

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 13 November 2008

Subject: St Helens Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Report of: Executive Director - Environmental Services

Contact officer: Martin Kimber 01942 404201 (Ext 4201)

Purpose / summary: St Helens Council is preparing its Local Development Framework Core Strategy Publication Report. This report recommends that we submit a representation to St Helens Council on the contents of their emerging Core Strategy approach for the development of an intermodal freight terminal at 'Parkside' to the east of Newton-le-Willows.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: The alternative option would be to not submit a representation on the St Helens Core Strategy. This would mean that we would not contribute to the shaping of the St Helens Core Strategy which will have significant implications for Wigan Borough.

Recommendation / decision: That Cabinet approves the contents of this report as the basis for Wigan Council's representations on St Helen's emerging Core Strategy.

Key Decision: This report involves a key decision within ground 1.

The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 25 November 2008

This item is included in the Forward Plan.

Risks / Implications:

Financial: No.
 Staffing: No.
 Policy: St Helens Core Strategy: cross boundary implications for Wigan Borough.
 Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted? The Core Strategy is being developed by St Helens Council. Diversity impacts will be considered by that council and have been considered in the preparation of this report.
 Wards affected: All.

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No.

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

Yes. Diversity impacts will be considered by St Helens and have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

The proposal is to submit a representation to St Helens Council seeking a change to their emerging Core Strategy Policy CAS3.7A. Diversity impacts have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **N/A**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

For Cabinet reports only:

Categorisation of the report:			
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	X
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
		13.11.08	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Title of document	Which meeting did it go to?	Date of meeting	Copy available from?
St Helens Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options			Civic Buildings New Market Street Wigan WN1 1RP or St Helens Council Town Hall Victoria Square St Helens WA10 1HP www.sthelens.gov.uk

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 20 October 2008

1.0 Background:

- 1.1 Cabinet has considered a number of reports on Wigan's Local Development Framework and, in particular, our Core Strategy Issues and Options Report that was approved for consultation in February and March this year. We intend to report our 'Preferred Options' to Cabinet on 5 February 2009 for consultation in March and April.
- 1.2 All districts have to prepare a Core Strategy. A report was presented to the meeting of Cabinet on 2 October 2008 on Bolton's Core Strategy Preferred Options. St Helens Council produced their Preferred Options late last year and are progressing towards the next formal stage in February next year. This report recommends the submission of a representation to St Helens Council on the contents of their Preferred Option for the development of an intermodal freight terminal at 'Parkside' to the east of Newton-le-Willows. The Preferred Option (reference CAS 3.7A) is set out in an appendix to this report.
- 1.3 Planning applications for this 'site' have been with St Helens and Warrington Councils for over 2 years. Planning Committee resolved to submit objections to the planning applications at their meeting on 4 November.

2.0 Proposals:

- 2.1 In accordance with (as then) draft Regional Spatial Strategy policy, St Helens Council seeks to designate an area at 'Parkside' - including land to the west and east of the M6 Motorway with access to the west coast mainline railway and east-west rail links - as an inter-modal freight terminal. The Green Belt boundary would be revised to accommodate this development.
- 2.2 The principle of developing an inter-modal freight terminal in this area has been accepted in the Regional Spatial Strategy subject to the details of policy RT8. This is in recognition of the need for substantial new infrastructure to drive forward the regional economy and achieve a shift from road to rail based transport, at least in terms of overall freight miles. However, as Planning Committee has resolved, we have a number of concerns about the details of what is proposed in the planning applications.
- 2.3 Given that the principle has been accepted, much of what is contained in Preferred Option CAS 3.7A is supported as appropriate policy criteria for considering the details of development, in particular the requirements that:
 - the site is developed only as an inter-modal freight terminal and for no other forms of development
 - all uses within the site are served by rail or are ancillary to rail-based uses
 - the local road network can accommodate traffic generated by the development without unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and traffic flows
 - there will be no unacceptable noise impact on local residents from the development itself or associated road and rail access routes
 - the impact on Green Belt and landscape character is mitigated by significant landscape enhancement including tree planting
 - measures are included for the minimisation of environmental impacts and contributions to sustainable development, including waste management,

renewable energy, energy efficiency, air quality, reuse of materials and access by public transport, walking and cycling

