



# **Land to the west of Omega South, and south of M62 Bold St Helens.**

Proof of Evidence of Mr Edward Mellor on  
Highways Matters

March 2021

Mott MacDonald  
Ground floor  
Royal Liver Building  
Pier Head  
Liverpool L3 1JH  
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)151 482 9910  
mottmac.com

St Helens Council

# **Land to the west of Omega South, and south of M62 Bold, St Helens**

Proof of Evidence of Mr Edward Mellor on  
Highways Matters

March 2021

**PINS Refs: PCU/CONS/H4315/3262458**

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Qualifications and Experience</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
<b>2</b>	<b>Scope of Evidence and Matters for Consideration</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Scope of my evidence	3
2.2	Bibliography	4
<b>3</b>	<b>The Proposals</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	Summary of Proposals	6
<b>4</b>	<b>Transport Policy</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1	National Policy	8
	National Planning Policy Framework	8
	Planning Practice Guidance: Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements	9
	National Planning Policy Framework - Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)	9
4.2	Regional Policy	10
	Third Local Transport Plan for Merseyside (LTP3)	10
4.3	Local Policy	11
	St Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (CS)	11
	St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035, Submission Draft January 2019	13
	St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035, Transport Impact Assessment, January 2019	14
	St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035, Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2018	16
	The Warrington Council Local Transport Plan (LTP3)	17
	Warrington Borough Council Standards for Parking in new Development (2015)	18
4.4	Policy Summary	18
<b>5</b>	<b>Transport Assessment Review</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1	Scope of the review	19
5.2	Transport Assessment Methodology	19
5.3	Impact on General Traffic	20
5.4	Committed Development	22
5.5	Traffic Growth	22
5.6	Assessment Scenarios	23
5.7	Vehicular Parking Proposals	24
5.8	Junction assessment	25
	Site Access Roundabout	26
	Catalina Approach / Omega Boulevard roundabout	27
	M62/Junction 8	28
5.9	Sustainable Travel	28

	Omega mode share	29
	Walking and Cycling	30
	Public Transport Accessibility Assessment	31
	B52 Bus Service	34
	Public Transport Summary	35
5.10	Framework Travel Plan	35
5.11	Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	36
5.12	Summary	37
<b>6</b>	<b>Statement of Matters</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Objections and Representations</b>	<b>41</b>
7.1	Preamble	41
<b>8</b>	<b>Summary and Conclusions</b>	<b>43</b>
8.1	Summary	43
8.2	Conclusion	43
<b>9</b>	<b>Statement of Truth</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>47</b>

# 1 Qualifications and Experience

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 My name is Edward Mellor. I am a Divisional Director with Mott MacDonald, a global, employee-owned multidisciplinary design consultancy. I have been employed within the Integrated Transport Division since 2004 which provides design services in all transport modes to the public and private sector.
- 1.1.2 I am a Chartered Engineer and a member of both the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation and the Institution of Civil Engineers and as such I am bound by their respective codes of conduct.
- 1.1.3 I was instructed in January 2021 by St Helens Council (StHC) in respect of the proposed development proposals at Omega Zone 8 to represent the council as their Highways expert witness. Mott MacDonald were engaged to provide review and responses to St Helens Council regarding the acceptability of the development proposals from a transport perspective. I was not involved with the evaluation of the application proposals, and as such I provide independent review and scrutiny of the transport proposals and review.
- 1.1.4 I have previously advised StHC and acted as an expert witness on their behalf, most recently at the conjoined Parkside Phase 1 and Parkside Link Road and Haydock Point North call-in Inquiries.
- 1.1.5 During my career I have gained over 30 years' experience in Transport Planning in both the public and private sectors and have been employed by Mott MacDonald since 2004. I have led and advised on numerous large-scale infrastructure projects with demanding logistics matters. I have significant experience in the appraisal of development impacts and identifying suitable mitigation measures to support sustainable travel options. I have advised and worked with Local Authorities, Government Departments, including Highways England and Department for Transport and developers of Nationally Significant Infrastructure projects.
- 1.1.6 My experience with the transport and logistics matters of large development proposals is relevant to the matters being considered at Omega Zone 8.
- 1.1.7 In preparation of my evidence I have carried a full and thorough review of the documents relevant to transport matters and I have advised the council accordingly.

- 1.1.8 I am familiar with the Omega Business Park and its surroundings within which the application site is set. I have visited the area and surroundings on a number of occasions and observed the traffic operation on the highway network. During the preparation of my evidence I have been party to meetings and discussions with Officers of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the applicants' transport consultant.

## 2 Scope of Evidence and Matters for Consideration

### 2.1 Scope of my evidence

- 2.1.1 My evidence is prepared with reference to the Transport Assessment (TA) [CD 33.32] submitted in support for the Omega Zone 8 proposals, as well as supporting documents listed in my Bibliography at Paragraph 2.2.2.
- 2.1.2 In my evidence I have reviewed the adequacy of the proposals. I have not elaborated further on matters which are contained within the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) relating to Highways and Transport matters with the applicant [CD 37.20] other than where it is useful for clarification purposes.
- 2.1.3 Whilst it is Highways England's (HE) position not to enter into a SoCG, it has nonetheless submitted a formal planning recommendation response [CD 34.28] offering no objection to the proposals and accepting the mitigation proposed to Junction 8 of the M62 (Appendix B & C).
- 2.1.4 Warrington Borough Council (WBC) are not making formal representations to this Inquiry and hence have declined to enter into a SoCG. However, WBC has confirmed that, subject to conditions it has no objection to the proposal [CD 34.58]. The position of WBC is contained in its consultation responses.
- 2.1.5 Matters agreed with the applicant in the SoCG can be summarised as follows.
- Planning Strategy
  - Suitability of access from Catalina Approach
  - Site accessibility for all vehicles to/from the Strategic Highway Network
  - Site accessibility by public transport and pedestrians and cycles
  - Improvements to bus accessibility
  - Baseline and transport Policy
  - Data, traffic flows, traffic distribution and traffic modelling
  - Committed and cumulative developments
  - Traffic Impact conclusions
  - Off-site Mitigation
  - Lorry parking and parking facilities
  - Travel Plan Framework
  - Planning Conditions

- 2.1.6 I will consider the following items in my evidence:
- The existing transport network and level of service, and a summary of the submitted scheme proposals.
  - The Transport Assessment and relevant updated technical notes and revisions.
- 2.1.7 In Chapter 3 I provide a summary of the development proposals as they relate to transport and highways.
- 2.1.8 In Chapter 4 I will consider relevant national and local transport policies and guidance.
- 2.1.9 In Chapter 5 I will summarise the approach taken by the developers' transport consultants to assessing the transport impacts.
- 2.1.10 In Chapter 6 I consider the relevant transport matters the Secretary of State (SoS) wishes to be informed about, in particular referring to SoS call-in letter 20 December 2020 [CD 30.XX]<sup>1</sup> and Case Management Conference note [CD 36.30]. Relevant to Highways and Transport are:
- The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong, competitive economy (NPPF Chapter 6)
  - The effect of the proposal on:
    - the highway network and how the development can contribute to meeting sustainable transport objectives.
- 2.1.11 In Chapter 7 I have considered Objections and Representations.
- 2.1.12 In Chapter 8 I provide summary and conclusions.
- 2.1.13 In Chapter 9 I provide a statement of truth.

## 2.2 Bibliography

- 2.2.1 The documents referred to and utilised as part of my review and relied upon on in my evidence are set out below.
- National Planning Policy Framework (2019) [CD 1.1].
  - Merseyside Local Transport Plan 3 [CD 22.33].

