activity.”*³⁰ The exceptional position is supported through an assessment of urban capacity which has revealed while there is scope to deliver additional development capacity – particularly through the regeneration plans for the Town Centre, Warrington Waterfront and wider inner Warrington area – there is insufficient urban capacity to meet the Borough’s housing and employment needs. In terms of employment needs, the Council acknowledges that there is a residual requirement to accommodate 251 hectares of employment land through Green Belt release³¹.
- 4.17 The Council³² has considered the consequences of not releasing Green Belt land and therefore not meeting development needs. In the short term the Council considers that Warrington’s economic strength and attractiveness will result in ongoing development pressure. This could potentially be accommodated within the urban areas through higher density development but it would not provide the Council with the ability to plan comprehensively and as a result, infrastructure delivery will be piecemeal and reactive. The consequences are likely to include severe congestion on Warrington’s transport network and risk a worsening on air quality, increase pressure on school places, health facilities, sports and leisure facilities and other community facilities and potential detrimental impact on heritage assets.
- 4.18 In the medium and longer term, the Council consider Warrington’s status as a key driver of the North West economy will be threatened as development land is used up, with potential development and investment lost to other regions of the UK and potentially overseas. As noted above, the EDNA already identifies that there is a suppressed demand for employment land.

³⁰ Preferred Development Option Plan, 2017, paragraph, 4.40, Warrington Borough Council

³¹ Preferred Development Option Plan, 2017, paragraph 4.17, Warrington Borough Council

³² Preferred Development Option Plan, 2017, paragraphs 4.40 – 4.42, Warrington Borough Council

5. Meeting Port Demand & Development Needs

Peel Ports

- 5.1 The Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal form an international gateway which is recognised by Government as a key component of the UK's global trading links and is therefore fundamental to the UK's economic prosperity.
- 5.2 The River Mersey is the third busiest estuary in the UK with some 16,000 commercial shipping movements per annum. In 2017, the Port of Liverpool and the Manchester Ship Canal handled 6.8 million tonnes of cargo.
- 5.3 Taken together, the Port of Liverpool, at the mouth of the Mersey, and the Ship Canal which begins eight miles upriver and continues for a further 36 miles to the centre of Manchester, is Britain's richest cargo-generating region outside London.
- 5.4 The Port of Liverpool extends from Royal Seaforth for four miles of docks up river with another three miles of berths across the Mersey at Birkenhead. All 1,500 acres accommodate a rich diversity of cargo handling and processing operations. The Port has over 300 lessees and operators ranging from blue chip companies such as Essar, Cargill, Eon and EMR to smaller port businesses – all of which are reliant upon water freight solutions and port infrastructure as part of their supply chains.
- 5.5 The Ship Canal has a number of docks, wharves, terminals and dredging grounds supporting over 70 lessees and operators. Until recently, the particular specialism of the Ship Canal was the handling of chemicals and bulk liquids and this is still reflected in the continued presence of companies including Shell, Nu Star, INEOS and Solvay Interox. However, diversification in new cargo sectors has begun to be achieved including the delivery of port-side warehousing which benefit from water, rail and road accessibility (multi-modality) and offer cost and environmental advantages in terms of removing unnecessary HGV journeys which would otherwise occur through normal 'road to road' distribution.
- 5.6 These opportunities have also been founded upon the recent opening of the deep water container terminal (Liverpool2) enabling the largest vessels to call directly in the heart of the UK and significant increases in freight movements into and through the region including along the Manchester Ship Canal. Container volumes on the Manchester Ship Canal between the Port of Liverpool and Irlam Container Base have grown from 3,000 TEU per annum in 2009 to 36,600 TEU per annum in 2016 – a twelve fold increase in seven years. The opening of Liverpool2 has the potential to significantly increase these throughputs further.

Mersey Ports Master Plan

- 5.7 Under a Department of Transport publication in 2008 "Guidance on the Preparation of Port Master Plans," the Government recommends that all major ports produce Port Masterplans and to consult upon them with stakeholders – including local planning authorities in order to clarify the port's own strategic planning and development needs

but also to assist local planning bodies in preparing and revising their own development strategies.

5.8 Peel Ports Group published its draft Mersey Ports Master Plan³³ (MPMP) in 2011. This Plan sets a strategy to harness the economic potential of Port of Liverpool and the development of a network of inland ports, including Port Warrington. The Masterplan outlines that the integration of the Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal offers the unique opportunity to drive transformational shift in the behaviour of supply chains beyond the UK, by developing a key logistics platform allied to the development of water freight solutions. This will provide the added value beyond the ports being simply a transit point and is to be achieved through the wider diversification of port operations including:

- Development of single and multi-user port-centric warehousing.
- Development of new processing facilities for imported commodities.
- Development of more customer-focussed operating practices.
- Entry into new sectors – including biomass, energy, offshore wind, waste to energy and recycling.
- Development of a new number of multi-modal inland ports upon The Manchester Ship Canal including Port Warrington.

5.9 The MPMP advances the national need case for ports as advocated in the NPSP by clarifying its own strategic planning over the medium and long term. It sets out how the Mersey Ports network is expected to grow and develop its business over time and identifies a land strategy response for its respective ports to meet the anticipated forecast in demand.

5.10 In this context, it is important to note that the MPMP seeks to identify land requirements for port-related activity. It does not seek to identify and address wider B8 distribution needs which might be most sustainably located near a port or rail connection. These are additional needs and requirements and identified within respective local authority employment land studies.

Forecast Growth

5.11 The Masterplan identifies that for Mersey Ports, there is an anticipated growth in tonnage traffic in excess of 70% from 39.64 million tonnes (2008 base year) to 68.58 million tonnes by 2030. This is predicated on a number of factors, including the following:

- (a) Containers (lo-lo³⁴)

The anticipated increase in container traffic arising from general growth but also from the delivery of the deep sea container port will enable the opportunity for the Port of

³³ Mersey Port Master Plan (Consultation Draft), 2011

³⁴ Containerised cargo – which is loaded and offloaded by a port's cranes and derricks.

Liverpool to double annual capacity to 1.5 million TEU. The expanded container operations at the Port of Liverpool will stimulate growth in port-centric logistics across its hinterland, serving the largest export cargo market outside London (the North West). The Manchester Ship Canal has a great advantage of ‘running through’ the most densely populated area of the North West enabling distribution centres to be located along this route and thereby accessing freight by water. The economic cost savings are supplemented with carbon and congestion benefits when compared to long distance freight movements made across the UK’s strategic road network emanating from existing ports in the South East of England.

The anticipated rise in port-centric demand would be serviced through the delivery of multi-modal ports along the Manchester Ship Canal at Port Wirral, Port Bridgewater, Port Ince, Port Warrington and Port Salford.

(b) Trailer Freight (ro-ro³⁵)

Liverpool is a national hub for the provision of roll-on and roll-off freight and passenger services owing to its proximity to the gateways of Belfast and Dublin. Trade is anticipated to expand based upon the further integration and reliance of the British and Irish economies. The Masterplan also identifies that it would be logical for the future development of ro-ro facilities to be closely related to distribution centre development at the inland ports so that the North West and Ireland can be served from one site.

(c) Steel, Metals and General Cargo

As a result of anticipated rising forecasts for steel, metals and general cargo throughput, the Masterplan anticipates the need for additional storage capacity along the Ship Canal to increase.

(d) Port Centric Logistics

Portside logistics warehousing and distribution facilities benefit from water, rail, and road accessibility. The demand emanating from the growth in lo-lo container traffic is predicated on the supply chain savings generated through using a port closest to the population centres of the UK and the ship to door logistics cost is optimised when the distribution centre is next to water.

The Masterplan identifies that the competitive advantage of the Mersey Ports is enforced through their advantageous position relative to centres of population and consumer demand. It cites that the North West represents the largest container-generating region outside of London and within a 125 mile radius has the largest concentration of distribution and manufacturing activity and the largest concentration of population. In light of this, the Master Plan envisages that over the 20 year strategy period, there could be an increase in the amount of port-related warehousing by a further 4 million sqft; this would necessitate the identification and delivery of a further 113 hectares of development land within the geographical remit of Mersey Ports.

³⁵ Non containerised cargo which is transported via roll-on, roll-off vessels designed to carry wheeled cargo that are driven on and off the ship on their own wheels

(e) Other Dry Bulks

The Port Masterplan envisages a likely demand for more space for tank storage associated with new businesses and further demand for material imports (such as aggregates, cement and timber) to support the construction sector all coming through the increase in the size of container vessels and enhanced ro-ro activity.

Land Strategy Response

5.12 To meet this growth forecast, the Master Plan sets a requirement for 344 hectares of port-related development land. This land requirement is based upon forecasting the growth in various traffics handled at the ports. Three aspects to future land requirements have been considered:

- Amount of land needed to serve the Port’s traffic growth;
- Amount of land required to serve the needs of port-centric distribution; and
- Amount of land required to serve complementary sectors (energy, waste, off-shore wind sector, processing activities).

5.13 The Master Plan identifies the overall land requirement to support the 20 year growth strategy as illustrated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Summary Land Requirements (acres / hectares)

Port Traffic	2020	2030	Total
Containers	40ac / 16.2ha	90ac / 36.2ha	130ac / 52.6ha
Ro-Ro	40ac / 16.2ha	45ac / 18.2ha	85ac / 34.4ha
Trade Cars	30ac/ 12.1ha	0	30ac / 12.1ha
Grain	3ac / 1.2ha	3ac / 1.2ha	6ac / 2.4ha
AFS & Biomass	8ac / 3.2ha	0	8ac / 3.2ha
Coal	0	0	0
Other Dry Bulks	5ac / 2.0ha	5ac / 2.0ha	10ac / 4.0ha
Steel, Metals & General Cargo	5ac / 2.0ha	5ac / 2.0ha	10ac / 4.0ha
Forest Products	10ac / 4.0ha	10ac / 4.0ha	20ac / 8.1ha
Petrochemicals	0	0	0
Other Bulk Liquids	6ac / 2.4ha	6ac / 2.4ha	12ac / 4.9ha
Port Centric Warehousing	140ac / 56.7ha	140ac / 56.7ha	280ac / 113.3ha
Complementary Sectors:			
Off-shore Wind Farms	75ac / 30.4ha	0	74ac / 30.0ha
Biomass Energy	45ac / 18.2ha	0	45ac / 18.2ha

Processing & Value Added	70ac / 28.3ha	70ac / 28.3ha	140ac / 56.7ha
Total	<u>477ac / 193ha</u>	<u>374ac / 151.4ha</u>	<u>851ac / 344.4ha</u>

Draft Mersey Ports Master Plan

- 5.14 To deliver this requirement, the Master Plan (MPMP) has disaggregated it amongst the Mersey Ports, accompanied by land use plan for each of the proposed development interventions.
- 5.15 Port Warrington was apportioned with a 14 hectares requirement (see Table 5.2 below) split into two phases which was the known opportunity at each location at the time:
- Phase 1 which incorporates land to the east of the existing Port complex which benefits from planning permission received in March 2010
 - Phase 2 which extends the Port complex westwards beyond Moore Lane Swing Bridge.
- 5.16 The scale of development expansion sought at that time was the full land extent that was under the control of Peel Ports Group.
- 5.17 The MPMP notes (at paragraph 6.40) that Port Warrington offers an ideal strategic mid-point upon the Manchester Ship Canal to develop port centric warehousing which could benefit from the operation of a regular barge shuttle between the Container Terminal at the Port of Liverpool and Irlam Container Terminal. It also acknowledges that the delivery of sustainable transport solutions will be a key determinant in respect of the further expansion of operational activities upon adjoining landholdings and upon the community.
- 5.18 Overall, Table 5.2 refers to 105 acres (c.42 hectares) of land requirement which is unidentified – this equates to a 12% gap in overall land requirement. The MPMP also notes that while 746 acres (302 hectares) has been identified, not all of this is readily available and/or deliverable without further activity – in respect of securing consenting options and ultimately through site acquisition, indicating that the shortfall in land provision could be even larger.

Table 5.2: Land Disaggregation (to 2030)

	Site Description	Area (acres / hectares)
L1	Seaforth river Terminal	42ac / 17ha
L2	Seaforth Area B	78ac / 31.6ha
L3	Hornby/Alexandra Dock	24ac / 9.7ha
L4	LIFT Zone Phase 2	19ac / 7.7ha
L5	Regent Road/Derby Road	92ac / 37.2ha

L6	N3 Canada	10ac / 4.0ha
L7	Huskisson Dock Complex	20ac / 8.1ha
B1	Twelve Quays	4ac / 1.6ha
B2	Beaufort Road	27ac / 10.9ha
B3	Former Mobil Site	23ac / 9.3ha
B4	Cammell Laird	34ac / 13.8ha
M1	Land at QEII Dock	17ac / 6.9ha
M2	Port Wirral	146ac / 59.1ha
M3	Former Bridgewater Paper Mill	46ac / 18.6ha
M4	Port Ince	10ac / 4.0ha
M5	Wigg Wharf	2ac / 0.8ha
M6	Port Warrington Phase 1	11ac / 4.5ha
M7	Port Warrington Phase 2	24ac / 9.7ha
M8	Irlam Container Terminal	6ac / 2.4ha
M9	Port Salford	111ac / 44.9ha
Total Land Identified		746ac / 301.9ha
Unidentified Land		105ac / 42.5ha
Overall Land Requirement		851ac / 344.4ha

The Land Position Today

- 5.19 Seven years have elapsed since the draft MPMP was published and while it was never formally adopted, its vision and implementation has been progressed with some £750 million invested in new facilities at the Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal. This is best reflected through the construction and operation of Liverpool2 the new deep sea container terminal at the Port of Liverpool which opened in 2017. Further developments have included a £100m biomass import terminal, steel and animal feed terminals and port-centric logistics development notably at Port Salford.
- 5.20 During this time, it has become evident that the availability of development land at a number of the Mersey Ports required to meet its strategy is much lower than originally anticipated.
- 5.21 This has occurred because previously identified expansion land remains unavailable. For example, in some circumstances, Peel Ports Group has not managed to secure the identified landholdings that were previously identified by the MPMP or land has been subsequently lost to alternative uses. In light of this, there is now an evidenced shortfall of available development land against the 2030 growth forecast (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Revised Port Land Availability (acres / hectares)

Port	Land Identified for Port-Related Uses (2011)	Land Available for Port-Related Uses (2017)	Change (+/-)	Comments
Seaforth River Terminal	42ac / 17.0ha	42ac / 17.0ha	-	Delivered
Seaforth Area B	78ac / 31.6ha	-	-78ac / -31.6ha	SSSI/SPA/Ramsar designation – IROPI case significant planning delivery issues
Hornby Alexandra Dock	24ac / 9.7ha	24ac / 9.7ha	-	Available
LIFT Zone Phase 2	19ac / 7.7ha	19ac / 7.7ha	-	Planning permission secured and partially implemented
Regent Road / Derby Road	92ac / 37.2ha	-	-92ac / -37.2ha	Land assembly issues multiplicity of land ownerships public sector CPO required not been progressed
N3 Canada	10ac / 4.0ha	10ac / 4.0ha	-	New steel terminal implemented
Huskiison Dock Complex	20ac / 8.1ha	20ac / 8.1ha	-	Available
Twelve Quays	4ac / 1.6ha	4ac / 1.6ha	-	Available
Beaufort Road	27ac / 10.9ha	-	-27ac / -10.9ha	Required for decant of port customers from East Float
Former Mobil Site	23ac / 9.3ha	-	-23ac / -9.3ha	Alternative permission secured
Cammell Laird	34ac / 13.8ha	34ac / 13.8ha	-	Available specific for off-shore

				wind
Land at QEII Dock	17ac / 6.9ha	17ac / 6.9ha	-	Available
Port Wirral	146ac / 59.1ha	123ac / 49.8ha	-23ac / -9.3ha	Only 123 acres available (23 acres HCA land sold to another developer)
Former Bridgewater Paper Mill	46ac / 18.6ha	46ac / 18.6ha	-	Consented and available
Port Ince	10ac / 4.0ha	10ac / 4.0ha	-	Consented and available
Wigg Wharf	2ac / 0.8ha	2ac / 0.8ha	-	Available
Port Warrington Phase 1	11ac / 4.5ha	11ac / 4.5ha	-	Planning permission secured and partly implemented
Port Warrington Phase 2	24ac / 9.7ha	24ac / 9.7ha	-	Forms part of the land assembly strategy and promotion
Irlam Container Terminal	6ac / 2.4ha	6ac / 2.4ha	-	Available
Port Salford ³⁶	111ac / 44.9ha	111ac / 44.9ha	-	Planning permission secured and partially implemented
Total land available for port-related development	746ac / 303.1ha	503ac / 203.6ha	-243ac / -98.3ha	
Unidentified land	105ac / 42.5ha	348ac / 140.8ha		
Overall land	851ac / 344.3ha	851ac /		

³⁶ A further expansion of Port Salford is currently being promoted through the draft Salford Local Plan (SLP). The proposed expansion relates to an additional 120 ha of land to the north and west of Phase 1 for expansion to deliver a 320,000 sqm (3.4m sqft) of logistics and manufacturing space. Port Salford is now being marketed as a nationally significant sustainable logistics hub and is seeking to meet a specific B8 logistic need as identified in the Greater Manchester Freight and Logistics Strategy rather than any port requirement envisaged in the MPMP

supply**344.4ha**

- 5.22 Peel Ports Group calculate that the overall land supply shortfall is now circa. 348 acres (140.8 Ha), including the original shortfall of 105 acres (42.5ha).
- 5.23 Along with capacity issues at the Port of Liverpool and Port Runcorn, it is clear that there is a significant shortage of available development land to meet identified growth. These factors are now hampering the ability for operators within the region, and within Warrington in particular, to be responsive to the opportunities flowing from the growth in freight tonnage; and as consequence, growth opportunities are now being lost to other ports around the UK. This is of crucial importance as the Ports NPS seeks to actively encourage competition to ultimately ensure national port provision exceeds overall demand and to secure efficiencies and overall competitiveness advantages of the UK economy. The configuration, availability and cost of land is important in this context. It also means the regional economy is missing out on this investment.
- 5.24 The market forces that apply to ports are variable and fast-paced. Hence, port operators must have access to a supply of available land that will enable them to be responsive to new enquiries and accommodate changing requirements. It will also ensure competition in the marketplace. This situation will only become more important in a post-Brexit economy when there is likely to be a growing reliance on imports (by sea) as the UK Government secure new global trade deals.
- 5.25 As identified in the Development Framework document, an expansion of Port Warrington has been identified as having the potential of delivering up to 195 acres (79 hectares) of port-related development (inclusive of the 35 acres or 14 hectares previously identified in the Peel Ports Masterplan). This will enable Peel Ports Group to grow the port, address some of the land requirement deficiency and develop a multi-modal facility (with rail freight) to complement its network of existing ports along the MSC and integrate with the Port of Liverpool.

Port Growth – 3rd Party Evidence & Validation

- 5.26 The MPMP was published in June 2011 but anticipated port growth arising from freight traffic has been further appraised and validated through the preparation of two sets of evidence which is informing development plan preparation across the sub-region. This evidence comprises:
- The Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) produced by GL Hearn on behalf of the local planning authorities of the Liverpool City Region.
 - Evidence commissioned on behalf of the Liverpool City Region surrounding the SuperPort concept.
- 5.27 Each is taken in turn below.

SHELMA – Liverpool City Region

- 5.28 The SHELMA³⁷ was published early in 2019 and seeks to provide a consistent evidence base for housing and employment land needs over the period 2037 to support the preparation of development plans by individual authorities within the Liverpool City Region. The scope of work related to:
- Review and identify the Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area geographies;
 - Identify Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) for housing between 2012 and 2037 across the City Region and per authority;
 - Consider the scale and distribution of economic growth across the City Region; and
 - Model the need for employment land across the City Region taking into account of the economic and market dynamics and the expansion of the Port of Liverpool.
- 5.29 The report recognises the potential growth in warehouse/storage demand arising from the expansion from the Port of Liverpool and its anticipated freight growth. To understand this further, MDS Transmodal were commissioned to review land requirements based on the MPMP, including forecasts for cargo handling by the Port to 2020 and 2030 by commodity.
- 5.30 The assessment by MDS Transmodal³⁸ confirms that while the freight forecasts in the MPMP may appear to be optimistic in comparison to those presented by the Government (in the NPSP), it is accepted that the MPMP is far more detailed and ‘personal’ due to more in-depth knowledge of the local markets and the future areas of expansion within the ports market particularly to the Mersey Ports. MDS Transmodal recognises that the forecasts will generate large land requirements and notes that the MPMP identified remains a 12% gap in overall land requirement (105 acres / 42.5ha) if needs for port-related logistics is to be met in/close to the ports. The assessment also specifically emphasises that not all of the land identified in the MPMP is readily available and/or deliverable without further activity including the potential need to acquire land. This has been demonstrated earlier in this section.

SuperPort – Market Analysis Land and Property (March 2014)

- 5.31 It is widely accepted by local authorities and local LEP’s that the delivery of the SuperPort will have a large impact on the demand for employment land throughout the sub-region – particularly in respect of large scale distribution uses.
- 5.32 To assess its potential and development need, the level of additional demand, and how and where it should be met, has been considered at a sub-regional level.

³⁷ Strategic Housing & Employment Land Market Assessment

³⁸ Section 13, SHELMA Main Report, GL Hearn, June 2018

- 5.33 Liverpool City Regional LEP commissioned NAI Global to undertake an assessment of the impacts of the SuperPort development proposals. The Liverpool City Region SuperPort Market Analysis Land and Property was published in March 2014. In effect, this is the most up to date evidence of additional land needs emerging from ports growth for the next 20 years.
- 5.34 The report examines the factors that will drive demand for Port-related employment land and premises arising from the investment in SuperPort assets. It is also pertinent to note that the report does not solely limit its geographical remit to the Liverpool City Region but also includes its wider hinterland including West Lancashire, Warrington and Cheshire.
- 5.35 The report analyses demand for land across three elements:
- Demand derived from economic activity utilising historical evidence;
 - Additional demand generated by infrastructure investment made at the Port of Liverpool; and
 - Secondary demand generated by the first two categories.
- 5.36 The report takes the forecast growth in containers from the MPMP and then examines land demand under two scenarios:
- A road freight dominated scenario (70 percent road, 5 percent rail, 25 percent sea/canal); and
 - A scenario with a higher percentage of rail freight (50 percent road, 25 percent rail, 25 percent rail/canal).
- 5.37 The identified overall demand for additional growth equates to a requirement for some 783-808 hectares of land over the next twenty years across the sub-region.
- 5.38 The study then reviews land supply within the sub-region, identifying suitable sites of greater than 5 ha in size, which can be capable of accommodating more than one unit of 50,000sqm and are within a 1 hour drive from the Port of Liverpool.
- 5.39 Overall, some 851.54 ha of land over 69 sites were identified. Of the 69 sites, 12 are considered to be high quality and immediately available extending to 233 ha of land. This is considered sufficient to meet the 158 ha of land needed over the next five years. However almost three quarters (618ha) is considered to be constrained through availability or physical factors. Based on the findings of the study, a further 400-500 hectares of high quality sites are forecast to be required over the next 20 years to meet the anticipated significant increase in demand.
- 5.40 The report concludes that there needs to be a collective commitment, through the local planning process, to identify and develop sufficient high quality sites to meet this demand. As such, the report does not include recommendations on where to locate this additional employment land nor percentage breakdowns of the land by local authority. The report does, however, also recommend that the option for landside

connectivity to tranship containers from the quayside down the Manchester Ship Canal to one of the string of canal ports identified in the MPMP should be fully explored, citing that there are clear economic and environmental advantages to this mode. By taking HGV trips out of the supply chain through inland waterways this would reduce both congestion and the carbon footprint while ensuring that the demand creates local jobs with a resulting economic impact.

