

Bootle Sites Masterplan

Vision Document
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01 | Introduction

Avison Young and SLR Consulting were appointed by Sefton Council ("the Council") to prepare a masterplan and visioning document for two development sites in Bootle.

- St Johns House, Merton Road, (part of) Bootle Office Quarter; and
- Hawthorne Road/Canal Corridor.

The Council is progressing with ambitious plans for Bootle Town Centre which commenced with the development of the Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP) and the ongoing delivery of the Strand Transformation project.

This stands with wider context of positive change in north Liverpool, including the continued delivery of Liverpool Waters, the development of Everton FC's new stadium at Bramley-Moore Docks and concurrent progression of plans for Goodison Park; implementation of the Ten Streets Strategic Regeneration Framework and the Liverpool North new town submission.

The development sites offer an opportunity to capitalise on this changing context in the wider area.

Through a process of design development and option testing we have determined a preferred option for each of the development sites.

The preferred options follow the Council's aspirations for maximising housing delivery on the site whilst ensuring sustainable principles of development and also taking account of Bootle's existing and future housing market. We have engaged with Council Officers and Members, landowners, key stakeholders and the public to refine the design proposals.

The remainder of this document sets out the findings of the masterplan and visioning process undertaken for each of the sites in turn and concludes with a series of delivery recommendations.

The main document is supported by a series of technical outputs including:

- **Policy and Demographic Baseline Assessment**
- **Design Development Workbook**
- **Baseline Transport Note**

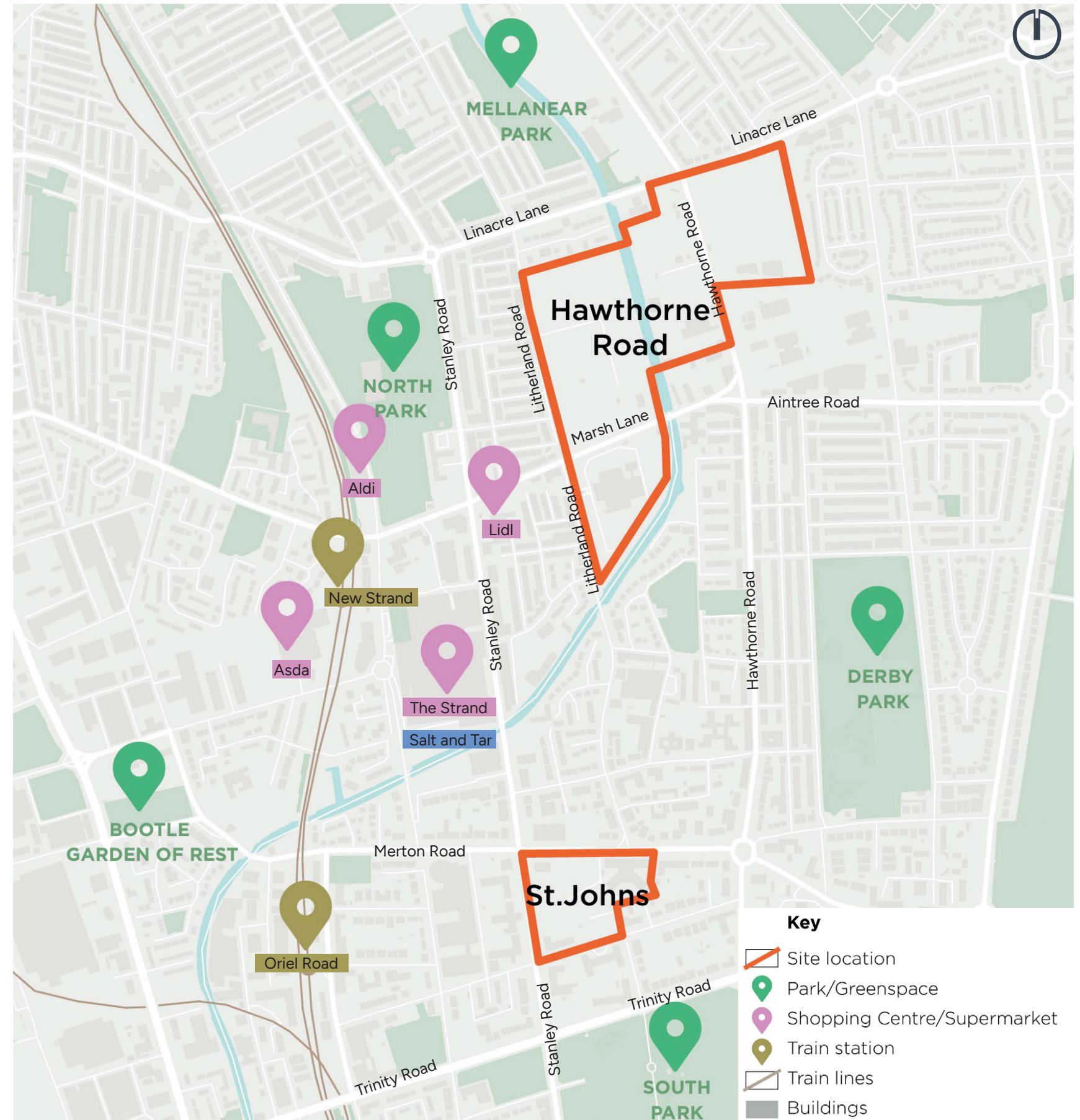


Fig 1 Site Locations

02 | Understanding the Place

It is important that the options developed respond to the existing context of Bootle. From the outset the team undertook a baseline analysis to ensure a robust understanding of the place.

This included a consideration of:

- **Planning Policy** – considering the Bootle AAP, Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other relevant policy and strategy to inform design proposals;
- **Commercial Market Context** – considering the existing housing and commercial market in Bootle to inform development strategy and viability;
- **Demographics and Social Characteristics** – analysis of secondary data including 2021 Census and household data to understand the existing population of Bootle; and
- **Place-based Analysis** – analysis of the physical characteristics of the sites and the surrounding areas.

Bootle in Context

Bootle is a town in the Metropolitan Borough of Sefton, Merseyside England. It is located to the north of Liverpool and is only a 15 minute train journey away from all the amenities of Liverpool city centre.

In addition to the local plan, the Bootle AAP out a clear vision for the town and the wider area for the next two decades and beyond. Building upon the local plan, the AAP identifies locations within the immediate town centre and beyond where regeneration and investment are needed. It also aims to help to secure the homes that people need and want, good quality open spaces and facilities, job opportunities and approaches to tackle climate change and environmental issues.

Sefton Council have a high housing target with the need to deliver with a need to delivery an annual housing requirement of 1,368 homes per year. At present, Sefton can only demonstrate 3.5 years supply of housing land and therefore housing sites need to be identified and delivered to meet this target.



Fig 2 Strategic Context

The Council have also been working with Liverpool City Council and the Combined Authority to reshape the socio-economic future of north Liverpool more broadly.

The vision encompasses major brownfield regeneration from Liverpool city centre up through areas including Bootle with a need to plan for the delivery of thousands of new homes, new employment zones, green spaces, and community infrastructure over a 15 to 20-year horizon.

The redevelopment of The Strand Shopping Centre is the cornerstone project in Sefton Council's vision to rejuvenate the town centre. Acquired by the Council in 2017 for £32.m, the centre is now undergoing a comprehensive redevelopment. The plans include the creation of a new town square, improved public spaces, and enhanced connectivity between Stanley Road, Salt and Tar, and Washington Parade. The project aims to introduce a mix of new retail, leisure, education, and health services, alongside green spaces, to create a more vibrant and sustainable town centre for Bootle.

However, Bootle isn't without challenge which the regeneration of the town centre is seeking to address.

Over half of the communities in Bootle are amongst the top 10% most deprived nationally and the deprivation ranking of LSOAs in Bootle remained static between 2015 and 2019, highlighting the ingrained nature of the challenge and the lack of progress that has been made.

Analysis of the gross disposable household income of the residents reflects the challenges with income. Bootle residents have an average disposable income of £18,864 which is lower than Sefton (£19,113), North West (£19,752) and England (£22,789).

