

Former Fiddlers Ferry Power Station

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

April 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview and Aims of the LVA

- 1.1.1. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared to inform the Former Fiddlers Ferry Power Station Development Framework (hereafter referred to as the Development Framework).
- 1.1.2. The LVA is a standalone document, prepared as a Technical Note to provide supporting information. The LVA summarises the key landscape and visual constraints and opportunities to be considered within the Development Framework, as well as recommending potential mitigation measures.
- 1.1.3. It then describes potential residual effects occurring on the landscape and visual resource of the site and surrounding area that would result from the Development Framework in operation. This appraisal has been undertaken by landscape architects at OPEN, specialising in landscape and visual impact assessment.
- 1.1.4. This LVA comprises the following elements:
 - Introduction: setting out the content of the LVA, the approach taken, the description of the project and extent of the study area;
 - Appraisal Methodology: describing the scope of the LVA, the methods used in the baseline appraisal and the appraisal of the levels of effects;
 - Landscape and Visual Baseline Conditions: describing the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and the surrounding area based on desk-based study and site visits;
 - Constraints and Opportunities: summary of the key constraints and opportunities that the site context and Development Framework poses for the site and surrounding area, and summary of the measures that could be taken to avoid or minimise the landscape and visual effects of the Development Framework through the design;
 - Landscape and Visual Appraisal: identifying the residual effects on landscape elements, landscape character, selected viewpoints and principal visual receptors; and
 - Summary of Effects.
- 1.1.5. The LVA is supported by a set of figures which contain GIS maps and photographs to illustrate aspects of the appraisal, and these have supported the professional judgement that is applied within the appraisal.

1.2. Relevance to the Development Framework

- 1.2.1. Landscape and visual matters are a key consideration in the production of the Development Framework and the future development proposals it guides. The LVA underpins an assessment of the capacity of the landscape and visual resource to accommodate development anticipated by the Development Framework.
- 1.2.2. The LVA should be used to help identify areas for development that would not compromise the key landscape and visual sensitivities identified in the baseline study, and to consider landscape and appropriate visual mitigation measures that would enhance the landscape 'fit' of the development proposals.

1.3. Approach

- 1.3.1. The appraisal follows best practice guidance produced by the Landscape Institute in its 'Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) (3rd Edition 2013) and

evaluates the likely effects of the proposed development on the landscape elements, landscape character and visual amenity of the site and its surroundings.

- 1.3.2. The following extract, taken from the GLVIA Statement of Clarification (Jan 2013), gives guidance on the terminology to be used in non-EIA Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisals, such as this.

'In carrying out appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes. The reason is that should a landscape professional apply LVIA principles and processes in carrying out an appraisal and then go on to determine that certain effects would be likely to be significant, given the term 'significant' is enshrined in EIA Regulations, such a judgement could trigger the requirement for a formal EIA. The emphasis on likely 'significant effects' in formal LVIA stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. The same principle - focussing on a proportional approach – also applies to appraisals of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA.'

- 1.3.3. In this appraisal, effects are assessed to be either 'minor', 'moderate' or 'major'. The level of effect is assessed through a combination of two considerations - the sensitivity of the landscape element, landscape character receptor or visual receptor, and the magnitude of change that would result from the proposed development. This evaluation is carried out for each of the receptors described within the baseline section of the report.

1.4. Site and Project Description

- 1.4.1. For the purposes of the LVA, the following terminology has been adopted to refer to the various elements of the site:

- Ownership Boundary – the area within the FF Allocation Site within the ownership of Peel NRE which works associated with the Development Framework may occur (see Figure 1).
- The Fiddlers Ferry (FF) Allocation Site, which is the area currently proposed in the emerging Warrington Local Plan. This includes an area to the north of the St Helens Canal comprising the majority of existing FFPS infrastructure, and an area to the south of the canal comprising former power station lagoons and adjacent land (See Figure 1).
- The FF Development Area, which covers the part of the FF Allocation Site to the north of the St Helens Canal. In Warrington Borough Council's Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021/22 – 2038/39 this area is proposed to be developed for employment and residential use, with associated open spaces and green infrastructure improvements.
- FF Employment Area, which is the area in the west of the FF Development Area to the north of St Helens Canal.
- FF Residential Area, which is the area in the east of the FF Development Area to the north of St Helens Canal.
- FF Southern Area, which is the area to the south of the St Helens Canal comprising ash lagoons.

- 1.4.2. The proposed first phase of employment development within the western part of the FF Development Area ('the FF Employment Phase 1'), is subject to a live planning application

(Ref. 2023/00392/EA). Further detail on the proposals within this area can be found in the Fiddlers Ferry Employment Land Phase 1 Design and Access Statement (Michael Sparks on behalf of Peel NRE, 2023). The findings of the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the FF Employment Phase 1 are summarised below:

- The Phase 1 LVIA identified no significant effects on landscape and visual receptors, during either the construction or operational phases;
 - The following receptors were considered to experience minor adverse construction phase effects, reducing to minor neutral effects during the operational phase:
 - Site landscape character;
 - Site environs landscape character;
 - LCA 1F: Penketh and Cuerdley ;
 - LCA 5A: River Mersey / River Bolin;
 - LCA 6A: Victoria Park to Fiddlers Ferry;
 - LCA 4: Upper Mersey Estuary;
 - VP1: Trans Pennine Way/Mersey Way on south bank of disused St Helens Canal, to south of proposed development boundary;
 - Road users at VP4: Marsh Lane to east of FFPS, adjacent to Marsh End Farm Barns and Marsh End Farm;
 - Main road users, Urban minor road users and residential occupiers north of the A562 Widnes Road at VP5L A562 Widens Road junction with Tannery Lane on western edge of Penketh;
 - VP6: Village Green at Cuerdley Cross, to north of FFPS;
 - PRoW users at VP8: Johnson’s Lane (Footpath W/68), adjacent to western boundary of the Application Site; and
 - VP11: Wigg Island Nature Reserve.
 - Construction and operational phase effects on the remaining two landscape receptors, visual receptors at the remaining 11 viewpoints, and additional visual receptors at three of the above viewpoints, were identified as being less than those identified above.
 - The Phase 1 LVIA did not assess the effects of the removal of the cooling towers and associated structures and buildings of the FFPS, as these were assumed to have been removed as part of the enabling works associated with the proposal.
 - Landscape mitigation proposed as part of the Phase 1 proposals included landscape designs which would enhance biodiversity and habitats for wildlife across the site, as well as enhancing green infrastructure and local landscape character.
 - Mitigation of the visual effects of the proposed building units described within the Phase 1 LVIA comprised the use of cladding in muted colours.
- 1.4.3. Notably the FF Employment Phase 1 application provides for the largest buildings being located centrally within the site area whilst lower buildings are proposed to the north and south where they are closer to visual receptors on the Trans Pennine Trail and Widnes Road and residential areas to the north respectively.
- 1.4.4. The former FFPS is located between Warrington to the east and Widnes to the west. The FF Allocation Site is bounded by Widnes Road to the north, Marsh Lane to the east, the River Mersey to the south, and existing industrial development to the west.
- 1.4.5. An area within the southern part of the FF Allocation Site, to the south of the St Helens Canal, comprises several large lagoons. Currently one of these lagoons (Lagoon D) is currently in use for ash extraction, which is anticipated to continue. Once ash extraction ceases, across the

lagoon area, land to the south of the canal will be restored and used for nature conservation, and parkland for leisure/recreation. It is understood that the landform of the lagoon embankments would likely be retained. It is also understood that there may be longer term development potential for Lagoon D, but this is beyond the current plan period and beyond the scope of the Development Framework.

- 1.4.6. Whilst the area to the south of the canal is included within the FF Allocation Site, in overall terms due to ongoing ash extraction and the need for restoration there is less certainty around the timing of future proposals. The artificial landform of the lagoons and their position adjacent to the River Mersey also mean that there are fewer receptors likely to experience views of this part of the FF Allocation Site than the northern part. Reference is therefore made to this area within the appraisal where relevant, but the main focus is on the FF Development Area, to the north of the St Helens Canal.

1.5. Study Area

Site work has shown that the visual influence of development planned as part of the Development Framework would be limited to a relatively localised area around the former FFPS. This is largely owing to the relatively flat nature of the FF Allocation Site and the surrounding area, and the screening effect of landform (as shown on Figure 2) along with extensive built form and tree cover within the vicinity of the former FFPS.

- 1.5.1. The study area has therefore been set at a radius of 2 km from the edge of the Ownership Boundary, which defines the extent of the area within which works associated with the Development Framework may occur. This reflects the localised extent within which it is likely for notable effects to arise.
- 1.5.2. The study area includes land within Warrington Borough Council, Halton Borough Council, and St Helens Borough Council. The ownership boundary, the FF Allocation Site and the study area are shown on Figure 1.

1.6. Planning Context

- 1.6.1. Warrington Borough Council's Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021/22 – 2038/39 includes allocation of the former FFPS for employment and housing as shown on Plate 1. This comprises an allocation across the eastern part of the FF Development Area for the provision of a residential area including a minimum of 860 homes and associated infrastructure and amenities, and an allocation of 101 ha. of employment land across the western part of the FF Development Area.
- 1.6.2. The eastern part of the FF Development Area, to the west of Marsh Lane and east of the existing FFPS infrastructure, currently lies within the Green Belt. However, 29 ha of this land is proposed to be removed from the Green Belt as part of the emerging Local Plan, under draft Policy MD3 (Fiddlers Ferry), and this will allocate residential development (a minimum of 860 homes, as well as a primary school and neighbourhood centre) across this eastern part of the FF Development Area.

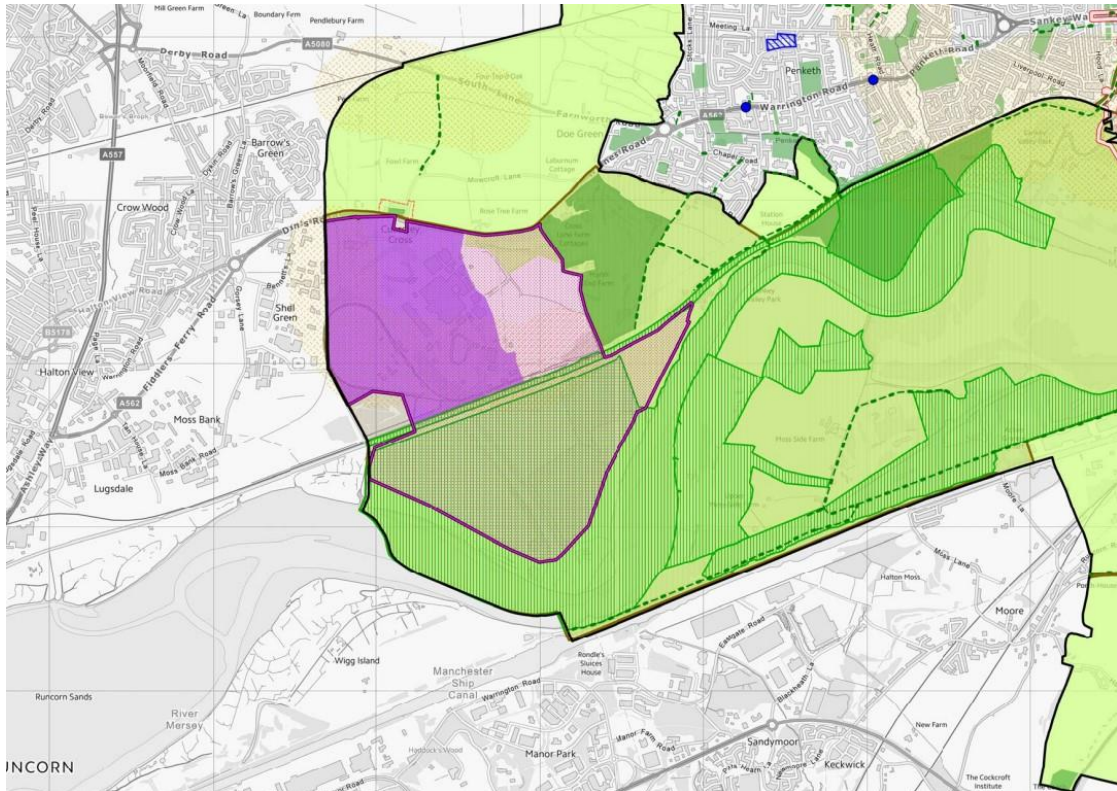


Plate 1: Extract from Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan Policies Map (source: Warrington Borough Council)

- 1.6.3. Land within the Green Belt to the west of Marsh Lane was identified as making a strong contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt (Arup on behalf of Warrington Borough Council, 2016). However, an assessment of the effects of releasing this land from the Green Belt (Arup on behalf of Warrington Borough Council, 2021) found that, although development across this area would result in some encroachment into the countryside and reduce the separation between the Warrington and Widnes urban areas, this would not result in neighbouring towns merging and would not represent unrestricted sprawl. The assessment concluded that although there would be some localised harm to the Green Belt in this location it would not affect the overall integrity of the Warrington Green Belt.
- 1.6.4. The proposed new Green Belt boundary would follow Marsh Lane, to the immediate east of the FF Development Area. Mitigation planting proposed as part of the development (in order to limit visual effects on nearby receptors and to mitigate for the loss of hedgerows and broadleaved woodland across other parts of the FF Development Area) would also have the effect of strengthening this new Green Belt boundary ensuring that it is a robust and defensible Green Belt boundary, as recommended by the Fiddlers Ferry Green Belt Assessment.
- 1.6.5. The western part of the FF Development Area is proposed to be designated for 101 ha. of employment land, comprising employment uses, following the demolition of the existing infrastructure on the western part of the FF Development Area.

2. Appraisal Methodology

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. Presented below is a summary of the appraisal methodology. Further detail of the criteria and levels assessed is included in Appendix 1 at the end of this LVA.
- 2.1.2. The following sources have been used in the preparation of the methodology and as guidance in the preparation of the written appraisal and production of figures.
 - The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013a). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (GLVIA3).
 - The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013b). GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13.
 - The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013c). GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/14.
 - Christine Tudor, Natural England (2014). An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment;
 - Landscape Institute (2011). Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11, Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment; and
 - Landscape Institute (2017). Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/17 Visual representation of development proposals.
 - Landscape Institute (2021). Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, Technical Guidance Note 02/21.
 - National Planning Policy Framework, 2021.
 - National Planning Practice Guidance, 2019.

2.2. Scope of the Appraisal

- 2.2.1. Effects on the landscape and visual resource of the former FFPS and study area are only considered during the post construction operational phase, as the purpose of this LVA is to guide the form and extent of operational development to be defined in the Development Framework and to assess the effects of this.
- 2.2.2. There are no landscape designations within the 2 km study area, and since effects on receptors beyond this distance are not included, there is no consideration of likely effects on landscape designations.
- 2.2.3. There is also no consideration of cumulative effects contained within the LVA. Although there are a number of approved applications in the 2 km study area, the Development Framework is considered unlikely to result in additional cumulative effects in combination with these proposals due to the generally domestic nature and small scale of development proposed in these applications.

Phase 1 LVIA

- 2.2.4. Part of the FF Development Area is subject to a live application for full planning permission, relating to the first phase of employment development - referred to as the FF Employment Phase 1 Planning Application (Ref. 2023/00392/EA). An LVIA was prepared as part of the EIA process to support this Planning Application.
- 2.2.5. Reference has been made to the FF Employment Phase 1 LVIA in the identification of likely landscape and visual receptors. In particular, viewpoints selected for inclusion in the LVA have

been chosen with reference to those included in the FF Employment Phase 1 LVIA, to allow the two reports to be read alongside one another.

- 2.2.6. Due to the different scope and focus of the LVA, not every viewpoint included within the FF Employment Phase 1 Planning Application is included in this LVA and some alternative locations have been used that are deemed to be more suitable for consideration of the wider FF Allocation. Further information is provided in the Existing Visual Amenity section below.
- 2.2.7. The area covered within the FF Employment Phase 1 Planning Application is located within the FF Development Area and forms part of the Development Framework. However, the effects of the proposals included within the FF Employment Phase 1 Planning Application are only described as forming part of the future baseline within which the Development Framework proposals would occur. This prevents duplication of the effects identified within the FF Employment Phase 1 LVIA.

