

LAND AT
AT **LITTLE**
STANNEY
LANE ELLESMERE
PORT
VISION DOCUMENT





River Mersey

Manchester Ship Canal

Little Sutton Station

Overpool Station

Ellesmere Port Station

Ellesmere Port

ORIGIN

M53

Capenhurst Station

Cheshire Oaks

River Gowy

A517

Little Stanney

Stoak

M56

VISION DOCUMENT



The Church Commissioners of England

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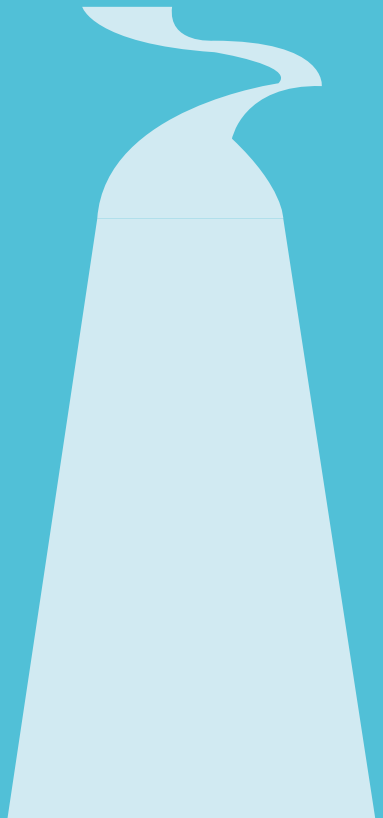
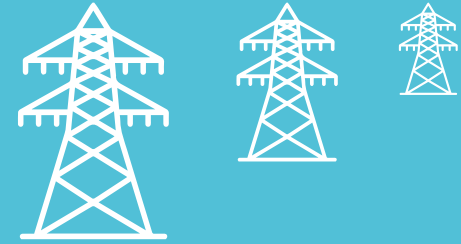
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ONE: INTRODUCTION

LAND AT **LITTLE**
AT **STANNEY**
LANE ELLESMERE
PORT
VISION DOCUMENT





I. INTRODUCTION

SETTING THE SCENE

The Church Commissioners for England control a significant area of land immediately to the south of Ellesmere Port which extends to some 258 hectares. The Site is bounded to the North by the A5117, to the South by the M56, and to the East by the River Gowy.

By virtue of its scale, location and connectivity the land – hereafter referred to as land at Little Stanney Lane – offers huge potential as a place for future development and positive change, by bringing forward new uses and activities that can complement Ellesmere Port and support wider aspirations for economic growth in the area.

The opportunity is unique. The land sits next to one of the country's biggest retail and leisure destinations at Cheshire Oaks, and adjoins the wider settlement of Ellesmere Port. It is in close proximity to an established and diverse employment base, and is connected into the wider landscape by public paths and the Shropshire Union Canal.

But right now the Site offers little to the people and businesses of Ellesmere Port. It is largely inaccessible, and poorly linked into the wider town. The main settlement stops abruptly at the A5117: the Site to its south contains the nucleated village of Stoak within the eastern portion and an element of ribbon development of the village of Little Stanney in the western element.

Through this study, and the subsequent dialogue it is intended to support, the potential wider benefits that this land could facilitate are explored – in response to a wider analysis of Ellesmere Port, the Site's relationship to it, and the opportunities for future growth to which it could contribute.

The Commissioners are seeking to work in partnership with key stakeholders to explore how their significant landholdings south of Ellesmere Port could play a part in the wider regeneration and future growth of the town.

I. INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS FOR ENGLAND

The Church Commissioners for England is a registered charity, established in 1948 to manage the Church of England's historic assets, and is responsible for providing financial support for the work and mission of the Church of England across the country.

This is achieved through the responsible and ethical management of the Church's permanent endowment fund, a diverse investment portfolio which enables the Commissioners to provide financial support for the Church, by helping to ensure funding is intentionally used for mission and growth.

The Church's historic land holding is held by the Commissioners as part of this investment portfolio and equates to c. 80,000 acres of land across England, a proportion of which already has significant identified development potential. This landholding is national, from Cornwall to Cumbria, Tyneside to Kent, and across the heart of the country.

The scale of this opportunity is such that the potential benefits could reach deep into the town and the community.

The Commissioners' estate is primarily leased to tenant farmers who operate agricultural businesses. The Commissioners work closely with these tenants to ensure that farming practices are aligned with **sustainability goals, including biodiversity conservation, soil health and reduced carbon emissions**. In addition, the Commissioners explore opportunities alongside agriculture such as renewable energy projects.

A recent review of their estate has identified a number of potential sites suitable for solar, battery storage and wind energy developments. These sites have been tendered amongst reputable **renewable energy** developers in order to identify suitable partners to bring forward potential projects through both the planning system and to secure grid connections.

The Commissioners bring forward land for strategic-scale development with the aim of **delivering new homes and employment opportunities that support and enhance local surroundings**. It does this by seeking to build new, and strengthen existing, communities helping to create and sustain vibrant places.

The importance of **high-quality placemaking** and thorough engagement with local authorities, existing communities and local churches and dioceses is at the heart of what it does – as set out here.

Across the Commissioners' land portfolio, it has the capacity to deliver circa 70,000 homes (c. 10,000 homes are the subject of live planning applications). In addition, the Commissioners' land portfolio can support the delivery of **sustainable economic growth** with seven million sq. ft. of allocated employment space, opportunities for onshore renewables (wind and solar) and low carbon energy generation and associated industries, as well as developments that support rural communities.

In 2021, the 'Coming Home' report was published by The Commission of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York on Housing, Church and Community. The report recognises the current housing crisis, the need for a coherent and long-term housing strategy and recommends the use of the church's land to promote housing delivery that aligns with the church's **five core values**; that homes should be:

Sustainable: Good housing does not undermine the planet on which we live and which we are called to protect and cultivate. It works in harmony with its local environment and sustains the balance of the natural world in which it sits.

Safe: Housing policy and practice needs to prioritise safety, so that houses are places where people can live comfortably, with security and privacy from unwanted intrusion by people, pests, hazards or disease. This core value requires active engagement by multiple actors, including those who govern, regulate, build, supply materials for and manage housing to avoid the injustices that result from a careless approach to housing quality.

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Stable: Good housing policy creates stable communities, where, if they wish to stay, people are able to buy or rent at truly affordable prices, put down roots and build lives, families and communities.

Sociable: Houses need to have space where we can live and also offer hospitality to friends, family and neighbours. Developments also need community spaces beyond the home, to enable interaction and fellowship, and to build strong community bonds.

Satisfying: Good houses are places that are a delight to come home to, that give pleasure and satisfaction, both to live in and to look at. Whether through design or architecture, new technology should be directed towards building homes that we enjoy living in.

The Commissioners are a Responsible Investor, seeking to drive the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda within the development industry and integrate this within its work.

They believe in the **creation of new communities** and not just the delivery of new homes, and look to prioritise **engagement with local authorities, communities and stakeholders**, and ensure our development partners deliver high quality homes and meet affordable housing needs.

The Commissioners take a **long-term approach to the stewardship** of their land, striving to deliver new developments which enhance their surroundings, providing safe and stable new homes and job opportunities to local areas, and facilitating the curation of **communities that can thrive for generations to come**.

With these landholdings, the Commissioners is engaged in all stages of the planning system; promoting suitable land through local plan call for sites, supporting local plan examinations, delivering new development through planning applications and working with development partners to achieve on-site delivery.

In 2021 the Strategic Land team **committed to formally integrating ESG** into their portfolio and the way they approach land promotion and projects, to ensure their portfolio remains at the forefront of Responsible Investment.

The first stage was to identify the key topic areas that best reflect their strategic economic, environmental and social priorities. This allowed them to then baseline their portfolio's existing performance. The baselining process identified where they are already performing strongly, where they didn't have appropriate data to form effective conclusions and where they needed to improve.

The analysis and the conclusions drawn has enabled the Strategic Land team to develop their ESG Framework that focuses on matters within their sphere of influence and will now be applied to their portfolio and projects going forwards.

The Framework comprises a set of high-level overarching ESG objectives set across six core themes. A Toolkit has been developed that sets out the actions that will be undertaken to achieve the objectives, as well as the data they propose to collect to monitor performance.

A supporting visual has been produced to demonstrate how the Toolkit can be applied to deliver truly thriving communities set within high-quality and biodiverse natural environments.

The Strategic Land team intend to apply this Framework to their new projects across the portfolio and will identify on a project-by-project basis how each of the commitments and actions apply to each site as development scale and a host of site-specific factors will also determine what is achievable.

Due to the long lead in times with strategic land projects, it will also take time to collect sufficient levels of data to be able to draw meaningful conclusions across the whole portfolio. It is the intention for the ESG Framework to be implemented from January 2025 onwards.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE VISION FOR LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

Through their analysis and exploration of opportunities undertaken to date, the Commissioners have established key themes which, in combination, form the basis of a Vision for the Land at Little Stanney Lane - and how it can play a contributory role in the wider enhancement and growth of Ellesmere Port.

It is apparent that by working in partnership and bringing this Site forward for development, wider benefits relating to health & leisure, movement & transport, the transition to Net Zero, and the positive creation of natural capital can all be targeted - with conviction.

Key themes within this emerging vision are set out below.

Considered & Comprehensive

Ensuring benefits extend into the wider town and address identified needs - to the benefit of existing communities and businesses.

Connected & Catalysing

Completing the loop, creating new links, and providing for extended diversity in destinations and activities.



Clean & Green

Energising growth, exemplifying the wider transition to renewable power sources - through generation and in use.

Ecologically Enhancing

Restoring, connecting and extending nature networks - allowing wildlife to thrive and people to appreciate flourishing biodiversity.

Considered & Comprehensive

Ellesmere Port is a multi-faceted place, enriched by a **strong identity and sense of community**. The vision for Land at Little Stanney Lane is to create a **cohesive place** through ongoing engagement and partnership with local stakeholders, responding to Ellesmere Ports' existing assets and opportunities, and providing for complementary uses on site to **benefit the wider community** and diversify the local economy.

Land at Little Stanney Lane can support Ellesmere Port's growth by providing **future-proofed housing** to meet the housing needs of a varied, extended community, while enhancing the distinct local identity of Ellesmere Port. The Site can also assist in **improving health inequalities by promoting a healthy lifestyle**, offering accessible active travel routes connecting to the town centre, stations and surrounding areas, providing a wide range of sports and leisure opportunities; and improving access to nature.

Connected & Catalysing

Site analysis reveals the potential for a **connected, permeable neighbourhood** that offers the opportunity to "**complete the loop**" and join the gaps in Ellesmere Port's active travel network, encouraging a culture of convenient and safe walking and cycling within everyday life.

Development at Land at Little Stanney Lane can help facilitate improvements to the local network of Public Rights of Ways and public transport, allowing the whole town to link into the benefits provided on site, and the future community at Land at Little Stanney Lane to **benefit from the facilities at Ellesmere Port town centre**, Cheshire Oaks, ORIGIN and surrounding areas.

With a multi-functional hub on Ellesmere Port's doorstep, boating activity along the Shropshire Union canal and a number of open space destinations, Land at Little Stanney Lane will be a destination for leisure and learning activities, creating a series of **key focal points for the community to come together, be active, learn and stay**.

Clean & Green

Fuelled by the ambitions of Origin, the Site could **support** and aid the **growth** of Ellesmere Port's industrial sector, helping to raise the profile of the area and to attract future investment.

The Site could offer opportunities to **work, learn and innovate**, supporting development of new skills in relevant industries and investment in the emerging green economy.

It could offer land for the generation of green energy, **exemplifying the wider transition to renewable, sustainable power sources** in the region and supporting the Cheshire Net Zero ambitions.

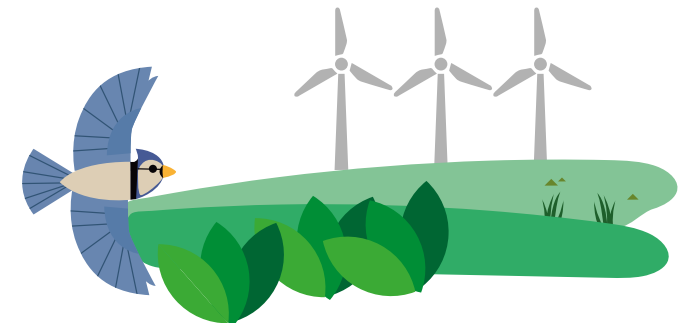
The Commissioners will explore opportunities to work in partnership with key stakeholders to facilitate the application of low carbon technologies on site.

Ecologically Enhancing

Ellesmere Port owes its industrial past to resources extracted from the land. The opportunity now exists to **give back to nature by restoring, connecting and extending nature networks** - allowing biodiversity to flourish.

Surrounded by a variety of high-quality natural assets, the Site offers a major opportunity for **environmental and ecological enhancement**, delivering a connected network of green spaces of different character and function, some for nature to thrive undisturbed and others for people to play, exercise and enjoy.

Working in collaboration with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, The Mersey Forest and the Woodland Trust, the Site can **achieve positive blue and green natural capital**, aiming to exceed Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.



I. INTRODUCTION

PLANNING CONTEXT

Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWCC) agreed on 10 January 2024 to commit to preparing a Local Plan under the new national system for plan-making and support the development of a borough-wide design code to eventually be incorporated into the new Local Plan or a supplementary plan.

Following this, in March 2024 CWCC undertook a series of early engagement consultations inclusive of a Employment Land Survey, Settlement Background Papers and a Land Availability Assessment alongside a Call for Sites Exercise. CCE provided representations alongside an initial Vision for the Site to this consultation.

Since the last consultation, changes to National Planning Policy have been published, inclusive of new standard methods which increases CWCC's minimum housing requirement per annum from 532 to 1914.

It is expected that CWCC will meet in January to discuss adapting the Local Plan to these recent national policy changes, including the delayed implementation of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 and the significant increase in Local Housing Need.

I. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

This study has been prepared following previous promotion of The Commissioners' land at Ellesmere Port, and is intended to support ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders who may facilitate, and benefit from, its future transformation.

The extent of the opportunity offered by the Site is significant, and could be shaped in a number of ways. Dialogue to date has identified a number of aspects in which the wider social and economic growth of Ellesmere Port could be supplemented and strengthened by the provision of:

- new homes;
- employment space (potentially catering for logistics and distribution, manufacturing, and engineering);
- places to stay;
- places for sport and leisure;
- destination open spaces for the community; and
- improvements to local public transport, augmented by a new mobility hub.

Links to universities and higher education facilities in the area may also offer opportunities that the Site could help realise.

The land may also present a suitable location for **the generation of green energy**, exemplifying the wider transition to renewable, sustainable power sources in the region and **supporting the Cheshire Net Zero ambitions**.

Alongside this, and in demonstration of a key strategic objective of The Commissioners, the Site **offers a major opportunity for environmental and ecological enhancement** – restoring, connecting and extending nature networks allowing biodiversity to flourish.

This document explores the various dimensions of the opportunity and **wider reaching benefits**, before then considering how the land itself might transform over time through new, regenerative development and environmental enrichment.

It is hoped that by articulating an **ambitious vision** for the Site, the significance of the opportunity can be more widely understood and then, collaboratively, further explored.

I. INTRODUCTION

GREEN BELT REVIEW SUMMARY

The whole of the Site and wider countryside beyond the settlement edge of Ellesmere Port, to the south, is designated Green Belt. The Cheshire West and Chester Green Belt Study (2013) highlighted an objective of the Green Belt in the area around Chester, is to maintain the 'strategic gap' between the urban settlements of Chester and Ellesmere Port.

