

3. The Application Site

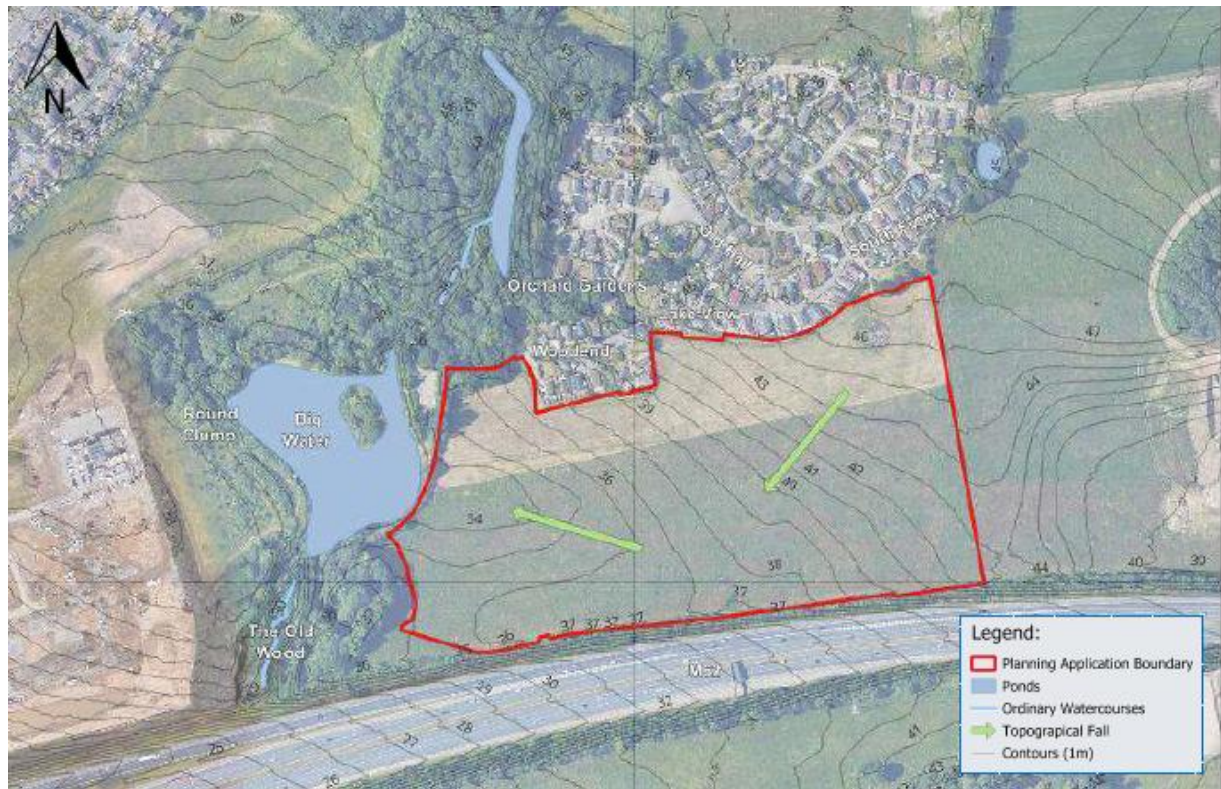
3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. This chapter provides a description of the Application Site (or Site) and its surrounding context. Discipline specific descriptions of the Site and surrounding area are provided within each individual chapter and associated appendices. The location of the Application Site is shown on the Site Context Plan, **Figure 1.1**, and Site Location Plans, **Figures 3.1 and 3.2**.