There is a markedly higher proportion of the population in Bootle working in lower skilled occupations (30%) compared to the national average (25%). Medium skilled qualifications are more common among residents in Bootle, however, there is a much lower proportion of the population in Bootle working in higher skilled qualifications (35%) compared to the national average (47%).

Roughly 8.5% of the population are either in bad health or very bad health and may need regular assistance and access to good healthcare. This is higher than in Sefton (6%) North West (7%) and England (5%).

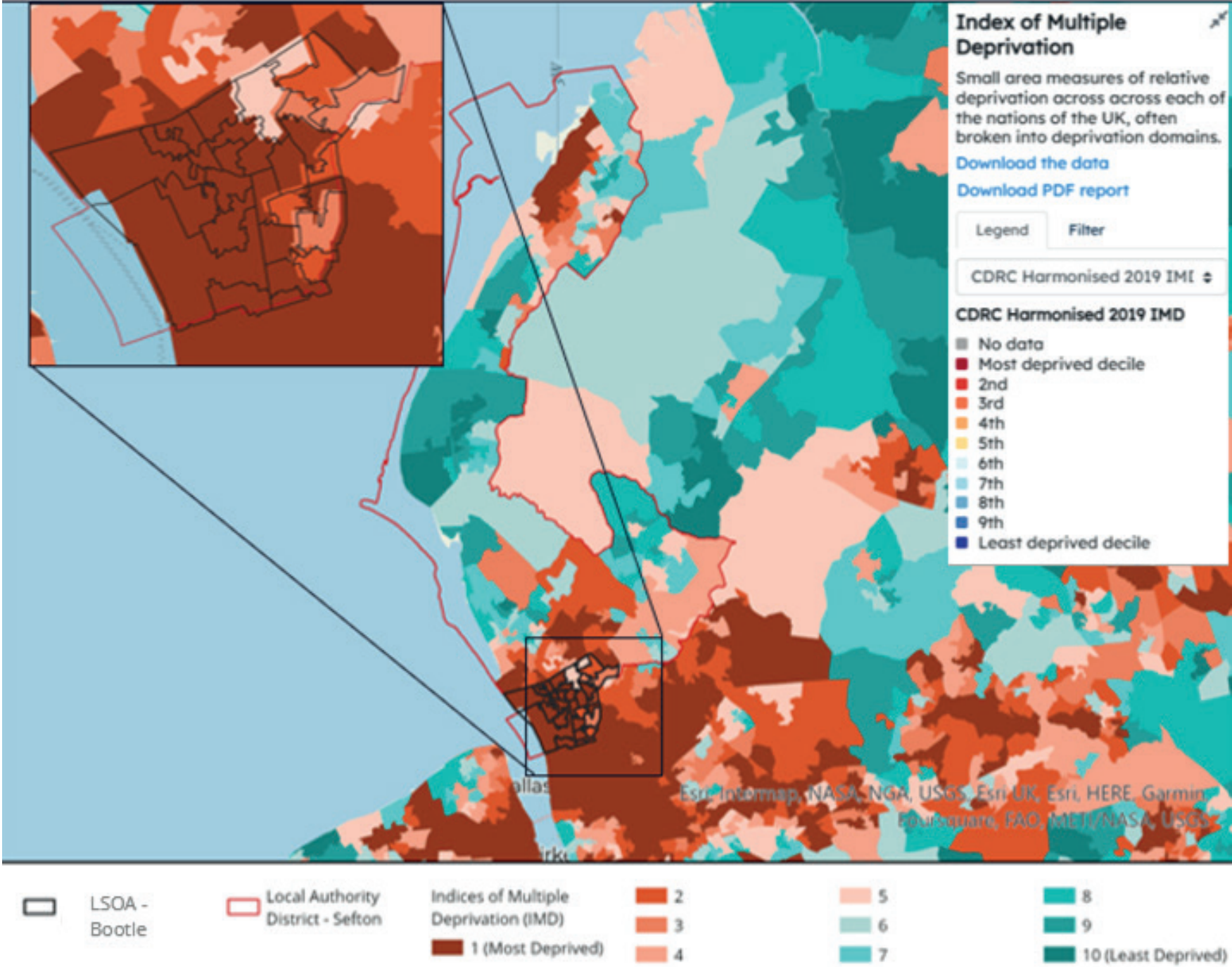


Fig 3 Indices of Deprivation (CDRC,2025)

In addition, Bootle’s residential and commercial property markets face challenging conditions. Bootle’s residential sales market is priced lower than the north west and England averages. Demand is largely local, serving existing residents with limited inward migration. New build development in recent years has been limited mainly to both volume-builder semi-detached development and Registered Provider affordable schemes, and has generally been supported by public funding. However, the delivery of these schemes, as well as recent developments at The Strand, demonstrate potential for market revitalisation. Bootle’s rental market remains robust, supported by structural supply constraints and affordability pressures on homeownership.

Bootle’s commercial market is also relatively limited and has historically been reliant on public sector occupiers, with limited future demand for office space anticipated. Many older office buildings have been vacated or converted to residential use, and the town is not well positioned to attract significant corporate office activity compared with nearby Liverpool. The retail sector, as in many towns across the UK, faces challenges due to high vacancy rates and changing consumer behaviour, which recent developments at The Strand aim to mitigate. Bootle has a modest overnight accommodation market, currently fulfilled largely by Airbnbs and small hotels but we anticipate some potential market demand for new hotel provision in the area to tap into Liverpool’s strong tourist market.

The sites sit in a good location within Bootle, surrounded by a large number of local assets which are easily accessed on foot by the community. These include:

- **Retail and Services** – Bootle town centre is within 15 minutes walk from the sites providing local amenities and services such as shops, cafes and pharmacies. There are also a number community centres in the wider area
- **Green Spaces** - South Park, North Park, Mellanear Park and Derby Park are all in close proximity which perform a range of important social and environmental functions.
- **Education** – Education – Hillside High School and St Monicas RC Primary School are amongst a number of schools within the catchment of the sites. Hugh Baird FE College is also located close by.

St. Johns House is located within the mixed-use area of the town centre core and Bootle Village to the north. To the east of the site the character is residential including the Derby Park conservation area.

Hawthorne Road / Canal Corridor is within walking distance of the mixed-use core of the town centre, however it’s character is influenced by residential and employment land uses.

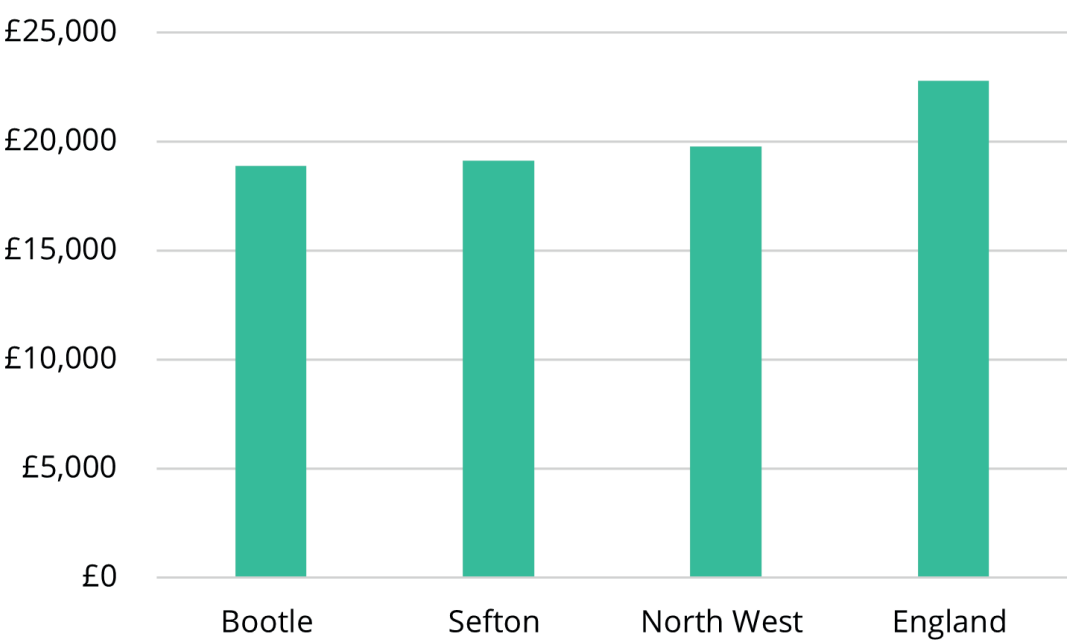


Fig 4 Gross disposable household Income, 2021. Source: ONS, Income Estimates for Small Areas (2021).

