

**Summary of Proof of evidence of
DOUGLAS BISSET (for the Applicants)
on HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**

Call-in by the Secretary of State of an application made by
Omega St Helens Limited / TJ Morris Limited

Land To The West Of Omega South & South Of The M62, Bold,
St Helens

LPA REF: P/2020/0061/HYBR

PINS REF: APP/H4315/V/20/3265899

CD38.2A

March 2021

1 Statement of Experience

1.1 Personal Qualifications

- 1.1.1 My name is Douglas Bisset. I hold the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Civil and Transportation Engineering, from Napier University Edinburgh. I am a Chartered Transport planning Professional, a chartered member of the Institute of Logistics and Transport, a member of the Institution of Highways and Transportation and a member of the Transport Planning Society.
- 1.1.2 I have twenty-nine years' experience in preparing development masterplans, giving consideration to traffic and transportation related issues, and in preparing Transport Assessments for development proposals, throughout the UK.
- 1.1.3 I have been involved in the traffic and transportation aspects of the wider Omega Warrington site since 2003, producing Transport Assessment reports, technical notes, outline drawings and analysis to support the evolving development over the last 17 years. I led the traffic and transportation aspects of the Omega West (Omega Zone 8) development proposals, located within St Helen's Borough Council's administrative boundary, from initial concept through to Transport Assessment scoping discussions, the production of the Transport Assessment report and the further technical notes and analysis undertaken post-submission of the hybrid planning application P/2020/0061/HYBR. I have visited the site on numerous occasions and am familiar with the site and surrounding area.

1.2 Scope of Evidence

- 1.2.1 I have been instructed to appear on behalf of the applicants, Omega St Helens Limited and T J Morris Limited, to provide expert evidence on highways and transportation matters in relation to the hybrid planning application P/2020/0061/HYBR for B8 logistics and B2 manufacturing development on land to the west of Omega South and South of the M62, St Helens, generally referred to as Omega Zone 8 or Omega West.
- 1.2.2 In my main evidence I provide my assessment of highways and transportation matters for the subject site, together with a summary of my involvement from initial scoping discussions with the relevant highways authorities, through to St Helen's Borough Council recommending the grant of planning permission subject to

conditions and the completion of an agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

1.2.3 I set out my position in relation to the question raised in the Inspector's pre-conference note circulated on 4 March 2021:

"The effect of the proposal on:...

- *The highway network and how the development can contribute to meeting sustainable transport objectives"*

1.2.4 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this called-in planning application reference APP/H4315/V/20/3265899 in this proof of evidence is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the Code of Conduct of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2. Highways and Transportation

2.1 Involvement in Application

2.1.1 In my main evidence I set out the timeline from initial scoping discussions with highways officers of St Helens Borough Council, Warrington Borough Council and consultants acting on behalf of Highways England on 15 May 2019, through to preparation of:

- the Transport Assessment Scoping note [CD33.33, page 3]
- Scoping Note Clarification/Update [CD33.33, Appendix A, pages 27 to 30]
- Transport Assessment report [CD33.32]
- M62 Junction 8 mitigation (WSP drawing reference 11191042_SK326 [CD43.29])

2.1.2 The submitted Transport Assessment was reviewed by the three highway authorities, and further technical notes and supporting analysis (detailed and referenced in my main evidence) were prepared by me and my team to address matters raised through the planning submission review process.

2.1.3 As a consequence of this further technical work, WSP proposed additional mitigation to address Highways England's concerns on how traffic lanes would be used on the circulatory carriageway of the M62 Junction 8 grade separated junction. The additional mitigation involved widening on Skyline Drive (the access to the Omega site directly from M62 Junction 8) to provide two full lanes in either direction (WSP drawing reference 11191042_SK329) [CD43.30]. The proposed mitigation has now been delivered on Skyline Drive within land under control of the applicants.

2.1.4 Highways England provided a final highway consultee response to St Helen's Borough Council dated 20 October 2020 [CD34.28], confirming that all outstanding points had been addressed to allow a suitable understanding of the impact of the development on the strategic road network. The consultee response concluded recommending that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted.

2.1.5 Consultants acting on behalf of St Helen's Borough Council provided a highways consultee response dated 21 July 2020 [CD34.60], recommending no objection subject to conditions.

2.1.6 Warrington Borough Council provided a highways consultee response to St Helen's Borough Council dated 12 August 2020 [CD34.58], recommending no objection subject to conditions.

2.1.7 St Helen's Borough Council officer report to the Planning Committee dated 27 October 2020 [CD35.1] recommended the grant of planning permission subject to conditions and the completion of an agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2.2 Policy Alignment

2.2.1 Relevant Transport Policy was reviewed as part of the submitted Transport Assessment and subsequent technical submissions for the subject site, including national and local policy. In my main evidence I explain that it is my view that the proposed development aligns with the transport objectives within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [CD1.1], Warrington Borough Council's Local Transport Plan 3 [CD43.31] (current at the time of preparing the Transport Assessment) and Local Transport Plan 4 [CD43.32] (adopted in December 2019).

2.2.6 It is my view that the proposed development supports the aims of Policy CP2 of the St Helens Core Strategy Local Plan (2012) [CD2.2], ensuring a choice in mode of travel and providing good access to a road designated as a Freight Priority Route.

2.3 The effect of the proposal on the highway network and how the development can contribute to meeting sustainable transport objectives

2.3.1 In my main evidence I state that the submitted Transport Assessment has demonstrated the effect of the proposed development on the highway network and mitigation measures have been developed to ensure that the development can be appropriately accommodated.

2.3.2 I discuss the extensive pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the wider Omega site, connecting to the established external sustainable travel networks. The site benefits from existing public transport services in the form of Warrington no.13 and the bespoke Omega B52 bus services. The Omega site has embedded travel planning and initiatives are co-ordinated by Warrington Borough Council, to promote sustainable travel opportunities.

2.3.3 In my main evidence I summarise how the proposed Omega Zone 8 development will contribute to meeting sustainable travel objectives.

2.3.4 I discuss a high level bus route assessment plan [CD43.33], which shows two potential bus routes from the Omega West site to the centre of St Helens to show how the public transport contribution secured through the Section 106 Agreement could be deployed and best serve areas identified within the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

2.4 Planning Conditions

2.4.1 The relevant highways conditions for the subject site are conditions 15 to 26 ([CD35.1], pages 192 to 193) for the detailed planning application and conditions 84 to 91 (pages 206 to 207) for the outline application.

2.4.2 In my main evidence I set out reasoning why I consider Planning condition 19 should be re-worded, to reflect Planning Condition 88, to address the practicalities of gaining appropriate baseline data prior to the Unit 1 development opening.

2.4.6 I am satisfied with the remainder of the highways planning conditions.