3.2. Application Site

- 3.2.1. The Site is located in Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) and is located c. 12km to the east of Liverpool City Centre. The Site lies immediately to the north of the M62 and east of Junction 6, with Whiston settlement lying c 1.2km to the north. The Site itself extends to 8.71ha. (Phase 3A: 5.47ha and Phase 3B: 3.24ha).
- 3.2.2. The Site forms part of a large Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) 'South of Whiston and Land South of M62' which is allocated for development within the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2016) under Policy SUE2 for approximately 1,500 dwellings, 22ha of employment and a country park. This covers land north and south of the M62. The Site falls within the parcel north of the M62. The allocation was subsequently named one of 14 new Garden Villages in January 2017 and Halsnead Garden Village Masterplan SPD) (HSPD) was adopted in June 2017. **Appendix 3.1** provides relevant extracts from the HSPD which illustrates the extent of 'the wider Halsnead Garden Village' and is referred to as such throughout this ES. The Site is referred to as 'Phase 3', within the wider Halsnead Garden Village.
- 3.2.3. The Site is centred at National Grid reference 347329 (Easting), 389861 (Northing) and is bound to the north by Halsnead Caravan Park, beyond lies a field and the under construction Land south of Lickers Lane residential scheme (under planning application reference 20/00399/OUT). To the east, the Site is bound by the consented and under construction Fox's Lane residential scheme under planning application reference 20/00417/FUL, beyond which lies Fox's Bank Lane and Blundell's Hill Golf Club. The M62 Motorway bounds the south of the Site, beyond which lies Symmetry Park. To the west, the Site is bound by an area of woodland (with an associated pond known as 'Big Water'), beyond which lies the consented and under construction land north of M62 motorway residential scheme under planning application reference 18/00283/HYB, with Windy Arbor Road and the M62 Motorway further west.
- 3.2.4. The Site is proposed to be accessed via Taylor Wimpey's Phase 2a scheme which is approved and currently under construction (planning application reference 20/00417/FUL).
- 3.2.5. All of the completed or under construction schemes set out in the above paragraph form part of the wider South of Whiston and Land South of M62 SUE2c Allocation.
- 3.2.6. The Site is a disused arable field, now consisting of tall ruderal growth and modified neutral grassland in the north. Treelines and scattered broadleaved trees are present along the southern and western boundaries with an area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland present in the southwest of the Site. There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) within or adjacent to the Site, although there are informal paths around Big Water (offsite) which is used for fishing. Levels onsite fall from a high point of c. 47m AOD in the northeast corner, down to c. 33m AOD in a low point near the western boundary.

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- 3.2.7. The wider area beyond the Site is predominantly residential in nature, further characterised by pockets of woodland, industrial development, the local and strategic road network, and open fields.

3.3. Application Site Connectivity and Existing Facilities

- 3.3.1. The Site sits at the heart of a Central Strategic Investment Corridor along the M62 between Liverpool and Warrington. Whiston Railway Station located is approximately 1.3 km north of the Site with regular services to Liverpool Lime Street, Manchester, Warrington Bank Quay, Crewe and Wigan.
- 3.3.2. The Site has good access to the strategic road network, via the Tarbock Island interchange (which can be accessed to the north and south of the Site), which provides routes to south Liverpool, Knowsley and the wider region. Liverpool City Centre is a 20 minute drive and Manchester City Centre a 35 minute drive.
- 3.3.3. The nearest bus stops are along Lickers Lane and Fox's Bank Lane both within 800m of the Site, providing local bus services connecting the Site to Huyton, Prescot and Broadgreen. Further bus stops located on Windy Arbor Road to the west of the Garden Village and provide services to Liverpool City Centre, Warrington, Prescot and Runcorn. National Cycle Network route 56 runs adjacent to the northwestern edge of the Site providing connectivity and a traffic free route north-south around Whiston.
- 3.3.4. Public access immediately around the Site is limited. The nearest Public Rights of Way (PRoW) run through the adjacent farmland to the south of the M62 and through Whiston Woods to the north east. A network of informal footpaths run around Big Water and the woodland to the east and north of the Site.



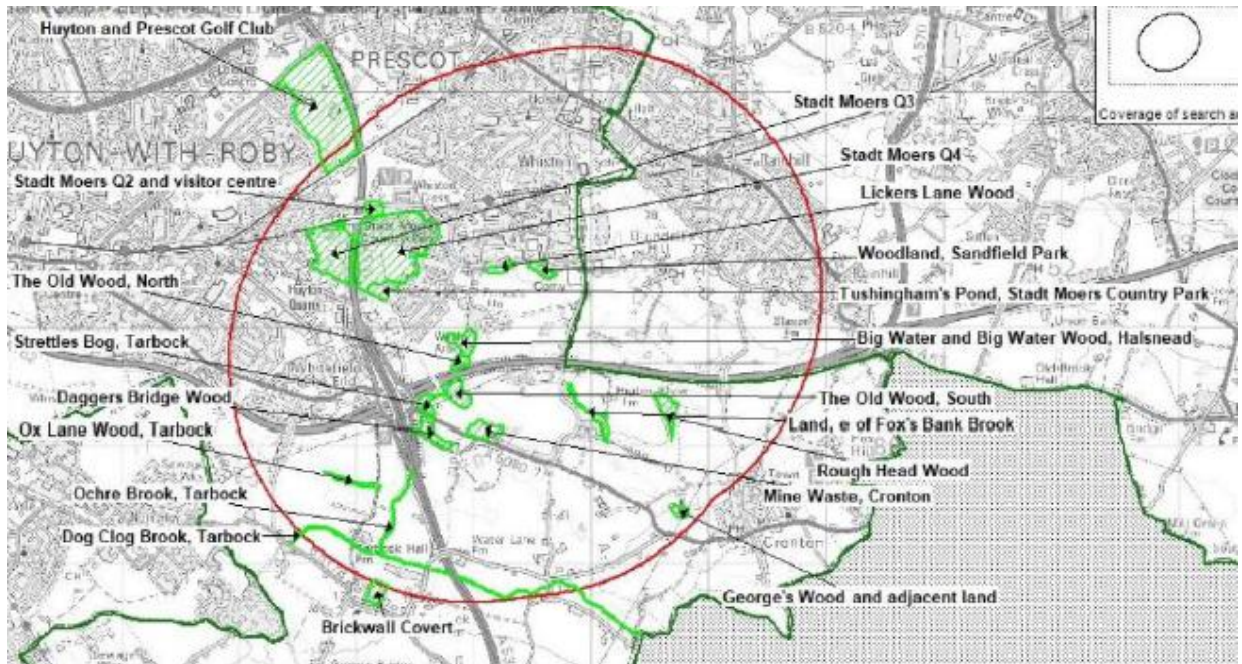
- 3.3.5. A broad range of services and facilities are available at Whiston Local Centre including a social centre, several takeaway outlets, a dry cleaners, dental practice, post office, local convenience stores and a Tesco Express. There is also a recently opened Aldi store at the Beacon 62 development. The nearest primary school, St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Primary is located less than 1.4km to the north. Prescott Town Centre is located approximately 3km north of the site and Huyton Town Centre approximately 3km north west, which are the largest settlements within the area, with a wider range of employment sites, supermarkets, national retailers etc. Whiston Hospital is located within 2km of the site (to the north). Two local churches are within walking distance of the Site (St Leo's and St Nicolas Church of England). Employment opportunities at Huyton Business Park and surrounding settlements