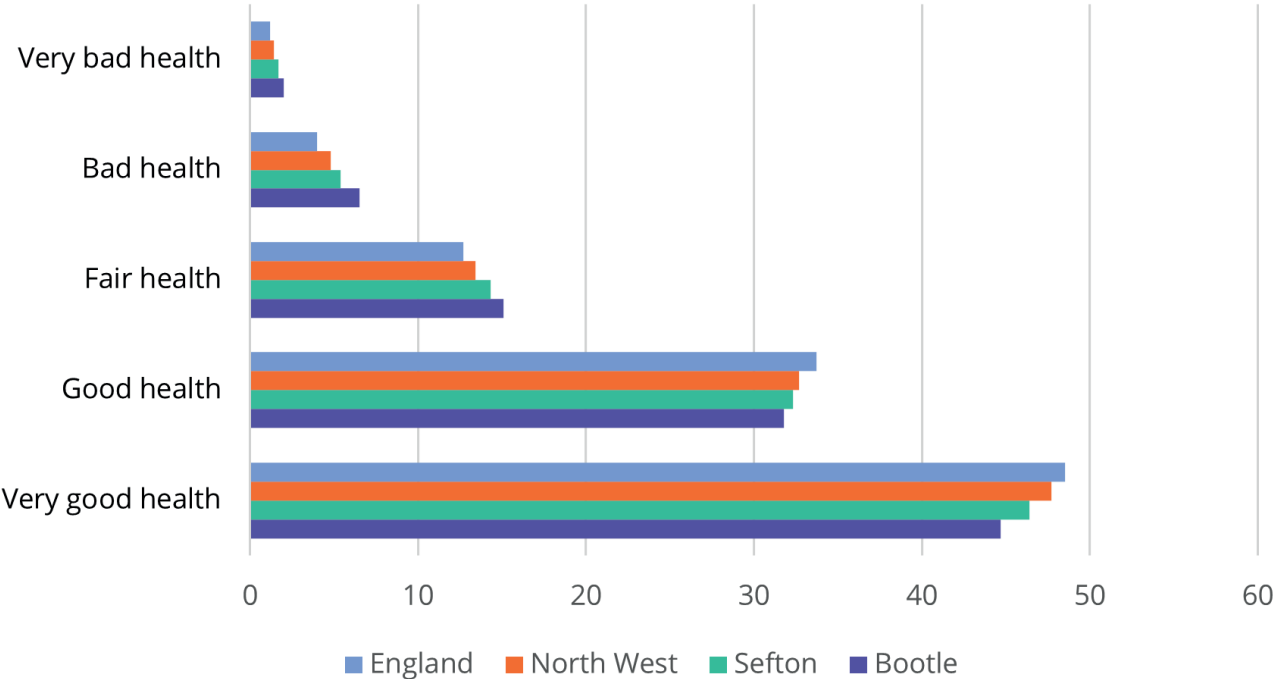


Fig 5 General health measures. Source: ONS, Census (2021)

03 | St. Johns

St John's House, Merton Road site is a 2.9ha located in Bootle Office Quarter, immediately to the south of Merton Road and to the east of Stanley Road. It is located directly to the north of Sefton Borough Council's offices.

The existing site has 3 main uses:

- **Merton Public House** – a public house which is currently unused but has planning permission for a leisure use on the ground floor and a hotel use on the first floor.
- **A surface level car park** (the site of office block demolished in early 2000s) which is used for town centre parking and a weekly car boot sale.
- **A cleared vacant site** which until recently was St Johns House, an 8000 sqm office building built approximately 20 years ago which was most recently occupied by HMRC.

Site Constraints

There are a series of constraints across the St John's House site that were factored into the development of the site:

- 3 freehold landowners with different uses and aspirations.
- Limited through access currently on site.
- Areas of self seeded vegetation now on site which will need to be considered as part of BNG scoring.
- Unknown utilities beneath site surface.
- Limited ground floor activation on Stanley Road.

Site Principles

- North-South active travel movement that connects to strategic parks and gardens and to Bootle Village.
- Primarily residential with elements of ground floor commercial and retail fronting Stanley Road.
- Proposals for a hotel on Trinity Road.
- Retained pub for future commercial / leisure use.
- Frontage onto Stanley Road to activate street scene
- Opportunity for public realm enhancements from Stanley Road into core of site.



Fig 6 St Johns Principles Plan



Streets safe for children, low/no car neighbourhood



High quality public realm and children's play space

- Key**
- Red line boundary
 - Ownership boundary
 - Proposed development
 - Retained existing trees
 - Retained existing sub-station
 - Gateway to site
 - Vehicular access into development plots
 - Proposed building frontages enclosing and defining key roads
 - Proposed building frontages enclosing and defining green spaces and key pedestrian routes
 - Proposed frontage respecting the frontage line of existing buildings within the conservation area
 - Long range views
 - Mid-rise development area
 - Low-rise development area
 - Existing building to be retained for future leisure use
 - Landmark buildings
 - Feature buildings
 - Active ground floor uses
 - Existing pedestrian crossing
 - Proposed public open space
 - Key pedestrian / cycle routes through site

- Landmark buildings to frame public realm.
- High density scheme that could explore 10 Storeys + on Stanley Road.
- Height and character to the eastern edges of the site should complement the conservation area.

Proposed Landuse

Residential led mixed use development with supporting commercial ground floor uses and a hotel provision.

A low car, active travel neighbourhood with below average parking:

- 2 x spaces per house
- 10% parking for flatted development

Sustainability and Greening

- Sustainable features throughout the public realm e.g. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), rain gardens trees, planting and green spaces to support urban cooling.
- A mixture of private and public green spaces to support placemaking and to ensure a positive biodiversity net gain on the site.

Proposed Scale and Density

- House types and sizes which respond to the Bootle housing need including a focus on small properties such as 1 and 2 bedroom properties.
- Height and scale which responds to the historic character of Derby Park Conservation Area to North East and the building heights along Stanley Road to the West i.e. 6 – 9 storeys to the east of the site and 2-3 storeys to the west of the site.

Access, Movement and Connectivity

- Excellent access to the town centre and public transport meaning it can support a low car neighbourhood.
- Improved frontage onto Stanley Road including ground floor commercial uses.
- A North – South route through the site responding to the historic urban grain of the site; connecting South Park to Bootle Village with through access only for pedestrians to prevent ‘rat running’.
- An East – West route through the site supported by a new pedestrian/ cycle route from Stanley Road into the heart of the site through high quality public realm.