---

<sup>1</sup> Not allocated a Core Document reference as of 25 March 2021



- St Helens Local Plan Core Strategy [CD 2.2].
- St Helens Submission Draft Local Plan [CD 3.18].
- St Helens Local Plan Preferred Options [CD 3.22].
- St Helens SPD – Ensuring a Choice of Travel [CD 3.2].
- St Helens Guidance Notes for the Submission of Transport Assessments March 2016 [CD 30.XX]<sup>2</sup>.
- Statement of Common Ground relating to Highway matters [CD 37.2]
- Warrington Borough Council Standards for Parking in new Development (2015) [CD 30.XX]<sup>3</sup>.
- Warrington 3<sup>rd</sup> Local Transport Plan (March 2011) [CD 30.XX]<sup>4</sup>.
- Warrington formal planning response [CD 34.58].
- WSP Transport Assessment, main text [CD 33.32].
- WSP Transport Assessment Appendices [CD 33.33].
- WSP response to Mott MacDonald TA comments letter 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 [CD 34.71].
- WSP supplementary Appendices document [CD 34.73].
- Mott MacDonald Technical Note, Transport Assessment and Travel Plan Review 21 July 2020 [CD 30.60].
- Highways England Planning Response formal recommendation (16-01) 28 May 2020 [CD 34.28].
- MerseyTravel consultation response [CD 34.44]
- MerseyTravel comments [CD 34.45]
- Parameter Plans Pack [CD 33.188].

---

2 Not allocated a Core Document reference as of 25 March 2021

3 Not allocated a Core Document reference as of 25 March 2021

4 Not allocated a Core Document reference as of 25 March 2021

## 3 The Proposals

### 3.1 Summary of Proposals

- 3.1.1 The application site is located within St Helens. The eastern boundary of the site is the administrative boundary between St Helens and Warrington Councils. To the east of the boundary (in Warrington) are the Omega Business Park and Lingley Mere Business Park. A Parameter Plan [CD 33.188] shows the site in the context of its surroundings. Aside from the proposed site access roundabout all highway access is within Warrington.
- 3.1.2 The site is known as Omega Zone 8 and comprises of an area of 75 hectares (ha) of undeveloped greenfield land. The proposals were submitted as a hybrid planning application (P/2020/0061/HYBR) for c.205,500sqm (c.2,210,500sqft) B2/B8 industrial uses on Omega Zone 8, and are broken down as follows;
- Full Planning Permission for the erection of a B8 Logistics Warehouse (c. 880,000sqft) with ancillary offices, associated parking, infrastructure, and landscaping; and
  - Outline Planning Permission for Manufacturing (B2) and Logistics (B8) development with ancillary offices and associated car parking, landscaping, and infrastructure (detailed matters of appearance; layout and scale are reserved for subsequent approval).
- 3.1.3 Vehicular access will be via the Warrington highway network. The primary point of highway access will be from a new site access roundabout at the westerly end of Catalina Way. Catalina Way currently terminates at its westerly end with a temporary arrangement of site fencing and incomplete highway works. In my opinion this shows a clear intent to extend the Omega Park development westwards as the logical next development phase, otherwise Catalina Way would have been completed with vehicular turning head arrangement appropriate for a logistic use cul de sac.
- 3.1.4 At its eastern end Catalina Approach (also variously referred to as Catalina Way) connects into the wider highway network at the Catalina Approach/Omega Boulevard roundabout junction. To the north of the roundabout Omega Boulevard connects to Skyline Drive which provides direct access to the M62 (at Junction 8) without the need to traverse residential areas such as Lingley Mere. The distance from Junction 8 to the proposed Omega Zone 8 access roundabout is approximately 2km/1.25miles. 600m south of the Catalina Way/Omega Boulevard roundabout Lingley Green Avenue connects to

Omega Boulevard via a roundabout. The area of Lingley Green is predominantly residential.

- 3.1.5 Similar to much of the Omega Business Park highway network, Catalina Way has Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) prohibiting loading at any time. From my on-site observations I have seen very little evidence of on-street parking taking place on the Business Park.

## 4 Transport Policy

### 4.1 National Policy

4.1.1 I have reviewed national, regional, and local transport policies relevant to the Omega Zone 8 proposals.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

4.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [CD 1.1] sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is therefore a material consideration when determining planning applications. The most recent version of the NPPF published in February 2019 considers Promoting Sustainable Transport in Chapter 9. Of note for transport considerations are paragraphs 102, 103, 104, 108, 109 and 111.

4.1.3 Paragraph 102 makes specific reference to transport issues being considered at the early stages of proposal development in order that development impacts on the highway network can be addressed<sup>5</sup>. Opportunities for sustainable transport modes, such as walking and public transport should also be explored<sup>6</sup>.

4.1.4 The importance of the location of development is noted in paragraph 103. In particular locations that promote sustainable transport objectives and offers a choice of travel mode. It is noted that opportunities to make the most of sustainable transport options will vary between rural and urban locations.

4.1.5 Paragraph 104<sup>7</sup> concerns the importance of plan policy making protecting sites and developing infrastructure routes which are essential for the delivery of large developments and facilitate travel choice. Furthermore, it states<sup>8</sup> that planning policies should provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking.

4.1.6 Further consideration is given in Chapter 9<sup>9</sup> to development proposals and sustainable transport. Development sites are expected to ensure that appropriate sustainable travel opportunities are adopted, and suitable access is

---

5 Paragraph 102, bullet point a, page 30

6 Paragraph 102, bullet point c, page 30

7 Paragraph 104, bullet Point c, page 30

8 Paragraph 104, bullet point d, page 30

9 Paragraph 108, page 31

considered for all users. It is also recommended that transport impacts should be “*cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree*”<sup>10</sup>. Alternative travel choices are detailed in the Travel Plan Framework section of Transport Assessment main text document<sup>11</sup> [CD 33.32] and form part of the agreed SoCG [CD 37.2].

- 4.1.7 Paragraph 109 states “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”.

### Planning Practice Guidance: Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements

- 4.1.8 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is a supplement to the NPPF and provides the industry including decision makers with guidance to navigate through the planning system. PPG contains specific guidance in relation to the preparation of Travel Plans, TAs and Transport Statements (TS). PPG explains that a TA should be tailored to particular local circumstances.

- 4.1.9 PPG further states the TA may propose mitigation measures where these are necessary to avoid unacceptable or “severe” impacts, which could otherwise be a reason for refusal of an application.

### National Planning Policy Framework - Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 4.1.10 An update to PPG was published in 2019 addressing how authorities can assess need and allocate space for logistics.<sup>12</sup> Of relevance to transport is paragraph 31: How can authorities assess need and allocate space for logistics?
- 4.1.11 The important contribution that the logistics sector has in delivering economic benefits and supplying services and goods is recognised. Importantly NPPG acknowledges that the locational requirements of the logistic sector are different from those of “general industrial land” and this distinction should be considered in the formulation of planning policy.
- 4.1.12 Paragraph 31 continues by stating: “Strategic facilities serving national or regional markets are likely to require significant amounts of land, good access to strategic transport networks, sufficient power capacity and access to appropriately skilled local labour”.

---

<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 108, bullet points a, b and c, page 31

<sup>11</sup> Section 5, Page 31

<sup>12</sup> Paragraph 31, Reference ID: 2a-031-20190722

4.1.13 Where a need for such facilities may exist, strategic policy-making authorities are expected to collaborate with other authorities, infrastructure providers and other interests to identify the scale of need across the relevant market areas.

## 4.2 Regional Policy

### Third Local Transport Plan for Merseyside (LTP3)

4.2.1 The development of local Transport Plans is a requirement of the Transport Act 2000. LTP3 [CD 22.33] provides the long-term vision for the policies and plans that will guide the future provision of transport in Merseyside up to 2024. The LTP3 was published in 2011 and was developed in accordance with the first version of the NPPF.

4.2.2 The LTP3 has six goals, with equal status:

1. Help create the right conditions for sustainable economic growth by supporting the priorities of the Liverpool City Region, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the Local Strategic Partnerships.
2. Provide and promote a clean, low emission transport system which is resilient to changes to climate and oil availability.
3. Ensure the transport system promotes and enables improved health and wellbeing and road safety.
4. Ensure equality of travel opportunity for all, through a transport system that allows people to connect easily with employment, education, healthcare, other essential services and leisure and recreational opportunities.
5. Ensure the transport network supports the economic success of the city region by the efficient movement of people and goods.
6. Maintain our assets to a high standard.