2.3. Development Framework

- 2.3.1. Landscape and visual issues are a key consideration for the Development Framework. To assist this, this LVA has been prepared alongside the Development Framework to help ensure that:
- Emerging proposals within the Development Framework are informed by identified landscape and visual constraints and opportunities;
 - Emerging proposals within Development Framework consider potential landscape and visual mitigation measures;
 - The LVA has appraised the likely effects of the Development Framework, taking potential mitigation measures into account and suggests further potential mitigation that may help to reduce the effects on identified sensitive receptors.

2.4. Categories of Effects

- 2.4.1. In the appraisal, the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource are grouped into three categories: effects on landscape elements, effects on landscape character, and effects on visual amenity.
- 2.4.2. **Effects on landscape elements:** are restricted to the area within the site boundary and are the direct effects on the fabric of the site, such as the removal or addition of trees and alteration to ground cover. This category of effects is made up of landscape elements, which are the components of the landscape that may be physically affected by the development of the site.
- 2.4.3. **Effects on landscape character:** arise either through the introduction of new elements that physically alter the pattern of elements that makes up landscape character, or through visibility of the proposed development, which may alter the way in which the pattern of elements is perceived. This category of effects is made up of landscape character receptors.
- 2.4.4. **Effects on visual amenity:** is an appraisal of how the proposed development would affect views throughout the study area. The appraisal of visual effects is presented as an appraisal of the effects that the proposed development would have on views from principal visual receptors, which are the notable settlements, routes, features and attractions found throughout the study area (as ascertained through the baseline study).
- 2.4.5. The appraisal of effects on landscape character and visual amenity are informed by a series of viewpoints that have been selected to represent visibility of the proposed development from the principal visual receptors around the site. The locations of these viewpoints are shown on Figure 4.

2.5. Methodology

Desk study

- 2.5.1. A desk study has been carried out as part of the appraisal. This study identifies aspects of the landscape and visual resource that may need to be considered as receptors in the landscape and visual appraisal, including landscape character typology, roads, Public Rights of Way, and settlements.
- 2.5.2. The following sources have been referred to in the desk study:
- Natural England (2014). National Character Area Profiles;
 - Warrington Borough Council (2014). Local Plan Core Strategy.
 - Warrington Borough Council (2021). Warrington Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan, 2018 – 2038.
 - Agathoclis Beckmann Landscape Architects on behalf of Warrington Borough Council (2007). Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment.
 - TEP on behalf of Halton Borough Council (2009). Halton Landscape Character Assessment.
 - Arup on behalf of Warrington Borough Council (2016). Green Belt Assessment: Final Report.
 - Arup on behalf of Warrington Borough Council (2021). Green Belt Assessment: Fiddlers Ferry.
 - Warrington Borough Council (2023). Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2021/22 – 2038/39: Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications.

Site visit / other assessment

- 2.5.3. Field work within the study area has been carried out during the course of the appraisal, in order to review the baseline conditions of the former FFPS, identify potential landscape and visual receptors, take viewpoint photographs, and carry out and review the appraisal of effects. A site visit and viewpoint photography took place in March 2023 when the surrounding deciduous trees were not in leaf. This ensures that their more limited screening effect during the winter months is understood. For a small number of viewpoints (11-13) photography presented in the FF Employment Phase 1 LVIA has also been incorporated into this LVA.

Assessment of the Level of the Effect

Sensitivity

- 2.5.4. Sensitivity is an expression of the ability of a landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development. The sensitivity is determined through a combination of the value of the receptor, and the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed development.
- 2.5.5. Levels of sensitivity - high, medium to high, medium, medium to low, low and negligible - are applied in order that the judgement used in the process of appraisal is made clear. The criteria used to determine sensitivity differ for the effects on landscape elements, landscape receptors and visual receptors. These criteria are explained in full in the Appendix to this report.

Magnitude of change

- 2.5.6. Magnitude of change is an expression of the extent of the change to the landscape and visual receptors that would result from the introduction of the proposed development. The magnitude of change is assessed in terms of the size and scale of the impact. The

geographical extent of the area influenced is described in relation to the magnitude of change.

- 2.5.7. Levels of magnitude of change - high, medium to high, medium, medium to low and low - are applied in order that the judgement used in the process of appraisal is made clear. The criteria used to determine magnitude of change differ for the effects on landscape receptors and visual receptors, as well as the cumulative effects on both. These criteria are explained in full in the Appendix to this report.

Level of effect

- 2.5.8. In order to ascertain the level of effect, the sensitivity rating is combined with the magnitude of change rating, through the application of professional judgement to conclude whether the level of the effect is major, moderate or minor.
- 2.5.9. A major effect occurs where the proposed development would provide a defining influence on a landscape element, landscape character receptor or visual receptor.
- 2.5.10. A minor effect occurs where the effect of the proposed development is not material, and the baseline characteristics of the landscape element, landscape character receptor, or visual receptor continue to provide the definitive influence.
- 2.5.11. A moderate effect occurs where the proposed development has a notable influence on a landscape element, landscape character receptor or visual receptor, but where the baseline characteristics continue to provide the definitive influence.

3. Landscape and Visual Baseline

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. The baseline study records the existing conditions of the former FFPS and study area to gain an understanding of what makes the landscape distinctive and what the important components or characteristics are. The baseline study is instrumental in the identification of the landscape elements, landscape character receptors and visual receptors included in the appraisal.
- 3.1.2. This section is presented under the following headings:
- Site Description and Context;
 - Proposed Phase 1 Development;
 - Landscape Baseline:
 - Landscape Designations;
 - Existing Landscape Character;
 - Visual Baseline:
 - Principal Visual Receptors;
 - Viewpoints;
 - Summary of Receptors to be Assessed.

3.2. Site description and context

- 3.2.1. The ownership boundary covers an area of approximately 322ha.
- 3.2.2. Towards the west of the FF Development Area, infrastructure associated with the eight cooling towers (114 m tall), chimney (200 m tall) and main power generation building (including boiler house and turbine hall) of the former FFPS occupy a large area. Hard standings and access routes as well as other buildings and plant/infrastructure occupy the

- area. Notably parts of the former FFPS, including four of the cooling towers, were demolished in December 2023.
- 3.2.3. West of the main FFPS buildings lies an area of ash and an ash processing plant surrounded to the north, west and south by areas of planted and regenerating woodland/scrub vegetation.
 - 3.2.4. The Development Framework includes a drawing which shows the buildings and infrastructure that are to be retained on the site permanently or for an assumed duration.
 - 3.2.5. There are two electricity sub-stations that will be permanently retained within the FF Development Area. These are a National Grid sub-station in the centre of the industrial area to the east of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct and a smaller substation to the south-east of the industrial area. There are also several pylon mounted transmission lines linking to these sub-stations and running north-south through the industrial part of the site and from the central part of the site, to the south and thereafter alongside the St Helens Canal and rail sidings. These will also be retained permanently.
 - 3.2.6. To the south-east of the FF Employment Area there are a number of buildings that are associated with the Ash processing that will be retained only for the duration of all ash extraction from the lagoon area (potentially the next 20 years or more, subject to Lagoon Management Plan)..
 - 3.2.7. The existing road bridge over the canal/rail corridor enables ash extraction. Its retention beyond the duration of the ash extraction operations will be subject to its condition and will be defined as part of the Lagoon Management Plan.
 - 3.2.8. There are several, existing, small structures in the north-west of the site that fall outside of Peel ownership. It is assumed these are permanent or are to be retained long term.
 - 3.2.9. An area of rail sidings and the adjacent rail hopper building to the north of the canal will be retained in the long term, subject to demand for re-use.
 - 3.2.10. There is also a site for a proposed battery storage facility located towards the north-west of the FF Development Area. Whilst this is not strictly a retained feature its presence is relevant as part of the context for the development.
 - 3.2.11. The Vyrnwy Aqueduct runs underground north-west to south-east between the main power station buildings and the former coal storage area. Landcover across the north-western part of the FF Development Area includes grassland and arable agricultural land.
 - 3.2.12. In the north-eastern corner of the FF Development Area there is an undesignated nature reserve, which features broadleaved woodland, meadow and ponds. To the south of this, the land cover comprises arable land with field boundaries delineated by sparse rows of broadleaved trees and a watercourse. There is also an area of relatively dense woodland in the south-eastern corner, adjacent to the railway line and rail sidings which run alongside the St Helens Canal. Parts of the canal are no longer navigable and have been colonised by wetland species.
 - 3.2.13. There are several areas of broadleaved plantation woodland, mixed plantation woodland and/or mixed scrub around the edges of the FF Allocation Site, including along the southern boundary of the FF Development Area, where it is located along a mound; to the north of the northern cooling towers; along Widnes Road to the west of the nature reserve; and to the north and west of the former coal storage area.
 - 3.2.14. There is a disused fishing pond featuring several scattered trees along its banks at the north-western corner wet within a context of arable agricultural land. Figure 5 shows the existing landscape elements and features within the ownership boundary.
 - 3.2.15. In the surrounding context, land uses include industrial and commercial units to the west of the former FFPS; residential development, particularly focused within Widnes to the north-

west and Warrington to the north east; and arable land, primarily focused to the north and to the south-east, beyond the River Mersey. A golf course is located to the east.

3.3. Proposed FF Employment Phase 1 development

- 3.3.1. The FF Employment Phase 1 proposals have been described and assessed in the Environmental Statement which accompanies the planning application (Ref. 2023/00392/EA). The proposals are summarised below:
- Construction of four units of 21.7m to 33.95m high for logistics and manufacturing space with ancillary offices with the smaller buildings located to the north and south of the site.
 - Associated infrastructure, including roads and car parking.
 - Green infrastructure provision, including semi-natural planting to the west and south of the buildings, and more formal planting to the east.
 - Drainage features, including a surface water attenuation pond.
- 3.3.2. The key changes to landscape features associated with FF Employment Phase 1 development would include removal of some areas of woodland and scrub and the addition of areas of new native planting along the western and southern boundaries of the FF Development Area, a pond at the south-western extent of the FF Development Area, and an area of shrub and species rich grassland at the south-eastern extent of the FF Employment Phase 1 site.

3.4. Effects of Removal of Former FFPS Infrastructure

- 3.4.1. The former FFPS infrastructure, including in particular the eight cooling towers, chimney and main power generation building, as well as further ancillary infrastructure, currently form a notable feature within the study area. The vertical scale of the cooling towers and chimney in particular mean that they are visible from much of local surrounding area.
- 3.4.2. This visual prominence is noted within published landscape character assessments, including Warrington Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment (Agathoclis Beckmann Landscape Architects on behalf of Warrington Borough Council, 2007). The description for the Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland Landscape Character Area (LCA), notes the “visually dominant effect of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station”. The descriptions of surrounding LCAs also note the influence of industrial development on surrounding skylines.
- 3.4.3. Much of the study area is therefore already subject to views of large-scale industrial infrastructure, and this industrial development forms part of the landscape and visual baseline. Much of this infrastructure, including the main elements described above, would be removed as part of the development proposals. This removal would have a positive effect on the landscape and visual resource of the study area.
- 3.4.4. The baseline influence of industrial development as a landscape feature within part of the FF Development Area will generally mitigate the magnitude of change to the landscape baseline resulting from the development proposals. The employment proposals will be in keeping with the existing landscape character and industrial land use across the western part of the FF Development Area.
- 3.4.5. The existing visual prominence of the former FFPS infrastructure will also generally mitigate the visual magnitude of change associated with the development proposals. The industrial and commercial buildings across the western part of the site will be smaller in vertical scale than the cooling towers and chimney of the former FFPS. They are assumed to be up to approximately 35 m in height, compared to the height of 114 m of the cooling towers and 200 m of the chimney. Although the proposed buildings will be smaller in vertical scale, they

are likely to occupy a larger footprint than the buildings of the FFPS, will require some removal of existing woodland and will likely bring development into closer proximity to a small number of visual receptors in the surrounding area. This is because the former FFPS buildings are generally focused towards the centre of the site, while the proposed buildings may be located towards the boundaries of the FF Development Area. However, overall the removal of the FFPS infrastructure is considered to result in positive effects on visual amenity. The long-term retention of the infrastructure described in Section 3.2 will not affect this conclusion. The existing visual influence of this industrial development is considered to reduce the magnitude of change associated with the development proposals.

3.5. Landscape Baseline

Landscape Designations

- 3.5.1. There are no national or local level landscape designations within the former FFPS or the surrounding area that would otherwise indicate a higher quality and value of the landscape and visual resource that would otherwise result in higher levels of sensitivity to the proposed change.
- 3.5.2. The Green Belt and designated allocated uses are planning controls and are considered in Section 1.6.

Existing Landscape Character

- 3.5.3. Landscape character assessment within the study area has been carried out at the national level by Natural England, and at a county level by Cheshire County Council. The 1994 Cheshire County Landscape Character Assessment was updated in 2008, but the updated version does not include land within Warrington Borough Council, as this was made a unitary authority in 1998. This assessment is therefore not considered further.
- 3.5.4. Landscape character assessment has been carried out at a district level across the study area by Warrington Borough Council and Halton Borough Council. Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within both boroughs are shown on Figure 3. Areas to the immediate west and north-west of the FF Development Area, including an area of housing located to the north-west and represented by Viewpoint 8: Weates Close, are classified as settlement within the Halton Landscape Character Assessment (TEP on behalf of Halton Borough Council, 2009), and are therefore not assigned an LCA.
- 3.5.5. Following field survey around the study area, it was judged that none of the LCAs identified within the Halton Landscape Character Assessment are likely to experience material landscape character effects resulting from the Development Framework, and they are therefore not considered further.
- 3.5.6. The relevant National Character Areas and Landscape Character Areas within Warrington Borough Council are therefore described in more detail below.

National Character Area

- 3.5.7. The FF Allocation Area is located within the National Character Area (NCA) 60: Mersey Valley. Relevant key characteristics include:
- *“The landscape is low-lying, focusing on the broad linear valley of the River Mersey; it is estuarine in the west and has extensive areas of reclaimed mossland in the east.*
 - *The Mersey Estuary is a defining element in the landscape, with expansive intertidal mudflats/sand flats and low exposed cliffs.*
 - *The River Mersey flows from east to west, joined by associated tributaries, although the Mersey itself is often obscured from view.*

- *Trees and woodland are mainly associated with settlements, occasional parkland and isolated woodland blocks; and in recent years new community woodlands have been planted.*
- *Large-scale, open, predominantly flat, high-quality farmland occurs between developments, with primarily arable farming to the north of the valley and a mixture of arable and dairying to the south.*
- *The field pattern is regular and large scale, often defined by hedgerows with isolated hedgerow trees; many hedgerows are intermittent and have been replaced by post-and-wire fencing, while field boundaries on the moorlands are marked by ditches.*
- *There is large-scale, highly visible industrial development, with docks, chemical works and oil refineries.*
- *The river valley has a dense communication network with motorways, roads, railways and canals running east–west, and power lines are also prominent.”*

District Landscape Character

- 3.5.8. Landscape character across the Warrington Borough Council area was identified in Warrington: A Landscape Character Assessment (Agathoclis Beckmann Landscape Architects on behalf of Warrington Borough Council, 2007). Landscape character across the Study Area is shown on Figure 3.
- 3.5.9. The FF Development Area, to the north of the St Helens Canal, is located within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 1: Undulating Enclosed Farmland / Landscape Character Area (LCA) 1F: Penketh and Cuardley. This LCA extends to the north and east of the FF Development Area, taking in rural areas to the north of the St Helens Canal and west of the western boundary of residential development in Warrington. The Landscape Character Assessment describes that this area is “*dominated by middle/foreground views of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station*”.
- 3.5.10. The southern part of the FF Allocation Site, comprising the ash lagoons, is primarily located within LCT 5: Flood Plain / LCA 5A: River Mersey / Bollin (West). A small area at the western edge of the ash lagoons is located within the Halton Borough Council area and is classed as Upper Mersey Estuary LCT.
- 3.5.11. There would be no direct effects on landscape character beyond the FF Development Area boundary, and any effects across this area would therefore be as a result of the presence of the Development Framework in views from the surrounding LCAs. Due largely to the existing presence of industrial development, comprising both FFPS itself, and adjacent industrial and commercial development to the west, the Development Framework is considered unlikely to result in notable effects on the LCAs that form the wider context. Effects on landscape character beyond 1 km from the FF Development Area are therefore not considered further.
- 3.5.12. The section below summarises the key characteristics of the Penketh and Cuardley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA, and other LCAs within approximately 1 km of the Ownership Boundary, as identified on Figure 3.
- 3.5.13. The Warrington Landscape Character Assessment identifies cultural elements, landscape sensitivities, landscape change issues and landscape management recommendations alongside the key characteristics, and these have been included below, where relevant.