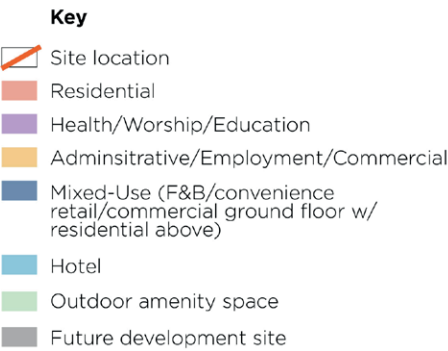


Fig 7 St Johns Proposed Landuse

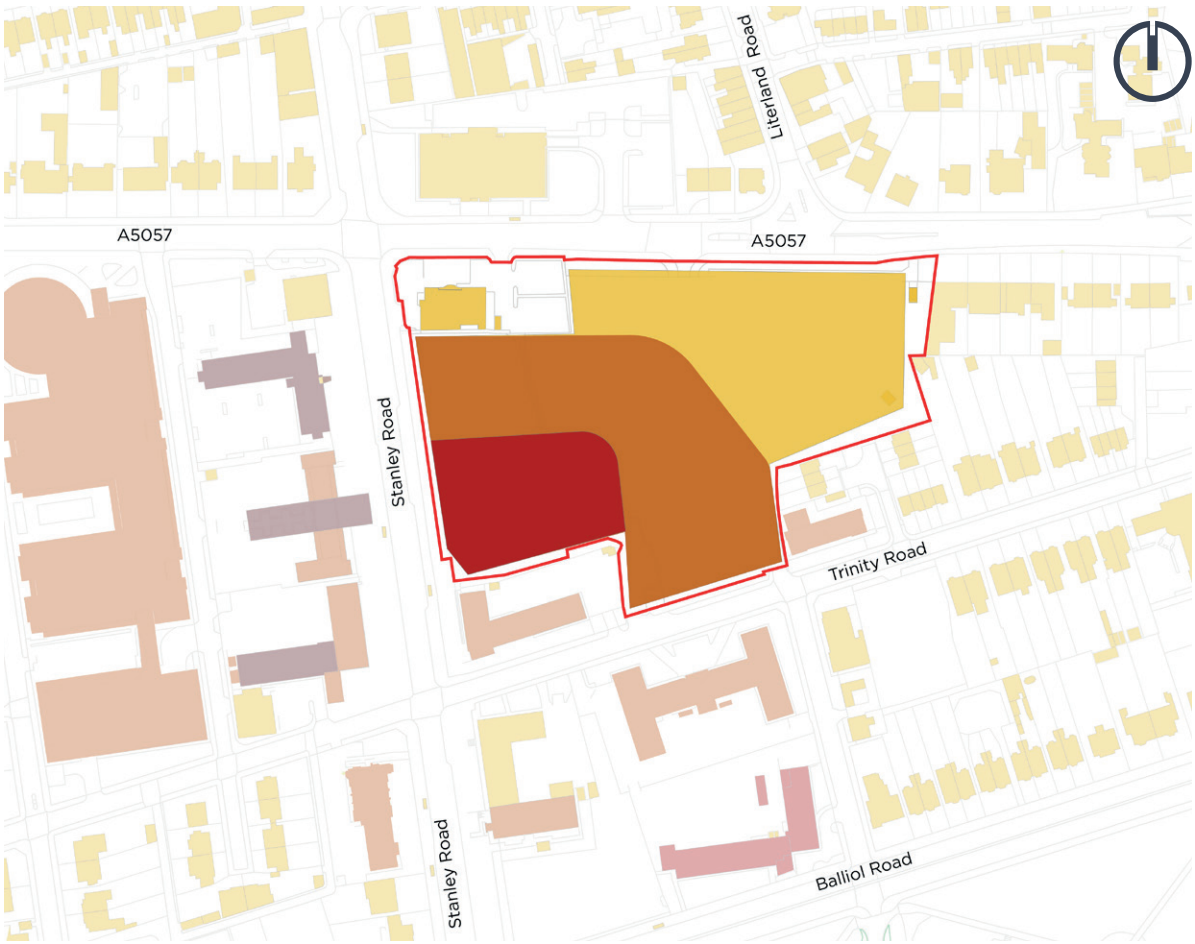
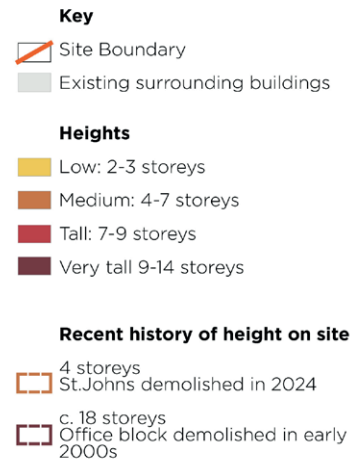


Fig 8 St Johns Proposed Scale and Massing

Detailed Masterplan Layout

The preferred option for St Johns delivers a total of 224 dwellings comprised of 189 flats and 35 houses, c. 690 sqm GIA ground floor commercial space and c. 5,700 sqm GIA hotel floorspace. It also delivers c. 1,800 sqm of public realm. The full development outputs are listed in the table 1 below.

Option Testing

This option is preferred because it provides a high number of properties across the site with a feasible mix of apartments and houses. The mix of uses across the site provides a marketable development with an opportunity to drive demand and revenue through the commercial spaces. It provides greater placemaking opportunity through the high provision of public open space.

In the case of a hotel not coming forward, alternative uses could be considered such as specialist housing (e.g. older persons housing) or community assets (e.g. health or youth club) which responds to responses raised through the public consultation.

Proposed Phasing

St Johns is of a size which may not require distinct delivery phases with separated financing and funding. However, we have considered a phasing strategy based on our understanding of place making, landownership and commercial viability.

In design and placemaking terms, it would be advantageous to deliver the western part of the site first, establishing urban form and, importantly, new commercial uses on Stanley Road with the remaining development working eastwards. The site has good access to the north, west and south which allows for flexibility in its delivery programme. This would result in the delivery of the flatted development in the early phases, alongside the commercial development followed by the housing development.



Fig 9 St Johns Preferred Masterplan Layout

Type	Units
1B Apartment	47
2B Apartment	100
3B Apartment	42
Total flats	189
3B Townhouse	26
4B Townhouse	9
Total houses	35
GIA (m2)	
Commercial GF	687
Hotel	5,776
Public Realm	994

Table 1: Proposed Unit Numbers



Fig 10 Aerial view from north east



Fig 11 Street level view along northern boundary



Fig 12 Aerial view from north west



Fig 13 View from Stanley Road looking east through new public realm



Fig 14 Aerial view from south west



Fig 15 Street level view from north west

04 | Hawthorne Road

The Hawthorne Road/ Canal Corridor site is a large site currently in multiple ownerships and multiple uses. The site is bound to the north and west by residential development and to the east by industrial uses. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal runs through the centre of the site dividing the site in two.

The existing site has multiple existing uses:

- **Former Bootle Gas Works** – a former gas works with gas holders in situ. Approval has been granted to dismantle the gas holders and fill in the voids. In addition to the gas holders, there is working Cadent gas infrastructure on site. The north of the site is vacant scrub land.
- **Former Litherland House** – a former public sector office building which is currently being demolished to a cleared site.
- **Peoples Site** – a cleared site owned by The Council which is allocated for housing. The Council are currently looking to dispose of the site to a house builder.
- **Acorn Way Industrial Estate** – an active estate containing operational businesses, which is defined as a Regeneration Opportunity Area within the Bootle AAP. The site has complex ownership totalling 10 freehold ownerships and multiple leasehold ownerships. This area is a long-term aspiration for development and will be contingent on what existing businesses want to do.