- 5.41 While it is accepted that the report does not follow the formal process of identifying specific employment needs and land requirement as defined by national planning policy and guidance it does, nonetheless, reappraise freight forecasts per port sector and concludes that there is a significant demand arising for more employment land to meet anticipated growth needs. It also reaffirms the need to maximise and harness the full economic potential of the Ship Canal to facilitate full landside connectivity through canalside ports like Port Warrington. The report has the support of the Liverpool LEP and was endorsed by the relevant local authorities.

6. An Updated Need Case for Port Warrington

- 6.1 The previous chapter of the report provided an overview of the anticipated demand arising from port freight traffic as set out in the MPMP and identified the shortfall of land provision to meet such demand. It also referred to third party evidence which more recently has sought to re-appraise, validate and/or update port growth forecasts to inform economic growth aspirations being endorsed by the LEP and/or development plan preparation across the sub-region. This body of evidence reaffirms that there is a significant requirement for further employment land to meet anticipated demand across the sub-region.
- 6.2 To supplement this context and to further support the allocation of Port Warrington, Peel Ports has commissioned MDS Transmodal to consider the market demand opportunity presented by Port Warrington in serving shipping, barge, rail and road freight.
- 6.3 The report can be viewed at **Appendix 2**. The key conclusions of the report are as follows:
- (1) The MDST report confirms that it is Government policy (principally enshrined through the NPS for Ports and for SRFIs in the NPS for National Networks) to support the delivery of employment distribution facilities which are connected to both the rail and ports network. The development of rail and/or water connected multi-modal distribution parks are also supported through the Transport for the North's Freight and Logistics Report.
 - (2) Port Warrington provides the ability to deliver a flexible arrangement of floorspace including larger warehousing which would become hubs of national and/or regional distribution networks. The report identifies some 3.7million sqm of new large scale floorspace is expected to be built in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor up to 2035. This would imply the need to bring forward 849ha of land through emerging Local Plans.
 - (3) A review of alternative sites to Port Warrington was undertaken to ascertain whether the quantum of land that will potentially be brought forward at other rail and water connected sites in the North West of England is able to meet anticipated demand to 2035. Taking an optimistic view with regards to deliverability, it is estimated that around 475ha of land at rail served and/or water connected sites (including Port Warrington) could be developed up to 2035 in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor. This would leave a significant shortfall (of around 374ha) that cannot be found from all of the appropriate rail and water connected sites even when Port Warrington is included within the assessment.
 - (4) A review of waterborne freight markets confirms that actual traffic growth and forecast demand for containerised traffic through the Port of Liverpool remains healthy and in line with growth expectations as envisaged in the MPMP while allowing for the global recession. Port Warrington therefore provides the opportunity and sustainable means to distribute deep sea and

short sea containers inland from Irish Sea markets directly to the inland origins and destinations across North West England. In effect, Port Warrington would act as an inland extension to the Port of Liverpool providing additional container storage for port-centric distribution in a location that can serve both the major conurbations in the North West from a single site but linked by low cost and environmentally sustainable waterborne freight transport. This would be particularly appropriate for commodities such as containerised cargo, but also for steel, forest products imports and dry bulk traffics and is consistent with the MPMP. The report identifies that with the provision of two berths, Port Warrington could conceivably handle around 200,000 TEU per annum.

- (5) The report confirms that Port Warrington would be able to enjoy a direct connection to the West Coast Main Line and would not encounter any constraints to the operation of the site from a rail connectivity point of view. Port Warrington would be able to handle the most efficient combination of containers and wagons and accommodate the longest intermodal trains that operate on the British rail network. Initial capacity assessments and timetabling indicate that Port Warrington could be served by one freight path per hour per direction which would make it a commercially attractive proposition for occupiers who are looking to adopt and/or expand rail freight connectivity into their supply chain distribution network.
- (6) The estimated environmental benefits from the proposals through providing a tri-modal capability and removing HGVs from the national highways network are significant, with an estimated reduction of 34.8 million HGV kilometres per annum (a reduction in carbon emissions of c. 30,900 tonnes per annum).

Conclusion

- 6.4 As outlined above and in the supporting evidence, there is clear local, regional and national market demand for the type of facilities which are proposed at the expanded Port Warrington. In particular, the growth of the logistics sector and the increasing requirement for large scale, purpose built distribution centres in highly accessible locations is recognised in Government policy. The lack of sufficient alternative sites and the significant locational advantages which Port Warrington offers, notably its potential to take advantage of its multi-modal transport options, contribute towards the 'exceptional circumstances' to support its removal from the Green Belt.

7. Warrington Commercial Park

The Opportunity

- 7.1 The proposed Warrington Commercial Park (WCP) lies to the south-west of Warrington Town Centre and adjacent to Port Warrington. The WCP will be accessed via a new link route (to Port Warrington) from the new Western Link to the east of the site.
- 7.2 The WCP forms part of the wider Warrington Waterfront regeneration initiative in the draft Warrington Local Plan³⁹; which identifies that it could accommodate c. 33ha of employment uses (B1, B2 and B8 uses). The WCP could provide employment space for activities related to Port Warrington (see previous section) but its location and proximity to Warrington town centre means that it will also be able to fulfil a broader role in meeting a wider range of Warrington’s business needs. A range of small to medium sized units could be built to complement the Port and to take advantage of the site’s location close to the Western Link, the proposed new dwellings to the north and the town centre.
- 7.3 This section considers the justification for the release of Green Belt for WCP in this context.

Exceptional Circumstances

- 7.4 The key exceptional circumstances in support of the WCP comprises the following.

(A) Objectively Assessed Employment Need

- 7.5 Warrington lies in a key strategic position on the M62 and is equidistance between Manchester and Liverpool. Over the last 20 years, it has taken advantage of this location to generate significant employment development, which has outstripped growth in the wider sub-region and the national average. The borough’s employment land take-up during this period was approximately 300 ha (15ha per annum) and the Council’s evidence⁴⁰ confirms that a similar level of growth is likely to occur over the next 20 years.
- 7.6 Taking this into account, the Council’s emerging Local Plan confirms⁴¹ that the Borough’s overall quantum of employment land is 381 hectares and this will satisfy its objectively assessed employment needs and growth aspirations for the Plan period (2017-2037). This requirement aligns with the level of growth identified in the LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan and the evidence in the Employment Development Needs Assessment (EDNA).
- 7.7 As a starting point, the Local Plan Preferred Option confirms that the Council will maximise the capacity of the existing urban area to accommodate new development.⁴² The Council’s evidence⁴³ goes on to state that the total urban capacity

³⁹ Warrington Council Preferred Development Option – Consultation (July 2017)

⁴⁰ Warrington Employment Development Needs Assessment (2016), paragraph 8.76

⁴¹ Warrington Council Preferred Development Option – Consultation (July 2017)

⁴² Warrington Council Preferred Development Option – Consultation (July 2017), paragraph 46

for employment land is 130 hectares of employment land. This indicates that urban capacity is insufficient to meet the Borough's total employment land requirement and there is a residual requirement to accommodate 251 hectares of employment development in greenfield locations.

- 7.8 The Green Belt tightly surrounds Warrington. Consequently, the borough cannot accommodate its objectively assessed employment requirement without incursion into the Green Belt.
- 7.9 However, before reaching this conclusion, the Council has also explored the possibility for neighbouring authorities accommodating a proportion of its identified employment requirement to reduce the need for Green Belt release. However, whilst a proportion of the borough employment land requirement could be met via an extension to the Omega employment site in St Helens' emerging Local Plan, this proposal would also necessitate Green Belt release.
- 7.10 In light of the above, the Council evidence clearly demonstrate that the borough cannot reasonably meet its objectively assessed employment needs without the release of up to 251 ha of land from the Green Belt. This confirms that exceptional circumstances exist to justify a review of the Borough's Green Belt boundary.

(B) Distribution of Employment Land

- 7.11 Over the past 20 years, the north of the borough has been the focus for new employment land due to the good access to the M62; in particular, the success of Birchwood Park and the Omega site has been a key feature of the local economy. However, these sites are now approaching their capacity and there is limited opportunity for further growth.
- 7.12 The Council's employment evidence highlights⁴⁴ that there is consensus amongst the property market that there is very little employment land supply in South Warrington, but a great deal of demand. To address this, the evidence highlights⁴⁵ the opportunity for further employment allocations around Port Warrington on the Manchester Ship Canal and land in South Warrington along the M56 Corridor. This would take advantage of the key M56/M6 links, reflect current market demand and the lack of remaining supply along the M62 in North Warrington (particularly at Omega).
- 7.13 The Council's evidence highlights a patent disparity in South Warrington between the supply and availability of employment land, versus a high level of occupier demand. In light of this, the proposed AMH can accommodate a substantial employment development in South Warrington and can make a positive contribution toward these identified needs.

⁴³ Updated Urban Capacity Statement

⁴⁴ Economic Development Need Assessment, 2016, paragraph 10.19

⁴⁵ Economic Development Need Assessment, 2016, paragraph 5.55

(C) Qualitative Need

- 7.14 Alongside the objectively assessed employment need, a qualitative assessment is also crucial in establishing future employment locations. The Council's evidence⁴⁶ looks specifically at qualitative needs for future employment development and confirms that consultation with national, regional and local property stakeholders has identified that:
- There is a shortage of land for all types of B-Class use in the Borough, including offices and smaller industrial options, alongside the larger B2/B8 premises currently being provided at Omega.
 - There is a lack of industrial and warehouse units of 2,000-5,000 sqm. Hence, Warrington may be losing out on some requirements to neighbouring authorities.
 - Local office demand is primarily for suites of 0-500 sqm, in Birchwood and Warrington Town Centre. Larger requirements can extend to 2,000 sqm and tend to be focused at Birchwood only. However, there is a shortage of 1,000-2,000 sqm properties at Birchwood and across the Borough generally.
 - Based on historic take-up, the evidence confirms that the strongest demand is likely to be for B8 Warehousing (165 ha) and B1(a) Offices (73 ha).
- 7.15 The evidence concludes that there is a strategic requirement for large regional and national production/distribution facilities (B2/B8) requiring site of 5-10 ha (or larger); a local warehousing demand for properties of up to 5,000 sqm on sites of up to or over 1.3 ha; and a general demand for smaller office units serving the micro business market.
- 7.16 In light of this, the scheme aligns with the qualitative requirements set out in the evidence and can deliver a high-quality business hub, which can accommodate a range of employment uses, such as production/distribution facilities (B2/B8) alongside smaller offices use (B1a). A range of other complementary uses, supportive of the proposed business function would be appropriate.
- 7.17 Importantly, the site's proximity to the town centre, the Manchester Ship Canal and the expanded Port Warrington, and the strategic road network, gives it unique locational advantage (see below) that make it a location of choice for employment development in both the borough and sub-region.

(D) Locational Advantages

- 7.18 The WCP is a unique site in the Borough and sub-region that benefits from: multi-modal connectivity (road, rail and water); adjacency to the expanded Port Warrington; and proximity to the town centre. These attributes act to differentiate the site from other potential employment sites in the local area and enable the site to attract inward investment opportunities that may not otherwise be accommodated in the borough and / or sub-region.

⁴⁶ Economic Development Need Assessment, 2016, table 60

7.19 The site offers multiple locational advantages, not least:

- The site is strategically located in a gateway position on the Western Link road, which will provide convenient access to the strategic motorway and trunk road network;
- The proximity to Port Warrington provides the opportunity for synergies and clustering opportunities between port-related businesses while also being proximate to Warrington town centre; and
- Local accessibility to both high value residential areas and deprived communities that can benefit from the wide range of job opportunities created.

7.20 These multiple locational advantages, particularly the fixed multi-modal infrastructure relating to the Port, will help the business hub become a location of choice for inward investment in the Borough and / or sub-region. These advantages will create a competitive business location which appeals to a breadth of occupiers (B1, B2 and B8 uses) who require proximity to the town centre, the strategic road and canal network, a skilled workforce, and flexibility in terms of size and format of accommodation.

7.21 The land has also been in use for a number of years and subject to previous industrial uses, including accommodating ancillary development associated with the infrastructure of the landfill and as a dredging deposit ground.

(E) Consequences

7.22 The EDNA confirms that there is already a suppressed demand for employment land. Therefore, the consequence of not releasing the WCP from the Green Belt and allocating it for employment development would substantially diminish the economic benefit for borough and the wider sub-region given the scale of development and inward investment that could be attracted. In the medium to long term, this could threaten Warrington's status as a key driver of the economy as existing development land is used up, with potential development and investment being lost to other regions of the UK and potentially overseas.

Summary

7.23 The WCP is a unique development proposition that can assist in meeting the quantitative and qualitative employment land requirements in the borough across the plan period. Notably, this site benefits from a unique local advantage that set it apart from any alternative non-Green Belt location elsewhere in the Borough.

8. Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park

- 8.1 Arpley landfill site measures an area of approximately 176ha and although it is within the designated Green Belt, it has been in operation for waste disposal operations since 1986. An application to extend the operational life of the facility to October 2018 and enable its restoration by October 2019, with a revised sequence of landfill phasing and restoration works, was approved after appeal in May 2015. The Inspector recognised that the benefits of the development outweighed the harm to the Green Belt and very special circumstances had been demonstrated.
- 8.2 The planning permission allowed for the restoration of those areas previously landfilled with a full landscaping restoration scheme of new topsoil, planting and seeding. The majority of the site has now been filled and is in the process of being restored to grassland, with the final phases remaining in use.
- 8.3 Moore Nature Reserve has been managed through funding secured through planning obligations as part of the Arpley Landfill development. The current funding stream for the Nature Reserve is coming to an end in 2021, and there is no known funding package for the ongoing maintenance of the existing reserve. The proposals for Warrington Waterfront would include a programme for the future management of the Country Park and the retained area of the Moore Nature Reserve.
- 8.4 The new, emerging proposals propose more extensive works than previously permitted, to create new native woodland, scrubland and hedgerow areas, alongside the creation of new usable greenspace. A number of habitat creation measures to provide ecological enhancement measures also proposed, with a plantation of woodland habitats and new connections. The proposals also seek to respond to the deficiencies in the existing open space network. A Vision Document in respect of the proposals has been prepared by LUC and are at Appendix 3. It sets out the proposals for developing a new Nature Reserve and Country Park in more detail and confirms that a range of zones that can be achieved within the environment including:
- A Nature Conservation Zone for ecologically sensitive areas. Access would be restricted within these areas with a primary purpose for education;
 - A Passive Zone which would feature quieter recreational activities such as bike riding and guided walks;
 - A Family Zone within a central hub area, with picnic table amenities and children's play facilities and outdoor performance areas; and
 - An Active Activity Zone in carefully sited areas of the park, suited to high energy sports such as bouldering/rock climbing.
- 8.5 These provisions will ensure that the land is significantly enhanced, particularly from an ecological and recreational perspective, when compared to the baseline position and the existing Moore Nature Reserve. The proposals will be of a scale, quality and range of activity which will result in the delivery of one of the largest country parks in the North West and of sub-regional importance. The enhancement will deliver significant

ecological, recreational and cultural benefits which weigh in favour of the overall proposals. A network of new recreational footpaths are also proposed to be dispersed throughout the site to encourage access by members of the public.

9. A Unique Opportunity

Summary

- The Warrington Waterfront initiative and the Western Link Road provide an opportunity to unlock a unique and unrivalled growth opportunity at Port Warrington and the Commercial Park.
- Port Warrington is an appropriate sustainable and spatial response to meet employment demand needs arising from port freight growth across the Peel Port network.
- The expansion of Port Warrington and the Commercial Park have the potential to create a unique development opportunity in Warrington which can create jobs, support the supply chain, unlock inward investment opportunities, and increase growth consistent with Warrington's LEP and Industrial Strategy.
- A Development Framework has been prepared to illustrate how the scheme may be delivered during the emerging Plan period to meet forecast growth in a number of port sectors, including port-centric logistical space, container space and construction hub activity.

- 9.1 The Port Warrington development is an opportunity which is unique and unrivalled in the North West. Its location adjacent to the MSC is a significant benefit as it will enable the increased movement of trade and freight by water at a point which is centrally located within the heart of Warrington and centre of the North West. The opportunity to directly connect to the West Coast Main Line will offer an immediate connection to the national rail freight network enabling freight traffic to be distributed across the country by rail thereby reducing road traffic movements to the site and the nearby WCP.

The Development Framework

- 9.2 A Development Framework has been prepared and illustrates the opportunity presented at the Site comprising Port Warrington, WCP and Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park. The proposal offers the potential to develop a significant new employment-led development at Port Warrington and the new Commercial Park, alongside an extensive new green infrastructure and recreational network at the Nature Reserve and Country Park. It is a major sustainable development opportunity site, in an accessible location to accommodate the meet port freight demand arising from the sub-region and local employment demand.
- 9.3 The re-use and expansion of Port Warrington will take advantage of the strategic opportunities which large scale port-led and infrastructure development can bring. As a result, a number of different elements could be accommodated on site, including a cluster of new manufacturing and assembly, logistics, industrial processing, storage (gas and petro-chemicals) and distribution uses.
- 9.4 The Development Framework reaffirms the vision is to develop a new multi-modal inland port facility delivering flexible floorspace of around 2.2m sqft with permitted

development rights⁴⁷ to reflect the existing long established/authorised port activity on part of the site which will be able to accommodate create a cluster of new uses.

9.5 The WCP also offers the potential to deliver a number of larger units suitable for B8 use as well as small / medium industrial units and office buildings which will reflect the business case findings, alongside other complementary uses. This aspect of the development will also be able to take advantage of the site's location close to Warrington town centre, the proposed Western Link Road and Port Warrington.

9.6 The Development Framework has been informed by a range of assessments and technical appraisals to demonstrate the suitability and deliverability of the land for the proposed development, as follows:

- Agricultural Land Assessment
- Arboricultural Walkover Survey and Desktop Assessment
- Ecological Appraisal
- Flood Risk, Drainage, Utilities and Hazards Review
- Heritage Appraisal
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Transport Appraisal

9.7 The illustrative Masterplan has also been designed to retain as many of the existing well-established trees where possible and to ensure that a strong green infrastructure network is created. The former Arpley Meadows landfill site and outlying areas in particular will be enhanced via the creation of further biodiversity resources, alongside additional green infrastructure and new hedgerow and tree planting. The new attractive recreational areas (including new play areas and picnic spots) will be fully accessible to members of the public, with potential connections into the wider waterfront scheme to residential areas and education facilities. The existing water-bodies on-site will be retained where possible to offer new landscaped areas and for flood attenuation purposes.

Summary

9.8 The baseline evidence base has identified that its overall sensitivity varies, with the Moore Nature Reserve performing a strong feature and accommodating a variety of key ecological qualities which makes it more sensitive to the emerging development proposals. In contrast, the land to the north east where the WCP is proposed, performs a more limited role with more moderate biodiversity features which is less

⁴⁷ Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 8, Class B

susceptible to future development, though the wider allocation and scheme for housing and the Western Link Road also brings further considerations.

9.9 In conclusion, the assessments have identified that:

- There are no overly restrictive constraints or environmental designations on the site and these can be addressed through careful masterplanning and the adoption of mitigation measures; and
- There are clear and substantial benefits which the development of the site could generate, as outlined further within this Document.

10. Green Belt

- 10.1 In accordance with the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework'), the following section outlines the justification for the release of the majority of the site from the Green Belt and its allocation for employment purposes within the emerging Local Plan. It reviews the contribution that the land currently makes to the Green Belt, as measured by the five purposes in the Framework and based upon the Council's Green Belt Assessment (2016). It also assesses the extent to which the wider Green Belt will continue to fulfil these purposes following the allocation and subsequent development of the site.
- 10.2 The subsequent sections of this document then include an appraisal of the exceptional circumstances that justify the change to the Green belt boundary and allocation of land for development, as highlighted in Paragraph 136 of the Framework.

Green Belt Purposes

- 10.3 The Framework identifies five purposes that the Green Belt serves, and which the site has been reviewed against:
- To check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 10.4 It is important to note at the outset that the Council has accepted in its emerging Plan that there are very clear exceptional circumstances which justify the release of significant amounts of Green Belt to meet Warrington's needs. Whilst it is recognised that all land within the current Green Belt fulfils at least some aspects of Green Belt purposes, the Council acknowledges that it simply will not be possible to meet the identified employment and housing needs of Warrington without some impact on the Green Belt.
- 10.5 The Council's Green Belt Assessment (2016) identifies that the whole Warrington Waterfront site, including Arpley Meadows, Port Warrington and the proposed WCP location, (General Area no. 15) makes a 'moderate' overall contribution to the Green Belt. It acknowledges that although it makes a 'strong' contribution when assessed against preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another, it only makes a 'moderate' contribution to assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and assisting in urban regeneration; and a 'weak' contribution in preventing sprawl and protecting historic towns.

- 10.6 The Assessment finds that the whole land contributes strongly to preventing towns from merging and its development would *'result in the merging of the Warrington urban area and Runcorn'*. However, as outlined further within this document, the proposed scale and type of development will not result in any merging of these settlements. When one considers the area proposed for release from the Green Belt for development, rather than the full land parcel in the Council's Assessment, a different conclusion as to the level of contribution to Green Belt purposes would be reached. The 'strong' contribution identified for the parcel would, we contend, be lessened further which would reduce the overall level of contribution as assessed.
- 10.7 The Council's Assessment has confirmed that the whole site performs no contribution to the historic setting of Warrington nor the surrounding area, and the recycling of land purpose which is relevant to all Green Belt sites.