LCT 1 Undulating Enclosed Farmland / LCA 1F: Penketh and Cuardley (Warrington Borough Council)

- 3.5.14. Key characteristics:
- *Forms a buffer of agricultural open space between surrounding urban, suburban and industrial development.*

- *Visually dominant effect of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station.*
- *Expansive views across the Mersey Valley to the south.*
- *Predominantly arable land with a medium to large-scale field pattern.*
- *Absence of cohesive hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *Golf facilities and horse grazing paddocks to the south of A562.*
- *Penketh Brook and associated tree lined banks.*

3.5.15. Cultural elements:

- *Fiddlers Ferry Power Station.*
- *The Widnes – Warrington Railway.*
- *Widnes Road.*
- *The Manchester – Liverpool railway line.*

3.5.16. Landscape sensitivities:

- *Locally open vistas.*
- *Pressures from the urban fringe.*
- *Dominance of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station.*
- *Power lines and cables.*

3.5.17. Relevant landscape change issues:

- *Reduction in agricultural land due to pressure for industrial and suburban uses.*
- *Substantial reduction in hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *The past impact of pylons and power lines.*

3.5.18. Relevant landscape management recommendations:

- *Restore and enhance remaining field patterns by additional hedgerow planting.*
- *Reintroduce hedgerow trees.*
- *Conserve and manage remaining hedgerows.*
- *Consider the application of woodland planting to housing and power station boundaries.*
- *Investigate the feasibility of recreational open space uses with links to the Mersey corridor.*
- *Consider additional tree planting and habitat diversity associated with Penketh Brook.*

3.5.19. The FF Allocation Site and wider study area are representative of several of these characteristics, particularly across the north-western and eastern parts of the FF Development Area which features relatively degraded hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and arable land with a medium scale field pattern. The visually dominant nature of FFPS is also acknowledged in the LCA description.

[LCT 5: Flood Plain / LCA 5A: River Mersey / Bollin \(West\) \(Warrington Borough Council\)](#)

3.5.20. Key characteristics:

- *The River Mersey and River Bollin.*
- *The Manchester Ship Canal.*
- *Mounded landfill sites.*
- *Slurry and dredging lagoons.*
- *Importance for nature conservation.*
- *Dominance of floodplain crossings (road and rail bridges).*
- *Residual floodplain meadows.*
- *Widespread residential and industrial development on the floodplain.*
- *Artificial levee and channel constraints to the river.*
- *Lack of visual importance of the river (normally screened from views).*
- *The Mersey Way recreational footpath.*

3.5.21. Relevant cultural elements:

- *The presence of sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and RAMSAR site.*

3.5.22. Relevant landscape sensitivities:

- *Continued development of building in the flood plain.*

3.5.23. Relevant landscape change issues:

- *Development of Warrington across the natural floodplain.*
- *Development of industrial uses over the floodplain.*

3.5.24. Several of these characteristics are expressed across the southern part of the FF Allocation Site and the wider study area, including the presence of “slurry and dredging lagoons”, the relative screening of the river in views from the surrounding landscape, and change associated with development of industrial and residential use adjacent to the river.

[LCT 6: Inter-tidal Areas and Mudflats / LCA 6A: Victoria Park to Fiddlers Ferry \(Warrington Borough Council\)](#)

3.5.25. Key characteristics:

- *Wild, almost remote, expansive areas downstream.*
- *Restrictive river channel and inter-tidal margins upstream.*
- *Presence of large flocks of bird life on the wider estuary.*
- *Restrictive views and access to the river from inner town areas upstream.*
- *Dominance of surrounding industrial use and landfill downstream.*
- *Relatively undisturbed areas with important nature conservation value.*
- *Views interrupted and framed by industrial skylines.*

3.5.26. Relevant landscape sensitivities:

- *Visually exposed to mainly urban and industrial views.*

3.5.27. This LCA covers the River Mersey and associated mudflats to the south of the FF Allocation Site. These characteristics are relatively unrepresentative of the wider study area, although there are views to the north of industrial areas within the FF Allocation Site and surrounding context from this LCA.

[Upper Mersey Estuary LCT \(Halton Borough Council\)](#)

3.5.28. Key characteristics:

- *River Mersey Estuary exerts a strong influence on the area;*
- *Areas of salt marsh and small tributaries along river are distinctive features;*
- *Frequent pockets of woodland planting and informal open space occur on the fringes of the area;*
- *Canals form the outer extents of urban development;*
- *Mudflats and water change daily with tidal movements and often contain flocks of birds;*
- *Recreation and nature conservation alongside industrial landfill are the predominant land uses;*
- *Expansive views along the River Mersey;*
- *Sense of separation and seclusion from adjacent urban area;*
- *Industry and new urban development prominent within views along the banks of the Mersey;*
- *Silver Jubilee Bridge is prominent in views; and*
- *Very little built development within character area; where present it tends to be feature buildings such as the Wigg Island Visitor Centre which is a landmark.*

3.5.29. A small area at the western edge of the FF Allocation Site is located within this LCA, to the south of the St Helens Canal and west of the ash lagoons, which primarily comprises salt marsh. The wider LCA extends to the west of the study area, focused on the River Mersey and salt marshes at Wigg Island to the south. Although the salt marsh within the FF Allocation Site is relatively characteristic of the LCA, it covers only a small part of the wider LCA, and proposed changes to this part of the FF Allocation Site are considered likely to result in only negligible changes to its character.

Landscape Character Conclusion

- 3.5.30. The baseline description above indicates that there are documented landscape character assessments that cover the area around the FF Allocation Site, at the national, district and local level. It is generally considered that while the national level typologies provide a useful overview of landscape character, the district and local typologies are appropriate for landscape character assessment. This is because these can better reflect the more detailed characteristics of specific areas or types of landscape character, whereas larger typologies tend to be more generalised and the assessment may therefore be less defined and less specific.
- 3.5.31. On this basis and due to the scale of the proposed development and the study area, the Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA is included in the appraisal of effects on landscape character within this appraisal. Although there may also be direct effects on the River Mersey / Bollin Flood Plain LCA and the Upper Mersey Estuary LCA associated with land to the south of the St Helens Canal, these are considered unlikely to result in material changes in landscape character and/or the nature of change cannot currently be defined in detail, and are therefore not considered further.

3.6. Visual Baseline

Principal visual receptors

- 3.6.1. Changes to views experienced by visual receptors across the study area will be a consideration in the design of development to be guided by the Development Framework. Those receptors which are required to be identified and considered in the visual appraisal (as views from them may be affected by the Development Framework) are referred to as principal visual receptors. The principal visual receptors and the basis for their inclusion are described briefly below.

Residential areas

- 3.6.2. The FF Development Area is located to the east of Widnes and west of Warrington. The combination of the relatively flat and low-lying landscape, localised enclosure formed by landform, tree cover, and built form within the surrounding settlements would limit visibility of new development from settlement across the wider area. Existing residential areas with potential to be materially affected by development are therefore located in relatively close proximity to the FF Development Area. These comprise;
- the Barrow's Green Lane area of Widnes to the north-west;
 - along Tannery Lane, Station Road and surrounding roads within Penketh on the south-western edge of Warrington to the north-east and east; and
 - more isolated and small clusters of residential properties located to the north and east, including within Cuerdley Cross and on Widnes Road to the north, and on Marsh Lane to the east.

Routes

- 3.6.3. The only major road routes in the vicinity of the FF Development Area are the A562 Widnes Road, which bounds the northern edge of the FF Development Area, and the A5080 South Lane which passes east to west further north. Visibility of the FF Development Area is available from sections of the A562 in close proximity, and there are views further south towards the FF Development Area along a short section of the A5080.
- 3.6.4. The Manchester to Liverpool railway line passes within approximately 1 km to the north of the FF Development Area and is likely to be subject to open views towards the FF Development Area along a short stretch close to the A5080. There are also likely to be open, longer-distance views over the FF Development Area from the elevated Mersey Gateway Bridge, located more than 1 km to the south-west of the site. The Arpley Warrington branch line that runs to the north of the St Helens Canal is used for freight only.
- 3.6.5. Other key routes include the Trans Pennine Trail, a Public Right of Way (PRoW) which follows the route of the St Helens Canal to the south of the FF Development Area, and from which there are glimpsed views into the FF Development Area at close proximity, partially filtered by vegetation along sections of the route. There are also several other PRoWs within the study area, including along Manchester Ship Canal to the south-east, connecting to the St Helens Canal to the east, to the north of the FF Development Area between Cuerdley Cross and the A5080, around the edge of the Moore Nature Reserve to the east and throughout residential and industrial areas, including Johnson's Lane and within Widnes to the west.

Principal visual receptors conclusion

- 3.6.6. The baseline information above indicates that the following principal visual receptors would need to be included in the appraisal:
- Recreational receptors on the PRoW network, including travelling along the Trans Pennine Trail which follows the St Helens Canal to the south of the FF Development Area.
 - Residential receptors to the north-west, around the Barrow's Green neighbourhood of Widnes.
 - Residential receptors to the east, including on the western edge of Warrington.
 - Residential receptors at Marsh End Farm. While views experienced at individual properties are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy, they are likely to be of high sensitivity. Due to the proximity of Marsh End Farm to the FF Development Area, effects on visual amenity experienced at this property have formed a key consideration.
 - Residential receptors on Back Lane and Cuerdley Green within Cuerdley Cross to the north.
 - Road users on A562 Widnes Road, A5080 South Lane and Manchester to Liverpool railway line.
- 3.6.7. Although close proximity views may be experienced by workers at nearby industrial and commercial units to the west of the FF Development Area, these are not considered likely to be materially affected by the introduction of new development proposed under the Development Framework, due to the lower sensitivity of these visual receptors, and are therefore not considered further.

Viewpoints

- 3.6.8. The appraisal of landscape and visual effects is informed by a series of viewpoints which are selected to represent the principal visual receptors that are described in the previous section. The viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 4. Table 1 below lists the viewpoints and

provides information on the reasons for their selection. The views experienced at these viewpoints should influence the design of development proposed under the Development Framework and used in the appraisal of its likely effects on the landscape and visual resource.

3.6.9. As described above, the viewpoints included within the FF Employment Phase 1 Planning Application have been evaluated and included where appropriate. Commentary is provided in the table below to indicate which viewpoints are common across the Phase 1 Planning Application and the LVA, and which are included in this LVA alone.

Table 1: Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Coordinates	Receptor	Distance to FF Development Area
1: Trans Pennine Trail to South of site, West	354571 385726	Recreational receptors on the PRow network.	< 0.1 km
2: Trans Pennine Trail to South of site, East	354754 385798	Recreational receptors on the PRow network.	< 0.1 km
3: Marsh Lane	355131 386562	Road users on the minor road network. Also representative of views experienced by residents at Marsh Lane Farm.	< 0.1 km
4: Trans Pennine Trail / Station Road Over Bridge at Fiddlers Ferry Marina	355972 386425	Recreational receptors on the PRow network, and recreational receptors at Fiddlers Ferry Marina. Similar views would be experienced by workers at industrial and commercial buildings nearby.	0.7 km
5: Station Road	356331 386775	Road users on the minor road network. Similar views would be experienced by residential receptors on the western edge of Warrington, and residential properties close to the canal.	1.1 km
6: A562 Widnes Road Junction	355365 387227	Road users on the A562. Similar views would be experienced by residential receptors on the western edge of Warrington.	0.5 km
7: Garden Centre, South Lane	354435 387747	Road users on the A5080. Similar views would be experienced by travellers	0.9 km

Viewpoint	Coordinates	Receptor	Distance to FF Development Area
		on the Manchester to Liverpool railway line.	
8: Weates Close	353231 386782	Residential receptors within Barrow's Green, on the eastern edge of Widnes. Similar views would be experienced by residential receptors to the north of the FF Development Area, around Cuardley Cross.	0.4 km
9: Trans Pennine Trail / Charter House Bridge	352711 385053	Recreational receptors on the PRow network.	1.7 km
10: Moore Nature Reserve	357033 385769	Recreational receptors on the PRow network visiting the nature reserve, and road users on the minor road network.	1.7 km
11: Cuardley Green	354132 386946	Residential receptors within Cuardley Cross, to the north, west and east of the viewpoint.	< 0.1 km
12: Wigg Island Nature Reserve	353313 383858	Recreational receptors visiting the nature reserve. Similar views would be experienced by road users on the Mersey Gateway Bridge.	2 km
13: PRow West of Moore Nature Reserve	355356 384437	Recreational receptors on the PRow network visting the nature reserve. Similar views would be experienced by recreational users of the Manchester Ship Canal and River Mersey.	1.6 km

3.7. Summary of receptors to be assessed

3.7.1. The sensitive landscape and visual receptors which will be assessed are listed below, according to the three categories of effects as described previously: effects on landscape elements, effects on landscape character, and effects on visual amenity, considering the key phases of the project description.

Effect on landscape elements

3.7.2. This category of receptors is made up of landscape elements, which are the components of the landscape that may be physically affected by the development of the FF Development Area, as described above in 'Site description and context':

- Agricultural land;
- Broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland;
- Scrub and grassland;
- Hedgerows; and
- Broadleaved scattered trees.

Effect on landscape character

3.7.3. This category of receptors is made up of landscape character receptors, and while this can be either landscape character types or designated areas, there are no designated areas in the study area and only one LCT with potential to be affected:

- Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland

Effect on visual amenity

3.7.4. This category of receptors is made up of principal visual receptors, which are the notable settlements, routes, and features found throughout the study area. The likely effects on these receptors are appraised through the use of 10 viewpoints, to represent the likely views experienced by each receptor.

- Recreational receptors on the PRow network, as represented by Viewpoints 1, 2, 4, 9 and 10;
- Residential receptors at Marsh End Farm, as represented by Viewpoint 3.
- Residential receptors to the east, including on the western edge of Warrington, as represented by Viewpoints 5 and 6.
- Road users on A562 Widnes Road, as represented by Viewpoint 6.
- Road users on A5080 South Lane, and travellers on the Manchester to Liverpool railway line, as represented by Viewpoint 7.
- Residential receptors to the north-west, around the Barrow's Green neighbourhood of Widnes, and to the north of Widnes Road along Back Lane and Cuerdley Green, as represented by Viewpoint 8.

4. Proposed Development

4.1.1. The development assessed in this LVA is as set out in the following documents:

- Former Fiddlers Ferry Power Station Development Framework; and
- Fiddlers Ferry Employment Land Phase 1 Design and Access Statement (Michael Sparks on behalf of Peel NRE, 2023).

5. Constraints and Opportunities

5.1.1. Landscape and visual issues are a key consideration in developing the Development Framework. Landscape and visual constraints and opportunities across the FF Development Area and the wider landscape are shown on Figure 6.

5.2. Identification of landscape constraints / opportunities

Opportunities:

- The existing FFPS development ensures that the FF Development Area has the capacity to accommodate the FF Development without material changes to the landscape character and visual resource through the introduction of alternative development uses within the site.
- FF Development Area is generally well screened from the local area by surrounding landscape and built features, such that changes within the FF Development Area will have some degree of separation from many of the sensitive receptors, where current views include large scale built development.
- Reinforcing the pattern of landscape features and landscape character of the FF Development Area in keeping with the surrounding landscape character type, Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland, and incorporating landscape management recommendations as described in the Warrington Landscape Character Assessment, including the reintroduction of hedgerows where possible, woodland planting, and recreational open space with links to the Mersey Corridor. This planting would also strengthen the existing Green Belt boundary along Widnes Road and the new Green Belt boundary along Marsh Lane.
- Connecting surrounding landscapes and habitats through the centre of the FF Development Area, through the use of landscape corridors, running both north to south and east to west.
- Long-term retention of existing landscape features, including in particular the Fiddlers Ferry Nature Reserve.

