

## **Fiddlers Ferry**

### **Response to Inspectors Questions**

**03/10/2022**

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#### **Introduction**

This statement has been prepared in response to the following questions from the Planning Inspector in relation to the proposed strategic allocation at the former Fiddlers Ferry Power Station (FFPS) (Policy MD3 of the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (UPSVLP) relates).

#### **Q1. Ecological Surveys**

*Council to work with Peel to produce a note identifying both the ecological survey work that has been undertaken and also that proposed, including timescales.*

##### **Survey work undertaken**

During its lifetime, the FFPS site has been the subject of various ecological studies / impact assessments. The following existing ecological reports have been prepared for the FFPS site and the existing habitat / protected species information has been used to inform the proposed allocation of the site:

- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey report (Thomson Ecology, 2009)
- Badger and Water Vole Survey report (Peak Ecology, 2012)
- Fiddlers Ferry Ecological Consultancy Reports from 2013 to 2020 (ELM, 2013- 2020)
- University of Salford Monitoring Contract Common Bird Census report (University of Salford, 2016)
- Invasive Plant Survey report (ELM, 2020)
- Ecological Survey report (ELM, 2020), and
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arcadis Consulting (UK), 2021).

An updated extended Phase 1 habitat survey, UKHAB condition assessment, building and tree assessments for bat potential and a badger survey, have since all been undertaken by Arcadis in 2022. The updated ecology surveys covered all the proposed development phases north of the canal. Wintering bird surveys are also being undertaken covering both the 2022/2023 winter period and are proposed for the 2023/2024 season.

#### **Ecology Strategy**

Given the vast existing baseline information available for the site, Peel already has a detailed understanding of the ecological constraints within the site and surrounding area. However, a detailed ecology survey programme has been prepared in line with the proposed development phases. This programme is under constant review by Arcadis to ensure all ecology survey

information is relevant and up to date in line with proposed application dates. Survey updates will be undertaken where necessary to ensure validity and to appropriately inform impact assessments, mitigation strategies and support any necessary future Natural England licence applications. An overview of the programme has been provided in **Appendix 1** to this statement.

A site-wide Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy is currently being prepared, which will consider all future phases of the Fiddlers Ferry proposed development. The overall BNG strategy will aim to consider the cumulative impact on ecology of all phases and therefore enable a site-wide mitigation strategy, to avoid a piecemeal approach. An update of the BNG strategy for each development phase will be supported by a detailed BNG metric, once detailed landscape designs are available.

It is currently uncertain whether a project / phase specific Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be necessary. Should it be determined that a project / phase HRA is needed to support a specific planning application, this assessment will be prepared alongside the relevant ecology reports. Adequate survey information is being collected to ensure a detailed HRA can be delivered should this be necessary.

## **Q2. Masterplan Delivery Programme**

*Council to work with Peel to review Masterplan Delivery Programme, and to identify key milestones to include:*

- *date for agreement and finalisation of the Development Framework*
- *key dates for completion Phase 1 clearance and remediation*
- *Phase 1 Build Out and completions*

Peel has reviewed the existing Masterplan Delivery Programme<sup>1</sup> produced by SSE. An amended headline delivery programme is provided in **Appendix 1**. The key headlines are as follows:

- The process of application delivery envisaged by Peel is different from SSE. The programme has been amended accordingly. Application delivery now comprises a number of detailed phased planning applications for the employment element and hybrid / outline planning applications for the residential / mixed use element. The scale and extent of the phasing for the employment element can be shown on the emerging concept masterplan at **Appendix 2**. The first phase employment area comprises the former coal stock yard which is the least constrained part of the site.
- The programme reflects the necessary programming of ecological surveys to be undertaken.
- Demolition of the entire FFPS site will be complete by 2026 at the latest.
- The timing and sequence of residential planning applications demonstrate, and the estimated receipt of planning permission would ensure, that housing delivery would be delivered in line with the housing trajectory presented at Appendix 1 of the UPSVLP.

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<sup>1</sup> Fiddlers Ferry – Masterplan, Section 5, page 5, April 2021 (document MP2A)

## Development Framework

Warrington Borough Council is suggesting a modification to part 6 of Policy MD3 of the UPSVLP as follows:

6. The Development Framework will be agreed with the Council in advance of **the determination of the application for the first part of the employment site and before any further** planning applications ~~being~~ are submitted.

WBC will also include some additional wording in the supporting text as follows:

**It is recognised that the first part of the employment site, on the area of the power station's former coal yard, needs to come forward early in the Plan Period to support the deliverability of the wider allocation. The application for this part of the employment site must demonstrate how it integrates with and contributes to delivery of the infrastructure requirements of the wider allocation and will only be determined after the Development Framework has been approved.**

Key dates for the preparation and agreement of the Development Framework are included within the programme at **Appendix 1** of this statement. This reflects the Council's proposed modification set out above, and the Council and Peel's commitment to work collaboratively to progress a Development Framework for the allocation.