4.2.3 The LTP3 states that<sup>13</sup>:

*“The success of any new developments depends to a large extent on getting the planning and infrastructure right. Pedestrian and cycle routes, public transport and vehicular access routes must be carefully designed to ensure that the schemes are sustainable and fully accessible. As these developments begin to come on stream the developer will need to undertake an in-depth analysis for the provision of future transport for access between the development and local communities, across Merseyside and the wider north-west region.”*

---

<sup>13</sup> Paragraph 5.45, page 110

4.2.4 Annex 4 of the LTP3 [CD 22.33] contains the Freight Strategy for the Liverpool City Region. The Freight Strategy directly supports Goal 5 of LTP3 to ensure the economic success of this city region by the efficient movement of people and goods. This is supplemented by the vision for SuperPort, which aims:

*“To bring together and integrate the strengths of the Ports, Airport and Freight Community to create a ‘SuperPort’ for freight and passenger operations within the Liverpool City Region that will become a key driver of its economy. It will create the most effective and cost-efficient environment for freight cargo logistics and passenger transit in the UK.”*

4.2.5 LTP3 Freight Strategy defines the Strategic Freight Network (SFN) in Merseyside<sup>14</sup>. The Strategic Freight Network identifies those routes most significant for the through movement of freight. The SFN covers the Merseyside authority regions. Relevant to the Omega Zone 8 proposals are the M62 and M6

### 4.3 Local Policy

#### St Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (CS)

4.3.1 The St Helens Local Plan CS [CD 2.2] is the principal planning document in the St Helens Local Development Framework (LDF). The CS contains policies to guide future development towards the spatial vision of St Helens.

4.3.2 The CS Spatial Vision is<sup>15</sup>:

*“In 2027, St.Helens will be a regenerated Borough. Taking advantage of its location between Liverpool and Manchester, it will have a vibrant economy, a healthy, safe, and attractive environment and inclusive, sustainable communities.*

*The Town Centre and its surrounding area will be the vibrant focus of the Borough, with expanded shopping and leisure facilities, a new stadium for St.Helens Rugby League Football Club and a redeveloped St.Helens College.*

*The majority of new housing developed, including affordable housing, will be developed in the core settlement of St.Helens, with particular priority on creating sustainable communities in the deprived areas, including parts of Parr, Thatto Heath, Four Acre and St.Helens Town Centre.*

---

14 Chapter 54, page 15

15 Chapter 4.2, page 48

*Previously developed land in sustainable locations within Haydock Industrial Estate and the M62 Link Road Corridor will remain priority areas for economic development, together with a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Parkside."*

4.3.3 Policy CSS 1: Overall Spatial Strategy, also states<sup>16</sup> that the following regeneration activity will be supported:

- Better links between areas of deprivation and economic development by promoting activity on sites within or in close proximity to areas of deprivation or those with good public transport access.<sup>17</sup>
- Measures for improving links between employment and residential areas<sup>18</sup>.

4.3.4 Policy CP2: Creating a sustainable future for St Helens<sup>19</sup>, requires development to be located where there is a choice of travel modes. More Specifically CP2 4(ii) states:

*"Ensuring development which generates significant movement of freight, is located on sites which are served by rail or where rail facilities can be provided as part of the development, or where these options are not available, locating where there is good access to a road designated as a Freight Priority Route".*

4.3.5 The M62 and M6 are designated as part of the Strategic Freight Network in the Merseyside LTP 3 Freight Strategy, Annexe 4. The location of the development proposals meets the requirements of Policy CP2.

4.3.6 Unlike Parkside SRFI<sup>20</sup>, the Core Strategy has no specific policy for the Omega development. Policy CP 2 is an important consideration in the context of Omega Zone 8 as it recognises the need for appropriate access arrangements.

4.3.7 CP1 has specific reference to ensuring a choice in mode of travel<sup>21</sup> in particular locating development where there is the opportunity to access sites via walking and cycling modes and opportunity to utilise public transport.

---

16 Section 2, page 39

17 Paragraph 2(ii) page 39

18 Paragraph2(iii), page 39

19 Section 13, page 96

20 Policy CAS 3.2; Development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) at the Former Parkside Colliery

21 Section 1 .



- The need to create a strong and sustainable economy for St Helens is captured in policy CE1: A Strong and Sustainable Economy<sup>22</sup>. The Policy states *“Sufficient land and premises will be provided to strengthen and diversify the Borough's economic base and to support the City Growth Strategy and other economic regeneration and development initiatives through”* Providing at least 37 hectares of land to meet local needs for B1, B2 or B8 purposes to 2027. This will be met though<sup>23</sup>;
- The identification of a range of sites within the Allocations DPD;
- Supporting the reuse, reconfiguration or redevelopment of vacant, derelict, or older employment land and premises for commercial purposes.

4.3.8 At paragraph 4 the Policy states: *“Focusing economic development to those sites that are either within, in close proximity to, or have easy public transport access to the most deprived areas of the Borough. Where this is not possible then developments will be expected to contribute to improving such links”*. There is a synergy with this Policy objective and that of CSS1 (4.3.3 of my evidence) also stresses the need to improve connectivity between residential and employment areas, together with connecting areas of deprivation to employment opportunity.

### **St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035, Submission Draft January 2019**

4.3.9 The Local Plan sets out the future development objectives of StHC and are an important part of the policy framework. The Local Plan will in time replace the Core Strategy.

4.3.10 Of note is Policy LPA 07 Transport and Travel<sup>24</sup>. Noted here is the strategic objective to use the transport network to amongst other things facilitate economic growth and access. Specifically,<sup>25</sup> ensuring that new development is sufficiently accessible by road transport, walking, cycling and public transport. The policy aligns with Core Strategy objectives of supporting development of significant generators of freight movement with convenient access to the Key Route Network (KRN).

---

22 Page 118

23 Paragraph 1

24 Paragraph 4.25, page 54

25 Paragraph 1(b)

4.3.11 Policy LPA04: A Strong and Sustainable Economy states that the Council will facilitate the provision of new jobs by ensuring a flexible supply of new high-quality employment floorspace, utilising existing employment areas and St. Helens' strategic location for logistics development. Omega Zone 8 (Site EA1 Omega South Western Extension, Phase 1, Land north of Finches Plantation, Bold) is identified as a site allocated in the Policies Map as employment land allocated for development.

### **St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035, Transport Impact Assessment, January 2019**

4.3.12 The Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) [CD22.22] is a supporting document to the submission draft Local Plan. The purpose of the TIA is to ascertain the impacts of the Local Plan proposals on the St Helens and Strategic transport infrastructure and the effectiveness of assumed mitigation measures.

4.3.13 Of relevance to the Omega Zone 8 proposal is M62/Junction 8. The TIA identifies this junction as requiring further consideration regarding the forecast operation (2033)<sup>26</sup>

4.3.14 The TIA provides a transport evidence base for the development objectives and land allocations. The specific proposals tested in the TIA are those in the Local Plan Preferred Options (LPPO) 2018 to 2033 [CD 3.22].

4.3.15 The findings from the TIA informed the development of the Local Plan Submission Draft [CD 3.18]. The TIA is a high-level assessment of the LP proposals and consequently further work will be required to assess specific network impacts as LP proposals are developed and planning applications brought forward.

4.3.16 Section 7.14 of the TIA considers the impacts on the Strategic Road Network (SRN), including Junction 8 of the M62 in both the 2017 base year, and 2033 forecast year with 4 scenarios:

- Do Minimum (DM) - committed development + planned infrastructure improvements.
- Do Something 1 (DS1) - all DM developments and planned infrastructure schemes + the Local Plan preferred site allocations.
- Do Something 2a (DS2a) reduces commuter trips originating St Helens by 5% to reflect the response to the range of strategic policies, improved technology and changing working habits.

---

<sup>26</sup> Page 132

- Do Something 2b (DS2b) - considers the effectiveness of small-scale capacity improvements at congested junctions on the KRN and implemented within St Helens by increasing the capacity on approach arms by 10%.

