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### INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Chapter 2 within the ES (Volume 2) describes the existing physical and environmental characteristics of the application site and its surrounding environs. Allied to this, other sections within the ES provide descriptions of the application site in relation to particular environmental topics, providing *inter alia* “baseline” surveys. In this respect, Chapter 5 describes the application site in relation to ‘Land Quality’ (often referred to as ‘contamination’) whilst Chapter 6 describes the baseline air quality in the vicinity of the application site. Chapter 7 describes the landscape character and topography of both the application site and its surroundings, and Chapter 8 describes the local highway network. The water environment is described in Chapter 10, whilst the ecological interests are described in Chapter 11. Finally, cultural heritage interests are set out in Chapter 12. This chapter therefore provides an overview of the application site and its environs.

### LOCATION

- 2.2 The site within which Parc Adfer would be constructed (referred to as ‘the application site’) is located within the boundary of the Deeside Industrial Park, some 10.5km to the northeast of Mold and northwest of Chester respectively<sup>1</sup>. More specifically, the application site is located to the north of the River Dee approximately 2.3km north of Connah’s Quay and similar distances to the west-southwest of Puddington and south-southwest of Burton.
- 2.3 For identification purposes, the proposed application site is centred on National Grid Reference SJ 31051 71564 and illustrated on Drawing 2/1.

### SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.4 The application site extends to around 10.5 hectares in area and is broadly triangular in shape, bounded by a railway line to the east, Weighbridge Road to the west, the A548 to the north and a former *Gaz de France* power station to the south. It has been previously developed and formed part of a former steelworks site. The proposed application site was occupied by railway sidings and a large rectangular building during the 1960s and 1970s and has been vacant since the early 1990s (refer to paragraphs 2.11 to 2.13 below). Drawing PA 2/2 illustrates the extent of the application site.

### Topography

- 2.5 The application site has an elevation of between 5m AOD (along the western boundary in the vicinity of Weighbridge road) and 13.37m AOD (the crest of bund in the north eastern edge of the site). The majority of the application site is fairly level and ranges between 9m AOD and 11m AOD. Notwithstanding this, there are localised areas of mounding rising above the plateau. Allied to this, topographic levels across the northern section of the

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<sup>1</sup> Distances measured from centre of settlement to centre of site using Google Earth

application site are more varied, ranging from around 5.5m AOD to 12m AOD.

- 2.6 Drawing F0614-10-01 (SM Pelorus) within Appendix 2/1 shows the topographic levels within the application site.

### Land Use

- 2.7 The application site does not have any current land use; it comprises an area of vacant brownfield (previously developed) land. The site comprises a mosaic of unimproved grassland, tall weedy vegetation and ephemeral/short perennial vegetation, with areas of scattered scrub, bare and disturbed ground. There are currently no buildings within the application site.
- 2.8 As noted in paragraph 2.4 above, historically the application site formed part of a steelworks which has subsequently been demolished. There are no existing buildings or structures situated on the application site. It has also been used informally as a trial bike track; recent peripheral fencing (and associated warning signage) has sought to preclude such trespass.
- 2.9 The application site has been colonised by grassland and scattered scrub, but not to the extent that it has been assimilated into the local landscape.
- 2.10 Within the current Development Plan<sup>2</sup> (refer to Chapter 4 below) Policy EM1 “*General Employment Land Allocations*” continues the previous allocation of the 10 hectare area of land to the east of the Shotton Paper Mill (i.e. the application site) as a general employment site (allocation EM1(11) on the proposals Map). Allied to this, the application site is also listed within Policy EWP6 of the Development Plan (“*Areas of Search for New Waste Management Development*”) as “*Land to the East of Shotton Paper, Deeside Industrial Park*”.

### Previous Development

- 2.11 The 1st series 1in:1mile Ordnance Survey (OS) map published in 1840 shows the application site located within the intertidal reach of the Dee Estuary, with encroaching salt marshes to the north and east between Burton Point and Shotwick. This situation remained largely unchanged up to the 1960’s, with the progressive reclaiming of land. The OS maps of 1899-1900 showed the route of the North Wales and Liverpool Railway, which forms the current eastern limit of the application site. Within the application site the land remained a mix of semi-dry land and shifting mudflats liable to flooding.
- 2.12 By 1964 (as indicated on the OS 1:2,500 scale map) the reclamation was almost complete, and the area of the application site was developed with numerous rail sidings, large embankments and a range of interconnected buildings. The sidings also ran west to connect with a large industrial site. This situation remained unchanged until the 1980s, at which time the 1984 OS map indicates that the rail sidings and buildings had been removed from the application site and land to the west leaving a series of remnant

<sup>2</sup> Flintshire Unitary Development Plan, Adopted September 2011.

embankments. No further development has taken place within the application site since this date, though new works had been established on the adjacent site in the early 1990s and the A548 constructed around the northern perimeter of the industrial park.

