

# Formby Play Sports Ltd Redevelopment & Store Extension Vision Document

September 2013



**Formby Play Sports Limited (FPSL):**

FPSL is pleased to be able to provide this vision document to the Council in support of its representations on the Local Plan. FPSL is a private leisure facility offering affordable services to the local community of Formby and the regions across Sefton and Merseyside. Owner Hugh McAuley, has an established background in both professional football and business and this is what drives his passion to develop his facility to help the participation of sport in the local area.

**The Design Team:**

We have also assembled a top class professional team to support us in working with the Authority, key stakeholders and the local community, all of whom we have successfully worked with before:



**Architects:**

Saunders Partnership is an Architectural practice specialising in practical and environmentally conscious design for food and non food retail developments, shopping centres, mixed use and master planning, large and small scale housing, high rise developments, retirement apartments, leisure and community facilities.



**Planning Consultants:**

DPP is a national, multi-disciplinary planning consultancy providing residential, retail and commercial planning support with specialist Heritage & Design, and Sustainability teams. DPP combines comprehensive national coverage with in depth local knowledge.



Sport recreation and leisure is a massive part of people's lives, whether it be for the physical exercise, or the social side that comes with participation in sport. Both are of great importance. Quality of facilities and cost are many people's barrier to participation and this is why I have decided to give back to my local area of Formby, by developing a high end leisure facility at affordable rates. Our pitches rival those all over Britain and yet they are one of the lowest priced venues in Merseyside".



Hugh McAuley, Owner



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# 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.0 Land south of Altcar Road, Formby controlled by Hugh McAuley/FPSL and which is in use for sports pitches and ancillary facilities by Formby FC and agriculture offers great potential for new development in future years but it is within Green Belt.
- 1.1 This potential extends to a mixed use development comprising new business uses as an extension to the existing Formby Industrial estate, new sports and recreation facilities for Formby FC and for use by the community, plus it provides scope should the need arise to improve/extend the existing Tesco store.
- 1.2 Although the land exhibits obvious potential for development and setting aside its Green Belt status, the draft Local Plan allocates land to the north of the Formby Industrial Estate, which is also currently in Green Belt, as an extension to the Formby Industrial Estate. This is surprising since this land is constrained and affected by nature policies.
- 1.3 The land to the south is not so designated or identified to be of ecological value.
- 1.4 It should also be noted that access to the land to the north from the existing industrial estate is badly constrained and involves use of poor aligned, heavily parked and generally constrained existing roads which currently also serve a number of existing industrial operations. On the other hand the southern site is so not affected and a new high quality access off Altcar Road can be provided.
- 1.5 The allocation of the land to the south has the potential to deliver a wide range of other benefits including the fact that the development would act as enabling development to deliver new and improved high quality sport and recreation facilities for Formby FC (through Formby Play Sports). Existing facilities are well used and are made available for use by local schools and clubs free of charge at certain times of the day.
- 1.6 A further potential benefit of allocating the land to the south is that it provides the potential for improvements to be secured to the existing Tesco food store and its car park and access, subject to the requirements of the site owner/retailer.
- 1.7 Land to the north of Formby Industrial Estate cannot be regarded as the most suitable site in the locale for its expansion. A far more acceptable option is the land to the south which is controlled by the representor. In essence there are no sustainable planning or land use reasons why the land to the south hasn't been allocated in preference to the site to the north.



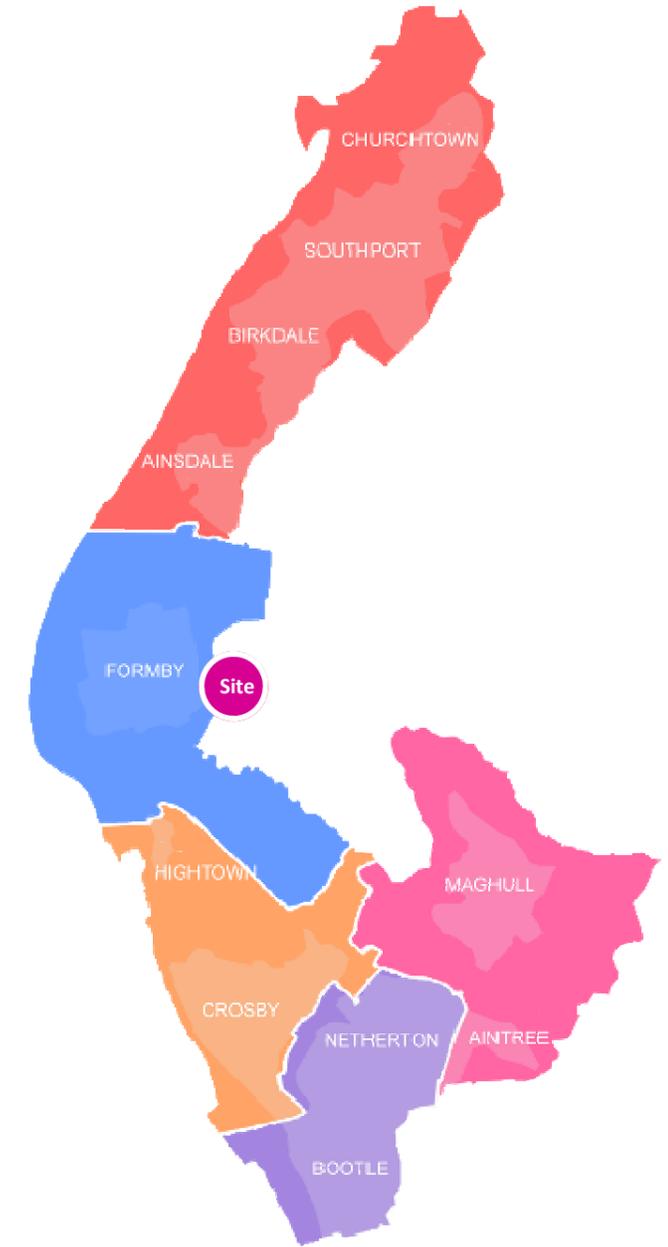
LOCATION : UK

**Fig.01** The proposed site is located in Merseyside which is a county in the North West of England with a population of approximately 1,381,200



LOCATION : REGIONAL

**Fig.02** . Formby is located within the North West of Merseyside and has a population of around 25,000. Formby has strong links to the surrounding area and is situated between the main areas of Liverpool and Southport.



LOCATION : LOCAL

**Fig.03-** Locally the Formby Play Sports Limited Site is situated between Hightown and Ainsdale with easily accessible links to its surrounding areas of Crosby, Maghull, and Birkdale

- 2.1 This document has been prepared by DPP and Saunders Partnership and associated consultancies on behalf of Formby Play Sports Ltd (FPSL).
- 2.2 Its purpose is to complement and expand formal representations made by FPSL in connection with the Draft Sefton Local Plan – Preferred Option. The representations are designed to bring to the attention of Sefton Council the potential of land controlled by FPSL for new high quality sport and recreation uses and facilities and a range of business and other forms of commercial development.
- 2.3 The land in question extends to 16.7 ha (41.5 acres) and is located to the south of existing development located on the south side of Altcar Lane, Formby.
- 2.4 At the present time the land comprises sport and recreation facilities used and operated by Formby FC and the local community and farmland.
- 2.5 FPSL is of the view that the land offers considerable potential for much needed new high quality sport and recreation uses and facilities for use by Formby FC, other clubs and organisations and the local community. However, a key issue with the proposed sport and recreation uses and facilities is their high cost which currently renders them as a development proposal, unviable.
- 2.6 The proposed new business and commercial developments, which also offers scope for much needed improvements (and the small scale expansion) of the existing Tesco Formby food store and its car park, provides the potential to ‘enable’ the sport and recreation uses, i.e. a good proportion of the development profit these uses would create could be used to fund the new sport and recreation facilities.



Fig 0.4 The site, Tesco, and industrial areas.

### Chapters:

#### Section 3: Site and Local Area

describes the strategic context of the site and the local area.

#### Section 4: Formby FC – Past, Present and Future Vision

describes the existing sport and recreation facilities available to Formby FC.

#### Section 5: Site Analysis

considers the strengths and weaknesses of the site and identifies opportunities and threats.

#### Section 6: Potential of the site

considers local development initiatives and considers the potential of the site in terms of its potential for new development.

#### Section 7: Proposed Allocations and related developments

Sets out the findings of a comprehensive design analysis of the site and depicts and describes FPSL's development aspirations for the site.

#### Section 8: Planning Policy Framework for the Site – Existing and Proposed

sets out and considers the implications of the adopted and evolving planning policy framework for the area and site.

#### Section 9: Benefits of the proposed allocation and related developments

Considers how the overall development initiative could be secured and delivered in the context of the evolving Sefton Local Plan and subsequently through a planning application. The section also sets out the range of benefits that would be secured should the proposed development and related planning policy initiative be endorsed and adopted the Council.