Release of the Land from the Green Belt

- 10.8 It is considered that the release of this land from the Green Belt and the alternative boundary which is proposed in this location is, in the context of the exceptional circumstances that exist, an appropriate response on the following grounds:
- the separation between settlements will be maintained and no merging of settlements will occur;
 - a revised permanent Green Belt boundary can be established by using existing and reinforced features to enhance definition, and longevity;
 - existing major urban features reduce the openness of the Green Belt in this area such that its contribution to this purpose of Green Belt is already weakened, as recognised by the Council's Assessment.
- 10.9 It is considered that the proposed release of Green Belt and its allocation for development will not cause significant harm to warrant its retention and it will not affect the long term permanence and endurance of the remaining Green Belt.
- 10.10 The realignment of the Green Belt would still retain substantial settlement separation and the proposals for Arpley Meadows would also provide enhancement of the Green Belt purposes. The Nature Reserve and Country Park will remain within the Green Belt, with the strong, permanent and defensible boundaries along the edge ensuring that the surrounding countryside is safeguarded from encroachment over the long term. The proposals will also enable significant improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land at the Nature Reserve and Country Park. The works to Arpley Meadows and the significant wider environmental and social improvements it will generate, notably the addition of new structural landscaping zones along the perimeter, will sustain the Green Belt's permanence in the long term⁴⁸. It will also bring wider benefits and offer opportunities to provide access and provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, and to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity (as supported within Paragraph 141 of the Framework).

⁴⁸ In accordance with Paragraph 136 of the Framework

10.11 The purpose of assisting in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land is applicable but it must also be accepted that the Port is geographically fixed, cannot be disaggregated and has no credible alternative. On this basis, the proposals will not harm this Green Belt purpose.

Table 10.1: Assessment against national Green Belt purposes if the site is removed from the Green Belt

Green Belt Purpose	Assessment Against Green Belt Purpose
Preventing Sprawl	The boundaries of the site would be reinforced from the extensive soft landscaping works which are proposed at the Nature Reserve and Country Park, to reduce any further development and unrestricted sprawl over the long term.
Merging of Settlements	A physical and visual separation (through soft landscaping works) would still be maintained in all directions and form a large green gap between the existing settlements to ensure that these remain separate townships.
Encroachment	Whilst the proposed development will itself represent a form of encroachment into the countryside, the proposed dense tree belts between the Country Park and the employment development will prevent any physical or visual encroachment into the wider Green Belt. The existing development on part of the land already provides a level of encroachment into the Green Belt area.
Overall Evaluation	The revised Green Belt boundary will be defensible over the long term and the end value of it will not be compromised, rather the proposals will provide the enhancement of the retained Green Belt.

Conclusion

10.12 As outlined above, it is considered that the extent to which the site proposed for development continues to meet the purposes of the Green Belt is limited and the effect of its release from the Green Belt would not be significantly harmful, nor compromising of the retained Green Belt in this area. The wider economic, social and environmental benefits which the different aspects of the development will generate, plus its location in close proximity to the strategic road, water and rail network, is also a key factor to promote its allocation for employment uses and the following sections of this report sets out the exceptional circumstances that justify the release from the Green Belt.

11. Benefits

Summary

The expansion of Port Warrington, WCP and the Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park will deliver considerable and tangible social, economic and environmental benefits to the regional, borough and the nearby local community

- 11.1 The project will generate significant economic, social and environmental benefits which strongly support the allocation of the site. Peel are committed to delivering a lasting social and economic legacy and implementing a Local Employment Strategy to optimise the benefits of the scheme for the residents and businesses of Warrington. The companies are also committed to minimising and mitigating the impacts of the development on the local area, including in relation to transport and traffic, ecology, landscape and other potential impacts. This will be achieved in partnership with the Council and other key stakeholders.
- 11.2 The scheme will support the on-going growth of Warrington's economy and lead to lasting social and economic benefits locally. In addition, it will assist in addressing local social and economic need, whilst also delivering wider environmental benefits. These benefits are reviewed in further detail below.

Economic Benefits

- 11.3 The scheme will attract investment which would not otherwise come to Warrington and in doing so would contribute directly to the Government's objectives of rebalancing the UK economy. This also reflects the wider emphasis on economic growth, as reflected in the Northern Powerhouse initiatives and reflects Warrington's overall growth and importance as one of the fastest growing centres in the country. Given these strategic advantages, multi-modal operations are becoming more important to occupiers who see rail operations and port-centric operations increasing in significance. The significant opportunities which Port Warrington offers, including both rail and port centric operations within a large urban catchment area at the heart of an urbanised region, needs to be fully exploited.
- 11.4 The development will also stimulate further business linkages and provide a significant opportunity to create a significant number of new jobs and training for local people. The development represents a significant financial investment in the Borough. It will deliver a wide range of jobs during the construction and operational phases and make a significant contribution to local GVA.
- 11.5 The substantial economic benefits that arise from the delivery of an inland port is supported by national planning policy as expressed in National Planning Policy Statement for Ports and National Networks respectively. This is in terms of supporting further through-put capacity and multi-modal provision at Ports (which are the main conduit for the country's imports and exports) and through provision of hubs with access to the strategic road network and rail (which would offer choice to customers and facilitate the prompt movement of goods for manufacturers, retailers and end consumers).

- 11.6 The proposals will offer potential occupiers with maximum choice and flexibility to utilise the most sustainable and competitive forms of transport in a location close to markets. This combination would make it a sustainable and logical location for logistics businesses serving the central and northern parts of the UK and offer an attractive location from which to base a UK wide logistics operation and the increased generation of business rates. These benefits will provide a significant boost to the region's economy and will include direct and indirect opportunities for local suppliers and workers.
- 11.7 A bespoke economic impact model has been created in order to assess the potential effects of the scheme. This initial assessment uses scheme-specific data and assumptions in order to consider the quantifiable impacts of the proposed development, both during its construction and operational (or 'lifetime') phases.
- 11.8 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Additionality Guide, published in January 2014, provides guidance to practitioners on the standard methodology associated with assessing the additional effects of an intervention or development. The HCA guidance has informed this assessment in order to ensure conformity to nationally accepted standards for assessing potential socio-economic effects.
- 11.9 Given the early stage of the project, all effects are presented as gross impacts.

Construction Phase

- 11.10 It is estimated that investment will total £317 million over the construction period.
- 11.11 Investment of this scale could be expected to support around 2,600 person-years of direct employment over the construction period, based on the average turnover per employee in the construction industry in the North West. This indicates that the proposed development will directly support an annual average of 515 temporary full-time equivalent (FTE) gross jobs over the construction period. Approximately 260 further jobs could also be induced or indirectly supported across the North West as a result of the proposed investment.
- 11.12 Construction of the proposed development will contribute significantly to economic output, measured in gross value added (GVA). GVA measures the value output created (i.e. turnover) net of inputs purchased, and is used to produce a good or service (i.e. production of the output). GVA therefore provides a measure of economic productivity – put simply the GVA is the total of all revenue into businesses, which is used to fund wages, profits and taxes.
- 11.13 The construction phase of the proposed development is expected to generate to a total of between £252 million over the construction period.

Operational Phase

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

- 11.15 The operational phase of the development could be expected to directly support c. 5,300 gross jobs on site. In addition, the operation of the proposed development could support additional indirect and induced employment, equating to a further 2,650 jobs across the North West. Total additional employment supported by the operation of the proposed development is therefore calculated as 7,950 FTE jobs.
- 11.16 The proposed development is expected to generate £418 million gross GVA per annum over its operational lifetime. This comprises direct impacts of £270 million, and indirect and induced impacts (those accruing in the wider supply chain) of £148 million per annum.
- 11.17 Given the large floorspaces that could be delivered, it can be assumed that the operational phase of the proposed development will generate significant business rate revenue for Warrington Borough Council. Initial analysis of the floorspaces and intended uses indicate that business rate revenue in the region of £6.3 million per annum could be generated.

Sustainability and Environmental Benefits

- 11.18 The proposals will generate other significant sustainability and environmental benefits for the local area and wider region. The transfer of freight from road haulage to more sustainable rail and water freight networks is a key objective of the Government's vision for a low carbon/sustainable transport system. MDST estimate that that the proposals would remove HGVs from the national highways network equivalent to 34.8 million HGV km per annum; this equates to a reduction in carbon emissions from these HGVs of about 30,900 tonnes per annum.
- 11.19 By encouraging a shift from road to water and rail based transport, Port Warrington has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of road haulage across the region, including amending the existing route via country roads and Moore Village. This would deliver significant reductions in carbon emissions and could ease congestion. The benefits of this would be felt across the highway network. Particular benefits would occur in areas of high HGV concentrations and areas of congestion. This would include the urban area around the port, the motorway links to Port Warrington and outlying areas.
- 11.20 The proposals strongly support the Government's vision for a low carbon, sustainable transport system through the transfer of road haulage and its associated emissions to sustainable rail and water based transportation. The movement of freight and goods to and from the regional economy will continue to rise significantly in line with economic growth and therefore there is a need to ensure the presence of the necessary infrastructure to allow a growing percentage of these goods to be transported via sustainable modes of transportation. This modal shift will also have benefits in terms of reduced vehicle emissions and improved local air quality by transporting goods closer to their origins and destination through lower emission modes, such as waterborne and rail transport.
- 11.21 The emerging scheme proposals will provide informal access opportunities for members of the public to habitat areas that are of improved visual context and biodiversity to the current use of the site, thereby providing some accordance with this

objective of Green Belt policy. The development also incorporates ecological mitigation measures to protect as much of the existing environmental features as retained as possible. The Framework (Paragraph 175) encourages developments which will secure measurable biodiversity net gains; if a biodiversity net gain is not achievable directly on-site, this could be secured off-site in the locality using Peel's wider landholdings. The Nature Reserve and Country Park will be landscaped in a manner that provides access to new green and recreational spaces for residents, visitors and employees within Port Warrington. The development thereby directly supports Paragraph 81 of The Framework to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt by providing access to Green Belt, to enhance and retain existing landscapes and to improve damaged or derelict land.

- 11.22 The scheme will be designed in accordance with high standards of sustainable design and construction which is fully supportive of Policy QE1 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 4.12.7 of the NPS. The buildings and infrastructure will be designed to minimise resource consumption (such as water), waste generation and carbon emissions through the use of sustainable design and construction best practice. The use of renewable and / or low carbon sources will be investigated, with a focus on solutions (such as Battery technology) that are future proofed in response to a changing climate and smart grid energy supply. An assessment will also be undertaken at the detailed design stage to identify the need for suitable resilience measures to be included within the proposals in response to future climate change.
- 11.23 Port Warrington will fully support the Western Link Road infrastructure by ensuring that it is integrated with the existing road network. Development of the Link Road will also reduce traffic volumes travelling between Port Warrington and the outlying area, thereby reducing HGV movements through Moore Village.

Social Benefits

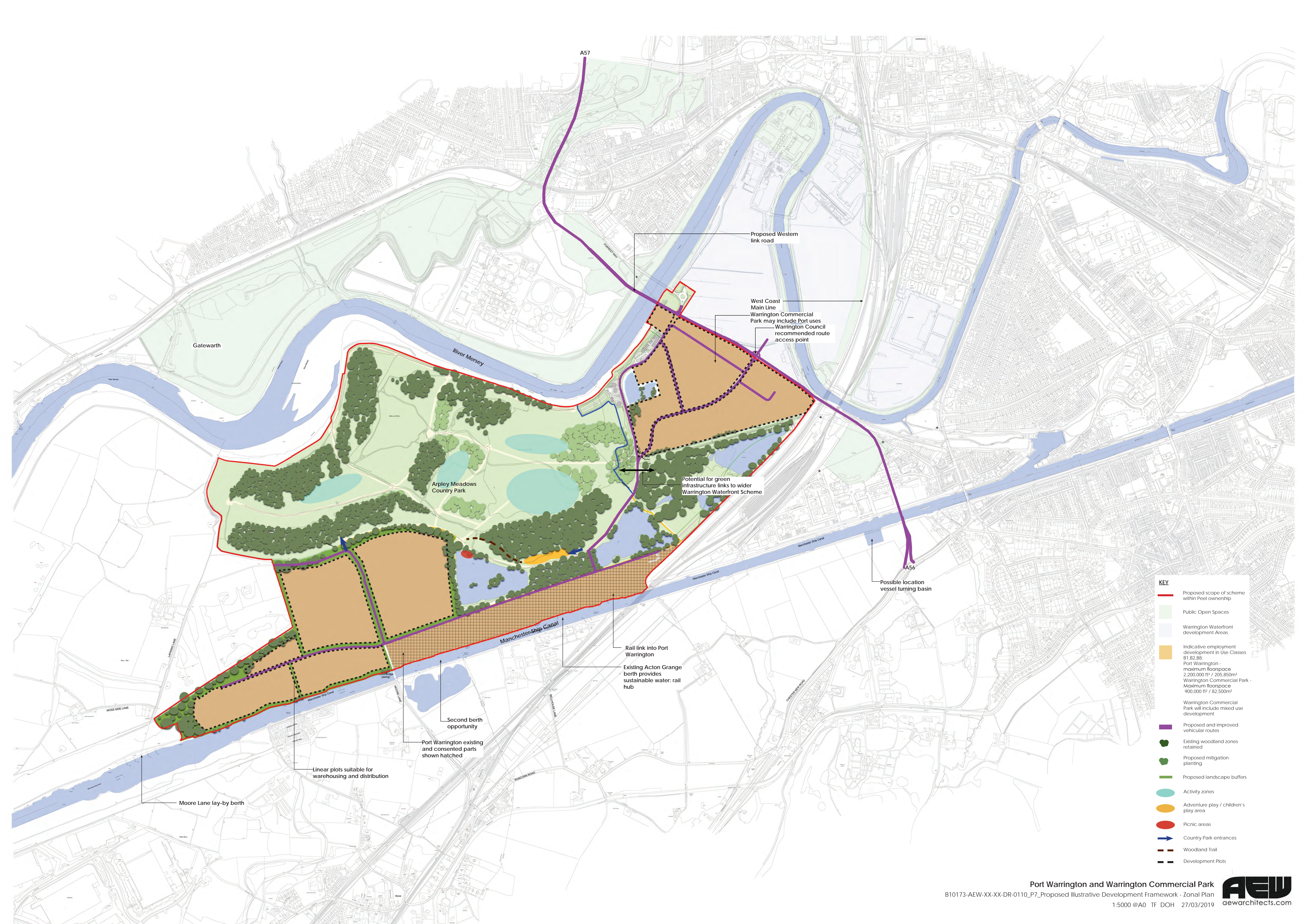
- 11.24 There is a proven link between economic growth and an improvement in health and wellbeing of workers and local communities. Port Warrington will provide significant economic benefits which, through an active local benefits and Social Value programme that will seek to maximise health and wellbeing benefits. New buildings will be designed with measures to promote health and wellbeing of occupants and workers such as maximising the use of natural ventilation and light.
- 11.25 Port Warrington will provide additional revenues for the Council to spend on necessary social infrastructure such as health care, education and community facilities. The creation of thousands of new employment opportunities will provide significant financial support for local shops and facilities in nearby
- 11.26 The inclusion of the Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park will provide opportunities for recreational activities and therefore wider benefits through the provision of open space and recreational facilities which are available to both the public and workers. Additional woodland planting (c.5.6ha), picnic areas, viewing platforms and performance and play areas will be provided, alongside new footpaths and a sculpture trail. Health and wellbeing benefits will also be encouraged through the exploration of opportunities for active and more sustainable modes of travel to and from the site including walking and cycling; the proposed cycle route along Birchwood Lane could

improve cycle provision to the site, for example. This development will also alleviate HGV traffic from passing through Moore Village, thereby providing wider environmental and social benefits.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 This Document has demonstrated that the Port Warrington, WCP and the Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park proposals present a crucial strategic opportunity which responds to the overall growth aspirations within the local, regional and national growth-agenda, including the Framework and the National Policy Statement for Ports.
- 12.2 The potential to create a sustainable inland port hub of significance which takes advantage of its unique multi-modal and key locational opportunities should be fully exploited. The accompanying documents, notably the Freight Transport Case for the Expansion of Port Warrington report, clearly demonstrate that the removal of Port Warrington and the WCP land from the Green Belt and its allocation for port infrastructure and employment development is entirely justified and sound and will support significant economic growth.
- 12.3 As outlined above, there is significant quantitative and qualitative justification and evidence to demonstrate the demand for the site for employment uses and its ability to accommodate the proposed development in an accessible location will help meet local and national demand, both now and in the future. These factors collectively comprise the exceptional circumstances case to support the removal of part of the site from the Green Belt. The wider Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park scheme and extensive off-site works will also create new high value ecology and landscape features and the whole development will bring economic, environmental and social benefits to the local area and wider region.

Appendix 1: Emerging Site Masterplan



Gatewarth

River Mersey

Arpley Meadows Country Park

Manchester Ship Canal

Moore Lane lay-by berth

Linear plots suitable for warehousing and distribution

Second berth opportunity

Port Warrington existing and consented parts shown hatched

Existing Acton Grange berth provides sustainable water: rail hub

Rail link into Port Warrington

Potential for green infrastructure links to wider Warrington Waterfront Scheme

West Coast Main Line Warrington Commercial Park may include Port uses Warrington Council recommended route access point

Proposed Western link road

A57

A56

Possible location vessel turning basin

KEY

- Proposed scope of scheme within Peel ownership
- Public Open Spaces
- Warrington Waterfront development Areas
- Indicative employment development in Use Classes B1, B2, B8:
 - Port Warrington - maximum floorspace 2,200,000 ft² / 205,850m²
 - Warrington Commercial Park - Maximum floorspace 900,000 ft² / 82,500m²
- Warrington Commercial Park will include mixed use development
- Proposed and improved vehicular routes
- Existing woodland zones retained
- Proposed mitigation planting
- Proposed landscape buffers
- Activity zones
- Adventure play / children's play area
- Picnic areas
- Country Park entrances
- Woodland Trail
- Development Plots

**Appendix 2:
Freight Transport Case for the
Expansion of Port Warrington**



FREIGHT TRANSPORT CASE FOR THE EXPANSION OF PORT WARRINGTON

Final Report

August 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 1: Introduction

MDS Transmodal was commissioned by Peel Investments (North) Ltd and Peel Ports to examine the freight transport case for the expansion of Port Warrington, taking into account maritime traffic, road and rail freight traffic and associated storage requirements. The report also considers rail network capacity and rail and marine operational issues related to the overall feasibility of the Port Warrington site for freight-related activity.

The current Port Warrington site has long operated as a road-based distribution facility. However, an expanded Port Warrington site is very well-placed to be a tri-modal logistics site given that it offers:

- An existing berth on the Manchester Ship Canal, with potential for a second berth;
- A location in close proximity to the West Coast Main Line (WCML) with the potential to develop a direct rail connection and;
- Existing road access which would be enhanced by the planned development of the Warrington Western Link to provide a new link road between the A56 Chester Road in Higher Walton and the A57 Sankey Way in Great Sankey;
- A site with almost 60 hectares of space, which could accommodate 250,000 sqm of large-scale distribution centres.

With its 250,000 sqm of distribution centres, its location adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal and its potential connectivity to the West Coast Main Line an expanded Port Warrington would provide a site of sufficient size to offer the economies of scale required for a water- and rail-connectable distribution park. This is because the site would be large enough to provide the critical mass of traffic required to justify waterborne freight and intermodal rail freight services and therefore support the development of sustainable distribution which has strong policy support at a national and regional level. Without the development of water- and rail-connectable sites such as Port Warrington there is a risk that developers will bring forward road-only sites on smaller plots of land which will not lead to the sustainability benefits sought by policy makers.

Section 2: Policy context

Government policy as set out in the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Ports, the NPS for National Networks, the National Planning Policy Framework and The Logistics Growth Review (and its 2014 Update) provides strong policy support for the development of strategic logistics facilities which are located on sites connected to the railway network, within ports or both. On a similar basis, Transport for the North's Freight and Logistics Report recommended the development of rail and/or

water connected 'Multimodal Distribution Parks' (MDPs). Policy at a national level and work carried out at a pan-northern level for Transport for the North is therefore highly supportive of the development of a water- and rail-connected distribution park at Port Warrington.

Section 3: Review of existing supply & forecast demand for large-scale warehousing

The following table summarises the forecast demand for new-build large scale warehousing to 2035 across the Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and Warrington. The Warrington (2037 in the study) and Liverpool City Region (2033 in SHELMA) forecasts have been scaled accordingly to 2035 so as to align with the time horizon for the GMSF.

Forecast Demand for New-build Large Scale Warehousing to 2035 in Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and Warrington

	New-build Demand to 2035 (000s sqm)	Land Required (ha)**
Liverpool City Region*	1,105	276
Greater Manchester	2,020	505
Warrington	271	68
Total	3,711	849

* Do-minimum scenario

** Floor space assumed to occupy 40% of plot footprint. Represents total land take required and not the quantum of 'new' land that needs to be brought forward in Local Plans and so does not account for existing vacant plots/sites with B8 consents and other sites in the planning pipeline.

In total, some 3.7 million square metres of new large scale floor space can be expected to be built in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor up to 2035 to cater for growth and replacement. If all of this demand were to be located at new sites, this would imply a need to bring forward 849ha of land in Local Plans. Around 0.8 million sqm of the total expected demand to 2035 is to cater only for traffic growth. There is significant demand overall for new land for replacement build in addition to this as demand cannot be met by existing vacant plots or by recycling existing plots alone. Furthermore, Government policy promotes increasing the proportion of logistics activity which takes place at rail and/or water connected sites, both to increase the cost competitiveness of supply chains and for sustainability reasons. Given that, as demonstrated above, most existing sites are not rail or water-served and some existing employment sites may be recycled for housing, there is a need to bring forward new land for distribution parks that are located alongside railway lines, within ports and adjacent to berths on waterways.

Section 4: Review of alternative sites

Following a review of the pipeline of rail- and water-connected sites that are in the planning process, we estimate that up to 488ha of land at rail-served and/or water connected sites (including Port Warrington) could in theory be available for development up to 2035 in the Liverpool-Warrington-

Manchester corridor. However, this takes an optimistic view with regards to each of the schemes being able to overcome any deliverability limitations and, for those requiring it, gaining planning consent.

Furthermore, if sites which are likely to be available only in the long term and where there are no active plans for a rail connection are discounted, the total falls to only 209ha and the only sites that offer the potential for a tri-modal, both water- and rail-connected, distribution park in the short to medium term are Port Salford and Port Warrington with a total of land area of 178ha.

Even if all 488ha were built out to their full extent, there would still be a shortfall of around 374ha of land that could not be found from all the appropriate rail and water connected sites in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester are up to 2035 and so would have to be developed by recycling existing or developing new road-only sites that would not meet the policy need set out in section 2.

Only Port Warrington and Port Salford can be developed as both water- and rail-connected distribution parks in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor in the short to medium term, which means that Port Warrington should be regarded as being a high priority for Warrington in its Local Plan.

Section 5: Review of waterborne freight markets

Port Warrington has the potential to perform two main roles from the point of view of port traffics, namely:

- As an inland port for consignments of relatively high value containerised cargoes transported in short sea or coastal vessels between the North West and the rest of the Irish sea market;
- An inland extension of the Port of Liverpool, providing additional storage space for port-centric distribution in a location that can serve both the major conurbations in the North West from a single site, but linked by low cost and environmentally sustainable waterborne freight transport. This would be particularly appropriate for commodities such as containerised cargo, steel and forest products imports and is entirely consistent with Peel Ports' plans as set out in the Mersey Ports Master Plan.