4.3.17 Table 41<sup>27</sup> of the TIA provides a summary of the above appraisal on the Strategic Road Network and is replicated below at table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Baseline SRN Maximum V/C Values (Table 41 from CD 22.22)**

Junction	2017 Base Year		2033 DM		2033 DS1	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
M62 Junction 7	96	96	100	100	102	101
M62 Junction 8	88	91	113	107	114	107
M62 Junction 9	100	100	103	98	103	100
M6 Junction 22	72	76	98	97	99	99
M6 Junction 23	100	100	107	106	115	109
M6 Junction 24	103	75	106	78	109	92

4.3.18 Volume to Capacity (v/c) ratio values are a measure of junction capacity derived from dividing the traffic volumes by the calculated theoretical capacity of the junction and is represented as a percentage. The TIA<sup>28</sup> states that a v/c level below 0.9 (90%) is operating satisfactorily, 0.9 – 1.0 (90% - 100%) is approaching absolute capacity and over 1.0 (100%) is over absolute capacity.

4.3.19 It can be seen in the above table that M62 Junction 8 is operating within capacity in the 2017 Base Year and is forecast to operate over capacity in the 2033 DM and DS1 scenarios.

4.3.20 Notwithstanding this, it is noted that the Local Plan impacts (when comparing the DM and DS1 outputs) are negligible in the morning peak and show nil detriment in the evening peak.

4.3.21 These outputs and conclusions are important in the context of the Local Plan TIA as the assessments include representation of the Omega Zone 8 development proposals. Employment Allocation 1 (EA1) Omega South Western Extension<sup>29</sup> has been included in all assessments and M62 junction 8 impacts are noted to be negligible at most.

<sup>27</sup> Page 130

<sup>28</sup> Table 20, page 95

<sup>29</sup> CD 22.22. Page 17

- 4.3.22 In addition to the traffic assessment of M62 junction 8, reference is also made to the Omega South Western Extension in the context of site accessibility, and table 10<sup>30</sup> refers to the accessibility of the site in the context of cycle routes, walk trips and bus routes.
- 4.3.23 The analysis confirms that there is a lack of good footways from local railway stations to the site, existing bus services are limited and both existing and proposed cycle routes are limited.
- 4.3.24 The accessibility of the site from the perspective of sustainable mode choices has been considered in the TA in this context and is set out further in Chapter 5 of my evidence.
- 4.3.1 The TIA is recognised as a high-level assessment and its purpose is to report the high-level impacts of the Local Plan proposals on the transport network. The detailed assessment of Junction 8 in the context of this application is explored further in Chapter 5 of my evidence. The traffic impacts of the Local Plan, of which part of the application site (~31ha) form a part and therefore considered not to be severe and hence acceptable in policy terms.

### **St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035, Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2018**

- 4.3.2 The Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) [CD 22.21] sets out the essential infrastructure required to ensure the delivery of the Local Plan proposals and support the strategic growth objectives in the Local Plan. Key infrastructure can include such things as community infrastructure, open space, education facilities or physical infrastructure such as highways. In general terms an IDP will include a mix of reinforcing existing, or provision of new infrastructure.
- 4.3.3 The IDP makes reference to the Junction 8 being identified in the TIA and the need for further work being dependent upon the adoption of the St Helens and Warrington Local Plans and Highways England Route Management<sup>31</sup>
- 4.3.4 I have also considered relevant local policy from Warrington Council. The proximity of the development site to Warrington, the fact that the site is an extension of the overall Omega Business Park and the reliance the site has on transport infrastructure within Warrington necessitates the inclusion of this information.

---

30 CD 22.22. Page 68

31 Paragraph 3.13 – 3.14

### The Warrington Council Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

4.3.5 Warrington LTP3 [CD XX.XX]<sup>32</sup> adopted in March 2011 and sets out Warrington's LTP strategy for the period 2011-2030. At the time of writing the TA it is noted that LTP4 was at the draft consultation stage. Relevant objectives of LTP3 have been listed below and are designed to build and manage a transport network that:

- Is integrated and customer focused and reduces the need to travel by car.
- Enables the regeneration of the Borough and supports economic growth.
- Maintains the highway, minimises congestion for all modes of travel and enables Warrington's 'smart growth'.
- Improves everyone's access to health, employment, education, culture, leisure and the natural environment.
- Enhances accessibility for those in disadvantaged communities or groups.
- Integrates with transport networks outside Warrington to enhance the sustainability of cross boundary travel.

I also note that the development proposals are in accordance with the following Actions and Policies set out in the LTP3.

AT4: Ensure that travel plans submitted at the planning application stage of the development control process fully consider the role of physical measures to support walking and cycling.

AT7: Seek to minimise potential conflict between different categories of Active Travel users and ensure that facilities introduced to benefit one category of user are not detrimental to the convenience, accessibility or safety of other users.

MT4: Seek to ensure that Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) use appropriate routes within the borough.

SC3: Encourage existing employers in the Borough to develop and implement effective Travel Plans

SC4: Ensure that Travel Plans submitted in support of planning applications are of appropriate quality and contain effective measures to facilitate and promote travel by walking, cycling and public transport, as well as schemes to reduce the need to travel.

---

<sup>32</sup> No Core Document reference allocated as of 26 March 2021

## Warrington Borough Council Standards for Parking in new Development (2015)

- 4.3.6 Warrington Council's Standards for Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) [CD 30.XX]<sup>33</sup> sets out the parking standards for Warrington. The SPD states that a travel plan or travel plan statement will be required as a key mechanism to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles and to influence travel behaviour in new development. It also states that the parking standards assume that all the main requirements of a travel plan will be met where required.
- 4.3.7 The TA provides clarity as to the relevant Warrington parking standards and their similarity to those adopted for use in St Helens can be ascertained.

### 4.4 Policy Summary

- 4.4.1 The Omega Zone 8 development is in effect an extension to the established Omega Business Park. To that end there is a network of established walking, cycling and road-based transport infrastructure that the proposed development can utilise.
- 4.4.2 There is no prospect of the development proposals being served by rail, however the site does have convenient access to the Strategic Freight Network (M62) as required by Core Policy CP2: Creating a sustainable future for St Helens.
- 4.4.3 The proposals are aligned to NPPF Chapter 9 by providing and facilitating appropriate access to all modes. Omega Zone 8 site is identified in the Local Plan (Site EA1) for future employment land development. The applicant has entered into a S106 agreement to deliver public transport improvements committing to the requirements of Policy CE1(4) paragraph 4 contributing to improving public transport links.
- 4.4.4 The proposals are supportive of the emerging Local Plan Policies LPA 07 and to make use of the transport network to facilitate economic growth and access.
- 4.4.5 I am satisfied that proposals are consistent with the relevant national, regional, and local transport policy and guidance. The TA considers the relevant policy context in Chapter 2. In addition, the interpretation of PPG used to set out a TA that is tailored to reflect local circumstances has been followed.

---

33 No Core Document reference allocated as of 26 March 2021

## 5 Transport Assessment Review

### 5.1 Scope of the review

- 5.1.1 The TA methodology adopted by the transport consultant (WSP) was submitted to and discussed with StHC in the form of a separate scoping document [CD 33.66].
- 5.1.2 The methodology adopted and assessment undertaken forms part of the agreed matters in the highways SoCG between StHC and WSP [CD 37.2].
- 5.1.3 The TA considers the transport impacts of the composite hybrid applications (full and outline).

### 5.2 Transport Assessment Methodology

- 5.2.1 The scoping undertaken and agreed with both St Helens and Warrington Council (WBC) and Highways England (HE). With the exception of the proposed site access roundabout all of the 'scoped' junctions are within Warrington, with the junction 8 merges and diverges being the responsibility of HE who also have an interest in the overall operation and performance of the roundabout. The agreed junctions/assessment locations are as follows:
- Burtonwood Road / Lockheed Road roundabout;
  - M62 Junction 8 signalised gyratory;
  - M62 Junction 8 merge and diverge slip roads.
  - Burtonwood Road / Charon Way signalised junction;
  - Burtonwood Road / Kingswood Road signalised junction;
  - Burtonwood Road / Westbrook Way roundabout;
  - Skyline Drive / Fairchild Road priority junction;
  - Omega Boulevard / Catalina Way roundabout; and
  - Omega Zone 8 roundabout.
- 5.2.2 With all the main junctions being in Warrington the only junction of direct concern for St Helens is the site access Omega Zone 8 roundabout. However, the operation of the Omega Boulevard / Catalina Approach roundabout is of interest to StHC given its proximity to Omega Zone 8.
- 5.2.3 It should be noted that Warrington Council and Highways England are content with the highways impacts and where appropriate, the mitigation proposed. Neither Warrington Council or Highways England were willing to enter into a SoCG but they have formally submitted responses of no objection [CD 34.28

and 34.58]. All matters are therefore agreed with the relevant local statutory consultees.