#### Section 10: Conclusions

sets out our overall conclusions on the overall development initiative promoted through this document.



Fig 0.5 Aerial overview, and surrounding areas.



Fig 0.6 Overview, and Industrial Estate



Fig 0.7 Formby overview looking West



Fig 0.8 Formby overview looking South

# 3.0 Site and Local Area

## The site

4.0 The site is located directly to the south of existing properties, uses and operations located on the southern side of Altcar lane, Formby, east of its junction with A565/Formby Bypass. The site extends to approximately 16ha (42acres).

4.0 The site is bounded to the north by the southern boundaries of properties on the south side of Altcar Road and Altcar Road itself, to the east it is bounded by Downholland Brook, to the south by agricultural land and to the west by A565/Formby Bypass.

4.0 The site currently comprises sport and recreation facilities used by Formby FC and agricultural land. The sport and recreation facilities are located in the eastern half of the site and have frontage onto Altcar Road. In summary they include:

4.0 This use extends across approximately 5ha (12.7 acres) of the site. The residual land is currently in use for agriculture and extends to 11ha (29.3 acres).

## Local Area

4.0 Directly north of the western half of the site is the existing Tesco Formby foodstore and its car park. This store was opened for trading in 1991 and comprises 64,025 sq ft of gross floorspace (41,360 sq ft sales area). It's



Fig 0.9 Formby and the surrounding areas.

car park comprises 345 spaces. Access to the store is off Altcar Road just east of its junction with A565 Formby Bypass

4.0 North of Altcar Road and accessed of it is an extensive and well established industrial estate, Formby Industrial Estate, which extends to approximately 10ha (25acres). It comprises a large number of industrial units and related concerns which are in use for light and general industry (Use Classes B1 and B2), offices (B1), warehousing and distribution uses (B8), trade counter uses (Sui Generis) and some mainly restricted retailing (A1). West of the A565/Formby Bypass are further fields and the urban area of Formby and

beyond this is the coastal zone.

## Wider Area

4.0 Formby is a town in the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton in Merseyside, England. It has a population of approximately 25,000. Formby is affluent with high owner-occupation and car ownership. Strong economic ties are retained with nearby Liverpool to which it acts as a dormitory town for some of its residents.

4.0 The town is well served by shops and community facilities. Formby



Fig 10. Aerial Photo of the site and surrounding areas. Looking West

# 3.1 Site and Local Area

town centre, which lies approximately 1km to the northwest of the site, offers a wide range of shops and services, including convenience and comparison goods shopping outlets and national multiple retailers including M&S Simply Food, Iceland, Boots, Dorothy Perkins and New Look.

4.0 Formby contains a number of community facilities including 7 primary schools and 2 high schools, a new swimming pool and leisure centre, a library and numerous sports clubs. The town is also served by 2 railway stations

which provide regular services between Liverpool and Southport.

4.0 Employment development in Formby is located within the town centre and on the Formby Business Park, located on the eastern edge of the settlement. The Business Park is currently occupied by a range of businesses including Homebase, Formby Cycles, car garages and builders' merchants.



Fig 11. Formby overview, and surrounding areas.



Views 1=10. Site views and imagery

# 4.0 Formby FC – Past, Present and Future Vision

Formby F.C. currently play in the North West Counties Football League Division One and are members of the Liverpool County Football Association.

## History -Early years

5.2 The club were established in 1919 as Formby United. After a year at various pitches in the town they moved to a ground that would be their home for more than 80 years, Brows Lane. Three years later they dropped the 'United' to become simply Formby FC.

## Post-war

5.4 The years immediately after World War II were something of a golden age for Formby. Now playing in the Liverpool County Combination, for eight out of ten seasons they were winners or runners-up for a trophy and/or league title.

## North West Counties Football League

5.5 Then in 1982 Formby were founder members of the North West Counties League playing in Division One in the 1982-83 season and finishing in 16th place. In 1984-85 they were again finalists in the Liverpool Senior Cup, losing to Marine. In the 1985-86 season they finished bottom of the table and were relegated to Division Two,

where they spent just one season before being promoted back to Division One. Their stay lasted just two seasons, and they were relegated again after finishing bottom in 1988-89.

5.6 Formby then spent the next thirteen seasons in Division Two. They won the division's knockout competition, the Lamot Pils Trophy, in 1994-95 and – a rare achievement for a lower division side – they won the league's knockout cup, the Worthington Challenge Trophy, in 2000-01.

5.7 In 2002 their new ground at Altcar Road failed to meet league standards, so they were demoted to the Liverpool County Football Combination where they spent the 2002-03 season, finishing in ninth place. In 2003-04 they rejoined the North West Counties Football League in Division Two, finishing in third place and winning promotion to Division One. They struggled at the higher level finishing in 20th in 2004-05, 22nd in 2005-06 (though they avoided relegation) and 21st in 2006-07.

5.8 Results improved in 2007-08 when they finished 13th out of 20, equalling their highest-ever placing since 1983-84, and also reached the fourth round of the FA Vase, their best performance to date in the competition, two stages beyond their previous record set in 1996-97.

## 2011 Rebirth

5.9 In the close season of summer 2011 the club had an almost complete change of personnel. They got a new chairman/owner, Hugh McAuley, new management of Jim Shirley and assistant Kevin Dally, an entirely new squad of players, and many new backroom staff. Additionally, the club reverted to its traditional colours of gold and royal blue, and the red squirrel badge was reinstated as the club's



Fig 14. Owner Hugh McAuley with local labour MP Bill Esterson at the current ground.

“ It was a wonderful gesture by Formby Play Sports to help out a local club in this way, which was very much appreciated by all of the children, adults and members of Formby Junior Sports Club ”

Hugh McAuley, Club Owner



FORMBY F.C., I ZINGARI FIRST DIVISION. — LEFT TO

Fig 012. Formby FC First Division Squad 1933–1938



Fig 013. FA Cup preliminary round Programme - 1947

# 4.1 Formby FC – Past, Present and Future Vision

emblem.

- 5.10 After a mixed 2011-12, Formby romped to the league Championship in 2012-13 in what they called their 'best ever' season.
- 5.11 However at the end of the season the Altcar Road ground was deemed unfit for their level of football and they were denied promotion. A two-year groundshare deal was agreed with neighbours Burscough for 2013-15.

### Current Facilities

- 5.12 Currently the site has 2no small stands, 2no changing rooms, 4no 6-a-side 3G astro turf pitches, 2no 11-a-side grass pitches, 1no 9-a-side pitches and a 7-a-side grass pitch.

### Vision of the Club

*"Our vision is to provide a high quality leisure facility to serve the local area of Formby that helps break down people's barriers to participation whilst promoting sport and leisure for inclusion groups."*

- Hugh McAuley, Club Owner

### How the Club is working towards the Vision

- 5.13 By keeping costs down the club able to overcome most barriers to participation for both adults and children. By donating the facilities to the largest provider of junior football in the Formby area on a Saturday morning, where more than 120 children get to play football
- 5.14 Subsidised rates for junior football teams that have had the match called off on a Saturday and Sunday morning helping to maintain children's participation in sport.

- 5.15 Everton football club will be using the facility to help promote children's football to the local area of Sefton by running free coaching to children, again FPSL have donated our facility free of charge. Facility is free of charge to local schools of Formby between the hours of 2.30– 4.30, Monday to Friday.
- 5.16 In partnership with the local police and PCSO's FPSL are looking to provide a youth club service on a Friday evening for children aged between 13 and 17 in the local area. They can use our centre between



Fig 15. Current Formby squad in a recent match.

8pm and 10pm for only £1 per person. By embracing the Government's 'Change 4 Life' campaign to always promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.

### Investment in the Local Community

- 5.17 Formby Play Sports is a brand new 3G Astroturf facility currently under development in Formby in Altcar Road behind the Tesco on Formby bypass. Their vision and community principals are to help promote Leisure activities in both adults and children within the local community. To help promote junior and adult football they have decided to only charge £35/hour for adults and only £25/hour for children under the age of 16

*"We have set out a five stage plan to redevelop the site of Formby football club, starting by investing in four 6-a-side 3G football pitches of the same standard and quality used by many premier league sides."*

- Hugh McAuley, Club Owner



Fig 16. The Existing 3G facilities already in place at the site.

- 5.18 On Saturdays and Sundays, between the hours of 9am and 1pm, the use of the pitch costs just £15 to all teams that play within the Craven minor league to help promote junior football, so the children can still play football even in bad weather.
- 5.19 Formby Play Sports decided to offer its facility, free of charge, to the inter-club teams of Formby Junior Sports Club as the children had not been able to play football for several weeks due to the ground being unfit at their usual home of Deansgate Lane. There has been over 80 children, boys and girls, between the ages of 4 and 9, using the facility on Saturday mornings.

