

Land South West of Gadbrook Park

Development Brief



November 2025

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	VISION – LAND SOUTH WEST OF GADBROOK PARK	7
3	STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT	8
4	SITE CONTEXT	20
5	DESIGN BRIEF AND COMMERICAL REQUIREMENTS.....	32
6	KEY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES	37
7	PHASING AND DELIVERY	58
8	POTENTIAL SCHEME BENEFITS.....	60

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SCHEDULE OF RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

APPENDIX B – TECHNICAL BASELINE AND PLANNING DESIGNATION FIGURES

APPENDIX C – LVIA VIEWPOINTS

APPENDIX D – INDICATIVE DESIGN PRECEDENTS

The Development Brief was approved by Rob Charnley, Cheshire West and Chester, Head of Planning Place Making on 6 November 2025.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Development Brief (“the Brief”) has been prepared by Stoford Gadbrook Limited (“Stoford”) and Michael John Vernon and Amanda Kay Vernon (“the Landowners”) (jointly hereafter “the Applicants”), in collaboration with Cheshire West and Chester Council (“CWaC” or “the Council”). Its purpose is to guide the comprehensive development of Land to the South West of Gadbrook Park (“the N4(f) Site” or “Site”) which was allocated for employment use under policy N4 of the CWaC Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (“LPP2”) in July 2019 and covers a plan period to 2030.
- 1.2 The preparation of this Brief has been informed by a thorough understanding of the N4(f) Site context and that of its surroundings, together with a clear design intent which has enabled key issues and opportunities to be identified. The overarching aim of the Brief is to establish key site specific parameters against which future planning applications will be considered including necessary infrastructure requirements.
- 1.3 Given the scale of development and infrastructure requirements the full delivery of the Site is expected to extend beyond the LPP2 plan period.

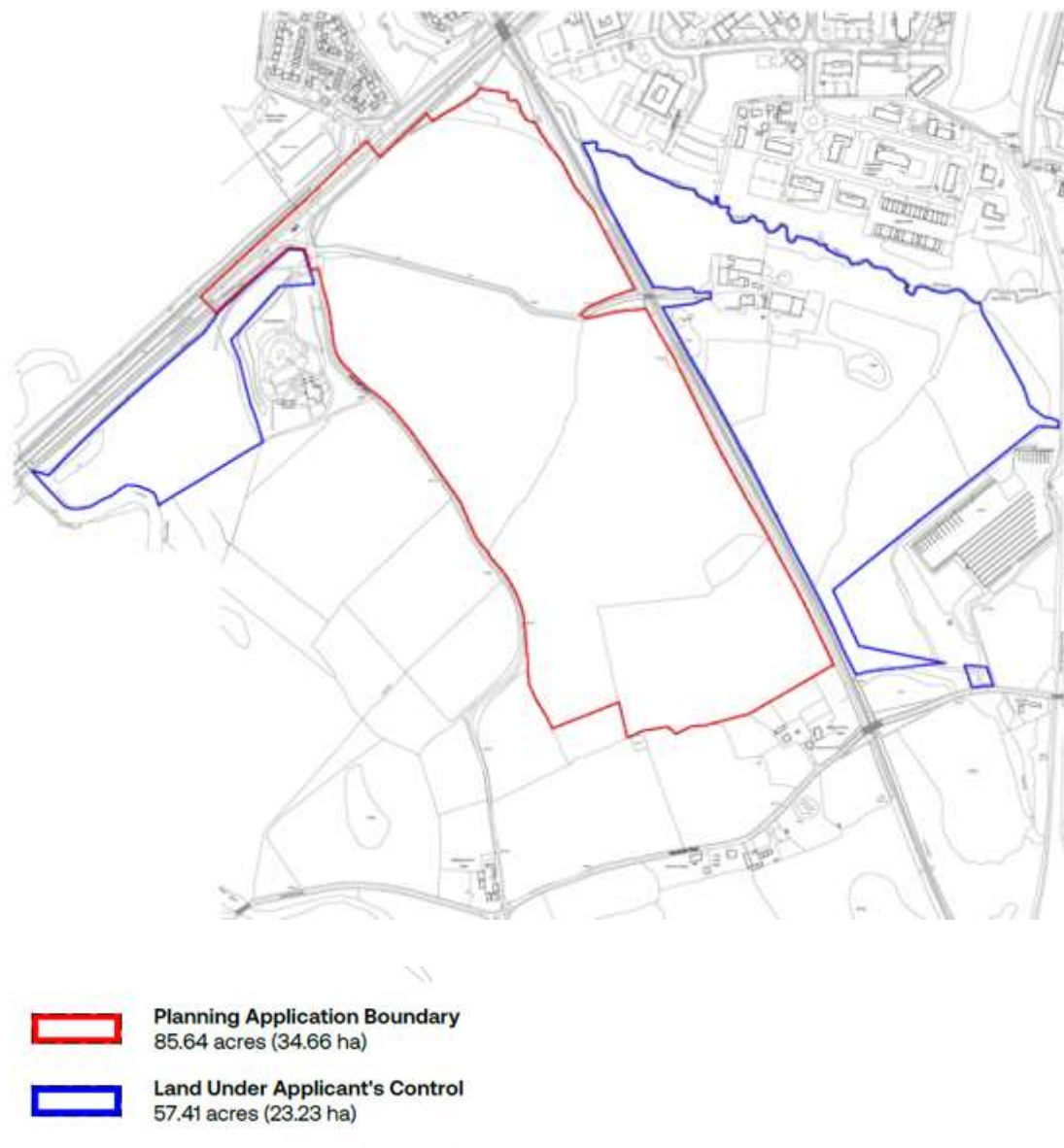
N4(f) Site Area

- 1.4 The N4(f) Site, edged red in Figure 1 below, is the focus of this brief. It is located within the administrative boundary of CWaC. The proposed planning application boundary extends to circa 34.66 hectares in area. This includes land allocated for employment use (B1 [now E(g)], B2 and B8) under Policy N4 ‘*Employment land provision in Northwich*’ of the LPP2 together with additional land required for highway junction improvements and green infrastructure/ ecological enhancements.
- 1.5 The N4(f) Site comprises broadly flat agricultural land which has an extant allocation for employment use. It is traversed by sporadic trees and hedgerows, which are denser on the site boundary edges, and in particular along the railway line on the eastern side. A small pocket of woodland exists in the south eastern part of the Site. A Public Right of Way (“PRoW”) runs from east to west, bridging the Sandbach – Northwich (‘Mid-Cheshire’) railway line, and linking Shurlach Lane in the west with Park Farm to the east. Gad Brook runs along the northern eastern boundary of the Site, travelling beneath the railway line and A556 as it flows northwards. Overhead power lines cross the N4(f) Site from south

west to north east with high and intermediate pressure gas mains present in the south east corner and northern edge along the A556, respectively.

- 1.6 The N4(f) Site is bound by the A556 to the north; by the Sandbach – Northwich railway line, which provides passenger services between Chester and Manchester Piccadilly, to the east; by Billinge Green Farm and agricultural fields to the south, and by Shurlach Lane and beyond that by the Vale Royal Crematorium to the west.

Figure 1 – N4(f) Site Location Plan



- 1.7 Land at Park Farm, edged in blue within Figure 1, is under the control of the Applicants and is also covered by Policy N5 'Gadbrook Park' of the CWaC LPP2.

N5 Policy Area

- 1.8 As shown edged purple in figure 2 below, the Policy N5 area extends to circa 92 hectares in area and includes three principal elements including the N4(f) Site, Land at Park Farm and the existing Gadbrook Park Business Park.

Figure 2 – Policy N5 Area



Purpose & Status of the Brief

- 1.9 The Brief is intended to establish a vision for the N4 (f) Site together with a series of key development principles. These are informed by policies contained in the adopted CWaC Development Plan as well as site-specific planning considerations. The Brief will guide the future delivery of the N4 (f) Site and will ensure that development is comprehensively planned taking into account the surrounding area, including the N5 policy area, and secures the efficient use of allocated land.
- 1.10 The Brief does not constitute supplementary planning guidance and has no statutory planning weight. However, once adopted by CWaC the Brief will comprise a material consideration in the determination of any future planning application.

Public Consultation and Key Stakeholder Engagement

- 1.11 The Brief has been subject to extensive consultation and engagement with CWaC, key stakeholders, local business groups and the community. This is detailed in the accompanying Statement of Community Involvement ('SCI').
- 1.12 A summary of the key preparation stages is illustrated in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3 – Key Stages in the Preparation of the Brief

Key Stages	Timescales
1. Establishing the technical baseline and design brief	May – September 2024
2. Engagement with CWaC Officers and other key stakeholders	May – September 2024
3. Preparation of Draft Development Brief	September - December 2024
4. Public Consultation on Draft Development Brief	January – February 2025
5. Refining the technical baseline/ design brief and updates to the Draft Development Brief	February – October 2025
5. Endorsement of the Development Brief by CWaC	November 2025

- 1.13 Below is a summary of the consultation and engagement undertaken on the draft Brief to-date.

Local Representatives

- 1.14 In January 2025, meetings were held with the MP for Mid Cheshire, Andrew Cooper and the local ward members for Davenham, Moulton and Kingsmead, Cllr Dan Marr, and Rudheath, Cllr Olwyn Dean, to discuss the emerging proposals and take on board comments. The comments received have been incorporated into the emerging Brief wherever possible.

Gadbrook BID Group

- 1.15 On 5th February 2025, the Applicants presented the emerging proposals to the Gadbrook Business Improvement District ('BID') Group, which comprises a number of local businesses, CWaC Officers and BID representatives. It was agreed dialogue would continue between the parties as proposals progress.

Public Consultation

- 1.16 The Applicants sought views from key stakeholders and the local community on a previous consultation draft version of the Development Brief. A public consultation ran between **Monday 27 January** and **Monday 10 February 2025**. Information about the proposals were published on the consultation website: www.asteerplanning.com/Gadbrook alongside details of the public consultation events.
- 1.17 Two drop-in community consultation events were held at the Venue Community Centre, Gadbrook Road, Rudheath, Cheshire, CW9 7JL on:
- Monday 27th January – 10am – 3:30pm; and
 - Wednesday 5th February – 3pm – 6pm.
- 1.18 Comments were available to be submitted online and / or via the dedicated email address at Gadbrook@asteerplanning.com.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.19 All the feedback received during the consultation has been taken into consideration resulting in changes to the development principles contained in this final version of the Brief and also the forthcoming planning application for the N4(f) Site.

Structure of the Brief

- 1.20 The remainder of this Development Brief is structured as follows:
- **Section 2: Vision** – establishes the vision for the N4(f) Site.
 - **Section 3: Strategic Policy Context** – sets out key Development Plan policies, national guidance, evidence base documents and other material considerations of relevance.
 - **Section 4: Site Context** – provides a description of the Site and its surroundings and summarises the key constraints and opportunities.

- **Section 5: Design Brief and Commercial Requirements** – outlines the key drivers for the proposals including contextual changes since the N4(f)/ N5 policy areas were allocated by the Council in 2019, the developer brief and commercial requirements.
- **Section 6: Development Principles** – establishes a series of development principles, aligned with Development Plan policy, site context and key design drivers, that will guide the future comprehensive development of the N4(f) Site.
- **Section 7: Phasing and Delivery** – sets out the indicative phasing proposals including requisite infrastructure delivery.
- **Section 8: Potential Scheme Benefits** – describes the environmental, social and economic benefits to be generated by the proposed development of the N4(f) Site.

2 VISION – LAND SOUTH WEST OF GADBROOK PARK

The Vision

2.1 The Applicant's Vision for the Site is:

"The development of high-quality, sustainable and connected industrial and commercial floorspace that capitalises on Land South West of Gadbrook Park's excellent strategic location; drives investment, job creation and skills growth; complements existing businesses at Gadbrook Park, and enhances connectivity and active travel opportunities whilst addressing local context and characteristics"

Development Principles

2.2 In order to deliver on the above Vision a series of development principles are required to provide further site-specific detail to guide future planning applications in respect of the N4(f) Site. To inform these principles the following considerations have been referenced:

- i. Strategic Policy Context (**section 3**);
- ii. Site Context (**section 4**); and
- iii. Design Brief and Commercial Requirements (**section 5**).

2.3 The proposed key development principles are presented at **section 6** of this Brief.

3 STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 This section provides an overview of the strategic policy context including Development Plan policy, Council strategies, Local Plan evidence base documents and emerging Local Plan policy.