5.2.4 The TA approach can be summarised as follows:

- Review of relevant national, regional and local transport planning policy.
- Description of site location and review of existing site access arrangements, surrounding highway network and walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Description of existing public transport infrastructure.
- Description of the proposed development, proposed access arrangements and parking provision.
- Development proposals including accessibility by all modes.
- Workplace Framework Travel Plan.
- Trip generation and distribution.
- Assessment of traffic impacts.
- Summary and conclusions.

5.2.5 Following the agreement of the TA scope and submission of the application there was an exchange of technical documents with WSP. Relevant documents from this process are listed in the bibliography of my evidence in Section 2.2.

### 5.3 Impact on General Traffic

5.3.1 Omega Zone 8 will be accessed from Catalina Approach via the provision of a new site access roundabout (shown in Appendix A). All traffic will arrive and depart from the roundabout and Catalina Approach. All HGV traffic will travel north on Omega Boulevard to access M62/Junction 8. Non-HGV traffic can similarly travel north or may continue south towards Lingley Mere (Shown in Appendix B).

5.3.2 Trip generation and assignment to the local highway network has been appraised in Section 6 of the submitted TA. It was agreed during the TA scoping exercise that the trip generation should be derived from observed traffic survey data from selected B2 and B8 developments on Omega Business Park, and blended to create local B2 and B8 trip rates. This approach is consistent with the trip generation approaches adopted for the recent Parkside Phase 1 (PPh1) and Haydock Point North (HPN) development proposals which blended trip data derived from local site surveys (from Omega Business Park) and TRICS datasets. A sensitivity test was also undertaken which compared to two additional surveys from equivalent sites in Haydock and Knowsley. The outcome of both approaches is a bespoke local trip rate relevant for use in these applications.



5.3.3 This approach was appropriate for both PPh1 and HPN development proposals and was agreed with the Council during the TA scoping exercise. Omega Zone 8 is a natural extension to the existing Omega Business Park development. To that extent it is logical to use traffic data from the established B2 and B8 businesses on the site as being most representative of the development proposals. Classified traffic count surveys were undertaken at the following sites to produce a blended trip rate:

**B2 use class**

- Dominos industrial unit (10,917 sq. m) located to the south of Skyline Drive, and;
- Plastic Omnium unit (22,262 sq. m) located south of Omega Boulevard / Catalina Approach.

**B8 use class**

- Asda Industrial Unit (57,454 sq. m) located on Skyline Drive
- A combined survey of Lockheed Road serving numerous industrial units (combined floor space of 101,025 sq. m).

5.3.4 The trip generation rates reported in the TA were incorrect and were subsequently corrected by WSP in a Supplementary Technical Note document<sup>34</sup> [CD 34.73]. Table 5.1 shows the B2 and B8 combined trip generation, both pre and post correction.

**Table 5.1: Omega Zone 8 Trip Generation**

Type	AM Peak Hour (08:00-09:00)		PM Peak Hour (17:00-18:00)	
	Arrivals	Departures	Arrivals	Departures
<b>Pre-Correction</b>				
B2+B8 General Vehicle Trips (PCU)	198	42	120	219
B2+B8 HGV Vehicle Trips (PCU)	92	123	123	86
B2+B8 Total Vehicle Trips (PCU)	290	165	243	305
<b>Post-Correction</b>				
B2+B8 General Vehicle Trips (PCU)	230	52	132	251
B2+B8 HGV Vehicle Trips (PCU)	106	109	123	92
B2+B8 Total Vehicle Trips (PCU)	337	161	256	343

<sup>34</sup> CD [34.73] Appendix E, Table 2-5 Page 12 of 21.

5.3.5 For input to the junction modelling, the trip generation shown above is converted to Passenger Car Units (PCUs) as is accepted convention when assessing highway network impacts. I consider the trip generation methodology used for this assessment is appropriate.

5.3.6 I am satisfied that the approach to trip generation is appropriate for considering the development traffic impacts.

## 5.4 Committed Development

5.4.1 Section 8.4 of the TA sets out the committed developments and states that the approach has been agreed with Warrington Borough Council and HE, as follows:

- 2016/27313 – Lingley Mere Business Park residential (160 units remaining); and
- 2007/11923 – Burton Wood Services business (117,509sqft GFA), general industry (109,006sqft GFA), self-storage (25,005sqft GFA) and storage distribution (109,006sqft GFA).

5.4.2 I am satisfied with the agreement reached by the applicant, Warrington Council and Highways England that the above represent appropriate development for inclusion in the TA. In addition to the committed developments, the following consented development at Omega South are also taken into account in the TA:

- Zone 7 Mountpark B2 / B8 land uses (424,079sqft GFA remaining);
- Zones 3–6 residential (1,050 units remaining), discount food store (21,528sqft GFA), hotel and pub restaurant (30,677sqft GFA) and care home (80 beds);
- Omega Phases 4-7 residential development (300-unit net increase over Zone 3-6 allocation); and
- Zone 1 & 2 B1 development (640,000sqft GFA) – removed as part of scenario 5.

5.4.3 The inclusion of the Omega South development is appropriate for the planning strategy proposed as part of this application.

## 5.5 Traffic Growth

5.5.1 The Department for Transport's (DfT) Tempro V7.2 has been used in the TA to identify a growth factor for the existing traffic flows on the network to factor the surveyed flows to the opening year of the proposed development (2021). In

terms of settings, the area type was set to rural, the road type was set to principal and an average growth factor was selected.

5.5.2 The TA uses the same factor for both the AM and PM peak periods. The AM peak period TEMPRO factor has been used as a blanket factor in order to provide a robust assessment, on the basis that it is higher than the equivalent PM factors.

5.5.3 I am satisfied that the approach to traffic growth is appropriate for considering the development traffic impacts.

## 5.6 Assessment Scenarios

5.6.1 Two scenarios are tested in the TA which are as below. For ease of reference appendix K shows the various development zones in Omega Park and the respective planning proposals.

- Scenario 2 – 2021 Base year (2019 flows + growth) and committed development, and;
- Scenario 5
  - Omega Zone 8 proposals (and removal of zone 1/2 B1 development)
  - Omega Zone 1&2 B2/B8 development
  - 300-unit residential development

5.6.2 Scenario 5 has been developed to reflect changes to the wider Omega Park Development. Of note the applicant has entered into a s.106 agreement [CD 40.10] to ensure that a B1 consent (59,590 sq. m GFA) will not be implemented on Zones 1-2, leaving the remaining B2/B8 consent. This is also a matter of agreement in the SoCG between StHC and the applicant [CD 37.1]. In addition to this there have been a number of changes to residential consents on Omega Park which result in a net increase of 300 residential units.

5.6.3 No assessment has taken place within the TA for retention of the B1 element at Zones 1-2. As such, if the Secretary of State is minded to approve the application for Omega Zone 8 the development should not progress without confirmation with both St Helens Council and Warrington Council that the applicant has assigned and completed a unilateral s.106 agreement, which precludes B1 development on Zones 1-2. It follows that such a s.106 meets the tests in the CIL Regulations and National Policy as, “necessary” because the impact without such a restriction has not been tested.