As illustrated in the Development Framework, two berths are likely to be required to provide the operational flexibility to allow Port Warrington to meet its potential as a water-connected distribution park.

Port Warrington provides the opportunity to provide a low cost and environmentally sustainable means to distribute deep sea and short sea containers and products such as steel and forest products inland from Irish Sea and global markets directly to the inland origins and destinations of the cargo in North West England. Port Warrington would act as an inland extension to the Port of

Liverpool, with container storage for subsequent distribution by road to local shippers and receivers and, with its on-site distribution centres, become an origin and destination of cargo in its own right. The Port Warrington site adds to the overall capacity of port land for the North West of England for buffer cargo and takes the cargo closer to its inland origins and destinations using cost-effective and sustainable waterborne transport.

Section 6: Traffic forecasts for Port Warrington

We have prepared traffic forecasts for the Port Warrington scheme, on the basis that 250,000 sqm of modern warehouse floor space is developed alongside a quay on the Manchester Ship Canal and an intermodal terminal capable of handling 750m trailing-length trains.

The overall forecast for daily HGV movements is for 513 inbound HGVs and 513 outbound movements or an average of 21.4 HGV movements in each direction per hour over a 24 hour period.

Section 7: Rail network capability, capacity & operations

The restoration of the short rail link from the Manchester Ship Canal Exchange Sidings that lie south of Arpley Yard would allow Port Warrington to enjoy a direct connection to the West Coast Main Line, capitalising on those Exchange Sidings and the existing Arpley Yard further north to hold trains before and after loading. The intermodal terminal would be able to accommodate two sidings for 750 metre long intermodal trains. There are therefore no current constraints to the operation of the site.

The WCML is a W10 gauge cleared route (allowing the operation of economic intermodal rail freight services using standard wagons and carrying the largest deep sea containers), with the capability to accommodate 750 metre long intermodal rail freight services (the European standard for intermodal rail freight services and the longest trains that can be operated on the GB network). Port Warrington will therefore be able to handle the largest container units on standard platform wagons and at the most competitive length available on the GB network.

We have undertaken a timetable pathing exercise which shows that the Port Warrington site could, based on the current Working Timetable, be served by one freight path per hour per direction, which means it is a commercially attractive proposition from the point of view of the rail freight industry. Our analysis also shows that plans by the public sector for HS2 and NPR will reinforce this position north of Crewe.

Section 8: Environmental benefits

Port Warrington would provide economic benefits due to its capability to receive and despatch unitised freight by rail and waterborne transport, rather than being a road-only facility.

Taking into account intermodal rail services that could be expected to handle 20% of cargo bound for on-site distribution centres, traffic transported on a waterborne freight service along the Manchester Ship Canal and three daily intermodal rail freight services serving off-site distribution activity, Port Warrington would be able to lead to a 34.8 million reduction in annual HGV kilometres which would equate to reduction in carbon emissions from these HGVs of about 30,900 tonnes per annum.

Section 9: Conclusion

The extension of the Port Warrington site offers the opportunity to develop a rail and water-connected distribution park that is well-located to serve the whole of the North West England market and which is fully in line with Government and pan-Northern policy.

There is a forecast need in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor for an estimated 849 hectares of land to cater for 3.7 million sqm of new build warehouses up to 2035.

A review of the pipeline of rail- and water-connected sites that are in the planning process shows that up to 488ha of land at rail-served and/or water connected sites (including Port Warrington) can be expected to be developed up to 2035 in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor. This implies that there would still be a shortfall of around 375ha of land that cannot be found from the appropriate rail and water connected sites in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester up to 2035, even when Port Warrington is included in the assessment.

Only Port Warrington and Port Salford can be developed as both water- and rail-connected distribution parks in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor in the short to medium term, which means that Port Warrington should be regarded as being a high priority for Warrington in its Local Plan.

The restoration of the short rail link from the Manchester Ship Canal Exchange Sidings that lie south of Arpley Yard allows Port Warrington to enjoy a direct connection to the West Coast Main Line and there are no current operational constraints associated with the site. The Port Warrington site could be served by one freight path per hour per direction, which means it is a commercially attractive proposition for the rail freight industry.

1 INTRODUCTION

MDS Transmodal was commissioned by Peel Investments (North) Ltd and Peel Ports to examine the freight transport case for the expansion of Port Warrington, taking into account maritime traffic, road and rail freight traffic and associated storage requirements. The report also considers rail network capacity and rail and marine operational issues related to the overall feasibility of the Port Warrington site for freight-related activity.

The current Port Warrington site has long operated as a road-based distribution facility; two old warehouse units, probably nearing the end of their economic life, occupy the site and provide around 30,000 square metres of floor space. However, an expanded site has the potential to be a tri-modal logistics site, with an existing berth on the northern side of the Manchester Ship Canal, its close proximity to the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and the planned development of the Warrington Western Link, which is a local authority-led scheme to provide a new link road between the A56 Chester Road in Higher Walton and the A57 Sankey Way in Great Sankey. While there is already road access to the Port Warrington site from the south, the planned Warrington Western Link would provide a higher quality and more appropriate future link for HGVs from the Port Warrington site to the A56/M56 to the south and the A57/M62 to the North West, as well as provide access for residential and employment land close to the centre of Warrington.

The marine infrastructure includes the existing Acton Grange berth for coasters and small container ships, plus the potential for the development of a second berth to the west of the existing berth. A turning basin is proposed on the southern side of the canal so that vessels can turn and berth at Port Warrington ready to return towards Ellesmere Port and the River Mersey; this will avoid disruption to road traffic in Warrington as vessels would otherwise have to pass under the A5056 swing bridge to turn upstream before passing back through to berth at Port Warrington. A call at the berth could also be a way-call en-route to another berth on the Ship Canal in Greater Manchester.

The table below provides a high level overview of the existing site at Port Warrington.

Port Warrington Site



Description	An existing warehousing development plus significant expansion land to the north and west.
Rail and/or water connected	Currently not rail-served, but the site used to be connected directly to the West Coast Main Line (WCML) via the Manchester Ship Canal Exchange sidings to the south of Arpley Yard and the former track bed is still in place and undeveloped. Reconnecting the site to the WCML should therefore be relatively straight forward. The WCML offers W10 loading gauge north and south. The site is adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal with an existing berth.
Highway connections	Access is to the south of the site via Moore Lan across the canal and through Moore to the A56 and then the M56 at Junction 11. All traffic to and from the site is currently by road.
Floor space current	c.30,000 sqm currently developed across two units.

As explained in the Development Framework, the proposals identify two plots of land that would be available for a total of 250,000 square metres (sqm) for potential logistics development, split as follows:

- 185,000 sqm on land immediately to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal at Acton Grange;
- 65,000 sqm on the proposed Arpley Business Hub site, which could also be developed for port-centric distribution or other logistics purposes.

With its 250,000 sqm of distribution centres, its location adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal and its potential connectivity to the West Coast Main Line an expanded Port Warrington would provide a site of sufficient size to offer the economies of scale required for a water- and rail-connectable

distribution park. This is because the site would be large enough to provide the critical mass of traffic required to justify waterborne freight and intermodal rail freight services and therefore support the development of sustainable distribution which has strong policy support at a national and regional level. Without the development of water- and rail-connectable sites such as Port Warrington there is a risk that developers will bring forward road-only sites on smaller plots of land which will not lead to the sustainability benefits sought by policy makers.

2 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This section of the report describes the current strategic policy context with respect to the development of water- and rail-connected distribution parks and shows how policy at a national level and work carried out at a pan-Northern level provides strong support for the development of sites such as an expanded Port Warrington. Five key documents are relevant to the Port Warrington scheme, namely:

- National Policy Statement (NPS) for Ports;
- NPS for National Networks;
- National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Logistics Growth Review and its 2014 Update; and
- Transport for the North Freight and Logistics Report.

The overarching case for water- and rail-connected sites, as outlined in each document, are that they promote economic growth and generate more cost competitive supply chains through the use of modes of transport that are more cost-effective over longer distances, whilst at the same time allowing goods to be handled and moved in a more sustainable manner when compared with road-only sites. The relevant parts of each document are summarised below.

2.2 National Policy Statement (NPS) for Ports

The *NPS for National Networks* was published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in January 2012. It sets out the Government's current policies concerning the development of new nationally significant port schemes, alongside providing a framework that will guide decisions on proposals for such schemes. The NPS details the Government's conclusions on the need for new port infrastructure such as an expanded facility at Port Warrington, considering the current place of ports in the national economy, the available evidence on future demand and the options for meeting future needs.

The NPS begins by setting out the importance of the ports sector to the UK economy. It notes that around 95% of international trade (by volume) passes through ports. It highlights the pivotal role played by the ports sector in handling energy supplies, alongside wider economic benefits generated.

In terms of Government policy for the ports sector, the NPS states that the Government encourages sustainable port development to cater for long-term forecast growth in volumes of imports and exports by sea with a competitive and efficient port industry capable of meeting the needs of

importers and exporters cost effectively and in a timely manner. Judgments about when and where new developments might be located should be made on the basis of commercial factors by the port industry or port developers operating within a free market environment (Para 3.3.1).

The NPS states that the Government wishes to see port development wherever possible:

- Being an engine for economic growth;
- Supporting sustainable transport by offering more efficient transport links with lower external costs; and
- Supporting sustainable development by providing additional capacity for the development of renewable energy (Para 3.3.5).

In terms of the Government's assessment of the need for new port infrastructure, the NPS states that total need for port infrastructure depends not only on overall demand for port capacity but also on the need to retain the flexibility that ensures that port capacity is located where it is required, including in response to any changes in inland distribution networks and ship call patterns that may occur, and on the need to ensure effective competition and resilience in port operations (Para 3.4.1). National port demand forecasts to 2030 are set out in the NPS and are discussed in more detail below in section 5. The purpose of the national forecasts is to help set the context of overall national capacity need, alongside competition and resilience considerations.

The NPS clearly states that capacity must be in the right place if it is to effectively and efficiently serve the needs of import and export markets. It notes that capacity needs to be provided at a wide range of facilities and locations, to provide the flexibility to match the changing demands of the market (para 3.4.11).

The NPS states that UK ports compete with each other. The Government welcomes and encourages such competition, as it drives efficiency and lowers costs for industry and consumers, so contributing to the competitiveness of the UK economy. Effective competition requires sufficient spare capacity to ensure real choices for port users. It also requires ports to operate at efficient levels, which is not the same as operating at full physical capacity. Noting that demand fluctuates seasonally and weekly, some latitude in physical capacity is needed to accommodate such fluctuations. Total port capacity in any sector will therefore need to exceed forecast overall demand if the ports sector is to remain competitive. The Government believes the port industry and port developers are best placed to assess their ability to obtain new business and the level of any new capacity that will be commercially viable, subject to developers satisfying decision-makers that the likely impacts of any proposed development have been assessed and addressed (Para 3.4.13).

The NPS states that spare capacity also helps to assure the resilience of the national infrastructure. Port capacity is needed at a variety of locations and covering a range of cargo and handling facilities, to enable the sector to meet short-term peaks in demand, the impact of adverse weather

conditions, accidents, deliberate disruptive acts and other operational difficulties, without causing economic disruption through impediments to the flow of imports and exports. Given the large number of factors involved, the Government believes that resilience is provided most effectively as a by-product of a competitive ports sector (Para 3.4.15).

In conclusion, Paragraph 3.4.16 of the NPS states that the Government believes there is a compelling need for substantial additional port capacity over the next 20–30 years, to be met by a combination of development already consented and development for which applications have yet to be received. Excluding the possibility of providing additional capacity for the movement of goods and commodities through new port development would be to accept limits on economic growth and on the price, choice and availability of goods imported into the UK and available to consumers. It would also limit the local and regional economic benefits that new developments might bring. Such an outcome would be strongly against the public interest.

In that respect, the NPS recognises that developers will need to bring forward proposals (alongside committed developments) to meet anticipated long-term growth and introduce further competition, flexibility and resilience in the market.

The NPS recognises the direct and indirect economic benefits of port development. In particular, bringing together groups of related businesses within and around ports can create a cluster effect, which supports economic growth by encouraging innovation and the creation and development of new business opportunities.

Given the level and urgency of need of infrastructure, the decision maker should start with the presumption in favour of granting consent to applications for ports development. The NPS can be a material consideration in non-NSIP port development.

There is therefore strong policy support at a national level for the further development of Port Warrington as an inland extension of the Port of Liverpool, providing a port-centric/water-connected distribution park and facilities for the handling and storage of bulk and semi-bulk cargoes for local industry. It will therefore provide the opportunity for importers and exporters to bring their cargoes further inland using sustainable waterborne freight transport, while at the same time delivering the market need for additional port capacity as identified in the NPS. This is explained in more detail in section 5 of this report. It also provides further market choice for port users and additional resilience in the ports sector.

2.3 NPS for National Networks

The *NPS for National Networks* was published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2014. It includes the Government's current policies concerning the development of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges (SRFIs) and it also provides planning guidance for the promoters of such

projects. While Port Warrington does not meet the definition of a SRFI (it is less than 60ha) and is being promoted as multi-modal inland port with the ability to be rail connected, the NPS is considered to be the principal policy document concerning the development of rail-served warehousing and logistics facilities (Para 1.4 states that the NPS is material for schemes considered under the Town and Country Planning Act).

Given the above and apart from its size, in all other respects the expanded Port Warrington facility would still meet the requirements of an SRFI as set out in the NPS (para. 4.84-4.88) as it would:

- Be well-located to serve both the major urban centres in the North West (Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region) and is also close to the major regional supply chain routes of the M6 and the M62 for road and the West Coast Main Line for rail.
- Have good road access via the planned Warrington Western Link to the A56/M56 to the south and the A57/M62 to the North West. This would allow the site to facilitate the use of rail to compete effectively with, and work alongside, road freight to achieve a modal shift to rail.
- Have a connection to a rail route with a W10 loading gauge, which is more generous than the W8 minimum gauge that is included in the NPS.
- Be a large-scale commercial operation and so is planned to operate 24/7.
- Be able to have an operational connection to the West Coast Main Line and an intermodal rail freight terminal to allow the handling of traffic between rail and road and for storage in on-site warehouses.
- Be able to handle at least six trains a day, higher than the minimum number of four included in the NPS.
- Be able to handle 775m trains both in the reception sidings at the entrance to the site and within the intermodal.

Paragraph 2.40 states that modal shift from road to rail can help reduce transport's emissions of greenhouse gases as well as providing wider transport and economic benefits. For these reasons, the Government seeks to accommodate an increase in rail freight where practical and affordable by providing extra capacity. Port Warrington would be able to contribute to this reduction in transport emissions of greenhouse gases by facilitating a shift of traffic from road to rail for long trunk-hauls.

The document notes that for many freight movements, rail is unable to offer a full end-to-end journey. SRFIs – and, more generally, rail-connected distribution parks such as Port Warrington - therefore enable goods to be transferred between modes, allowing rail to be used to best effect to undertake the long trunk-haul, with road haulage subsequently undertaking the final delivery (Paragraph 2.43). The NPS states that the aim of SRFIs is to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by maximising rail trunk haul and minimising some elements of the secondary distribution leg by road through co-location of freight and distribution activities. Port Warrington would

therefore be a key element in reducing the cost of moving freight by rail to and from the North West of England and so would be important in facilitating modal shift (Paragraph 2.44).

Logistics is currently a predominantly road based industry. However, the NPS states that the users and buyers of warehousing and distribution services are increasingly looking to integrate rail into their transport operations. This will require the logistics industry to develop new facilities that need to be located alongside the major rail routes, close to major trunk roads as well as near the conurbations that consume the goods (Paragraph 2.45). Port Warrington would meet this commercial need in the North West of England.

There are four drivers of need for SRFIs and other rail-connected distribution parks such as Port Warrington that are identified in the NPS (Paragraphs 2.46 to 2.52).

1. Changing needs of the logistics sector. The document states that a network of SRFIs is a key element in aiding the transfer of freight from road to rail, supporting sustainable distribution, rail freight growth and meeting the changing needs of industry, especially from the ports and retail sectors. It notes that existing rail facilities offer no opportunity to expand, they lack modern warehousing facilities and they are not conveniently located for the modern logistics and supply chain industry. Port Warrington would be able to offer modern rail freight facilities, with a new rail connection, a modern intermodal rail freight terminal and on-site warehouses for the storage of goods that arrive and depart by rail.

2. Rail Freight Growth. The NPS notes that the industry, working with Network Rail, has produced rail freight forecasts which were produced for Network Rail's Freight Market Study in 2013; the NPS considers these forecasts and the method used to produce them robust and the Government has accepted them for planning purposes (Paragraph 2.49). The document states that the forecasts confirm the need for an expanded network of rail freight interchanges across the regions to accommodate the long-term growth in rail freight. Port Warrington would be able to meet this commercial need for intermodal rail freight services in the North West – serving both the Greater Manchester and Liverpool areas from a single site.

3. Environmental. The document notes that rail transport has a less negative impact on society than road transport and so has a crucial role to play in delivering reductions in pollution and congestion. Port Warrington would be able to accommodate at least six trains a day, thereby removing HGVs from the road network for long hauls and providing environmental benefits.

4. Jobs and Growth. The NPS states that rail-connected distribution parks such as Port Warrington can provide considerable benefits for the local economy. This is because many of the on-site functions of major distribution operations are relatively labour-intensive and this can create many new job opportunities and contribute to the enhancement of people's skills and use of technology, with wider longer term benefits to the economy.

The Government's vision is for a sustainable transport system that is an engine for economic growth. The NPS consequently states that the Government believes it is important to facilitate the development of the intermodal rail freight industry. The transfer of freight from road to rail has an important part to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change (Paragraph 2.53). As a rail-connected distribution park Port Warrington would be able to contribute to the growth of the intermodal rail freight industry and promote a shift from road to rail by providing origins and destinations for freight movements that are rail-connected. To facilitate this modal transfer, the NPS concludes that a network of rail freight interchanges is needed across the regions, to serve regional, sub-regional and cross-regional markets and this network of SRFIs should in turn provide improved trading links with our European partners and improved international connectivity and enhanced port growth (Paragraph 2.54).

The NPS concludes that a reliance on existing rail freight interchanges and on road-only based logistics is neither viable nor desirable (Paragraph 2.55 and Table 4). The Government concluded that there is a compelling need for an expanded network of interchanges. It is important that interchanges are located near the business markets they will serve – major urban centres, or groups of centres – and are linked to key supply chain routes. Given the locational requirements and the need for effective connections for both rail and road, the number of locations suitable as SRFIs will be limited, which will restrict the scope for developers to identify viable alternative sites (Paragraph 2.56). While Port Warrington would not be a SRFI because of its scale, it would more than meet all the other criteria. It would, in particular, be able to accommodate at least six trains a day (compared to a minimum of four trains) and so would more than meet the requirement to be able to generate the critical mass of traffic required to secure a switch of traffic from long distance road haulage to rail.

2.4 National Planning Policy Framework

National planning policy for England is set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, which was originally published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in March 2012 and then revised and reissued in July 2018. A number of key sections of the reissued NPPF are relevant schemes to water- and rail-connected distribution parks such as Port Warrington, and these are summarised below.

Sustainable transport is addressed in Section 9 of the NPPF and overall it provides for transport policies that facilitate sustainable development but also contribute towards wider sustainability objectives (Para 104). In summary the NPPF requires that planning policies should

- Identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development (para. 104c);

- Provide for any large scale transport facilities that need to be located in the area, and the infrastructure and wider development required to support their operation, expansion and contribution to the wider economy (para 104e). Policies for large scale facilities, including rail freight interchanges should, where necessary, be developed through collaboration between strategic policy-making authorities and other relevant bodies.

The development of an expanded Port Warrington water- and rail-connected distribution park would be a large-scale development that would widen transport choice for freight through its connections to the waterborne and rail networks and therefore planning policies in Warrington should make provision for its development and allow it make a contribution to the wider economy of the area.

There is a specific reference in the NPPF that planning policies and decisions should recognise the importance of providing adequate overnight lorry parking facilities, taking into account any local shortages, to reduce the risk of parking in locations that lack proper facilities or could cause a nuisance. Proposals for new or expanded distribution centres should make provision for sufficient lorry parking to cater for their anticipated use (para. 107). For the Port Warrington site, such a parking requirement would apply to the 21.4 hourly average HGVs (see section 6 of this report for demand forecasts for the distribution park) that would arrive at the site each hour. Allowing for 20 parking spaces - to make generous allowance for each HGV waiting for at least 30 minutes before its allocated slot - would require 0.24 hectares of space¹ within the site which would represent only 0.4% of the whole expanded site.

The NPPF states that In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been - taken up, given the type of development and its location (para. 108a). The Port Warrington site could provide rail and waterborne freight connectivity access and would therefore be able to promote sustainable transport modes for freight use.

2.5 The Logistics Growth Review

The Logistics Growth Review was published by the DfT in November 2011 as part of the Government's wider Growth Review strategy. Its main aim was to identify the barriers to economic growth within the logistics industry and present a series of measures to address these identified barriers.

The document states five core areas in which the Government can play a significant part in increasing the productivity of the logistics sector. One area directly relevant to Port Warrington is '*Giving industry greater confidence to invest*', by, in particular, removing planning barriers to

¹ 20 spaces x 120m² per space

sustainable logistics development with a focus on SRFIs and promoting the use of private capital and facilitating access to capital for commercial investment. The document notes that road and rail transport infrastructure plays a vital role and that according to the rail freight industry's own forecasts (see the National Networks NPS above) growth can be expected in rail freight activity. It notes that this expansion will be difficult to deliver unless industry is able to deliver modern SRFIs, providing effective integration between road and rail networks (Paras 5 and 6). As the expanded Port Warrington is proposed as a water- and rail-connected distribution park, it will directly address this market need.

The Logistics Growth Review – 2014 Update was published in June 2014, reporting on progress since the Logistics Growth Review itself. In particular, it noted that the Government is in the process of developing a NPS which will give Parliamentary endorsement to the Government's policy on SRFIs. As set out above, this was subsequently published in December 2014 as the National Networks NPS.

2.6 Transport for the North Freight and Logistics Report

Transport for the North published *its Freight and Logistics Report* in autumn of 2016. The report considered opportunities to reduce the cost of freight transport for users (through lower freight transport costs) and non-users (for example, by reducing the environmental impacts of freight and logistics movements), create new facilities, expand market share in the logistics sector and attract inward private sector investment to the Northern Powerhouse. The report made a series of recommendations for public sector interventions that would encourage the private sector to invest in and operate a thriving freight and logistics industry in the North that will, in turn, support a vibrant and well-connected Northern economy.