3.4. Application Site Context

- 3.4.1. There are no statutory designated sites for ecology and nature conservation located within the Site. Within 10km of the Site's boundary there is one European designated site, Mersey Estuary designated as a Ramsar site, a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located c. 6.4km south. Within 5km of the Site boundary there are no national or local designated sites for ecology and nature conservation.
- 3.4.2. The Site is located within an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the Mersey Estuary SSSI, however the development is not of a type listed within Natural England's risk categories for that zone.

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- 3.4.3. In total, there are 25 non-statutory locally designated sites within 2km. Those closest to the Site are The Old Wood North Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Big Water and Big Water Wood LWS, both located directly adjacent to the west of the Site.
- 3.4.4. Old Wood North located adjacent (but outside of the Site) to the western boundary is designated Ancient Woodland and subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), with further pockets to the north west of the Site and south of the M62. Trees to the west of Halsnead Park and north of Big Water are also covered by TPOs.



- 3.4.5. There are no heritage assets located within the Site. Within the surrounding 1km of the Site there are eight designated heritage assets, all of which are Grade II listed buildings. The following were listed in the consultation response as being within the wider setting of Phase 3:
- Grade II Barn at Snape Gate (1253250),
 - Grade II Old Halsnead (1261787),
 - Grade II Carr House Farmhouse (1253441),
 - Grade II Paddock and Stables to Carr House (1253505).
- 3.4.6. The nearest Conservation Area to the Site is the Rainhill Area 2 Conservation Area located c. 1.9km north east. Stadt Moers Country Park is located c. 840m north west of the Site.
- 3.4.7. Two heritage assets were noted as non-designated heritage assets by KMBC: Halsnead Park (MME15147) and Halsnead Park Wall (MME15681). Halsnead Park is extensive and incorporates the whole of the Site and the area to the north, east, west and south of the M62, around which stretches of the Halsnead Park Wall are extant, the nearest being over c.400m to the east of the Site along Fox's Bank Lane.

- 3.4.8. There are no statutory landscape designations within the Site, nor are there any Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within 5km of the Site boundary nor any other landscape designations located in close proximity.
- 3.4.9. According to Natural England's Provision Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Map the Site is located within Grade 2 land which is considered best and most versatile (BMV).
- 3.4.10. According to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning the Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 which has the lowest probability of flooding. The majority of the Site has a very low risk of surface water flooding with a small section within the north western corner and along the southern boundary of the Site located within an area of surface water flood risk. An Ordinary Watercourse appears to flow southwards from a pond to the north-west, likely into Big Water and out further south through Old Wood.
- 3.4.11. The Site is not located within Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The closest AQMA to the Site is the Liverpool City AQMA, located c. 2.7km to the west of the Site.

3.5. Planning Background

- 3.5.1. Planning policy is discussed further in the Planning Statement which accompanies the planning application, however the Development Plan relevant to the Site is the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Adopted in January 2016.
- 3.5.2. As mentioned the Site forms part of a wider allocation under Policy SUE2 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy for a large SUE known as 'South of Whiston and Land South of M62'.