The necessarily retained electrical and other infrastructure on the FF Development Area site, which includes two substations, the ash processing plant (to be retained for the duration of ash extraction) and associated road bridge, rail sidings area and rail hopper building, utilities infrastructure in the north-west corner of the FF Development Area, and pylon mounted transmission lines, result in development characteristics being maintained on the site. This ensures that the capacity of the site to accommodate development is maintained following the removal of the FFPS development.

Constraints:

- The loss of existing landscape features within the FF Development Area. The area to the west of the FF Development Area features areas of broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland, as well as a redundant fishing pond with scattered trees and a number of species poor hedgerows. The area to the east currently comprises arable agricultural land and the nature reserve in the north-east. There are scattered trees within the arable land, and the nature reserve features broadleaved woodland and several ponds. There is also broadleaved woodland in the south-eastern corner and a hedgerow along the eastern boundary. Such features are likely to be lost or substantially changed as a result of development proposed under the Development Framework.
- Underground and overhead infrastructure may restrict use of some areas for woodland and tree planting.

5.3. Identification of visual constraints / opportunities

Opportunities:

- There are relatively few residential receptors in close proximity to the FF Development Area. The FF Development Area is somewhat separated from large numbers of receptors in the wider landscape by the Fiddlers Ferry Golf Course to the east, industrial and commercial development to the west, the lagoon structures and River Mersey to the south. The main consideration in this respect is therefore residential views from the north. This provides an opportunity to prioritise mitigation of impacts on views from this direction.
- Existing vegetation plays a role in screening the FF Development Area from some of the closest proximity receptors, including along Widnes Road to the north, and along the eastern and southern boundaries to an extent, as shown in Figures 6 and 7. Retaining such vegetation in full or in part would provide an opportunity to maintain the visual buffer it provides.
- There is an opportunity to adopt a strategy of ‘conceal and reveal’ along the boundaries of the FF Development Area, while maintaining some existing woodland. This would allow views into the FF Development Area at strategic locations while maintaining the existing landscape buffer between the FF Development Area and nearby receptors. Where there are gaps in the existing woodland planting, these present an opportunity to reveal aspects of the development, particularly at the proposed entrance to the FF Development Area. The existing woodland could also be managed and supplemented with additional planting to increase screening, including adjacent to Marsh End Farm to the east, and along the northern and southern boundaries.
- New buildings located across the FF Development Area would be seen in longer-distance views from the Mersey Gateway Bridge – i.e. where the whole Development Framework may be seen in its entirety. Therefore, a clear urban structure would help create a ‘sense of place’ seen from this perspective, replacing the visual landmark currently created by FFPS.

Constraints:

- Although the number of sensitive receptors is relatively limited, there are sensitive close-proximity receptors to the north, north-west and east. Mitigation should

therefore be focused across these areas, and consideration needs to be given to the interface between the FF Development Area and the surrounding landscape in proximity to these receptors. Development should have suitable separation at these locations, and landscape features should be incorporated along boundaries to protect views experienced by residential receptors. Larger buildings should be set back from boundaries at a distance that is proportionate to their proposed height and mitigated through landscape features.

- Consideration should be given to how development would be perceived in longer-distance views. At distance, more of the FF Development Area would be visible, in contrast with closer proximity views which are likely to focus only on contained parts of the FF Development Framework.
- In terms of views from the Trans Pennine Trail to the south, constraints associated with overhead cables along this southern edge means that consistent woodland planting would unlikely be accommodated, and so the Development Framework needs to consider potential exposure in these views.

5.4. Proposed Mitigation Measures

5.4.1. Given the landscape and visual constraints and opportunities described above, mitigation measures could be incorporated into proposed development. These mitigation considerations have been developed to inform the Development Framework and future detailed design.

- Where possible, existing landscape features should be retained. Features to be retained in the long term include woodland within the Fiddlers Ferry Nature Reserve, and trees along Marsh Lane to the east of the FF Development Area. Other landscape features should be retained where possible.
- Employment development could be structured on a grid-like alignment, taking the axis of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct as a starting point, and creating connections broadly north-south and east-west across the FF Development Area. This would create an identifiable and legible form and help to create connections between landscapes.
- The strategy of 'conceal and reveal' can be incorporated through the retention of existing vegetation and additional planting along the northern boundary to create a balance between allowing development to create visible, positive landmark buildings (seen from Widnes Road, particularly at the entrance to the FF Development Area), whilst breaking up close-proximity views of large-scale development that may be experienced by sensitive receptors.
- It is assumed that building heights may potentially be in the order of c18-35 m high across the employment development areas, as proposed in the FF Employment Phase 1 proposals. Visual effects resulting from close-proximity views of buildings of this scale are likely to be material, albeit this is in the context of the retained National Grid and SPEN substations, ash processing plant (to be retained for the duration of ash extraction), rail sidings and pylons, particularly if located to the north west where there are existing sensitive residential receptors located at close range. It is therefore recommended that buildings of this scale have suitable separation from this boundary, and with appropriate planted buffers. Suitable mitigation of the effects on these receptors should be developed through the detailed design.
- Built form along the southern boundary could be broken down and taller buildings should be set back from the edge in open views from the Trans Pennine Trail to the

south. Suitable mitigation of the effects on users of the Trail should be developed through the detailed design and take into account the retained rail siding, associated vegetation and ash processing plant/buildings, which offer some separation to the east of the overbridge.

6. Landscape Appraisal

6.1. Effect on Landscape Elements

Introduction

- 6.1.1. The first category of effects covered in the landscape appraisal is effects on landscape elements, which are the direct effects on the landscape fabric and pattern of landscape features on the site. Effects on landscape elements are found only on the site, where landscape elements may be removed or altered by the construction and operational use of the development site. The assessment of the effects on the landscape elements scoped in above is described below.

Arable agricultural land

Baseline

- 6.1.2. The Development Framework would involve the removal of two areas of arable agricultural land that formed part of the land management regime of the FFPS rather than being part of a standalone farm holding. The first comprises three fields of medium size, delineated by sparse scattered trees across the eastern part of the FF Development Area. Agricultural practices across this area would cease, and the land would be converted to residential use with associated green infrastructure. The second area of agricultural land that would be removed as a result of the Development Framework is located at the north-western extent of the FF Development Area, within the commercial and industrial development area. The openness of the fields means that the relatively flat nature of the landscape is evident, and relatively open views are available across this area.

Sensitivity:

- 6.1.3. The agricultural land has a medium sensitivity to change. It is a distinct element of the agricultural semi-rural landscape on account of its apparent open landform, and geometric field pattern with associated degraded field boundaries, particularly across the eastern part of the FF Development Area. The character of the arable land is typical of the Penketh and Cuedley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA that characterises much of the wider agricultural landscape and the FF Development Area forms a small part of this more extensive area. This is particularly the case across the arable land within the eastern FF Development Area. Arable land at the north-western extent is more fragmented and displays the characteristic field pattern to a lesser degree. Arable farmland is a typical feature throughout this cultivated landscape and therefore lacks any scarcity value, however, its openness, vegetated land cover and lack of built development provide it with some local value within the wider context.

Magnitude of change

- 6.1.4. Agricultural land would undergo a medium magnitude of change as a result of the Development Framework. Two areas of agricultural land within the FF Development Area would be taken out of agricultural use and developed for residential development and commercial and industrial development respectively, which would constitute a marked change to its openness and undeveloped characteristics. Other parts would be converted to areas of species rich grassland and areas of planting. However this represents a relatively small area of agricultural land, compared to its extent within the wider semi-rural landscape and this area is only locally perceived rather than having a wide influence within the area.

Level of effect

- 6.1.5. The level of effect on arable agricultural land as a result of the Development Framework would be moderate. Effects on arable agricultural land would be confined to a relatively limited area. Provision of open space with public access within the Development Framework would present a beneficial mitigation measure.

Broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland

Baseline:

- 6.1.6. Woodland areas are identified on Figure 5. The Development Framework would involve the removal of several small areas of broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland across the FF Development Area. This would include:
- Woodland areas to the north and south of the existing spoil area would be removed to accommodate FF Employment Phase 1;
 - A small area along the eastern boundary of the nature reserve at the north-east of the FF Development Area to accommodate the widening of Marsh Lane;;
 - Small areas of woodland located around a hard standing area to the south of the nature reserve (west of arable agricultural land);
 - A narrow strip along Widnes Road to accommodate a cycle path along Widnes Road;
 - A strip of mixed plantation woodland to the north of the northern cooling towers and linking to the woodland along the edge of Widnes Road and further smaller areas to the west and east of these;
 - Small woodland areas to the south and east of the southern cooling towers;
 - A small block of mixed plantation woodland to the north of Wrights Lane; and
 - A small area at the northern extent of an area of broadleaved woodland in the south-eastern corner of the FF Development Area.
- 6.1.7. Woodland within the Fiddlers Ferry Nature Reserve and on the bunds to the south-west of the site would be retained and managed long-term. Other areas of existing woodland which would be retained and managed include a small woodland block to the south-east, trees along the railway to the south-west and a small tree group on the western edge of the FF Development Area. There is also an opportunity to integrate existing landscape features along Widnes Road within future development proposals, as shown on the 'Landscape Framework' drawing within the Development Framework.

Sensitivity:

- 6.1.8. The woodland has a high sensitivity to change. Although the woodland has been established through plantation as a consequence of the FFPS, and is therefore of lower value than natural or semi-natural woodland, it is well-established and provides a sense of enclosure to the power station and some of the surrounding land uses.. Woodland has a high value as it provides an important part of the context and setting of the FF Development Area, as well as being valued for its amenity, biodiversity and carbon capture capabilities. It can also provide valuable containment and screening between different land uses. Across the FF Development Area, woodland would be retained where possible and incorporated into the Development Framework. Plantation woodland is characteristic of this landscape.

Magnitude of change:

- 6.1.9. The magnitude of change in respect of the loss of broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland would be low. The largest area of woodland removal would occur across the north-western extent of the FF Development Area, while in other parts the loss of woodland would be relatively limited. The level of enclosure across parts of the FF Development Area would

be altered by this woodland removal but needs to be considered in the context of the wider demolition and clearance of the power station. Additional woodland planting within the landscape strategy for the Development Framework would compensate for woodland removal in the medium to long term. There would be additional woodland planting throughout the residential area, and along the northern boundary of the FF Development Area, adjacent to Widnes Road. As this matures, the magnitude of change associated with the loss of woodland would be reduced. The majority of the woodland within the undesignated nature reserve would be retained, and this area would be brought into active management, which would be beneficial to its longevity and the contribution it makes as a landscape feature.

Level of effect:

- 6.1.10. The level of effect on broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland across the FF Development Area as a result of the Development Framework would be moderate, reducing to minor following establishment of new woodland areas when the new woodland planting will be of benefit. Although several areas of plantation woodland would be removed to accommodate the Development Framework, the landscape strategy would result in enhanced woodland planting to mitigate these effects.

Scrub and grassland

Baseline:

- 6.1.11. Several areas of scrub, wet grassland, neutral grassland and ephemeral / short perennial grassland would be removed as part of the Development Framework. This is generally unmanaged and in moderate condition. These areas are identified on Figure 5.

Sensitivity:

- 6.1.12. Areas of scrub and grassland across the FF Development Area have a low sensitivity to change. These areas are generally unmanaged and of low value from a landscape perspective. They are of lower susceptibility to changes associated with the Development Framework as they are relatively easy to replace and establish.

Magnitude of change:

- 6.1.13. The Development Framework would result in the loss of several areas of scrub and grassland to accommodate built form within the FF Development Area. However, this would be mitigated by the introduction of managed areas of species-rich grassland, wet meadow and wildflower meadow. Overall, this would result in a low magnitude of change.

Level of effect:

- 6.1.14. The level of effect on areas of scrub and several types of grassland across the FF Development Area as a result of the Development Framework would be minor. Although there would be a loss of several areas of this type of habitat to accommodate buildings and roads within the Development Framework, this loss would be mitigated by the introduction of larger areas of species-rich grassland, wet meadow and wildflower meadow, which would be connected throughout the FF Development Area.

Hedgerows

Baseline:

- 6.1.15. The Development Framework would include the removal of short sections of hedgerow, primarily along the north-western boundary, where the new access and associated

roundabout would be located. This is generally in good condition with some gaps and fragmentation.

Sensitivity:

6.1.16. The hedgerows have a medium sensitivity to change. The hedgerows are of medium value due to their relative importance as landscape features that define field compartments and form part of the landscape structure. Their susceptibility is medium as there is potential disruption of the existing hedge structure due to removal, however they are also relatively easy to replace and establish as landscape features.

Magnitude of change:

6.1.17. The Development Framework would result in a low magnitude of change on hedgerows across the FF Development Area. There would be a loss of small sections of hedgerow at the north-western extent of the FF Development Area to accommodate new access to the FF Development Area and roads within the FF Development Area. However, hedgerow along the boundary with Widnes Road would be retained or replaced, and the magnitude of change would therefore be primarily associated with the loss of hedgerow within the FF Development Area itself, rather than on the boundary.

Level of effect:

6.1.18. The level of effect on hedgerows across the FF Development Area as a result of the Development Framework would be moderate-minor. Although several short sections of hedgerow would be removed to create a new access point into the FF Development Area, these provide a small contribution to the overall landscape structure. Existing hedgerows along the eastern boundary of the FF Development Area would remain unaffected.

Broadleaved scattered trees

Baseline:

6.1.19. The Development Framework would involve the removal of a number of scattered broadleaved trees, including trees which delineate field boundaries within the arable land across the eastern part of the FF Development Area, and around an existing pond at the north-western extent of the FF Development Area.

Sensitivity:

6.1.20. These trees have a medium sensitivity to changes associated with the Development Framework. They are of medium value due to the contribution they make to the landscape structure, and they are well established. They are of medium susceptibility to change.

Magnitude of change:

6.1.21. The Development Framework would result in a low magnitude of change on broadleaved scattered trees across the FF Development Area. A relatively small number of individual trees would be removed to accommodate the Development Framework, including across the arable land to the east, and surrounding an existing pond to the north-west of the FF Development Area. This loss would be mitigated by the establishment of extensive additional tree planting, including around a proposed pond at the north-west, along routes within the commercial and industrial development, and within the residential development to the east.

Level of effect:

6.1.22. The level of effect on scattered broadleaved trees across the FF Development Area as a result of the Development Framework would be moderate-minor. Although a small number of trees

would be removed to accommodate development, this loss would be mitigated by additional tree planting throughout the FF Development Area.

6.2. Effect on Landscape Character

Introduction

- 6.2.1. The second category of effects covered in the assessment is effects on landscape character. Landscape character is the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and the way that this pattern is perceived. Effects on landscape character are manifested both on the site, where the pattern of elements that characterises the landscape would be directly altered by the addition of the development to the landscape; and off-site, around the study area, where visibility of the development may alter the way in which the pattern of elements is perceived.
- 6.2.2. The assessment considers only the effects of the Development Framework on the Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA. This denotes the limited extent to which the Development Framework would affect landscape character, as well as the absence of any landscape related planning designations in the area. The assessment of the effects on this LCA is described below. The detailed methodology for the assessment of effects on landscape character is described in Assessment Methodology.

Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA

Baseline:

- 6.2.3. The landform of this LCA is relatively flat and low-lying, given its position close to the River Mersey, although the land rises to the north as shown on Figure 2. The landscape is generally arable farmland, and there are few natural features across the LCA. There are limited areas of natural or semi-natural habitat, with areas of woodland generally being a result of plantation associated with industrial and recreational areas. However, the Penketh Brook passes through the LCA, to the west of the suburban edge of Warrington, and features wooded banks.
- 6.2.4. The farmland primarily comprises arable land with a medium to large-scale field pattern and generally degraded hedgerows marking the boundaries between fields. Other land uses across the area include the Fiddlers Ferry Golf Course. The character of the area is influenced by man-made development, including the extensive FFPS, which is highly prominent due to the scale of the built structures, electricity transmission lines, the busy Widnes Road (A562), and the Manchester – Liverpool railway line, which passes along the northern boundary of the LCA.