- training schemes will be put in place to increase the opportunity for the local population to obtain employment at the complex

- 2.4 All but the first two of these requirements are about the potential impacts of such a development on surrounding areas. However, while they could – and should – be applied to impacts of the development within Wigan Borough as well as in St Helens, there is no substantive recognition that development of the site will have an impact on an area wider than a single planning authority, or that it will provide key infrastructure that will stimulate regional economic growth.
- 2.5 Specifically, the Preferred Option recognises only the Green Belt impact on St Helens and Warrington. It recognises only that a more competitive and larger business base is a key objective for St Helens. It recognises only that worklessness is a key challenge for St Helens. It refers only to the opportunity for St Helens to be a regional intermodal transport hub. It identifies only that one nearby area in St Helens is ‘deprived’.
- 2.6 It specifically does not recognise that the ‘site’ is at the very edge of St Helens Borough and, indeed, has to include land in Warrington Borough to ‘work’. It also does not recognise that the site has ‘expanded’ across the M6 Motorway eastwards to abut the boundary with Wigan Borough, in the Green Belt. It fails to recognise specifically that development will have considerable impacts on Warrington and Wigan Boroughs, both positive – which need to be maximised; and negative – which need to be mitigated to acceptable levels. In this sense it fails to rise to one of the key challenges of ‘spatial planning’, that many issues do not respect local planning authority boundaries. This is particularly true of road and rail traffic impacts, which are covered in the resolution of Planning Committee on the planning application, and of the economic impact of the site.
- 2.7 The Preferred Option fails to promote the economic opportunities of such a development to surrounding communities. In particular, non-operational office development and supply-line businesses should not be located on-site. The policy should promote these but direct them towards more sustainable, existing and planned, policy compliant sites in or close to town centres, served by existing public transport ‘infrastructure’. A co-ordinated approach to spatial planning and economic development is needed to achieve this.
- 2.8 In doing so, there would be far greater potential to develop a more competitive and larger business base and tackle ‘worklessness’ and ‘deprivation’ where it is most acute across the mid-Mersey area. Green Belt land should only be brought forward for development that is needed and can only be achieved on a site that is within the Green Belt.

3.0 Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option:

- 3.1 The alternative option would be to not submit representations on the St Helens Core Strategy. This would mean that we would not contribute to the shaping of the St Helens Core Strategy which will have significant implications for Wigan Borough.

4.0 Conclusions:

- 4.1 Given that the principle of developing an inter-modal freight terminal at 'Parkside' has been accepted in the Regional Spatial Strategy, much of what is contained in St Helens Council's Preferred Option CAS 3.7A is supported as appropriate policy criteria for considering the details of development. However there is no substantive recognition in the document that the site is at the very edge of St Helens Borough, part in Warrington Borough and immediately adjacent to Wigan Borough. This is a significant omission in the Preferred Option as St Helens Council needs to work closely with this Council and Warrington Council to ensure that negative impacts are mitigated to acceptable levels and positive impacts are maximised for the benefit of the mid-Mersey area within which the site is strategically located.