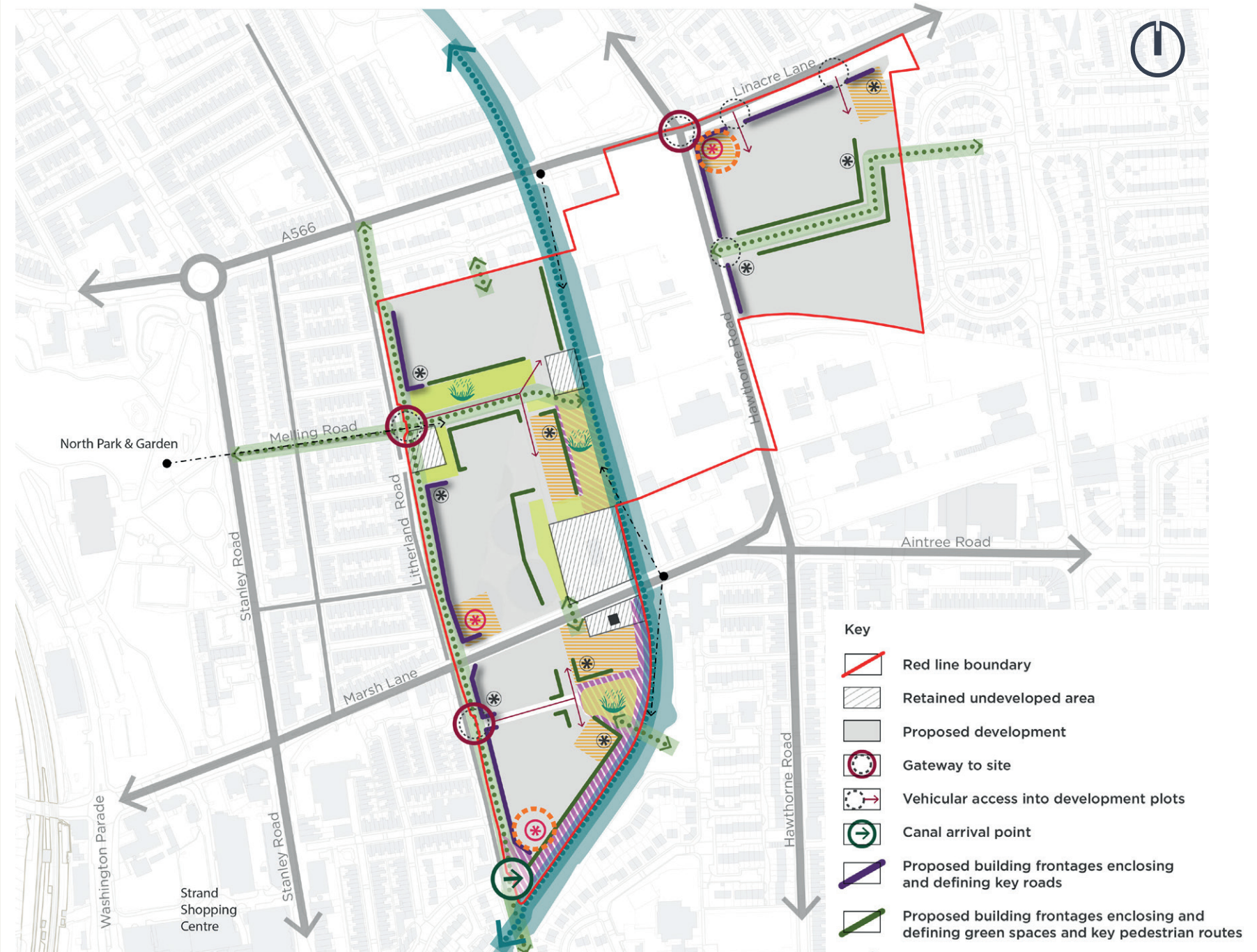


Fig 16 Hawthorne Road Principles Plan



Contemporary terrace street typology



High quality amenity space

Site Constraints

There are a series of constraints across the Hawthorne Road site that were factored into the development of the site:

- The gas holders which are currently on site. We are aware of approval to dismantle the holders but significant remediation will be required to bring the site forward for residential use. The working gas infrastructure on the site will also have to be retained in the short-medium term.
- Telecoms Tower – the telecoms tower located to the south of Marsh Lane is in operational use. Relocation would be required if the tower was removed.
- Acorn Way Industrial Estate – any development coming forward at Acorn Way would have to be coordinated on not in a piecemeal approach. However, the number of freeholders and leaseholders makes this a complex task.
- Flooding Zones 2 and 3 and surface water flooding.
- 3m high brick walls around the site including onto the canal path.
- Marsh Lane and Linacre bridge that rises approx. 4m above the site separating north and south sites.
- Areas of self-seeded trees and scrub.
- Engagement with United Utilities indicated the presence of a large sewer in the north east corner of the site which requires further investigation and potential easements.

Development Principles

- Enhanced canal corridor that includes active travel routes.
- Higher density framing the canal.
- East – west green link for cyclists and pedestrians connecting from Stanley Road to Fernhill Road which can link more widely with aspirations for the Liverpool Loop Line.
- New frontage onto Linacre Lane
- Area of public realm on Litherland house site to encourage dwell time along the canal – could include mooring opportunities.
- Ground floor amenity uses for local community.
- Explore opportunities for height along Marsh Lane
- Active travel corridor along Litherland Road to provide strategic connection north to south.
- Retained telecommunications tower.
- Areas of POS throughout the site that interact with the canal.
- Gateway at Linacre Lane / Hawthorne Road framed by key buildings.
- SUDs incorporated into POS and street network where appropriate.
- Retention of businesses at Acorn Way.