## 5.7 Vehicular Parking Proposals

- 5.7.1 The vehicular parking numbers for the full unit proposed in the TA<sup>35</sup> reference the maximum parking standards in the St Helens SPD guidance<sup>36</sup>. The parking proposals for this detailed element of the application (Unit 1) are noted to be lower than the maximum requirements which by definition is acceptable with justification. In my opinion this approach is to be encouraged and will strengthen the Travel Plan objectives. In order to understand this reduced provision in relation to maximum standards, I have considered the Omega Business Park Travel survey (paragraph 5.9.4 of my evidence), which shows that although 81% of trips are made by car, 47% are car share.
- 5.7.2 Over providing car parking or indeed meeting the maximum car parking standards is very likely to undermine the objectives of the Omega Business Park and Omega Zone 8 Travel Plans of encouraging more sustainable modes of travel. The success of the Travel Plan measures including the use of the walking, cycling and public transport facilities will require sufficient controls over the level of parking provision.
- 5.7.3 TRICS database is a national database of development traffic surveys and is used as a data source for generating trip rates and parking requirements. The latest Guidance Note from TRICS<sup>37</sup> promotes the benefits of a 'decide and provide' rather than a 'predict and provide' approach. The ethos of this approach is that to continue with a predict and provide, (a technique based on historic data) will simply serve to perpetuate past trends. Decide and provide is an approach that attempts to influence travel behaviour choices, by providing the type of infrastructure that meets longer term objectives on increased active and sustainable mode travel.
- 5.7.4 Measures can be applied by the site operator through the Travel Plan and appropriate design to limit the number of parking spaces available to single occupancy vehicles, and incentivise car sharing in a 'carrot and stick' approach.
- 5.7.5 The proposed parking provision is shown in table 5.2.

---

<sup>35</sup> CD 3.32 Section 4.6, page 29

<sup>36</sup> CD 3.2 Supplementary Planning Document – Ensuring a Choice of Travel, Section 4, Page 22

<sup>37</sup> TRICS Guidance Note on the Practical Implementation of the Decide and Provide Approach February 2021

**Table 5.2: Unit 1 proposed parking provision (including cycle & M'cycle spaces)**

	St Helens SPD (maximum standards)	Proposed Parking	Calculated Maximum Provision	Difference	Ratio
Standard Bays	1 Space per 100 sq.m	576	816	-240	0.7:1
Disabled Bays	3 spaces or 6% of total maximum standard whichever is greater.	35	49	-14	0.7:1
Motorcycle Bays	1 space per 1500 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	48	54	-6	0.89:1
Cycle Spaces	1 space per 1500 sqm (minimum of 2 spaces)	156	163*	-7	0.96:1
EV Spaces	No requirement	36	-	-	
HGV / Trailer Bays	No requirement	360	-	-	

\*minimum standard

5.7.6 I have undertaken my own assessment of the proposed parking provision to compare it against established B2 and B8 type businesses in Omega Business Park. Table 5.3 shows the proposed parking provision compared to the StHC maximum parking guidance (the guidance has a minimum for cycling) and calculates a parking ratio (delivered spaces vs maximum provision).

**Table 5.3: Existing Parking Provision at Omega Business Park**

Site	size of development sqm	Parking standard for Cars sqm per space	Required spaces in line with WBC guidance	Provided Spaces	Ratio
Dominoes	10,917	60	182	140	0.77:1
Plastic Omnium	22,262	60	371	240	0.65:1
Asda	57,454	120	479	436	0.9:1

5.7.7 The analysis presented in the above table demonstrates that the private vehicle parking provision of comparative Omega Business Park units ranges from a ratio of 0.65 to 0.9. On this basis it is suggested that the Omega Zone 8 provision of 0.7 is comparable as similar travel characteristics would be expected.

5.7.8 I am satisfied that the proposed parking provision is in accordance with the Core Strategy Policy objectives CIN1 & CP2 requiring development to provide suitable infrastructure and appropriate access together with the Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD [CD 3.2] by not overproviding car parking.

## 5.8 Junction assessment

5.8.1 The distribution of traffic generated by the proposal will have a direct impact on the highway network in Warrington and on the Strategic Road Network. As all but the proposed site access roundabout are within St Helens, a review of the operational assessments in the TA has not been considered by me or St Helens

Council. Views however have been sought from Warrington Council and Highways England.

- 5.8.2 Highways England (HE) have confirmed in Planning Response (HEPR 16-01) Formal Recommendation to an Application for Planning Permission 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 [CD 34.28] that the Omega 8 proposals are acceptable subject to conditions in Annexe A of the submitted response. Relevant to StHC is the proposed alteration to the road making at Junction 8 and the widening of Skyline Drive (un-dualled 2 lanes in each direction) between Junction 8 and Fairchild Road roundabout (Appendix B).
- 5.8.3 Works to widen Skyline Drive have recently been completed. I understand that this was done by the Omega Business Park owners for economies of scale and utilising contractors who were already undertaking other works on site.
- 5.8.4 The highway impact assessment (with the exception of Junction 8 merges/diverges and the site access roundabout) is wholly within Warrington Council (WBC) boundary as set out in Chapter 5.2.1 of my evidence. WBC formally responded to StHC 12 August 2020 [CD 34.58]. The response confirms that the WBC Planning Committee considered the Omega Zone 8 proposals at its meeting of 5 August 2020 and offered no objection subject to a number of requirements.
- A contribution of £180k per annum for a period of 5 years to support the diversion of the B52 bus.
  - A contribution of £10k per for a minimum period of ten years to support a coordinated approach to Travel Planning and alignment with the existing Omega Travel Plan.
  - Testing the resilience of the Warrington highway network in the event that the M62 is not available because of an unplanned event.
- 5.8.5 I am satisfied that the impacts on the HE network have been considered appropriately and mitigated and it has offered no objection to the proposals.
- 5.8.6 Warrington Borough Council have not made any formal submissions to the Call-in Inquiry. As such WBC have decided not to enter into a Transport and Highways SoCG with StHC. In my role as expert witness for StHC I have not reviewed the transport impacts in Warrington in detail.
- Site Access Roundabout**
- 5.8.7 The site access junction (Appendix A) has been modelled using Junctions9 and the results are provided at table 5.4 below.

**Table 5.4 Zone 8 roundabout analysis results**

Approach	2020 AM with Dev		2020 PM with Dev	
	RfC	Queue	RfC	Queue
Northern Arm	0.00	0	0.00	0
Catalina Way	0.22	0	0.17	0
Southern Arm	0.09	0	0.26	0
Western Arm (site access)	0.03	0	0.03	0

5.8.8 The modelling results illustrate that the junction operates within capacity during the AM and PM peak hours, at the 2021 opening year. This is not unexpected given the roundabout is to provide access to a proposed development and hence has no baseline traffic flows. The highest predicted reference flow capacity (RFC) is recorded on the southern arm of the roundabout which indicates an RFC of 0.26. An RFC below 0.85 is considered to be within capacity.

5.8.9 As such, the design of the junction is considered appropriate in both the opening year (2021) and for any future year, given that it would not be expected to be exposed to background traffic increases given it is not part of any through route carrying non-development traffic.

**Catalina Approach / Omega Boulevard roundabout**

5.8.10 The Catalina Approach / Omega Boulevard roundabout (noted as Catalina Way in the table below) is the single junction access point connecting the development to the wider highway network. Whilst the junction is in Warrington, I consider it is useful to specifically consider the highway impacts and operation at this location.

5.8.11 It can be seen from Table 5.5 that the dominant flows are on Omega Boulevard. With scenario 5, the highest predicted RFC of 0.78 is recorded on Omega Boulevard (north) in the AM which is within the generally accepted RFC capacity level of 0.85, and as such the development impacts do not present a severe impact at this junction and are considered to be acceptable.

**Table 5.5: Omega Boulevard / Catalina Approach**

	Scenario 2 (2021 Base)			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue	RFC	Queue
Omega Boulevard (S)	0.38	0.62	0.41	0.69
Catalina Way	0.04	0.04	0.08	0.08
Omega Boulevard (N)	0.61	1.53	0.38	0.61
Scenario 5 (2021 PM + Phase 4-7 + Omega Zone 8)				
Omega Boulevard (S)	0.41	0.70	0.47	0.89
Catalina Way	0.13	0.14	0.30	0.42
Omega Boulevard (N)	0.78	3.42	0.56	1.24

**M62/Junction 8**

- 5.8.12 A mitigation scheme has been proposed to accommodate alterations in traffic demands associated with the forecast traffic demand. The mitigation comprises of amendments to the road markings at the junction. It is proposed to alter the lane allocation at the stop-line and upstream stop-line to accommodate two traffic lanes from the M62 westbound off-slip to Skyline Drive (Appendix C refers).
- 5.8.13 This mitigation has been accepted by Highways England [CD 34.28] and as such the development impacts do not present a severe impact at this junction.