The Development Plan

- 3.2 The adopted Development Plan covering the N5 policy area, including N4(f), comprises the following:
- The CWaC Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies (“LPP1”) (January 2015);
 - The CWaC Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (“LPP2”) (July 2019); and
 - Davenham and Whatcroft Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030 (“NP”) (March 2017)
- 3.3 This section focuses on the key strategic policies of relevance to the Site, as set out in LPP1 and LPP2, however a schedule of wider planning policies is enclosed within **Appendix A**.

Planning Designations

- 3.4 The following planning policy designations are of specific relevance to the Site and should be addressed as part of any future planning application:

CWaC Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies (January 2015)

- 3.5 The following LPP1 policies are of specific relevance to the Site.

Policy STRAT 2 ‘Strategic Development’

- 3.6 Policy STRAT 2 seeks to deliver at least 365 hectares of land for employment development to meet a range of types and sizes of site. The majority of development will be located within or on the edge of Chester or towns including Northwich, in line with the settlement hierarchy. The policy advises that *“To deliver the levels of development outlined a number of key sites have been identified and further sites will be identified through the Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies Plan”*.

Policy STRAT 5 'Northwich'

- 3.7 Policy STRAT 5 notes that Northwich will provide a key focus for development in the east of the Borough. It seeks to make provision for at least 30 hectares of additional land for business and industrial development. It states that:

"Key sites for business and industrial developments are:

- Gadbrook Park will be retained and protected for continued employment purposes. Any expansion of the employment park will be assessed through the Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies Plan*
- A site will be identified through the Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies Plan to meet the need for logistics/ warehousing and distribution"*

- 3.8 Paragraph 5.54 of the justification text notes that (emphasis in bold):

"Northwich benefits from excellent transport links and proximity to the M6 and national motorway network. Proximity to Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon Airports also provide further economic opportunities. The 'Employment Land Study Update' indicates that whilst the borough has a good range of employment sites across most market segments, there are some sectors (e.g. warehousing and distribution) where sites are more limited. It suggests within the Northwich area, there is a need for 30ha of employment land allocations to 2030 to support economic growth in the medium to long term for a range of office, industrial and warehousing/distribution uses. Sites for new employment development will be identified through the Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies Plan".

Policy ENV9 'Minerals Supply and Safeguarding'

- 3.9 As shown in **Appendix B** the N4(f) Site is situated within a Minerals Safeguarding Area ('MSA') for salt and sand and gravel.

ECON1 'Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise'

- 3.10 Policy ECON 1 seeks to promote "sustainable economic growthy in the borough and wider sub-region" which in turn will attract new inward investment and creation new job opportunities. The Council note that:

"A flexible supply of land for industrial and business use (falling in uses classes B1, B2 and B8) will be provided to meet a range of types and sizes of sites in locations across the borough."

Sustainable development

- 3.11 The principle of sustainable development is central to the Local Plan. Balanced with the need to promote economic growth and development, is the need to protect the natural environment by protecting landscape character, supporting high quality multi-functional green infrastructure, safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity (including net gain) and seeking the highest quality design and sustainable construction in new developments.
- 3.12 Local Plan (Part One) policies ENV2 Landscape; ENV3 Green Infrastructure, ENV4 Biodiversity and geodiversity and ENV6 High quality sustainable design and construction are of specific relevance to the site and are detailed in Appendix A.

Policy ENV 4 'Biodiversity and geodiversity'

The Local Plan policies map identifies a designated local wildlife site 'Gadbrook Valley' under policy ENV 4 and associated wildlife corridor and ecological network. Development should not result in any net loss of natural assets, and should seek to provide net gains.

CWaC Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (July 2019)

- 3.13 The following LPP2 policies are of specific relevance to the Site.

Policy N4 'Employment Provision in Northwich'

- 3.14 As shown on figure 4 below, at least 19 hectares of land to the south A556/ south-west Gadbrook Park is allocated under policy N4 (f) for development under use classes B1 (now Class E(g) following changes to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) post adoption of the LPP2), B2 and B8. This is the largest employment allocation in Northwich.

Figure 4: Plan showing Land South West of Gadbrook Park (Policy N4(f)) allocation (hatched blue land west of rail line and the wider Gadbrook Park (Policy N5) allocation



- 3.15 Paragraph 4.19 of the justification text identifies that policy N4 allocates a range of sites to cater for economic growth outlined in LPP1 policy STRAT5, providing at least 30 hectares of land for business and industrial development. Paragraph 4.20 advises that the policy *“does not identify which uses should go to a particular site but sets out a number of criteria which proposals for development on those sites will be judged”*.
- 3.16 The allocation of 19 hectares of land within the wider N4(f) boundary (hatched light blue in figure 4) was assessed during the preparation of the LPP2, It did not specify:
- i. Where the development should be located within the overall boundary; or
 - ii. Whether the 19 hectare figure purely constituted built form (i.e. buildings, car parking and service yards) or the development area (i.e. the above plus integral elements such as amenity greenspace, access road and infrastructure).
 - iii. Phasing of development
- 3.17 These are matters for further consideration at the planning application stage. There are various ways in which the Site could be delivered taking account of the policy N4 and N5 criteria.

Policy N5 'Gadbrook Park'

- 3.18 Policy N5 covers the N4 (f) Site together with the existing Gadbrook Park Business Park to the north east and adjoining land at Park Farm to the east. The policy wording states that (emphasis in bold):

"Within the Gadbrook Park area, as identified on the policies map, development proposals must be compatible with established employment uses, the character of the surrounding area and contribute towards achieving a more sustainable pattern of development for users of the business park. Within the established business park, proposals for environmental improvements that encourage continued investment by current and future occupiers will be supported where;

- 1. There would be no adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents**
- 2. it is compatible with the operational needs of site users**
- 3. there is no significant loss of employment potential**
- 4. provision is made for adequate car parking, or to encourage sustainable modes of travel**

Employment development on land to the South West of Gadbrook Park, as identified in Local Plan (Part Two) N4, should be comprehensively planned and brought forward in line with an agreed development brief that addresses criteria 5-11 below. Development within the area identified on the policies map should:

- 5. provide suitable highways and access infrastructure improvements to ensure the traffic generated can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site and the surrounding road network;**
- 6. include measures to improve access by walking, cycling and public transport and provide connections to the surrounding area and established business park;**
- 7. support improvements and enhancements to the rail network and safeguard sufficient land for a railway station;**
- 8. provide car parking having regard to the Council's parking standards and takes account of parking needs in the surrounding area;**

- 9. minimise the landscape and visual impact of new development, be of a high quality design, of a suitable scale, density, form, massing, height and materials that respects the surrounding landscape character and topography and preserves or enhances the historic environment in accordance with the historic environment policies of the plan (DM 46-50), where relevant;**
- 10. integrate and enhance surrounding ecological networks and green infrastructure;**
- 11. minimise and mitigate flood risk within the site and surrounding area in line with Local Plan (Part Two) policy DM 40"**

3.19 Paragraph 4.23 of the justification text notes that land to the west of the railway line, south west of Gadbrook Park, is anticipated to be the first phase of employment development within the Local Plan period. In terms of the land to the east of the railway (Land at Park Farm) this was included by CWaC to:

"Ensure that any development is considered in a holistic manner and integrates fully with the established business park, improves connectivity for future occupiers/users and addresses any potential transport or environmental impacts of new development. The land to the east of the railway line may have longer term development potential. It is therefore essential that scale, phasing of development, the proposed design layout and mix and type of uses within the site should be agreed through a comprehensive masterplan for the area defined on the policies map. It is essential that any development is a high standard of design, layout, materials that takes account of local landscape character and potential effect on the setting of historic assets. Proposals should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and mitigation strategy. The scheme should be designed to minimise and mitigate ecological harm, minimise flood risk and to safeguard and enhance biodiversity networks in line with other relevant development plan policies".

3.20 The Council also supports the provision of car parking for the established business park (paragraph 4.22) and improved access to Gadbrook Park by public transport or other means of transport to the car (paragraph 4.25).

3.21 In terms of the highways network Paragraph 4.24 highlights that *"The allocation of additional employment land in this area is only possible with improvements to transport infrastructure along the A556, particularly on junctions with the A530 and at Gadbrook Road, combined with a wider package of transport measures (including pedestrian/cycle links) and mitigation."*

Policy DM44 'Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment'

- 3.22 The majority of the N4(f) Site is designated under CWAC Policy DM 44 '*Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment*' as either an Ecological Network Core Area or a Restoration Area. Appendix B Figure B.6 illustrates these areas.
- 3.23 Core Areas are defined as "*areas which contain concentrations of habitats that are rare or important because of the wildlife they support and areas of irreplaceable natural habitat*" whilst Restoration Areas are defined as "*areas which are designed to enhance connectivity, resilience and the functioning of the ecological network*".
- 3.24 Overall, DM 44 seeks to "*achieve net gains in biodiversity and geodiversity assets in the borough which, when delivered in line with the ecological network priorities, can contribute towards strengthening the borough's wider green infrastructure network, natural capital and maximise gains to the natural environment as a whole*".
- 3.25 DM 44 includes the following principles:
- "Development that makes a positive contribution towards the borough's ecological network will be supported. Within the components of the ecological network, as identified on the policies map, proposals should:*
- increase the size, quality or quantity of priority habitat within core areas, corridors or stepping stones;*
 - within corridors and stepping stones, improve the connectivity of habitats for the movement of mobile species;*
 - in restoration areas, improve the structural connectivity, resilience and function of the network;*
 - in buffer zones within core areas and around protected meres and mosses, minimise adverse impacts from pollution or disturbance;*
 - contribute towards the integration and creation of green infrastructure and habitats in line with Local Plan (Part One) policy ENV 3"*
- 3.26 It should be noted that LPP2 Policy DM44 was adopted prior to national legislation mandating that at least 10% biodiversity net gain be delivered through developments.

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 3.27 In December 2024, the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) which sets out Government planning policy for England and is a material consideration for plan-making and decision-taking.

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 3.28 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF establishes that the planning system has three overarching interdependent objectives:

- a) ***“an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) ***a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) ***an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

- 3.29 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is clear that plans and decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development subject to the provisions of footnote 7.

Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

- 3.30 The NPPF places significant weight on the need to “support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development” (NPPF paragraph 85).
- 3.31 Paragraph 86(c) of the NPPF urges Local Planning Authorities (‘LPA’s) to pay particular regard to (emphasis in bold): *“facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern*

economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, **gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics**".

3.32 Paragraph 87 recognises the need for decisions to address "specific locational requirements of different sectors" by making provision for (emphasis in bold):

- a) "**clusters or networks** of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and **infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries** (including data centres and grid connections);
- b) **storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations** that allow for the efficient and reliable handling of goods, especially where this is needed to support the supply chain, transport innovation and decarbonisation; and
- c) the expansion or **modernisation of other industries** of local, regional or national importance to **support economic growth and resilience.**"

Planning Practice Guidance

3.33 On 6th March 2014, the former Department for Communities and Local Government published the National Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG"). The PPG is an extensive online resource and is regularly updated and provides further guidance on the interpretation of national planning policy within the Framework. The PPG is a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications.

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance notes

3.34 In addition to the adopted Development Plan, the following Council Supplementary Planning Documents ("SPD") (or the latest updated versions) and Guidance Notes are of relevance.

- Revised Parking Standards SPD (9 February 2022)
- Travel Planning Guidance SPD (16 March 2016)
- Sustainable Construction guidance note (updated June 2022)

- Interim Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Networks Guidance Note (March 2024)
- Minerals Safeguarding Guidance Note
- Health Impact Statement

Council Strategy and Evidence Base Documents

Cheshire West and Chester Economic Development Needs Assessment (March 2025)

- 3.35 The CWaC Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) published in March 2025 establishes the current employment baseline and market trends. It provides recommendations on the key economic issues to be addressed in the new CWaC Local Plan and future employment needs. In relation to industrial land the EDNA finds that (emphasis in bold):

*“The LPA should ensure a deliverable provision of future land supply in line with the recommendations of this report being **193 ha of industrial**¹. In reality this may **mean a switch from PDL, available through the last plan period, to greater levels of greenfield provision.** Given the ongoing level of occupier interest and investment a strategy of land release is considered justified. A downward adjustment of up to 10% could be considered as an allowance for future windfalls, however, there may be exceptional investments over and above planned or allocated land to be considered on a case by case basis. Ellesmere Port followed by **Northwich** and Winsford are the **priority areas for provision. Large scale inward investment sites should make up a minimum of 40% of the future total but it would be preferable for this to be closer to 60% reflecting trends towards large units for both inward investment and strategic distribution**”.*

- 3.36 The ENDA stakeholder/market feedback on the expansion of Gadbrook Park that industrial, warehousing and distribution premises of most sizes should be viable given evidence of speculative employment development taking place elsewhere in Northwich. Table 6.1 of the ENA notes there may be some local barriers to development when delivering smaller floorspace units, or which may include access to power supply or biodiversity net gain requirements.