The recommendations included:

- The development of rail and/or water connected Multimodal Distribution Parks (MDPs) at an average rate of 50ha per year, to be located at the edge of urban centres, thus minimising the cost of onward distribution by road, as well as offering sustainability enhancements. ; and
- Ensuring that MDPs can be brought forward in suitable locations through the planning system, with the relevant funding required to achieve rail and water connections.

MDPs are essentially logistics sites that are connected to the rail and/or waterborne freight network (either at a port or on an inland waterway) and therefore allow on-site warehouses to be used for the storage of goods that are distributed to and from the sites by rail and/or waterborne transport.

Port Warrington, with its location adjacent to the Manchester Ship Canal and with the potential for a high quality rail connection to the West Coast Main Line, is therefore a prime example of an MDP. The report was therefore recommending that sites such as Port Warrington should be brought

forward through the planning system in the North West and that the connection to the rail network could be subject to public sector funding.

3 REVIEW OF EXISTING SUPPLY & FORECAST DEMAND FOR LARGE-SCALE WAREHOUSING IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND

3.1 Introduction

An expanded Port Warrington would be a water- and rail-connected distribution park and so will have the ability to accommodate large-scale warehouses – or distribution centres – which will be used to store, sort and add value to relatively high value cargoes such as consumer goods. Around half of all freight moving in Great Britain passes through these large warehouses (over 8,000 sqm in size) and so these warehouses are the key hubs for this type of freight and for the national and regional distribution networks.

National policy as set out in the National Networks NPS and the NPPF Policy highlights that the higher the proportion of warehousing that is located on rail or water-connected sites the lower will be the proportion of goods moved on their trunk (long distance) legs by road, generating savings for the shippers and receivers of the freight and environmental benefits for society. This is because the cost of the road feeder leg from an off-site rail terminal or port to a warehouse is avoided. However, such rail or water-connected logistics sites such as Port Warrington need to be sufficiently large to capture the available economies of scale to support rail and waterborne freight services and therefore present greater challenges in terms of land assembly and planning than smaller-scale road-only schemes.

The large-scale warehouses (over 8,000 sqm) that would be located at Port Warrington would be a mixture of National Distribution Centres (NDCs) and Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs) and the precise mix would be determined by the requirements of specific occupiers.

National Distribution Centres (NDCs) act as inventory holding points for imported and nationally sourced goods, before re-distribution to subsequent stages in the supply chain. Average dwell time varies considerably but may average 4–6 weeks. They are termed 'national' because they serve the whole of Great Britain (and sometimes Ireland) from the one site and are normally associated with manufacturers, with suppliers to retailers (such as importers of electrical goods, beers/wines/spirits or clothing) and major retailers. NDCs have traditionally been located in the Midlands, in particular, but also in the North West of England and the Yorkshire and Humber regions in order to have a location in Great Britain to serve domestic suppliers, ports and Regional Distribution Centres. NDCs located at Port Warrington would be well-located to serve the whole of Great Britain and also Ireland from a single location, using a combination of waterborne, rail and road freight services.

Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs) receive goods from NDCs or direct from suppliers, before re-distributing the goods to retail outlets and, increasingly, direct to consumers' homes. They have a regional hinterland and are normally associated with retailers which receive inbound goods from

suppliers and their own NDCs before consolidation into loads for individual retail outlets throughout the region. Dwell times are much shorter than for NDCs; perishable and time sensitive goods will generally be redistributed within 24 hours. RDCs located at Port Warrington would be well-located to serve the whole of North West of England from a single location, given that the site is located between both the Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region and would have good strategic road access on the north-south axis via the M6 and on the east-west axis via the M56 and the M62. This chapter describes the existing supply of large-scale warehousing in the North West and the extent to which this capacity is rail or water-connected. In this context, existing supply refers to fully built-out warehouse units which physically exist 'on the ground', and will either be occupied by a shipper/distributor or standing empty but available for immediate occupation. It then summarises the forecasts of need for distribution capacity along the Mersey corridor between the Liverpool City Region, Warrington and Greater Manchester and considers the extent to which this demand can be met by existing rail and water-connected sites.

3.2 Existing Warehouse Capacity

The North West within the national context

This section provides an analysis of the quantum and location of existing large scale warehouses in the North West of England, alongside national comparisons. The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) 'records the amount of floor space by function within commercial properties across England and Wales for business rates purposes in its non-domestic Rating List. This is a public domain source and MDS Transmodal has developed the means to filter the database to establish the large-scale warehousing stock on a consistent basis for England and Wales in 2017. Buildings that meet the following criteria have been extracted from the VOA database:

- Floor space designated as 'warehouse' or similar (e.g. cold store, distribution depot) within a building whose primary classification is 'Warehouse and Premises' i.e. a building purposely built to receive, store and distribute cargo, and therefore not including floor space designated as warehousing but forming part of a commercial property with a different primary function e.g. retail outlet, factory; and
- The total area (Gross Internal Area) of the warehousing components in each building that is more than 8,000 sqm i.e. ancillary functions have therefore been excluded.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the total quantum of floor space in units greater than 8,000 sqm by English region and Wales.

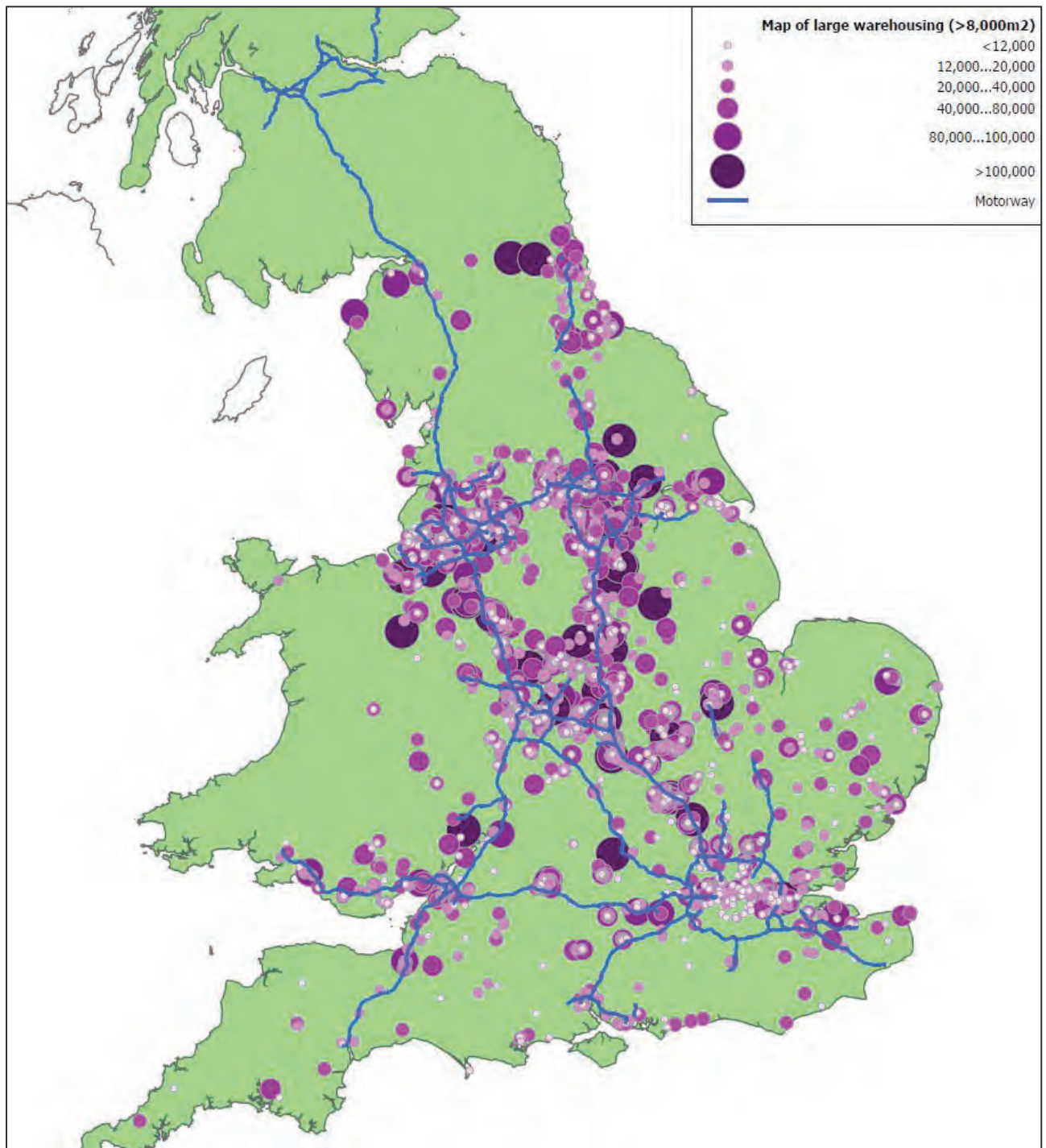
Table 1: Large Scale Warehouse Capacity by Region in 2017 (Units >8,000sqm)

	Floor Space (000s sqm)	Market Share	Number Units	Market Share	Mean sqm/unit
North West	7,181	17%	407	18%	17,645
Yorkshire/Humber	5,917	14%	313	14%	18,906
North East	1,463	4%	89	4%	16,443
East Midlands	7,712	19%	363	16%	21,245
West Midlands	5,913	14%	351	15%	16,846
East of England	3,969	10%	229	10%	17,332
South East	3,371	8%	194	8%	17,378
London	1,792	4%	134	6%	13,375
South West	2,308	6%	141	6%	16,369
Wales	1,446	4%	84	4%	17,209
Total England and Wales	41,073		2,305		17,819

Source: VOA Rating List 2017

The data in the Table 1 above is also presented in a map below showing, for England and Wales, the concentrations of large scale warehousing.

Map 1: Location of Large Scale Warehousing in England and Wales in 2017 (Units >8,000sqm)



Source: MDS Transmodal, based on VOA data

The North West region currently accommodates around 7.2 million sqm of large scale warehouse floor space. Nationally, there are some 41.1 million sqm of warehouse floor space of this size across 2,305 buildings; mean unit size is therefore around 17,800 sqm for those warehouses over 8,000 sqm. The East Midlands region has the largest concentration of warehouse floor space in terms of

area (7.7 million sqm), albeit the North West of England has the highest number of actual buildings (407). As well as the East Midlands, the North West, Yorkshire/Humber and the West Midlands also have large concentrations of warehouse centre floor space (ranked 2nd, 3rd and 4th respectively in terms of total floor space), reflecting these regions role in national as well as regional distribution.

The East Midlands region has attracted a quantum of warehouse floor space which is significantly more than is required to handle the volume of cargo distributed into that region's economy; the region accounts for 9% of the population of England and Wales, though it accommodates 19% of the warehouse capacity by area. Much of the East Midland's warehouse capacity is therefore serving the national market in addition to regional consumers. The same conclusion can be drawn for the North West, which has 13% of the population of England and Wales but 17% of the large-scale warehousing capacity and this suggests there is some national distribution activity in addition to capacity serving the end-user market in the North West. For example, Matalan operates an NDC in Knowsley, and Adidas and Kellogg's operate NDCs in Trafford Park to serve northern and national markets. Port Warrington would therefore be serving an established market for logistics sites in the North West and would be able to accommodate both RDCs serving the large regional population centres in Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region and NDCs serving the whole of Great Britain and even Ireland.

Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the North West region's capacity by local authority area.

Table 2: North West England Large Scale Warehouse Capacity 2017 (Units >8,000sqm)

	Floor Space (000s sqm)	Number Units
<i>Greater Manchester, of which</i>	2,696	154
Bolton	295	17
Bury	114	8
Rochdale	497	26
Oldham	572	29
Manchester	105	8
Tameside	89	7
Stockport	93	8
Trafford	399	23
Salford	201	13
Wigan	332	15
<i>Liverpool City Region, of which</i>	1,598	88
Sefton	135	11
Knowsley	350	17
St Helens	363	17
Liverpool	312	15
Wirral	146	13
Halton	292	15
<i>Cheshire, of which</i>	1,262	64
Cheshire West & Chester	423	19
Cheshire East	478	22
Warrington	361	23
Lancashire	1,338	84
Cumbria	287	17
North West Total	7,181	407

Source: VOA rating List 2017

The North West region accommodates the second largest quantum of large scale warehouse floor space in England and Wales in terms of area at 7.2 million sqm). Out of that total, around 5.0% is located within Warrington.

Warrington has 2.9% of the North West's population (202,000 out of a total of 7,052,000 based on the 2011 Census), but has 5.0% of the region's large-scale warehousing. This suggests that the

market regards Warrington as a competitive location for distribution activity, given its position between the region's two major population centres.

Rail and water-connected distribution space in the North West

Table 3 below summarises the position with respect to rail-served large scale warehousing in the North West of England. In this case, rail-served warehousing is defined as either being directly rail-connected (by means of a rail siding alongside) or being located in close proximity to an intermodal terminal.

Table 3: Large warehousing in North West England on rail-served sites (Units >8,000sqm)

	Floor Space (000s sqm)
Trafford Park	383
3MG	85
Knowsley	8
Port of Liverpool (Seaforth)	75
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>551</i>
North West Total	7,162
% Rail-served	8%

Source: MDS Transmodal, based VOA

Trafford Park was developed from the early 20th Century onwards as a planned industrial estate, served by rail and the Manchester Ship Canal. The Freightliner intermodal terminal was built in the 1960s, while more recently the Channel Tunnel Euroterminal opened in 1993. Around 383,000 sqm of large scale floor space is now located on the Trafford Park estate (in close proximity to both terminals). The 3MG site at Widnes has been developed over the past 15 years as a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) and currently 85,000sqm of floor space has been built around the Stobart operated intermodal terminal. A further 75,000 sqm of large scale floor space is located within the Seaforth port estate. A small rail-served warehouse (handling municipal waste) is located on the Knowsley Industrial Estate.

In a similar manner, Table 4 below summarises the position with respect to water-connected large scale warehousing in the North West of England. In this case, water-connected is defined as either being directly served from a quay or being located within a port estate. Some 145,000sqm of water-served floor space is identified, mostly within the Port of Liverpool but also at the existing Port Warrington site and in total accounts for around 2% of the regional capacity.

Table 4: Water-Connected Large Scale Warehousing North West England (Units >8,000sqm)

	Floor Space (000s sqm)
Port of Liverpool, of which	115
<i>Seaforth (Sefton and Liverpool)</i>	75
<i>Birkenhead (Wirral)</i>	40
Port Warrington	30
Total	145
North West Total	7,162
% Water-connected	2%

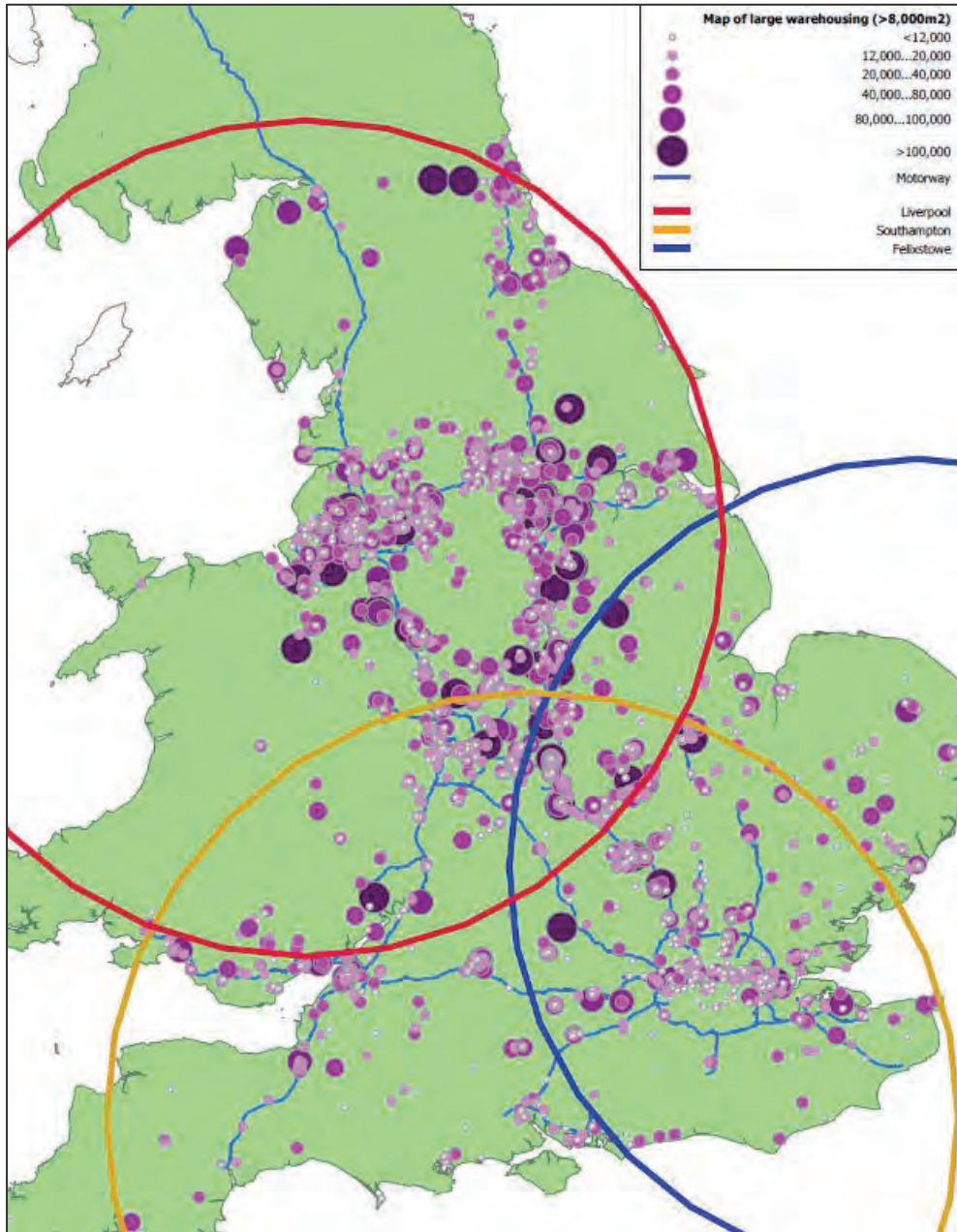
Source: VOA

NB: *Seaforth water connected warehousing also rail-served (see Table 3 above)*

The location of large scale floor space within the North West of England partly reflects where local planning authorities have in the past released land for B8 developments. With only 8% rail-served and 2% water-connected (and allowing for Seaforth being both rail and water-connected), some 92% of the region's existing warehouse capacity has been developed on road-only connected B8 sites. Given the strong policy support for the development of sustainable distribution sites set out in section 2 above, the relatively low proportion of large-scale warehousing that is rail-linked or water-connected in the North West suggests in itself that the expansion of Port Warrington is needed to improve the modal share for rail and waterborne freight in the region.

As well as being able to serve a regional distribution hinterland, Port Warrington is also well-located for national distribution to and from the deep sea container port of Liverpool – particularly as it can act as an inland extension to the Port of Liverpool via shipping and barge services via the Mersey and along the Manchester Ship Canal. Container traffic via deep sea ports is important for national distribution because an increasing proportion of goods are imported from deep sea locations such as China. Map 2 below re-produces Map 1, but with three circles to indicate a 200km hinterland from the Ports of Liverpool, Felixstowe and Southampton (Red, Blue and Yellow respectively).

Map 2: Location of Large Scale Warehousing (>8,000sqm) within 200km of Liverpool, Felixstowe and Southampton



Source: MDS Transmodal, based on VOA rating List 2017

The data in the map is also shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Large Scale Warehousing (>8,000sqm) within 200km of the ports of Liverpool, Felixstowe and Southampton

Port	Floor Space within 200km (000s sqm)	Number of Warehouse Units within 200km
Liverpool	40,085	1,532
Felixstowe	18,578	769
Southampton	26,369	1,148

Source: VOA rating List 2017

Two key conclusions can be drawn from this analysis. Firstly, there is a significantly greater concentration of large scale warehousing in the immediate hinterland of the Mersey estuary (i.e. in the North West) when compared with the immediate hinterlands of the two largest British deep sea container ports of Felixstowe and Southampton. Secondly, it shows there is a significantly greater quantum of large scale floor space within 200km of Liverpool, including such warehouses that are located in the other main regions associated with large scale warehousing (the East and West Midlands and Yorkshire/Humber). Relating this back to the policy requirements of the NPS and NPPF, this analysis shows that the Mersey estuary is located closer to the key business markets it serves when compared with both Felixstowe and Southampton. Port Warrington would therefore be well-located within the immediate hinterland of the Port of Liverpool and with a direct waterborne freight connection to the port via the Manchester Ship Canal.

3.3 Future Demand for Warehousing

Introduction

Having considered existing capacity, we have undertaken an assessment of future need for new-build large scale warehousing in the Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and Warrington. This is derived from future B8 land requirements as forecast in recent evidence base documents which are informing emerging development plans across the Liverpool and Greater Manchester City Regions and Warrington.

New-build warehouses undertake two principal functions, namely:

- To replace existing capacity which has become either physically or functionally obsolete; and
- To provide additional floor space to accommodate long-term growth in traffic.

The useful physical life of a modern warehouse building is around 30 years, after which it can either be demolished (and the plot used to accommodate a new building) or substantially re-furbished ahead of a new occupier. Older buildings can also become functionally obsolete. This can include units ending up in a sub-optimal location as market conditions change over time and, given their

location, coming under pressure to be developed for alternative uses such as housing. More recently, as older units often cannot handle e-commerce goods efficiently under the same roof as goods destined for retail outlets (as the former involves picking and packing at the individual consignment rather than at pallet/roll-cage level), this has necessitated new-build units. Overtime, traffic volumes passing through a warehouse can increase to the point where the facility reaches its capacity. This can be due to general economic growth, supply chain reorganisations following mergers/acquisitions and changes in tastes and fashions. Additional floor space is therefore required to handle growing traffic volumes.

Liverpool City Region and West Lancashire

The *Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA)* was published for consultation in 2017. As the name suggests, it covered future land requirements for housing and employment in the Liverpool City Region and West Lancashire district. It was produced by GL Hearn, with MDS Transmodal providing specialist inputs covering B8 land requirements going forward.

Forecasts of new-build demand and the consequent land requirements up to 2033 and 2043 were produced as follows:

- Quantifying the existing large scale warehouse capacity in the Liverpool City Region and West Lancashire, and subsequently estimating the proportion of this that is likely to require replacement (due to physical or functional obsolescence) up to 2033 and 2043;
- Using the GB Freight Model to estimate traffic growth (for warehouse commodities) up to 2033 and 2043 in the area, and subsequently equating this as a need for additional floor space (using standard factors which relate cargo volumes, throughputs and floor space need); and
- Combining the two elements to estimate the new-build demand (in square metres) and the consequent future B8 land requirements on the basis that warehouse floor space occupies around 40% of a plot footprint.