*"There are many barriers to participation in sport and leisure. And one that affects us all is affordability. This is why we have decided to charge a much lower rate for the use of our 3G facility"*

- Hugh McAuley, Club Owner

## STRENGTHS

### LOCATION

Directly south of Kirkby industrial estate and east of Formby Bypass (A565) and well linked and related to the urban area of Formby.

### SIZE

Large site in terms of overall size which creates flexibility in terms of how it can be used/developed, and also creates opportunities for low levels of densities of development and extensive areas of landscaping.

### GENERAL PROFILE

Site is undeveloped except for existing Formby FC sports and recreation facilities and residual areas are in use for agriculture. It is flat and readily developable. Few trees on site and those that exist can be retained.

### PROXIMITY TO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Fact that site sits directly to south of Altcar Road means it is very well related to existing industrial estate and creates a better balance for expansion of it than northern site.

### BESIDE TESCO

Fact that site sits directly south of existing Tesco Formby foodstore affords the opportunity to expand and improve this valuable local retail asset.

### GOOD ACCESS

Good quality access can be created directly into the site off Altcar Road and opportunity to create in/out access/egress off south bound carriageway of Formby Bypass.

### WELL RELATED TO BUILT UP AREA

Formby industrial estate forms part of the existing built up area of Formby and fact that site lies to the south of it means any new development/expansion of the industrial estate in this location would appear as a natural extension of the urban area. This is also assisted by the fact that land to the west, on the other side of Formby Bypass, is proposed to be allocated for housing.

### NO ECOLOGICAL VALUE

Although it is clear that the section of the site running alongside



Fig 17. Current 11-a-side pitch on the site.

Downholland Brook and the River Alt will have ecological value as a habitat for river bank living mammalian, avian and insect species, the site is not designated/allocated as having any noted ecological value, but in any case it is not proposed to develop land running alongside Downholland Brook and the River Alt. In addition, the favoured proposed masterplan option allows for new habitats/wildlife areas to be created.

### EXISTING USES

The site is the current home of Formby FC although current facilities and pitches leave a lot to be desired in terms of the range of their quality. It is helpful that the current site of this sporting club will stay as it is at present albeit the new facility will be bigger and considerably better.

### NOT DEVELOPED

The undeveloped status of the site means that the site's overall potential in layout, design and profile terms can be maximised.

## WEAKNESSES

### IN USE BY FFC

Whilst a benefit it is also a weakness subject to phasing that during the development stages Formby FC and other clubs might need to play games elsewhere.

### IN USE FOR AGRICULTURE



Fig 18. The Local Plan for Sefton

Development will involve loss of use of good quality agricultural land (Grade2)

### POTENTIAL FLOOD RISK

The proximity of the site adjacent to the Downholland Brook and River Alt means that it is in part identified to as an area of flood risk. Whilst this is unfortunate, the eastern half of the proposed development is sports pitches which would mean that available flood plain is not reduced, and proposed development to the west could be designed and layout to minimise the effect of flooding.

### DEVELOPMENT IN OPEN COUNTRYSIDE/OPEN LAND

The initiative would deliver development on land that is currently undeveloped/open land. This though is exactly the same for the currently preferred option for expanding the industrial estate.

### GREEN BELT

Site is currently allocated for Green Belt. Whilst the sport and recreation uses/developments can be regarded as appropriate in the context of Green Belt policy, the proposed business uses would be inappropriate, hence the proposal to de-allocate the site as Green Belt to enable it to be re-allocated as a mixed use site for business and commercial uses.

### NOT ALLOCATED

Same point made in relation to Green Belt applies to this this issue.

# 5.1 Site Analysis

## OPPORTUNITIES

### GREAT DEVELOPMENT SITE

Great, well related to existing development, natural expansion site which exhibits strong and obvious potential for business and other commercial developments.

### RELATIONSHIP TO TESCO

Great relationship to existing store thus affording the opportunity to expand and improve this very popular and successful but very constrained store.

### RELATION TO INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Much better option than the selected northern option to expand the existing industrial estate, and one that creates a better balance, in development/coverage terms, and one that would result in a central spine road, Altcar Road, crossing the site, and new/better quality business premises.

### GOOD ACCESS

Opportunities to use Altcar Road and south bound carriageway of the Formby Bypass.

### CAN CREATE BETTER FFC

Great opportunity to create much improved and expanded Formby FC and related sports and recreation facilities.

### WELL BOUNDED

Site is well contained and is bounded by hard /well defined features around 3 of its sides.

### LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

Consultation on Sefton Local Plan –Preferred option affords the opportunity to look afresh at best option to deliver the planned expansion of Formby Industrial Estate and improvement of Formby FC.

### BETTER SITE THAN LAND NORTH OF INDUSTRIAL ESTATE/ LESS CONSTRAINED

For reasons set out in greater detail in Section 7 the site/development option is a much better one than the northern option which the draft local plan currently promotes.

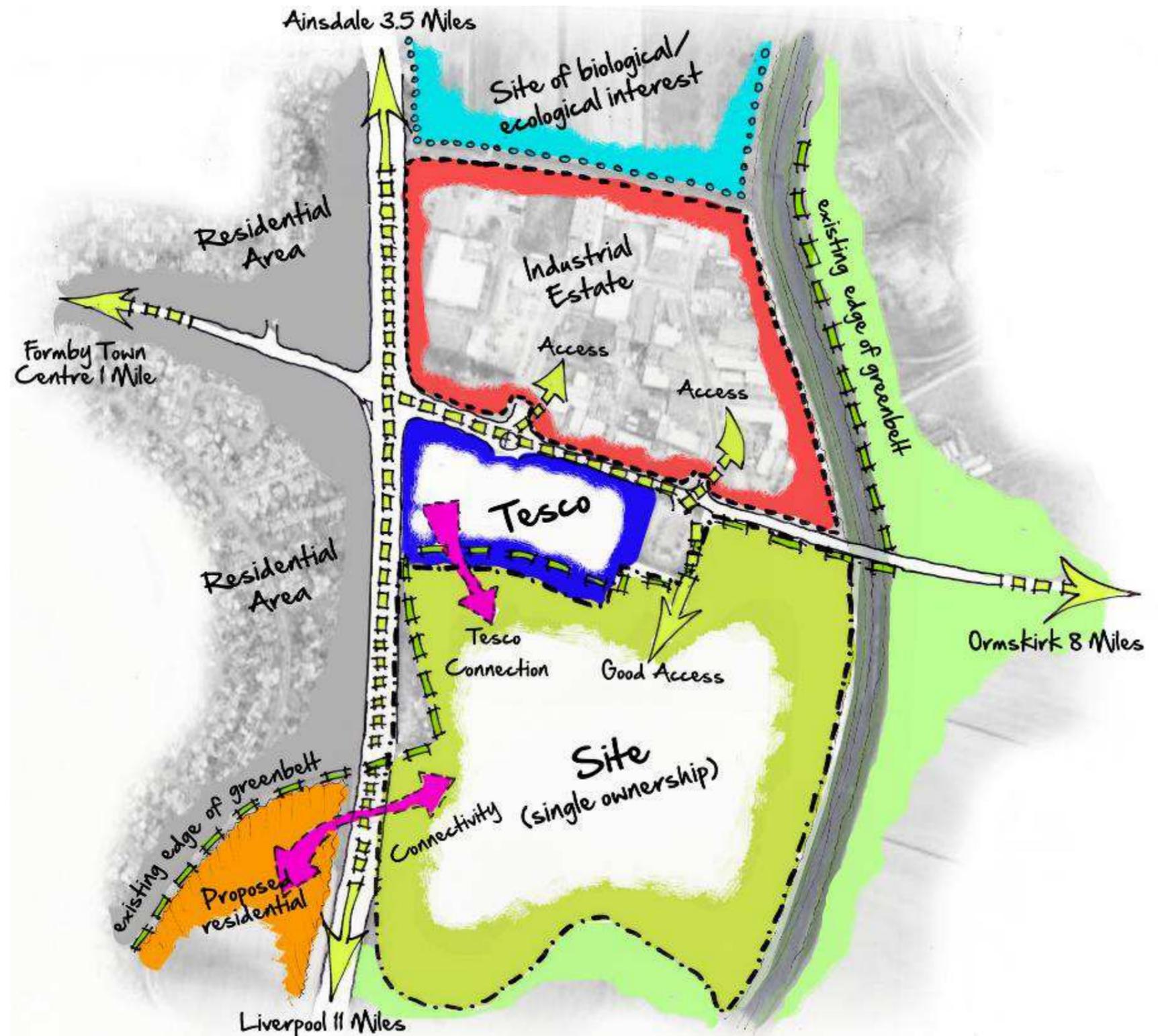


Fig 19 Access, existing developments and strengths.