¹ Estimated over a 20 year period

West Cheshire Inclusive Economy Prospectus and Action Plan 2021

- 3.37 CWaC published an Inclusive Growth Strategy in 2021. The strategy sets out the key challenges for the district and states in the Executive Summary that : *“We have a strong local economy in West Cheshire, but significant inequalities persist in our communities. Growth to date has not resulted in prosperity for all in our Borough”*. Page 12 reiterates these challenges:

“What is striking in West Cheshire is not the widespread scale of deprivation, but the presence of pockets where disadvantage is enduring and highly concentrated”.

- 3.38 The Strategy sets a clear vision for the future : *“Our vision for West Cheshire is to achieve a thriving and inclusive economy which is greener, fairer and stronger – one that enables all our people, places, and enterprises to flourish”*.
- 3.39 Implicit in the Strategy is the need to create more jobs and encourage more people into work – addressing the challenges outlined above.

Mid Cheshire Plan, May 2025

- 3.40 More recently CWaC has published the Mid Cheshire Plan to set an economic growth agenda for the towns of Middlewich, Northwich and Winsford.
- 3.41 The Vision for the plan is to: *“To draw together strengths, eliminate barriers to new investment, and make Mid Cheshire’s economy stronger, greener, and fairer”*.
- 3.42 The document also states that:
- *“Mid Cheshire is well-placed for further economic growth” (p10).*
 - *“Some communities suffer high levels of deprivation” (p3).*
 - *“If we are successful, in ten years’ time you will see a marked difference in the range and quality of employment opportunities in our borough” (Foreword).*

- 3.43 Provision of new jobs at the N4(f) Site at the site will clearly align well with all local economic policy objectives.

Cheshire West Climate Emergency

- 3.44 On 21 May 2019, CWaC declared that the Borough is in a Climate Emergency. In declaring a climate emergency, the Council is targeting the earliest date before 2045 that the

borough can be carbon neutral. The Council has prepared a Climate Emergency Response Plan which sets out the actions that the CWaC will take to respond to the climate emergency, alongside evidence on the borough's current carbon footprint, and its potential trajectory over the period 2020-2045.

Emerging Policy and Guidance

CWaC Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation (June 2025)

- 3.45 In the Council Cabinet Meeting of 11th June Members approved the Local Plan 'Issues and Options' for public consultation. A key purpose of the consultation is to seek views on how and where future development needs should be accommodated taking into account significant uplifts to the Borough's housing requirements as a result of the Government's Standard Method and evidence base documents including the CWaC Economic Needs Assessment (March 2025).
- 3.46 Three spatial options are proposed to accommodate these needs including:
- **Option A** – Retain the Green Belt
 - **Option B** – Follow current Local Plan level and distribution of development
 - **Option C** – Sustainable transport corridors
- 3.47 In line with the NPPF the Council will review land allocated for development in plans to ensure there is a reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the allocated use.
- 3.48 In terms of Northwich, all spatial options appear to show the potential for greenfield employment expansion to the south of the town around the location of the N4(f) Site and adjacent Land at Park Farm. Development within existing employment areas (i.e. Gadbrook Park) is also denoted.

Emerging Cheshire West and Chester Design Code

- 3.49 The Council is preparing a Design Code for Cheshire West and Chester in partnership with Create Streets. This document once adopted will provide a collection of design principles which helps residents define what good development and high-quality public streets and spaces look like in their area.

4 SITE CONTEXT

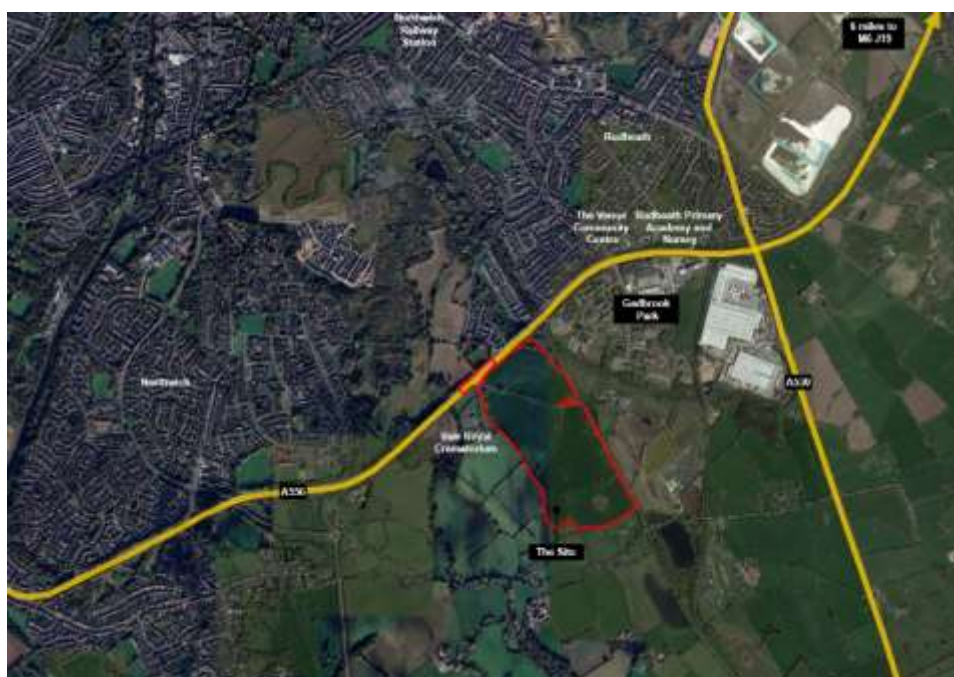
- 4.1 This section describes the N4(f) Site and its surroundings, presents site-specific technical considerations and describes key opportunities.

The N4(f) Site

Overview

- 4.2 The Site to be brought forward for development by the Applicants, edged red in Figure 5 below, is irregular in shape and extends to circa 34.66 hectares in area. The majority of land within the red line boundary is allocated for employment use (B1 [now E(g)], B2 and B8) under Policy N4 'Employment land provision in Northwich' of the LPP2 and falls with the wider boundary of LPP2 policy N5. It comprises broadly flat arable land that is traversed by sporadic trees and hedgerows, which are denser on the Site boundary edges, and in particular along the railway line on the eastern boundary. A small pocket of woodland exists on the south eastern part of the Site.
- 4.3 Gad Brook bisects the northern eastern tip of the Site, travelling beneath the railway line and A556 as it flows northwards. Overhead power lines cross the Site from south west to north east with high and intermediate pressure gas mains present in the south east corner and northern edge, along the A556, respectively.

Figure 5 – Site Context



- 4.4 Cartens Bridge to the east links the Site with Park Farm across the railway line however, this is not within the ownership of the Applicants.

Wider Surroundings

Immediate Surroundings

- 4.5 The Site is bound by the A556 to the north and beyond that by residential properties in the village of Rudheath; by the Sandbach – Northwich railway line, which provides passenger services between Chester and Manchester Piccadilly, to the east; by Billinge Green Farm and agricultural fields to the south and beyond that by Davenham Road, and by Shurlach Lane to west and beyond that by the Vale Royal Crematorium and Shipbrook Hill Farm.

Gadbrook Park – Policy N5 Area

- 4.6 The Site is located in a proven location for commercial development, where it can meet an established need for manufacturing, industrial, storage and distribution uses. It has good connectivity to the strategic highways network with immediate access to the A556. This connects to junction 19 of the M6, approximately 9km to the north east, and junction 8 of the M56 north of that. Both motorways are prime corridors for strategic commercial occupiers.
- 4.7 The Brief has been prepared in response to the requirements of LPP2 policy N5 ‘Gadbrook Park’ the boundary of which is shown edged red in **Figure 6** below.

Figure 6: Plan showing the wider Gadbrook Park (Policy N5) allocation



Source: Google Earth, Land South West of Gadbrook Park, 53°14'27.42" N 2°29'10.13" W elev 30m (imagery Date 10/27/2024)/ 53°14'28.34"N 2°29'06.41"W elev 29m (imagery dated 4/22/2021)



4.8 Policy N5 of the LPP2 covers the following three principal parcels as shown above.

- i. Established Gadbrook Business Park (shaded red);
- ii. Land to the south west of Gadbrook Park – as allocated under LPP2 Policy N4(f) (shaded blue); and
- iii. Land at Park Farm (to the east of the railway line)

4.9 Given that the N4(f) Site has been described above, the following paragraphs provide a description of Gadbrook Business Park and Land at Park Farm.

Gadbrook Business Park

4.10 Gadbrook Business Park is an established, circa 100-acre, business park located to the north east of the Site. The majority of the business park comprises office uses (Class E(g)) with the management of the area overseen by the Gadbrook Park Business Improvement District ("BID").

4.11 As noted at paragraph 6.42 of the Council's EDNA:

"The Business Park predominantly provides office space, although there are some non-office uses, for example Roberts Bakery which is a key local employer. Since the pandemic, Gadbrook Business Park has lost a number of key occupiers including Barclays who chose to retain a hybrid working model and consolidated their office space to Nantwich and the Hut Group who moved to Manchester Airport to offer a place-based destination to their employees. Multiple large office buildings, including two large buildings formerly occupied by Barclays, are now vacant with associated under-utilised car parks. The buildings are now very dated and have become functionally obsolete".

4.12 There are considered to be synergies between Gadbrook Business Park and the proposed development at the N4(f) Site with the potential to create a significant clustering of economic activity. The Applicants engaged with the BID as part of pre-application consultation and will continue dialogue as the proposals come forward. Given the Site's location within the policy N5 boundary any future proposals will be liable to pay the BID levy. This helps cover a range of services and improvement projects including security, coordinated business activity and physical management and maintenance around the park.

Land at Park Farm

4.13 Land at Park Farm is located to the east of the railway line and is separated from the Gadbrook Park to the north east by Gad Brook. It currently comprises agricultural fields and is traversed by an existing PRow linking Gadbrook Business Park and the Site via the existing railway bridge which constitutes unregistered land. Land at Park Farm is fully operational and includes domestic properties and agricultural buildings together with yard space and storage. The land is not currently allocated in the LPP2 for development although it does fall within Policy N5. Any future development proposals would need to be progressed through CWaC's emerging Local Plan or through a separate planning application.

- 4.14 The continued ability to provide suitable vehicular and pedestrian access to Land at Park Farm from the A556 is a key consideration in the Brief. There is an opportunity to improve access along the existing footpaths on the land in this area and improve the connectivity of the development site with the surrounding area for walking and cycling.

Site Specific Technical Considerations

- 4.15 A suite of technical, environmental and commercial work has underpinned the preparation of the Brief, providing a robust understanding of constraints and opportunities at the Site. Relevant figures illustrating the technical considerations are set out in **Appendix B**.

Landownership

- 4.16 The majority of land within allocation N4.F is under the control of the Applicants, as shown on figure 1 of this Brief, with the exception of a small 0.2 hectare parcel to the north west corner adjacent to the A556 which is unregistered. Additionally, a small area of land around and including Cartens Bridge (ref. SNJ Bridge 25) in the centre of the N4(f) Site is unregistered but understood to be Network Rail property. These areas are excluded from the red and blue line boundaries.
- 4.17 Land to the east of the railway line situated within the Policy N5 boundary (Land at Park Farm) is under the control of the Applicant's together with a parcel to the north west of the Vale Royal Crematorium.

Strategic Location

Public Transport

- 4.18 The nearest bus stops to the proposed development, indicated by a marked layby and a shelter, are located on Gadbrook Road approximately a 1km walk to the access of the proposed development. There are also bus stops located within the Rudheath area. The bus stop can be accessed by pedestrians using the existing footway that runs along the south side of the A556 from the N4(f) Site and the existing dropped kerb crossings at the A556/Shipbrook Road junction provides access to the northern footway on the A556.
- 4.19 The N4(f) Site is also situated relatively close to a number of services, facilities and transport connections in Northwich, the centre of which is approximately 2km to the north west, including a railway station with services to Chester and Manchester.

Strategic Highways

- 4.20 The N4(f) Site has good connectivity to the strategic highways network with immediate access to the A556. This connects to junction 19 of the M6, approximately 9km to the north east, and junction 8 of the M56 north of that. Both motorways are prime corridors for strategic commercial occupiers.

Existing Access and Connectivity

Vehicular

- 4.21 The N4(f) Site is accessed to the north west via a left in left out arrangement from the A556 to Shurlach Lane. A private access track then crosses the northern part of the Site and links to Park Farm across the railway bridge to the east.