D/MK/NC/JAW/

20 October 2008

Appendix: Extract from St Helens Local Development Framework Core Strategy Preferred Options

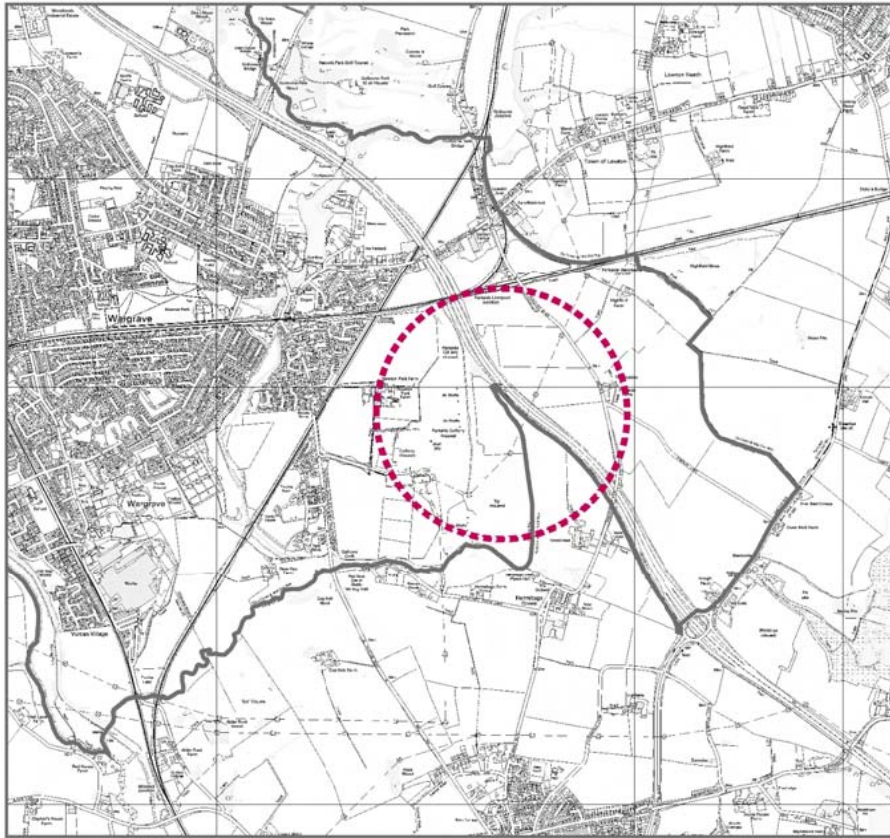
Preferred Option CAS 3.7A: Development of an Intermodal Freight Terminal



An area based on the former Parkside Colliery including land to the west and east of the M6 Motorway with access to the West Coast main line and Trans Pennine rail route will be shown diagrammatically on the Core Strategy diagram for development as an inter-modal freight terminal.

The precise boundaries will be determined following consideration of a detailed scheme which will need to satisfy the requirements set out below.

Subject to meeting these requirements the site will be removed from the green belt with the proviso that the site will only be developed as an inter-modal freight terminal and for no other forms of development:

- i. Compliance with criteria set out in Appendix RT5.1 of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy.
- ii. Direct access to the site from the M6 for HGVs can be obtained avoiding use of the A49 and A573.
- iii. The ability of the local road network to accommodate traffic generated by the development without unacceptable impact on residential amenity and traffic flows.
- iv. That the character and amenity of the Newton High Street Conservation Area is safeguarded.
- v. No unacceptable noise impact on local residents from the development itself or associated road and rail access routes.
- vi. All uses within the site are served by rail or are ancillary to rail-based uses.
- vii. Impact on Green Belt and landscape character is mitigated by significant landscape enhancement including tree planting.
- viii. Measures for the remediation of contaminated land, minimisation of environmental impacts and contributions to sustainable development including waste management; energy generation by renewable means; energy efficiency; archaeology; agricultural land; air quality; biodiversity; water conservation and sustainable drainage; reuse of materials; access by public transport, cycle and foot.
- ix. Provision for the positive management of existing environmental assets.
- x. Measures are in place to safeguard or relocate the Newton Park Farm Listed Buildings within the vicinity of Newton and preferably within the St Helens local authority area.
- xi. Training schemes will be put in place to increase the opportunity for the local population to obtain employment at the complex.



-  Parkside Intermodal Freight Term
-  Borough Boundary