## 5.2 Site Analysis

### WILLING DEVELOPER/SINGLE OWNERSHIP

The land is in single ownership and the land owner and owner of Formby FC is a willing participant/developer.

### RELATES WELL TO LAND TO WEST/ALLOCATION

Proposed allocation/development relates very well to proposed allocation of land to the west of the site for housing, and there is the option to create a direct link across the Formby Bypass into the site from where access could be gained to Tesco Formby and the sport and recreation facilities.

### CAN CREATE GREAT/ATTRACTIVE DEVELOPMENT

Profile and location of the site is such that it affords the potential for high quality and attractive new development.

### NEW SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

A key aim of Council policy is to create healthy lifestyles and improve health and the new sport and recreation facilities would contribute directly to these objectives.

### MANY COMMUNITY AND HEALTH BENEFITS

The owner/developer of Formby FC would continue to offer use of the sports and recreation facilities free of charge at nominated times of the day which would benefit local schools and the wider the community.

### THREATS

#### GREEN BELT

Representations fail and site is not de-allocated from Green Belt.

#### OTHER ALLOCATION

Northern option succeeds as preferred allocation.

#### NOT GETTING AN ALLOCATION

Same as Green Belt Point.

#### SITE RELATED FLOOD RISK ISSUES

Potential flood risk issues cannot be satisfactorily addressed.

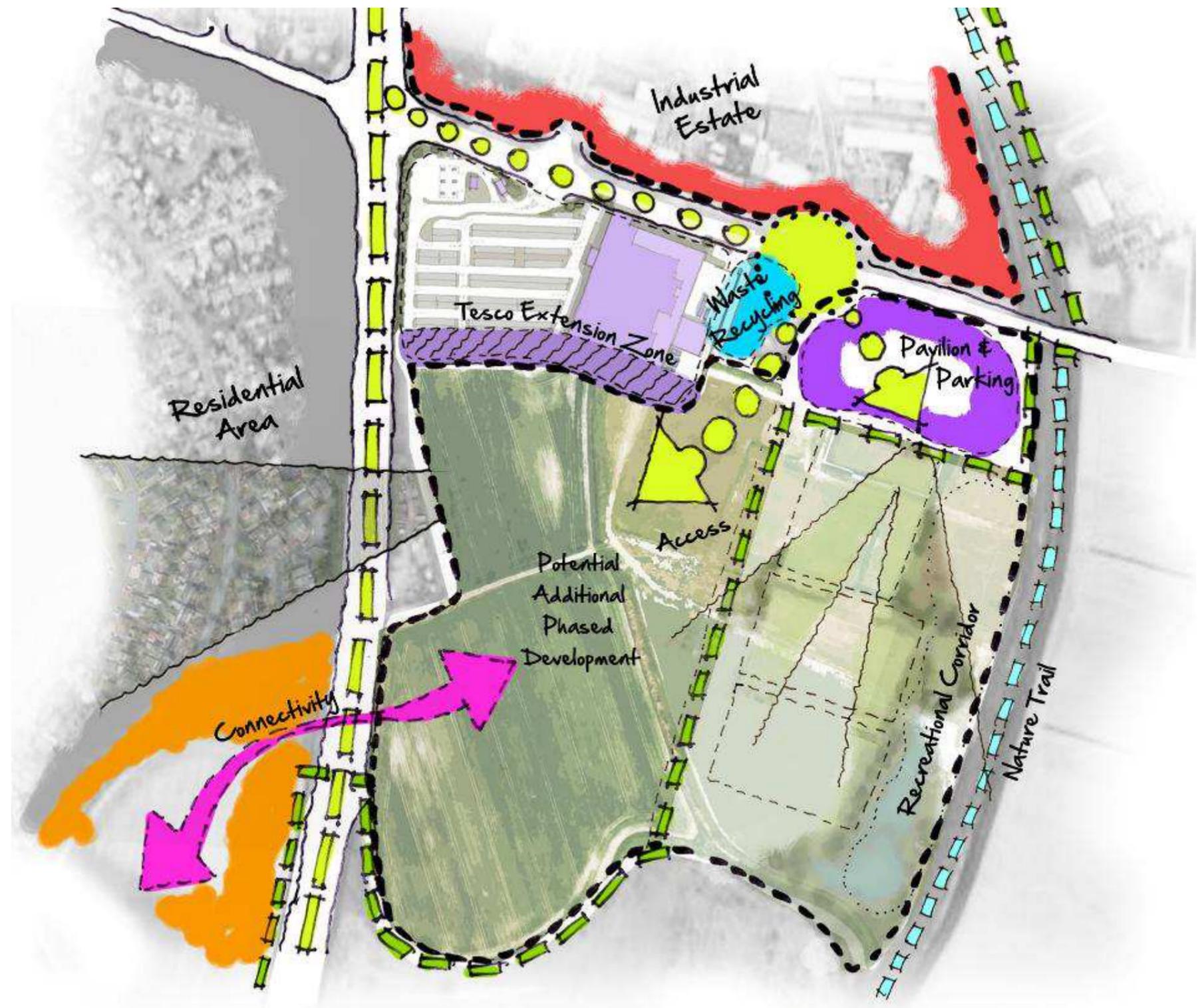


Fig 20. Site Proposals Sketch

## 6.0 Potential of the site

Existing

- 7.1 The existing ground and related facilities of Formby FC are poor in quality and scope despite investment to date in some new pitches and facilities. Although, the ground and related facilities are generally of a poor quality it is a popular sports facility and one of only a handful in this part of Sefton. As such, it is a valuable local facility in so far as the local community is concerned and a number of teams play home games at the ground. It is also used by local schools and community groups/clubs.
- 7.2 A new sporting facility at the site has the potential to offer much improved playing and related facilities for Formby FC. Unfortunately the cost of the new facilities is prohibitively high. Detailed estimates are still to be prepared but current estimates put the total cost at in the order of £5m+ on current prices. Therefore, the high level of up-front investment required to realise the project plus estimated initial running costs and likely financial returns in the short term make the project unviable.
- 7.3 The nearby Tesco food store is the largest store in the area. It was granted planning permission and opened its doors to trade in the early 1990s. It is a popular store with customers in Formby and the surrounding area and because of this it trades well. Whilst the store trades well, by current standards it has for many years been regarded by the retailer as being too small. In addition and when compared to modern Tesco food stores it is regarded as being outdated and inefficient and in need of upgrading. Unfortunately the site on which the store stands is relatively small and is tightly constrained being bounded by roads to the west and north, a waste transfer station to the east and open farmland to the south.
- 7.4 Whilst the land to the south offers the potential for the store to be extended and generally improved, in the past it wasn't available. In addition, as it was in Green Belt it was not regarded as suitable for retail development, and at the time there were no very special circumstances to argue for the Green Belt policy presumption against inappropriate development to be set aside.
- 7.5 In the recent past and since the land was secured by Hugh McAuley it has become apparent that a small section of his land located



Fig 21. The existing site and adjacent land uses.

# 6.0 Potential of the site

directly south of the existing food store could be used to facilitate the extension and improvement of the store and the proceeds from the sale of the land to the freeholder of the Tesco site could be used to fund new sporting facilities for Formby FC etc. In essence, an extension to the Tesco store has the potential to be argued to represent enabling development given its potential to effectively fully fund the new sporting facilities for Formby FC.

**7.6** A combination of the enabling development case and the many sporting, community and other benefits that the overall development initiative would deliver, creates the very special circumstances which would allow the overall development to be supported given the Green Belt status of the site.

**Case for allocation - alternative site than the site to the North of industrial Estate.**

**7.7** The Formby Football club site represents a more viable option rather than the site currently proposed to be allocated (SFR1/SR5). The land currently being proposed is currently not the best option as the land/area selected is currently allocated in the Adopted Development Plan as a Site of Biological or Geological Importance and under the current Draft this designation is proposed to be continued (through Policy).

**7.8** The land at Formby Football Club is readily available and suitable for employment development, including in the form of offices, research and development facilities and light industrial uses that are compatible with an office park environment.

**7.9** The proposed allocated site (SR5) cannot be easily accessed through the existing employment site. Overall, the as proposed to be allocated site cannot be regarded as the best option when compared to other available options. A much better, deliverable and more sustainable option, and one that would deliver a wide range of other

benefits, is land directly to the south of the existing Formby Industrial Estate.

**7.10** The proposed new and improved sports facilities would complement the proposed new employment allocation and enable a range of recreation facilities to be provided.

**7.11** Further potential benefit of allocating the land to the south is that it provides the potential for much needed improvements to be secured to the existing Tesco foodstore and its car park and access, which in turn would also assist in enabling the new and improved sports and recreation facilities.