Public Rights of Way

- 4.22 Public Footpath 106 FP3X1 ('Davenham FP3X') runs across the Site from Shurlach Lane in the west and connects to Public Footpath 259 FP4/1 ('Rudheath FP4') adjacent to Park Farm in the east. This then leads to footpath 259/FP5/2 ('Rudheath FP5') which heads north, crosses Gad Brook and connects into footpath 259/FP9/1 ('Rudheath FP9') providing pedestrian access to Gadbrook Park. Footpath Rudheath FP4 also links into 259/FP1/1 ('Rudheath FP1') which travels south toward the Marina and Davenham Road.

Topography

- 4.23 The Site is broadly flat, generally falling gently from west to east toward the railway line. However, north of Cartens Bridge the topography falls away more dramatically toward Gad Brook in the north east corner and eastern boundary north of Cartens Bridge.

Landscape and Visual Character

Statutory Designations

- 4.24 There are no World Heritage Sites, National Parks or National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) located within close proximity.

Landscape Character

- 4.25 The N4(f) Site is identified as falling within Landscape Character Type ('LCT') 10 – 'Cheshire Plain East' within the Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester

Borough (March 2016). Specifically, the Site falls within Landscape Character Area ('LCA') 10b 'Stublach Plain' which forms a flat pastoral plain influenced in part by features associated with the brine/salt extraction and gas storage industries.

Visual Baseline

- 4.26 The surrounding views are an important aspect of the visual amenity of the N4(f) Site. Local receptors consist of users of the existing PRoW whilst external receptors include, but are not limited to, Vale Royal Crematorium, residential properties, local farms and businesses at Gadbrook Park. A series of key views have been agreed in the preparation of the Brief as shown in **Appendix C**.

Nature Conservation

Statutory Designations

- 4.27 The N4(f) Site does not contain any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 5km of the Site however, whilst the Site is situated within a SSSI risk zone, it does not meet the criteria which requires consultation with Natural England.
- 4.28 There is one Ramsar Site within 10km, the Midland Meres & Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar Site is 7.6km south west. There are no Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas within 5km. There is one Local Nature Reserve (LNR) within 5km, the Marshall's Arm, Hartford LNR is situated 2km west of the Site. There are no National Nature Reserves within 10km of the Site.

Non-Statutory Designations

- 4.29 Two Local Wildlife Sites ('LWS') are located adjacent to the railway line to the east, Gadbrook Valley LWS to the north and Billinge Green Farm Pond LWS to the south.

Habitat Distinctiveness/ Priority Habitats

- 4.30 The N4(f) Site is generally characterised by species poor modified grassland and other low or very low distinctiveness habitats. Pockets of medium distinctiveness habitats (i.e. ponds and woodland) exist however the N4(f) Site does not contain any areas of high or very high distinctiveness habitats. No irreplaceable habitats are present.

- 4.31 The made Davenham and Whatcroft Neighbourhood Plan (section 7.3.2) includes a habitat distinctiveness map and areas of medium and high habitat distinctiveness are protected in the Neighbourhood Plan. The map is included at figure B.7 of Appendix B for reference.

Trees

- 4.32 The N4(f) Site contains 53 no. individual trees and 13 no. groups which range in quality from B1 to C2 with 3 no. identified as category U.

Heritage

- 4.33 The Site does not contain any statutory or non-statutory heritage designations.
- 4.34 However, there are four listed buildings within 1km of the Site including Trent and Mersey Canal Milepost at SJ 6828 7293 960m (north east); Shipbrook Bridge 380m (south west); Bridge End Farmhouse 780m (south west); and Farm Building at Manor Farm 560m (south).

Flood Risk

Flooding from River and Sea

- 4.35 The closest water body is Gad Brook which flows through the northern tip of the Site, flowing from a north west to south east direction. The majority of the Site is situated within Flood Zone 1. The northern eastern tip of the Site is sited in Flood Zone 3 which is associated with Gad Brook however, no built form is proposed in this location.

Surface Water Flooding

- 4.36 As shown in **Appendix B** the N4(f) Site is generally at low risk of surface water flooding however, there are pockets of high and medium areas of surface water flood risk. These appear to relate to localised depressions across the Site.

Agricultural Land Classification

- 4.37 As shown in **Appendix B** the N4(f) Site contains an area of both Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land which is defined as '*best and most versatile agricultural land*' ('BMV') in the NPPF. The remainder falls within Grade 3b.

Air Quality Management Area

- 4.38 The Site is not within, nor within the vicinity of an Air Quality Management Area ('AQMA').

Utilities

Electricity

- 4.39 A 33,000-volt overhead electricity line traverses the Site from south west to north east which would need to be diverted to accommodate the proposed development subject to consultation with statutory undertakers.
- 4.40 The existing electricity supply will require reinforcement and upgrading through the provision of a new primary sub-station in order to facilitate the delivery of the LPP2 allocation.

Gas

- 4.41 A 168mm diameter high pressure gas main is located to the south-east of the Site with a further 273mm diameter gas pipe to the north of the Site along the A556. Both gas mains will require an easement in the vicinity.

Railway Line

- 4.42 The Sandbach to Northwich Railway line runs along the eastern boundary of the N4(f) Site. Currently a railway bridge provides access to Park Farm however, this is not under the ownership of Stoford. Therefore, any upgrades to the bridge to facilities increase traffic movements and pedestrian/ cycle access would need to be agreed with the owner, understood to be Network Rail. The proximity of the railway line to the east requires that consideration be given to track safety and security including, but not limited to, lighting, glint and glare and boundary planting.
- 4.43 A constraints plans illustrating the key considerations at the Site is shown in **Appendix B**.

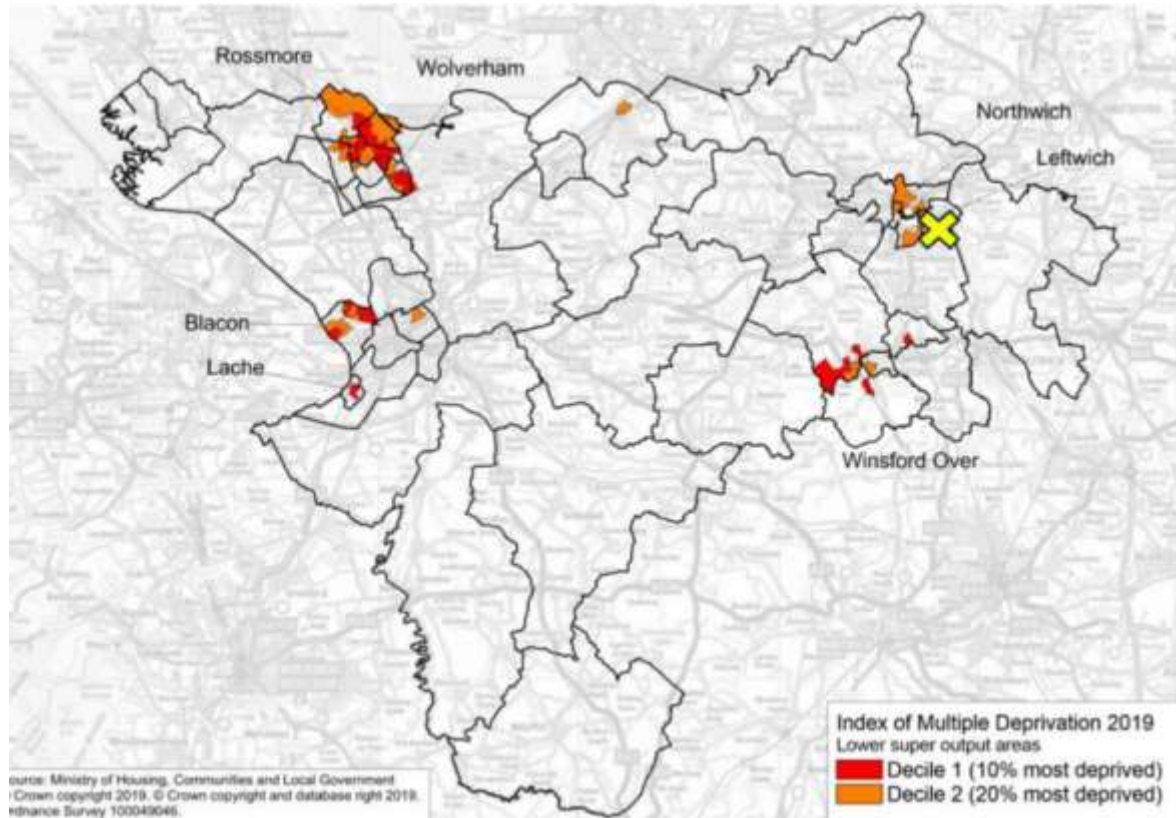
Economic Context

Deprivation

- 4.44 CWaC ranks 183rd out of 317 local authority districts in England in terms of deprivation (where 1 is the most deprived and 317 the least deprived) – so outside the top 50% most deprived districts as defined in the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

- 4.45 Whilst the overall scale of deprivation is relatively modest, the authority does have clusters where disadvantage is concentrated. Intense deprivation – as measured by communities in the top 20% most deprived in England - is found clustered in four main locations (see figure 7 below). Two of these locations are communities within Northwich and Winsford.

Figure 7 - Pockets of Deprivation in Cheshire West and Chester (Site marked with yellow cross)



Unemployment and Inactivity

- 4.46 The overall number of residents in employment stands at some 164,000 in the Borough. In addition, and according to the Census 2021, there are a further:
- 6,600 unemployed residents actively claiming benefits.
 - 11,900 long term sick or disabled residents – a number of whom would like a job but are not actively looking.
- 4.47 Whilst the overall scale of economic inactivity is not significant relative to other Local Authorities, the issues are acute in certain locations within the Borough. As with deprivation, inactivity is concentrated in a small number of communities. More specifically:

- 1,500 of the unemployed reside in the two towns of Northwich and Winsford, 23% of the district total.
- 3,000 of the long-term sick or disabled residents are also found in two towns of Northwich and Winsford, 25% of the district total.

Key Opportunities

4.48 The N4(f) Site presents a series of opportunities to deliver significant local benefits including:

- Delivering sustainable, high-quality industrial, warehousing and distribution floorspace on an allocated Site contributing to meeting CWaC's employment need.
- Securing significant inward investment in the local area and generating significant direct and indirect jobs.
- Meeting the needs of regional and national occupiers helping to create a clustering of economic activity at Gadbrook.
- Safeguarding land for a potential future railway station which could provide enhanced public transport accessibility to the N5 policy area and local communities.
- Upgrading the existing access off the A556 through the delivery of highway junction improvement works and mitigating impacts on other key junctions along this route
- Enhancing pedestrian and cycle permeability with surrounding areas, particularly to the north and east to maximise the benefits of the potential new railway station.
- Exploring opportunities to re-route existing/ new bus services through the N4(f) Site to create a transport interchange, maximising the benefits of the potential new railway station and enhanced pedestrian/ cycle accessibility.
- Incorporating surface water attenuation and SuDS to reduce flood risk onsite and elsewhere.
- Creating improved green infrastructure (GI) links between Site and surrounding GI/ Local Wildlife Sites through additional landscape planting

- Delivering 10% biodiversity net gain as part of the scheme proposals.
- Diverting existing power lines and introduction of a new primary sub-station to facilitate the development.

5 DESIGN BRIEF AND COMMERCIAL REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of Stoford's design brief and key occupier requirements that will ensure that the scheme capitalises on its excellent strategic location close to the M6, maximising the socio-economic benefits that can be generated locally.

Introduction to Stoford

- 5.2 Founded in 1996, Stoford is one of the UK's leading property specialists. The company has completed commercial developments totalling over 22 million sq. ft across a diverse range of sectors throughout the UK. It has an extensive track record of delivering in the logistics and employment market.
- 5.3 Stoford specialise in occupier led, pre let development and have a strong presence within the northwest market, having developed schemes for some of the UK's largest financial institutions and occupiers. As a result, Stoford are aware of the latest occupier requirements, and are therefore well placed to bring forward development that will generate significant economic benefits. Stoford have a track record of working in partnership with local authorities to deliver employment schemes across the Country that benefit the local area.
- 5.4 Stoford have instructed an experienced project team to help deliver the proposals. A site-specific design brief and delivery strategy has been developed and is described below.