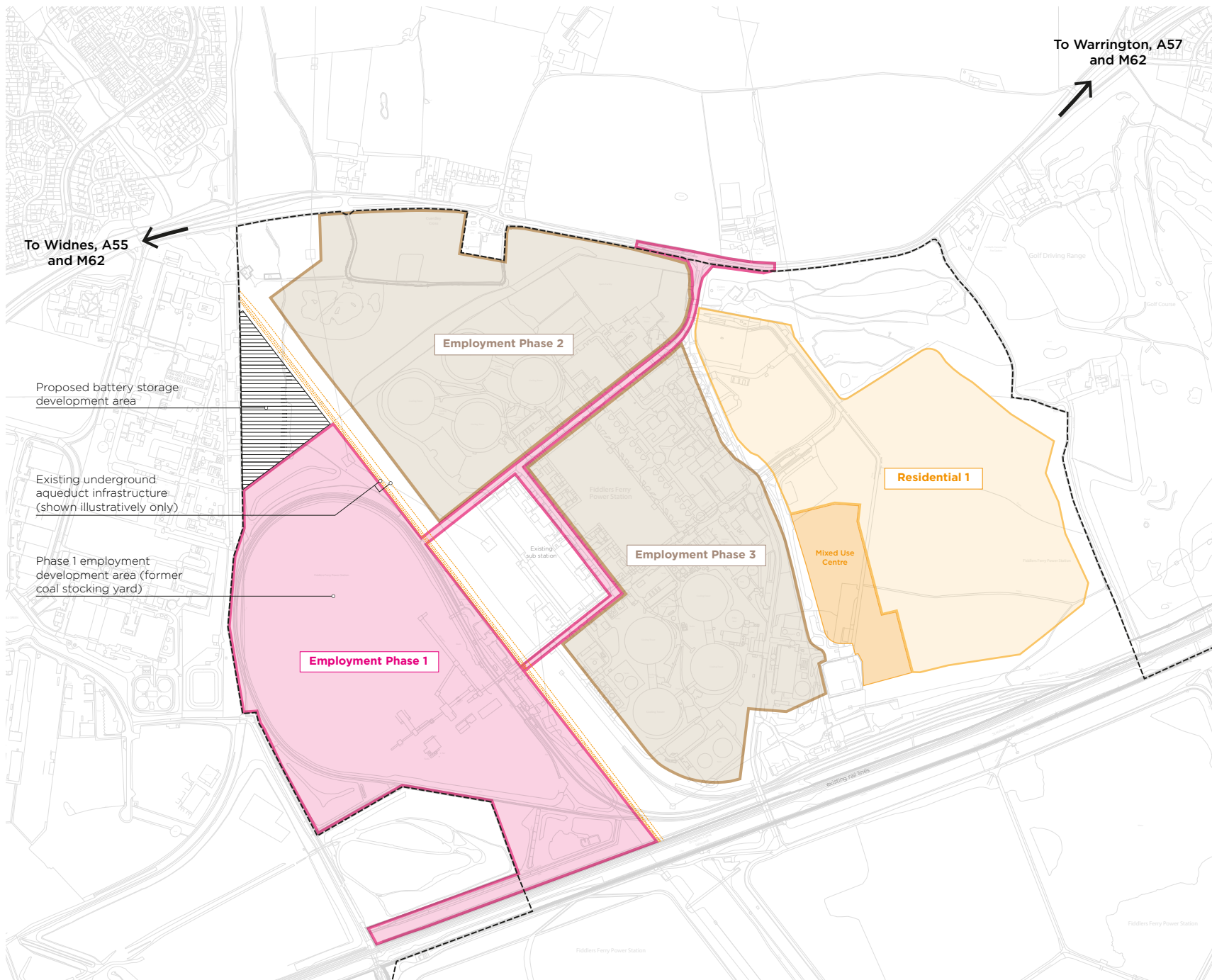
## **Appendix 1: Site Development Phasing & Ecological Survey Programme**

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## **Appendix 2: Emerging Concept Masterplan – Employment Phasing**





Not to scale  
Preliminary - for information

- Draft Local Plan allocation boundary (illustrative)
- Proposed employment development - Phase 1
- Proposed employment development - later phases
- Proposed residential development
- Mixed use centre including school and sports pitches

**M20423 Fiddlers Ferry**  
Framework Plan

## Phasing concept: principal areas (North)

Optimised Environments  
221003