The outputs from this process, which were subsequently included in the SHELMA report, are outlined in Table 6 below. The growth element includes two scenarios - a 'do-minimum' approach and a second scenario which reflected the recommended strategy contained in TfN's *Freight and Logistics Report* (published in September 2016) for the north of England

Table 6: SHELMA Large Scale New-build Forecasts and Associated Land Requirements

Scenario		2014	2033	2043
Do Minimum	Existing floor space	1,537		
	Replacement build		768	1,229
	Growth Build		232	354
	Total		1,000	1,584
	Land Required (ha)		250	396
TfN Strategy				
	Existing floor space	1,537		
	Replacement build		768	1,229
	Growth Build		517	820
	Total		1,285	2,049
	Land Required (ha)		321	512

Source: SHELMA 2017, derived from MDS Transmodal modelling

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF - Draft)

The first draft of the GMSF was published in October 2016 and provides a joint plan for all the local authorities in Greater Manchester to provide the land for jobs and new homes across the city region. Policy GM2 in the draft GMSF states that, “Around 4,000,000 square metres of industrial and warehousing floor space will be delivered across Greater Manchester over the period 2015-2035”. Key locations for new industrial and warehousing in Greater Manchester will include:

- Western Gateway – Trafford Park, Port Salford and Carrington;
- Northern Gateway – Heywood, Stakehill and Kingsway;
- Eastern Gateway – Ashton Moss, Bredbury Park and Tame Valley;
- M6 Corridor in Wigan;
- M61 Corridor in Bolton;
- East Lancashire Road Corridor;
- Central Park in Manchester; and
- Manchester Airport.

The figure quoted represents ‘take-up’ or total build (rather than net growth), meaning it represents both replacement and growth combined. The forecast figure is based on an uplift of past development rates in Great Manchester (40% uplift). It also covers the full range of industrial and warehouse floor space i.e. from small units through to major distribution centres. However, if we assume that around 60%² of the existing large scale capacity will require replacement over the 20 year period 2015-2035 (60% x 2.696 million sqm = 1.617 million sqm) and that (in-line with the

² On the basis that the useful economic life of a warehouse building is around 30-35 years, implying that over a 20 year timescale we would expect around 60% of the existing capacity to require replacement.

SHELMA do-minimum forecasts) the growth build element equates to around 15% of existing capacity (15% x 2.696 million sqm = 0.404 million sqm), then new-build demand for large scale units during the period 2015-2035 can be expected to account for 2.02 million sqm of the 4 million square metres planned in the GMSF.

Warrington Employment Development Needs Study

This was published in October 2016 to inform the development of the emerging Local Plan. The document states that 200ha of B8 development can be expected in Warrington between 2016 and 2037, equating to around 800,000sqm of logistics space on the basis that warehouse floor space occupies around 40% of a plot footprint.

As per the GMSF, this is a gross 'take-up' figure based on past trends, meaning it represents both demand for replacement and growth build combined. The study also states that it represents 'Strategic and Local' take-up i.e. the full range of units across the spectrum of distribution facilities. However, on a similar basis to Greater Manchester, if we assume that around 60% of the existing large scale capacity will require replacement over the period 2015-2035 (60% x 361,000 sqm = 216,600 sqm) and that the growth build element equates to around 15% of existing capacity (15% x 341,000 sqm = 54,150 sqm), then new-build demand for large scale units during the period 2015-2037 can be expected to account for just over 270,750 sqm of the 800,000sqm (200ha) forecast in the Warrington study.

Conclusion

Table 7 summarises the forecast demand for new-build large scale warehousing to 2035 across the relevant area of the Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and Warrington. The forecasts for Warrington (to 2037 in the Warrington Employment Needs Development study) and the Liverpool City Region (to 2033 in SHELMA) have been scaled to 2035 so as to align with the GMSF figure.

Table 7: Forecast Demand for New-build Large Scale Warehousing to 2035 in Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and Warrington

	New-build Demand to 2035 (000s sqm)	Land Required (ha)**
Liverpool City Region*	1,105	276
Greater Manchester	2,020	505
Warrington	271	68
Total	3,711	849

* Do-minimum scenario

** Floor space occupies 40% of plot footprint. Represents total land take required and not the quantum of 'new' land that needs to be brought forward in Local Plans and so does not account for existing vacant plots/sites with B8 consents and other sites in the planning pipeline.

In total, some 3.7 million square metres of new large scale floor space can be expected to be built in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor up to 2035. If all of this demand were to be located at new sites, this would imply a need to bring forward 849ha of land in Local Plans and around 0.8 million sqm of the total expected demand of 3.7 million sqm to 2035 is to cater only for traffic growth.

In practice, a significant quantum of 'new' land will need to be brought forward to meet the expected total demand. This is because many existing sites are no longer commercially attractive to the logistics market, either due to the size and configuration of the plots available or their location. In many cases the size and configuration of plots potentially available for recycling are unable to accommodate the very large-scale buildings now required by the market. A recent trend has seen the merging of operations previously based at multiple sites to one new-build warehouse. The ability to operate fewer but larger distribution centres to provide economies of scale has been facilitated by advances in modern ICT inventory management systems which have permitted much larger warehouses to be operated more efficiently than was previously the case. Some of the existing sites, which are not well-suited to a strategic distribution role, could be released for other employment activities, or even non-employment use, including playing a role in meeting local authority targets for new residential developments.

In addition, there is a policy objective of substantially increasing the quantum of floor space which is both water and rail-served. As described in Section 2, current Government policy supports the development of strategic logistics facilities which are located on sites connected to the railway network, within ports or both. Work has been completed for Transport for the North that recommends the development of rail and/or water connected Multimodal Distribution Parks (MDPs). Such sites promote economic growth and generate more cost competitive supply chains, whilst at the same time allowing goods to be handled and moved in a more sustainable manner when compared with road-only connected sites.

Section 3 demonstrated that only 8% of existing floor space capacity in the North West region is located on a rail-served site, while only 2% is located within a port. It is therefore clear that the national and sub-national policy objective of increasing the quantum of floor space which is both water and rail-served cannot be achieved through the 'recycling' of plots located at existing sites alone.

The implication of the above is that some new large sites will need to be brought forward over the long term to accommodate a significant proportion of the forecast new-build, given that such sites will be capable of being rail-served/water-served and will have the large plots required for modern distribution buildings.

This all suggests that additional land is required to be brought forward through Local Plans to meet the need for both growth and replacement newbuild. Further, as noted in Section 2 Government

policy promotes increasing the proportion of logistics activity which takes place at rail and/or water connected sites, both to increase the cost competitiveness of supply chains and for sustainability reasons. Given that 92% of logistics space for large-scale warehousing, is on sites that are not rail or water-served, there is a clear need for new sites in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor that are connected to the rail and/or waterborne freight networks.

As it would be able to offer 250,000 sqm of logistics space Port Warrington would accommodate 31% of the 800,000 sqm of logistics space that is needed along the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor only to accommodate forecast growth in need, let alone replacement build up to 2035. Furthermore, the expansion of Port Warrington provides an opportunity in the North West to develop a distribution park that is both rail- and water-connected and therefore meet the policy need to increase the proportion of logistics space that can facilitate modal switch to more sustainable modes.

4 REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE SITES

4.1 Review of rail and water-connected sites in the North West

A review of 'alternative sites' to Port Warrington has been undertaken to ascertain whether the quantum of land that could be brought forward at other rail and water connected (or connectable) sites in North West England is able to meet the anticipated demand of 849 hectares to 2035, as outlined in section 3. In this context, potential future site supply is considered to be:

- Existing rail and water connected sites with vacant plots or expansion potential, including plots and sites with B8 consents; and
- Potential alternative sites that are may to come forward for consideration by the planning system over the medium term. This includes sites currently being promoted by developers or which have previously been identified as potential sites in studies and local plans.

The tables below provide a high level overview of these potential sites.

Port Salford



Description	A new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange being promoted by <i>Peel Land and Property</i> .
Rail and/or water connected	Planning consent granted for a new spur connection to the Manchester-Liverpool Chat Moss railway line with a W9 loading gauge, although it has not yet been built.
Highway connections	Passive provision for a new container quay on the Manchester Ship Canal 1km to M60 Jct11 and access to the Salford Western Gateway link road.
Floor space current	25,000 sqm currently occupied in one unit.
Development Potential	Planning consent for c.150,000 sqm of floor space, though with adjacent expansion land (not yet consented) the site could potentially expand to around 500,000 sqm once fully developed.
Comments and Deliverability Potential	<p>Identified in the GMSF as part of the Western Gateway where new-build logistics development will be focused.</p> <p>Potentially a tri-modal distribution park given the development of a new container quay – with potential to be served by the existing container service along the Manchester Ship Canal from the Port of Liverpool.</p> <p>Scheme focused (and ideally located) to provide very large plots for rail-served distribution centres serving the north west conurbations.</p> <p>Discussion currently ongoing with Network Rail concerning rail spur.</p> <p>May be limited by short-term lack of capacity on the Chat Moss Line.</p>

Kingsway Rochdale



Description	An existing industrial and warehousing development in the process of being built-out.
Rail and/or water connected	Currently not rail-served and no plans/consents for rail-connection. However, the site is located close to the Calder Valley main line and could potentially be retrofitted with a rail terminal and connected to the Calder Valley line by sharing the track currently utilised by the Metrolink line to Rochdale.
Highway connections	Adjacent to M62 Jct 21.
Floor space current	c200,000 sqm currently developed across 14 units.
Development Potential	Developer's website currently indicates that c.56ha across 20 plots are currently available (potentially provide around 220,000sqm of floor space). See Appendix 1.
Comments and Deliverability Potential	<p>Identified in the GMSF as part of the Northern Gateway where new-build logistics development will be focused.</p> <p>Identified in TfN's Freight and Logistics Report as a potential multi-modal development site.</p> <p>Further work needed to develop rail potential and there are no current plans to develop a rail connection.</p> <p>Calder Valley line only cleared to W7 towards Manchester and Leeds.</p>

Parkside



Description	Site has previously been proposed as a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, most recently by ProLogis. Site is currently under the control of Langtree, who are at the moment promoting a smaller non rail-served scheme.
Rail and/or water connected	Site formerly the rail-served Parkside colliery (last in the Lancashire coalfield). Previous SRFI proposal planned for the site to be rail-served (intermodal terminal and some directly rail-connected warehousing), served from the adjacent Manchester-Liverpool Chat Moss railway line – W9 loading gauge.
Highway connections	Adjacent to M6 Jct 22.
Floor space current	Zero
Development Potential	Potential for c.375,000 sqm from 93ha site on western side of M6. A further 80ha potentially available on the eastern side of the M6 (c.320,000 sqm).
Comments and Deliverability Potential	Site is located in the Greenbelt, albeit the current St Helens Local Plan permits the development of a SRFI on the site with strict conditions. Given its size, any development would be classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under Planning Act 2008, meaning it would require a Development Consent Order (DCO). May be limited by short-term lack of capacity on the Chat Moss Line. New motorway junction likely to be required for full scheme to provide sufficient capacity.

Mersey Multi-Modal Gateway



Description	An existing Strategic Rail Freight Interchange. Site owned by a collection of owners/developers, with strategic co-ordination and branding from Halton BC.
Rail and/or water connected	Intermodal rail terminal operated by Stobart Ports. Served from the WCML Liverpool branch – W12 loading gauge.
Highway connections	Adjacent to new Mersey Gateway bridge, and within of both the M56 and M62 via dual carriageways.
Floor space current	c74,000 sqm, including Tesco temperature controlled DC.
Development Potential	A further 45,000sqm (12ha) potentially available for development.
Comments and Deliverability Potential	<p>An established SRFI development with excellent road and rail links, alongside an established intermodal terminal with a variety of daily services to/from container ports.</p> <p>Approaching its full development potential.</p> <p>Part of the site now occupied by Alstom for train refurbishment and possible assembly.</p>

Seaforth



Description	A planned port-centric warehousing development by Peel Ports (Port of Liverpool) alongside Regent Road/Derby Road, Bootle.
Rail and/or water connected	Planned development would have direct off public highway access to the Port of Liverpool’s RoRo and LoLo quays and intermodal rail terminal. W12 cleared rail access to national network.
Highway connections	Via A5036 to M57/M58 Switch Island junction.
Floor space current	Zero - currently a mixture of low-grade light industrial units, open storage and other property
Development Potential	Potential for 37ha (c.180,000 sqm) of large scale warehouse floor space.
Comments and Deliverability Potential	Identified in the Peel Ports Master Plan for port-centric warehousing. Land is currently under different ownership, c.50% under Peel Ports control i.e. would potentially require some compulsory purchase to assemble a sufficient quantum of land under Peel control to deliver a scheme. Development would probably be dependent on additional highway capacity from M57/M58 interchange (either upgraded existing road or proposed new route via Rimrose Valley). Longer term opportunity, but otherwise a competitive location for national distribution focused on the receipt, storage and re-distribution of imported cargo.

Port Wirral



Description	A planned modern port and port-centric logistics scheme, adjacent to the Vauxhall/Opel car factory near Ellesmere Port. Focused on dry-bulk and semi-bulk cargoes (steel, forestry products etc.) rather than unitised goods.
Rail and/or water connected	Rail-served by means of an extension of the existing branch line serving Manisty Wharf to the south. New quays on the Manchester Ship Canal.
Highway connections	Adjacent to the M53 Jct 6
Floor space current	Zero
Development Potential	Potential for 60ha (c.150,000sqm) of port-centric warehouse floor space
Comments and Deliverability Potential	Identified in the Peel Ports Master Plan for port-centric warehousing, in part to replace outdated facilities at Runcorn Docks (see below). However, it is understood that the Peel Group are no longer promoting this site for port related and multi-modal activity. Since the publication of the Master Plan, there is now on-going investment planned at Port Runcorn, meaning there is no longer a requirement to relocate activities from Runcorn – see below)

Port Cheshire



Description	Former Bridgewater papermill site adjacent to Manisty Wharf
Rail and/or water connected	Rail-served by means of the existing branch line serving Manisty Wharf Existing quay on the Manchester Ship Canal.
Highway connections	Adjacent to the M53 Jct 6
Floor space current	Zero
Development Potential	Potential for 19ha (c.76,000sqm) of port-centric warehouse floor space
Comments and Deliverability Potential	Identified in the Peel Ports Master Plan for port-centric warehousing.

Protos (Ince Marshes)



Description	A commercial development by Peel Environmental based around resource recovery/recycling and environmental technologies.
Rail and/or water connected	Planned berth on the Manchester Ship Canal which forms the northern boundary of the site.
Highway connections	Planned rail-terminal from the Helsby-Ellesmere Port line, which passes to the south of the site (existing connection serving the adjacent fertiliser factory)
Floor space current	2km to M56 J14
Development Potential	Zero
Comments and Deliverability Potential	54ha – mainly devoted to resource recovery/recycling and environmental technologies.
	Some limited B8 available.
	Identified in the Peel Ports Master Plan for resource recovery/recycling and environmental technologies. It cannot therefore be considered as a realistic alternative to Port Warrington or as part of the region’s future site supply for B8.

Port Runcorn



Description	Two small port and port-centric distribution facilities located on the Manchester Ship Canal at Runcorn.
Rail and/or water connected	Berths on the Manchester Ship Canal. Not rail-served.
Highway connections	Adjacent to and direct access to the Weston Point Expressway.
Floor space current	c.10,000sqm across 16 small scale units
Development Potential	No further development potential at both sites. Both sites are bounded on one side by the Manchester Ship Canal, and by the INEOS Chemicals and Waste-Energy plant on the other.
Comments and Deliverability Potential	The facilities on this site are outdated and were due to be replaced in the long term by Port Wirral (see above). On-going investment is now planned at the site which will update and replace the existing facilities, thereby securing continued port use over the long term. However, there is no expansion land (effectively like-for-like replacement) and it will continue to focus on specialist bulk commodities related to nearby manufacturing. It cannot therefore be considered as part of the region’s future B8 site supply, and neither is it directly comparable with the vision for Port Warrington.

4.2 Conclusion

From the review above and taking an optimistic view with regard to each of the schemes being able to overcome the deliverability limitations identified and, where required, gaining planning consent, we estimate that at most about 475ha of land may be available at rail-served and/or water connected or connectable sites in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor that could meet the forecast demand of 849 ha up to 2035 (Table 8).

The figures for Port Warrington, Seaforth and Port Cheshire assume they are developed to their full warehousing potential for general distribution traffic; however, other types of port traffic such as bulk traffics would reduce this figure.

Table 8: Potential Rail/Water Connected Schemes in Pipeline and Forecast Demand to 2035

Development	Potential Floor Space Remaining/Available (000s sqm)	Land Remaining/Available (ha)
Port Salford	475	118
Kingsway	220	56
Parkside	695	173
3MG	45	12
Seaforth	180	37
Port Cheshire	76	19
Port Warrington*	250	60
Total	1,941	475
Expected New-Build to 2035	3,711	849
Shortfall	1,770	374

* Phases I and II

However, various factors may reduce this land availability in the short- to medium-term:

- The opportunity at Seaforth is for the long-term as it requires land assembly;
- Kingsway is at present a road-only site and there are no existing plans to develop a rail connection;
- Parkside is at present being promoted as a road only scheme which is on a smaller scale than that required for an SRFI.

If these sites are discounted as potential rail- and/or water-connected sites in the area, then the availability of land in the relevant area falls to 209ha. Of this remaining land availability the 12ha at 3MG are only rail-connected and Port Cheshire lacks the scale to be a tri-modal distribution park with a number of large-scale warehouses on a single site. This means that the only sites that offer the potential for a tri-modal distribution park in the short to medium term are Port Salford and Port Warrington with a total of land area of 178ha.

Even if all the sites in Table 8 were built out to their full extent, there would still be a shortfall of around 374ha of land that could not be found from all the appropriate rail and water connected sites in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester up to 2035 and so would have to be developed by recycling existing or developing new road-only sites that would not meet the policy need set out in section 2. Only Port Warrington and Port Salford can be developed as both water- and rail-connected distribution parks in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor in the short to medium term, which means that Port Warrington should be regarded as being a high priority for Warrington in its Local Plan.

5 NEED FOR WATERBORNE FREIGHT

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report sets out how Port Warrington can meet a need for waterborne freight facilities, alongside the need for large-scale warehousing on a tri-modal distribution park as set out in sections 3 and 4. It also demonstrates how the waterborne freight services can operate efficiently at Port Warrington.

As an inland port and providing an inland extension to the port facilities at Liverpool, Port Warrington would be able to act as a port-centric distribution facility where distribution centres are located at a site that can receive international traffic. Total inland freight lifted by road and rail in the UK is about 1.55 billion tonnes per annum and work for the Department for Transport has established that on average goods are lifted 1.8 times between origin and destination, implying a total of around 0.86 billion tonnes of unique goods. Of this total around 0.19 billion tonnes are domestically sourced aggregates, implying a net volume of all other goods of 0.67 billion tonnes. In 2017 UK ports handled 0.38 billion tonnes of international cargo, implying that at least half of all non-aggregate goods moving inland in the UK have one end of their supply chain abroad. This demonstrates just how effective port-centric distribution can be as it places the origins and destinations of the traffic (a distribution centre) on the port estate and reduces unnecessary road distribution legs between port estates and inland distribution centres.

5.2 National port traffic forecasts

National port traffic forecasts were developed up to 2030 by MDS Transmodal for the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2007 and were also published in the National Policy Statement for Ports in January 2012. These forecasts remain the only official published national port traffic forecasts.

Since the publication of these forecasts in 2007 Government energy policy has developed to accelerate the decarbonisation of electricity generation as the UK sought to meet its greenhouse gas emission targets and this had an impact on the trend in energy bulk traffics through ports. However, the key traffic at Port Warrington would be higher value unitised traffic that would be transported in containers, while other traffics could include bulk cargoes associated with local industry.

Table 10 shows the national port traffic forecasts for unitised traffic in terms of TEU (for lolo traffic) and ro-ro units for ferry traffic. Between 2005 and 2030 container traffic was forecast to grow at a compound average rate of +4.2% and ro-ro units were forecast to grow by 2.8% per annum.

Table 10: Overall forecast growth in GB unitised traffic to 2030 (including Channel Tunnel)

Traffic type	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	% CAGR 2005-30
Lolo TEU	7	10	12	14	17	20	+4.2%
Roro units (including Channel Tunnel)	8	9	11	13	14	16	+2.8%

Source: MDS Transmodal, published in the Ports National Policy Statement

The Ports NPS recognised that the economic crisis in 2008-09 led to a severe downturn in demand, especially for unitised cargo. However, the Government's view was that the long-term effect will be to delay by a number of years - but not ultimately reduce - the eventual levels of demand for port capacity, in particular for unitised goods, set out in the forecasts produced by MDST in 2007.

Actual unitised traffic growth for all major UK ports from 2005 to 2016 is shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Actual growth UK unitised traffic 2005-16

Units

Mode of appearance	2005	2010	2015	2016	% CAGR 2005-2016	% CAGR 2010-2016
Ro-ro (including Channel Tunnel)	8.7	8.2	9.2	9.6	+1.0%	+3.7%
Lo-lo	4.8	5.0	5.8	5.9	+2.3%	+3.1%
Total UK unitised	13.5	13.2	15.0	15.5	+1.4%	+3.3%

Source: DfT Port Freight Statistics, analysis by MDS Transmodal

Unitised traffic, which experienced a significant downturn in 2008-09, has recovered steadily since 2010 to reach record levels in 2016. Table 11 shows that since the end of the downturn in 2010 the average annual growth rates up to 2016 are generally in line with the average growth rates that were forecast in 2007.

5.2 Traffic forecasts in the Mersey Ports Master Plan

The Mersey Ports Master Plan (MPMP) covers the port facilities at the Port of Liverpool and on the Manchester Ship Canal. The main purpose of the MPMP, which was developed by Peel Ports, was to:

- Clarify Peel Ports' own strategic planning for the port facilities for the medium to long term;
- Assist regional and local planning and transport network providers to prepare and revise their own development strategies;
- Inform port users, employees and local communities as to how they can expect to see the port develop over the coming years.

The traffic forecast sections of the Master Plan are set out by commodity, giving a description of the importance of that particular commodity to the Mersey Ports as well as the national context, followed by the forecasts and reasons for expected growth/decline. Using a 2008 base year, the forecasts were presented in the context of the above national port forecasts prepared by MDS

Transmodal. The Mersey Ports forecasts were developed using a “bottom up” commercial approach, with a rationale for any differences with the national forecasts.

The chapter outlines an overall context of cargo for the Mersey Ports, detailing that in 2008 the port group handled 39.6 million tonnes of cargo, which represented 7.8% of all ports traffic via UK major ports.