Strategic Policy Context

- 5.5 The starting point for the design are the policy criteria established by LPP1 policies STRAT 5 and LPP2 policies N4(f) and N5 with at least 19 hectares of employment uses (E(g), B2 and B8) to be delivered in this location on the edge of Northwich. The evidence base which supported these policies identified a clear need for large scale logistics and warehousing uses close to the M6. This need was confirmed by the Local Plan Inspector in approving the Plans. This fed into the business case for improvements to the A556 Gadbrook Park Junction upgrade which is now complete. As noted at paragraph 4.24 of the LPP2 the masterplan also included the need for additional junction improvements on the A556/Shurlach Lane and junction/carriageway improvements to the A556/A530 roundabout..
- 5.6 Paragraph 4.24 of the LPP2 justification text notes that *"The assessment of sites within and around Gadbrook Park has considered potential transport impacts and mitigation*

measures on the highway network. The allocation of additional employment land in this area is only possible with improvements to transport infrastructure along the A556, particularly on junctions with the A530 and at Gadbrook Road, combined with a wider package of transport measures (including pedestrian/cycle links) and mitigation. Further transport assessments will be required to ensure that transport infrastructure requirements can be satisfactorily addressed on the surrounding road network".

- 5.7 The criteria set out in policy N5 have then been used to inform the development principles included at section 6.
- 5.8 It is important for decision makers to note that the previous masterplanning work undertaken by the promoter of the Site through the Local Plan process was:
- i. Based on high-level technical assessments and evidence from 2018 (or earlier) which may now be out-of-date;
 - ii. Did not factor in the requirements for 10% biodiversity net gain
- 5.9 Moreover, the masterplan submitted with previous Local Plan representations was not an approved document and merely showed a potential way that development could come forward. Since this time further technical and commercial work has been undertaken in order to inform development principles for the N4(f) Site.

Initial Phase Infrastructure Delivery

- 5.10 In order to facilitate the delivery of the allocation, significant infrastructure improvements and earthworks need to be undertaken as an initial phase of development. This includes, but is not limited to:
- Junction improvements to the A556 to create a new signal controlled all way movement access including active travel routes;
 - Upgrading power connections to the N4(f) Site through the provision of a new primary sub-station and associated infrastructure at least 3 years in advance of employment floorspace being delivered;
 - Diversion of existing overhead power lines;
 - Ground improvement and cut and fill enabling works; and

- Creation of a circa 850m new internal spine road and access to Park Farm to facilitate the development of new plateaus as the current access track is not considered to be fit for purpose for increased HGV movements.
- Incorporating active travel routes as part of key junction improvements and the internal scheme layout and design².

5.11 The above initial infrastructure works will require significant levels of capital investment. These works will also need to be undertaken early in the phased delivery of the scheme in advance of wider employment floorspace coming forward. The proposed development of N4(f) will therefore have circa 10 year delivery programme.

Flexibility and Adaptability

Planning Application Approach

5.12 Given the lead-in times for delivering the above initial phases of infrastructure (in excess of 3 years) it is not possible to engage with potential occupiers on a detailed basis at this stage. Therefore, in order to agree key development parameters which will provide additional certainty to occupiers and investors, a planning application will be progressed on a speculative basis utilising Stoford's extensive understanding of market requirements.

Commercial Requirements

5.13 The Applicants consider that due to modern industrial and warehouse requirements and the significant upfront infrastructure that is needed to be constructed, the scheme will be delivered over a number of years. On this basis, this Development Brief and the forthcoming planning application needs to be suitably flexible to respond to changing market conditions and occupier/ investor requirements, especially those which operate at the national and regional level.

5.14 A useful tool for achieving this is to have regard to 'institutional standards' which provide a set of guidelines which meet the requirements of most major occupiers/ investors as they relate to manufacturing, logistics and warehousing. Standard institutional requirements include, but are not limited to:

² Further information is available at: [Junctions | Active Travel England](#)

- **Shape** – Rectangular with a length: width ratio of 2:1.
- **Yard Size and Location** – Increased depth of yards will correlate with the size of the proposed unit up to 50+m for larger schemes. Depending on site context yards typically face inwards within developments to reduce potential operational noise impacts.
- **Height of buildings** – Clear internal height ('CIH') and ridge height increase with the size of the unit footprint. Large scale regional/ national occupiers will typically require large units to give greater flexibility to future occupiers.
- **Type of Doors** – The number of Dock levellers will correlate with floorspace with larger units providing a greater number of dock levellers.
- **Number of HGV trailer spaces/ car parking spaces** – The number of HGV trailer spaces and car parking spaces will increase with the unit floorspace, in line with LPA parking standards and engagement with highways officers.
- **Ancillary Offices** – a choice between internal (i.e. within the main warehouse) or external (lean to structure) can be sought by occupiers. The size is typically between 5% and 10% of warehouse area.
- **Sustainability Credentials** – Occupiers will typically require BREEAM 'Excellent' standards as a minimum which will usually require roof mounted solar PV panels. This, alongside structural and operational considerations, limits the use of green roofs in developments of this nature.
- **Operation** – Occupiers and investors will generally seek to operate sites 24/7.

5.15 Taking these considerations into account, the Applicant's consider that the development of the N4(f) Site could come forward in a number of ways driven by market requirements however, developers will require buildings of sufficient scale to meet occupier requirements and generate values that are capable of carrying the significant upfront servicing costs. These units could be orientated in different ways depending on eventual needs. The creation of large, regularly shaped development plateaus (i.e not triangular) could maximise flexibility. These matters will be considered at the planning application stage.

- 5.16 The Council acknowledge the commercial requirements and considerations but other schemes for regional / national operators have been delivered at heights informed by their specific site/planning context, business requirements and location. Alongside the commercial requirements for modern businesses, the Council must, be satisfied that matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale (including building heights and massing) are fully considered. The Council will seek an acceptable scheme having regard to future employment needs/ inward investment and also the need to safeguard landscape character and promote good design. Building heights have the potential to cause a significant adverse impact on the landscape setting and character of the area. Section 6.37 and 6.38 of this brief sets out the approach that will be taken in assessing landscape and visual impacts at the planning application stage.

Safeguarded Railway Land

- 5.17 Based on the site context and need to ensure adequate servicing access, two plateaus, north and south, are considered to be most appropriate to meet commercial requirements set out above. This also allows for land to be safeguarded for a new railway station in the heart of the N5 policy (alongside the railway line) to serve the new development, Gadbrook Park (subject to enhanced pedestrian access) and Land at Park Farm. Level changes, particularly to the north of Cartens Bridge, may limit to the ability to develop a new station in this location however, this would need to be determined at the detailed design stage.

6 KEY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 This section sets out the key development principles for the N4(f) Site building on the vision set out in section 2 of this Brief.

Development Principles

- 6.2 The following Development Principles will inform the parameters for the development of the Site and should be considered as part of any future planning application brought forward at N4(f).
- 6.3 These principles have been informed by the criteria set out in Policy N5 of the LPP2. Criteria 5-11 are set out as follows:
5. *provide suitable highways and access infrastructure improvements to ensure the traffic generated can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site and the surrounding road network;*
 6. *include measures to improve access by walking, cycling and public transport and provide connections to the surrounding area and established business park;*
 7. *support improvements and enhancements to the rail network and safeguard sufficient land for a railway station;*
 8. *provide car parking having regard to the Council's parking standards and takes account of parking needs in the surrounding area;*
 9. *minimise the landscape and visual impact of new development, be of a high quality design, of a suitable scale, density, form, massing, height and materials that respects the surrounding landscape character and topography and preserves or enhances the historic environment in accordance with the historic environment policies of the plan (DM 46-50), where relevant;*
 10. *integrate and enhance surrounding ecological networks and green infrastructure;*
 11. *minimise and mitigate flood risk within the site and surrounding area in line with Local Plan (Part Two) Policy DM40*
- 6.4 A future planning application, supported by robust design and technical assessment work, will look to agree the key parameters for the Site.

6.5 The development principles have been organised under the following headings:

1. Principle of Development;
2. Access, Movement and Parking;
3. Design Principles;
4. Landscape, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity; and
5. Other Technical Matters

6.6 These are addressed in turn below.

1. Principle of Development

6.7 In accordance with Policy N4(f), the following land uses will be acceptable, in principle and without prejudice to other Development Plan policies, on Land South West of Gadbrook Park:

- Use Class B2;
- Use Class B8;
- Ancillary office space (Use Class E(g)(i) (ii) (iii));
- Ancillary employee wellness facilities;
- Uses associated with railways infrastructure (parking, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure) on land safeguarded for a potential future railway station;
- Wider infrastructure including ancillary primary sub-station, internal road network and footpaths/ PRow; and
- Associated landscaping, green space, sustainable drainage and ecological enhancements.

6.8 LPP2 Policy N4(f) states that 19 hectares of employment development will be delivered at the Site. Based on pre-application discussions additional employment development over and above 19 hectares could potentially be delivered within N4(f) subject to appropriate justification being provided by the Applicant.

6.9 The proposed uses will complement the existing employment character of Gadbrook Park Business Park and support the vision to create a new modern, high quality business destination.

- 6.10 Any inappropriate or sensitive uses which conflict with existing and future employment uses be resisted in accordance with Policy ECON 1 'Economic growth, employment and enterprise' and DM5 'Protection of Employment Land and Premises' of the LPP2.

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Use and Amount</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acceptable land uses at the Site include those falling within Use Class B2 and B8 together with ancillary office space (Use Class E(g)) and employee facilities, and associated infrastructure, including Primary Sub-Station. 2. At least 19 hectares of employment development will be delivered within allocation N4(f). An additional quantum of development within the Site boundary may be acceptable subject to suitable justification. 3. Land will also be safeguarded for a future railway station (see specific development principle). 4. The entirety of Gadbrook Park (as defined in LPP2 policies N4 and N5) will be safeguarded for employment uses including ancillary development.

2. Access, Highways & Movement

Vehicular Access

- 6.11 The main N4(f) Site access is proposed to be formed from the A556. This will replace the existing left in / left out at grade junction, off the westbound dual carriageway with an all turn movement signal-controlled junction providing direct access into the development and re-aligning priorities to Shurlach Lane and the Crematorium. The proposed new access arrangements are preliminary at this stage and would be subject to further engagement with CWaC highways officers.
- 6.12 The proposed access layout to the Site will seek to safeguard the existing access requirements to the Vale Royal Crematorium and Shurlach Lane, by introducing a right turn ghost island priority junction, which provides sufficient capacity to ensure no queuing onto the A556. The remainder of Shurlach Lane would remain as existing.
- 6.13 The geometric design of the junction shall be in accordance with the national standards for highways using the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) – CD 123-Geometric design of at-grade priority and signal-controlled junctions, and any supporting LHA specific addendums or specifications, under a Section 278 Agreement of the Highways Act 1980.

- 6.14 Following agreement on scope with the Local Highways Authority, the detailed design of the signal-controlled junction will be informed by a Transport Assessment, Traffic Modelling and Traffic Surveys, prepared to support a planning application. This will ensure that the appropriate design, type and size of junction is provided to accommodate the anticipated future year traffic flows. The above will be prepared in accordance with LPP1 Policies STRAT10 'Transport and Accessibility' and Policy STRAT 11 'Infrastructure' together with other relevant guidance.
- 6.15 A new controlled emergency access to the south east of the Site is also proposed with detailed information to be included with any future planning application.
- 6.16 The following is agreed in principle only and without prejudice to detailed transport assessment work and further engagement with the Local Highways Authority.

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Vehicular Access</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary vehicular access into the Site will be from the A556 via an all turn movement signal-controlled junction. 2. A new controlled emergency access is to be provided on to Shurlach Lane. 3. The proposals will ensure that safe access to the Vale Royal Crematorium and Shurlach Lane are maintained. 4. The proposals will ensure continued safe and suitable vehicular access to Park Farm. 5. In developing the detailed design of the new vehicular access point from the A556, a scoping exercise will be undertaken with the Local Highways Authority as part of the formal pre-application process.

Highways

- 6.17 In accordance with STRAT10 of the LPP1 and Policy N5 of the LPP2, a detailed Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan will fully consider the potential transport impacts of any future proposals and suggest highway mitigation measures (if required) at the planning application stage. Subject to the proposals progressed by any future planning application mitigation measures could potentially include:
- Improvements to transport infrastructure along the A556;
 - Mitigation required at key junctions, including the A530 and at Gadbrook Road;
 - A wider package of transport measures for all modes (including pedestrian/cycle links) and mitigation; and

- Commuted sums and contributions to highways where necessary in accordance with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010.

6.18 The following is agreed in principle only and without prejudice to detailed transport assessment work and further engagement with the Local Highways Authority.

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Highways and Transport</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transport assessments, modelling and surveys to be undertaken will be scoped and agreed with the Local Highways Authority in advance at the pre-application stage. 2. Informed by the scoping exercise, traffic modelling and traffic surveys will be undertaken, as required, to understand the potential impact of the proposals on the existing highway network. 3. Where necessary, and following engagement with the Local Highways Authority, mitigation measures will be incorporated to ensure that the proposed development is acceptable in highways terms. 4. A Framework Travel Plan will be required in line with the Council's Travel Planning Guidance SPD.