**Fig 22.** The current site and facilities.

# 7.0 Proposed Allocation and Related Developments

- 9.1 Starting from the top of the site, northern edge, the eastern half of the site 7.2ha (18 acres) is where the new sports and recreation facilities for Formby FC will be created. It is proposed to create a new high quality access onto the site to serve this facility and the adjacent business park (via mini-roundabout of Altcar Road).
- 9.2 The new access will serve a new main spine road which will run southwards across the site and will serve at its northern end a new car park (270 spaces). This serves the proposed new pavilion which will double as a stand and contain indoor sport and recreation, changing and food and drink facilities at the northern end of this part of the site, along with a skate park. Directly south of the pavilion will be a new FIFA senior standard 3G football pitch and alongside this 4, 3G 5-a-side pitches. Below the main 3G pitch will be a senior grass football pitch and below this a grass rugby pitch (for use by Formby RUFC). East of the pitches will be a children's adventure centre, small grassed sites for scout/guide use for camping, fishing lake, nature walk/trail, picnic areas, outdoor play area, practice areas/pitches.
- 9.3 To the west of the spine road and served by it and south of the existing Tesco Formby foodstore and waste reception centre will be the proposed new business park. This extends across 8.9 ha (20 acres) of the site and has the potential to deliver in the order of 12300 sqm (132,396 sqft) of new gross floorspace for use mainly for offices, research and development and light



Fig 23. Phasing strategy .



Fig 24. Phasing Strategy and proposed new green belt boundary.

# 7.1 Proposed Allocation and Related Developments

industry, although there is the potential for ancillary uses like a crèche/nursery to be created.

- 9.4 There is the potential for or a new in/out access/egress to be created off southbound carriageway of A565/Formby Bypass, which would link with the main spine road and related circulation roads.
- 9.5 The business park would be of a high quality and set within a structured green/landscaped environment.
- 9.6 North of the proposed business park on a small part of the site it is proposed to use this land to facilitate the minor expansion and improvement of the existing Tesco Formby food store. This has long been an aspiration of the company although previous initiatives have never been progressed because of site related constraints. There is also the potential to develop a single complementary drive thru/food and drink use, which would complement the business park, Tesco store and sport and recreation facilities. This part of the overall site/development proposal extends to 0.8ha (2acres).
- 9.7 ENABLING DEVELOPMENT TO FUND FFC FACILITIES - On their own the proposed new sport and recreation facilities for Formby FC are unviable. For this reason, and has been shared with the Council



Fig 25. Additional phasing breakdown and new access



Fig 26. Proposed access and additional phases.

## 7.2 Proposed Allocation and Related Developments

through previous discussions on the site, the non-commercial sport and recreation uses will be funded through the commercial uses, i.e., they will be 'enabled' by the 'enabling developments.' This means that the overall package of new developments proposed under this initiative will be phased.

- 9.8 PHASING- As is alluded to above the enabling developments, which in essence are the commercial uses, will enable the sport and recreation uses. Accordingly so as to create value at an early stage of the implementation process it is necessary for key commercially valuable uses to be progressed as part of an initial phase of development. What this means in practical terms is that it is proposed to promote the proposed minor expansion and related improvements to the existing Tesco Formby store and proposed drive thru/food and drink use as a discrete first phase of development.
- 9.9 This will be immediately followed by the implementation of the sport and recreation uses starting with the car park and new pavilion and main pitches, rolling the overall development out north to south, including the complementary recreation uses.
- 9.10 Complementing the initial phase of commercial development there is the potential to also develop the first phase of the business park - it is envisaged that this would be rolled out over three distinct phases of development. This could deliver approximately 3,075sqm (33,099sq ft) of floor space. The alternative is that work on this would start soon after, to be followed as demand develops by the second phase 5,535sq m (59,578sq ft), and subsequently the third and final stage 3,690sq m (39719sq ft).
- 9.11 DELIVERY- It is not the intention of FPSL to deliver the commercial elements of the overall proposal. Instead it would be the intention to work with a developer, still to be selected, through some form of joint venture arrangement, to deliver these elements.



Fig 27. Proposed Sketch layout and access networks

# 7.3 Proposed Allocation and Related Developments

01. Proposed Pavilion to house Home / Away player changing facilities, Referee / Officials Changing, Admin, Reception Area, Club Shop, Board Rooms, Function Room, Bar, Viewing veranda, Stands, Office accommodation, Private boxes, Catering facilities, Directors Lounge, Meeting Rooms, Storage and Supporter Toilets.

02. Proposed Skate Park

03. Proposed 11-a-side pitch.

04. Existing 5-a-side 3G Pitches retained.

04. Proposed 11-a-side 3G Pitch

05. Proposed Practice Areas

06. Children's Outdoor Adventure Play

07. Scout and Guide camp site areas

08. Proposed Rugby Pitch

09. Fishing lake and balancing pond

10. Links to Nature Trail



11. Existing Industrial Zone

12. Formby Cycles

13. Existing Tesco Store and proposed extension

14. Existing and proposed Tesco Car Park

15. Existing Residential Zone

16. Proposed access in from the Formby bypass (A565)

17. Proposed access out from the Formby bypass (A565)

18. Proposed Crèche/ Nursery facilities.

19. High quality phased B1 Office Accommodation. See phasing diagrams for details.

20. Proposed Fast Food Retail Unit

Fig 28. Proposed site master plan and facilities.

# 8.0 Planning Policy Framework for the Site – Existing and Proposed

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**10.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on the 27th March 2012 and is a core element of the Government’s reforms to the planning system, with the intention of making it less complex and promoting sustainable growth.

**10.2** Paragraph 7 provides the three dimensions to sustainable development in the planning system. These dimensions allow the planning system to execute various roles:

*“an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure; a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and; an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use*

*natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

**10.3** Again the document reaffirms the Government’s presumption in favour of sustainable development (para. 14) and places the presumption at the heart of the planning system describing it as a “golden thread” running through plan making and decision taking (para 14).

**10.4** Para 14 further advises planning authorities (and thus decision makers) to: Positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area; Meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless; Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

**10.5** Para 14 further confirms the Governments advice that decision takers should take account of: any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted

**10.6** Paragraph 186, considering Development Management confirms: Local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development.

**10.7** Whilst the whole of the document takes a positive approach to development paragraph 187 adds to this in a way that wasn’t achieved under the historic presumption in favour of development. It confirms that Local Authorities should approach development management decisions positively; looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved where possible. The encouragement of local authorities to become positively involved is very welcome.

**10.8** Paragraphs 18 to 22 consider planning for prosperity, predominantly for business and economic development. Para 71 sets the first objective:

**10.9** The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

**10.10** In essence, an overriding presumption in favour of sustainable development is threaded throughout the document and should be considered at the heart of national planning policy.

*“Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states “When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development*



Fig 29. Existing Green belt Boundaries



Fig 30. Proposed Greenbelt boundaries



# 8.1 Planning Policy Framework for the Site – Existing and Proposed

towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary”.

10.11 Paragraph 85. When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:

“Ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development; not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open; where necessary, identify in their plans areas of ‘safeguarded land’ between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period; make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development; satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent”.