Table 12: Mersey ports traffic forecasts 2008-30

Million tonnes (except where stated)

Commodity	2008	2020	2030	CAGR (%)
Containers (TEU)	4.85 (672,000)	14.43 (2,000,000)	21.65 (3,000,000)	+7.0%
Roro (units)	6.82 (513,000)	10.07 (757,000)	13.92 (1,047,000)	+3.3%
Trade cars (units)	0.04	0.20	0.20	+8.1%
Grain	1.25	1.25	1.25	-
AFS & biomass	1.34	2.40	2.90	+3.6%
Coal	2.38	2.38	2.38	-
Other dry bulks	3.85	4.57	5.28	+1.5%
Steel, metals & general cargo	0.80	1.00	1.35	2.41
Forest products	0.26	0.60	0.75	+4.9%
Petrochemicals	15.80	15.80	15.80	-
Other bulk liquids	2.26	2.70	3.10	+1.5%
Total	39.64	55.40	68.58	+2.5%

Source: Mersey Ports Master Plan

Overall, the forecast growth rates in the Mersey Ports Master Plan were for higher growth than in the national forecasts and this was explained in the Plan by stronger anticipated growth in the lolo and roro sectors, in biomass handling, palm oil and other dry bulks.

Actual traffic growth for the Mersey Ports (Port of Liverpool and The Manchester Ship Canal) from 2008 to 2016 for unitised cargo is shown in Table 13 below. Demand for containerised traffic through the Port of Liverpool remains healthy and in line with growth expectations, while allowing for the impact of a global recession. Liverpool’s lack of a deepwater container terminal has also slowed growth and this is being addressed by the opening of the Liverpool 2 container terminal which is expected to increase the port’s market share.

Table 13: Actual Mersey ports traffic 2008-16

Million tonnes (except where stated)

Commodity	2008	2016	CAGR (%)
Containers (TEU)	4.85 (672,000)	5.29 (727,000)	+1.2%
Roro (units)	6.82 (513,000)	7.61 (711,000)	+4.8%
Trade cars (units)	0.04 (36,000)	0.02 (80,000)	+12.1%
Grain, AFS & biomass (note)	2.59	2.33	-1.4%
Coal	2.38	-	-
Other dry bulks	3.85	4.09	+0.9%
Steel, metals & general cargo	0.80	0.62	-3.6%
Forest products	0.26	0.22	-2.4%
Petrochemicals	15.80	14.54	-1.2%
Other bulk liquids	2.26	1.92	-2.3%
Total	39.64	36.65	-1.1%

Note: Grain, AFS & biomass combined to make the figures for 2008 and 2016 are comparable.

Source: Mersey Ports Master Plan

Compared to total UK port traffic in 2016, the Mersey Ports marginally lost market share at 7.5% in 2016 compared to 7.8% in 2008. The performance of the group of ports was therefore roughly in line with the UK as a whole, with, for example, the loss of coal import traffic not being compensated for fully by biomass imports.

However, Port Warrington would be most likely to cater for demand for container traffic and Table 13 shows that, despite the economic downturn in 2008-09, the Mersey Ports achieved an average growth rate over this period of 1.2% for container traffic. In addition, the waterborne freight facility at Port Warrington could also handle a variety of bulk and semi-bulk traffics that would mainly be related to local industry or specific occupiers, such as:

- Grain;
- Dry bulk traffics;
- Steel, metals and general cargo;
- Forest products;
- Edible oils.

The handling of these traffics would allow Port Warrington to act as an inland extension of the Port of Liverpool via the Manchester Ship Canal. Each of these traffic types is discussed in more detail below.

5.3 Review of traffic types for Port Warrington

Containers

The MPMP suggests that, in the future, deep sea container traffic will be moved on increasingly larger vessels. The increasing size of vessels and increasing volumes of containers that is likely to be unloaded per call at Liverpool will place additional pressure on portside land required for handling and storage of containers. Part of the forecast growth in container traffic at the Port of Liverpool will be catered for by the in-dock Royal Seaforth Container Terminal and part will be handled at the L2 riverside terminal, but the pressure for portside land at Liverpool and the availability of a water-connected distribution park at Port Warrington would allow shippers and shipping lines to transport goods by means of cost-effective and environmentally sustainable waterborne freight services along the Manchester Ship Canal for storage at on-site distribution centres.

While L2 can accommodate container ships up to 20,000 TEU, the facility at Port Warrington would cater for smaller feeder and coastal container ships or potentially barges of up to 300 TEU capacity and would allow shippers and shipping lines to transport containers inland to Port Warrington. As a water-connected distribution park, Port Warrington is likely to cater for:

- A feeder container service from the Port of Liverpool by ship or barge up the Manchester Ship Canal to Warrington; and/or
- An Irish Sea short sea or coastal container service, such as the one that BG Freight Line already operates between Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Greenock, Liverpool and the Manchester Ship Canal.

Port Warrington provides the opportunity therefore to provide a low cost and environmentally sustainable means to distribute deep sea and short sea containers inland from Irish Sea markets directly to the inland origins and destinations of some cargo in North West England. Port Warrington would also be able to act as an inland extension to the Port of Liverpool, with container storage for subsequent distribution by road to local shippers and receivers and, with its on-site distribution centres, an origin and destination of cargo in its own right. The Port Warrington site adds to the overall capacity of port land for the North West of England for buffer cargo and takes the cargo closer to its inland origins and destinations using cost-effective and sustainable transport (shipping or barge).

The existing weekly Irish Sea service is operated by two vessels which, with a length of 99 metres and capacity of 340 TEU, would be suitable for operations to and from Port Warrington. As BG Freight Line is owned by Peel Ports it can provide a vertically integrated service on a quay-to-quay or door-to-door basis between Irish Sea markets and Port Warrington.

Grain

Most of the grain traffic through the port of Liverpool relates to inbound movements in deep sea vessels for processing within the region's food processing and manufacturing sector. The handling of grain at Port Warrington would therefore require the transshipment of the grain at Liverpool into barges and the development of specialist handling and storage in siloes. While this is potential cargo for Port Warrington, it would be based on a bespoke agreement with a shipper.

Other dry bulks

Other dry bulk cargoes associated with local industry that are clean and therefore offer no risk of contamination of general distribution cargo, such as dry bulk chemicals and some construction materials, could be handled at Port Warrington.

Steel, metals and general cargo

An annual growth rate of 2.4% was forecast in the Mersey Ports Master Plan and steel and other metals traffic could be a source of traffic for Port Warrington because the consignment sizes are suitable for short sea/coastal vessels or barges and they can be handled using a mobile harbour crane and then transferred into a warehouse located close to the quay. As the cargoes are relatively high value they would be able to bear the cost of additional handling at Liverpool if transhipped from a deep sea vessel. Port Warrington would effectively provide an inland extension to the port of Liverpool by means of low cost waterborne freight transport. The cargoes are relatively clean and there would be no risk of contamination and the traffic would therefore be compatible with other general logistics traffic that would be handled in the rest of the Port Warrington site.

Forest products

The port of Liverpool has little land currently available for portside handling of forest products. Given that Brexit might lead to greater imports of North American forest products, the Mersey would be well-located for these traffics. Similarly to metal traffics, these cargoes are relatively high value and they are more likely to bear the cost of additional handling at Liverpool if transhipped from a deep sea vessel. Port Warrington would effectively provide an inland extension to the port of Liverpool by means of low cost waterborne freight transport for forest products such as timber. The cargoes are relatively clean and so would be compatible with other general logistics traffic that would be handled in the rest of the Port Warrington site. This traffic type could use open as well covered storage and so offers some flexibility over where it is stored on the Port Warrington site.

Edible oils

Edible oils, used in the food processing industry, can be transported in relatively small shipments, but would require the development of specialist handling and tank storage. This is a possible cargo for Port Warrington given the nature of the manufacturing industry in the local area.

5.4 Maritime operations

The existing berth at Port Warrington - which is 28km inland from the sea-lock at Eastham - is approximately 100 metres long and is sufficient to cater for the maximum size of vessels that would operate to and from Port Warrington of around 5,000 cargo tonnes or 300 TEU capacity. The passage along the Ship Canal to Port Warrington is lock-free apart from the sea-lock to obtain access to the River Mersey.

An inlet is proposed on the south bank to act as a turning circle which will allow vessels of that length to turn and come alongside to unload and then re-load cargo before returning along the Manchester Ship Canal towards the Mersey estuary.

The small container vessels and barges that are likely to be handled at the Port could be served by a single crane capable of averaging about 20 lifts per hour (around 35 TEU) so that a vessel of 300 TEU would take some 18 hours to discharge and reload. Given that ships enter and leave the Ship canal at high tide and there are no locks for the 28km between Port Warrington and the Canal entrance lock at Eastham there would be sufficient time for a ship to round trip efficiently within two tidal cycles.

A single berth could cater for three visits per week, meaning that at an 80% mean load factor one berth could handle around 75,000 TEU p.a. or 750,000 tonnes of semi bulk and bulk cargo.

There is also provision for a second berth at Port Warrington and this, along with a second crane, would more than double this throughput figure as higher berth utilization could be achieved because there would be less chance of no berth being available when a ship arrived. We estimate therefore that Port Warrington, with two berths, could achieve an annual throughput of up to 200,000 TEU of container traffic or 2 million tonnes of bulk and semi-bulk traffic per annum. Given that the Port of Liverpool handled some 30 million tonnes of traffic in 2017, Port Warrington would provide significant additional port capacity for the Mersey Ports as a whole while also providing the opportunity for shippers and shipping lines to distribute cargo inland using cost-effective and environmentally sustainable transport.

5.5 Conclusion on maritime traffic

Port Warrington has the potential to perform two main roles from the point of view of port traffics, namely:

- An inland port for consignments of relatively high value containerised cargoes transported in short sea or coastal vessels between the North West and the rest of the Irish sea market;
- An inland extension of the Port of Liverpool, providing additional storage space in a location that can serve both the major conurbations in the North West from a single site and local industry, but linked by low cost and environmentally sustainable waterborne freight transport. This would be particularly appropriate for commodities such as containerised cargo, steel, forest products imports and dry bulk traffics associated with local industry and is consistent with Peel Ports' plans as set out in the Mersey Ports Master Plan.

As illustrated in the Development Framework, two berths are likely to be required to allow sufficient operational flexibility to ensure that no vessels are delayed on berthing and discharging and loading cargo.

In conclusion Port Warrington provides the opportunity to provide a low cost and environmentally sustainable means to distribute deep sea and short sea containers inland from Irish Sea markets directly to the inland origins and destinations of some cargo in North West England and to transport a range of bulk and semi-bulk cargoes to inland for local industry. Port Warrington would be able to act as an inland extension to the Port of Liverpool, with container storage for subsequent distribution by road to local shippers and receivers and, with its on-site distribution centres, become an origin and destination of cargo in its own right. The Port Warrington site adds to the overall capacity of port land for the North West of England for buffer cargo and takes the cargo closer to its inland origins and destinations using cost-effective and sustainable transport by shipping or barge and there are no operational constraints that would restrict coaster or barge services to and from the site and associated cargo handling.

6 TRAFFIC FORECASTS FOR PORT WARRINGTON

We have prepared traffic forecasts for the Port Warrington scheme for the 250,000 sqm of modern warehouse floor space that would be developed alongside the berths on the Manchester Ship Canal and which would accommodate an intermodal rail freight terminal capable of handling 750m long trains. The on-site distribution centres planned for the site would receive cargo by rail/water and road and then store and re-distribute cargo by road. In addition, the on-site intermodal terminal would handle traffic for off-site distributors and shippers in the wider area and therefore allow these operators to use rail rather than road for longer distance hauls.

Table 14 below outlines the traffic forecasts for the development of the site for large-scale warehousing.

Table 14: Port Warrington estimated traffic through on-site distribution centres

Basis of calculation	Assumption/result	Units
Floor space developed	250,000	sqm
Storage density	1.5	pallets per sqm
Warehouse capacity	375,000	pallets
Mean capacity utilisation	85%	
Pallets in stock at anyone time	318,750	pallets (i.e. 85% of capacity)
Stock turns per annum	12	mean one month
Pallet throughput per annum	3,825,000	pallets (i.e. 318,750 x 12)
Pallets per HGV equivalent unit	25	pallets
HGV equivalent units per annum	153,000	HGV equivalent units
Days per annum	300	
HGV equivalent units per day	510	HGV equivalent units

A road-only distribution site of the scale of Port Warrington, in the absence of sustainable distribution services, would generate 510 inbound HGV-equivalent units per day and 510 outbound HGV-equivalent units.

However 20% of the inbound traffic would arrive by rail freight or barge/ship along the Ship Canal (i.e. 102 HGV- equivalent units) rather than by road and this would reduce the road freight movements into and out of the distribution centres to a net 408 HGV-equivalent units per day and 408 outbound HGV-equivalent units.

This volume of rail freight traffic would amount to three daily trains arriving into the site, supplemented by container units delivered by barge/ship along the Manchester Ship Canal. In addition, further train movements could be handled to serve off-site distributors and shippers in the wider Warrington hinterland. We estimate that a total of at least six trains per day would be attracted to the Port Warrington site once completed, with three trains for traffic associated with off-site shippers and distributors. Given an average of 35 containers per train these three trains

would lead to an additional 105 HGV-equivalent units and 105 outbound HGV-equivalent units per day.

The overall forecast for daily HGV movements is therefore 513 inbound HGVs (408 plus 105 movements) and 513 outbound movements or an average of 21.4 HGV movements in each direction per hour over a 24 hour period.

7 RAIL NETWORK CAPABILITY, CAPACITY & OPERATIONS

7.1 Introduction

Sites considered appropriate locations for being served by intermodal rail freight services are expected to meet the following three requirements, namely:

- Operationally flexible; the ability to operate full length trains to/from multiple destinations;
- A generous loading gauge; and
- Available freight capacity.

Each of these is considered in turn below and shows that the Port Warrington site can be connected relatively easily to a line with excellent capability to handle intermodal rail freight and which currently has capacity to accommodate the number of trains that are forecast for Port Warrington. This section will also show how rail operations at Port Warrington can be carried out efficiently.

7.2 Railway operations

The Port Warrington site would be served via a chord from the existing Manchester Ship Canal (MSC) sidings. These are a set of 4 x 400m sidings located to the east of the West Coast Main Line (WCML) slow lines and immediately to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. From the southern end of these sidings, a vacant former track alignment (track bed minus railway lines) passes under the WCML and into the Port Warrington site. A chord from the southern end of the MSC sidings could therefore be constructed over the vacant alignment into the Port Warrington site to connect with the planned intermodal rail terminal. The site of the four MSC sidings could be used to create two 750 metre long reception sidings for trains prior to arrival from or departure onto the WCML via the Arpley line.

The MSC sidings connect with the WCML slow lines to the south of Arpley freight yard. Trains arriving from the WCML south (i.e. from Crewe) cannot enter the MSC sidings directly as the turnout onto the main line faces northwards towards Arpley freight yard only. Consequently, trains arriving from the WCML south (probably the majority of trains) would initially need to come off the WCML onto the line to Arpley freight yard, and then reverse in order to enter the reception sidings prior to proceeding into the Port Warrington site.

The restoration of the short rail link from the MSC Exchange Sidings that lie south of Arpley Yard, along with two reception sidings on the MSC sidings, would therefore allow Port Warrington to enjoy a direct connection to the WCML. The track towards Arpley Yard could be used to hold twelve trains a day (six inbound and six outbound) to allow the main line locomotive to return to the main

line, while a single shunter could haul the trains between the Arpley line and the reception sidings and between the reception sidings and the intermodal terminal.

It follows that a relatively simple 750 metre long two track loading area could be used intensively as the intermodal terminal within the Port Warrington site. A fleet of four reach stackers or a pair of overhead cranes would be able to turn around a train carrying an average of 35 containers in 90 minutes allowing up to 6 trains per day to be handled.

Such a throughput implies a need for six paths a day per direction along the West Coast Main Line. The great majority of departing trains will pass to the south and a pathing analysis shows that an hourly path is currently available (so that an hourly path could be shared with another site), largely because trains have only to pass along a relatively short length of route (24km) between Acton Grange and Winsford before reaching the continuous four track section towards Crewe. For the first 10km there are currently only two passenger trains per hour per direction on the route.

7.3 Rail network capability

The physical definition of the maximum height and width in cross section of a railway line is called its *loading gauge*. The size of the loading gauge is determined by lineside features such as overbridges, tunnels, overhead power lines, signal gantries and platform edges. The physical dimensions of a rail freight wagon or intermodal wagon/intermodal unit combination must be within the loading gauge profile to ensure that it will not collide with any of these lineside features. The higher the bridges and tunnels, the larger the freight wagon that can be conveyed.

There are seven different loading gauge profiles on the British railway network. The least generous is the *W6a* profile, which can only accommodate so called conventional freight wagons (most bulk type wagons used to convey coal, minerals etc). The minimum requirement for intermodal traffic is the *W8* loading gauge profile. However, this profile can only accommodate standard height maritime containers (2.59m/8'6") and not the high-cube units now used on most deep-sea and intra-European shipping routes (2.9m/9'6" tall).

The *W9* loading gauge is the minimum gauge which can accommodate these intermodal units, albeit only on certain types of platform wagon. The *W10/W12* loading gauges can accommodate the full range of units on all standard platform wagons with a deck height up to 1.0m i.e. those used by most of the major traction operators. An appropriate site is therefore one where the adjoining railway lines and the approach routes are gauge cleared to at least *W9*, and preferably to *W10* or *W12*. The WCML is currently cleared to the *W10* loading gauge profile (a generous profile), meaning that Port Warrington will be able to handle the largest container units on standard platform wagons.

7.4 Rail network capacity

Network capacity is a key issue; clearly there has to be sufficient train path capacity available so that freight train service providers can operate trains to serve rail-freight distribution parks. This includes key strategic trunk routes and final approach routes into a site. Commercially attractive sites are generally recognised to be those where the adjoining railway lines are able to provide at least one freight path per hour per direction during the daytime period; while freight paths are more easily available overnight, rail freight rolling stock needs to be utilised 24 hours per day in order for rail freight to be economic.

We have therefore undertaken a timetable pathing exercise to determine whether the Port Warrington site could realistically be served by one freight path per hour per direction. To undertake this exercise, the current Working Timetable (WTT) for Tuesday 22 May 2018 (taken to be a representative day) over a four-hour daytime period (1100 to 1500) was plotted onto train graph diagrams. These are a visual representation of the WTT, allowing the location of trains at a particular moment in time to be identified (each line represents the movement of a particular train service through distance and time). Consequently, where lines intersect this represents two or more trains being at the same location at that particular time. This is not a problem where trains are occupying different tracks or station platforms. Conversely, pathing conflicts will occur where trains have been scheduled in such a way that they occupy the same section of track or pass through an at-grade junction at the same time. The use of train graphs therefore allows changes to the WTT, such as inserting additional freight trains, to be 'tested' while ensuring there are no pathing conflicts and that minimum headway requirements are adhered to.

The WCML from just south of Crewe (Basford Hall Junction) to Winwick Junction (just north of Warrington) has been assessed. This is a mixture of two and four track sections used by both intercity and regional passenger trains and freight trains (i.e. trains of varying operational speeds). The WCML is four-tracked south of Crewe, with freight trains generally segregated onto separate tracks from passenger trains (slow lines). Basford Hall to Warrington is therefore likely to be the main section where there are potentially network capacity issues. During the four hour period considered, using the train graph diagrams we have tried to identify at least one additional freight path per hour per direction between Basford Hall Junction and Arpley freight yard.

This assessment has conformed to Network Rail Timetable Planning Rules, as follows:

- Headways between following trains – 4 minutes north of Crewe;
- Junction margins (i.e. time required between conflicting movements at junctions) – 3 minutes where the first move is a crossing move, and 2 minutes where the second move is a crossing move; and
- Sectional running times – derived from current full-length intermodal services running on the WCML Crewe to Warrington

The train graphs are presented in the report Appendix 2 (blue lines represent passenger trains, red lines freight trains scheduled to operate that day and green lines being freight paths in the timetable where the train will operate given sufficient customer demand). Additional paths between Basford Hall Junction and Arpley freight yard (to serve Port Warrington) are shown in purple. From this exercise, we can determine that based on the current WTT (over the four hour period considered) at least one freight path per hour per direction during the daytime period can be identified. Timetables generally operate on a clockface basis, meaning the outputs from this four hour period considered should be reflected across the 18 hour daytime, with further capacity also being available overnight.

In contrast, the main route serving Trafford Park (from Crewe via Styal and Piccadilly) appears to be operating at capacity during daytime hours. The exercise described above was repeated for this route and the train graphs are also presented in the report Appendix 2. Note that there is an existing freight path via Crewe to/from Trafford Park via Piccadilly, though there is no scope for an additional path.

7.5 Potential impact of HS2 and NPR

Introduction

Our analysis above shows that, based on the current WTT, the Port Warrington site is located adjacent to a line with sufficient network capacity. Long term infrastructure plans currently being progressed by the public sector will reinforce this position north of Crewe.

HS2

It is current Government policy for HS2 to be completed as far north as Manchester via the West Midlands and Crewe. Phase 1 as far as Lichfield has planning consent via an Act of Parliament (and preparatory construction works have recently commenced) and Parliamentary powers (via a Hybrid Bill) are currently being sought to extend the line from the West Midlands to Crewe (Phase 2a), where it will re-join the WCML. Phase 2a has a planned opening date of 2027. The planned route alignment for Phase 2b, which will subsequently extend HS2 from Crewe to Manchester via a new station at Manchester Airport, is now clearly documented. Scheduled to open in 2033, the plans include a new line from Crewe to Manchester, with a branch leaving the line at Mere and crossing the Ship Canal before re-joining the WCML at Golborne, south of Wigan. Parliamentary powers for Phase 2b will be sought in due course via another Hybrid Bill and this process is expected to begin in 2019.

NPR

It is the current policy of *Transport for the North* to complement HS2 by developing 'Northern Powerhouse Rail' (NPR). NPR is currently planned to combine new high speed railway lines and upgrades to existing routes in order to deliver faster train services connecting the main northern conurbations. Key conditional outputs include 4 trains per hour between Manchester and Liverpool with a transit time of 20 minutes.

NPR infrastructure options are less developed than HS2, though one option under serious consideration is for a new high speed branch line leaving HS2 Phase 2b at Mere and then following an alignment along the former Lymm – Warrington – Ditton railway line, with either a new alignment west of Warrington or upgrading the existing line to Liverpool via Allerton. Fast Liverpool to Manchester trains would use this route, using the new HS2 line east of Mere to pass via Manchester Airport to Manchester. Liverpool to London HS2 trains would also use this new NPR route to Mere before joining HS2 southbound. Planning powers for NPR will be required but are currently some-way off.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, our train pathing analysis demonstrates that under the existing working timetable there is sufficient network capacity for an hourly freight path to serve Port Warrington. In the longer-term, the combined effect of HS2 Phase 2b and NPR, as described, will be to relieve the WCML north of Crewe of the fastest passenger train services between North West England and London (Liverpool, Wigan and Preston) and to Scotland, as these are diverted on to HS2/NPR. This will have the consequence of generating additional capacity on the WCML north of Crewe and on the Chat Moss route, some of which could be utilised by additional freight services to the Warrington area and further north. Further, it can also be seen that Port Warrington will not impact on TfN's long-term NPR aspirations for faster east-west passenger services.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

We have completed a calculation of the potential environmental impact of Port Warrington due to its capability to receive and despatch unitised freight by rail and waterborne transport, rather than being a road-only facility.