With forty-two percent of the Cheshire West and Chester borough classified as Green Belt (with Chester, Ellesmere Port and Northwich either encompassed within or adjoining the Green Belt), the future settlement growth of Chester and Ellesmere Port (to address housing need) is physically constrained by the Green Belt. The new NPPF (December 2024) requires Local Planning Authorities to review and amend Green Belt boundaries, where necessary, to meet housing needs.

The land use within the Site (part of the Green Belt) is **predominantly agricultural farmland** in private ownership and is inaccessible, situated and land locked between the Ellesmere Port urban area and highway infrastructure corridors (A5117, M56 and M53). Most of the Site lacks any recreational and amenity value - except for the land in the east, adjacent to the **Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve**.

There are significant barriers in accessing the Site, which affect the north / south and east / west connectivity across the landscape - including these highway infrastructure corridors.

A couple of east / west public footpaths cross the central parts of the Site, however they lack legibility, are narrow and are often overgrown in places. Contrary to the national policy aspirations of improved accessibility to the Green Belt, these issues all combine to provide a Green Belt with very limited benefits for the adjacent communities of Ellesmere Port.

When considering the definition of 'Grey Belt', found in the Glossary of the new NPPF ("other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes'), although the Site does not contain substantial built development, is not fully enclosed by built form and is not dominated by physical development, it:

- is subject to urbanising influences from the adjacent settlement edge of Ellesmere Port and substantial adjacent highway infrastructure corridors (M53 & M56)
- does not contribute strongly to any of the Green Belt Purposes
- makes limited contribution to checking unrestricted sprawl
- makes limited contribution to preventing towns from merging into one another
- makes no contribution to preserving the setting and special character of historic towns

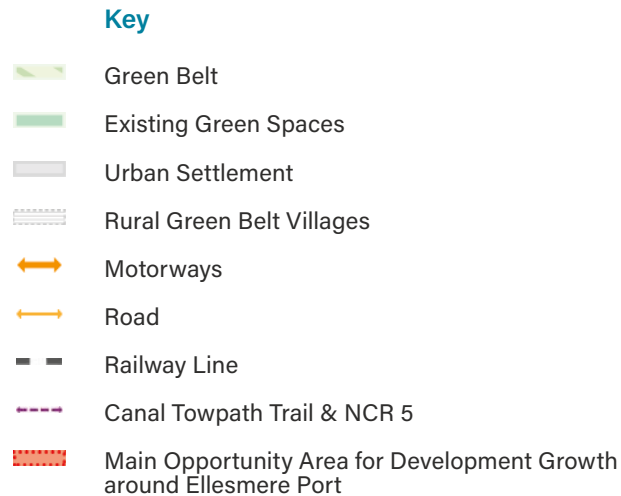
Given the above, substantial parts of the Site may be considered Grey Belt. Development of the Site and release from the Green Belt has potential to bring **substantial benefits to this edge of the existing settlement**, including the delivery of **extensive Biodiversity Net Gain** (BNG), and extensive areas of open space.

To accord with the Government's 'Golden Rules' for release of land from the Green Belt (for major development), there is an opportunity to provide the following as part of a sustainable, landscape and community led development on the Site:

- A high percentage of **affordable housing**, at a rate to be agreed with Cheshire West and Chester Council (to accord with NPPF Golden Rules and subject to development viability), whilst also increasing the volume of aspirational homes as part of a suitable balance of tenures and housing mix.
- Creation of new, **local green infrastructure** facilities on this edge of the town, improving the accessibility and range of facilities for the new and existing community.
- **Enhanced biodiversity** through collaboration & partnership with Cheshire Wildlife Trust, to extend Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve, creating a new publicly accessible open space that transforms farmland pastures into a biodiverse wetland habitat mosaic.
- The retention and enhancement of the **hedgerow, tree and woodland network** across the Site, in collaboration & partnership with Mersey Forest, seeking opportunities for new tree / woodland community planting.
- Opportunities to provide access on land currently private and inaccessible. A new **active travel network** could be provided - connecting with the existing PRoW network and the **canal towpath**, encouraging walking and cycling over the use of cars.
- The provision of a substantial area of the Site as high **quality accessible green open spaces**, integrating active travel and recreational routes.

The Green Belt Review and Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (supporting technical reports produced by BMD) considers that the western parts of the Site (west of the M53) could be considered Grey Belt, with majority of the Site (excluding the land to the east of the Shropshire Union Canal) being well contained visually, with strong defensible boundaries of the M56, M53, strong field boundary vegetation and the Shropshire Union Canal to the east.

Overall, it is considered therefore, that sensitive **landscape-led development** of the Site could be achieved without resulting in a negative impact on, or weakening of, the purposes or strength of the wider Green Belt beyond the boundaries of the Site.



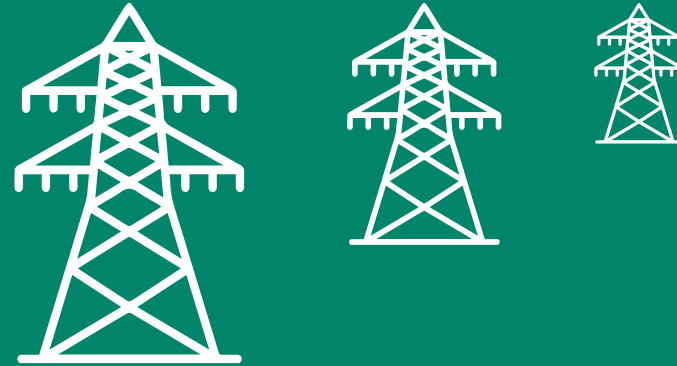
Green Belt Plan



TWO:
ELLESMERE
PORT
TODAY



**“ Ferry ‘cross the Mersey
‘Cause this land’s the place I love
And here I’ll stay ”**



Ellesmere Port is a large industrial town and port in Cheshire, situated south of Wirral on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal, and to the north of the city of Chester. The industrial heritage of the town sets a backdrop to a forward-looking programme under the title of Origin: ‘powering the UK’s race to net zero’.

“Fast becoming a global leader in zero carbon energy technology and innovation, our vision is for Ellesmere Port to become the world’s first Net Zero Carbon Industrial cluster....climate solutions on an industrial scale.”

In this chapter we illustrate some of the characteristics that define Ellesmere Port today, before placing the Commissioners site at Little Stanney Lane into this context.

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

LOCAL CONTEXT

Ellesmere Port's retail, leisure and industrial facilities are centred around 3 key locations:

- Ellesmere Port Town Centre
- Origin Industrial Business Cluster
- Cheshire Oaks

Green Infrastructure

Ellesmere Port has number of green spaces from the more formal Whitby Park in the town centre to the wilder Gowy Meadows and Stanney Woods to the south.

- 1 Gowy Meadows
- 2 Whitby Park
- 3 Stanney Woods
- 4 Rivacre Valley Country Park

Shopping

Practical shops for supplies and services are located in the town centre, with further designer and leisure stores at Cheshire Oaks.

- 5 Ellesmere Port Market
- 6 Cheshire Oaks

Education

Ellesmere Port offers the full range from primary to further education, with a number of schools within 2km of the Land at Little Stanney Lane.

- 7 Ellesmere Port CoE College
- 8 Cheshire College South & West
- 9 Christ Church CoE Primary
- 10 Woodland Primary School
- 11 The Oaks Community Primary School
- 12 The Whitby High School

Leisure

Local leisure opportunities such as the community theatre and National Waterways Museum balance the larger scale offerings at Cheshire Oaks.

- 13 Theatre Porto
- 14 National Waterways Museum
- 15 Blue Planet Aquarium
- 16 Vue Cinema Cheshire Oaks

Sports

The Ellesmere Port Sports Village includes swimming pools, a gym, an athletics track and the Cheshire Phoenix's home stadium. Local team sports take place at the playing fields in Whitbyheath.

- 17 Ellesmere Port Sports Village
- 18 Whitby Sports and Social Club

Accommodation

Ellesmere Port has a relatively limited overnight accommodation offering with two hotels, one located near the National Waterways Museum and the other at Cheshire Oaks.

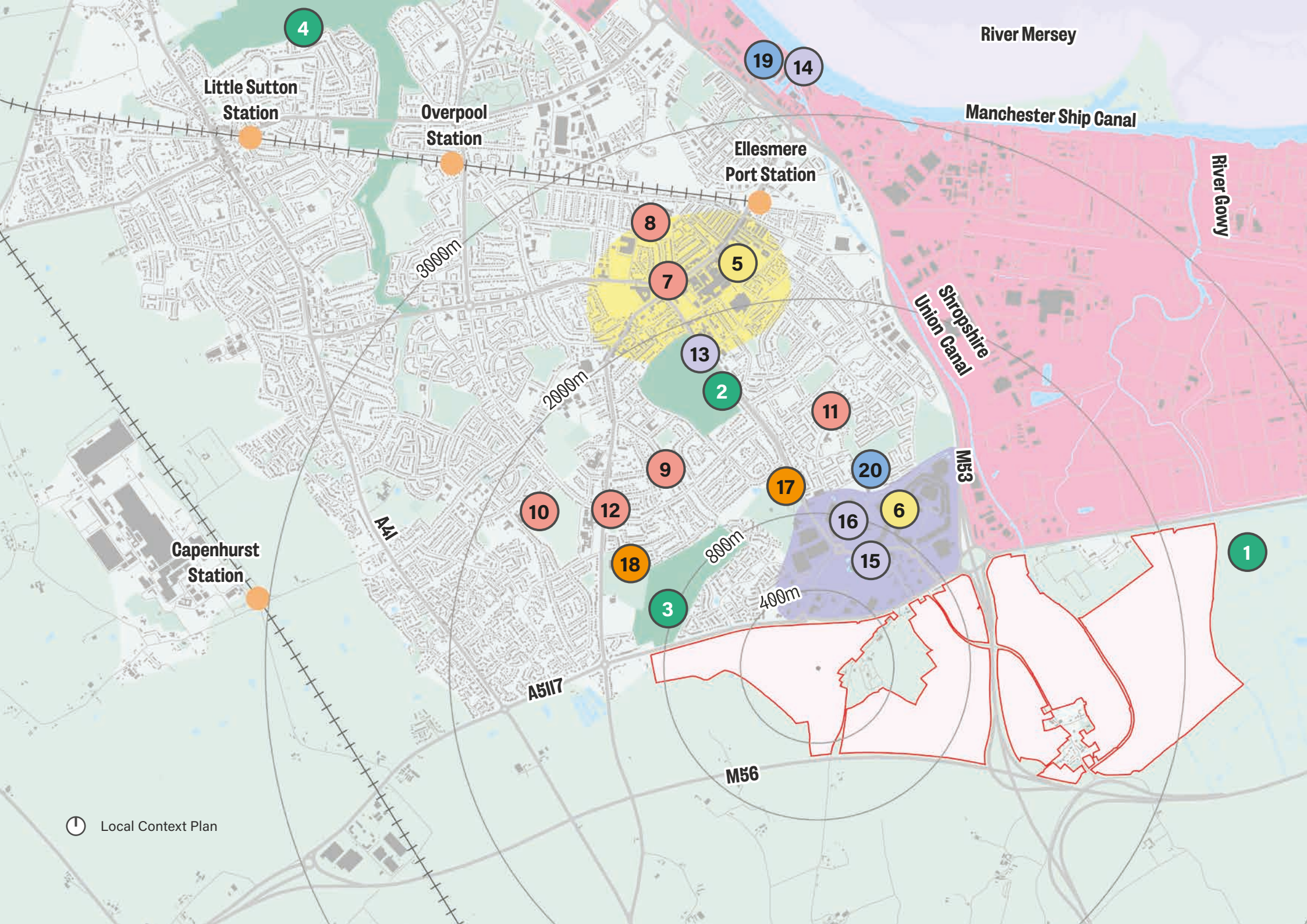
- 19 Holiday Inn Ellesmere Port
- 20 Travel Lodge Cheshire



National Waterways Museum



Theatre Porto



River Mersey

Manchester Ship Canal

River Gowy

Shropshire Union Canal

M53

M56

A517

A41

Little Sutton Station

Overpool Station

Ellesmere Port Station

Capenhurst Station

4

19

14

8

5

7

2

11

20

6

1

10

12

18

9

17

16

15

3

800m

400m

2000m

3000m

Local Context Plan

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

ORIGIN AND ELLESMERE PORT INDUSTRIAL AREA

ORIGIN is one of the most important industrial and employment clusters in the UK, including 1,300 businesses employing 24,100 people, with the potential to increase to 1,463 businesses, employing 35,500 people by 2040.

ORIGIN is at the forefront of advanced plans to respond to the Climate Emergency through several transformational projects. Most significant is HyNet, an industry-led initiative to develop world-leading Carbon Capture Usage and Storage and Hydrogen Power. Vertex Hydrogen, a key part of Essar Energy Transition is planning investment of nearly £500 million building a new production plant in Ellesmere Port.

At Ellesmere Port, ORIGIN includes four distinctive development zones, which have which have **attracted multi-million investment** to date including Regatta, Jaguar Land Rover / DHL, Westland Horticulture, Marks and Spencer, EET Fuels, Peel (Protos), URENCO, the University of Chester (Thornton Science Park), Cheshire Oaks and Stellantis.

It now presents a transformational **economic growth** opportunity and has the potential to both fast track the Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan commitments and support the UK's Green Industrial Revolution and Road to Net Zero ambitions.

Significantly, it is a **once-in-a-generation opportunity** for the wider area, and in particular supporting the regeneration of Ellesmere Port town centre.

ORIGIN is the new branding for the vision for Ellesmere Port Industrial Area (EPIA)'s transformation.

Four themes have been identified as part of the initial vision for EPIA, deriving from the key challenges and opportunities for the area. The themes focus on the low-carbon, **energy and sustainability agenda** and future growth of the industrial sectors; employment and economic growth to maximise **benefits on the local economy**; branding and **profile raising** to put EPIA on the map and to support securing future investments; and transport and **connectivity**, key requirements to enable growth.

From the four themes, **eight objectives** have been distilled, aiming to drive a number of actions and interventions to help achieve the vision for the area.