Sensitivity:

- 6.2.5. The sensitivity of the Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA to the effects of the Development Framework is medium-low. The value of the farmed landscape to the north of the FF Development Area relates to its openness and absence of built development in the context of suburban development within Warrington and Widnes to the east and west respectively. However, the susceptibility of the LCA to the effects of the proposed Development Framework is moderated by the existing presence of FFPS on the FF Development Area, which has established industrial development as an existing feature within this landscape, and which exerts an influence on the wider LCA.

Magnitude of change:

- 6.2.6. The magnitude of change on this LCA resulting from the Development Framework would be medium. The removal of the large scale built form associated with the FFPS will result in a

marked beneficial change to the landscape character of this LCA, albeit that some infrastructure associated with FFPS will be retained long-term, including two substations, rail sidings and rail hopper building, the ash processing plant (to be retained for the duration of ash extraction) and pylon mounted transmission lines. In addition, areas of extensive spoil and associated infrastructure will also be removed. Although parts of the FF Development Area are already subject to industrial development, and therefore relatively uncharacteristic of the wider farmland landscape, there are areas across the northern and eastern part of the FF Development Area which feature arable agricultural land and areas to the north and south of the spoil area, which would be subject to changes associated with the Development Framework.

- 6.2.7. The Development Framework also occupies a relatively extensive area within this LCA, and changes within the FF Development Area would be visible from much of this relatively flat, open landscape and the rising land to the north. The scale of the industrial and commercial units will be much smaller in scale than the most prominent buildings and infrastructure associated with FFPS but larger than existing built form that occurs within the wider LCA.
- 6.2.8. Residential development across the eastern part of the FF Development Area would introduce development of this typology into this LCA, which currently features only relatively limited areas of residential development, primarily contained to individual or small clusters of residential properties. This would introduce a more urban character to this LCA, which currently forms a buffer between residential areas within Widnes and Warrington. An extensive landscape framework, which includes a firm eastern boundary along the revised Green Belt boundary moderates the impact of this change.
- 6.2.9. The industrial and commercial development across the west of the FF Development Area would extend the urban area of Widnes, which borders the FF Development Area along its western boundary, further east. Development would be similar in scale to that currently being developed along Gorse Lane to the west..
- 6.2.10. Although the scale of the proposed industrial and commercial units would be greater than built form in the surrounding landscape, it would be much smaller than the scale of existing industrial infrastructure on the FF Development Area. Visibility will be restricted to a relatively contained area. Landscape mitigation will also help to integrate development into the surrounding landscape, in particular through enhanced green connections through the centre of the FF Development Area, and through enhanced vegetation buffers along the boundaries some of which serve as existing and proposed Green Belt boundaries. –This would contribute towards enhanced legibility of landscape boundaries, a feature which has become degraded throughout this LCA.

Level of effect:

- 6.2.11. The level of effect on the Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA as a result of the Development Framework would be moderate. This finding relates chiefly to the medium-low sensitivity of the LCA and the medium magnitude of change that the Development Framework would give rise to. Vegetation along the boundaries of the FF Development Area would be largely retained and supplemented, and the landscape proposals within the FF Development Area would be designed to contribute over the longer term to the appearance of the wider landscape, reinstating features of the landscape that have been lost.

7. Visual Appraisal

7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. Ten viewpoints have been selected to represent the visual amenity of the surrounding area. Their locations are shown on Figure 4. The baseline character of the view from each viewpoint is described and then the predicted effects are appraised in respect of the sensitivity of the view and the magnitude of change that would occur to the view as a result of the Development Framework, taking into account the mitigation measures incorporated into the design of the layout.
- 7.1.2. The viewpoints are shown with panoramic views created by joining individual photographs to create each 90-degree field of view presented. For viewpoints 1-3 180 degrees of the view is shown.

7.2. Viewpoint 1: Trans Pennine Trail to South of Site, West

Baseline:

- 7.2.1. This viewpoint is located on the Trans Pennine Trail, which runs from east to west. It passes along the southern edge of the route of the St Helens Canal, which separates the FF Development from the FF Southern Area.
- 7.2.2. Views to the south are contained in the foreground by a fenced area containing vegetation and large pipes associated with FFPS. To the north, the large forms of the southern cooling towers, chimney and ancillary buildings of the power station are visible beyond a foreground formed by wetland vegetation within the St Helens Canal, and mixed scrub at the southern extent of the FF Development Area. Views to the east and west are available along the Trans Pennine Trail. To the east, the elevated bridge which passes between the FF Development Area and the ash lagoons within the southern part of the FF Allocation Site is visible crossing the St Helens Canal.

Sensitivity:

- 7.2.3. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value, and the quality of the view is moderated by its unremarkable nature and the existing views of industrial infrastructure. However, the viewpoint is located on a nationally recognised long-distance route. The susceptibility of users to the effects of the development is also moderated by the industrial nature of the local context, including particularly across the FF Development Area to the north and associated with the pipes to the south so that whilst they may use the route for recreation as well as enjoyment of the countryside their expectations will not be of views of an undeveloped landscape as part of the context of the route. Users of the route would experience successive views towards the FF Development Area over a short section of the overall route. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.2.4. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the development would be medium. The large scale forms of the cooling towers and chimney as well as lower storage tanks and buildings would be removed, which will be a beneficial change. Development of employment buildings would be visible in close proximity to the viewpoint to the north in close proximity. These would be seen beyond pylon mounted transmission lines, retained industrial buildings associated with the rail sidings and the ash processing plant (to be retained for the duration of ash extraction) and a foreground formed by low vegetation

within the St Helens Canal, and an area of grassland and scattered scrub within the FF Development Area. The Development would occupy a large horizontal extent of the overall available view and would be seen in successive views by users of the PRow travelling in both directions. The FF Employment Phase 1 development would be partially screened by existing coniferous trees located on a bund to the north of the St Helens Canal supplemented with proposed broadleaved woodland along its eastern boundary. Partial screening of the employment to the east of the aqueduct is provided by retained scrub woodland to the north of the rail sidings.

- 7.2.5. Mitigation should consider that built form should not be continuous along the southern edge of the site and buildings should be suitably separated from the boundary and/or lower height buildings along the edge at this point, subject to detailed design.

Level of effect:

- 7.2.6. The level of effect resulting from the Proposed Development would be moderate. This is as a result of the beneficial removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimneys from the view. This change is considered in combination with the proximity of the viewpoint to the FF Employment Area and , the wide horizontal field of view occupied by this as well as the limited nature of vegetation buffers between the Trans Pennine Trail and the FF Development Area. The FF Residential Area is unlikely to be markedly visible from this viewpoint due to the retained intervening vegetation.
- 7.2.7. Users on this route may experience close proximity, intermittent views of large-scale employment buildings over approximately 1km of this long distance route. The employment buildings will be markedly less visible and prominent than the FFPS cooling towers and chimney currently are from this route.
- 7.2.8. Mitigation will be considered at the detailed design stage in terms of the location and form of the buildings along the southern edge of the employment land to reduce the effects on the views from this section of the Trans Pennine Trail. The Proposed FF Employment Phase 1 development proposes that smaller scale buildings (21.7 m high) are positioned to the south, close to the Trans Pennine Trail.

7.3. Viewpoint 2: Trans Pennine Trail to South of Site, East

Baseline:

- 7.3.1. This viewpoint is located on the Trans Pennine Trail, which runs from east to west. It passes along the southern edge of the St Helens Canal, which separates the FF Development Area from the FF Southern Area.
- 7.3.2. Views to the south are contained in the foreground by a fenced area containing vegetation and large pipes associated with FFPS, as well as bunds associated with the ash lagoons to the south. To the north, the southern cooling towers and ancillary buildings of the power station are visible beyond a foreground formed by wetland vegetation within the St Helens Canal. Views to the east and west are available along the Trans Pennine Trail. To the west, the elevated bridge which passes between the FFPS and the ash lagoons is visible crossing the St Helens Canal.

Sensitivity:

- 7.3.3. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognized value, and the quality of the view is moderated by its unremarkable nature and the existing views of industrial infrastructure. However, the viewpoint is located on a nationally recognised long-distance route The susceptibility of users to the effects of the development is moderated by the industrial nature of the local context,

including particularly across the FF Development Area to the north and associated with the pipes to the south so that whilst they may use the route for recreation as well as enjoyment of the countryside their expectations will not be of views of an undeveloped landscape as part of the context of the route. Users of the route would experience successive views towards the FF Development Area over a short section of the overall route. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.3.4. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of Development would be medium. The large scale forms of the cooling towers and chimney would be removed, which will be a beneficial change. Development of employment buildings would be large in scale but markedly lower and visible in close proximity to the viewpoint to the north. These would be seen beyond retained features which would be present in the view in the long-term, including pylon mounted transmission lines, retained industrial buildings associated with the rail sidings and ash processing plant (to be retained for the duration of ash extraction), and in the context of a foreground formed by low vegetation within the St Helens Canal, and an area of grassland and scattered scrub within the FF Development Area. Residential buildings across the eastern part of the FF Development Area may be seen in slightly longer distance views, although these are likely to be largely screened by retained and enhanced woodland planting along the southern boundary of the FF Development Area. The Development would occupy a large horizontal extent of the overall available view and would be seen in successive views by users of the Trans Pennine Trail for approximately 1km of the route.
- 7.3.5. Partial screening of the employment to the east of the aqueduct is provided by retained scrub woodland to the north of the rail sidings.
- 7.3.6. Mitigation should consider that built form should not be continuous along the southern edge of the site and buildings should be suitably separated from the boundary and/or lower height buildings along the edge at this point, subject to detailed design.
- 7.3.7. Potential visibility of development/storage associated with any new rail-side development proposals should be considered in relation to this view.

Level of effect:

- 7.3.8. The level of effect resulting from the Proposed Development would be moderate. This is as a result of the beneficial removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimney from the view. This change is considered in combination with the proximity of the viewpoint to the FF Employment Area and the wide horizontal field of view occupied by this as well as the limited nature of vegetation buffers between the Trans Pennine Trail and the FF Development Area. The upper parts of the FF Residential Area are likely to be visible from this viewpoint above the retained intervening vegetation.
- 7.3.9. Users on this route may experience close proximity, intermittent views of large-scale employment buildings over approximately 1km of this long distance route (as noted in relation to Viewpoint 1). The employment buildings will be markedly less visible and prominent than the FFPS cooling towers and chimney currently are from this route.
- 7.3.10. Mitigation will be considered at the detailed design stage in terms of the location and form of the buildings along the southern edge of the employment land to reduce the effects on the views from this section of the Trans Pennine Trail. The Proposed FF Employment Phase 1 development proposes that smaller scale buildings (21.7 m high) are positioned to the south, close to the Trans Pennine Trail.

7.4. Viewpoint 3: Marsh Lane

Baseline:

- 7.4.1. This viewpoint is located on Marsh Lane, to the east of the FF Development Area. This route connects Widnes Road in the north to the railway line that passes through the FF Allocation Site. It is a public route along approximately half its length and connects Marsh End Farm with Widnes Road. Thereafter, it is gated and a private access route to the rail lines where it is a dead end.
- 7.4.2. The viewpoint is representative of views experienced by residents at Marsh End Farm. It is also representative of views experienced by road users on Marsh Lane, although due to the fact that Marsh Lane is a dead end, these are assumed to be primarily residents and workers at Marsh End Farm and accessing the rail lines.
- 7.4.3. The view to the west is over arable land, towards FFPS in the middle distance. Marsh Lane is flanked by woodland to the north, and the nature reserve at the north-east of the FF Development Area can be seen to the north. To the south-east, woodland along Marsh Lane limits longer-distance views. Buildings associated with Marsh End Farm can be seen to the east, partially filtered by vegetation from this viewpoint. To the south-west, the horizon is formed by land on the southern bank of the River Mersey, and a large overhead line passes from east to west towards FFPS.
- 7.4.4. Scattered trees within the arable land to the west partially filter views in this direction from parts of Marsh Lane, although to the south-east, between the viewpoint and Marsh End Farm, there are more open views to the west. This is due to the absence of any vegetation between the arable land and the road along this stretch of the route.

Sensitivity:

- 7.4.5. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any townscape or landscape designations which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value, and the quality of the view is moderated by the industrial influence of FFPS to the west. It does, nonetheless, provide a partially open aspect to local residents, and this raises the susceptibility to the Development. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium-high for residents. Road users would have a lower sensitivity to changes associated with the Development.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.4.6. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be medium-high. Residential development across the eastern part of the FF Development Area would be visible in close proximity to the viewpoint and would occupy a large extent of the available view. The visual context of the viewpoint would change from arable land to a residential area seen in the foreground of the view. Commercial and industrial development would be seen rising above this, beyond a strip of parkland featuring broadleaved trees and hedgerow which would separate the residential and commercial / industrial areas.
- 7.4.7. Mitigation of effects on this view includes that the closest form of development is of a lower form as two storey housing with larger scale employment land set at a greater distance. The housing has been set back from the edge of the FF Development Area and the foreground of the view would feature a hedgerow or linear broadleaved woodland feature along the edge of Marsh Lane, with a wildflower meadow seen beyond. The broadleaved woodland which is currently visible to the north-west within the Fiddlers Ferry Nature Reserve would be retained long-term, and additional planting would extend this woodland into closer proximity to the viewpoint, and would contribute to increasing enclosure along Marsh Lane whilst also creating a well-defined Green Belt boundary. Residential development would be seen beyond

this. Marsh Lane would be widened to the north of the viewpoint, and an access road associated with the residential development would pass in close proximity to the east of the viewpoint. There would be a small associated loss of woodland in the view to the north and east as a result of these changes.

Level of effect:

- 7.4.8. The level of effect resulting from the Development would be major-moderate for a small number of residents of Marsh End Farm, while road users would experience a lower level of effect. The removal of the large scale buildings of the FFPS would be beneficial whilst the Development would occupy a large proportion of the overall view resulting in a change in the immediate context of the viewpoint from a broadly arable landscape to a residential area. Mitigation of effects includes a framework of landscape proposals within the residential area and specifically boundary planting along the eastern edge, alongside Marsh Lane. This also serves to define and reinforce the Green Belt boundary.

7.5. Viewpoint 4: Trans Pennine Trail / Station Road Bridge at Fiddlers Ferry Marina

Baseline:

- 7.5.1. This viewpoint is located on a bridge across the St Helens Canal, near Fiddlers Ferry Marina, to the south-east of the FF Development Area. This bridge provides vehicular access between Station Road, on the south-western residential edge of Warrington, and a small area of industrial and commercial development at Riverside Trading Estate to the south of the St Helens Canal.
- 7.5.2. The viewpoint is representative of views experienced by users on the Trans Pennine Trail and PRoW which passes alongside the southern edge of the St Helens Canal, as well as recreational users of Fiddlers Ferry Marina and workers at industrial and commercial units to the south of the viewpoint.
- 7.5.3. Industrial development to the south of the canal is visible in the foreground to the south, and screens views towards the River Mersey in this direction. To the west, views of the upper parts of the southern cooling towers within FFPS, as well as the chimney and glimpsed views of the northern cooling towers, are available beyond broadleaved woodland to the east of Fiddlers Ferry Golf Club, located to the north-west of the viewpoint. Overgrown vegetation within the St Helens Canal is visible in the foreground, beyond the bridge. To the north, there are views of the railway line, which follows the St Helens Canal on its northern edge, and a level crossing where Station Road crosses the railway. Woodland to the north of Station Road limits long-distance views. To the east, the St Helens Canal stretches into the middle distance, and boats associated with Fiddlers Ferry Marina are visible. Woodland also limits long-distance views in this direction.

Sensitivity:

- 7.5.4. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognized value, and the quality of the view is moderated by the existing views of industrial and commercial development at close proximity, as well as industrial infrastructure including the railway line, overhead lines and FFPS. The viewpoint is located close to a nationally recognised long-distance route. However, the susceptibility of users to the effects of the Development is moderated by the industrial nature of the local context, so that whilst they may use the route for recreation as well as enjoyment of the countryside their expectations will not be of views of an undeveloped landscape as part of the context of the route. Users would experience intermittent, successive views towards the FF Development over a relatively long period.

