

# FIDDLER'S FERRY MASTERPLAN

**Briefing: Warrington Borough Council Local Plan  
Preparation**  
Prepared for: **Scottish and Southern Energy Plc**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This briefing note has been prepared to assist Warrington Borough Council (WBC) to undertake an initial assessment of the emerging Fiddler's Ferry Masterplan for inclusion within the 2020 Warrington Local Plan-Submission Draft.

This submission is informed by extensive technical assessments of the former power station site undertaken in 2021. The emerging land use plan has also benefited from the input from the Fiddler's Ferry Task Force which has provided ongoing engagement with local authority officers from both Warrington Borough Council and Halton Borough Council.

SSE would like to acknowledge the advice and guidance gratefully received from both authorities.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Briefing

The purpose of this briefing note is threefold:

- To advise WBC of the likely capacity of Fiddler's Ferry to accommodate both employment and residential development over the course of the Warrington Local Plan 2021-2036;
- To set down a preliminary timeline for the delivery of the Masterplan over the period of the Plan; and
- To provide a draft development description for consideration and further development by the Local Plan team by way of establishing a shared understanding of the development requirements of Fiddler's Ferry.

## 2.0 Fiddler's Ferry Development Quantum

The Fiddler's Ferry Masterplan can deliver the following development quantum across two phases of the masterplan within the life of the local plan:

Phase 1 (North of the Railway Line) 2021-2031

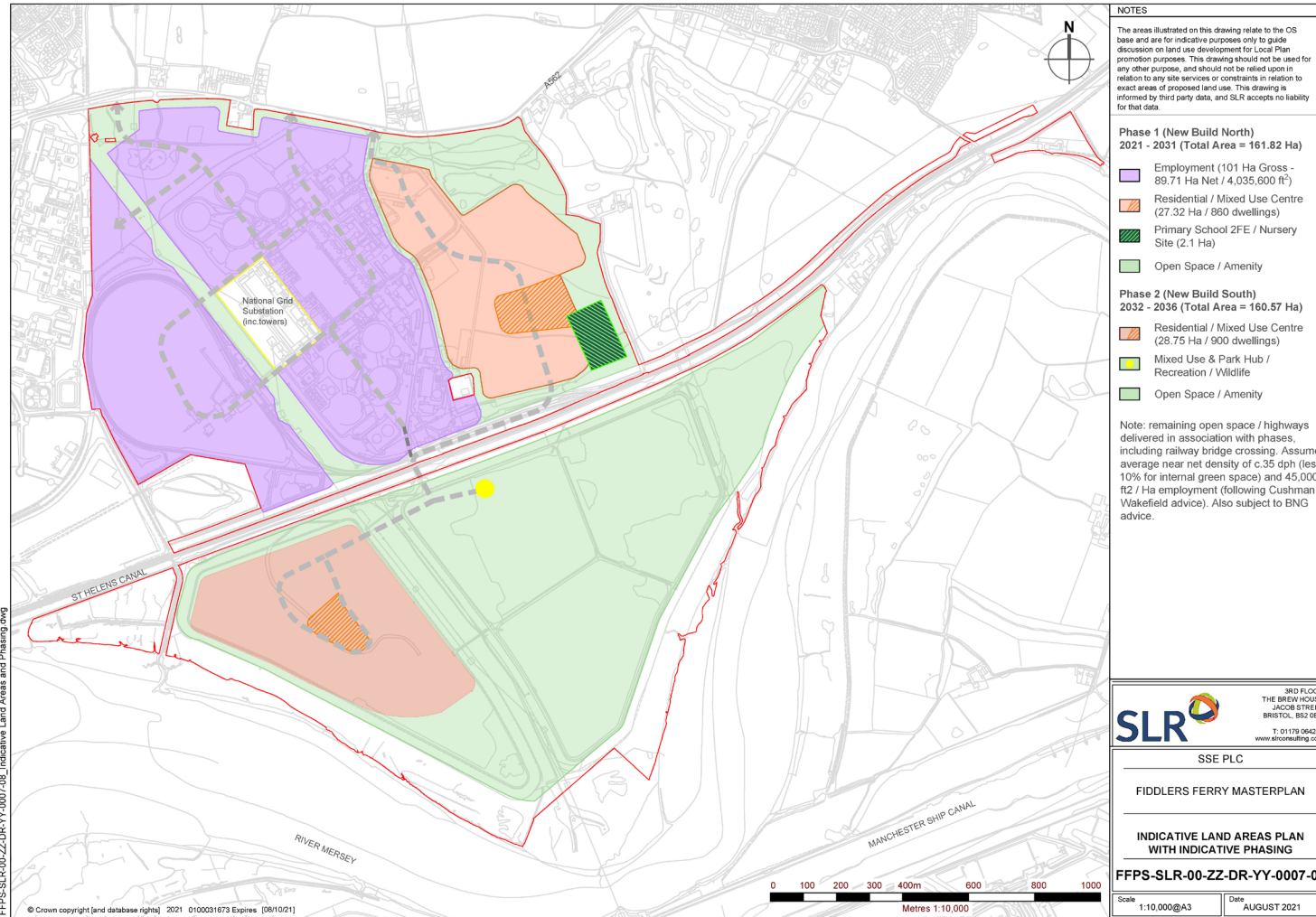
- 860 residential units
- 89.7 ha (circa 4,035,600m sq ft) net employment land