Objective 1
Facilitate world leading low carbon technologies

Objective 2
Deliver green and clean growth

Objective 3
Build on the economic strengths of the area

Objective 4
Improve connectivity and access

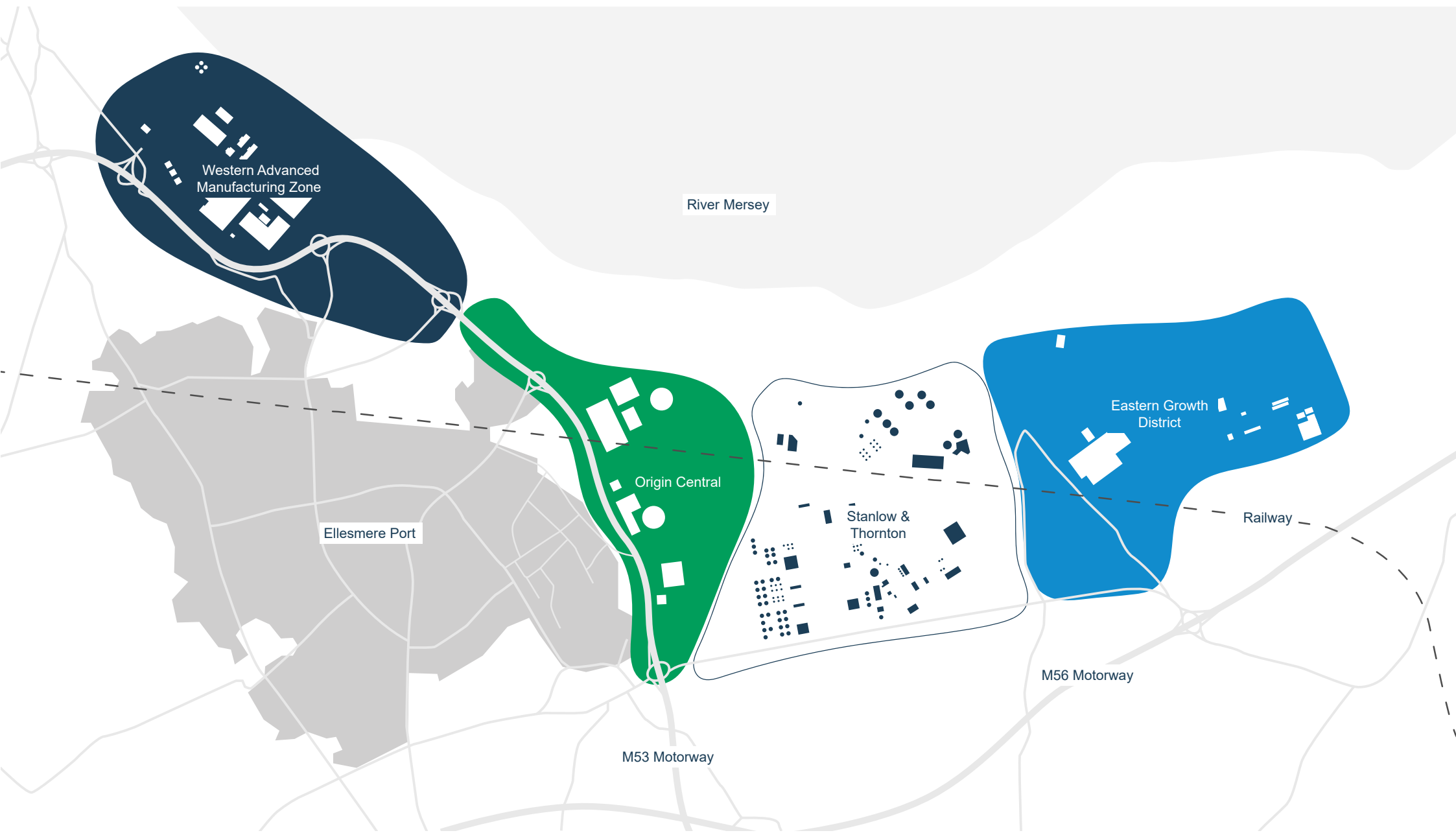
Objective 5
Maximise job creation and economic growth

Objective 6
Maximise job and training opportunities for local people

Objective 7
Raise the profile of the area to support future investment

Objective 8
Improve the quality of the place and quality of life for residents

Source: Ellesmere Port Industrial Area Development and Infrastructure Investment Framework



Source: www.origin-ep.co.uk

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

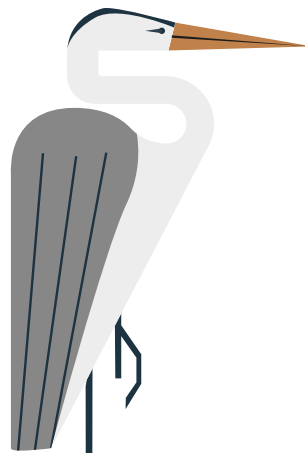
AT THE HEART OF ELLESMERE PORT

Ellesmere Port is a multi-faceted place, one that displays strong evidence of its industrial past and present, one that has continued grow and yet in parts has declined, and one that forms the subject of cutting-edge ambitions as to how economic growth will accelerate in the future.

Home to some 65,000 people, Ellesmere Port includes three of the most deprived wards in England, and has suffered from a decline in the 'big industry' employment that brought with it employment opportunities whilst underpinning social networks and community infrastructure.

Yet this is a place with eyes on the future: the major tourism generator and employer that is Cheshire Oaks continues to thrive, with over 50% of its employees living in the town, some 24,000 people are employed directly and indirectly by the industrial estates, and – fuelled by the transition to green energy and the Origin programme - this has the potential to rise to over 35,000 jobs by 2040. Meanwhile the town has expanded as a place to live, and has grown through the addition of popular new neighbourhoods, whilst it is home to respected and progressive further education facilities and sports clubs.

The Commissioners are working to advance their understanding of Ellesmere Port – its past and its present - and how they can constructively contribute to its future. This understanding covers existing identity, assets and identifiable opportunities, but also existing areas of challenge, limitation and deprivation.



Assets & Opportunities Include:

Access to a wide range of great natural assets such as amenity green spaces, parks, the Rivacre Valley, Gowy Meadows both the Manchester Ship and Shropshire Union Canals with their walks.

Evidence of strong local pride and sense of ownership. People are involved in the community life and many local initiatives and groups can be found.



Close proximity to a variety of water ways with different character and function: Mersey River, River Gowy, Rivacre Brook, Mill Brook and the Shropshire Union Canal.



Opportunity to **build on the emerging green industries and ORIGIN**, the re-branding of Ellesmere Port Industrial Area, benefitting from the regeneration investment.

Benefits from excellent connectivity to the strategic road network with immediate access to the M53 and M56 motorways, providing an attractive location for those seeking regional employment opportunities.



2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

AT THE HEART OF ELLESMERE PORT

Cheshire Oaks is a booming leisure and hospitality hub, continuing to thrive and expand, that can be used as a catalyst for investment in the town. It hosts the largest UK Designer Outlet site and represents a destination attracting **over 90 million visitors per year**, including international tourists.



Ellesmere Port has been awarded **13.5 million of Levelling Up Funding to re-invigorate the town centre**, transforming the market hall and flea market. **Public realm improvements have already started** in the town centre, now showing new planters, specimen trees and newly paved areas.



The Shropshire Union Canal winds around the east and south of the town, an under-utilised yet historic and characterful asset. A sustainable link between Ellesmere Port and Chester waiting to be more widely enjoyed.



Significant investment has been placed in housing development within Ellesmere Port over the last 10 years. Existing neighbourhoods are overall well maintained and **new housing schemes are planned in areas surrounding Ellesmere Port**. New affordable housing sites will also be delivered in the town centre from 2025.



2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

AT THE HEART OF ELLESMERE PORT

Local retail is available and accessible price wise, with the Port Arcades Shopping Centre being well-used.



Part of the Levelling Up Funding has been used to **improve active transport routes within the town**. Ellesmere Port has an **accessible network of public transport including Ellesmere Port train station** and the Bus Interchange.



2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

AT THE HEART OF ELLESMERE PORT



Data shows a good cycling culture in Ellesmere Port. **National Cycle routes** are accessible from the town and provide long-distance active travel and leisure routes.

Projects like The Pledge, Careers Enterprise Company and the West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber Young Chamber are currently **supporting schools (including special schools) and colleges to develop a strategic approach to careers, brokering effective links to local employers.**



Further Education is one of the strongest sectors in Ellesmere Port. Cheshire College South and West supports 11,000 students and 1,000 apprentices across their 3 campuses, delivering training opportunities and collaborating with local partners and stakeholders to ensure the provision available is in line with local economic needs.

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

AT THE HEART OF ELLESMERE PORT

Parts of Ellesmere Port aren't working as well as they could at the moment. Severance created by major road infrastructure, areas within the town centre that could benefit from improvements and greater occupation / patronage, and the need to encourage existing businesses to stay and support growth offer immediate areas of focus when considering a positive future for the town.

Whilst a resounding success as a destination, severance and connectivity issues between Cheshire Oaks and the town centre have limited the wider economic benefits that might otherwise have arisen from the huge number of visitors it consistently attracts.

The road network and motorway access encourage those who have cars to rely on them, and the history of local car production reinforces this culture.

Health inequality is not helped by relatively limited access to significant open space for recreation and relaxation.

Challenges & Limitations

Amenity green spaces are **unequally distributed** within Ellesmere Port, showing a **lack of accessible green spaces** within the town centre.



Graffiti outside civic offices give **evidence of somewhere that features inequality**

Easy access to motorways and potentially the lack of direct train routes to nearby towns makes **Ellesmere Port predominantly car centric**, with a number of large car parks located in the town centre.



2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

AT THE HEART OF ELLESMERE PORT

Cheshire Oaks, being a regional destination, brings every day high volumes of traffic and is a car-dominated environment



Ellesmere Port Industrial Area creates a visual and physical barrier around the town, screening views to the port area and Manchester Ship Canal, and to the Goway Meadows and countryside beyond.

The M53 creates a strong physical barrier to the port area and Manchester Ship Canal to the north, disconnecting an area rich of local character and potential. The motorway also severs Ellesmere Port from the industrial area, the Shropshire Union Canal and its towpath, as well as the Goway Meadows Nature Reserve to the east.

Public transport connection to neighbouring towns would benefit from improvements and more frequent services



The 2019 Indices of Deprivation indicates that almost 1/3 of the population of Ellesmere Port lives in the top 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

General health is below national average with high obesity rates both in children and adults.



National Cycling routes around Ellesmere Port, including the towpath along the Shropshire Union Canal are disconnected from town centre, severed by the M53 and not directly linked with key destinations.

Areas within the town centre and high street are showing signs of wear and are in need of improvement

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

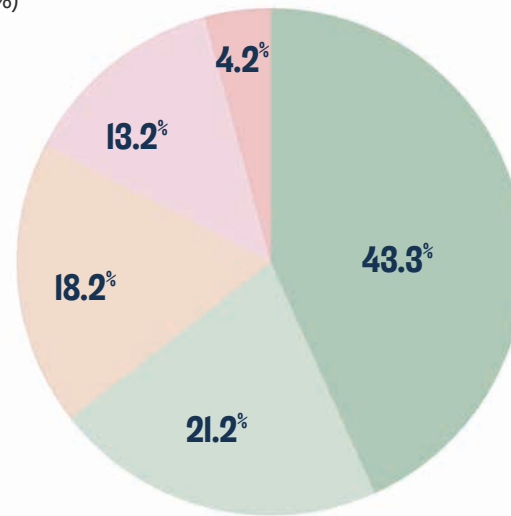
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

High level analysis of the existing demographics across Ellesmere Port reveals some of the challenges faced by those living there currently. Across a number of metrics, including qualifications, employment, income, and health, the population is assessed as markedly below the average across Cheshire West & Chester and nationally. Access to open green space is also less available to many residents as compared to those elsewhere in the district – six of the nine Ellesmere Port wards offer a below-average level of open space provision.

In exploring the potential of the Land at Little Stanney Lane, ways in which its development could offer enhancement to the wider community of Ellesmere Port will be identified.

Travel to Work

Most people work either within 10km of Ellesmere Port or at home. While there may be a pandemic skew - less people work from home in Ellesmere Port than the England average (31.5%)



- 10km or less (Includes Chester, Deeside Industrial Park and Neston)
- Work from home
- 30km - 10km (includes Liverpool and parts of Wales)
- Offshore or outside the UK
- 30km or more

Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics



65% of the Ellesmere Port population travel to work by private vehicle



20% work from home



9% use active travel



4% use public transport

Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

28% of all green space is located within two wards.

Source: Ordnance Survey Open Green Space

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

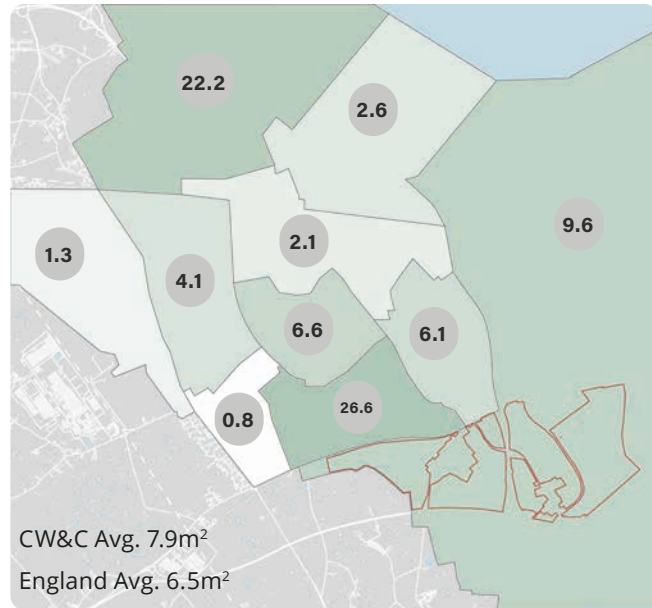
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Green Space Provision

There is an unequal distribution of green space as shown by this map of green space area per 1000 people across Ellesmere Port Wards in m2.

Whitby Groves has the highest proportion of green space as it includes Stanney Woods, sports fields, Whitby Heath, Brio Leisure Sports Village and Elm Grove Park. Most of the town centres green space is made up of play spaces.

6 out of the 9 Ellesmere Port wards provide less greenspace than the regional average of 6.5m2 per 1000 people. 28% of all green space is located within two wards.



Source: Ordnance Survey Open Green Space

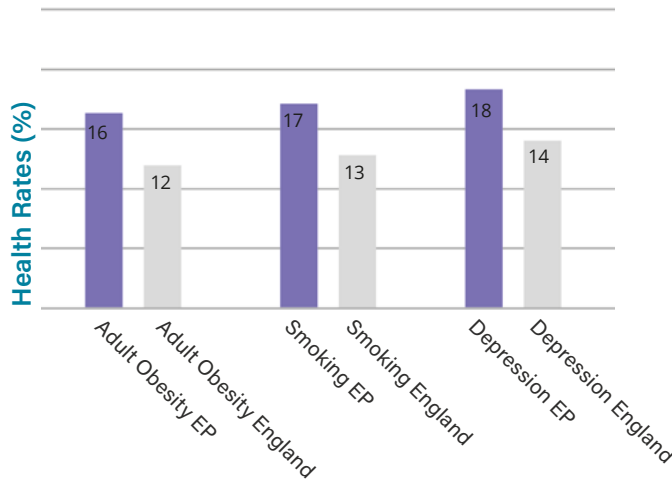
Health

8 out of 9 Ellesmere Port wards have higher levels of overweight year 6 children than the national average.



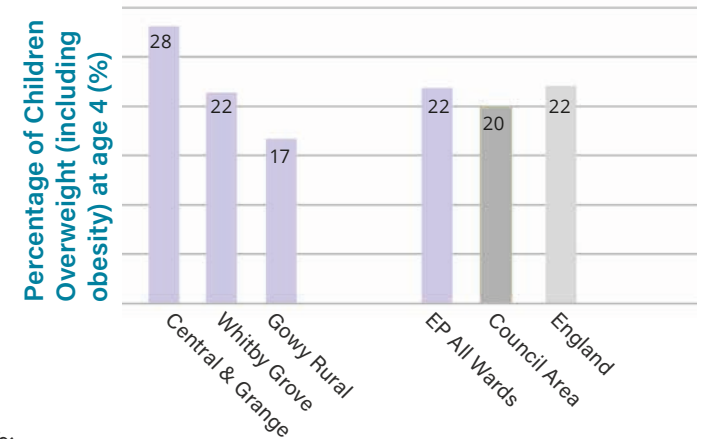
Source: Finger tips, Public Health England

Ellesmere Port as a whole has poorer health than the England average in many categories.