Parking Provision

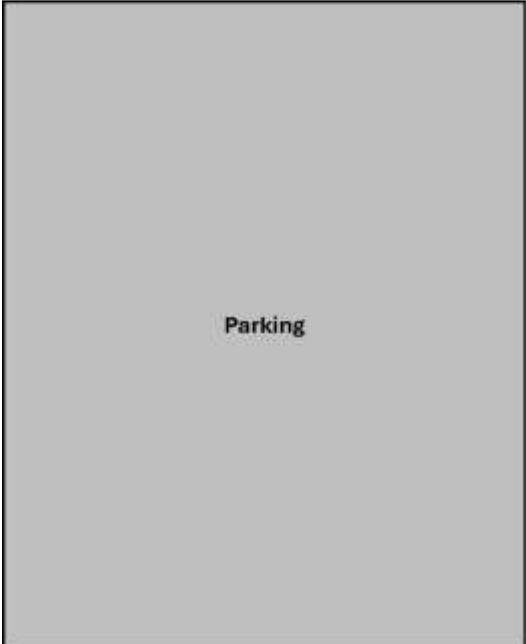

6.19 A scheme will be developed as part of a future planning application to ensure that adequate levels of HGV, car and cycle parking in accordance with the Council's parking standards set out in the Parking Standards SPD (2022). A summary of the requirements for B2/B8 use is provided below:

Table 6.1 – CwaC Parking Standards

Use Classes	Class/ Rest of Brough	Minimum Standards		
		Maximum Standards	Disabled Bays	Cycles
			Up to 200 bays	
B2	1 space per 45 sqm		Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity, whichever is greater	Over 200 bays
				6 bays plus 2% of total capacity
B8	1 space per 100 sqm		Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity, whichever is greater	1 space per 450sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
E (g(i)(ii)(iii))	1 space per 29 sqm		Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity, whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of total capacity
				1 space per 850sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)
				1 space per 300sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)

- 6.20 Development proposals should include sufficient car parking with regard to the Council's parking standards and takes account of parking needs in the surrounding area.
- 6.21 Sufficient HGV parking will also need to be provided albeit specific standards are not provided by the Council at this stage.
- 6.22 LPP2 Policy T5 encourages improved parking facilities to serve railway stations.
- 6.23 Future proposals will also seek to incorporate electric charging infrastructure with parking spaces, where appropriate, in line with the requirements of Building Regulations and Local Plan policies STRAT 10 and T5.
- 6.24 The Council's Parking Standards SPD (2022) states long stay cycle parking for employees, should be located conveniently for the cycle user in a secured, covered area, to reduce the chance of theft and exposure to weather. Facilities should be provided such as showers, changing rooms, lockers and facilities to securely dry out cycling equipment, particularly in larger employment schemes.
- 6.25 The Local Plan policy N 5 states that development should take account of parking needs in the surrounding area. Paragraph 4.22 of the Local Plan acknowledges that there have

been some parking problems within the existing business park and in surrounding neighbouring residential areas. The Council is considering a range of potential solutions to support and enhance the continued success of businesses at Gadbrook Park, to minimise disruption to residents and to support environmental enhancements. Overspill car parking for current users of Gadbrook Park will be encouraged within or adjacent to the existing business park. The need for additional car parking to take account of the needs in the surrounding area will be addressed through the planning application.

Development Principle	Description
	 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Car and cycle parking will be provided in accordance with the adopted Development Plan and Parking Standards SPD (2022 or subsequent update) 2. Adequate HGV parking will be provided in consultation with the Local Highways Authority. 3. Electric charging infrastructure will be provided with parking spaces in line with adopted Development Plan policies and relevant Building Regulations as they relate to non-residential buildings. 4. Encourage enhanced cycle parking facilities to serve the proposed railway station (to be accommodated within the safeguarded land). 5. Sufficient car parking provision to be provided, including accessible spaces, to cater for the proposed railway station (to be accommodated within the safeguarded land).

Active Travel and Public Transport Accessibility

- 6.26 The proposed development of the Site for employment uses presents an opportunity to enhance pedestrian and cycle accessibility, particularly with residential areas to the north and with Gadbrook Park to the east. The SPD Parking Standards (2022) sets out that in line with Local Plan policies STRAT 10 and T 5, where applicable, schemes should maximise the use of sustainable travel modes and demonstrate that the scheme has been designed to assist both access to and movement through and around the site for pedestrians and cyclists. Schemes should also link to adjoining development and land uses.
- 6.27 As part of the proposed development improvements are proposed to surfacing and delineation of the footway/cycleway to the southern side of the A556 allowing it to connect to the junction of Gadbrook Road and the A556 to the north east. Additionally, a

new pedestrian access point is proposed to the north east of the Site to provide enhanced linkage to the safeguarded railway land. The footway/cycleway to the southern side of the A556 needs to be provided in accordance with LTN1/20 guidance, where practicable, including the provision of crossing points and adequate widths. This provision also needs to be provided within the development itself. Walking and cycling links from the site to Northwich rail station should be included within the design.

- 6.28 Improved connections between the N4(f) Site, Shurlach Lane / the A556 and the wider Gadbrook Park will also be considered, potentially through the re-alignment and upgrade of the existing PROW. Should amendments be proposed to the existing PROW these would need to be discussed with the Council's PROW Officer and fully justified as part of any future planning application.

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Active Travel</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced pedestrian and cycle permeability to be embedded within the proposed development to improve connections between the A556/ Shurlach Lane, the Site (including safeguarded railway land) and Gadbrook Park. 2. Improved surfacing and delineation of the footway/cycleway to be considered on the southern side of the A556 subject to discussions with the Local Highways Authority. 3. Potential to re-align and upgrade the existing PROW to facilitate safe pedestrian and cycle accessibility through N4(f), subject to engagement with the Council's PROW Officer and the provision of suitable justification. 4. Any extension of existing, or creation of new, PROWs within or adjacent to N4(f) should take into consideration existing constraints including, but not limited to, levels, flood risk and Local Wildlife Sites.

Public Transport Accessibility

Bus Accessibility

- 6.29 Opportunities to divert existing bus services into N4(f) will be explored with operators and the Council's strategic transport team subject to viability considerations. Initial technical work undertaken by Stoford indicates that an extension loop to the existing services on Gadbrook Road, via Shipbrook Road, could be feasible. Opportunities exist to increase the frequency of services to coincide with shift start/ finish times. This may require investment in public transport services and should be addressed through the planning

application process. Bus stops should be placed at regular intervals and easily accessible, ideally located within 400m of all buildings, where practicable, in line with Active Travel England guidance [Bus stops | Active Travel England](#). Improvements to bus service provision can improve connectivity between the residential areas of Northwich, railway stations and with key employment locations.

Safeguarded Land for Potential Future Railway Station

- 6.30 In addition to new bus services, and as required by LPP2 policy N5 (clause 7), land sufficient for a future railway station is to be safeguarded within N4(f).
- 6.31 A Strategic Outline Case ('SOC') was prepared by AECOM behalf of CWaC, Cheshire East Council and the Cheshire and Warrington LEP in October 2022 to consider improved infrastructure on the Sandbach to Northwich branch railway lines. This indicatively shows a preferred location for the new railway station to the north of Cartens Bridge and identifies the following elements to be accommodated within the safeguarded land:
- Single face platform measuring 100m long x 3.5m wide;
 - 2 no. footway/cycleways measuring 106m long x 3m wide and 43m long and 3m wide respectively;
 - Vehicular access road measuring 65m x 7.3m wide; and
 - Car park measuring 20m long x 25m wide.
- 6.32 It should be noted that the SOC was not informed by detailed technical assessments/ investigations and was prepared in advance of proposals being developed for the wider N4(f) Site.
- 6.33 Taking into account levels and the need to create suitable development platforms, the Applicants consider that the railway station would be best located to the south of Cartens bridge, accessed via a new internal access road and footway/ cycleway. This option also provides the opportunity to create a new 'transport interchange' bringing future bus and train services together and allowing buses to loop through N4(f). However, following discussions with CWaC Officers, the MP and local representatives, the safeguarding area has been extended to the north of Cartens Bridge. This will enable further design work to be undertaken at the detailed design stage to understand whether it would be feasible to locate a new platform in this location.

- 6.34 Discussions are to be held with the Council's Strategic Transport team and Network Rail to agree the location of the safeguarded railway land and the infrastructure/ facilities that need to be accommodated within it.

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Public Transport Accessibility</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore the potential to divert existing bus services into N4(f), providing an extension to the Gadbrook Park loop (subject to viability and feasibility). 2. Engage with the Council's Strategic Transport team and Network Rail to agree the most suitable location for the safeguarded land taking into account Site constraints and operational requirements. 3. Engage with the Council's Strategic Transport team and Network Rail to agree the area of the safeguarded land taking into account the requisite infrastructure/ facilities. 4. Safeguard land within N4(f) for a new railway station (including car parking and other facilities) alongside the existing railway line to the north and south of <u>Cartens Bridge</u>.

3. Design Principles

Development Plots

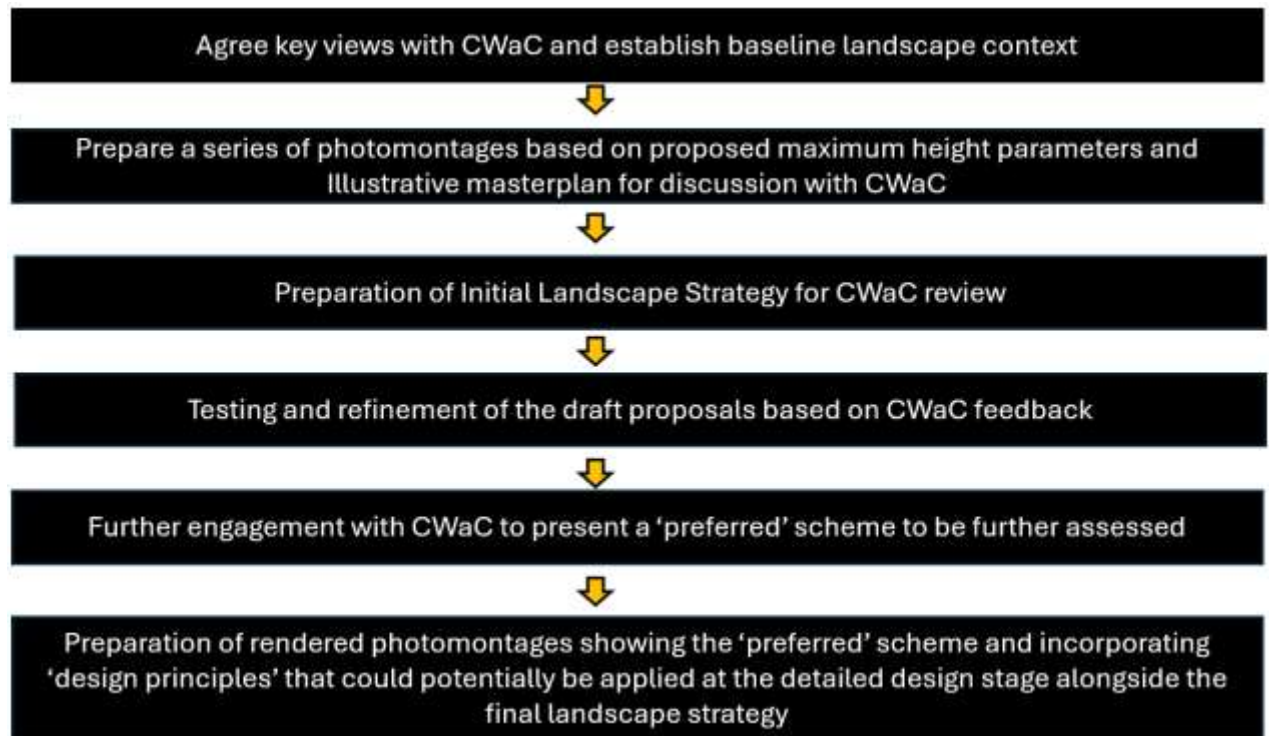
- 6.35 Taking into account constraints on N4(f) and the need to maximise flexibility for potential occupier requirements the Applicants proposes a single developable zone, is created which will be broken down into distinct plots/ plateaus with the same Finished Floor Levels ('FFLs'). The development zone is proposed to be bisected by a new internal access road which will maximise the efficiency of the proposed development and futureproof access to Park Farm to the east of the railway line. This has not been agreed with the Council who would require further consideration of the design process and rationale for the overall scale, layout and density of the scheme at the planning application stage. The exact area of the buildings will be developed through detailed planning applications.

Height, Scale and Massing

- 6.36 In line with the key drivers set out in section 5 it is proposed that height, scale and massing would need to align with institutional standards/ developer brief whilst also balancing technical considerations, namely landscape and visual impact and ecology.