- 7.5.5. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium for recreational receptors and users of the Fiddlers Ferry Marina. Workers at the industrial and commercial development to the south would have a lower sensitivity to changes associated with the Development.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.5.6. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be low. The removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimney from the view will be beneficial. The Development would be visible to the west at a distance of approximately 1 km. Larger buildings may be visible in the view to the west. It is likely that much of the Development, including the residential development in closest proximity to this viewpoint, would be screened from view by existing broadleaved woodland to the west of the viewpoint, beyond the FF Development Area boundary. The Development would occupy a relatively limited extent of the overall view available from this location.
- 7.5.7. Potential visibility of development/storage associated with any new rail side development proposals should be considered in relation to this view as proposals evolve.

Level of effect:

- 7.5.8. The level of effect resulting from the Development on this viewpoint would be moderate-minor for recreational users, while workers would experience a lower level of effect. This is primarily as a result of the limited horizontal extent of the view which the Development would occupy when compared with the beneficial removal of the existing FFPS. and the screening effect provided by broadleaved woodland to the east of the FF Development Area, west of this viewpoint. This would result in likely views of the Development Framework being limited to views of the upper parts of industrial and commercial buildings, seen at a distance of approximately 1 km.
- 7.5.9. Potential effects of development/storage associated with any Railside development proposals should be considered in relation to this view as proposals evolve.

7.6. Viewpoint 5: Station Road

Baseline:

- 7.6.1. This viewpoint is located on Station Road, at the junction with a minor road which leads to the Riverside Trading Estate and Fiddlers Ferry Marina, to the south-east of the FF Development Area. The viewpoint is representative of views experienced by road users, a small number of residents at nearby properties, and recreational users of the adjacent dog park and the Public Right of Way and nearby Trans Pennine Trail.
- 7.6.2. The main focus of the view from this location is to the north-west. In this direction, the gate at the entrance to the adjacent dog park allows longer-distance views. To the south, views are contained in close proximity by residential development and hedgerows alongside the road. To the east, hedgerows and woodland also limit outward views, although there are views towards woodland to the south of the St Helens Canal, as well an overhead line passing to the south-east. To the north, residential development on the southern edge of Warrington is visible in longer-distance views, partially filtered by hedgerows along Station Road.
- 7.6.3. To the north-west and west there are open views over the dog park in the foreground, followed by arable land featuring areas of woodland in the middle distance. The overhead line which is also visible to the east passes from the west in relatively close proximity to north the viewpoint. FFPS forms a prominent feature upon the skyline to the west, with both sets of cooling towers, the chimney and the main power generation building visible above a belt

of woodland located to the east of Fiddlers Ferry Golf Course, at the edge of the arable land to the west of the viewpoint.

Sensitivity:

- 7.6.4. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value, and the quality of the view is moderated by its unremarkable nature and views of industrial infrastructure, including FFPS on the horizon to the west, and the overhead line passing in close proximity to the north of the viewpoint. However, the context of the view is largely rural, with arable land and hedgerows forming key elements. Residents at nearby properties have principal views to the north-east, over nearby arable land and a car park. Road users would experience views towards the FF Development Area over a small period, due to a gap in the hedgerow at the viewpoint, which otherwise filters views. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium for residents and recreational users. Road users would have a lower sensitivity to changes associated with the Development.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.6.5. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be low. The removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimney from the view will be beneficial. The FF Development Area will be seen in the context of the retained pylon mounted transmission lines which will be present long-term. Changes associated with the Development would be visible in the view to the west. This is a relatively open direction of the view, and changes associated with the industrial and commercial development areas are likely to be perceived. However, the closer range residential development towards the east of the FF Development Area will be screened from view by broadleaved woodland to the west of the viewpoint, alongside Fiddlers Ferry Golf Course. Changes associated with the Development are therefore likely to comprise views towards the upper parts of large-scale industrial and commercial buildings towards the west of the FF Development Area, at a distance of approximately 1.5 km. They would occupy a relatively limited extent of the overall view, albeit in a more open aspect of the view from this location but in place of very large scale FFPS infrastructure. Only the upper parts of the employment buildings are likely to be visible, due to screening by existing vegetation beyond the FF Development Area boundary, and they would be seen in a part of the view which currently features views of industrial development associated with FFPS.

Level of effect:

- 7.6.6. The level of effect resulting from the Development on this viewpoint would be moderate-minor for residents and recreational users. Road users would experience a lower level of effect. This is primarily as a result of the relatively limited extent of the overall view which would be occupied by the Development, in place of very large scale FFPS infrastructure, combined with its position in a more open aspect of the view.

7.7. Viewpoint 6: A562 Widnes Road Junction

Baseline:

- 7.7.1. This viewpoint is located on the A562 Widnes Road, close to the junction with Tannery Lane and Cuerdley Road, to the east of the FF Development Area. The viewpoint is representative of road users travelling west and nearby residences. The viewpoint is located on the south-western edge of Warrington and represents the point at which views of FFPS become available for road users travelling west. Similar views, albeit with increased screening by

adjacent woodland, would be available for residents along Tannery Lane. Residents on Cuedley Road would have similar visibility to this viewpoint if views over the currently overgrown, intervening hedgerow became possible. These properties are orientated with principal views to the north-west, while views towards the FF Development Area are to the south-west.

- 7.7.2. Widnes Road passes as a dual carriageway to the east of the viewpoint, bordered on either side by woodland. Residential development on Tannery Lane and Cuedley Road is visible to the south and north respectively. To the south, woodland on the northern edge of Fiddlers Ferry Golf Club borders Widnes Road and Tannery Lane, and limits longer distance views in this direction. To the south-west of the viewpoint, Widnes Road becomes a single carriageway road, and stretches into longer-distance views, bordered to the south by woodland and the north by open arable land. FFPS forms a prominent feature upon the skyline in this direction. The chimney and northern cooling towers are readily visible to the west, while the main power generation building and southern cooling towers are partially screened by woodland which flanks Widnes Road.

Sensitivity:

- 7.7.3. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value, and the quality of the view is moderated by its unremarkable nature and views of industrial infrastructure, primarily FFPS. Road users travelling west would experience direct views towards the FF Development Area over a relatively limited duration, and views would be partially screened by woodland to the south of the road. Residents on Cuedley Road, to the north of the viewpoint, would experience oblique views towards the FF Development Area over a long duration, albeit partially screened by an overgrown hedgerow in the foreground. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium-high for residents, while road users would be of lower sensitivity.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.7.4. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be medium-low. The removal of the cooling towers, main energy generation building and chimney from the view will be beneficial. Changes associated with the Development would be visible in the view to the west at a distance of less than 1 km but would be much less prominent than the very large scale FFPS infrastructure. Larger industrial and commercial buildings within the western part of the FF Development Area would be visible in direct views for road users when travelling west. These would be seen above woodland to the south of Widnes Road and beyond arable land to the north of this route. This is a relatively open direction of the view, and changes associated with the industrial and commercial development areas are likely to be perceived. However, residential development towards the east of the FF Development Area is likely to be screened from view by broadleaved woodland to the south-west of the viewpoint, along the northern edge of Fiddlers Ferry Golf Course and southern edge of Widnes Road. The large-scale commercial units would occupy a relatively limited vertical extent of the overall view, albeit in a more open aspect of the view and seen in direct views from this location. Woodland along the northern boundary of the FF Development Area with Widnes Road is likely to provide low-level screening of the development, albeit of a limited nature due to the vertical scale of the buildings.
- 7.7.5. Similar views would be experienced by residential receptors on Cuedley Road to the north. These would be experienced over a long duration by sensitive receptors, although views towards the Development Framework would be filtered by a large hedgerow along Cuedley

Road. Views towards the Development would be oblique from the principal orientation of these properties, which experience principal views focussed over arable land to the north-west. Residents on Tannery Lane to the south of the viewpoint may also experience filtered views of a similar nature towards the Development Framework.

- 7.7.6. The large-scale industrial units would be visible in direct views for road users travelling west, with screening of the lower parts of the buildings. They would be seen in a relatively open direction of the view. However, they would occupy a relatively limited extent of the overall view, and there would be some visual separation provided by woodland along the northern boundary once established. Similar views, of a more limited nature, would be available from residential properties to the north of the viewpoint on Cuerdley Green, and on Tannery Lane to the south of this viewpoint.

Level of effect:

- 7.7.7. The level of effect resulting from the Development on this viewpoint would be moderate for some residents with west facing views on Cuerdley Road and lower for residents of Tannery Lane and road users. This is primarily as a result of the relatively limited extent of the overall view which would be occupied by the Development, combined with its position partly in a more open aspect of the view, and the existing views of very large scale FFPS infrastructure across the FF Development Area. New woodland along the northern edge of the FF Development Area will provide some mitigation of the effects on the open views towards the commercial and industrial areas over time.

7.8. Viewpoint 7: Garden Centre, South Lane

Baseline:

- 7.8.1. This viewpoint is located on the A5080 South Lane, which connects the A562 on the western edge of Warrington in the east, with the A557 in Widnes to the west. It is located adjacent to the entrance to White Moss Garden Centre and is representative of road users of the A5080 and rail line further north. There are also a small number of residential properties along the A5080 which are orientated to the south and would experience similar views.
- 7.8.2. The view to the north is over the garden centre car park and is contained in close proximity by a large hedge which separates the garden centre itself from the car park. To the east, views are relatively long-distance. South Lane stretches to the east, flanked on either side by open arable land, and views are contained by woodland along field boundaries. An overhead line on large pylons passes in relatively close proximity to the east of the viewpoint.
- 7.8.3. To the south of the viewpoint, the foreground is formed by arable land, delineated by scattered trees. FFPS forms a prominent feature on the skyline in this direction, partially due to the relatively flat topography and the lack of features of a similar vertical scale. Views of the northern cooling towers and chimney in particular are readily available, while the main power generation buildings and southern cooling towers can also be seen. Due to the topography, Widnes Road is screened from view from this viewpoint, although there are glimpsed views towards residential development to the north of Widnes Road.
- 7.8.4. Commercial and industrial development to the west of the FF Development Area forms a small feature to the south-west, and the Mersey Gateway Bridge can be seen beyond. An overhead line also passes to the west of the viewpoint, at a slightly greater distance than the one to the east. To the west, views are contained in the middle distance by a railway line which crosses South Lane beyond a number of residential properties, as well as woodland which delineates a field boundary to the south of the road.

Sensitivity:

- 7.8.5. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value, and the quality of the view, while somewhat rural in nature, is moderated by the influence of industrial development, including FFPS and large overhead lines. Road users travelling along this route would experience oblique views towards the FF Development Area over a relatively limited duration. Residents along South Lane to the west of the Garden Centre would experience direct views to the south towards the FF Development Area over a long duration. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium-high for residents, while road users would be of lower sensitivity. Similar views would be experienced by travellers on the Manchester – Liverpool railway line which passes in close proximity to this viewpoint.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.8.6. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be medium-low. The removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimney from the view will be beneficial. The FF Development Area will be seen in the context of the pylon mounted transmission lines which will be retained long-term. There may be views towards the industrial and commercial development plots towards the west of the FF Development Area and these would extend the horizontal extent of large-scale development across a wider part of the view than is currently affected by the very large-scale infrastructure, although notably lower.
- 7.8.7. Due to the change in elevation between the viewpoint and the FF Development Area, with Widnes Road positioned slightly lower than the arable land to the north, there will be some screening of the lower part of the Development. Retained and proposed broadleaved woodland along the northern boundary of the FF Development Area will also provide low-level screening towards the industrial and commercial units. This includes broadleaved woodland within the Fiddlers Ferry Nature Reserve, which would be retained in the long term. Residential development towards the east of the FF Development Area is not likely to be visible from this viewpoint, due to existing screening by intervening woodland within the FF Development Area. The upper parts of larger buildings are likely to be visible at a distance of approximately 1 km in oblique views for road users travelling in both directions along this route. This would be seen in a sector of the view which is partly occupied by large-scale industrial infrastructure associated with FFPS, which will be removed. The full horizontal extent of the commercial and industrial development plots is likely to be perceived. Road users would experience these views at an oblique angle over a relatively short duration. Residential receptors to the east of the viewpoint are likely to experience direct views towards the FF Development Area, with little foreground screening or filtering of views, over a long duration.

Level of effect:

- 7.8.8. The level of effect resulting from the Development on this viewpoint would be moderate for residents, with road users experiencing a reduced level of effect. This is primarily as a result of the relatively limited extent of the overall view which would be occupied by the Development seen in place of the very large scale buildings associated with the FFPS, combined with screening by the topography and broadleaved woodland.

7.9. Viewpoint 8: Weates Close

Baseline:

- 7.9.1. This viewpoint is located on Weates Close, in an area of residential development on the eastern edge of Widnes, between the neighbourhoods of Crow Wood and Barrow's Green. The viewpoint is representative of views experienced by residential receptors on the edge of Widnes, to the north-west of the FF Development Area.
- 7.9.2. The viewpoint is located on the southern edge of this area of residential development, to the north of Widnes Road. Views to the north are contained in relatively close proximity by residential properties. To the west, Weates Close stretches into the middle distance, and residential properties again form the horizon. To the east, an area of woodland flanking Widnes Road limits long-distance views. A large pylon mounted overhead line is visible passing from south to north in the view to the east and south-east.
- 7.9.3. The view to the south is over an area of grassland in the foreground. Widnes Road passes to the south of this and can be seen in the middle distance. Beyond Widnes Road there is an area of woodland which limits views. In this direction, infrastructure within FFPS forms a prominent feature. The northern cooling towers, in particular, are seen relatively close to Widnes Road, while the chimney, main power generation buildings and southern cooling towers are visible beyond. The main power generation buildings and southern cooling towers are slightly less prominent upon the skyline due to the increased distance between the viewpoint and these features. The lower parts of the infrastructure within FFPS are screened from view by buildings forming the Gateway Recovery Centre, a healthcare facility to the south of Widnes Road and areas of woodland.

Sensitivity:

- 7.9.4. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value. The view is relatively unremarkable, and its quality is moderated by the presence of industrial infrastructure including FFPS. Residents would experience views towards the FF Development Area over a long duration, which increases their susceptibility to changes as a result of the Development. Overall, the sensitivity would be medium-high.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.9.5. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be medium. The removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimney from the view will be beneficial. Retained overhead lines and associated pylons within the FF Development Area would be visible long-term. The upper parts of industrial and commercial units within the FF Employment Phase 1 area may be visible from this viewpoint to the south-east beyond an area of roadside woodland. Industrial and commercial development towards the north and west of the FF Development Area is likely to be visible at a distance of approximately 0.5 km. Larger buildings may be seen in relatively close proximity to extend the horizontal and vertical spread of commercial development in this view. There will be some low-level screening and filtering of views of development along the western edge of the FF Development Area, provided by woodland to the south of Widnes Road, outside the FF Development Area boundary. The commercial and industrial units would be seen partially beyond existing industrial development along Bennett's Lane. If large-scale buildings positioned in the north-western part of the FF Development Area they would be apparent.
- 7.9.6. The proposed main employment entrance to the north west of the FF Development Area from Widnes Road formed by a new roundabout will not be visible from this viewpoint. Due

to the intervening topography and existing woodland both along the FF Development Area boundary and beyond the FF Development Area, views of the Development are likely to be restricted to industrial and commercial units on the north-western edge of the FF Development Area. Residential development to the east of the FF Development Area will not be visible.

To the east of this viewpoint residential areas around Ronaldshay would not have visibility of the Development due to intervening woodland

Level of effect:

- 7.9.7. The level of effect resulting from the Development on this viewpoint would be moderate. The removal of the highly prominent chimney, cooling towers and main energy generation building will be beneficial to the view. The effects of the Development would occur as a result of the potential for relatively close proximity of industrial and commercial units on the north-western edge of the FF Development Area, combined with the sensitivity of the residential receptors. The level of effect would be moderated by the presence of existing industrial infrastructure within the baseline view, and screening of the Development proposals by vegetation and existing built form.