Phase 2 (South of the Railway Line) 2031 -36

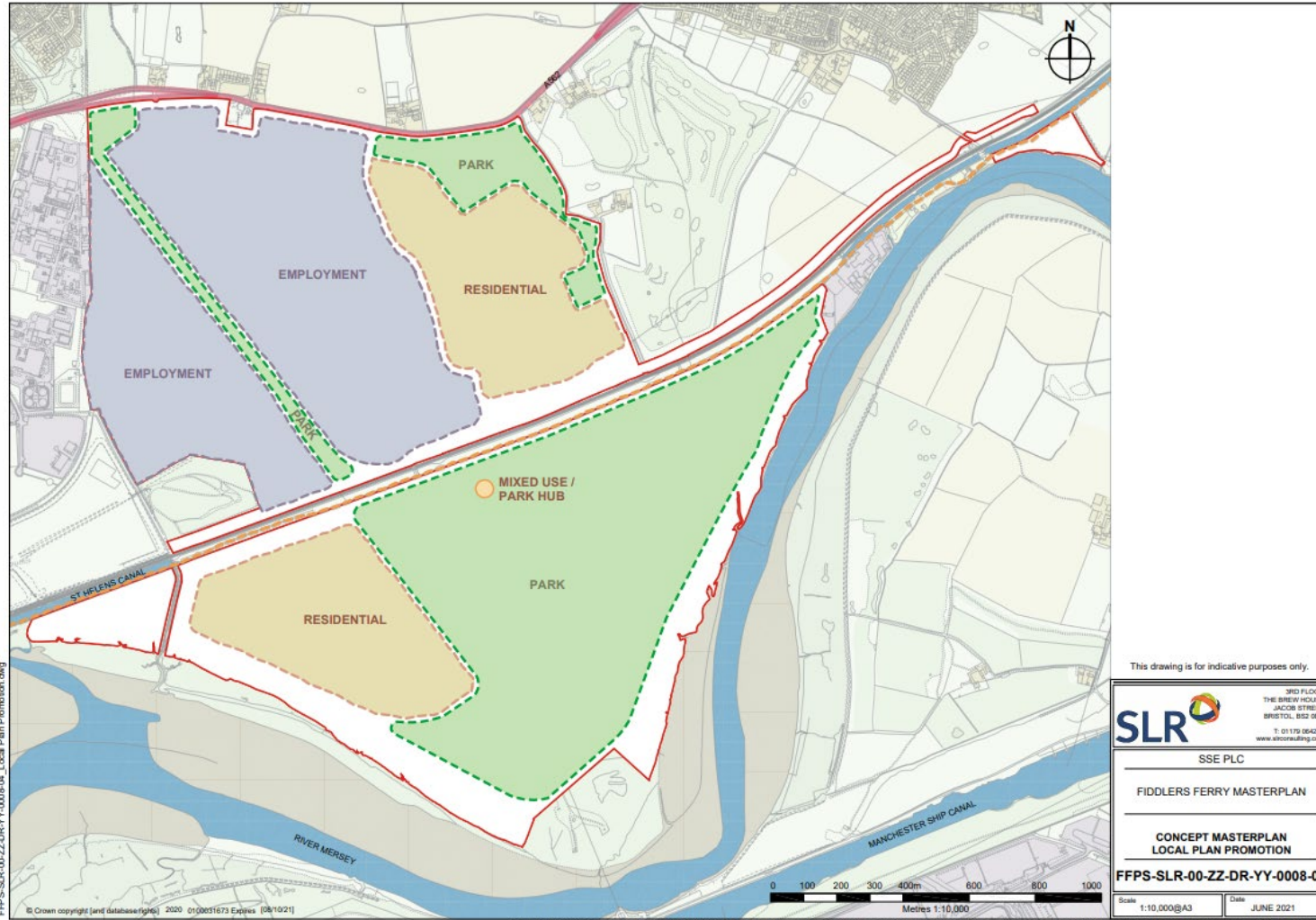
- 900 residential units

The employment area measures c.109 ha in total, however this is reduced to c101ha gross to allow for the presence of the national grid substation. A further 11.3ha has been allowed for landscaping provision producing a net development area of c. 89.7ha.