**5.9 Sustainable Travel**

- 5.9.1 Locating development in areas with good access to sustainable travel modes, or the opportunity to provide such infrastructure is recognised in national and local planning policy. Maximising the access to sustainable travel modes has a benefit in reducing the use of motorised vehicles and has environmental, health and wellbeing benefits.
- 5.9.2 NPPF [CD 1.1] (paragraph 103) states the importance of locating development where it promotes sustainable transport objectives and offers a choice of travel mode.
- 5.9.3 St Helens SPD: Ensuring a Choice of Travel [CD 3.2] sets out the transport and access requirement guidance for developers with the key principles of:
  - Ensure the reasonable choice of access by all modes of transport to new development;



- Enable the provision of a balanced transport infrastructure which will provide access to employment, leisure, retail and other facilities for all residents and visitors;
- Reduce the environmental impact of travel choices, by reducing pollution, and improving the local environment;
- Provide a framework for future investment in the strategic road and rail network where a new development would create additional travel demand;
- Improve road safety;
- Promote healthier lifestyles by providing opportunities for people to walk or cycle for work or leisure purposes;
- Reduce the level of traffic growth and congestion on the strategic and local road network; and
- Encourage opportunities to improve the quality of development proposals by better use of space through the provision of less car parking spaces where appropriate.

### Omega mode share

5.9.4 Mode share data derived from the Omega Business Park Travel Plan survey provided by the applicant<sup>38</sup> indicates that Omega is primarily reliant upon the use of private cars. In summary:

- 81% of trips made by car;
- 47% undertaken by car share;
- 7% made by cycle;
- 1% walking trips; and
- 8% made by bus and 1% made by rail.

5.9.5 The results reveal the level of reliance on car trips, but the large percentage of car share trips is encouraging and an indicator of the value of the Omega Business Park Travel Plan.

5.9.6 Despite a good level of on-site supporting infrastructure, walking and cycling only account for 8% of trips. Bus trips are at 8% but there is opportunity to increase these trips with further investment in bus provision extending an existing St Helens bus service and diverting the B52 Omega bus service closer to the Omega Zone 8 site. The details of these proposals are considered later in my evidence. 1% of trips by rail is not unexpected given the distance to nearest

---

38 CD 34.60 Appendix C)

rail stations, Sankey for Penketh – 3.2km, and Warrington West – 3.8km, and the relatively infrequent rail service.

### Walking and Cycling

- 5.9.7 An existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) passes through the western extent of the site (footpath 102) and is shown in Appendix D. Footpath 102 connects the Bold area of St Helens to Bold Heath. The footpath links Gorsey Lane in St Helens to Warrington Road in Warrington. Footpaths 309 and 349 are located north of the M62 connecting Gorsey Lane and Burtonwood Road, via Joy Lane and onto M62 J8.
- 5.9.8 A walking accessibility assessment has been undertaken by Mott Macdonald. The walking isochrone is shown at Appendix E, and indicates that accessibility to the site on foot from St Helens is limited due to its relatively rural location on the outskirts of Warrington. Whilst PRoW 102 provides access to St Helens in the northwest and southwest, very few residences are currently located within the isochrones and hence are beyond a maximum acceptable 2km walking distance.
- 5.9.9 Footpath 102 requires walkers to negotiate a stepped footbridge crossing the M62 which is likely to be a further a barrier to the mobility impaired.
- 5.9.10 In terms of walking accessibility to key public transport links, both Sankey for Penketh and the new Warrington West rail stations are not likely to be accessible on foot from the site given they lie outside of a 2km walk.
- 5.9.11 The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) guidance document Providing for Journeys on foot states that the acceptable maximum walking distance for commuting trips is 2 kilometres.
- 5.9.12 StHC SPD Ensuring a Choice of Travel states<sup>39</sup> that walking isochrones should be provided for 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 minutes walking time. Based upon a walking speed of 1.4 m/s this equates to 400, 800, 1,200, 1,600 and 2,000 metre isochrones.
- 5.9.13 The existing bus stops located on Omega Boulevard and within the Lingley Mere Business Park also lie outside the preferable maximum 400m (5 minute) sankeyguidance [CD 3.2], although it is noted that the TA considers a potential bus stop located on the access to the site to satisfy the recommended 5-minute walk distance.

---

39 CD 3.2 Supplementary Planning Document – Ensuring a Choice of Travel, Paragraph 6.13 & 6.14, page 128

- 5.9.14 Similarly, for cycling, isochrones are considered for 10, 20 and 30 minutes based upon on a speed of 4m/s<sup>40</sup> and recognises a cycle distance of 8km (33 minutes) which can be considered appropriate.
- 5.9.15 A Mott MacDonald cycling isochrone is shown in Appendix F and demonstrates reasonable coverage of nearby residential areas. The cycling accessibility discounts use of PRow 102 from north of the M62 as the motorway overbridge is stepped and the route is therefore to footpath standard only. It was noted that the equivalent cycling accessibility analysis undertaken by WSP in the TA includes PRow 102 which distorts the accessibility assessment of St Helens.
- 5.9.16 The applicant has recognised that that residential areas of St Helens are beyond the accepted 2km walking distance and much of the residential areas of St Helens are beyond the guideline maximum 8km cycle distance.
- 5.9.17 Notwithstanding the potential unsatisfactory nature of the walking and cycling distances to the site from St Helens, the applicant has proposed the realignment of PRow 102 to create a link into the Zone 8 and wider Omega development site. It is a matter of common ground that the realigned PRow will be managed and maintained by the applicant and the proposed alignment is shown in Appendix D.

### Public Transport Accessibility Assessment

- 5.9.18 As part of the review of the development proposals, Mott MacDonald undertook an assessment of public transport accessibility. To undertake the review, TRACC software was used to analyse multimodal travel times. TRACC software is widely used in public transport analysis in the UK. It uses imported datasets from the Department for Transport (DfT) to run multi-modal journey time calculations, which are then used to produce. The graphical output of this assessment is shown in Appendix F
- 5.9.19 The transport data used in the analysis is from Quarter 1 2020 and the population data is based on 2018 mid-year estimate of population. The isochrones are based on a 200m origin grid.
- 5.9.20 The TRACC analysis shown in Appendix F is for travel to the site for the AM Peak (07:00-09:00) time period.
- 5.9.21 The TRACC analysis demonstrates that within a 60-minute travel time there is at present limited provision for direct access from St Helens into Warrington,
-

particularly from the west of the Omega Business Park from St Helens Town Centre. On this basis, opportunities for extending existing services into Warrington and to the Omega site have been explored with MerseyTravel, and this is discussed further in the following Section (consistent with policy CE 1(4)).

- 5.9.22 The applicant recognises that much of St Helens is outside of the recommended comfortable walking and cycling distance and also has limited public transport connectivity. As such, the applicant has committed to financially supporting (see 5.9.38 of my evidence) the extension of a bus service to reinforce connectivity to St Helens and Warrington.
- 5.9.23 Discussion with Merseytravel [CD 34.44 & CD 34.45] have identified bus services 30 and 32 as the services likely to deliver the most benefit, including connecting areas of multiple deprivation in St Helens to Omega Business Park.
- 5.9.24 The 30 (Sutton Manor to Chain Lane) and 32 (Moss Bank to Sutton Manor) services largely follow the same routing with both services passing through St Helens town centre. The main difference between the two routes is that the 30 terminates in Laffak which is south of the A580 and the 32 traverses the A580 to Moss Bank.
- 5.9.25 The 30 service operates on a 30-minute frequency between 08:28 and 18:52 hrs, Monday to Saturday. The 32 service operates a 30 minutes service between 06:16 18:20 hours together with a limited Sunday service. The extension element of either route to Omega Zone 8 would follow the same alignment which would be from Sutton Manor via the A569 and A57 to Omega Park via Lingley Green Avenue
- 5.9.26 The routing and catchment areas and proposed route extension of both bus services are shown in Appendix H and I.
- 5.9.27 The accessibility assessment undertaken includes the proposed extension option of both the 30 and 32 service. The purpose of this assessment is to assess the how each bus service would connect recognised areas of deprivation in St Helens to Omega Park.
- 5.9.28 To assess the 30 and 32 bus routes a 400m buffer was used to assess the accessibility of the route to align with St Helens planning policy requirements<sup>41</sup>. Whilst this is a high-level assessment, it is consistent with the methodology I adopted for equivalent analysis of bus accessibility for the Haydock Point North (HPN) Inquiry in February this year (which was not subject to any criticism).