7.10. Viewpoint 9: Trans Pennine Trail / Charter House Bridge

Baseline:

- 7.10.1. This viewpoint is located on the Trans Pennine Trail. The route passes along the southern edge of the St Helens Canal, which separates the FF Development from the FF Southern Area. This viewpoint is located to the south-west of the FF Development Area, close to the Charter House Bridge which connects the Trans Pennine Trail with an area of commercial and industrial development to the north, west of the FF Development Area.
- 7.10.2. Views to the south are contained by vegetation which flanks the route. The Mersey Gateway Bridge can be seen to the south-west beyond gaps in this vegetation. To the west, the St Helens Canal and Trans Pennine Trail are seen passing into the middle distance, before becoming obscured by vegetation both within the canal and alongside it. Charter House Bridge passes over the canal in close proximity to the west of the viewpoint. To the north, the canal forms the foreground, with areas of construction associated with residential development visible beyond.
- 7.10.3. To the north-east, industrial development forms a prominent feature on the skyline. There are several chimneys as well as lower industrial units visible beyond the canal. FFPS is visible beyond, with the northern cooling towers and chimney being largely screened by intervening industrial development. The southern cooling towers are evident further east, as well as part of the main power generation buildings. The canal continues to the east, and the horizon is formed by woodland vegetation. An overhead line can be seen upon the skyline in long-distance views in this direction. The upper parts of buildings within the FF Employment Phase 1 development area are likely to be visible from this viewpoint, beyond closer-proximity industrial development.

Sensitivity:

- 7.10.4. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value, and the quality of the view is moderated by its unremarkable nature and the existing views of industrial infrastructure. However, the viewpoint is located on a nationally recognised long-distance route. The susceptibility of users to the effects of the Development is also moderated by the industrial nature of the local context, including particularly on the opposite side of the canal to the north. Users of

the route would experience intermittent successive views towards the FF Development Area over a relatively long period. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.10.5. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be low. The removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimney from the view will be beneficial. Industrial and commercial development towards the south-west of the FF Development Area may be visible in views to the north-east for recreational users of the Trans Pennine Trail at a distance of more than 1.2 km and above retained woodland. This would be visible in the context of existing industrial development to the west of the FF Development Area, seen in front of the FF Development Area from this viewpoint. Development towards the north of the industrial and commercial development areas, is unlikely to be visible from this location due to screening by development at the south-western extent of the FF Development Area and residential development towards the east of the FF Development Area will not be seen.

Level of effect:

- 7.10.6. The level of effect resulting from the Development would be moderate-minor for recreational users of the Trans Pennine Trail. Although visibility of parts of the Development is likely to be available in relatively direct views for users along this stretch of the route, this would be seen in the context of closer-proximity development of a similar industrial nature and in place of views of the former FFPS.

7.11. Viewpoint 10: Moore Nature Reserve

Baseline:

- 7.11.1. This viewpoint is located at a distance of approximately 1.7km from the south-eastern edge of the FF Residential Area on Lapwing Lane, a Public Right of Way and part of the path network within Moore Nature Reserve, to the south-east of the FF Development Area. Moore Nature Reserve is located to the south of the River Mersey and north of the Manchester Ship Canal. Lapwing Lane provides access to a small number of residential properties and farm buildings, but the viewpoint would primarily be experienced by recreational receptors visiting the nature reserve.
- 7.11.2. The view is contained by woodland within the nature reserve in close proximity to the south. To the north and west, an area of arable land provides more open views. The view is contained to the north by further areas of woodland on the edge of the arable fields. To the north-west, there are longer distance views towards Fiddlers Ferry Marina and residential development on the south-eastern edge of Warrington.
- 7.11.3. FFPS forms a feature upon the skyline in long-distance views to the west, with the northern and southern cooling towers, chimney and main power generation buildings all visible beyond hedgerows and woodland in the middle distance. Overhead lines associated with the power station can also be seen passing from north to south. To the south-west, Lapwing Lane stretches into the middle distance and is then obscured by vegetation on either side of the road. Farm buildings are visible in the middle distance, partially screened by vegetation to the west of the road.

Sensitivity:

- 7.11.4. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value. The quality of the view is moderated by existing views of industrial infrastructure at FFPS. However, the viewpoint is located within a

nature reserve, where the focus of recreational receptors is likely to be on the potential for viewing the wildlife and habitats within the nature reserve as well as the landscape around them, and it offers views over a relatively rural context. Users of Lapwing Lane would experience successive views towards the FF Development Area over a relatively short period. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be medium.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.11.5. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be low. The removal of the large scale cooling towers, main energy generation building and chimney from the view will be beneficial. Residential development towards the east of the FF Development Area, in closest proximity to this viewpoint, is likely to be screened from view by intervening vegetation on either side of the River Mersey. Visibility of the Development is likely to be restricted to the upper parts of buildings within the industrial and commercial development areas, seen at a distance of approximately 2 km, and partially screened by intervening vegetation. Visibility of these elements of the Development would be seen in a relatively open direction of the view and in relatively direct views for recreational users travelling west along Lapwing Lane.

Level of effect:

- 7.11.6. The level of effect resulting from the Development would be moderate-minor for recreational users of the PRoW along Lapwing Lane and visitors to Moore Nature Reserve. Although visibility of parts of the Development is likely to be available in relatively direct views for users travelling west along this stretch of the route, this would be seen at a distance of more than 2 km, and would occupy a limited extent of the overall view available from this location.

7.12. Viewpoint 11: Cuedley Green

Baseline:

- 7.12.1. This viewpoint is located within an area of residential development within Cuedley Cross to the north of Widnes Road. This comprises a small village green adjacent to Widnes Road and flanked to the north, west and east by a number of residential properties on South View Cottages, Cuedley Green and Back Lane. The viewpoint is representative of views experienced by residential receptors to the north of the FF Development Area. Similar views would be experienced by residential receptors at Cuedley Cottage, Clock Lane Farm, and from the restaurant to the south of the road.
- 7.12.2. The viewpoint is located in the centre of this area of residential development, within the green, which forms the foreground of views in all directions. Views to the north, east and west are contained in relatively close proximity by residential properties on the edges of the green.
- 7.12.3. To the south, a line of deciduous trees separates the village green from Widnes Road. These trees partially filter views in this direction in Winter with better screening provided when the trees are in leaf. Two buildings associated with the restaurant to the south of the road are visible. Woodland to the south of Widnes Road can be seen to the east of the restaurant buildings and this extends further east alongside Widnes Road. The northern cooling towers and chimney of FFPS form prominent, large-scale features beyond this, and prevent longer-distance views in this direction. To the west of the cooling towers, areas of arable agricultural land and woodland within the FF Development Area are visible.
- 7.12.4. Several properties around Cuedley Cross will experience somewhat more open, direct views to the south, while other properties will experience more oblique views in this direction. The

viewpoint is also representative of views experienced by recreational receptors using the village green.

Sensitivity:

- 7.12.5. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value. The view is relatively unremarkable, and its quality is moderated by the close-proximity presence of industrial infrastructure including FFPS. Residents would experience views towards the FF Development Area over a long duration, which increases their susceptibility to changes as a result of the Development, although this is also moderated by the prominence of FFPS. Overall, the sensitivity would be **medium**.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.12.6. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development will be **medium-high** reducing to **medium** following the establishment of roadside screening woodland in the western part of the view. The removal of the large scale cooling towers and chimney from the view will be beneficial. The industrial and commercial units towards the north and west of the FF Development Area are likely to be visible at close range, partially filtered by intervening trees in this viewpoint whilst to the south-east only the upper parts of the units would be visible above the roadside woodland. If large-scale buildings are located in close proximity to the northern boundary of the FF Development Area these will form prominent features.
- 7.12.7. Industrial and commercial buildings positioned across the northern and western parts of the FF Development Area will be smaller in vertical scale than the cooling towers and chimney of the former FFPS, in terms of their relative height. However they will be closer than the northern cooling towers and will appear to extend the horizontal spread of development in this view to the east and west of that currently occupied by infrastructure associated with the former FFPS to the south of Widnes Road.
- 7.12.8. Visibility of the development from the eastern part of Cuerdley Cross is reduced by the intervening woodland along the road and to the south and east of the restaurant. Further woodland is proposed along part of this northern boundary which will provide screening in the longer term, once established.
- 7.12.9. The existing FF Development Area boundary is a hedgerow along part of the northern edge to the west and existing woodland further within the FF Development Area to the south-west of this viewpoint would be removed as a result of the proposals. The new main employment access roundabout would occur in close proximity to Clock Lane Farm and in the main view to the south. Other properties, particularly at the western end of the Cuerdley Cross cluster of houses, would also gain close range views of the northern part of the commercial and industrial area and access road. The magnitude of change would be **medium-high** in the vicinity of these properties.
- 7.12.10. Due to the intervening topography and existing woodland beyond the FF Development Area, as well as the potential to integrate existing landscape features along Widnes Road into future development proposals, views of the Development are likely to be restricted to industrial and commercial units on the north-western edge of the FF Development Area, and the new main employment access roundabout. Residential development to the east of the FF Development Area will not be visible. Depending on the scale and position of buildings developed during the detailed design stage, industrial and commercial units within the FF Employment Phase 1 area may also be visible in slightly longer-distance views.

Level of effect:

- 7.12.11. The level of effect resulting from the Development on this viewpoint would be **moderate-major** reducing to **moderate** following the establishment of boundary woodland. Further mitigation should be incorporated into the Development during the detailed design stage to reduce this level of effect. Perimeter planting, careful consideration of the scale and position of buildings and appropriate elevational treatment, should be incorporated into the design of the Development to reduce the effects. Mitigation may be achieved through a combination of factors i.e., if taller buildings are proposed these would have to be set further back from Widnes Road than smaller buildings in order for them to be satisfactorily accommodated.
- 7.12.12. For the properties further west at Clock Lane Farm western Cuerdley Cross the effect would be major-moderate. Further mitigation should be incorporated into the Development during the detailed design stage to reduce this level of effect. Perimeter planting, careful consideration of the scale and position of buildings and appropriate elevational treatment, should be incorporated into the design of the Development to reduce the effects. Mitigation may be achieved through a combination of factors ie if taller buildings are proposed these would have to be set further back from Widnes Road than smaller buildings in order for them to be satisfactorily accommodated.

Viewpoint 12: Wigg Island Nature Reserve

Baseline:

- 7.12.13. This viewpoint is located at a distance of approximately 2 km from the south-western edge of the FF Employment Area, within Wigg Island Nature Reserve. Wigg Island Nature Reserve is located to the south of the River Mersey and north of the Manchester Ship Canal. The viewpoint is located on a path through the nature reserve, adjacent to a disused canal, and would primarily be experienced by recreational receptors visiting the nature reserve. Similar, oblique and elevated views would be experienced by road users travelling in both directions on the Mersey Gateway Bridge.
- 7.12.14. The view to the north and east is more open, over wetland on the edge of the River Mersey. This viewpoint offers open views towards the former FFPS, which forms a prominent feature on the skyline to the north-east. The northern and southern cooling towers, chimney and main power generation buildings are all visible beyond the River Mersey. Overhead lines associated with the power station can be seen on either side of the former FFPS infrastructure. Industrial development within the Shell Green, Moss Bank and Lugdale areas of Widnes is visible on the skyline to the north.
- 7.12.15. Similar views will be experienced by road users on the Mersey Gateway Bridge, although these will be from higher elevation and will therefore offer longer-distance views over the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity:

- 7.12.16. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value. The quality of the view is moderated by existing views of industrial infrastructure at FFPS and close-proximity views of the Mersey Gateway Bridge. However, the viewpoint is located within a nature reserve, where the focus of recreational receptors is likely to be on the potential for viewing the wildlife and habitats within the nature reserve as well as the landscape around them. Users of Lapwing Lane would experience successive views towards the FF Development Area over a relatively short

period. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be **medium** for recreational receptors, while road users would be of lower sensitivity.

Magnitude of change:

- 7.12.17. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be **low**. The removal of the large scale cooling towers, main energy generation building and chimney from the view will be beneficial. Retained overhead lines and associated pylons within the FF Development Area would be visible long-term.
- 7.12.18. Residential development towards the east of the FF Development Area is likely to be screened from view by intervening vegetation to the north of the River Mersey. Visibility of the Development is likely to be restricted to the upper parts of buildings within the industrial and commercial development areas, seen at a distance of approximately 2 km, and partially screened by intervening vegetation. Visibility of these elements of the Development would be seen in a relatively open direction of the view and in relatively direct views for recreational users travelling on parts of the path within Wigg Island Nature Reserve.
- 7.12.19. Road users on the Mersey Gateway Bridge would likely experience more open views towards the Development, with a greater extent of the industrial and commercial development visible from this more elevated location. This will be seen in the context of existing industrial development to the west of the FF Development Area, in closer proximity to the bridge. Views towards the Development will be largely oblique for road users travelling in both directions.

Level of effect:

- 7.12.20. The level of effect resulting from the Development would be **moderate-minor** for recreational visitors to Wigg Island Nature Reserve, with road users experiencing a reduced level of effect. Although visibility of parts of the Development is likely to be available in a relatively open part of the view for recreational users within the nature reserve, this would be seen at a distance of approximately 2 km, and would be seen in the context of existing industrial and commercial development to the north of the River Mersey, in closer proximity to this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 13: PRoW West of Moore Nature Reserve

Baseline:

- 7.12.21. This viewpoint is located at a distance of approximately 1.6 km from the southern edge of the FF Employment Area, on a small strip of land between the River Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal. It is located on a PRoW which connects this area to Moore Nature Reserve to the east. The footpath continues to the west towards Wigg Island Nature Reserve, although it is not designated as a PRoW beyond this point. This viewpoint would be experienced by recreational receptors on the PRoW, although similar views would be experienced by users of the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal.
- 7.12.22. To the east and west the foreground is formed by the thin strip of land on which the footpath is located, flanked to the north and south respectively by the River Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal. Vegetation alongside the footpath partially filters these views. A large pylon is located in close proximity to the west of the viewpoint, and an overhead line crosses the River Mersey to the north, above the viewpoint.
- 7.12.23. To the north, the view is over the River Mersey towards the former FFPS, which forms a prominent feature on the skyline. The northern and southern cooling towers, chimney and main power generation buildings are all visible, as well as several large pylons and the associated overhead line. A landscape bund associated with the ash lagoons to the

south of the power station infrastructure is visible on the northern bank of the river, to the east of the power station infrastructure. Deciduous woodland alongside the ash lagoons forms a feature on the skyline and also screens lower-level views in this direction.

Sensitivity:

7.12.24. The viewpoint and the view are not covered by any landscape designations, which would otherwise denote a special or recognised value. However, the viewpoint is located on a PROW between two nature reserves, where the focus of recreational receptors is likely to be on the potential for viewing the surrounding wildlife and habitats as well as the landscape around them. The susceptibility of users to the effects of the Development is moderated by the partially industrial nature of the local context, so that whilst they may use the route for recreation as well as enjoyment of the countryside their expectations will not be of views of a totally undeveloped landscape as part of the context of the route. Users would experience intermittent, successive views towards the Development over a relatively long period. Taking all these factors into account, the sensitivity would be **medium-high** for recreational receptors.

Magnitude of change:

7.12.25. The magnitude of change on this viewpoint as a result of the Development would be **low**. The removal of the large scale cooling towers, main energy generation building and chimney from the view will be beneficial. The overhead line which passes above this viewpoint, and the large pylons located in close proximity to the viewpoint and on the skyline to the north of the River Mersey, would be retained and visible long-term.

7.12.26. Residential development towards the east of the FF Development Area is likely to be screened from view by intervening vegetation to the north of the River Mersey, as well as topographical changes associated with the ash lagoons. Visibility of the Development is likely to be restricted to the upper parts of buildings located towards the south of the industrial and commercial development areas, seen at a distance of approximately 1.6 km, and partially screened by intervening vegetation. Visibility of these elements of the Development would be seen in a relatively open direction of the view. They would be seen in oblique views for recreational users travelling on the PROW.

7.12.27. In the short term, the ash lagoons would continue to be used for ash extraction. However, in future there may be changes associated with the restoration of these areas for nature conservation and as parkland for leisure and recreation. However, there is a higher degree of uncertainty associated with these proposals than the area within the FF Development Area to the north.

Level of effect:

7.12.28. The level of effect resulting from the Development would be **moderate-minor** for recreational visitors on the PROW to the south of the River Mersey, with recreational users of the River Mersey and Manchester Ship Canal experiencing a similar level of effect. Although visibility of parts of the Development is likely to be available in a relatively open part of the view for recreational users, this would be seen at a distance of approximately 1.6 km, and would be seen in the context of existing industrial development to the south, and in oblique views from this route.