### Sefton Unitary Development Plan (June 2006)

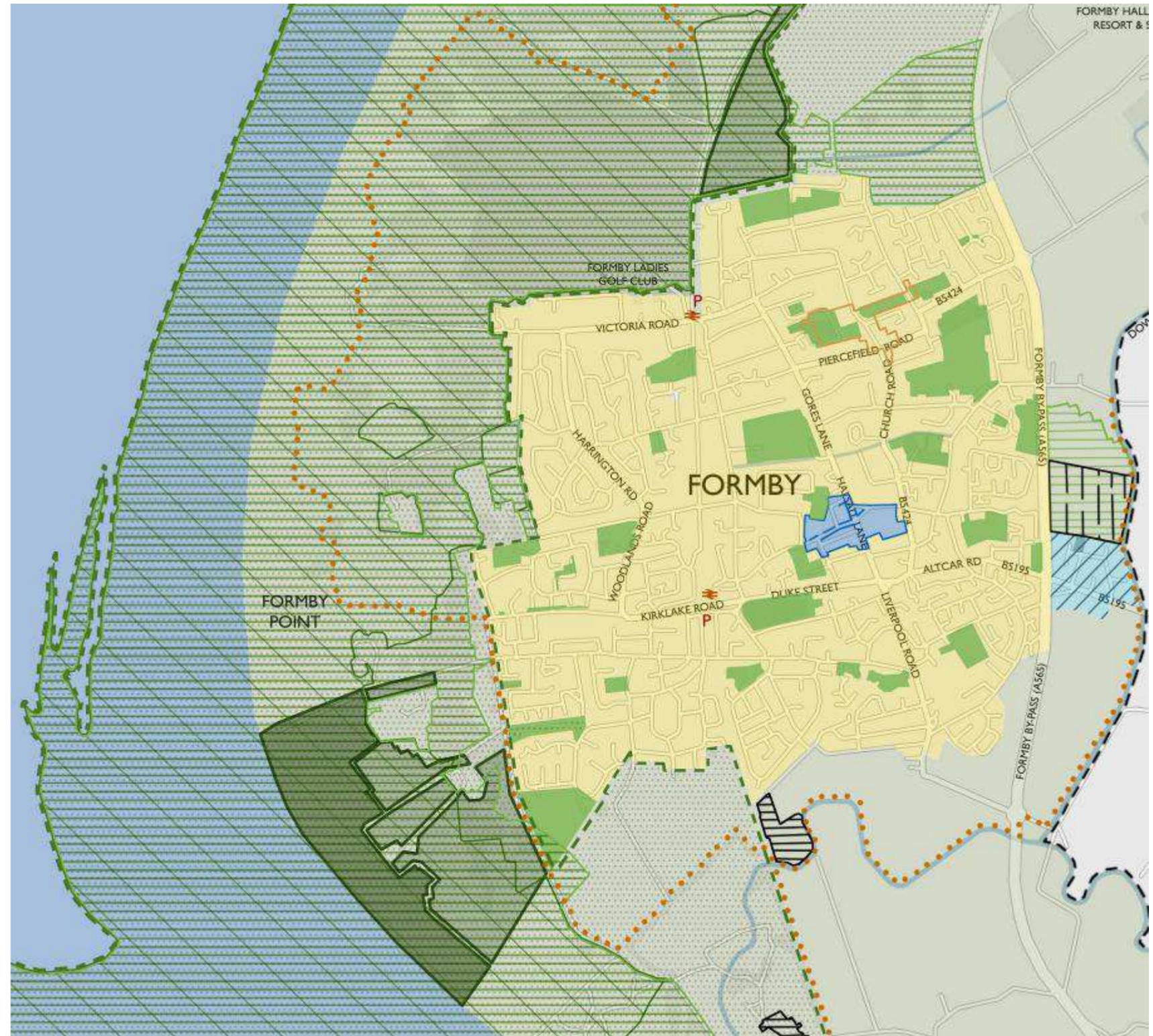


Fig 31. Proposals and Existing Plan

# 8.2 Planning Policy Framework for the Site – Existing and Proposed

**10.12** Following the revocation of the Regional Strategy (RS) on 20 May 2013 the Development Plan for Sefton comprises the saved policies of the Sefton Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

**10.13** The UDP was adopted in June 2006 under the provisions of the 1990 Act and covers the period from 2001 and 2016. Policies that have been saved will continue to provide the local planning framework within Sefton until such time as they are replaced by the emerging local plan.

### FPSL'S Allocation

**10.14** The FPSL site is located within Green Belt [Policy GBC1]. This policy states that there will be no changes to the general extent of the Green Belt at least until 2011, and the need for any amendment beyond then will be determined at the next Plan Review. In the interim, only very restricted types of development appropriate to the purposes of the Green Belt will be permitted [Policy GBC2].

### Green Belt History

**10.15** The broad extent of the Green Belt for Merseyside was first identified in the Merseyside Structure Plan (1980) and largely followed boundaries established in informal town plans produced in the 1960s and 1970s. The Structure Plan confirmed that open land not protected by Green Belt was vulnerable to development whilst there was a significant amount of vacant and under-used land in Merseyside towns.

**10.16** The Merseyside Green Belt was established in order to: check the outward spread of the built-up area, direct development into existing towns, and encourage their regeneration; ensure that towns and villages keep their individual characters; and safeguard the surrounding countryside, so that its potential for agriculture, nature conservation and recreation and its value as an amenity for townspeople is preserved.

**10.17** The precise boundaries were later defined in the Merseyside Green Belt Local Plan (adopted in December 1983). The boundaries were purposefully restrictive and tightly drawn around the existing edge of built development to encourage regeneration within the urban area of Merseyside. No 'Safeguarded Land' was identified to meet future

development needs as, at that time, such requirement was not contemplated given that the plan was only anticipated to last for 15 years while a comprehensive Green Belt review was carried out as part of the Structure Plan review process and preparation of borough-wide local plans. In addition the Merseyside conurbation was in decline and suffering significant loss of population and there was no pressing strategic need to identify future development needs.

**10.18** The Green Belt was drawn very tightly around the existing urban edge of Formby; this is common with the approach adopted in the plan for other large settlements surrounded by Green Belt. It is notable that on the eastern side of the town the Green Belt boundary follows the line of the Formby by-pass for the majority of its length.

### Emerging Development Plan Document (DPD)

**10.19** It is clear from the history of the Green Belt in Sefton and the Council's own evidence base that the emerging local plan will need to release significant areas of land from Green Belt to accommodate future development needs.

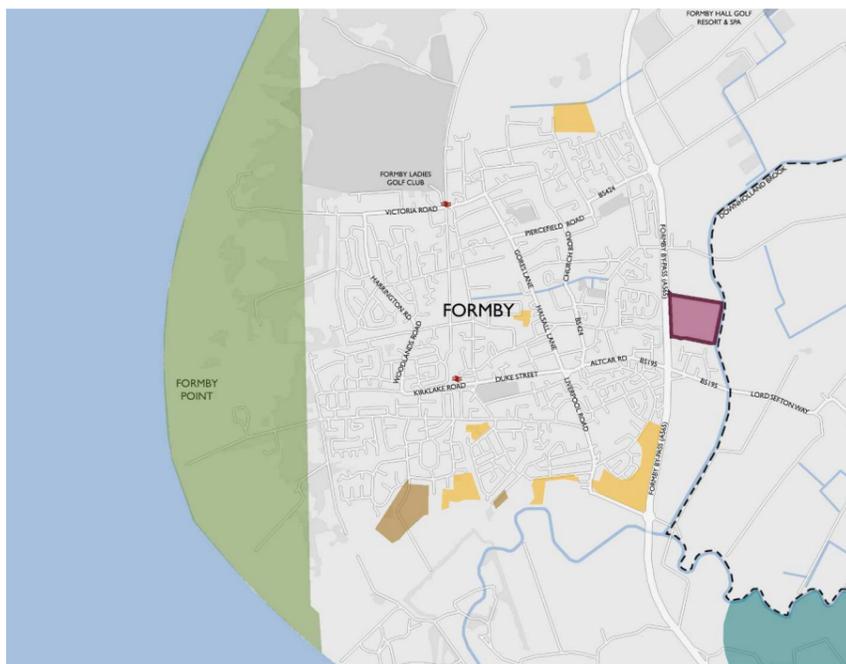


Fig 32. Existing Policy Plan

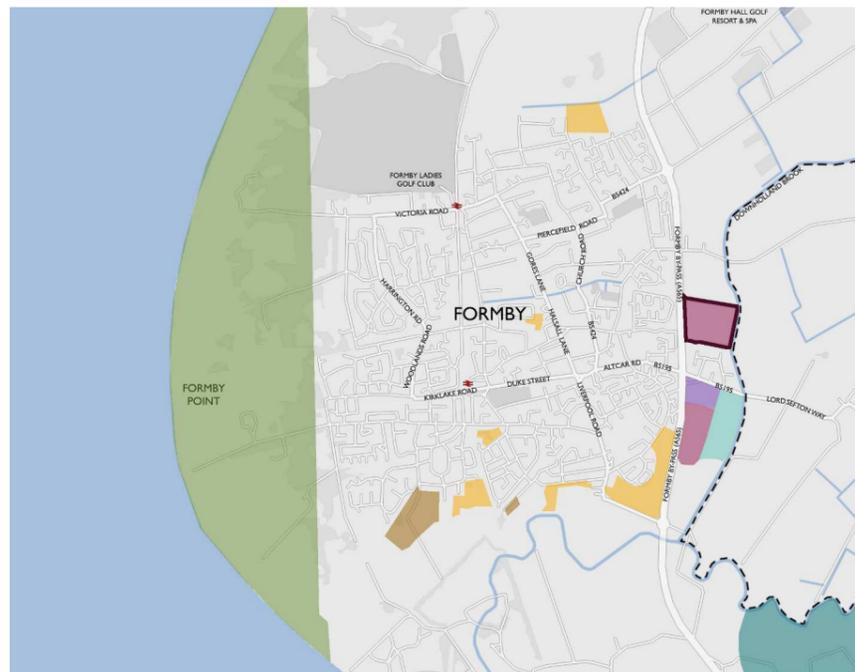


Fig 33. Proposed Policy Plan



## 8.3 Planning Policy Framework for the Site – Existing and Proposed

**10.20** The Council has carried out an assessment of potential Green Belt sites for release; the preliminary report comprised a qualitative analysis of sites identifying those that make the least contribution to the purposes of Green Belt.