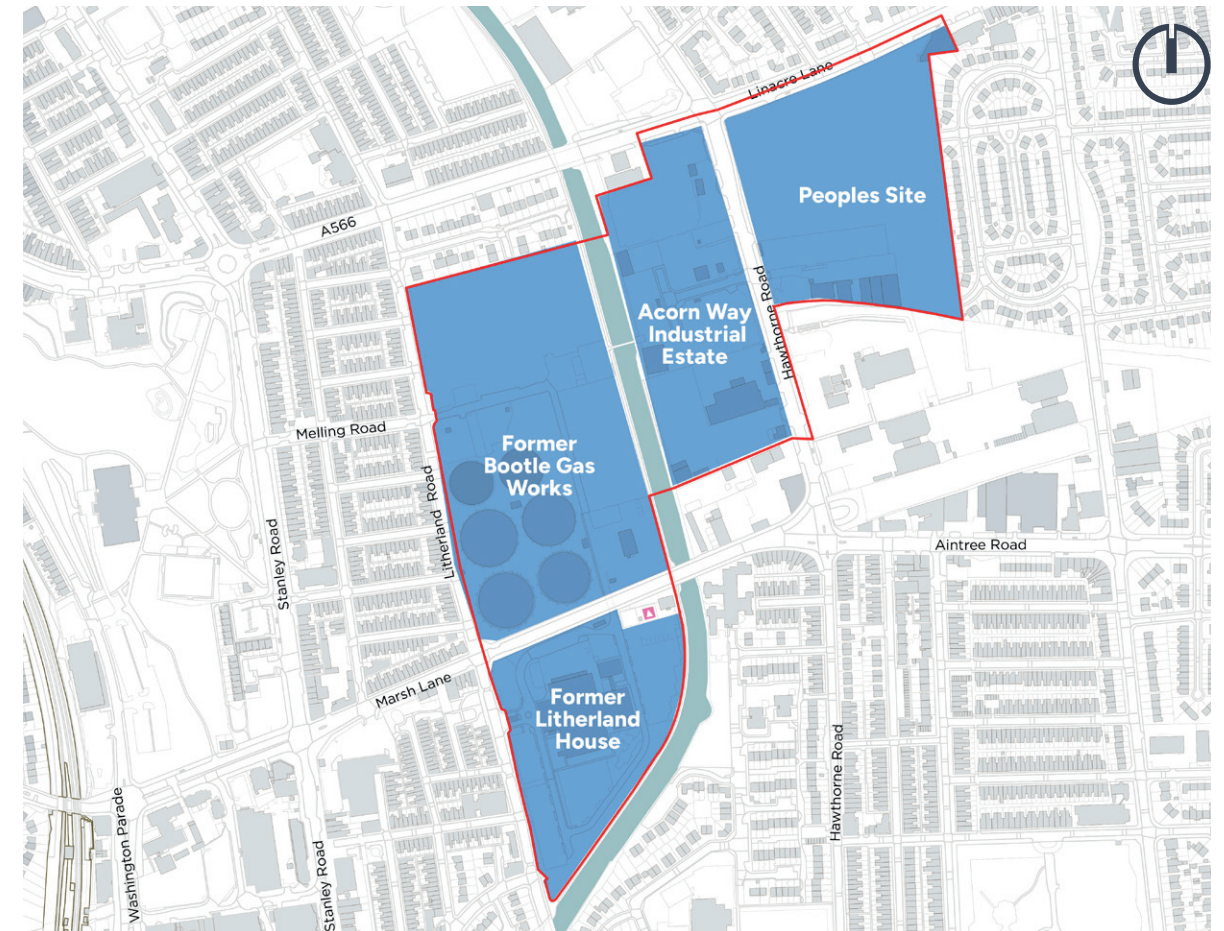


Fig 17 Hawthorne Road Development Sites

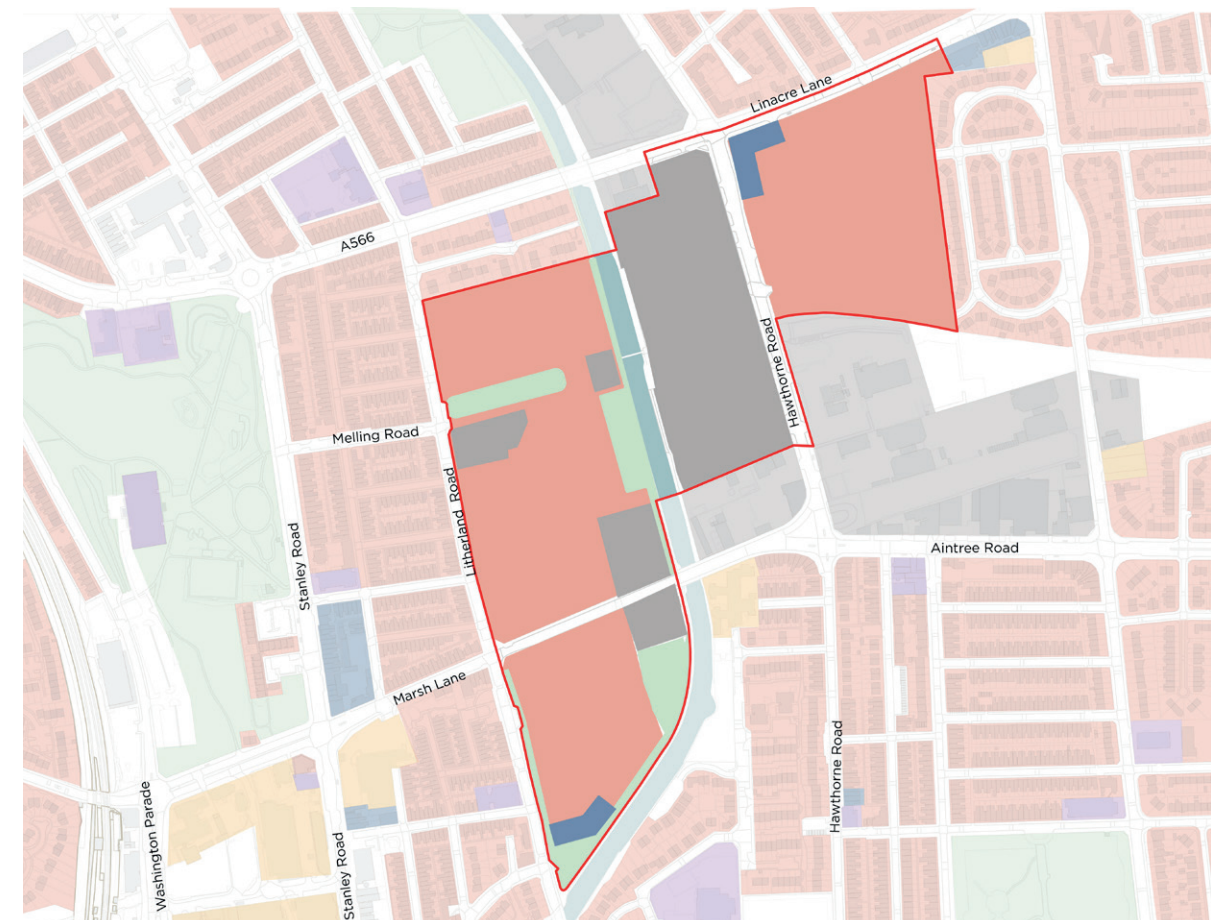
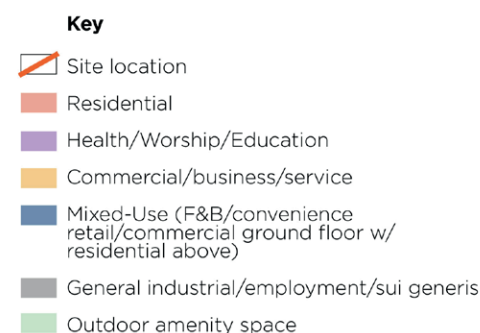


Fig 18 Hawthorne Road Proposed Landuse Plan



Site Uses

- Predominantly residential with opportunities for supporting leisure uses, particularly along the canal frontages. In the short term, the retention of existing businesses in the Acorn Way estate with longer term plan for housing development in this location.
- A low car, active travel neighbourhood with below average parking:
 - 2 x spaces per house
 - 20% parking for flatted development
- Responding to the challenges associated with the existing uses across the site including considering a long term plan and phasing of the development of the site.

Scale and Density

- A mixture of housing and flatted development meeting Bootle's housing need but aligning with density in the surrounding area.
- Opportunities for height along the canal and key landmark buildings at site corners and road junctions.
- Sustainability and Greening.
- Sustainable features throughout the public realm.
- Trees, planting and green spaces to support urban cooling.
- A green route along Litherland Road.

Access, Movement and Connectivity

- Development of a north-south pedestrian/cycle route along Linacre Road and the canal tow path.
- Opening up access to the Canal tow path, improving the experience on the Canal and increasing the connections to the town centre.
- East-west pedestrian/cycle route linking into regional cycle infrastructure links.
- The potential for a new pedestrian bridge over the canal, once Acorn Way is available for development.
- New pedestrian connections into existing streets such as Summer Road and Spence Ave so that existing communities can make use of new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and public amenity space.

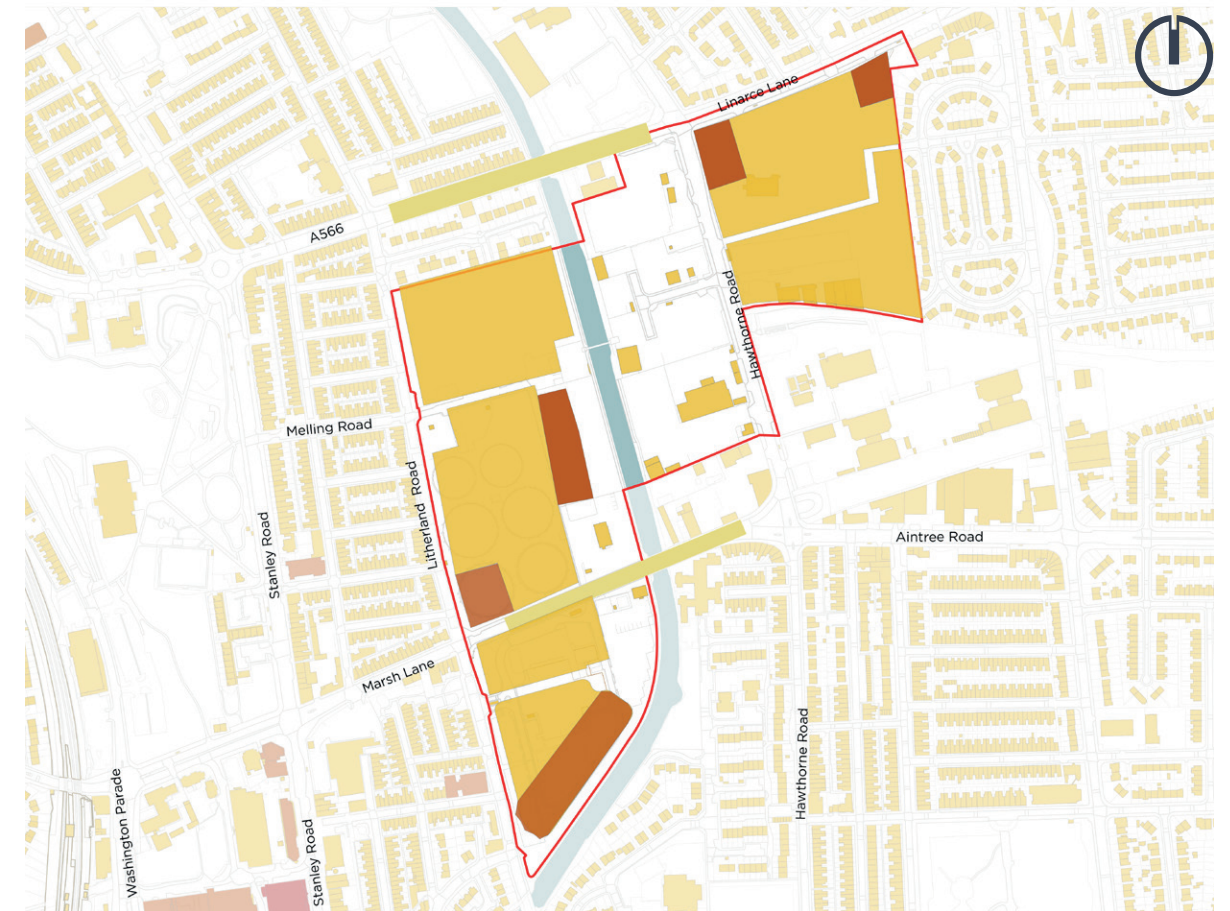
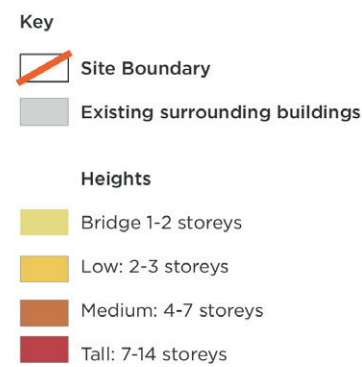