Source: Finger tips, Public Health England

The number of overweight children (including obesity) is similar to the regional and national rates, yet above average in the town centre.



Source: Finger tips, Public Health England

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

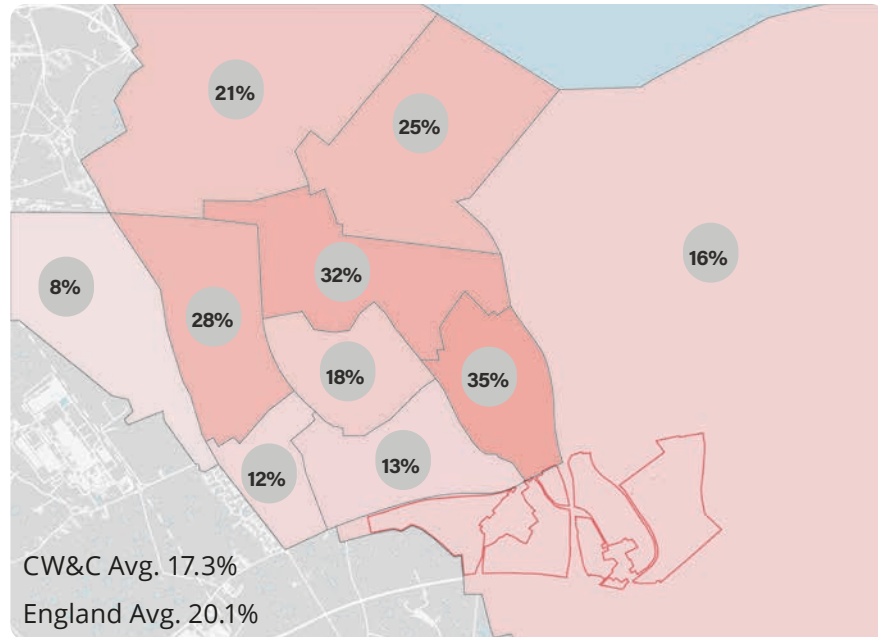
Income

6 out of the 9 wards that make up Ellesmere Port have an average income below £35,100 the regional average. National average income is £37,000. (Source: Paycheck)



Plan showing the percentage of children in low income families:

Wolverham, Central & Grange, Sutton Villages, Westminster and Netherpool are all above the England average of 20%.

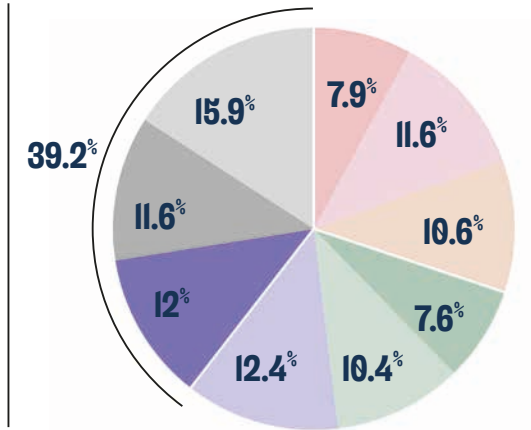
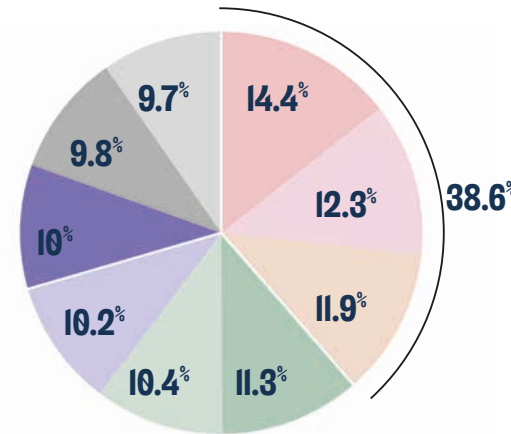


Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Occupation

Overall, there is a fairly even split of occupations. However, over the whole town 14.4% have professional occupations.

But in the town centre only 7.9% have professional occupations. The largest share here have elementary occupations.



- Managers, directors and senior officials
- Professional occupations
- Associate professional and technical occupations
- Administrative and secretarial occupations
- Skilled trades occupations
- Caring, leisure and other service occupations
- Sales and customer service occupations
- Process, plant and machine operatives
- Elementary occupations

Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Education

19% of the Ellesmere Port population have no qualifications. The regional average is 16% and the national average is 18%.



Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

24% 24% of primary school pupils in Ellesmere Port Central & Grange ward have special educational needs. CW&C average is 17.4%

Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

Employment

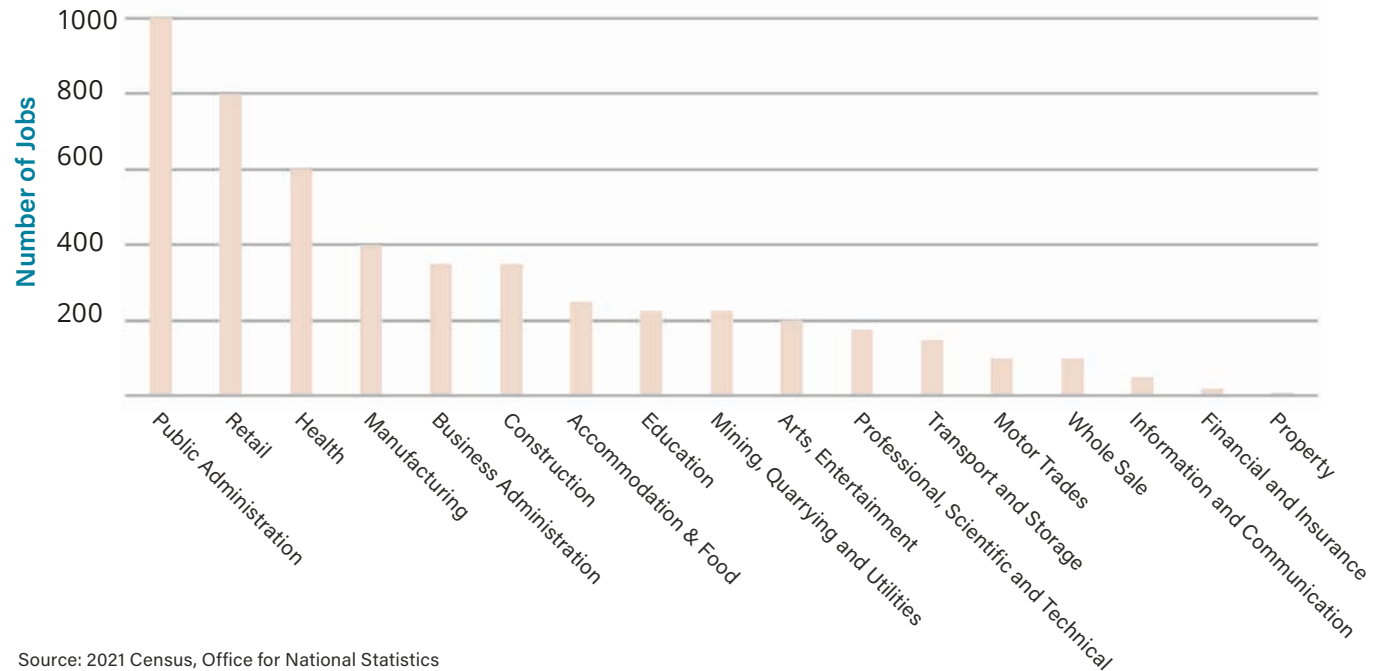
2.6% of Ellesmere Port population are self-employed. Much lower than CW&C avg of 9.1% and UK avg of 9.3%.



Source: CW&C Annual Population Survey 2021

The two largest employers within the Central & Grange Ward are public administration and retail.

According to the NOMIS labour demand data, there are a total number of 36,000 jobs in Ellesmere Port. Therefore, the job density ratio is 0.55 jobs per person in the town – less jobs than people.



Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics

2. ELLESMERE PORT TODAY

CONNECTIVITY

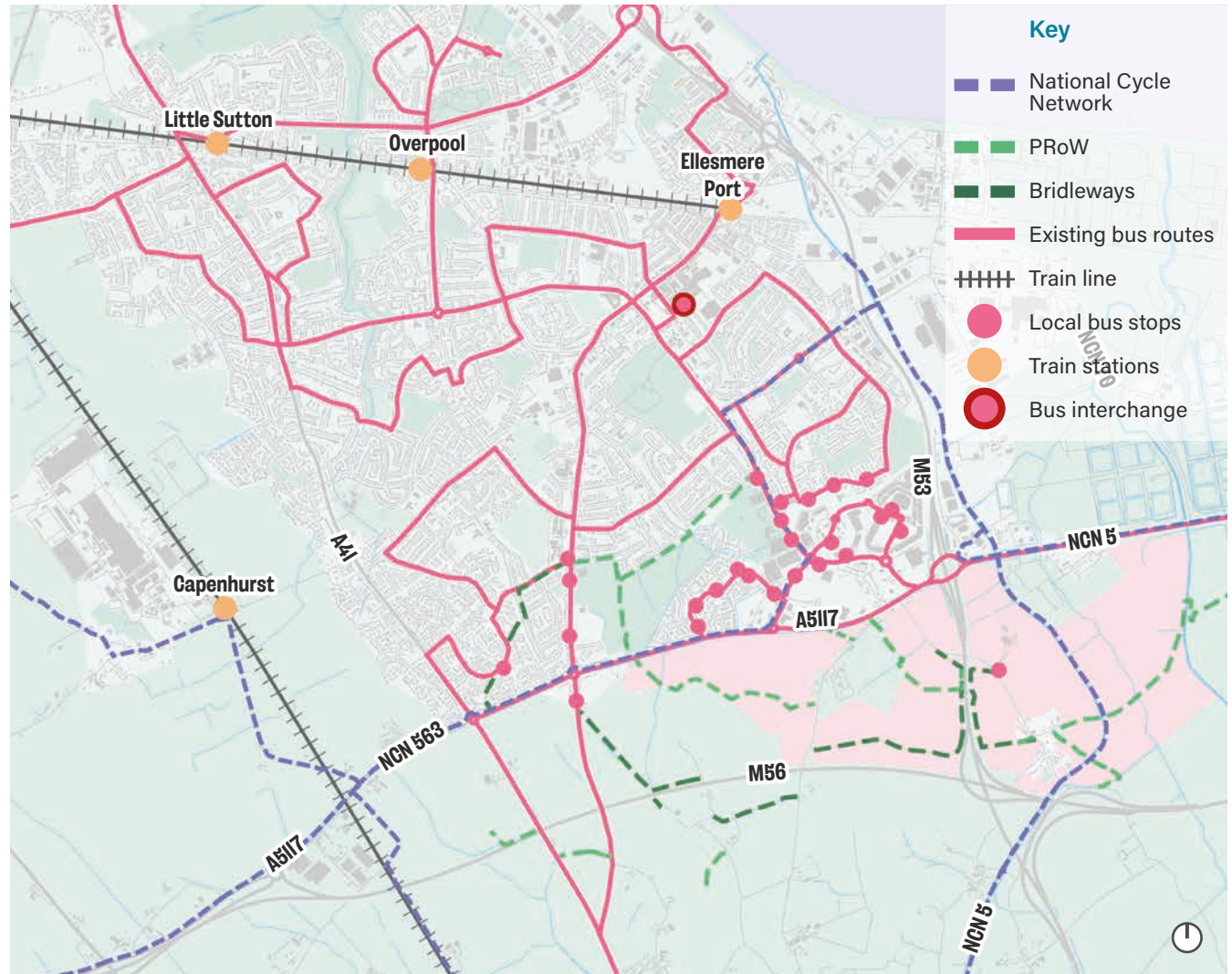
The Site is located south of the A5117, from which vehicular access can be achieved, and it's dissected centrally by the M53. A network of footpaths, bridleways and the Shropshire Union Canal Towpath run through and around the Site.

Public Transport - Bus and Rail

Cheshire Oaks is the closest destination to the Site, served by a number of bus routes. Existing bus services provide regular access from Cheshire Oaks to Chester and Ellesmere Port Bus Interchanges seven days a week. Two Sunday services provide twice hourly services to Ellesmere Port Railway Station, whilst Chester Railway Station is the only railway station that is accessible by public transport from Cheshire Oaks seven days a week.

Located 10 km from the Site, Chester Railway Station is a regional transport hub with connections into Liverpool, Manchester, Crewe, London Euston and North Wales. Ellesmere Port Station is the Merseyrail terminus of the Ellesmere Port to Liverpool Central service. Capenhurst Station provides additional connections to Chester, but is not accessible from the Site by public transport.

The strength of Ellesmere Port's connection to major road links has also caused weakness through severance of the port from the town.



Existing Wider Connections Plan

Connectivity Opportunities

Bus Route 1 (Chester to Liverpool) and Route 2 (Runcorn to Chester) have been considered appropriate for re-routing through the Site and along the A5117.

Route X1 presents the greatest strategic opportunity, as it is the most frequent service (serving Cheshire Oaks seven days a week) and connects to Overpool Station.

This could be served by high-quality stops with shelters and real-time passenger information on the A5117, with good pedestrian links into the Site. A rail station shuttle bus could also be provided through the Site.









The A5117 currently forms a physical barrier to active travel users' desire lines between the Site and these facilities.

There is opportunity to provide a variety of regular crossing points along the A5117 which align with anticipated desire lines and key points of access into the Site.

The proximity of the Site to the south of Ellesmere Port and Cheshire Oaks, providing a key range of facilities, means improving connectivity to the north is essential.

A mobility hub could be located within the Site, comprising interchanges between public transport and other mobility options for first/last mile journey, such as cycling, walking and micro-mobility.

Key

-  Shropshire Union Canal Towpath
-  Potential footpath within the Site
-  Proposed pedestrian crossing points over A5117
-  X1 existing bus route
-  X1 existing bus stops
-  Potential bus route through the Site
-  Potential additional bus stops on site
-  Potential Mobility Hub

A **segregated walking/cycling** route can be accommodated along the southern side of the A5117, within the Site boundary, to create a safe east-west path.

Opportunity to deliver a bus corridor through future development parcels

The Shropshire Union Canal Towpath can also be improved as part of the proposal, making the towpath a more accessible long-stance leisure route for all users.





THREE: EXPLORING POTENTIAL



“ The transformation of the land at Little Stanney Lane could have far-reaching benefits, ones that support and complement wider objectives for Ellesmere Port and the transformational economic growth opportunity represented by Origin. ”



Ellesmere Port has a strong link to nature: the town used the River Mersey to drive its industrial revolution and economy for generations. This industrial energy is now being steadily rechannelled into green, renewable energy – a place that is being re-engineered for the next century.

In exploring the potential for development and positive change, the links that connect nature and economy can be redefined for the future, ensuring that this is a place that makes best use of what it has: re-purposing canals, re-wilding green spaces, and building with the circular economy in mind.

