

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 July 2009

Subject: St Helens Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Report of: Executive Director - Environmental Services

Contact officer: David Kearsley 01942 404234 (Ext 4234)

Purpose / summary: St Helens Council are at an advanced stage in preparing their Local Development Framework Core Strategy and have published a Publication Draft which is out for consultation until 8 July. Wigan Council previously submitted representations on the St Helens Core Strategy at the Preferred Options stage, in November 2008, on their approach for the development of an intermodal freight terminal at Parkside to the east of Newton-le-Willows. These have mostly been taken into account. This report recommends that we submit a further representation on the St Helens Core Strategy on the remaining unresolved issues.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: The alternative option would be not to 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 implications for Wigan Borough.

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

Key Decision: This report involves a key decision within ground(s) 2.

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 14 July 2009.

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 St Helens Council.
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.

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 CAS3.2. 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
		2 July 2009	

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 Publication Draft			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 17 June 2009

1.0 Background

- 1.1 St Helens Council published their Core Strategy Publication Draft on 14 May 2009. This is currently out for consultation until 8 July 2009. This report recommends the submission of a representation to St Helens Council on the contents of their Core Strategy Publication Draft for the development of an intermodal freight terminal at 'Parkside' to the east of Newton-le-Willows. Draft Policy CAS3.2 and a diagram of the Parkside site are set out in an appendix to this report.
- 1.2 A report was previously presented to, and approved by, Cabinet on 13 November 2008 regarding representations on the St Helens Core Strategy Preferred Options Document. Wigan Council submitted these representations in November 2008.

2.0 Proposals:

- 2.1 At the preferred options stage in November 2008, the Council supported a large part of the policy context, however had a number of concerns principally concerning the lack of substantive recognition that the development at Parkside would have an impact on an area wider than a single planning authority.
- 2.2 The majority of the representations that we made at this stage have been resolved. The remaining areas of concern are:
- There is a lack of recognition that the site has the potential to abut, or even extend into, Green Belt land within both Wigan and Warrington districts. No official boundary of the Parkside site is set out in the Core Strategy. Instead, there is an indicative site diagram which indicates directions for growth, including growth towards the Wigan Borough boundary (see appendix). There is therefore a need for more clarity as to where the site boundary, and consequent Green Belt boundary change, will be. Our main concerns include:
 - The development's visual intrusion on the countryside.
 - The narrowing of the Green Belt between St Helens and the Wigan urban area.
 - The traffic impacts of the development, particularly at the East Lancashire Road / Lane Head junction.
 - The Core Strategy states that worklessness is a key challenge for St Helens. However, there is no recognition that worklessness is also a challenge in both Wigan and Warrington, despite the site being located adjacent to their borough boundaries.
- 2.3 The St Helens Core Strategy will be considered by an independent inspector at an Examination in Public, at which our representations will be considered.

3.0 Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option:

3.1 The alternative option would be not to submit representations on the St Helens Core Strategy. This would mean that we would not contribute further to the shaping of the St Helens Core Strategy which will have 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 Core Strategy Policy CAS3.2 is supported as appropriate policy criteria for considering the details of development.

4.2 The Council has previously made representations on the St Helens Core Strategy at the Preferred Options stage. The majority of these representations have been taken into account in the Publication Draft, which we have welcomed. However, there remains no substantive recognition that the Parkside development site could potentially abut the Wigan Borough boundary and Green Belt land within the borough, or that worklessness is a key challenge for both Wigan and Warrington, in addition to St Helens.

Appendix: Extract from St Helens Local Development Framework Core Strategy Publication Draft

Policy CAS 3.2: Development of an Intermodal Freight Terminal

The Council recognises that the site of the former Parkside Colliery has the potential to facilitate the transfer of freight from road to rail. This area of land located to the west of the M6 motorway comprising 54.02 ha is shown on the Key Diagram. Planning permission will not be granted for any use which would prejudice the eventual use of the site as a freight interchange.

However, it is understood that for operational and commercial reasons a larger area of land extending westwards and to the east of the M6 motorway may be required to accommodate a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange.