Fig 19 Hawthorne Road Proposed Scale and Massing

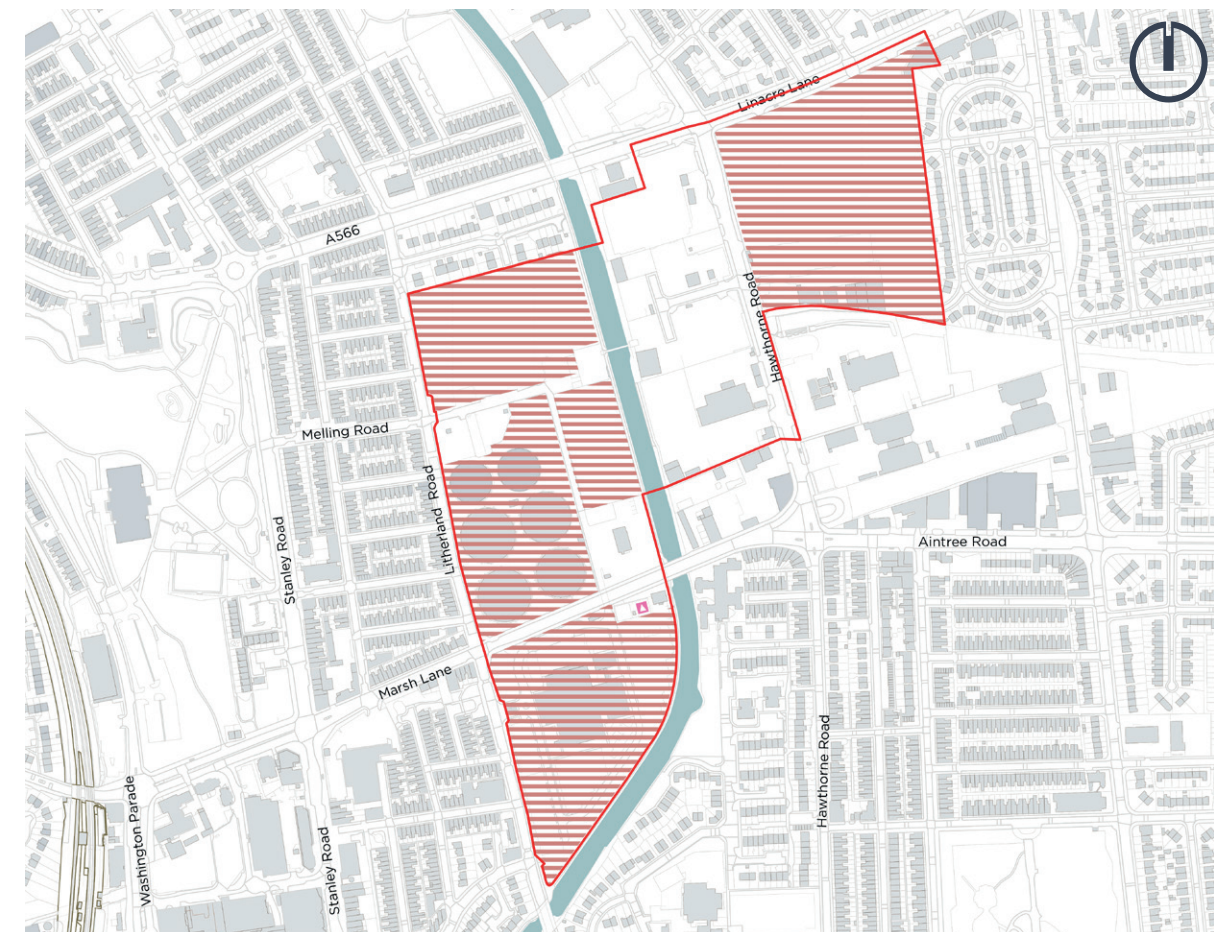


Fig 20 Hawthorne Road Proposed Developable Area

Heritage

- Retention of the existing brick perimeter wall in some locations to reflect the history of the area, including sections damaged during WWII.

Development Outputs

- In the short term, the preferred option for Hawthorne Road delivers a total of 425 dwellings comprised of 156 flats and 269 houses, and c. 1300 sqm GIA ground floor commercial space and c. 330 sqm GIA of F&B floorspace and also delivers c. 17,700 sqm of public realm. The full development outputs are listed below.
- The designation of Acorn Way area (shown as hatched on Figure 21) for long term development could deliver a further 143 units on the site. This should be delivered through joined up and comprehensive approach to avoid infill development. It will also support the wider principles of development across the site such as improved canal frontage, better east-west links and the creation of a gateway at Hawthorne and Lineacre Lane.

Type	Units
1B Apartment	35
2B Apartment	113
3B Apartment	8
Total flats	156
3B Detached House	14
4B Detached House	20
3B Semi-Detached/Terraced House	173
4B Townhouse	62
Total houses	269
GIA (m2)	
Commercial GF	1,288
F&B	329
Public Realm	17,675

Table 2: Proposed Unit Numbers



Fig 21 Hawthorne Road Preferred Masterplan Layout

Option Testing

- This option is preferred because it supports a phased approach which meets the needs of the council around housing delivery but also a well connected and desirable place to live.
- In the short term it will deliver 425 units with the opportunity for an additional 143 units in the longer term development if Acorn Way was to come forward.
- Whilst in the short term, the lack of development at Acorn Way compromises the east-west movement through the site, in the longer term this would be possible, especially if a pedestrian bridge across the Canal is delivered.
- This option involves the remediation of the gas cylinders but the retention of the existing gas infrastructure and the telecoms tower which reduces potential relocation costs. However, there is an opportunity cost to this option as this results in the need for additional public realm to buffer development, a smaller net developable area and a deflation in potential sales values.
- In addition, the introduction of green spaces across the site provides significant amount of public open space which supports placemaking and address challenges with surface water flooding. The interaction with the Canal is still retained in most part, providing opportunities for higher value properties and also increasing the accessibility and safety of the canal tow path.
- The short/medium term retention of Acorn Way reduces short term costs. It also creates certainty and allows for further engagement with all businesses to support the area coming forward for comprehensive development in the longer term.