- 2.13 Until 2012, a small part of the northern area of the site was recently occupied by Flintshire County Council (FCC) for the operation of a soil reclamation plant which comprised the segregation and stockpiling of inert materials produced from FCC highways works. Stockpiled spoil from this operation remains in the northern part of the site.

## THE SURROUNDING AREA

### Landscape

- 2.14 The land in the immediate vicinity of the application site, such as the Deeside Industrial Park, is low lying, generally being between 0m AOD and 5m AOD. This area of low lying land is orientated northwest to southeast, following the alignment of the River Dee and the estuary. To the north, the topography gently rises, reaching a high point of around 72m AOD at Haddon Wood, to the north of Burton. To the south, the topography also rises, but more steeply and reaching greater elevations; 160m AOD is reached to the north of New Brighton and also to the south of Soughton (Sychdyn).
- 2.15 The vegetation pattern varies across the local area, with a clear distinction between the estuarine landscape and more elevated areas that create the broad valley feature. The estuary itself is a wild and open space with subtle changes in level defining areas of marsh from the mudflats and open water. As the landform rises up agricultural applications begin to predominate, with hedgerows and small blocks of woodland providing structure to a relatively intimate scale rural landscape. Field compartments are quite small, but the underlying topography does mean that views can extend out to the wider landscape.

### Land Use

- 2.16 In the wider context, Policy EM3 within the current Development Plan designates the Deeside Industrial Park as part of the Deeside Development Zone. Policy EM1 General Employment Land Allocations, which allocates the application site, also allocates other areas within the Deeside industrial park for Employment uses.
- 2.17 To the west of the application site lies the UPM Shotton Paper Mill with associated biomass CHP plant. The paper mill comprises a large industrial complex with a number of buildings of varying height, together with a flue stack (understood to be around 60m in height). To the south is the former GDF Power Station, with its two flue stacks; it is understood that this facility is in the process of being decommissioned and removed from the site. To the south west is the Tata steelworks, again being a series of large buildings.

### Sensitive Receptors

#### Human Receptors

- 2.18 The application site is remote from any large areas of residential development or other sensitive uses, such as schools, hospitals and care homes; it is also similarly remote from any individual dwellings. The nearest residential areas are located in Connah's Quay more than 2km away to the south (in the vicinity of the B5129); Garden City (off Sealand Avenue) to the southeast. The villages of Puddington and Burton, which are within England, are also more than 2km away to the northeast and north respectively. Examination of aerial photography and OS mapping show individual properties lying to the south of Burton, in the vicinity of Burton Mere Fisheries, which are around 1.7km from the northern boundary of the proposed application site.
- 2.19 Outline planning permission has been granted for the Northern Gateway Site (The Airfields Deeside<sup>3</sup>), which is a mixed development of industrial, commercial and residential. This development is located to the north/north west of Garden City, approximately 2.3km<sup>4</sup> to the southwest of the application site. The western flank of the development (being closest to the proposed application site) would comprise industrial plots, with residential development located closest to the edge of Garden City.

#### Environmental Receptors

- 2.20 Table 2-1 below summaries the environmental constraints within a 2.5km radius of the centre of the proposed application site.

**Table 2-1**  
**Summary of Environmental Receptors**

Criteria	Comment
Air Quality	There are no Air Quality Management Areas in the vicinity of the application site.
Cultural Heritage	The previous development of the site precludes the survival of any buried archaeological features/assets. Heritage assets, such as listed buildings are located to the south of the proposed application site within Connah's Quay. A number of listed buildings also exist within the villages to the north/north east of the proposed application site, such as Burton, Puddington and Shotwick. A scheduled monument (" <i>Promontory fort on Burton Point 550m south west of Burton Point Farm</i> " – 1013298) lies approximately 2.2km to the north of the proposed application site. Other monuments lie just outside of the 2.5km radius, including an Icehouse to the south of Burton (1016918); Heavy Anti-Aircraft gun site to the south east of Puddington (1019848) and Shotwick Hall moated site (1011785).
Ecology	There are a number of national and European designated sites in the vicinity (2km) of the proposed application site, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dee Estuary (Ramsar, SAC, SPA, SSSI)</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.theairfields.co.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> Measured centre to centre using Google Earth

Criteria	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Dee (Ramsar, SAC, SSSI)</li> <li>• Inner Marsh SSSI</li> <li>• Shotton Lagoon and Reedbeds SSSI</li> </ul>
Geology and Soils	The site has an industrial history of use. Land Quality assessments have been undertaken and a geo-environmental site investigation carried out.
Hydrology and Hydrogeology	The application site lies outside of the flood plain (being in Zone A). The proposed application site does not overlie a Source Protection Zone (SPZ).
Landscape	The proposed application site is not subject to any national or local landscape designations.
Land Use	Hawarden Airport (Chester) lies 7.5km to the south-southeast of the application site, and thus the application site lies within the aerodrome safeguarding zone.