This is based on the following assumptions:

- 102 units per day by rail in each direction rather than by road (see section 5 above);
- 300km of road haulage saved in each direction³;

The calculation of the annual benefits for traffic that would be received and despatched by rail and which would be transferred directly to and from on-site distribution centres is as follows:

- HGV movements saved per annum = 102 HGVs x 2 directions x 300 days = 61,200 HGV movements
- HGV-km saved per annum = 61,200 HGV movements x 300km = 18,360,000 HGV-km

In addition, a weekly container shipping service between Liverpool and Port Warrington would provide the following savings in HGV km compared to distribution via the Port of Liverpool (40 miles from Warrington):

- 300 TEU ship = 200 container capacity (1.5 TEU/container)
- Assuming 90% capacity = 180 containers x 2 = 360 containers loaded and unloaded
- Annual containers handled = 360 x 50 weeks = 18,000 containers per annum
- Annual HGV miles saved = 18,000 containers x 40km = 720,000 HGV-km per annum

As it is likely that there will be insufficient intermodal terminal capacity in the rest of the North West to accommodate additional intermodal trains for traffic with origins and destinations off-site, this would allow further HGV traffic to be accommodated on rail rather than by road and would therefore lead to further environmental benefits. These potential environmental benefits have been calculated below, based on the following assumptions:

- 105 units per day by rail in each direction rather than by road (see section 5 above);
- 300km of road haulage saved on the trunk haul in each direction;
- 50 km of local haulage required between the Port Warrington site and off-site origin or destination.

³ The Network Rail Freight Market Study (October 2013) stated that the average length of haul for intermodal rail freight was 'over 300km'.

The calculation of the annual benefits for traffic that would be received and despatched by rail and which would then be distributed to and from off-site origins and destinations is as follows:

- HGV movements saved per annum = 105 HGVs x 2 directions x 300 days = 63,000 HGV movements
- HGV miles saved per annum = 63,000 HGV movements x (300 - 50) km = 15,750,000 HGV km

In total the estimated annual environmental benefits from the Port Warrington site being a water- and rail-connected distribution park and removing HGVs from the national highways network would be an estimated 34.8 million HGV km, which would equate to a reduction in carbon emissions from these HGVs of about 30,900 tonnes per annum⁴.

⁴ Based on 2.511 kg of CO₂e per litre of diesel and fuel consumption for an articulated HGV of 2.83 km/litre.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 The site & proposed infrastructure

The Port Warrington site has the potential to be a water- and rail-connected distribution park for up to 250,000 sqm of distribution centres. With its location on the northern side of the Manchester Ship Canal providing access via the River Mersey to the Port of Liverpool and the Irish Sea and its close proximity to the West Coast Main Line (WCML), which is the most important route for intermodal rail freight in Great Britain, Port Warrington offers the opportunity for the development of a tri-modal facility to serve the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor.

The planned Warrington Western Link will provide enhanced road access to the site both to the south towards the M56 and to the north towards the M62. In the event that the local authority-led scheme does not go ahead, there is existing road access to the south via Moore Lane and, with improvements, to the north via Forrest Way.

The existing marine infrastructure includes the Acton Grange berth that would be available for use by berth for coasters, barges and small container feeder ships, plus the potential for the development of a second berth to the west of the existing berth. A turning basin is proposed on the southern side of the canal so that vessels can turn and berth at Port Warrington ready to return towards Ellesmere Port and the River Mersey. Alternatively, ships could make a way-call at Port Warrington before proceeding on to facilities in Greater Manchester. The facilities would require a harbour crane to provide the flexibility to be able to load and discharge both containers and a variety of general cargo.

The rail freight infrastructure would consist of a connection on an existing alignment to the Manchester Ship Canal Exchange Sidings, with an on-site intermodal terminal consisting of two sidings and four reach stackers or two rail-mounted cranes for the loading and unloading of trains.

9.2 Need for additional rail and water-connected distribution space

The North West of England has 7.2 million sqm of large-scale warehousing, representing 17% of the total warehousing space over 8,000 sqm in England and Wales, while the regional population is only 13% of the total. This indicates that the North West has both a national and a regional distribution role.

However, despite the region having a deep sea container port at the Port of Liverpool and the Manchester Ship Canal and the main British rail freight route (the WCML) is running through it, only 8% of the large scale warehousing is on a rail-connected site and only 2% is on a water-connected site. Government policy as set out in the National Policy Statement (NPS) for National Networks, the

National Planning Policy Framework and the Logistics Growth Review and its 2014 Update and the work completed on the Transport for the North Freight and Logistics Report supports the development of strategic logistics facilities which are located on sites connected to the railway network, within ports or both.

There is a forecast need in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor for an estimated 849 hectares of land to cater for 3.7 million sqm of new build warehouses up to 2035. While some of this land could be found through recycling existing sites, this also implies a clear need to bring forward new land which is located alongside railway lines, within ports or both.

A review of the pipeline of rail- and water-connected sites that are in the planning process and taking an optimistic view with regards to each of the schemes being able to overcome any deliverability limitations and, for those requiring it, gaining planning consent, we estimate that up to 488ha of land at rail-served and/or water connected sites (including Port Warrington) could in theory be developed up to 2035 in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor.

However, if sites which are unlikely to be available only in the long term and where there are no active plans for a rail connection, are discounted the total falls to only 209ha and the only sites that offer the potential for a tri-modal, both water- and rail-connected, distribution park in the short to medium term are Port Salford and Port Warrington with a total of land area of 178ha.

Even if all 488ha were built out to their full extent, there would still be a shortfall of around 374ha of land that could not be found from all the appropriate rail and water connected sites in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester are up to 2035 and so would have to be developed by recycling existing or developing new road-only sites that would not meet the policy need set out in section 2.

Only Port Warrington and Port Salford can be developed as both water- and rail-connected distribution parks in the Liverpool-Warrington-Manchester corridor in the short to medium term, which means that Port Warrington should be regarded as being a high priority for Warrington in its Local Plan.

A review of potential port traffics shows that Port Warrington can act as an extension of the Port of Liverpool for port-centric logistics in the Warrington area, handling container traffic, dry bulk and construction materials and other general cargo (such as steel products and forest products) that would be transhipped at the Port of Liverpool and then transported along the Manchester Ship Canal on barges or small coastal and feeder container ships. The container services could be either to and from Port Warrington itself or a way-call en-route to other berths along the Ship Canal in Greater Manchester.

9.3 Network capacity & operational feasibility

The restoration of the short rail link from the Manchester Ship Canal Exchange Sidings that lie south of Arpley Yard allows Port Warrington to enjoy a direct connection to the West Coast Main Line and the use of those Exchange Sidings and the existing Arpley Yard further north to hold trains before and after loading. The intermodal terminal would be able to accommodate two sidings for 750 metre long intermodal trains.

The WCML is a W10 gauge cleared route, with the capability to accommodate 750 metre long intermodal rail freight services. Port Warrington will be able to handle the largest container units on standard platform wagons and at the most competitive length available on the GB network.

We have undertaken a timetable pathing exercise which shows that the Port Warrington site can currently be served by one freight path per hour per direction, which means it would be a commercially attractive proposition from the point of view of the rail freight industry. Our analysis also shows that plans by the public sector for HS2 and NPR will reinforce this position north of Crewe.

APPENDIX 1: KINGSWAY ROCHDALE – AVAILABLE PLOT INFORMATION AS PER DEVELOPER’S WEBSITE

		ha	acres
Plot C1	Available	1.63	4.03
Plot C2	Available	1.54	3.81
Plot D1	Available	1.56	3.85
Plot F	Available	3.28	8.10
Plot G	Available	3.51	8.67
Plot I	Available	6.99	17.27
Plot J2	Available	4.36	10.77
Plot L	Available	3.74	9.24
Plot M	Available	6.70	16.56
Plot N	Available	2.44	6.03
Plot O	Available	1.16	2.87
Plot P1	Available	1.18	2.92
Plot P2	Available	5.70	14.08
Plot P3	Available	1.35	3.34
Plot Q	Available	2.36	5.83
Plot R	Available	1.62	4.00
Plot U2	Available	1.39	3.43
Plot V	Available	0.95	2.27
Plot W	Available	1.41	3.48
Plot X	Available	2.16	5.34
TOTAL		56.6	139.78

Source: <https://www.kingswaybusinesspark.com/masterplan>

APPENDIX 2: TRAIN PATHING DIAGRAMS

**Appendix 3:
Moore Nature Reserve and Country
Park Masterplan and Vision
Document**



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

MOORE NATURE RESERVE & COUNTRY PARK VISION DOCUMENT

Prepared by LUC February 2019



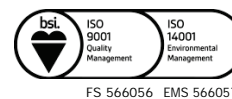
REVISION SCHEDULE

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

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FS 566056 EMS 566057

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

Purpose of the Report

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

The Waterfront proposals include:

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

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

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

The objectives of this document are:

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

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

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

Wider Context

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

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

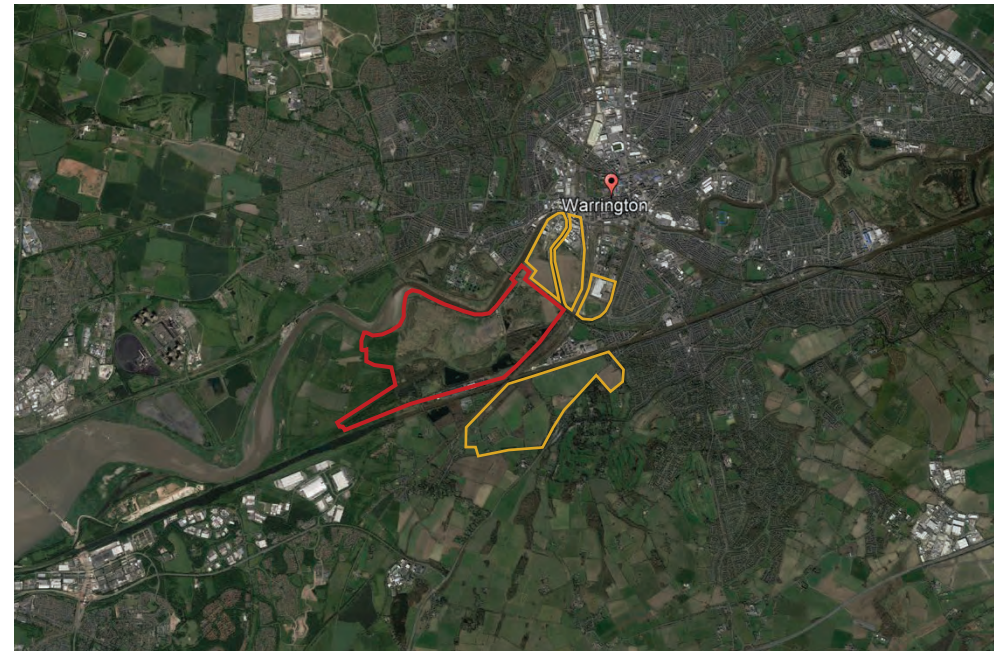


Figure 1 Study area and wider Waterfront Scheme Area & Southwest Urban Extension Residence Allocation

Study Area

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

Planning context

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

Policy CS 10 Strategic Proposal Waterfront & Arpley Meadow:

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

Policy SN 7 Enhancing Health and Well-being:

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

Policy QE 3 Green Infrastructure

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

Policy QE 5 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

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

Policy QE 7 Ensuring a High Quality Place:

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

Policy MP 3 Active Travel:

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

Open Space and Recreation Provision SPD:

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

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

WIDER SITE ANALYSIS

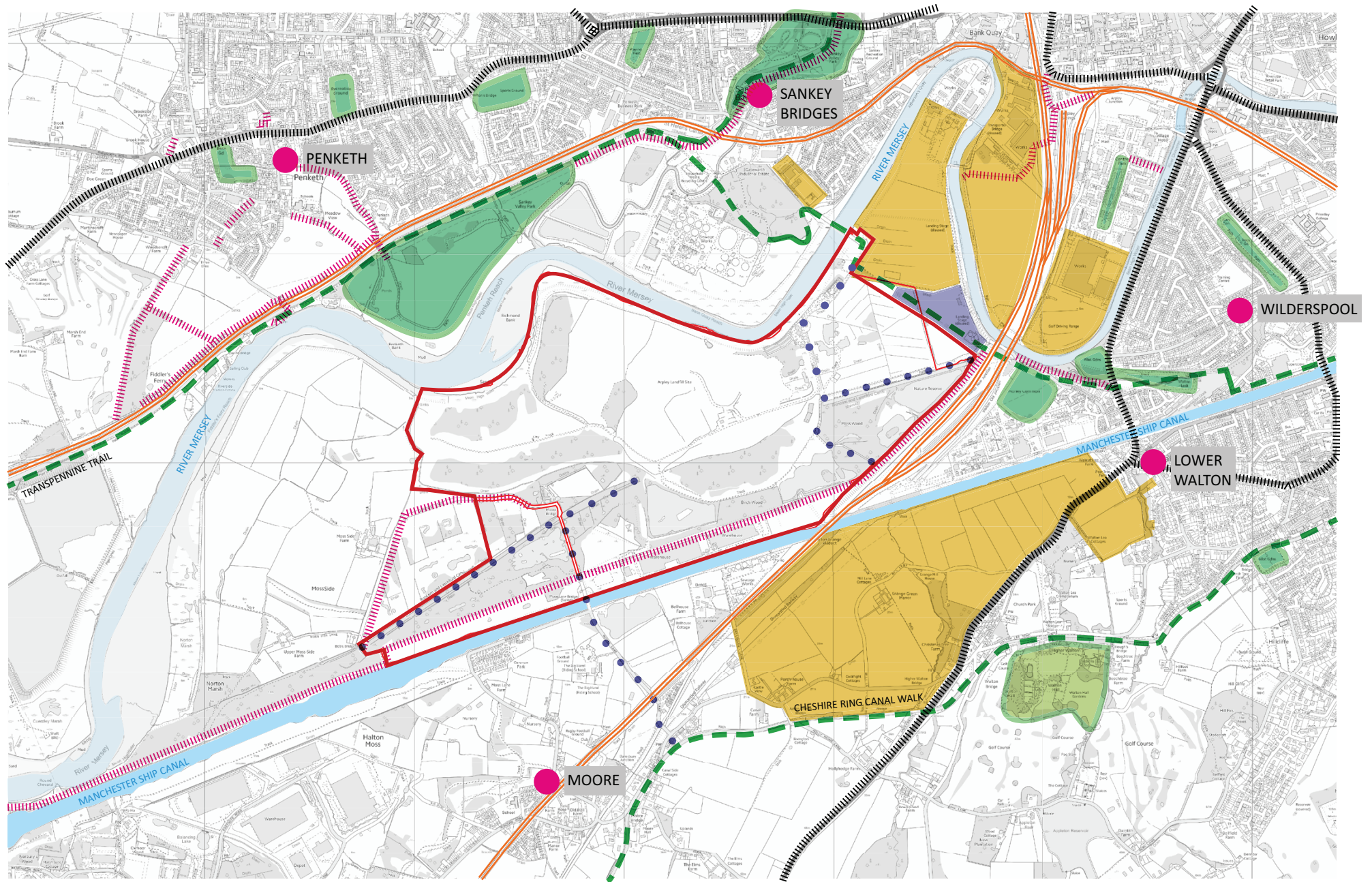













Figure 2 - Wider Site Analysis

Figure 2 - Legend

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

Wider Site Analysis

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

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

Figure 2 also highlights:

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

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

INTERNAL SITE ANALYSIS

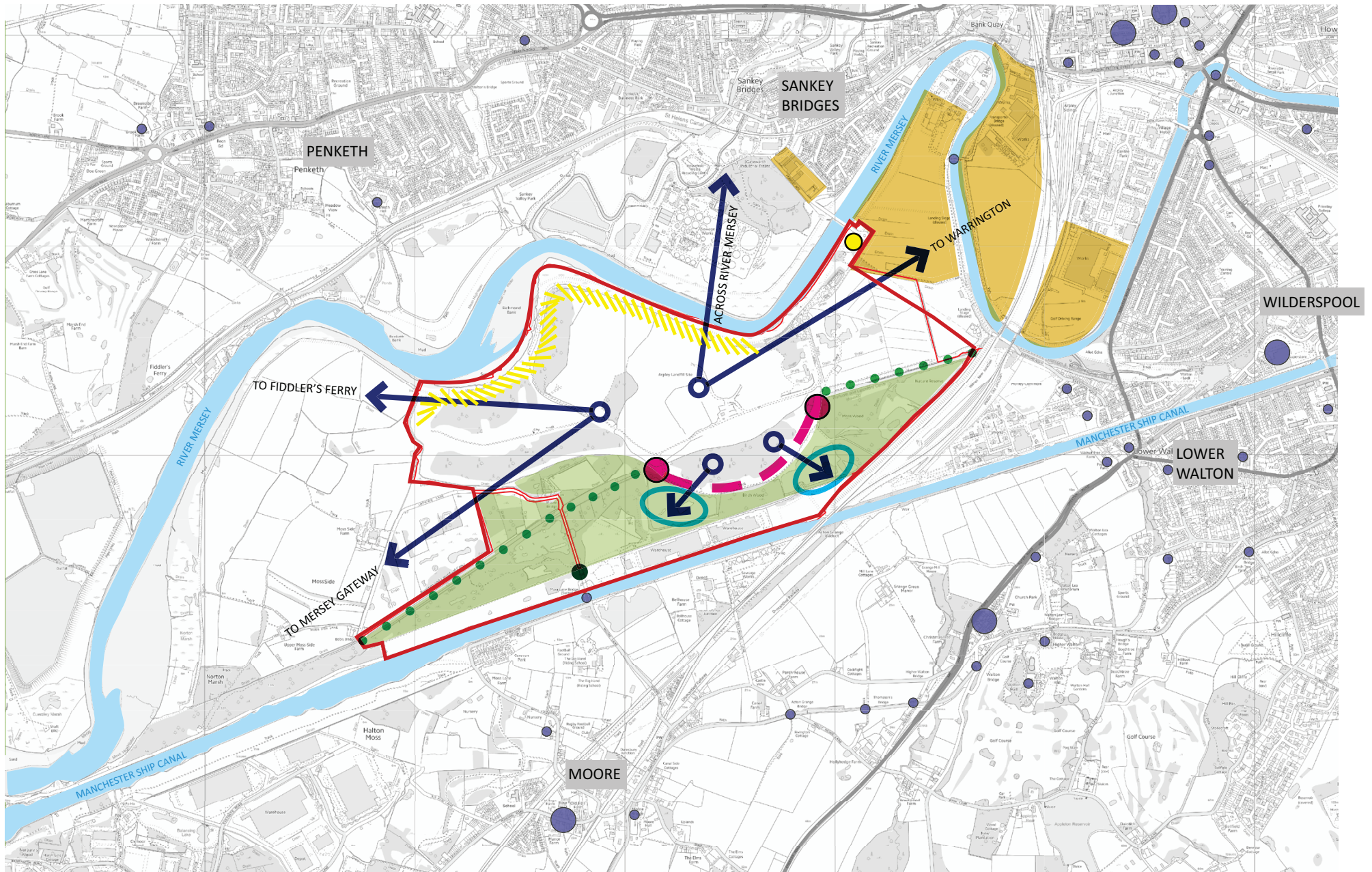
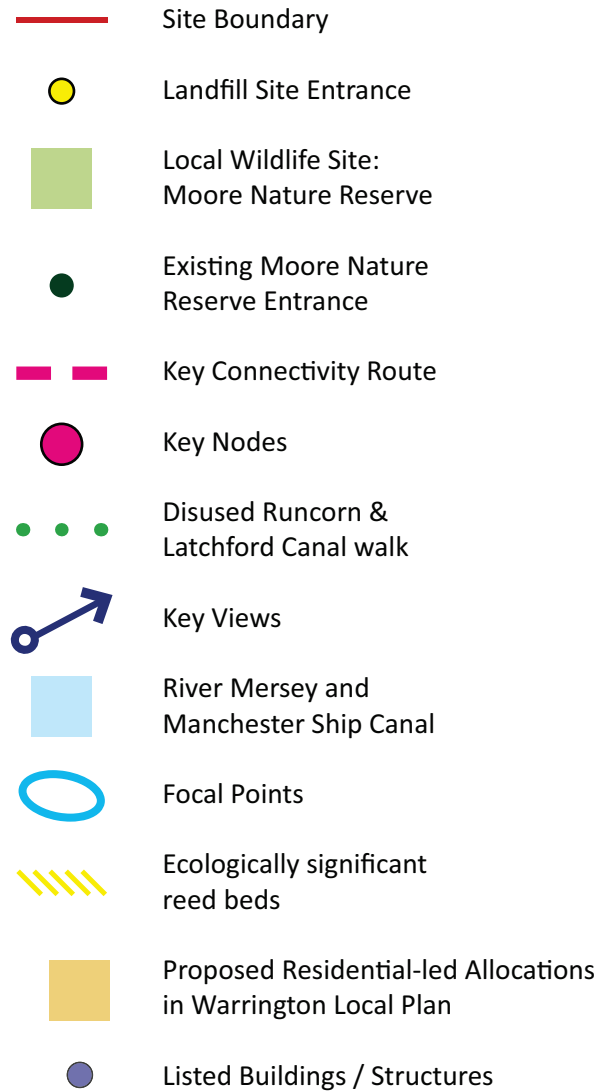


Figure 3 - Internal Site Analysis

Figure 3 - Legend



Internal Site Analysis

Figure 3 identifies:

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

FCC Arpley Landfill Site Closure Landscape Scheme

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

Ecological Considerations

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

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



View looking west to Fiddler's Ferry Power Station



View looking northwest to Warrington North Wastewater Treatment Works

Part II : DEVELOPMENT OF VISION

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

Figure 4 - Arpley Landfill Restoration Scheme



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Country Park Spatial Concepts

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

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

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

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

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

SPATIAL CONCEPTS



Figure 5 - Spatial Concepts









SPATIAL CONCEPTS





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

Landscape Masterplan Legend


Consented Scheme Proposals

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





Ecological Off-setting Within the Country Park

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





Enhanced Recreation Within the Country Park

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

Additional Infrastructure Within the Country Park

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

The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Proposals

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

Part II : DEVELOPMENT OF VISION

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

The Moore Nature Reserve and Country Park Landscape Masterplan

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

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

Ecological Off-Setting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aims of Proposals

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



Local signpost to Colin's Hide and Trans Pennine Trail



Pathway running alongside the Runcorn and Latchford Canal



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