Fig 22 Aerial view from north west



Fig 23 Aerial view from north east



Fig 26 Aerial view from south east



Fig 24 Street level view along Litherland Road



Fig 25 View from Canal looking south towards Marsh Lane

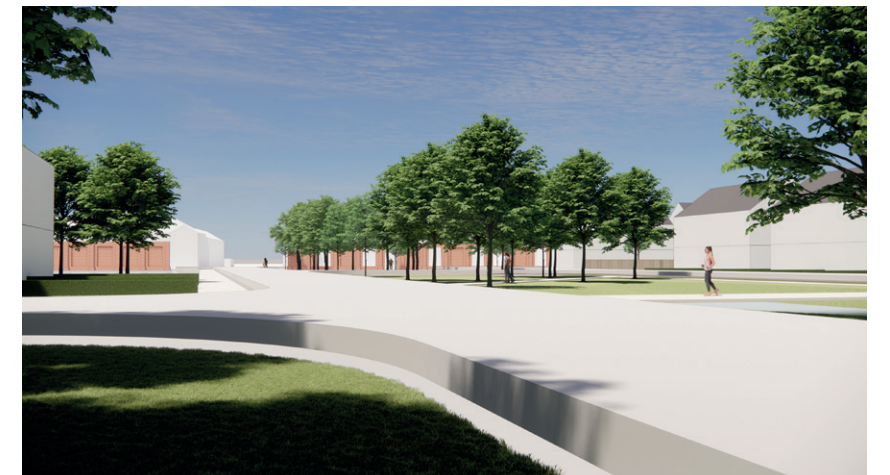


Fig 27 Street view showing residential streetscape with open green space

Development Phasing

- The phasing of Hawthorne Road/Canal Corridor is developed in response to the level of complexity across the sites in terms of existing use, landownership and known constraints.
- The People's Site and Litherland House, are the most progressed and likely to come forward for delivery in the short term.
- The Council is already progressing disposal of the People's site, and we assume this will continue with a developer delivering this site in isolation. We are aware that the housing allocation does not cover the full extent of the site, so we would anticipate that the southern element of this site is developed at a later stage.
- Litherland House's canal frontage offers an opportunity to drive developer interest (either in the site in isolation, or the wider Hawthorne Road area) and provide a unique housing product in the area. This can also serve as a precedent for further development of the canal northwards where land ownership and other constraints are more complex.
- Following Litherland House, the Gas Works could come forward as the final element in the short term. Due to the remediation required, this will be a later phase development. Depending on the extent of the remediation, the northern end of the Gas Works site could come forward earlier than the rest of the site.
- Acorn Way will then be monitored as a long-term opportunity, with the Council continuing dialogue with landowners and considering its options for assembling the site.

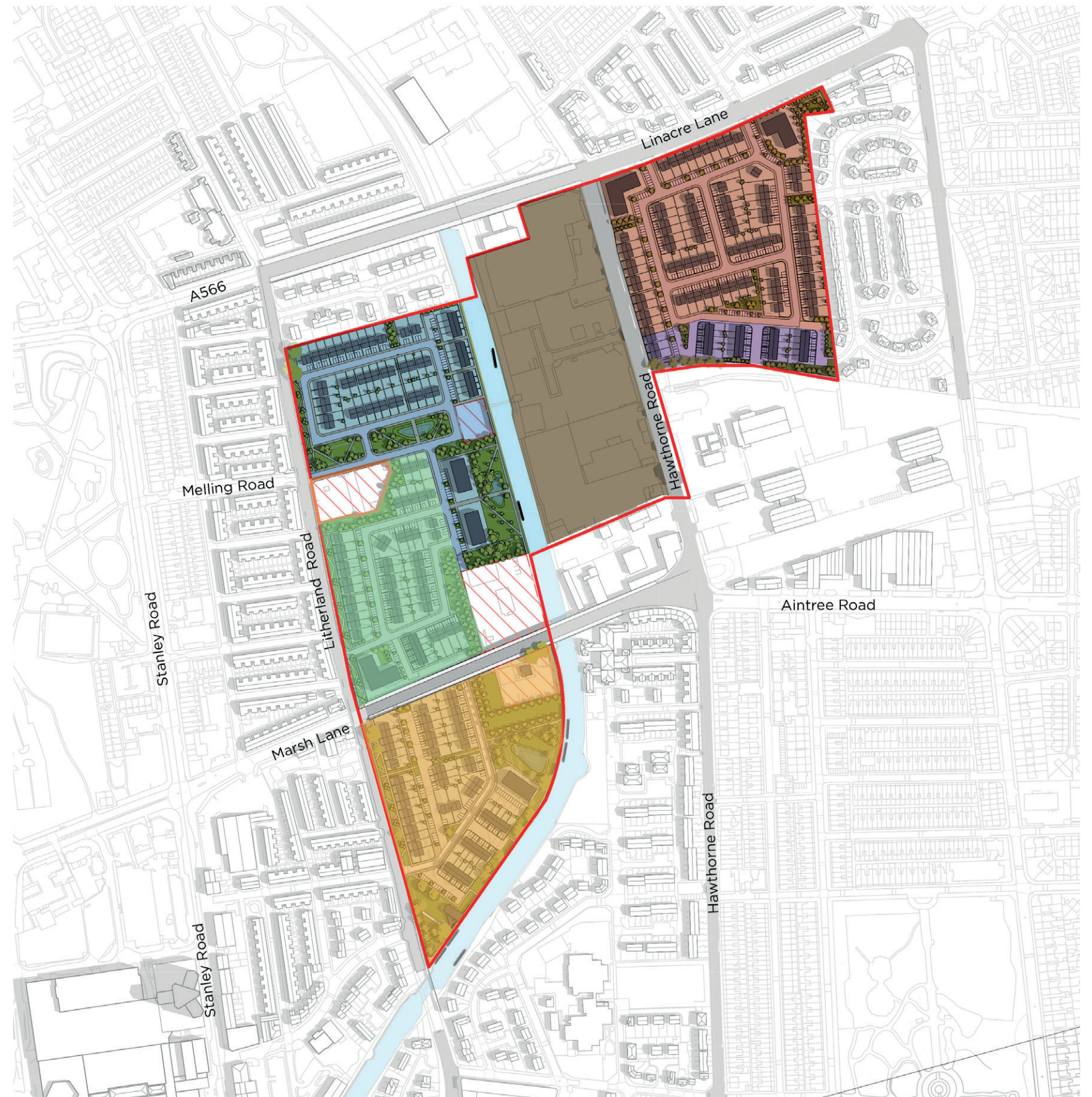


Fig 28 Hawthorne Road Proposed Phasing Plan

05 | Next Steps

There are a series of next steps that the Council and partners should consider to work towards bringing St Johns (Bootle Office Quarter) and Hawthorne Road/Canal Corridor sites forward for delivery.

These are:

- Seek approval for the Masterplan visioning document through the Council Cabinet so it becomes material consideration for any planning applications that come forward on the sites.
- On the back of engagement led by Avison Young, continue to engage with the freehold owners to understand aspirations and any progression they are making with developers / land agents. This could be in the form of a landowner forum.
- Continued engagement between Sefton's Planning team and landowners or developers to ensure that development is aligning with the masterplan vision.

For St Johns Site:

- Support engagement between the landowners to encourage bringing the site forward as one development in line with the masterplan vision.
- Consider the role of a public sector body including Homes England or the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in the delivery of the development.

For Hawthorne Road Site:

- Where the council own land, ensure that any sale to a housebuilder contains a development agreement that ensures that delivery in alignment with the masterplan vision.
- Consider a linked S106 agreement across the constituent parts of the site so that infrastructure such as affordable housing could be delivered on different parts of the site.
- Consider public sector intervention to remove and remediate gas holders which are currently a major barrier to development.
- Continued engagement with the freeholders and leaseholder at Acorn Way to support any longer term development in this area. Consider public sector intervention for potential acquisition.



Fig 29 Model render of both Hawthorne Road and St Johns sites