### 3.0 Concept Masterplan

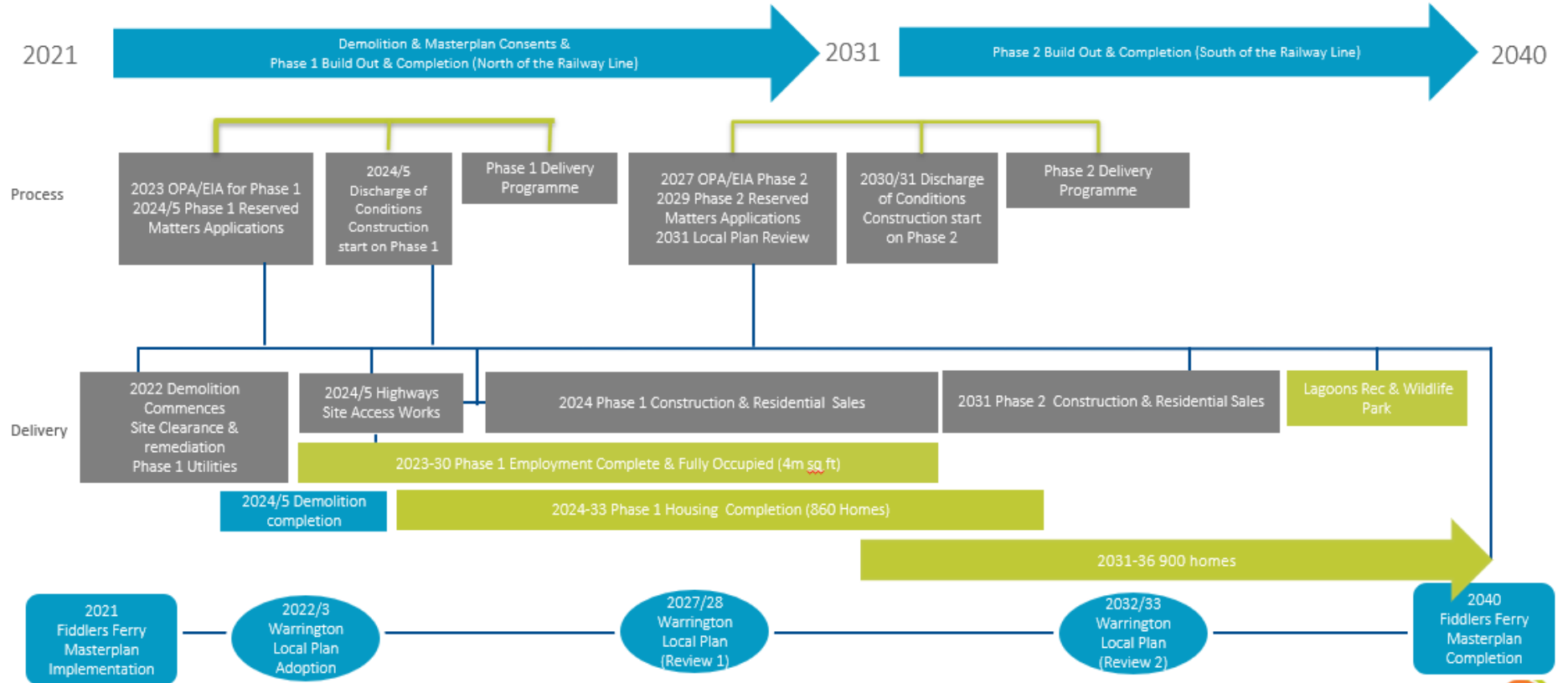


## 4.0 Local Plan Concept Drawing



## 5.0 Masterplan Delivery Programme

Fiddlers Ferry Masterplan – Delivery Programme 2021-2040



## 6.0 Opportunity Description

This section sets out a draft description for Fiddler's Ferry for consideration and further development by the Local Plan team by way of establishing a shared understanding of the development requirements of the development.

### 6.1 Fiddler's Ferry

The redevelopment of the former Fiddler's Ferry power station presents a major opportunity for a mixed-use employment and housing project on one of the largest brownfield sites in the region. Fiddler's Ferry will be developed as a sustainable mixed-use neighbourhood to the south west of Warrington adjacent to the borough boundary with Halton at the Widnes waterfront. The intention is to create an attractive, well-designed and distinctive place set within a strong landscape framework of open spaces and parkland. The area will be well served by new community infrastructure and a network of sustainable transport links maximising travel by walking, cycling and public transport utilising the route of the Trans Pennine Way connecting Widnes and Warrington.

The former power station site extends north and south of the St Helens Canal and Widnes to Warrington Railway Line comprising some 324 ha (800 acres) accessed from the A562 Widnes Road. This is an integrated planning unit comprising the former power station site and the extensive land holding containing the network of associated engineered ash lagoons and ancillary operational space. It will deliver a minimum of 1,760 homes and 89.7 Ha (4 million sq ft) of net employment land spread over two phases. It will provide a high-quality environmental setting and enable development to be comprehensively planned with new homes and employment land phased in accordance with the delivery of wide-ranging supporting infrastructure.

The housing and employment provision can be delivered substantially within the plan period and will make a major contribution to the borough's development needs, predominantly using previously developed land and ensuring the permanence of the revised Greenbelt boundaries

The new residential and working community will be supported by:

- Two new Local Centres comprising primary school, local shops and other local community facilities, one north and one south of the Widnes to Warrington railway line.
- Three new park facilities and extensive areas of open space and recreation; and
- Extensive highways and public transport improvements

The Fiddler's Ferry masterplan will provide for development in two distinctive sequential phases following demolition and remediation of the former power station, addressing a first phase north of the railway line and a second phase south of the railway line. Phase 1 will deliver a major employment hub of 89.7 (net) ha together with an adjacent residential neighbourhood of a minimum of 860 homes. Phase 2 will deliver a second residential neighbourhood of a minimum of 900 homes. Both phases will deliver three integrated parkland areas.