This is a place that can be connected to its neighbours and the strengths of the region through positive partnerships. In becoming open and connected to the community, the Site can become many things to many people: it is a place that can

3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

SUPPORTING ORIGIN: STRENGTHENING ELLESMERE PORT

Land at Little Stanney Lane can support Ellesmere Port by:

Improving **access** to the town centre by enhancing **public transport** connections, frequency of services and by enhancing active travel routes through Ellesmere Port and along the Shropshire Union Canal

Assisting in **improving health inequalities** by facilitating a healthy lifestyle; creating a **network of pedestrian and cycle routes**, varied and accessible to all, within the Site and connecting to nearby destinations and to the countryside; providing a **wide range of sports and leisure** opportunities; improving **access to nature** by offering a variety of high-quality green spaces and by improving accessibility to the Shropshire Union Canal



3 Supporting the **growth** and enhancement of Ellesmere Port by providing **complementary employment** provision to diversify the local economy

4 Exploring opportunities with local clubs such as the Cheshire Phoenix Basketball team for on Site **Sports provision**

5 Working in **partnership with Cheshire College South and West** and other local education facilities to ensure the employment offer and **training opportunities** at Little Stanney Lane are suitable for higher-education institutions, and can **support the transition of the local economy**

6 Supporting its growth by providing **new, future-proofed housing**, to meet the housing needs of a varied, extended community, and that enhances the distinct local identity of Ellesmere Port

7 Promoting active travel by providing a **Mobility Hub at Ellesmere Port's doorstep**, offering cycle-hiring docks, cycle parking, car club spaces and other mobility services, and making the most of the proximity with Cheshire Oaks

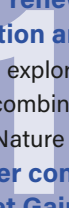
8 Improving **links to the wider region** by unlocking Capenhurst Station and enhancing connections to Ellesmere Port Station





Land at Little Stanney Lane can support Origin by:

Offering **land for renewable energy production and innovation**, also exploring solutions that can work in combination with Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve expansion, **further contributing to Biodiversity Net Gain**



Providing sustainable and **high-quality homes for skilled workers**



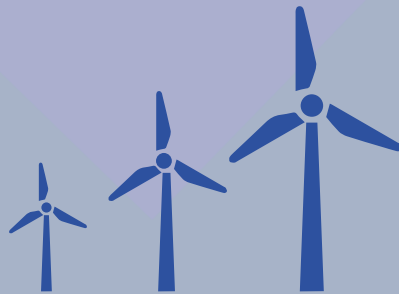
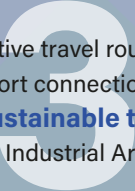
Facilitating **access to open space** from the Industrial Area



Accommodating **land for small-scale employment opportunities**, freehold industrial units and incubators, offering **training opportunities** and supporting development of new skills in relevant industries and **investment in the emerging green economy**

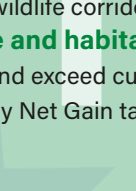


Improving active travel routes and public transport connections that **facilitate sustainable travel** and access to the Industrial Area

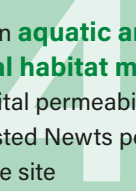


Land at Little Stanney Lane can support nature recovery by:

Providing a **network of green and blue corridors** which connects existing natural assets with new wildlife corridors, allowing for **nature and habitats to expand** and exceed current Biodiversity Net Gain targets



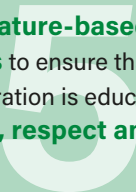
Creating an **aquatic and terrestrial habitat mosaic** which provides vital permeability for the Great Crested Newts population through the site



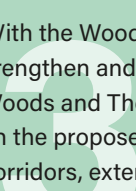
Working in **partnership with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust** and offer land for Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve expansion, to create a high-quality **nature conservation area**



Offering **nature-based learning activities** to ensure that the next generation is educated to **maintain, respect and protect nature**



Working With the Woodland Trust to strengthen and connect Stanney Woods and The Mersey Forest with the proposed network of green corridors, extending the "Forest Fabric" within the site, **supporting species diversity and resilience**



3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

ELLESMERE PORT: MANY PLACES

The Site offers a rare opportunity to make the most of what's there through partnerships with the Site's neighbours and key stakeholders, to ensure the long-term success of the area.

Through an ongoing process of understanding and engaging, the The Commissioners are seeking to learn how they might most meaningfully aid in the delivery of benefits to Ellesmere Port and its community.

The work undertaken to date has revealed many aspects of the settlement that are relevant in this context, prompting many thoughts as to how, in response, the land at Little Stanney Lane could serve as a contributor and catalyst to positive change.

This process of exploration of opportunities will continue through dialogue and analysis, seeking to identify areas in which collaboration and partnerships can unlock potential.

At this stage the areas most suited to further exploration are yet to be agreed, but over the following pages the breadth of opportunity is illustrated - by showing some of the many places that already make up Ellesmere Port, and considering how they might directly influence and connect to its future growth.



3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

PLACES TO LEARN

Today

Cheshire College South & West

on-site sustainable home for green skills training



Ellesmere Port CofE College



The Bridge Short Stay School

Academic learning with pro-social skills, learning behaviours.



Looking Ahead

- Could this be an opportunity to collaborate with Cheshire College to further their green skills training?
- There are many Scouts groups in the area. Where do they currently undertake activities and camps?
- How could the local natural setting be made accessible for SEND school groups and nature learning?
- Could a new primary school be provided on site?

3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

PLACES TO PLAY & STAY HEALTHY

Today

Ellesmere Port Sports Village



Climbing Hut Ellesmere Port



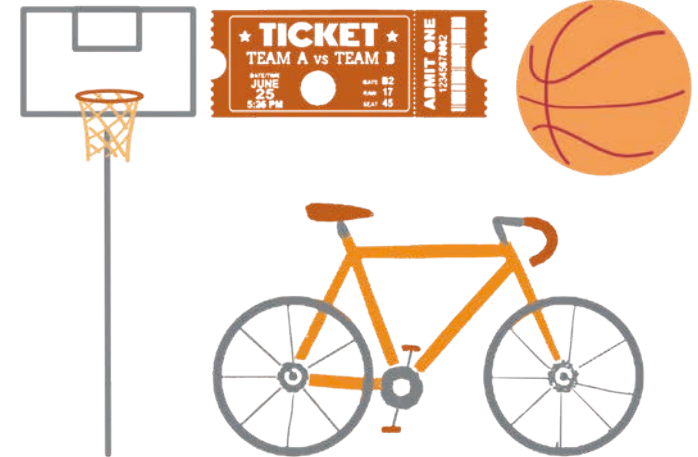
Whitby Sports and Social Club



David Lloyd Gym at Cheshire Oaks



Whitby Park Parkrun



Looking Ahead

- Would this be a good site for Cheshire Phoenix expansion? Could basketball become part of the 'destination' offering?
- How can the towpath along the Shropshire Union Canal be improved to maximise use and accessibility?
- How to harness the Parkrun approach of free, accessible exercise in contrast to high end gyms and spas of Cheshire Oaks?

3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

PLACES TO EXPLORE

Today

Shropshire Union
Canal towpath



Stanney Woods



Manley Mere



Looking Ahead

- Is the flood zone suitable for nature access and exercise routes?
- Could a temporary structure be used as a meanwhile activity centre to activate the canal from the early stages? Could a barge form a temporary community centre?

3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

PLACES TO BE CREATIVE

Today



The Flea Market
LUF



Civic Hall
Entertainment
space



National
Waterways
Museum

Theatre Porto: a child and youth focussed theatre and cultural hub:

- 'Ground Up Project' coffee shop CIC
- Community art, film, national theatre live, live performances, Young writers club
- Employ local young people



Looking Ahead

- Is there an opportunity to connect with landmarks and businesses further down the Shropshire Union Canal? For example Chester Zoo?
- What uses could be proposed along the Shropshire Union Canal celebrate heritage and celebrate it's importance to Ellesmere Port?
- How would a nature reserve sculpture park work in conjunction with Gowy Meadows and their existing work?

3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

PLACES TO WORK

Today



Cheshire Oaks
Business Park



Cheshire Oaks



ORIGIN

The opportunity to provide *small-scale plots* for employment use can be brought forward complementary to the bigger *industrial activities* established and growing across the Origin framework.



Looking Ahead

- Would Ellesmere Port stakeholders invest in a start up space or incubator? Could it be related to ORIGIN with an upscaling pathway? Could it be the place to explore smaller scale innovation?
- Could this be an opportunity for a Cheshire College skills show case?
- How many of Ellesmere Port local residents work for Cheshire Oaks and ORIGIN?

3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

PLACES TO LIVE

Today



Ledsham Garden Village
By Redrow



Gilsk
by Northstone



Looking Ahead

- How to ensure new housing reflects the needs of Ellesmere Port's diverse demographic?
- Where will the new ORIGIN employees want to live? Are young employees more likely to stay in Ellesmere Port if it is affordable?
- Will the growing low-carbon work force prioritise low carbon living?

3. EXPLORING POTENTIAL

PLACES TO STAY & INTERACT

Today

Theatre Porto have auditorium and office space to hire: <https://theatreporto.org/>

Cheshire Oaks Travelodge and conference room



Chester Fair Oaks Club Campsite



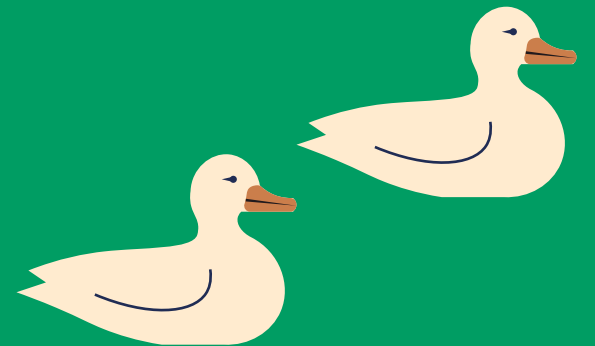
Ellesmere Port Holiday Inn



Looking Ahead

- Would a hotel with dedicated conference rooms, provided on Site, support growth at ORIGIN and Cheshire Oaks?
- Would outdoor activities associated with the hotel attract workers and families? How could it relate to eco-tourism?
- How to make Ellesmere Port a destination, rather than just a day trip to Cheshire Oaks. People are visiting, what would make them stay?

FOUR:
THE SITE-
LAND AT LITTLE
STANNEY LANE



“Ellesmere Port is home to pockets of rich biodiversity and ecological habitats - but the opportunity exists to make big moves to the significant benefit of nature recovery.”



This chapter explores how Land at Little Stanney Lane has evolved over time and what are the key assets that characterise the place.

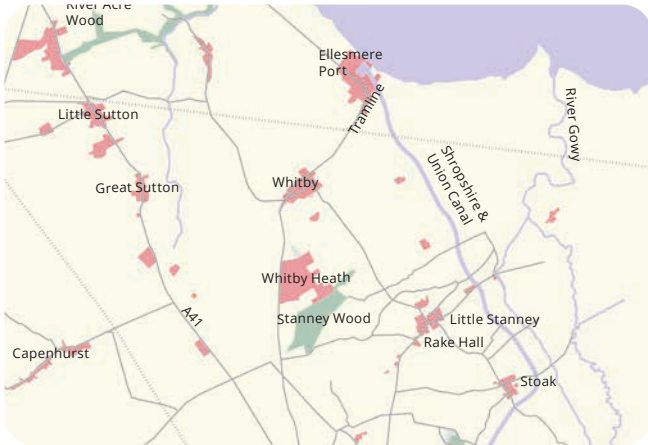
Located between Stanney Woods and Gowy Meadows, the Site shows a distinct green and blue landscape character, with valuable natural assets that contribute to it.

The presence of historic routes such as Heath Lane and the Shropshire Union Canal towpath running through the Site, represent an opportunity to re-connect the Site to Ellesmere Port and the wider region, contributing to a cohesive regional and town-wide network.

4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

HISTORIC GROWTH

Ellesmere Port

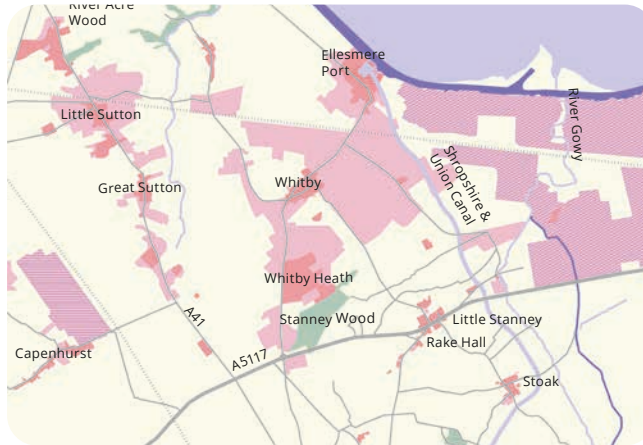


1900: Canal Port Origins

The area now known as Ellesmere Port started as distinct villages, each with their own identity and role within the region.

Ellesmere Port's identity was water based, owing its prominence to the Ellesmere Canal which connected into the Mersey in the late 18th century but was never completed. An inn and bathing huts were supplied by passenger steam packets but soon gave way to docks, warehouses and ship building yards supplied by goods ships.

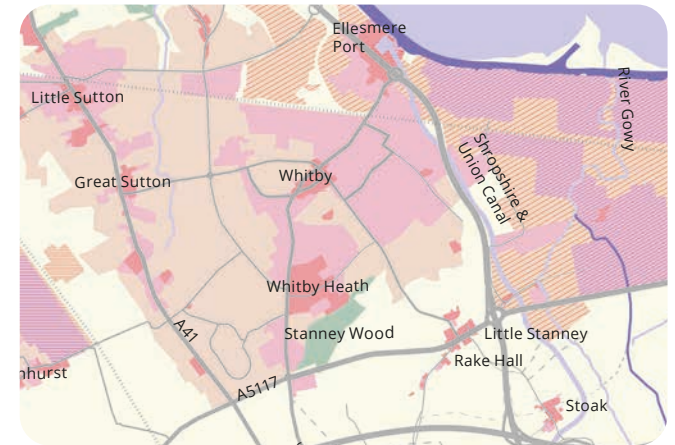
Commerce transformed the port into a town of residential, industrial and retail buildings.



1950: Industrial Powerhouse Growth

Ellesmere Port's industrial boom was ignited by the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal attracting new industries to the area such as Stanlow Oil Refinery in the 1920s and the Vauxhall Car Manufacturers in 1962. Vauxhall built housing estates to cater for their workers, contributing to the town's expansion.

As Ellesmere Port grew, the surrounding villages became suburbs and the town's centre established itself in its current location on Whitby Road, shifting the focus from the water to the land. The construction of the A5117 streamlined the connections to the wider country, while modification of the River Gowy allowed it to pass beneath the Manchester Ship Canal and flow more efficiently.



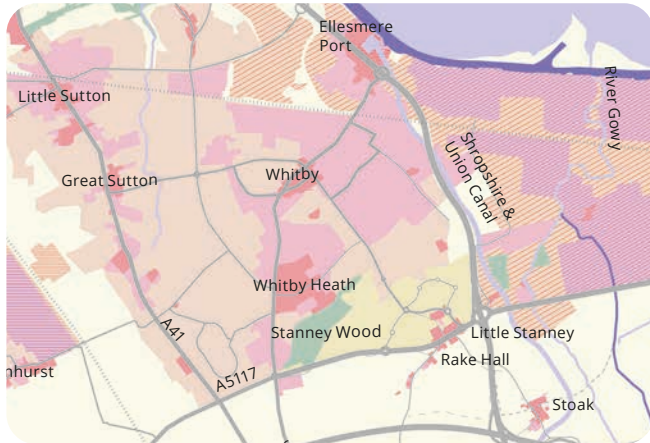
1980 - 1995: Retail Destination

In the 1980s the Port Arcades shopping centre opened, and the major retail destination of Cheshire Oaks was established in 1995.

The designer outlets and associated retail offerings represented a significant addition to the town centre and attraction to visitors from further afield, and it has continued to thrive.