- 6.37 Informed by initial engagement with CWaC, the following stepped approach is proposed to developing maximum height parameters and assessing landscape visual impacts as part of any future planning application:

Figure 8 – Proposed Approach to Developing Maximum Heights/ Landscape Visual Impacts



- 6.38 Any future planning application will be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA'), the scope of which will be agreed with CWaC Officers, including photomontages. Due regard will also be had to relevant development plan policies, specifically LPP1 policy ENV2 and LPP2 policies DM3 and N5, as they relate to landscape, visual impact, design and amenity. The LVIA should seek to minimise and mitigate landscape and visual impact of the proposed development taking into account local context. The significance of the landscape/visual impacts would be assessed through the planning application. The Local Plan supports sustainable development and proposals that give rise to significant adverse landscape and visual impacts, that clearly outweigh the benefits of the proposal, would not be supported.

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Scale, Height and Massing</p>	<p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Chris Sinton (Chris.Sinton@asteerplanning.com) is signed in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development plots, or plateaus, will be created to accommodate future built form. These plots/ plateaus will ensure that continued vehicular access is provided to Park Farm. The extent of the plots will be agreed through a future planning application. 2. Maximum height parameters across the N4(f) site will be agreed with CWaC Officers and other key stakeholders, as part of any future planning application taking into account site context, commercial considerations and technical assessments including Landscape and Visual Impact. 3. Any future planning application should be accommodated by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal undertaken by a suitably qualified practitioner.

High Quality Design and Sustainable Construction

- 6.39 The proposed development should be of high-quality design in accordance with Policy ENV6 (High Quality Design and Sustainable Construction) of the LPP1; Policies DM3 (Design, Character and Visual Amenity) and DM4 (Sustainable Construction) of the LPP2, and the Council's Sustainable Construction Guidance Note.
- 6.40 All future planning applications shall take local design policies into account. They will also be informed by the principles set out in the National Design Guide and the CWaC Design Code, where relevant. Key architectural design considerations for the N4(f) Site could include:
- **Elevational Treatments** – A complimentary set of high-quality cladding materials shall add visual interest to building facades and break up the mass of large volumes. Detailed studies should be undertaken once the scheme is developed to determine appropriate colour choices and designs for the facade treatments, to effectively mitigate longer distance views.
 - **Roof forms** – To create a varied roofscape and variety of form within the N4(f) Site, different roof types should be explored through the design process and incorporated into proposals, where appropriate taking into account potential roof mounted renewable energy opportunities.

- **Definition of Architectural Elements** – Building entrances, fenestration, and other functional elements (e.g. loading bays) will be strongly articulated to enliven building facades, where practicable.

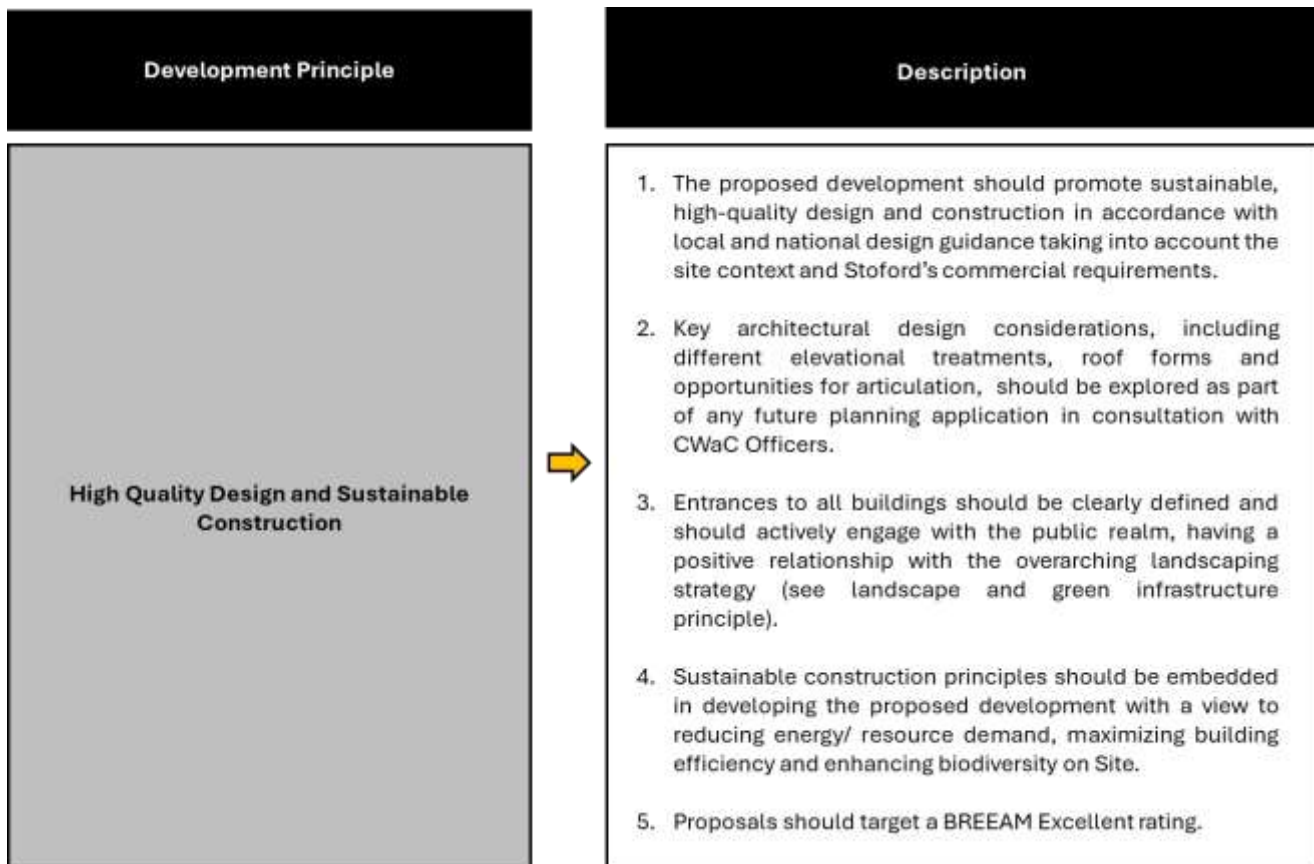
- 6.41 The Applicants has successfully implemented integrated the above design principles into large scale industrial and commercial development. **Appendix D** provides some examples of precedents that will be considered as part of the design process.
- 6.42 The Applicants will work closely with the CWaC Officers to develop a series of Site-specific design principles.
- 6.43 The following sustainable construction principles have been utilised elsewhere by the Applicants and will be explored as part of the design evolution process at the N4(f) Site:

Table 6.2 – Sustainable Construction Principles

Theme	Principles
Fabric First Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce energy demand by achieving higher levels of insulation, lower air permeabilities, good levels of natural daylight. • Minimise overheating with shading. • Energy efficient technologies to provide the right environment, for example Air Source Heat Pumps with heat recovery fresh air ventilation systems. • Well controlled lighting systems that make best use of energy, reduce light pollution and energy consumption at night. • Facilitating sustainable travel by providing electric car chargers, secure cycle shelters, and shower rooms.
Net Zero Carbon in Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The control of operational carbon emissions to be closely monitored and mitigated. • Provision of photovoltaic panels, or other suitable renewable technologies, to generate sufficient energy to counter consumption by the fixed building services. • Assessing likely overall energy consumption with occupiers and monitoring over a 12-month period to understand how energy is being used. Informed by this information, adjustments can then be made, e.g. adding more batteries to store excess power. • Roofs of buildings strengthened to allow for PV systems, if installed, to be scalable, such that the occupier can increase the area of PV to an optimum level to achieve Net Zero Carbon in Operation specific to their processes.
BREEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of BREEAM as a design tool rather than a measure of a predetermined design. • Seeking to achieve BREEAM Excellent ratings, where possible.

EPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking to achieve a minimum EPC rating of A
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising that water is a valuable resource and seeking to implement measures within the design to ensure water is used efficiently. Measures could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainwater harvesting to provide water for flushing toilets Green roof cycle shelters Substantial stormwater attenuation ponds and swales to store and filter run off Low flow showers Waterless urinals; and Permeable paving
Employee Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of good outdoor space including wellbeing areas for breakout and, where space allows, outdoor gyms and walking / running trails.

6.44 The following principles will be followed in developing the scheme design and will be addressed in detail as part of future planning applications.



4. Landscape and Green Infrastructure

Landscape and Green Infrastructure

- 6.45 A Landscape Strategy will be prepared, informed by an assessment of site context and landscape characteristics, to accompany any future planning application. This will be developed in conjunction with CWaC Landscape Officers and informed by Policies ENV3 (Green Infrastructure) and ENV4 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the LPP1 and Policies DM35 (Open Space and New Development), DM37 (Recreational Routeways), DM44 (Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and DM45 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows) of the LPP2.
- 6.46 Initial assessments indicate that the most sensitive views are the ones closest to the N4(f) Site, where new planting closer to the viewpoints would be most effective. This includes the Site perimeters to the north-west and south. On these edges space should be provided to accommodate new woodland planting. The eastern edge adjacent to the rail line already benefits from planting along this corridor.
- 6.47 Green buffers should be strategically positioned throughout the site and around its boundary. The tree line between the A556 and the existing Gadbrook Park development should be extended along the entirety of the site's Northern boundary to mitigate the visual impact of building volumes, where practicable, taking into account underground utilities, level changes and areas identified for new footpath connections. Boundary planting should also run along the length of Shurlach Lane, with the exception of the new vehicular access point, to minimise potential impacts on the character of the crematorium and the lane itself.
- 6.48 Within the Site itself a strong landscape structure should be provided including grass verges and large growing trees. Grass verges should run the lengths of all new streets within the development, where practicable. Car parking areas should include and be bounded by planting.
- 6.49 Local artists should be commissioned to provide public art to be included within the landscaping scheme in accordance with LPP2 policy DM 39 'Culture and Community Facilities'.
- 6.50 Entrances to all buildings should be clearly defined and should actively engage with the public realm, having a positive relationship with the overarching landscaping strategy.

- 6.51 The following landscape and green infrastructure principles are proposed which should be taken into consideration as part of future planning applications:

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Landscape and Green Infrastructure</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Landscape Strategy, informed by an assessment of Site context and landscape characteristics, will be prepared for the proposed development. 2. The Landscape Strategy and subsequent detailed planting plans should be developed in conjunction with ecological advice, to maximise Biodiversity Net Gain within the Site. 3. Green infrastructure buffers (varied in width) will be retained or created to help screen views of the development. 4. Key ecological features, trees and boundary hedgerows should be retained where practicable unless replacement planting would offer greater benefits in landscape/ green infrastructure terms or where there is no reasonable prospect of built form being located elsewhere. 5. All planting should seek to link with features in the wider landscape, in particular the railway line, surrounding hedgerows and the adjacent local wildlife sites. Within the Site itself a strong landscape structure should be provided including grass verges and large growing trees. 6. Should levels be altered, planting should be provided at the higher parts of any new slopes. 7. Should the existing PRoW be re-aligned to accommodate the proposed development then opportunities should be explored to create a new, well lit green infrastructure corridor through the Site. 8. Car parking areas should include and be bounded by planting. 9. Opportunities for public art, commissioned from local artists, should be considered as part of the public realm in accordance with LPP2 policy DM39.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees

- 6.52 A number of habitat and protected species surveys have been undertaken to establish the baseline constraints and opportunities at the N4(F) Site and to inform the principles for future development.
- 6.53 The N4(f) Site mainly supports species-poor grassland, which is of low ecological value, together with boundary features of higher ecological interest, such as mature hedgerows,

scrub and trees. Additionally, the railway line vegetation to the east provides an important foraging and commuting corridor for wildlife.

- 6.54 In accordance with national legislation and local planning guidance, a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain ('BNG') will be achieved through the proposed development. In developing the scheme proposals consideration should be given to the mitigation hierarchy as defined in the NPPF.
- 6.55 The development will not deleteriously impact upon any protected species populations or important habitats. The development has the opportunity to enhance wildlife resources, by replacing species-poor, intensively managed habitats with species-rich, structurally diverse habitats.
- 6.56 In developing the proposed scheme, the Applicants will engage with CWaC Nature Conservation Officers, ensuring that the scope of ecological assessments and surveys are agreed.