### Sefton Green Belt Study (June 2011)

**10.21** The first draft Sefton Green Belt Study was published for consultation in May 2011. A further detailed Green Belt Study was prepared in June 2013; it comprises a more detailed review of the potential sites, eliminating many due to reasons of conflict with one or more important Green Belt purpose. The majority of sites identified in the original Study are assessed as being only 'partially contained' and comprising an essential gap between settlements; a significant number also have other technical or ecological constraints.

**10.22** Although the FPSL site lies within the adopted Merseyside Green Belt, the relevant development plan policy relating to the control of development within the Green Belt is GBC2 of the adopted Sefton UDP (2006). That policy is limited to the consideration of development which is appropriate to the Green Belt and does not explicitly acknowledge the scope provided by national policy to rebut the presumption against inappropriate development and justify its approval where very special circumstances are demonstrated. In that context the development plan is inconsistent with the NPPF and it is



**Fig 34.** Existing Site, Surrounding areas and Access

the policies of the Framework that should take precedence in the determination of this application

### Council's Assessment Criteria

**10.22** Appended to the Green Belt Study (June 2011), are the Council's assessment criteria for each site being promoted. The Council's site assessment for the FPSL's land (S047 - Land south of Formby Industrial Estate), concludes that the site would be beneficial for employment purposes.

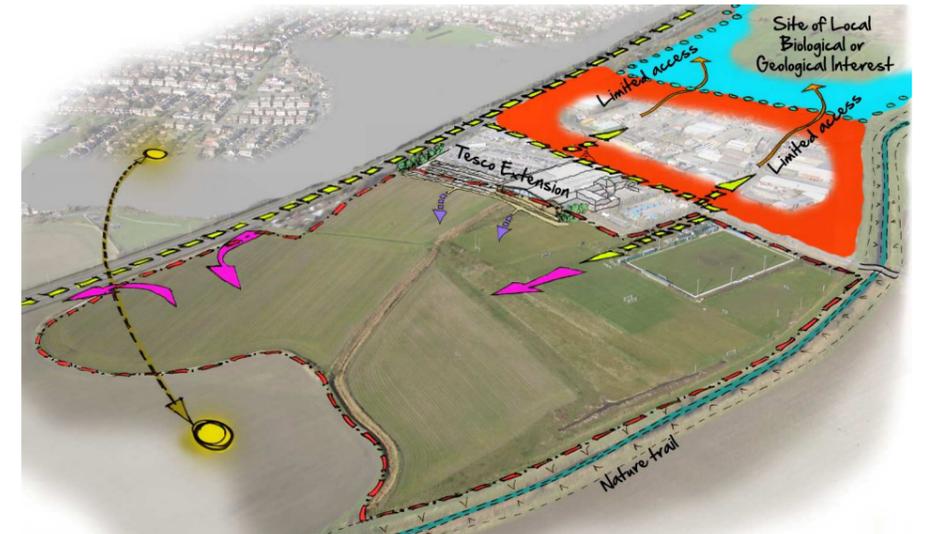


**Fig 35.** Proposed additional access routes.

**10.23** However, the assessment criteria for the site currently favoured and currently being promoted by the Council (SR5 - S044 - land to the north of the Formby Industrial Estate) concludes "the parcel is designated a local wildlife site and would therefore not normally being considered for development".

**10.24** Both sites score equally on accessibility and sustainability criteria and both sites are located within flood risk areas.

**10.25** From a review of the assessment criteria for both sites, it makes more sense to identify the required 25 hectares of land to the south if the Formby site which is not designed as a local wildlife site and therefore



**Fig 36.** Proposed access and location of Site of local/biological interest.

there would be less harm on the purposes of including land in Green Belt and the ecological value of the land in the area.

### Case for Site's Allocation

**10.26** The land to the south of the industrial estate (Formby Football Club) is readily available and suitable for employment development, including in the form of offices, research and development facilities and light industrial uses that are compatible with an office park environment.

**10.27** The proposed allocated site (SR5) cannot be easily accessed through the existing employment site. Access to the land to the north from the existing industrial estate is badly constrained and involves use of poorly aligned, heavily parked and generally constrained existing roads which currently also serve a number of existing industrial operations. The southern site is not affected and a new high quality access off Altcar Road can be provided (it is accepted that new accesses can be provided into both the land to the north and land to the south from the A565/ Formby Bypass).

**10.28** Allocating the southern site provides the potential for a direct link to be provided off A565/Formby Bypass to the proposed new employment allocation from where a direct link could be provided to the new sport and recreation facilities and Tesco foodstore, making the

# 8.4 Planning Policy Framework for the Site – Existing and Proposed

development sites more sustainable.

**10.29** The land to the north is currently Green Belt but under the Local Plan it is proposed to be designated as an extension to the Formby Industrial Estate. However, the land is currently and as proposed in future is designated as a Nature Site (site of biological or geological importance). This surely indicates that it cannot be regarded as suitable for development. The land to the south is also Green Belt but it is not affected by a Nature Site policy.

**10.30** The land to the north is also recognised as being of value as an identified habitat for Water Voles. Water Voles are protected species and this land cannot be developed unless suitable alternative habitat is provided. We understand that no supporting research or information confirming how this issue would be addressed has been made available by the land owner in support of this proposed allocation. The land to the south is not designated or identified to be of ecological value.

**10.31** The allocation of the land to the south has the potential to deliver a wide range of other benefits including the fact that the development would act as enabling development to deliver new and improved high quality sport and recreation facilities for Formby FC (through Formby Play Sports). Existing facilities are well used and are made available for use by local schools and clubs free of charge at certain times of the day. The proposed new and improved sports facilities would

complement the proposed new employment allocation and enable a range of recreation facilities to be provided.

**10.32** A further potential benefit of allocating the land to the south is that it provides the potential for much needed improvements to be secured to the existing Tesco food store and its car park and access, which in turn would also assist in enabling the new and improved sports and recreation facilities.

**10.33** The nature of the land to the north and its relationship to the existing industrial estate suggests that even if issues could be satisfactorily addressed, the site is more suitable for light or general industrial uses than high quality offices research and development facilities such is

it's profile. This is not the case with the land to the south which lends itself to a business park development.

**10.34** It is clear from the above that the land to the north of Formby Industrial Estate (SRF 5) cannot be regarded as the most suitable site in the locale for its expansion. A far more acceptable option is the land to the south. Although this land was considered by the Council (through Site SO47, Green Belt Study) it was dropped for reasons which cannot be substantiated. Indeed, reasons which directly support the land to the north of the industrial estate (which was site SO44) also apply to the land to the south. In essence there are no sustainable planning or land use reasons why the land to the south wasn't allocated in preference of the site to the north.