4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

HISTORIC GROWTH



2024: Filling in the Gaps

Over the centuries, Ellesmere Port has adapted to tourism, commerce, technology and retail, always undergoing industry driven growth and embracing new technologies. Now Ellesmere Port can combine these diverse economic streams to remain responsive to evolving trends. As industry moves to mitigate climate change, Ellesmere Port can acknowledge the waterways and natural resources that the town was built around.

Analysis of Little Stanney over time, provides an insight into how this historic growth impacted the land at Little Stanney Lane.

Little Stanney



1900: Self Contained Village

Like Ellesmere Port, Little Stanney started as its own entity. Originally it was a fishery and home to Rake Hall the noble Bunbury family's holiday home. The village was well rooted in the surrounding region. Many roads connected into the village centre, which was comprised of farms, orchards, a smithy and school. Open fields, populated by many small ponds, surrounded Little Stanney and supported its agricultural identity.



1950: Drastic Road Infrastructure

As Ellesmere Port grew in importance, the A5117 was constructed, connecting the town to the wider region. As a result, Little Stanney was bisected, separating fragments of the village from its rural context. While the new infrastructure layout minimised the loss of dwellings, Little Stanney's identity was altered.



2024: Little Stanney Today

The 1995 construction of Cheshire Oaks caused the further change, engulfing residential buildings and the village hall, north of the A5117. While no longer the village it once was, some residential dwellings are still found interspersed along Rake Lane, where Rake Hall is now a Grade II listed building, used as a pub and fields are used for camping and motorhomes.

4. THE SITE LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

THE SITE

The land south of Ellesmere port is bisected North to South by the M53, contains the nucleated village of Stoak within the eastern portion and an element of ribbon development of the village of Little Stanney in the western element. The northern part of the village of Little Stanney has been subsumed into the retail and leisure elements of Cheshire Oaks.



4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

THE SITE

Landscape Features

Lines of mature hedgerows and copses of trees with ponds define the character of the Site and hold ecological and historic relevance.

The retention of the majority of these existing features will create opportunities for wildlife corridors and public open space to thread through the Site, connecting existing habitats and creating new ones.

The highest fluvial flood risk is found to the east of the River Gowy.

This land lies on the doorstep of Ellesmere Port: it can be transformed from something inaccessible to something integrated.



Tree clusters concealing ponds



Existing mature trees alongside the Shropshire Union Canal

Active Travel Connectivity

Heath Lane PRow runs east-west through the southern part of the Site and has been diverted to cross the M53, detracting from its natural landscape appeal in parts. The Lane holds historic importance and could be reinstated and enhanced as green corridor and active travel route.

The Shropshire and Union Canal also runs through the Site with a 1.5m wide towpath and associated cycle paths running along it. There is potential to improve the accessibility of this route and for development to interact with the canal and its views.



Shropshire Union Canal towpath



Existing mature tree belt and hedgerows



Heath Lane

4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

THE SITE

Vehicular Access

The A5117 runs along the northern boundary and represents a key constraint to north-south active travel permeability, which future proposals will address.

Primary vehicular access to the Site can however be achieved from the A5117, which also gives access to the M53. Limited vehicular access can be achieved from Little Stanney Lane, to serve small scale non-residential uses.

Rake Lane runs through the western part of the Site, serving existing properties at Little Stanney.

Existing Utilities

A number of overground and underground utilities cross the Site. Based on their easements' requirements, development around these lines will be limited.

These represent however an opportunity for linear green corridors through the Site, to benefit people and wildlife.



A5117 junction to Rake Lane, north of the Site



Overhead power lines

Stoak

The Site surrounds the village of Stoak, located to the south-east. Future proposals will have to respect its setting, scale and views of St Laurence Church.

There is also the opportunity to increase active travel connectivity through and around the village via Church Lane, as well as improving access to the canal and the wider PRow network.



Stoak



Stoak natural setting

In a town that suffers from the impacts of traffic along certain key movement corridors, the opportunity exists to meaningfully diversify transport options available to those living in and travelling to the town.

Site Analysis Plan

Key

- Overhead 11kv
- Overhead Trans
- CLH Pipeline System
- Gas LHP Main
- Water Distribution Main
- Raw Water
- Tranmere to Stanlow TEP
- Tranmere to Stanlow Crude
- Flooding Zone 2
- Flooding Zone 3
- Greenbelt
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Green Space
- Hedgerows
- Conservation Area
- Listed Building
- PRoW
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Potential Access Point West
- Existing Signalled Crossing
- Potential Crossing
- Potential Crossing Upgrade



4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

A GREEN NETWORK

Green Infrastructure Opportunities

The Site extends over a number of Green Infrastructure (GI) corridors linking core biodiversity areas, identified within the Ellesmere Port and Chester GI Actions Plan. The Site provides the opportunity to enhance and connect the green network and contribute to Cheshire West's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Rivacre Brook - Stanney Corridor

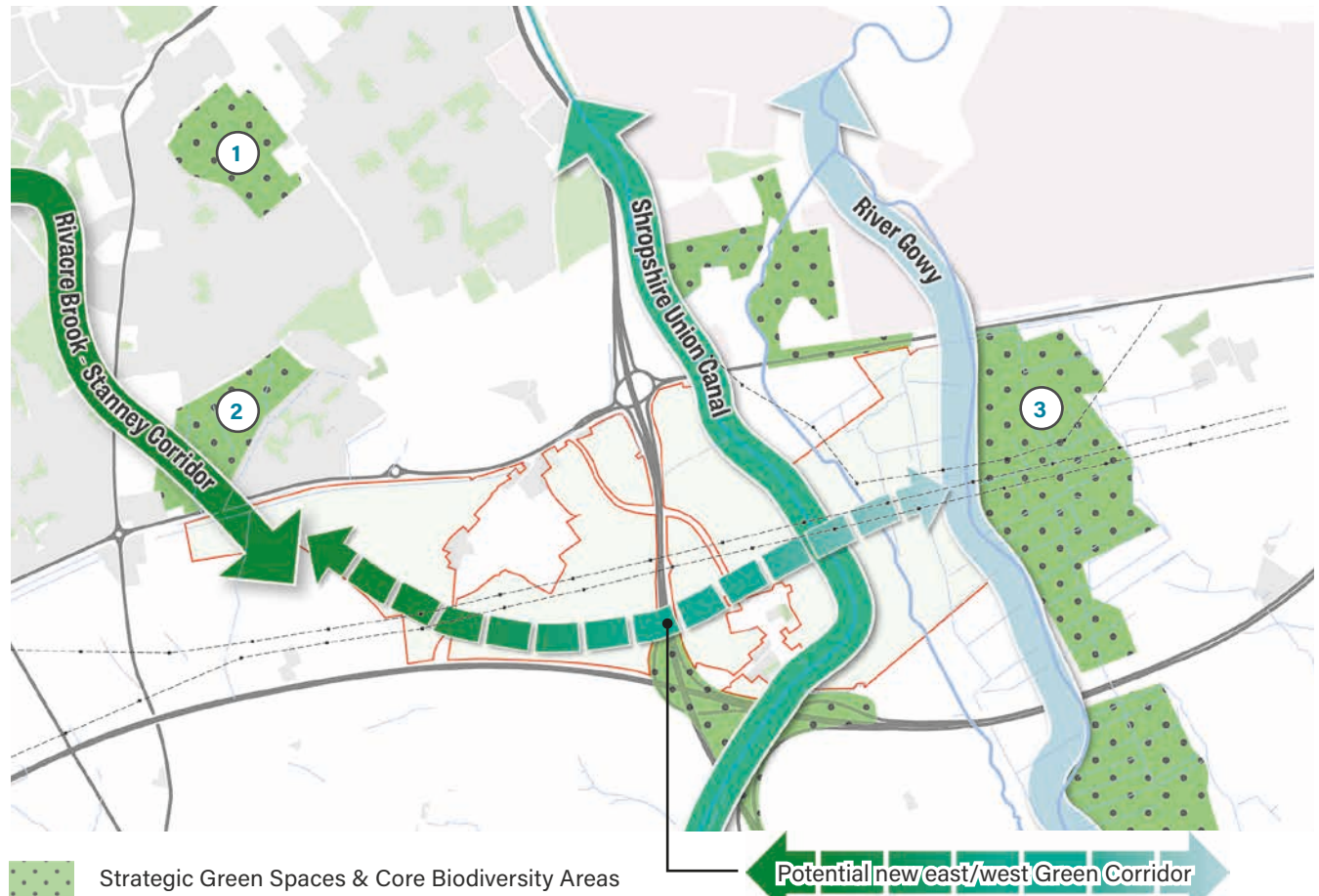
Improve physical linkages between Ellesmere Port and green spaces by improving habitat connectivity through the Site for people and wildlife.

Shropshire Union Canal

Safeguard and enhance green spaces adjacent the canal with buffer zones around watercourses for biodiversity and recreational movement.

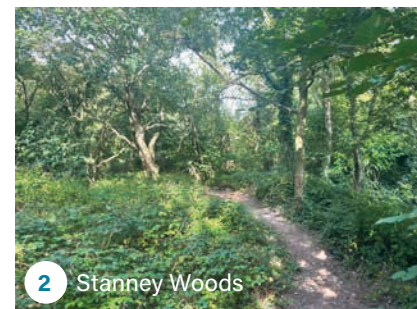
River Gowy

Extend Gowy Meadows nature reserve into the Site and manage landscape for biodiversity - exploring a long term partnership with Cheshire Wildlife Trust.



Potential new east/west Green Corridor

opportunity to connect Stanney Woods to Gowy Meadows through a transitional landscape corridor through the Site - from woodlands to wetlands



4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL










Value of waterways to the visitor economy

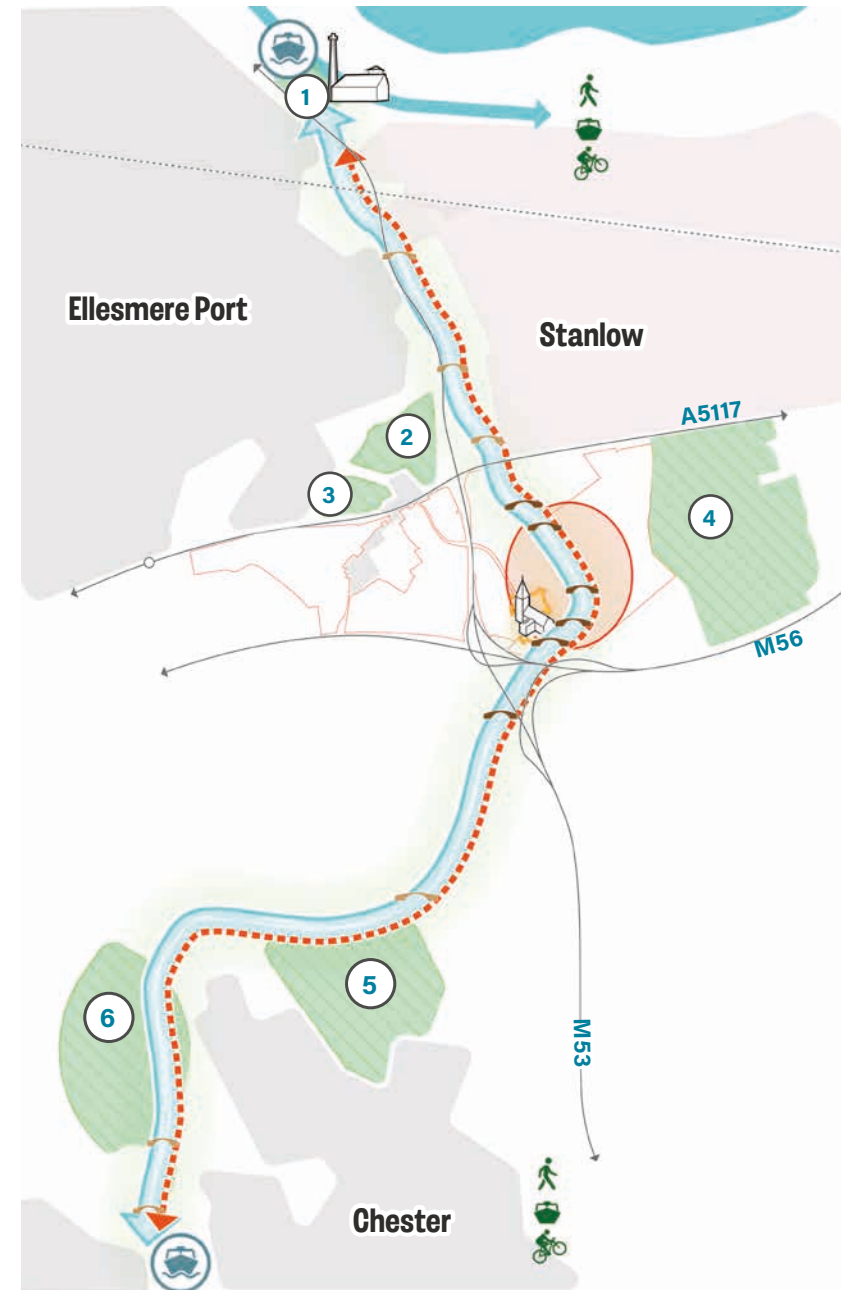
There is the opportunity to unlock the leisure potential and activate the Shropshire Union Canal as part of proposals - creating a new tourism offer and improvements to the towpath network.

Waterways are an important tourism and leisure resource; they enhance the attractiveness of both urban and rural areas, they link places of interest and generate tourism. The Shropshire Union Canal is a navigable inland waterway, used by boats and canoes, with marinas for mooring located in the urban areas of Chester and Ellesmere Port. The towpath is also an important leisure route used by walkers and cyclists, however the section running through the Site is narrow, poorly surveilled and not surfaced.



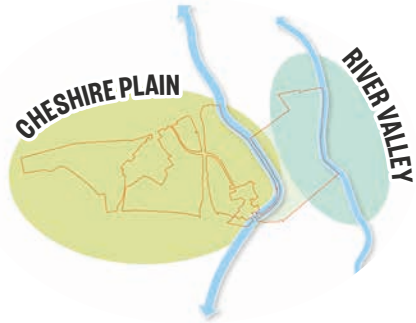
The canal through the Site is partially enclosed on its boundaries - lacking activity and positive frontages and with limited recreation capacity on the towpath.