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 10% biodiversity net gain will be achieved as part of the proposed development taking into consideration the mitigation hierarchy 2. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment, UK Habitat Survey, requisite Protected Species Surveys (to be scoped with CWaC Officers), Outline Biodiversity Net Gain Plan and supporting BNG metric, and Draft Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan are to be submitted with any future planning application. 3. Where identified, protected species habitat or Priority Habitat will be retained and protected or mitigated for, with appropriate planting. 4. Protection of vegetation along the railway line, through a landscape buffer and sensitive lighting scheme, should be provided alongside opportunities to link with adjacent local wildlife sites where practicable taking into account the requisite railway safeguarding land. 5. Creation of new species-rich grassland, woodland planting and waterbodies, where practicable, taking into account the need to balance landscape and visual impact matters with biodiversity net gain. 6. Any future planning application should be supported by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment. 7. In developing proposals due regard should be had to relevant national and local planning guidance including Policies ENV3 (Green Infrastructure) and ENV4 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the LPP1 and Policies DM44 (Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and DM45 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows) of the LPP2.

5. Other Technical Matters

- 6.57 Based on the N4(F) Site's context and taking into account national and local planning guidance the following development principles should also be addressed through any future planning application:

Flood Risk and Drainage

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Flood Risk and Drainage</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In accordance with national guidance and LPP1 policy ENV1, development of the Site will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding (i.e. avoiding development within flood zone 3 to the north-eastern corner). 2. In accordance with Paragraph 180 of the NPPF, given the Site's allocation in the adopted Development Plan and assessment within the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment ('SFRA') 2016 a sequential test will not currently be required. Since the adoption of the Local Plan (Part Two), national guidance has changed in relation to surface water flooding, and this should be considered through the site-specific flood risk assessment and drainage strategy with regard to the most up to date information and the Council's updated SFRA (in production at the time of writing). 3. In line with Local Plan policies ENV 1 and DM 41 proposals for major development will be required to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS schemes will be required to satisfy technical standards and design requirements having regard to the Council's Draft SuDS Design and Technical Guidance. SuDS should be incorporated at an early stage of the design process. 4. Surface water run-off should be restricted to mimic or improve upon greenfield run-off rates. 5. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy should be submitted in support of any future planning application congruent with guidance contained in LPP1 policy ENV1, LPP2 policies DM40-43, CWaC Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Guidance and national policy.

Noise

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Noise</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The potential noise impacts of the proposed development on sensitive local receptors, including the adjacent Vale Royal Crematorium and residential properties, should be assessed. 2. A Noise Impact Assessment should be scoped with CWaC Officers through pre-application discussions and submitted in support any future planning application. 3. Consideration should be given to LPP1 policy SOC5 and LPP2 policy DM30.

Air Quality

Development Principle	Description
Air Quality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The potential air quality impacts of the proposed development on sensitive local receptors, including the adjacent Vale Royal Crematorium and residential properties, should be assessed. 2. An Air Quality Assessment should be scoped with CWaC Officers through pre-application discussions and submitted in support any future planning application. 3. Consideration should be given to LPP2 policy DM31.

Ground Conditions, Soils and Minerals

Development Principle	Description
Ground Conditions, Soils and Minerals	<p>Agricultural Land Classification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on desk-based assessment there may be potential for the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land ('BMV') within the boundary of the N(f) Site. Consideration should therefore be given to relevant provisions within the NPPF. <p>Minerals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A minerals safeguarding area is identified within the Site boundary for salt and brine and a small area for sand and gravel. A Mineral Resource Assessment should be undertaken to understand the extent of mineral deposits on Site. Should sand and gravel/ salt be identified then consideration should be given to the policy tests set out in the LPP2 policy M2 and Minerals Safeguarding Guidance Note. 2. Consultation should be undertaken with the Cheshire Brine Subsidence Compensation Board and Compass Minerals as part of any future planning application. <p>Land Contamination</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Phase 1 Geo-Environmental report should be submitted in support of any future planning application identifying any potential land contamination or instability on Site in accordance with LPP2 policy DM32.

Utilities

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Utilities</p>	<p>Existing Utilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within the easement of the on-site High Pressure Gas Main to the south east of the Site no built form will be permitted with the exception of roads, car parking or hardstanding. Consultation should be undertaken with Transco as part of any future planning application. 2. Consideration should be given to the existing overhead electricity line as part of any future scheme design including potential for a diversion. Consultation should be undertaken National Grid as the proposals develop. <p>Proposed Utilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In order to deliver new high-quality industrial and commercial development at the Site, new utilities and infrastructure will need to be provided. This will include a new Primary Sub-Station together with other infrastructure required for modern employment use.

Heritage and Archaeology

Development Principle	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Heritage and Archaeology</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whilst there are no statutory or non-statutory designations within the Site consideration should be given to heritage and archeological matters as part of any future planning application in accordance with LPP1 policy ENV5 and LPP2 policies DM46-50. 2. A Heritage Assessment and Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment should be submitted with any future planning application.

7 PHASING AND DELIVERY

Overall Timescales

- 7.1 Given the scale of the proposals, full delivery of the N4(f) Site is expected to take place over a 10 -15 year period with development anticipated to come forward in a series of phases alongside necessary infrastructure provision.
- 7.2 Given the speculative nature of the proposals a flexible approach must be maintained to enable the N4(f) Site to be responsive to opportunities and occupier needs.

Initial Phasing – Infrastructure

- 7.3 As noted in section 5, a significant amount of upfront infrastructure is required to facilitate the delivery of the proposals, namely highway junction improvements, enhanced power supply, earthworks and internal spine road.
- 7.4 The first phase of development will be the delivery of a new primary sub-station with associated infrastructure and landscaping to the north of the site. The planning application for this element will be submitted in full detail.

Later Phases

- 7.5 The phasing of remaining plots within the potential development zones will be dictated by occupier/ market demand with reserved matters applications coming forward on a plot-by-plot basis. It is likely that plots will logically come forward from north to south across the N4(f) Site however, this is not fixed.

Site Wide Strategies

- 7.6 A coordinated approach will need to be taken to support the delivery of:
- **Green infrastructure and biodiversity** - Landscape planting, green infrastructure improvements and biodiversity net gain;
 - **Accessibility** – Accessibility and active travel interventions including new/ diverted footpath and cycle links and public transport provision;
 - **Drainage** – SuDs and new drainage connections; and

- **Utilities** –Existing power line diversions, provision of new connections to the primary sub-station and new telecommunication infrastructure.

Safeguarded Land for Future Railway Station

- 7.7 The proposed development will safeguard land to the north and south of Cartens Bridge to facilitate the future delivery of a single platform railway station. The proposed station will not be delivered by the Applicants and as such it is not possible to provide timescales for its delivery at this juncture.

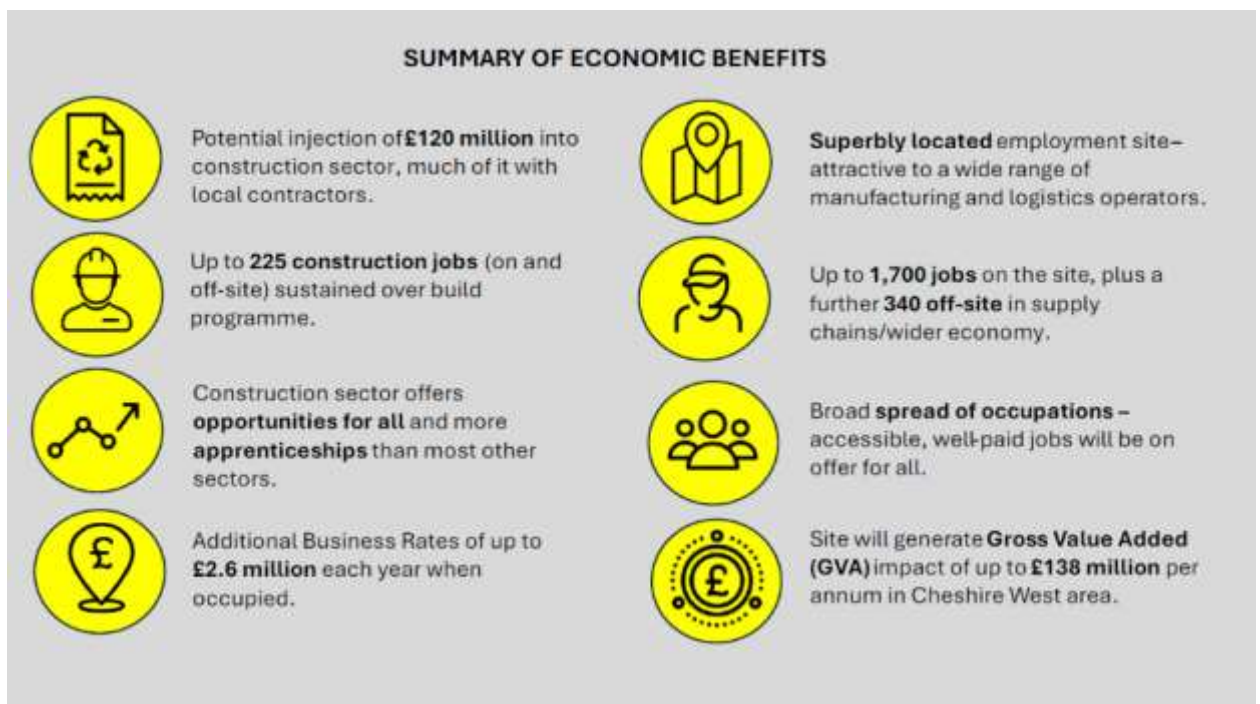
8 POTENTIAL SCHEME BENEFITS

- 8.1 The section provides an overview of the significant economic, social and environmental benefits the proposed development could potentially generate.

Economic Benefits

- 8.2 The anticipated socio-economic benefits that could be generated by the Illustrative scheme proposed by the Applicants of 110,000 sqm employment scheme (assessed on a 20:80 B2 to B8 split of uses) together with ancillary office space, have been calculated by Wisner Consulting and are summarised in figure 9 below:

Figure 9 – Summary of Economic Benefits



- 8.3 These benefits can make a positive contribution towards local economic conditions:

- Intense deprivation – and issues of unemployment and economic inactivity – are found clustered in the adjacent communities of both Northwich and Winsford.
- The type of jobs to be created fit well with local workforce skills and the likely occupiers will tend to draw heavily on local labour markets.
- The benefits (i.e. more local jobs) are precisely what are called for in both the Cheshire West and Chester Council Inclusive Economy Strategy 2022 and the new Mid Cheshire Plan 2025.

- 8.4 The proposed development would also contribute to the overall vitality of Gadbrook Park through the clustering of complimentary economic uses and as a result of additional levies that could be raised by the BID to oversee the management of the N5 policy area.

Social Benefits

- 8.5 In addition to the significant economic benefits that could be derived from the proposals the following social benefits could also be secured:

- **Enhanced Connectivity** – The proposals could enhance local connectivity both in terms of public transport accessibility and active travel through:
 - Safeguarding of land adjacent to the railway line for a future railway station which is the first step in realising the Council's long held ambition for improved rail connectivity for Gadbrook Park and the wider area;
 - Potential re-routing of local bus services to facilitate improved bus connections to the N4(f) Site and allow for a transport interchange around the safeguarded railway land;
 - New pedestrian and cycle route to the north east of the N4(f) Site to improve permeability with the safeguarded railway land and encourage the use of the future station by the local community.
 - Improved highway junction to create an all way traffic controlled junction to accommodate additional traffic movements and facilitate improved pedestrian crossings on the A556.
 - Provision of enhanced footways along the southern side of the A556.
- **Training, Education and Skills** - The proposed development provides an opportunity to deliver training, education and skills through partnerships with the local training colleges

Environmental Benefits

8.6 The proposals will also seek to secure the following environmental benefits:

- **Sustainability**

- Net Zero Carbon in Operation.
- Highest levels of sustainability and environmental performance by targeting a BREEAM score of 'Excellent'.
- Energy performance Certificate "A" rating targeted for all buildings.
- A fabric first approach; with U-values, design air permeability and ventilation targets all aspiring to exceed Building Regulations Part L 2022 standards.
- Utilising grey water or rainwater storage and recycling systems to reduce water consumption.
- Suitably sized photovoltaic arrays on each plot.

- **Biodiversity Net Gain** – Delivering at least 10% BNG in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy.
- **Ecological Network** - The proposals would seek to retain important mature hedgerows and vegetation around the boundaries and along the railway line, where possible, in order to retain ecological connectivity. Moreover, species-rich hedgerows and wildflower grassland are proposed with will enhance connectivity providing an improvement to the functionality and quality of the Ecological Network.
- **Tree Planting** – Whilst the extent of tree loss and replacement will be determined at the detailed design stage, a minimum of 2:1 tree replacement strategy will be implemented across the N4(f) site.

8.7 In summary, the proposed delivery of a high-quality employment scheme at N4(f) will secure significant benefits locally and more widely across the borough.