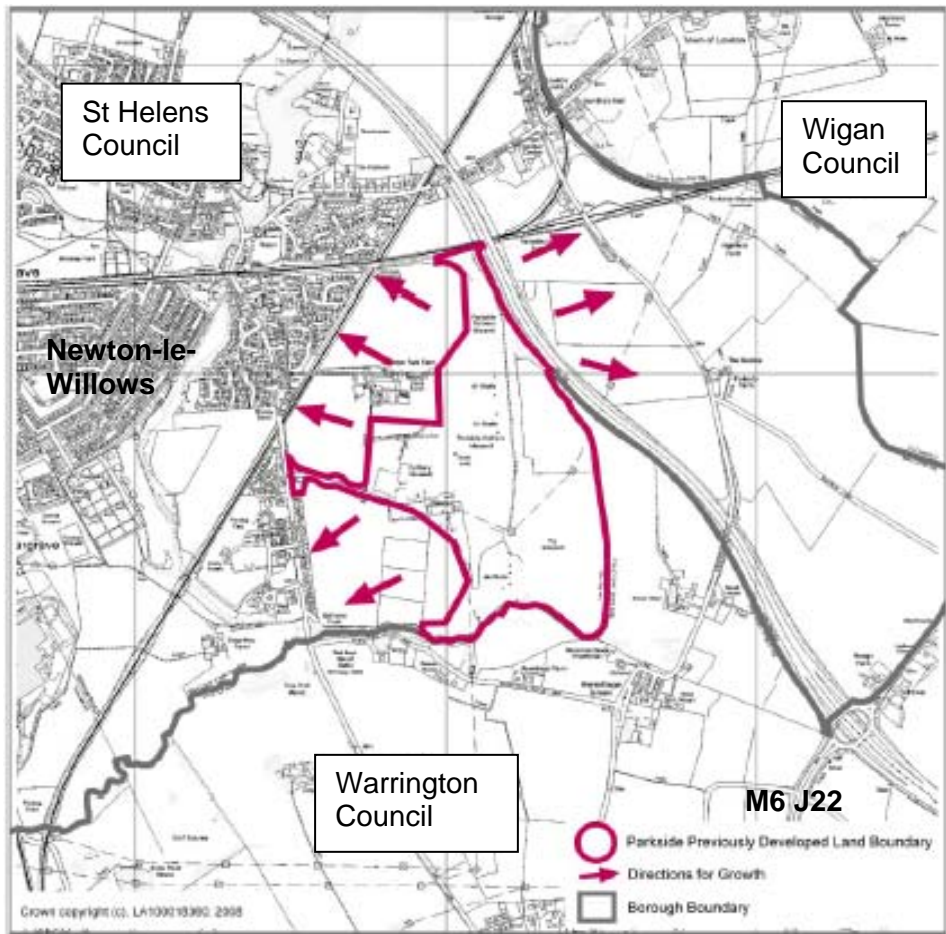
Subject to meeting the requirements listed below the site will be removed from the Green Belt with the proviso that the site will only be developed as a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange and for no other form of development.

The precise boundaries of any enlarged area will be determined following consideration of a detailed scheme. Any proposal for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange will need to satisfy the requirements set out below.

- i. It complies with criteria set out in Policy RT8 of the North West of England Plan to 2021 (RSS);
- 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 should have the prime purpose of facilitating the movement of freight by rail. Any ancillary uses to this main use must be directly related the movement of freight by rail and must demonstrate clearly why they need to be located on the site;
- vii. Impact on Green Belt and landscape character is mitigated by significant landscape and green infrastructure enhancement, including tree planting;
- viii. Measures for the remediation of land affected by contamination, 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 and new 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; and
- xi. Training schemes will be put in place to increase the opportunity for the local population to obtain employment at the complex.

If an appropriate proposal for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange cannot be formulated, and there is no prospect of such within a reasonable timetable, the future of the site will be reviewed and alternative uses assessed in the context of the Green Belt designation.

Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Site



Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Site