-  Key Visitor Destinations
-  1 National Waterways Museum
-  2 Cheshire Oaks
-  3 Blue Planet Aquarium
-  4 Gowy Meadows
-  5 Chester Zoo
-  6 Chester Wetland Centre
-  Canal Towpath Trail & NCR 5
-  Inland Marina



4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

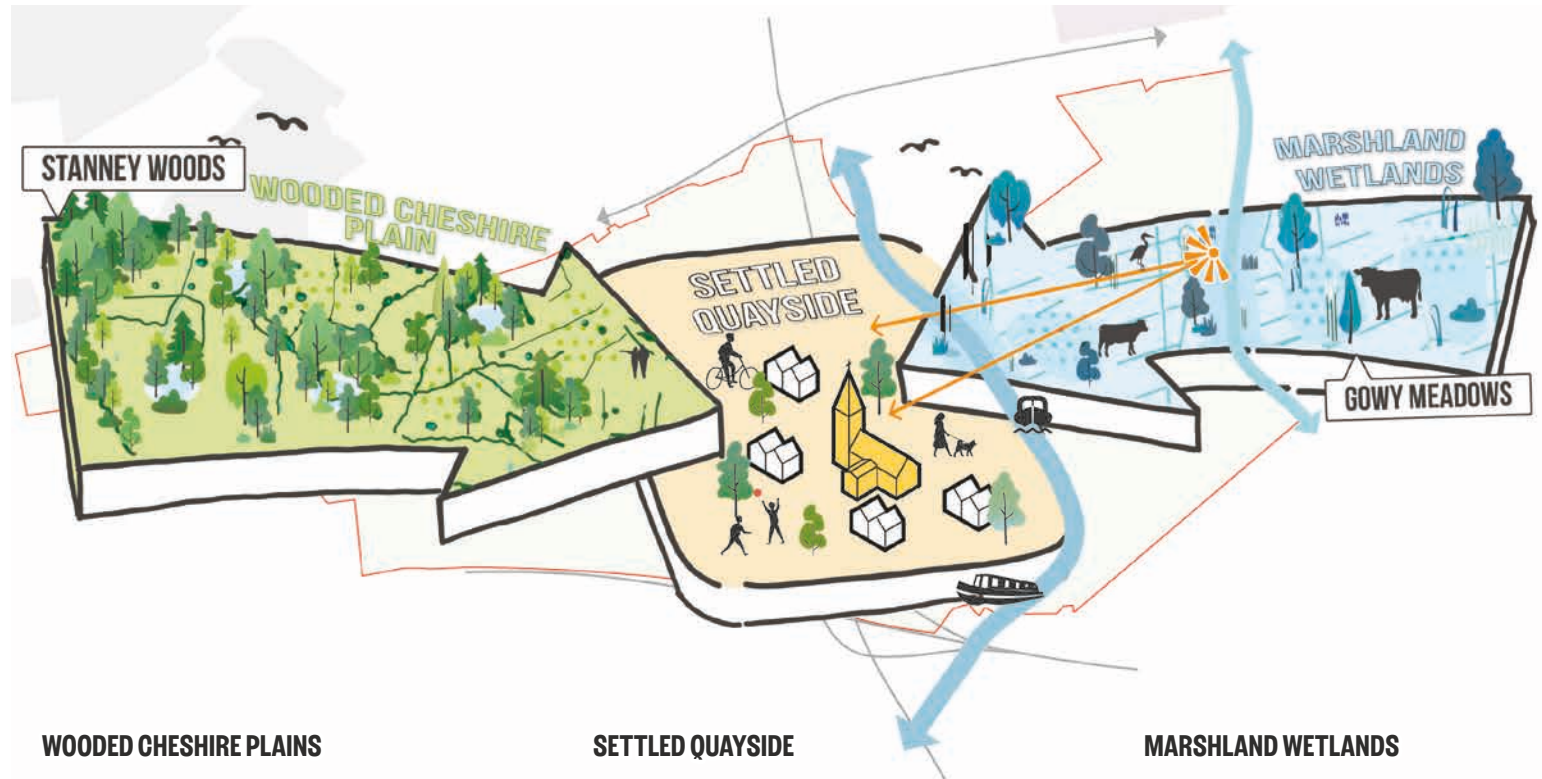
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER INFLUENCES



The Site is located in a landscape that transitions from the enclosed wooded Cheshire Plain in the west to the open river valley corridor and wetlands of the River Gowy in the east.

At a district level 'A Landscape Strategy for Cheshire West and Chester Borough (2016)' identifies and describes a number of landscape character types and provides guidance for the conservation, enhancement and restoration of landscape character.

The proposals for Land at Little Stanney Lane provide the opportunity to contribute to Cheshire West's landscape and management strategy for the different landscape typologies.



WOODED CHESHIRE PLAINS

An enclosed wooded character defined by strong field pattern of hedgerows, oak trees and field ponds.

- enhance and maintain the hedgerow, pond and treed field pattern
- plant small pockets of trees to strengthen wooded character

SETTLED QUAYSIDE

Rural settled villages of Cheshire scattered along the canal, intrinsically linked to the canal and its history

- provide access and open space along the canal for local communities
- enhance leisure route along the canal by boat, bike or walking

MARSHLAND WETLANDS

An open linear and elongated river valley corridor, with subtle drainage and field patterns.

- extend floodplain habitats that contribute to the character
- support recreational use of the landscape, ensuring that any visitor facilities are low key

4. THE SITE-LAND AT LITTLE STANNEY LANE

LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES



Following a combined landscape and biodiversity analysis and consideration of findings, the following landscape opportunities have informed the design process and helped shape the vision.

WETLAND HABITAT MOSAIC

- collaboration & partnership opportunity with Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- potential to extend Goway Meadows nature reserve, as a large scale wetland destination that transforms farmland pastures to a biodiverse wetland habitat mosaic

HEDGEROWS, TREES & PONDS

- conserve & strengthen the tree, hedgerow & pond network (GCN potential)
- collaboration & partnership opportunity with Mersey Forest, through new tree / woodland community planting
- enhance ecological connectivity and biodiversity across the Site

HISTORIC LANE

- integrate Heath Lane, a historic route severed by the M53, through improving legibility and extending the recreational movement network through and between the Site.
- conserve the scenic quality and naturalistic character of the woodland habitat enclosing the lane which provide an important ecological network

INFRASTRUCTURE BARRIERS

- separation and constraints due to infrastructure (overhead pylons and motorways) to be considered in development of masterplan
- offsets and buffer planting around infrastructure, creating green corridors along routes

SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL

- collaboration & partnership opportunity with Canals & Rivers Trust
- enhance and activate the canalside with development frontages, public open space and marina / moorings
- improve the recreational capacity along towpath.

Key

- Public Long Distance Footpath
- Public Footpath
- Public Bridleway
- +— Existing Overhead Pylons
- Listed Buildings & Structures
- Ancient Woodland



FIVE: DELIVERING THE VISION

“

**The Commissioners
land can play a
significant role in
supporting ambitious
plans for employment
growth and business
development, offering
space for young
businesses to grow.**

”

This chapter looks to differentiate between some potential ‘early wins’ – ways in which the Site could deliver benefits that would soon be felt by the wider community should they wish to engage with the location – and longer term potential – ways in which bigger, positive impacts might be delivered over time, given impetus by growth and an increased critical mass.

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES

Chapter 3 explored the potential ways in which support can be offered to the growth of Ellesmere Port and Origin. This chapter responds to this exploration by identifying site-specific proposals that could shape future development of the land at Little Stanney Lane.

The following pages illustrate key moves that could define this new neighbourhood, and which constitute the framework of the proposed Concept Masterplan.



1. Giving back to Nature



2. Completing the Loop



3. Creating a Catalyst



4. Designing for the Future



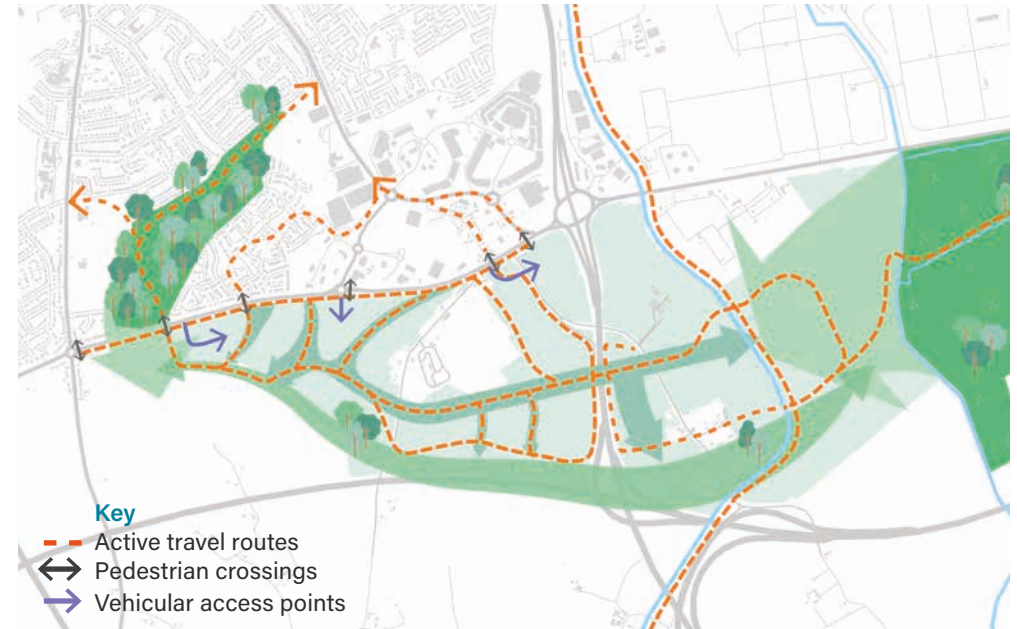
5. Supporting Growth



6. Working, Learning & Innovating

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES



1. Giving back to Nature

Ellesmere Port owes its industrial past to resources extracted from the land. The aim is to give back to nature by providing opportunities for nature to grow and biodiversity to thrive.

At Land at Little Stanney Lane, this can be achieved by creating a connected nature recovery network linking Stanney Woods to Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve, and providing areas for these assets to expand within the Site.

Retaining and enhancing existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows, and celebrating the waterways of the River Gowy and Shropshire Union Canal constitute the framework of the proposal for Land at Little Stanney Lane.

A series of green spaces are proposed both for nature to thrive and for the community to enjoy.

2. Completing the Loop:

Joining the gaps in Ellesmere Port's active travel and public transport network would allow the whole town to link into the benefits provided on site; and the future community at Land at Little Stanney Lane to benefit from the facilities at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire Oaks, ORIGIN and surrounding areas.

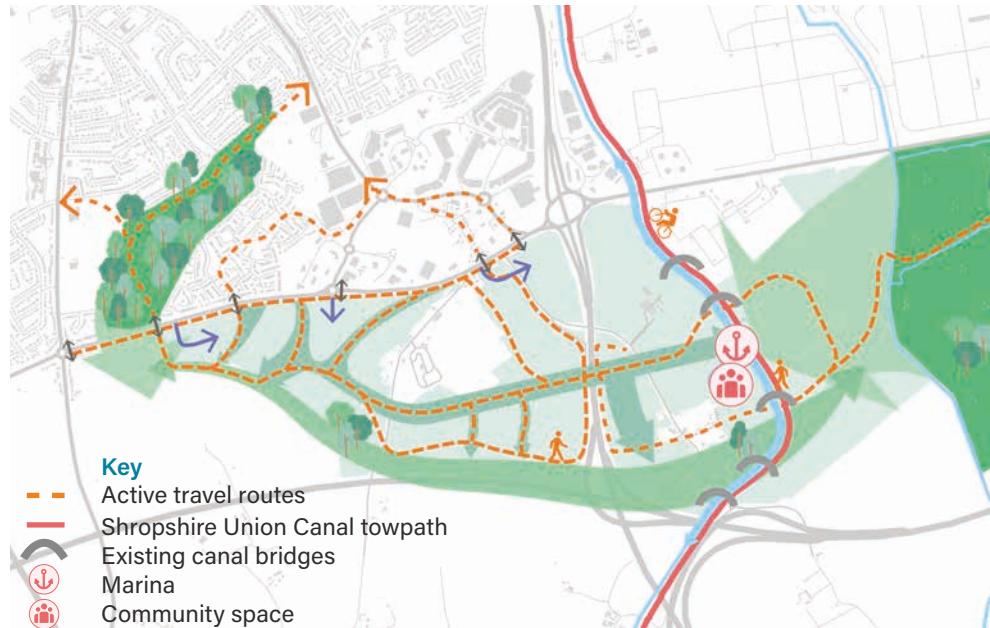
The aim is to facilitate the growth of a permeable neighbourhood, with active travel

routes threading through green corridors and connecting with the existing PRoW network, Heath Lane and the canal towpath, encouraging walking and cycling over the use of private cars.

Repairing the severance of strategic infrastructure is also a key aim, focusing in particular on providing safe pedestrian crossings over the A5117 to create one coherent place.

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES



3. Creating a Catalyst:

The Shropshire Union Canal and towpath offer a strong strategic link into Ellesmere Port and wider Cheshire.

This path could be celebrated more by creating a series of public spaces along its way, offering opportunities to meet other local residents or simply rest from the walk.

A primary focal point along the canal could be a catalyst for the existing and future community, with the opportunity to create canal-side activities, community areas and a café.



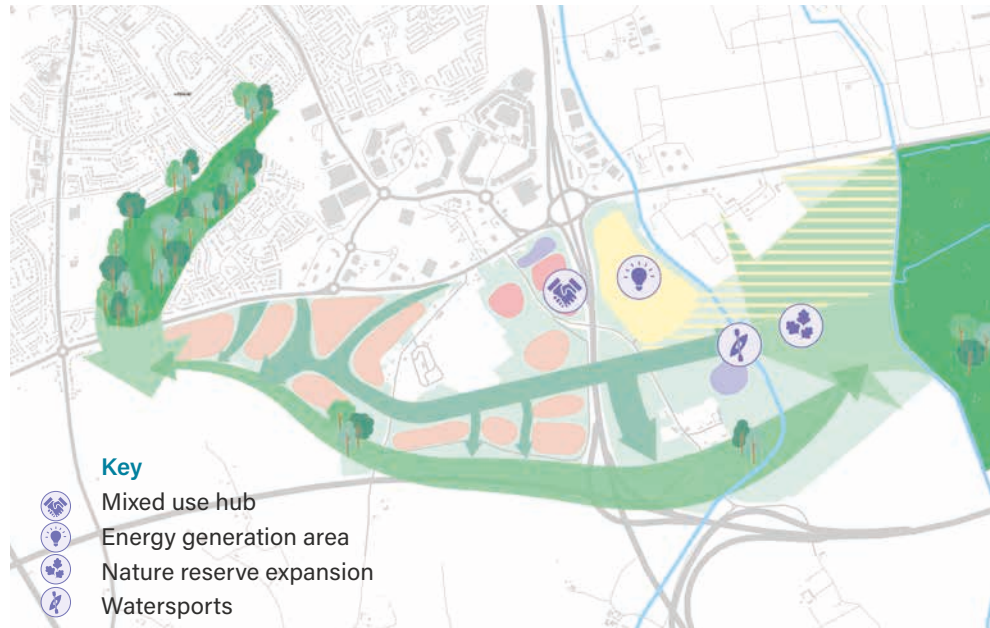
4. Designing for the Future

Ellesmere Port is projected to have 35,000 employees working at ORIGIN in 15 years. High quality, sustainable homes could ensure that the town can grow in a sustainable way and accommodate future needs. Future homes could provide a range of typologies and tenures to meet the housing needs of the extended community, supported by a range of community and leisure uses.

Land at Little Stanney Lane could become a destination, through the addition of a mixed-use hub at Ellesmere Port's doorstep. Making the most of the proximity with Cheshire Oaks, the hub could feature a new hotel, a public square, a mobility hub including bus stops, cycle parking, car club spaces and other mobility services, as well as a café. Other outdoor and indoor leisure uses could also be located around this area, easily accessible from Ellesmere Port.