8. Summary of Effects

8.1.1. The potential effects on the landscape and visual receptors that are considered likely to arise as a result of development proposed have been described in this report. The LVA process has

identified those receptors with the potential to be affected and appraises the potential effects that development may give rise to, taking into account the proposals as they are currently defined.

8.1.2. The findings of the assessment are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Level of effect
Arable agricultural land	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland	High	Low	Moderate, reducing to minor after 15 years
Scrub and grassland	Low	Low	Minor
Hedgerows	Medium	Low	Moderate-minor
Broadleaved scattered trees	Medium	Low	Moderate-minor
Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA	Medium-low	Medium	Moderate
Viewpoint 1: Trans Pennine Trail to South of site, West	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Viewpoint 2: Trans Pennine Trail to South of site, East	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Viewpoint 3: Marsh Lane	Medium-high	Medium-high	Major-moderate
Viewpoint 4: Trans Pennine Trail / Station Road Over Bridge at Fiddlers Ferry Marina	Medium	Low	Moderate-minor
Viewpoint 5: Station Road	Medium	Low	Moderate-minor
Viewpoint 6: A562 Widnes Road Junction	Medium-high	Medium-low	Moderate
Viewpoint 7: Garden Centre, South Lane	Medium-high	Medium-low	Moderate
Viewpoint 8: Weates Close	Medium-high	Medium	Moderate
Viewpoint 9: Trans Pennine Trail / Charter House Bridge	Medium	Low	Moderate-minor
Viewpoint 10: Moore Nature Reserve	Medium	Low	Moderate-minor
Viewpoint 11: Cuerdley Green	Medium	Medium-high reducing to medium	Major-moderate reducing to moderate
Viewpoint 12: Wigg Island Nature Reserve	Medium	Low	Moderate-minor
Viewpoint 13: PRoW West of Moore Nature Reserve	Medium-high	Low	Moderate-minor

8.1.3. The Development Framework will guide development including the commercial and industrial and residential development set within a landscape structure that incorporates amenity, hydrological and biodiversity features on the site as well as, in some instances, creating buffers between different areas and land uses. The revised Green Belt boundary on the eastern edge of the FF Residential Area will be robustly defined by new planting.

- 8.1.4. In undertaking this LVA reference has been made to the assessment and findings of the LVIA prepared for the FF Employment Phase 1 development, which found no significant effects on landscape and visual receptors.
- 8.1.5. The study area for the Development Framework covers a radius of 2 km from the boundary of the former FFPS and receptors within this area with the potential to be materially affected have been considered in detail. This has included five landscape features, one landscape character area (LCA) and ten viewpoints. Annotated photographs have been prepared for all ten viewpoints. These have helped assist in the appraisal process. Figures 1 to 7 show plans of the study area, landscape receptors and visual receptors, as well as visual constraints and opportunities to be addressed in the Development Framework. Figures 8 to 17 show the annotated viewpoint photographs showing the FF Development Area.
- 8.1.6. The effect of removing the large scale and locally prominent FFPS cooling towers, chimney and main energy generation building will be beneficial to the landscape character and views within the surrounding area. The necessary long term or permanent retention of industrial and transmission infrastructure such as the two substations, ash processing plant and access bridge, pylon mounted transmission lines, rail hopper building and rail sidings provides an industrial context and setting for the commercial Development, which reduces the magnitude of change.
- 8.1.7. In respect of the effects on landscape elements, the appraisal found that effects in relation to the loss of agricultural land; broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland; scrub and grassland; hedgerows; and broadleaved scattered trees would range between moderate and minor, with the greatest effects being experienced as a result of the loss of agricultural land. While losses to landscape features associated with the Development would be long term and permanent, the individual losses experienced to each landscape feature would be relatively small, particularly when considered in relation to the surrounding landscape context. Mitigation including additional woodland planting and enhanced species rich grassland and wet meadow, as well as the planting of individual trees within the residential and industrial areas, will reduce the magnitude of change experienced as a result of loss of these landscape features. In particular, additional broadleaved and mixed plantation woodland planting would reduce the magnitude of change experienced as a result of the Development on this landscape feature from moderate to minor after 15 years, owing to the establishment of this woodland. The key woodland in the Fiddlers Ferry Nature Reserve on Widnes Road and the woodland upon the canal-side bund will be retained and managed. There is also an opportunity to integrate existing landscape features along Widnes Road within the future development proposals, as shown on the 'Landscape Framework' within the Development Framework.
- 8.1.8. In respect of effects on landscape character, the appraisal found that there would be moderate effects across the Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA in which the Development would be located. The effects of the Development on landscape character would result from the beneficial effect of the removal of very large scale FFPS infrastructure, the introduction of industrial and commercial development into an area that is largely currently characterised by existing industrial development and the addition of an area of residential development within a currently agricultural landscape across the eastern part of the FF Development Area, Vegetation along the boundaries of the FF Development Area would be largely retained and supplemented, and the landscape proposals within the FF Development Area would be designed to contribute over the longer term to the appearance of the wider landscape, reinstating features of the landscape that have been lost.

- 8.1.9. The Development does not have an effect on landscape planning designations (designated for their landscape quality or value) as there are none located within the 2km study area..
- 8.1.10. In respect of effects on visual amenity, of the thirteen viewpoints included, the appraisal found that receptors at two viewpoint would experience major-moderate effects, receptors at five viewpoints would experience moderate effects, and receptors at six viewpoints would experience moderate-minor effects as a result of the Development. Mitigation through the establishment of screening vegetation would reduce some of these effects once established. A major-moderate effect would also arise from some properties to the west of Cuedley Cross. Views would either be affected owing to their close proximity to the FF Development Area or because they represent more sensitive residential receptors.
- 8.1.11. Visual effects relate principally to the scale of the industrial and commercial buildings, and their proximity to sensitive visual receptors, including recreational users of Public Rights of Way and long-distance routes in the vicinity of the FF Development Area, and residential receptors primarily located to the north and east of the FF Development Area.
- 8.1.12. The effects of development will be relatively localised, meaning that the wider surrounding area would remain unaffected and that there would be limited long range effects. This finding relates to the relatively low-lying position of the FF Development Area within an area where there is a notable baseline influence of industrial development, including the existing FFPS, as well as commercial and industrial development to the immediate west of the boundary.
- 8.1.13. Landscape and visual constraints and opportunities for consideration have been described. Further mitigation proposed as part of the appraisal process and it is recommended that such measures should be incorporated at the detailed design stage:
- Where possible, existing landscape features should be retained, particularly along boundaries. The broadleaved woodland within the Fiddlers Ferry Nature Reserve and the woodland on the bund to the north of the canal would be retained in the long term, and other landscape features should be retained where possible.
 - A framework of landscape proposals within the FF Employment Area and FF Residential Area and specifically new boundary planting along the northern boundary along Widnes Road and on the eastern edge, alongside Marsh Lane. This also serves to define and reinforce the Green Belt boundary.
 - Employment development could be structured on a grid-like alignment, taking the axis of the Vyrnwy Aqueduct as a starting point, and creating connections broadly north-south and east-west across the FF Development Area. This would create an identifiable and legible form and help to create connections between landscapes.
 - The strategy of 'conceal and reveal' can be incorporated through the retention of existing vegetation and additional planting along the northern boundary to create a balance between allowing development to create visible, positive landmark buildings (seen from Widnes Road, particularly at the entrance to the FF Development Area), whilst breaking up close-proximity views of large-scale development that may be experienced by sensitive receptors.
 - It is assumed that building heights may potentially be in the order of c22-35m high across the FF Employment Area, as proposed in the FF Employment Phase 1 proposals. Visual effects resulting from close-proximity views of buildings of this scale are likely to be material, albeit this is in the context of long-term views of retained infrastructure including two

substations, , the ash processing plant (to be retained for the duration of ash extraction), rail sidings and rail hopper building and pylons. This is particularly if located to the north west where there are existing sensitive residential receptors located at close range around Cuerdley Cross. Further mitigation should be incorporated into the Development during the detailed design stage to reduce this level of effect. Perimeter planting, careful consideration of the scale and position of buildings and appropriate elevational treatment, should be incorporated into the design of the Development to reduce the effects.

- The location and form of the buildings along the southern edge of the employment land should be carefully considered in order to reduce the effects on the views from the closest sections of the Trans Pennine Trail. Built form along the southern boundary could be broken down and taller buildings should be set back from the edge in open views. Such proposals should be developed through the detailed design and take into account the retained rail siding and associated vegetation, which offer some separation to the east of the overbridge. The FF Employment Phase 1 development proposes that smaller scale buildings (XX m high) are positioned to the south, close to the Trans Pennine Trail.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1.1. The development of the site would result in a beneficial effect on the landscape and visual resource of the local area through the removal of the large industrial structures associated with the FFPS and in particular the prominent cooling towers, chimney and main energy generation building. Some existing industrial buildings/structures and transmission infrastructure will be necessarily retained and provide an industrial context for the western, commercial parts of the Development.
- 9.1.2. The proposed employment and residential development will be set within a landscape framework that will assist in integrating it within the wider landscape. This includes reinforcement of the existing and new Green Belt boundaries to the north and east of the FF Development. The development itself would have relatively localised effects on the landscape and visual resource. The appraisal has identified the potential for moderate effects on the landscape character of the Penketh and Cuerdley Undulating Enclosed Farmland LCA as well as some of the landscape features on the site, much of which is compensated for by the green space, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting of the landscape framework.
- 9.1.3. The appraisal has found there would be Moderate effects on viewpoints on the Trans Pennine Trail, sections of the local road network and on the edge of the residential areas to the north-west and north-east. Major-moderate effects have been identified in relation to views from areas where there are residential properties to the east and north of the site on Marsh Lane and around Cuerdley Green/Cuerdley Cross respectively.
- 9.1.4. The appraisal sets out the mitigation that should be included at the detailed design stage in order to ensure that the effects on key receptors (people using the Trans Pennine Trail and people in residential areas) are considered and reduced to a satisfactory level that may be considered acceptable in the planning balance. Such measures include consideration of the location, scale and form of the buildings to be located to the south and north of the FF Employment Area as well as the provision of planted boundaries. This particularly relates to the need to reduce the magnitude of change on the views from the properties around

Cuerdley Cross where suitable mitigation may be achieved through a combination of factors ie if taller buildings are proposed these would have to be set further back from Widnes Road than smaller buildings in order for them to be satisfactorily accommodated.

Appendix 1: Methodology

Table A1: Criteria for Sensitivity and Magnitude of Change on Landscape Elements

Sensitivity Criteria	Magnitude of Change Criteria
<p>The sensitivity of a landscape element is defined using professional judgement as being low, medium or high. It is determined through a combination of the value of the landscape element and its susceptibility to the proposed development. Intermediate levels of sensitivity may also be used.</p> <p>Value of the landscape element:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its importance in the pattern of elements that constitutes the landscape character of the area and whether or not landscape elements are part of a designated landscape; and • The quality of the landscape element, that is a reflection of its condition and state of repair. <p>Susceptibility to change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability of the individual element or feature to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for maintenance of the baseline; and • The degree to which the element can be restored, replaced or substituted. 	<p>The magnitude of change on landscape elements is an expression of the scale of the change that will result from the proposed development and is dependent on a number of variables regarding the size or scale of the change and its geographical extents. The basis for the appraisal level is made clear using evidence and professional judgement, based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents as a contribution of that element to the character of the landscape; • The degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by the removal or existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones; and • Whether the effects change the key characteristics of the landscape which are critical to its distinctive character. <p>The level of magnitude of change is defined using professional judgement as being low, medium or high. Intermediate levels may also be used.</p>

Table A2: Criteria for Sensitivity and Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character

Sensitivity Criteria	Magnitude of Change Criteria
<p>The sensitivity of a landscape character receptor is defined using professional judgement as being low, medium or high. It is determined through a combination of the value of the landscape character receptor and its susceptibility to the proposed development. Intermediate levels of sensitivity may also be used.</p> <p>Value of the landscape character receptor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its importance in terms of any designations that may apply. • Its quality in terms of scenic quality, sense of place, rarity and representativeness. 	<p>The magnitude of change on landscape character receptors is an expression of the scale of the change that will result from the proposed development, and is dependent on a number of variables regarding the size or scale of the change and its geographical extents. The basis for the appraised level is made clear using evidence and professional judgement, based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which the pattern of elements that makes up the landscape character will be altered by the proposed

Sensitivity Criteria	Magnitude of Change Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The experience of the landscape in relation to perceptual responses, cultural associations, its iconic status, its recreational value, and the contribution of other values such as nature conservation or archaeology. <p>Susceptibility to change: its ability to accommodate the changes that will occur as a result of the addition of the proposed development with consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specific nature of the proposed development, its size, scale, location, context and characteristics; The degree to which the receptor may accommodate the influence of the proposed development; and The extent to which the proposed development will influence the character of the landscape receptors across the study area. 	<p>development, by removal or addition of elements in the landscape;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the effects change the key characteristics of the landscape, identified in the baseline study, which may be critical to the distinctive character of the landscape; The distance between the landscape character receptor and the proposed development. Generally, the greater the distance, the lower the scale of change; The proportion of the proposed development that will be seen; and The geographic area over which the landscape effects will be experienced is also considered, which is distinct from the size or scale of effect. <p>The level of magnitude of change is defined using professional judgement as being low, medium or high. Intermediate levels may also be used.</p>

Table A3: Criteria for Sensitivity and Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

Sensitivity Criteria	Magnitude of Change Criteria
<p>The sensitivity of a view is defined as being low, medium or high and is determined by a combination of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptors to the change that the proposed development will have to the view. Intermediate levels of sensitivity may also be used.</p> <p>Value of the view: a reflection of the recognition and importance attached either formally through identification on mapping or being subject to planning designations, or informally through the value which society attaches to the view(s).</p> <p>Susceptibility to change: the nature of the viewer experiencing the view and how susceptible they are to the potential effects of the proposed development. Professional judgement is used based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of the viewer: the occupation or activity which they are engaged in at the viewpoint or series of viewpoints; The principal visual characteristics: those features which define the view; and 	<p>The magnitude of change on views is dependent on a number of variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The distance between the visual receptor and the development; generally, the greater the distance, the lower the magnitude of change; The scale and character of the context within which the development will be seen, as this will determine the degree to which the development can be accommodated in the existing outlook. The scale of the landform and the patterns of the landscape, the existing land use and vegetation cover, and the type of development and settlement seen in the baseline view will all be relevant; The extent of the development that will be seen; The position of the development in relation to the principal orientation of the receptor. If the development is seen in a specific, directional vista from a receptor the magnitude of change will generally be greater; and The width of the view available and the proportion of the view that is affected by the development. Generally, the more of a view

Sensitivity Criteria	Magnitude of Change Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of the viewer: The experience of the visual receptor relates to the extent to which their focus is directed on the view, the duration and clarity of the view and whether it is a static or transitory view. 	<p>that is affected, the higher the magnitude of change will be.</p> <p>The level of magnitude of change is defined using professional judgement as being low, medium or high. Intermediate levels may also be used.</p>

Table A4: Definition of Levels of Landscape and Visual Effect

Level of Effect	Definition of Landscape Effect	Definition of Visual Effect
Major	Where the proposed changes are sufficiently large to substantially alter important landscape features/ valued aspects of a landscape.	Where the proposed changes are sufficient to substantially alter a nationally important view, or view of high scenic quality.
Major-moderate	Where the proposed changes noticeably contrast with the underlying character of an area or substantially alter a locally important landscape feature / valued aspect of the landscape.	Where the proposed changes to views contrast with the existing view and/ or substantially alter a locally important view, or view of scenic quality.
Moderate	Where the proposed changes contrast with the underlying character of an area or noticeably alter a landscape feature or aspect of landscape.	Where the proposed changes to views contrast with the existing view or noticeably alter a view.
Moderate-minor	Where proposed changes are readily apparent and at slight variance with the underlying character of an area and/ or landscape features.	Where proposed changes to views are noticeable and at slight variance with the existing view.
Minor	Where proposed changes are intermittent and at slight variance with the underlying character of an area or landscape features.	Where proposed changes to views are intermittent and at slight variance with the existing view.
Negligible	Where proposed changes have an indiscernible effect on the character of an area or landscape features.	Where proposed changes have an indiscernible effect on views/ visual amenity.

Appendix 2: Figures