Fig 37. Limited access to north site diagram

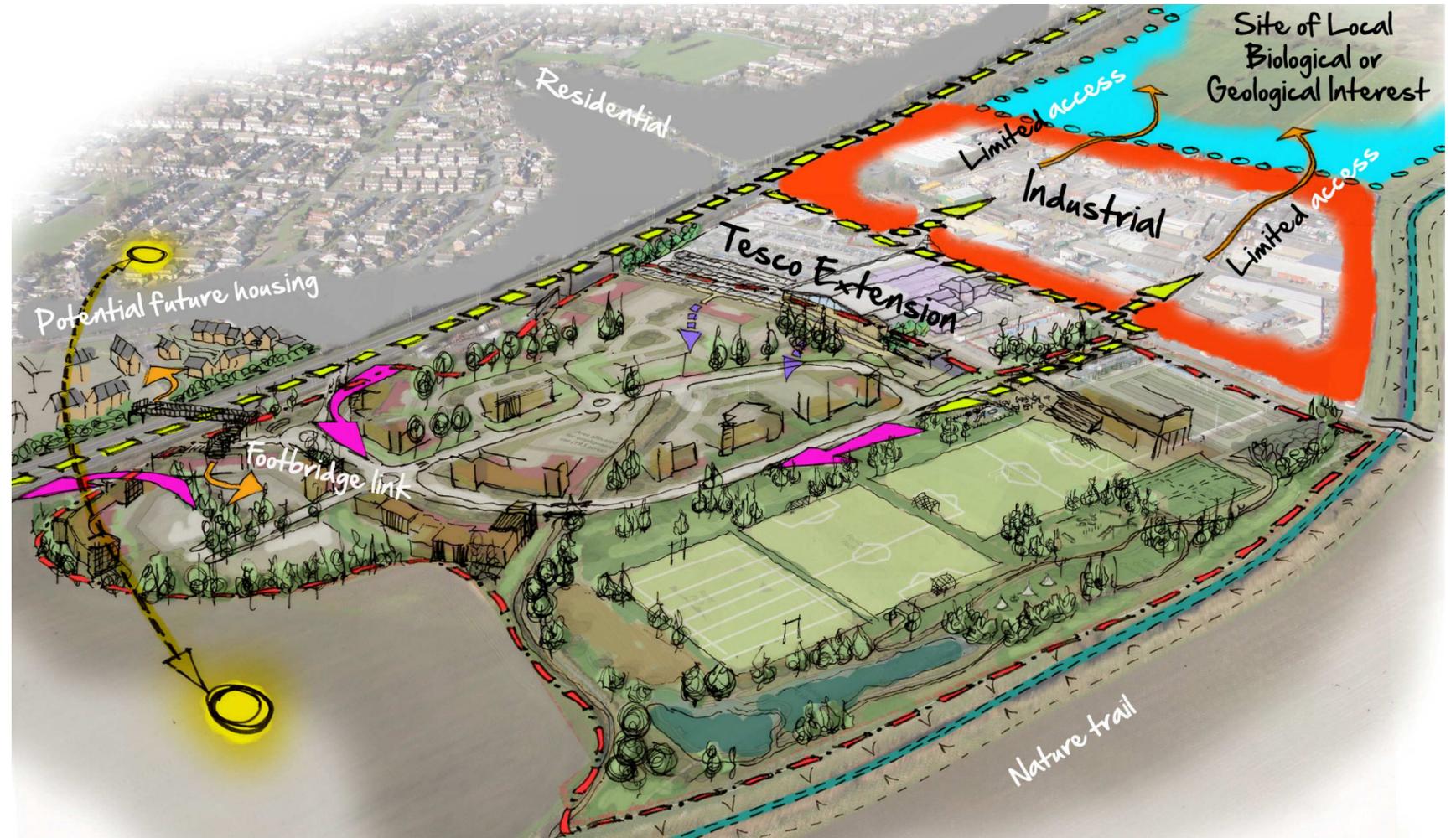


Fig 38. 3D Sketch proposals for the new masterplan

# 9.0 Benefits of the Proposed Allocation and Related Developments

### Best Option in Planning Terms:

If it is accepted that the existing industrial estate needs to be improved and expanded, which is a view that appears to be held by the Council and FPSL, and there are only 2 options that can be considered. They are the northern option, i.e., land to the north of the industrial estate, or the southern option, i.e., land controlled by FPSL to the south of the estate. Of these the northern option has to be regarded as the least suitable. It involves a tortuous access arrangement through the existing estate; it requires replacement habitat to be provided; its visual profile is not as good as the southern option; and there are issues relating to delivery. These constraints do not affect FPSL's land.

### Deliverability benefits :

The fact that FPSL is very active in the area and keen to see the Formby FC/ sport and recreation elements implemented as soon as possible confirms that there is every intention to deliver the wider/overall proposals as soon as possible. This counts for a lot in delivery terms.

### Best Option in Development Terms:

The southern option has the potential to deliver a new high quality business park development complemented potentially by high end light industrial units. Importantly it also has the potential to deliver sport and recreational facilities which if not delivered at this site will not be delivered anywhere else/at all, i.e., they are not transferable being directly related to Formby FC which is owned by FPSL.

### Benefits for Tesco:

For many years Tesco has operated the main food store which benefits the



town of Formby and its local community. Whilst the store might be located in what planning policy now might regard as a non-planning policy compliant location, i.e., it is out-of-centre, nevertheless without the store local residents would have to travel much further than Formby to find a similarly sized, stocked and priced food store for the purposes of basket and weekly bulk food shopping.

Indeed, the success of the store in turn over terms evidences this claim. For this reason and given the store site is relatively cramped and constrained and the store would benefit from being expanded to improve the shopping environment and customer experience, retail operations, range of goods and related services, it would benefit from being expanded and improved. This also applies to access, car parking and circulation arrangements. Historically this has not been possible due to policy and land ownership constraints. Under this initiative however, there is now scope for the wider development initiative to deliver these important and beneficial improvements. These will benefit the local community and further reduce the need to travel.

### Community benefits :



In addition to the use of the new sport and recreation facilities by Formby FC, local clubs and schools and the local community. To further enhance their attractiveness for use and as occurs at present FPSL is prepared to continue to commit to let local school, clubs and other organisations use the facilities/pitches at nominated times for no charge. Indeed, it is currently considering extending the times when facilities can be used free of charge. This will further enhance general sport, recreation, health and community related benefits.

### Benefits for Formby Football Club :

The club has long aspired to see its membership increased and for its main



teams to gain play in higher and more competitive leagues. This initiative focuses on securing new and improved playing, spectating and ancillary facilities for the club which will assist these broad objectives.

General sport and recreation benefits – Sport and recreation contributes significantly to healthy life styles and the new and improved sport and recreation facilities will contribute significantly to Council objectives in this regard.

### Jobs :



The proposed new business park could result in the creation of 11,800 sq m of new business floorspace in a range of uses. The much improved and expanded FPSL/Formby FC operation, expansion of the existing Tesco foodstore and new business park has the potential to generate in the order of up to 600 new jobs.

The planned development would represent a development investment of some £25m which would create confidence in the local market place and create confidence for further investments in the local area.

# 10. Conclusions

**Key conclusions are as follows:**

- 11.1 Land south of Altcar Road, Formby which is controlled by Hugh McAuley/FPSL and which is in use for sports pitches and ancillary facilities by Formby FC and agriculture offers great potential for new development in future years but it is within Green Belt.
- 11.2 This potential extends to a mixed use development comprising new business uses as an extension to the existing Formby Industrial estate, new sports and recreation facilities for Formby FC and for use by the community, plus it provides scope should the need arise to improve/extend the existing Tesco store.
- 11.3 Although the land exhibits obvious potential for development and setting aside its Green Belt status, the draft Local Plan allocates land to the north of the Formby Industrial Estate which is also currently in Green Belt as an extension to the Formby Industrial Estate.
- 11.4 This is surprising since the land is currently, and this is proposed to be maintained in future through the Local Plan, designated as a Nature Site (site of biological or geological importance); plus this land is also affected by a Nature Site policy (value as an identified habitat for Water Voles)
- 11.5 The land to the south, Hugh McAuley/FPSL's site is not so designated or identified to be of ecological value. Even if it were the representor would commit to providing replacement habitat as part of his wider development proposals for the land (see selling document).
- 11.6 In addition, it should be noted that access to the land to the north from the existing industrial estate is badly constrained and involves use of poor aligned, heavily parked and generally constrained existing roads which currently also serve a number of existing industrial operations.
- 11.7 On the other hand the southern site is so not affected and a new high quality access off Altcar Road can be provided (it is accepted that new accesses can be provided into both the land to the north and land to the south from the A565/ Formby Bypass).
- 11.8 The allocation of the land to the south has the potential to deliver a

wide range of other benefits including the fact that the development would act as enabling development to deliver new and improved high quality sport and recreation facilities for Formby FC (through Formby Play Sports). Existing facilities are well used and are made available for use by local schools and clubs free of charge at certain times of the day.

- 11.9 The proposed new and improved sports facilities would complement the proposed new employment allocation and enable a range of recreation facilities to be provided.

- 11.10 A further potential benefit of allocating the land to the south is that it provides the potential for improvements to be secured to the existing Tesco food store and its car park and access, subject to the requirements of the site owner/retailer.

- 11.11 The nature of the land to the north and its relationship to the existing industrial estate suggests that even if related issues can be satisfactorily addressed and the site developed it is more suitable for light or general industrial uses than high quality offices research and development facilities such as its profile. This is not the case with the land to the south which lends itself to a business park development.



Fig 39. 3D Sketch proposals for the new masterplan

# 11. Conclusions

- 11.12** It is clear from the above that the land to the north of Formby Industrial Estate cannot be regarded as the most suitable site in the locale for its expansion. A far more acceptable option is the land to the south which is controlled by the representor. Although this land was considered by the Council (through Site SO47, Green Belt Study) it was dropped for reasons which cannot be substantiated.
- 11.13** Indeed, reasons which directly support the land to the north of the industrial estate (which was site SO44) being allocated apply more to the land to the south. In essence there are no sustainable planning or land use reasons why the land to the south wasn't allocated in preference to the site to the north.
- 11.14** In the event the Council is unwilling to drop in its entirety the land to the north allocation but accepts these representations, the representor would be prepared to see the land to the north allocation retained but reduced in size and limited to light/general industrial uses, to be complemented by the allocation of the land to the south which would be zoned for a new business park.
- 11.15** This also reflects the representor's representations on the Local Plan Preferred Option for New Development (paragraph 6.25) and Policy SS1, which supports Option 2 albeit in an amended form (increase targets for new housing and employment development and amounts of land to be allocated for new these forms of development).



Fig 40. Proposed site master plan and facilities.