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES



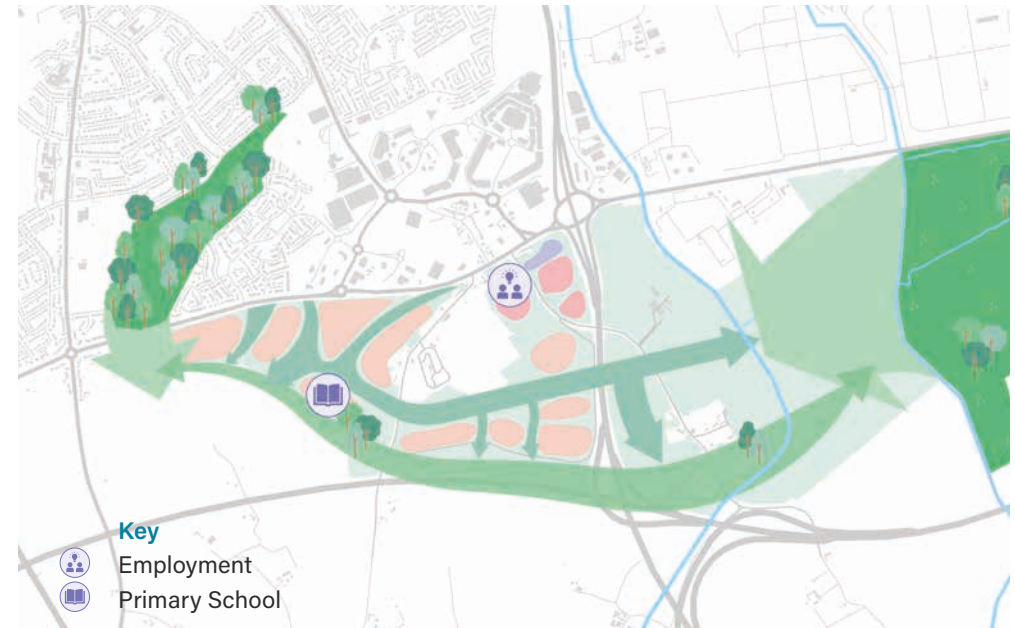
5. Supporting Growth

Numerous potential partners are active in the area and could be involved in shaping the long-term success of the future development of the Site.

Strong partnerships with the local nature trusts, colleges, local businesses, industries and community groups would strengthen the potential for change that the Site offers.

Little Stanney Lane offers land that could be used as low carbon energy generation, with the opportunity to power homes, facilities and forms of transport within the new development.

A potential partnership with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust could also explore areas of co-location of renewable energy generation and nature enhancement, looking to maximise land efficiency and biodiversity net gain.



6. Working, Learning and Innovating:

Ellesmere Port boasts large scale industry and businesses. Land at Little Stanney Lane could offer space - in a sustainable location - for start-ups, commercial freehold, workshops and innovative business ideas.

Partnership with local colleges and businesses could lead to training opportunities which the Site could accommodate, as well as co-working spaces to support the changing needs of the community.

The Site could also accommodate a Primary School which would benefit from direct access to outdoor leisure and nature, offering nature-based learning opportunities and ensuring that the next generation is educated to respect, protect and maintain these spaces.

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

STANNEY OAKS

STANNEY OAKS

'FOREST FABRIC'

- Strengthen the existing hedgerow, tree and pond habitat mosaic whilst reinforcing local character
- A rich tapestry of new 'community woodlands' and tree typologies will strengthen and connect existing woodland, whilst supporting species diversity and resilience
- A 'Jam Belt' will comprise fruit and nut trees, plants and shrubs within the green infrastructure network, to support wildlife and community foraging

THE GREEN RIBBON

'COMMUNITY FABRIC'

- A series of parkland destinations, that offer opportunities for social interaction and activity, through a diverse range of recreational facilities
- Transforming an existing overhead power line corridor into a 2 km long connected parkland, with open space and trails
- A range of informal activity spaces for community cohesion including food growing, play, sport and fitness

HEATH LANE RESERVE

'NATURE'S FABRIC'

- A nature focused corridor along the southern boundary to enhance ecological connectivity and biodiversity
- An aquatic and terrestrial habitat mosaic will provide vital permeability for the Great Crested Newts (GCN) population, ensuring safe movement and supporting breeding and foraging

QUAYSIDE PARK

'CULTURAL FABRIC'

- Celebrating and enhancing the canalside, and its natural and historic assets, with the creation of a new parkland destination
- Creating a new tourism offer and relieving the recreational pressure along the towpath by providing an alternative recreational route
- Potential to create a new marina and canalside frontages, providing a stop off point for boats between Chester and Ellesmere Port

This is an opportunity to open up a landscape that is largely hidden and little used, for the people of Ellesmere Port.

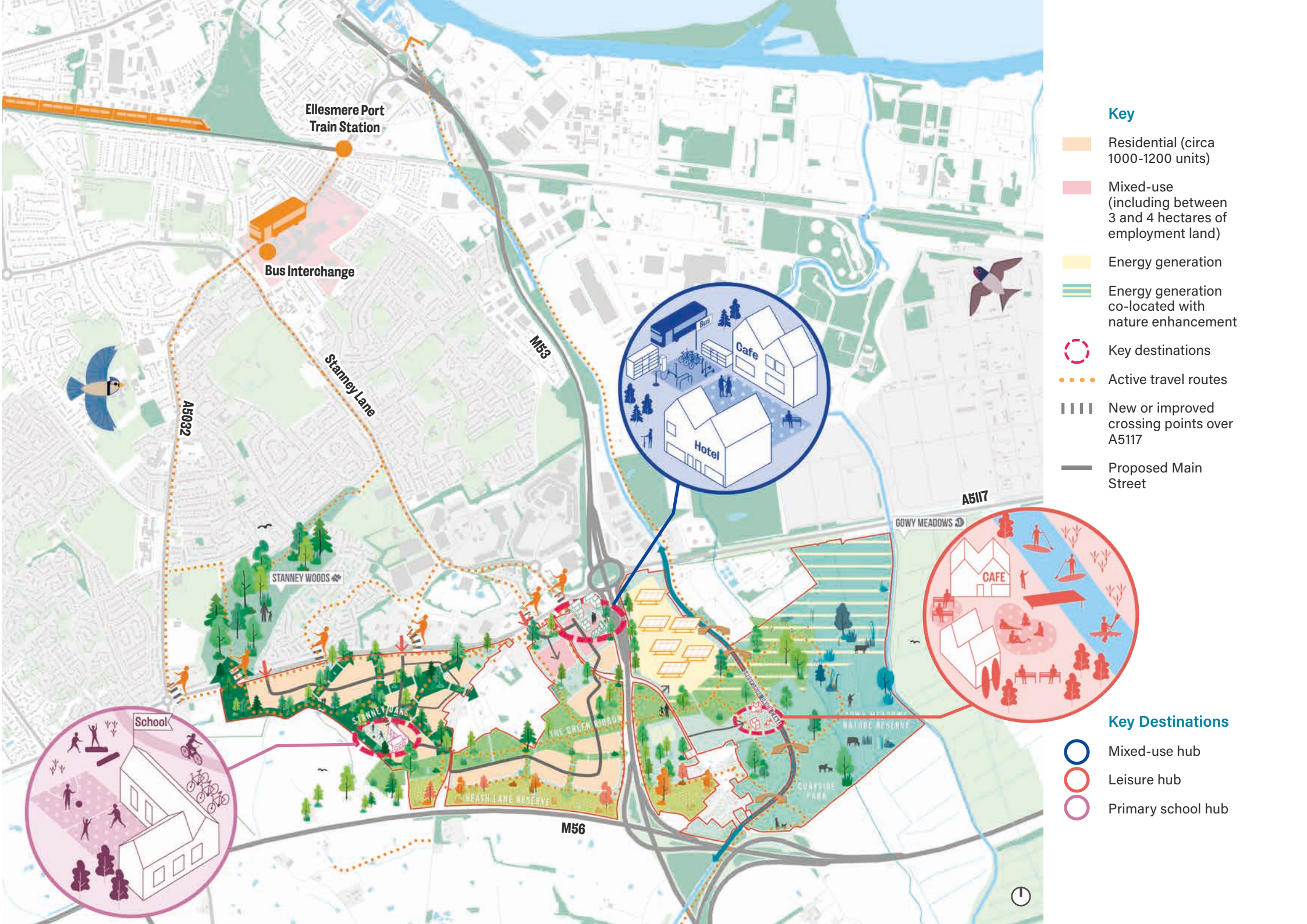


GOWY MEADOWS RESERVE

'WETLAND FABRIC'

- Collaborate with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust to expand and enhance wetland areas adjacent to Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve
- Transform farmland pastures into a biodiverse habitat mosaic, supporting regional wetland birds and high-value habitats that align with conservation priorities
- Potential to provide small scale tourism facilities, such as a visitor centre within Gowy Meadows, which can contribute to the local economy





Key

- Residential (circa 1000-1200 units)
- Mixed-use (including between 3 and 4 hectares of employment land)
- Energy generation
- Energy generation co-located with nature enhancement
- Key destinations
- Active travel routes
- New or improved crossing points over A5117
- Proposed Main Street

Key Destinations

- Mixed-use hub
- Leisure hub
- Primary school hub

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

The concept masterplan is the product of a vision reflecting the wider aspirations for the future of Ellesmere Port, shaped by the study of the town and the local area, and by the analysis of the Site's constraints and opportunities. The proposed concept is an illustration of one way in which the development could come forward, and it is intended to explore a range of potential benefits that this land could facilitate.

The masterplan is defined by a framework of green spaces of different character and function, proposed to retain and enhance the numerous landscape assets of the Site.

A network of footpaths and cycleways thread through these green spaces creating a permeable neighbourhood and connecting the Site with Ellesmere Port, working to repair the severance created by the A5117. To the west, **Stanney Oaks** is a network of green corridors proposed along the lines of retained existing hedgerows. Residential parcels are set within these corridors, creating a new, active frontage along the A5117.

A **Primary School** is proposed along the western boundary, located along the main street and easily accessible from all residential parcels.

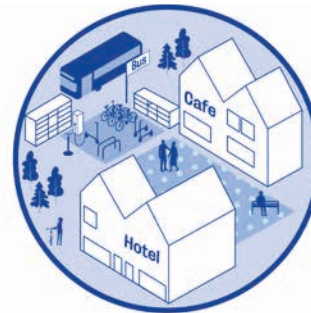


The **Green Ribbon** - linear, central green space - connects Stanney Oaks to the Shropshire Union Canal and Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve beyond, providing a series of parkland destinations and leisure activities along it.

To the south of the Green Ribbon, lower density residential parcels are surrounded by nature. South of these parcels, Heath Lane is retained and enhanced, reinstating a leisure walk along the edge of Heath Lane Reserve.

Higher density residential and mixed-use development is proposed to the north of the Green Ribbon, to create a strong edge to the A5117 and the M53. A **mixed-use hub** is envisaged here, south of Junction 10, acting as a landmark for the future development and **a magnet of activity**. The hub offers the opportunity to provide a number of facilities that would benefit from proximity to Ellesmere Port, Cheshire Oaks, Origin and access to key road infrastructure. Some of the facilities provided could be:

- A hotel with conference facilities;
- civic and open spaces associated with the hotel;
- indoor and outdoor sport facilities;
- co-working spaces;
- employment areas suiting local demand;
- a mobility hub (including cycle hire, car clubs, etc.);
- community facilities; and
- a café.



No residential and mixed-use development is proposed east of the M53 due to the sensitivity around the setting of Stoak and Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve.

There is, however, an opportunity to use the land between the M53 and the Ellesmere Port Wastewater Treatment Works site for **green energy generation**. A co-location of energy production land and nature enhancement could also be explored in areas within the **Gowy Meadows Nature Reserve**, closer to the Wastewater Treatment Works.

The land between the **Shropshire Union Canal** and the River Gowy is proposed to become an expansion of the existing Nature Reserve, transitioning west into parkland.

A second hub is proposed along the western side of the Shropshire Union Canal. Different in nature and function from the first, this is proposed to be a **key leisure destination**, of a scale which respects Stoak and its rural setting. Some of the facilities provided could be:

- Water related activities; shop/ rental (Canoe, kayak, paddle, etc);
- Bike repair shop;
- Café; and
- Community room/events venue.



5. DELIVERING THE VISION

WHERE DO WE START: SHORT TERM VISION & QUICK INITIATIVES

Tying into The Commissioners's ESG principles, the focus is on adding value through initiatives focused on environment, social sustainability and good governance.

Working with the multiple assets of this place, and bringing in the pieces people will fall in love with, there are things that can happen now, to open opportunities going forwards.

The number of visitors to Ellesmere Port - including to Cheshire Oaks and to the many businesses and initiatives covered by Origin - is only set to grow: this site is ideally placed to offer venues, activities and overnight accommodation to support those visits and encourage further spend in Ellesmere Port.

Environmental

- Rekindle Ellesmere Port's close ties to the canal and National Waterways Museum
- Parks, outdoors pursuits
- Existing paths improvements to make green spaces easily accessible
- Expansion of nature reserve and creation of wild areas
- Outdoors nature-based community hub for local user groups and education amongst nature



Social

- Education: Kids visiting and learning with potential to work with local Scouts groups
- Start-Up Workspace
 - Provide co-working areas for start-ups that support Ellesmere Port's ambitions of a low carbon future.
 - Associated outdoor spaces for gathering.
- Canal Activities
- Provide access to the water for journeys and/or water sports
- Create associated temporary structure cafe and facilities



Governance

- Engage with the public and community groups
- Establish a community network
- Support the expanding employment offer
- Showcase the skills learned at the Cheshire College through prototypes and innovation test beds

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

WHERE DO WE START: SHORT TERM VISION & QUICK INITIATIVES



5. DELIVERING THE VISION

LONG TERM VISION

The breadth of opportunity, as explored in this document, is very significant. How this will be most fully realised will be the product of collaboration, sustained ambition, investment, and time – with the outcomes potentially taking many different forms beyond the provision of new homes.

It is also possible that development of the Site might be more united by a particular objective, activity or use such as employment, education, or leisure.

In the context of the Commissioners ESG Framework, ideas for this longer term transformation are explored on these pages.

Environmental

- Offer further green education with local colleges and nature-based learning at a green school
- Reinforce the expanded nature reserve as rewilding areas mature
- Fully connect this green infrastructure with the wider Cheshire area



Social

- New and better homes to meet diverse needs
- Provide a sports hub and offer new forms of leisure based in nature
- Provide a hotel with conference and outdoor activity space:
 - Embrace eco-tourism and extend visitor stay
 - Host corporate and educational away days
 - Connection to the town centre, civic space and Origin
- Support the 35,000 employees projected to work at Origin by 2040



Governance

- Establish partnerships with surrounding stakeholders for a localised supply chain
- Locally procure green skills
- Maintain links with the Ellesmere Port Development Board
- Grow a Community Development Trust for Land at Little Stanney Lane that can establish an on-site presence and acquire assets

5. DELIVERING THE VISION

LONG TERM VISION



5. DELIVERING THE VISION

NEXT STEPS

This document has been prepared to support ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders who may help to facilitate, and may benefit from, the future transformation of Land at Little Stanney Lane.

In the coming months, the Commissioners will:

- continue regular engagement with Rob Charnley at CWCC, as well as members of the Planning Policy, Regeneration and Energy Teams;
- engage with local stakeholders and neighbours such as Cheshire Oaks, Peel and Origin;
- engage with key Green Infrastructure stakeholders Cheshire Wildlife Trust, Canals and Rivers Trust and The Mersey Forest as critical friends to assist in developing the Vision;
- engage with the Ellesmere Port Development Board to present the emerging Vision of the Site;
- continue specific engagement with immediate site neighbours such as United Utilities, Hynet and EET Fuels on Low Carbon Energy Generation synergies and Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities; and
- engage with Local Members on the emerging Vision for the Site.





LAND
AT **LITTLE**
STANNEY
LANE ELLESMERE
PORT