Both residential neighbourhoods will provide a range of housing types with a particular focus on family housing, homes for older people and provision of affordable housing. Each will be served by a Local Centre comprising local community and retail facilities with a shared single primary school provision. The neighbourhoods will each provide local parks and smaller areas of green space and be linked to a network of greenways and cyclepaths using the routes of the Verney Aqueduct and Trans Pennine Trail to connect to Cuerdley in the North, Widnes Waterfront to the west and Penketh and Warrington to the East.

Over 50% of the Fiddler's Ferry Masterplan area will be devoted to green infrastructure provision. Three parkland spaces will be created, two in the first phase and one in the second. On Phase 1 to the north the existing woodland and wildlife area that provides a buffer to the A564 will be augmented by an area for recreation and



sports pitches extending along the eastern boundary of the site providing a robust green belt boundary between the site and the strategic gap to Warrington. A linear park will also be provided on the line of the Verney Aqueduct. On Phase 2 a park will be formed along the east and southern flanks of the masterplan on the area of the former ash lagoons, encompassing existing wildlife habitats and providing a strong green edge to the impressive Mersey river corridor. In addition to these, the service corridors of the Verney Aqueduct which runs north-south through the site and the Trans Pennine Way which runs east-west will be developed as greenways and active travel routes.

Fiddler's Ferry will provide a major new Employment Area as an extension of the Widnes Waterfront Masterplan development area. The employment area measures c.101 ha gross (allowing for the National Grid Sub Station) and 89.7ha net development area (allowance made for 11.3ha of landscaping provision). This will make a significant contribution to meeting Warrington's future employment land needs, whilst supporting the consolidation of the Widnes Waterfront project. It will have the potential to comprise large scale distribution, logistics, industrial uses and low carbon energy projects, benefiting from its accessibility to the regional road network and its established grid infrastructure.

All new development will be designed to support walking and cycling for local journeys within the masterplan area and to other local destinations in both Widnes and Warrington. Improved public transport services will provide access to both towns and other Employment Areas in the wider Warrington/Widnes area.

The first phase of development will be supported by new junction connections to the A562 which will separate employment and residential traffic into the site and ease traffic flow. Further transport infrastructure will be required to support phase 2 of the development towards the end of the Plan Period. It is anticipated that this will potentially include a replacement crossing or upgrade of the existing bridge link across the railway line and canal serving Phase 2.

The development of Fiddler's Ferry will ensure that important ecological assets within the site are preserved and enhanced. Provision will be made within the masterplan for extensive areas of open space to provide additional habitats and enhance biodiversity, linking into Warrington's wider Green Infrastructure Network.

Phase 1 of Fiddler's Ferry can progress within the capacity of the existing transport infrastructure with potentially minor improvements to junctions east and west of the site access on the A562. The impact of phase 2 will be assessed in consultation with Highways England in terms of wider impacts with funding streams and trigger points identified for the delivery of the further mitigation measures should they be needed to enable development to come forward.

Community infrastructure within each of the phases will be required in early stages of development to ensure new residents have access to essential local services and to alleviate pressure on other facilities in south Warrington and Widnes.

The infrastructure requirements for Fiddler's Ferry can be kept under review throughout the Plan period. The detailed infrastructure requirements for development later in the Plan Period and, if necessary, beyond the Plan Period will be confirmed through future formal reviews of the Local Plan.

The development concept diagram has been informed by an extensive masterplanning exercise. It provides:

- a definitive site boundary for the overall Fiddler's Ferry Masterplan area;
- illustrative locations of the two residential neighbourhoods and the employment allocation; and
- illustrative leisure and green infrastructure network including the parklands and green links.

Key development requirements and principles, including details of phasing and the requirement for a delivery strategy can be set out in the local plan. The final form of development can be determined through the preparation of a comprehensive development framework which the Council will prepare as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

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