---

41 Policy CP2 Creating a sustainable St Helens, 4(i) Ensuring a choice of travel mode, page 96

- 5.9.29 To assess the population within the 400m buffer area postcode data was spatially joined to Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles and deciles of deprivation scores, based on the Lower Super output Area (LSOA) they fell within.
- 5.9.30 To disaggregate the population data, the total 2019 mid-year estimate population figures were divided by the total number of domestic residences within that LSOA, creating a population per residence figure to calculate the total for the catchment area. This population per residence figure was multiplied by the sum of residences to give a total population in the study area. This method ensures that the catchment population figures truly reflect where people reside within the area and again is consistent with the methodology used at the HPN Inquiry.

The following tables (5.6 to 5.9) detail the outputs of the accessibility analysis undertaken by Mott MacDonald.

Table 5.6 shows the population catchment within 400m threshold of Route 30 and Table 5.7 shows the population within the same threshold from the most deprived decile of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Tables 5.8 and 5.9 show the equivalent analysis for Route 32.

**Table 5.6: Route 30 – Population catchment**

Metric	Total
Total population within 400m of the current 30 bus route	26,948
Total working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the current 30 bus route	16,615
Total population within 400m of the extended 30 bus route	30,738
Total working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the extended 30 bus route	19,084

**Table 5.7: Route 30 – Catchment area of most deprived (10% decile) population.**

Metric	Total
Total deprived (most deprived decile) population within 400m of the current 30 bus route	8,894
Total deprived (most deprived decile) working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the current 30 bus route	5,736
Total deprived (most deprived decile) population within 400m of the extended 30 bus route	8,894
Total deprived (most deprived decile) working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the extended 30 bus route	5,736

**Table 5.8: Route 32 – Population catchment**

Metric	Total
Total population within 400m of the current 32 bus route	32,202
Total working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the current 32 bus route	19,994
Total population within 400m of the extended 32 bus route	35,992
Total working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the extended 32 bus route	22,463

**Table 5.9: Route 32 – Catchment area of most deprived (10% decile) population.**

Metric	Total
Total deprived (most deprived decile) population within 400m of the current 32 bus route	13,520
Total deprived (most deprived decile) working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the current 32 bus route	8,534
Total deprived (most deprived decile) population within 400m of the extended 32 bus route	13,520
Total deprived (most deprived decile) working age population (16 to 64) within 400m of the extended 32 bus route	8,534

- 5.9.31 When considering which route that has the greatest potential benefit it can be seen from Tables 5.8 and 5.9 that bus route 32 provides connectivity to a working age population in the most deprived decile of 8,534 people. Similarly, bus route 30 is 5,736 people. In summary bus route 32 has a potential catchment population almost 50% greater than route 30.
- 5.9.32 It can be seen from tables 5.7 and 5.9 that extending either bus route doesn't increase the catchment of the most deprived decile of employment age. However, it should be noted that the purpose of the route extension is to provide a direct bus connection to Omega Zone 8 and the wider Omega Business Park from St Helens.
- 5.9.33 In my opinion either bus route 30 or 32 meet the Core Policy requirements of CSS1 and CP1 to connect areas of employment opportunity to areas of deprivation and to offer a choice of travel mode.

**B52 Bus Service**

- 5.9.34 The B52 is an established bus service which serves the Omega Business Park site. The service has been supported through the Omega Business Park Travel Plan and connects Warrington Town Centre with the Business Park both north and south of the M62. The applicant has committed funding to extend the B52 service to Omega Zone 8. The existing and proposed B52 route are shown on Appendix J.
- 5.9.35 Extension of the B52 into the Zone 8 development site will give employees access to rail services in Warrington.

## Public Transport Summary

- 5.9.36 The nearest existing bus stops are located on both Omega Boulevard and within the Lingley Mere Business Park but these lie outside the preferable maximum 400m (5 minute) walk) and therefore are unlikely to be attractive for employees to make bus or linked bus/rail trips, particularly outside of regular commuting hours due to the early/late shift patterns. The Applicant recognises the barriers the Zone 8 site has to bus accessibility and has committed to an improvement plan which is a matter of agreement in the SoCG.
- 5.9.37 The applicant proposes to divert the existing B52 bus service into Omega Zone 8 as part of its route. In addition, a new bus stop will be installed within the Omega Zone 8 boundary providing less than 5-minute walking time from all four units.
- 5.9.38 The applicant has committed to a s. 106 contribution of £750,000 over a 5 year period for the extension of an existing St Helens bus service to the site, with the specific details to be implemented by MerseyTravel, which will make the site accessible from St Helens.
- 5.9.39 In my opinion the financial support to both the B52 and the 30 or 32 bus service extension are essential to provide the required level of connectivity. The bus services will not only connect areas of deprivation in St Helens they will also support the delivery of the Travel Plan initiatives and reduce the reliance of private car trips. The success of the B52 in contributing to an 8% bus mode share is encouraging. With the additional support described above a realistic increase in bus use as an alternative to the car is achievable.
- 5.9.40 The delivery of the public transport improvements is required by Policy CE1(4) and complies by contributing to improving public transport links. The measures to improve public transport access also support NPPF paragraph 109 , which requires development sites to ensure sustainable travel opportunities which are appropriate to the development are adopted, and appropriate access is considered for all users.

## 5.10 Framework Travel Plan

- 5.10.1 As the Omega Zone 8 application is in a hybrid form the applicant has developed a Framework Travel Plan (FTP). A detailed Travel Plan (TP) will be developed when the site is occupied. The contents, structure and commitments of the FTP are a matter of agreement in the SoCG and a planning condition.
- 5.10.2 The main structure of the FTP is as follows;
- Operational details of a shuttle bus service;

- Involvement of employees;
- Information on existing transport policies, services and facilities, travel behaviour and attitudes;
- Updated information on access by all modes of transport;
- Resource allocation including Travel Plan Coordinator and budget;
- A parking management strategy;
- A marketing and communications strategy;
- An action plan including a timetable for the implementation of each such element of the above; and
- Mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing, and implementing the travel plan

5.10.3 The Omega Zone 8 Framework Travel Plan will be aligned to the wider Omega Business Park Travel Plan. In real terms the applicant has committed to support bus services improvements, and a funding contribution to provide coordination between Omega Zone 8 Travel Plan and the wider Omega Park Travel Plan.

5.10.4 The Omega Business Park development has an extensive network of walking and cycling facilities, an established bus service and controlled parking levels which are all valuable assets for encouraging the use of sustainable modes.

5.10.5 The Travel Plan is expected to act as a complementary measure to the wider site Travel Plan and make continued progress in relation to reducing car borne trips, particularly those of single occupancy, consistent with national and local policy.

## **5.11 Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**

5.11.1 Separate CEMPs have been produced by the applicant's transport consultants for the construction of the site access roundabout and access to Unit 1 [CD 32.01], and the build-out of Zone 8.

5.11.2 The planned haul route for construction traffic is from Junction 8 of the M62, via Skyline Drive which is the most direct route to the M62. Access to the site will be via existing gates from Catalina Approach. To enable access to the adjacent Unit 1 site during construction of the site access roundabout a temporary 8m wide tarmac haul road will be constructed immediately east of the proposed site access roundabout linking into the Unit 1 site north of the carriageway.

5.11.3 The CEMP's will cover typical matters such as:

- Directional signage, and HGV routing;
- Operational hours;



- Material storage, loading and delivery;
- Street cleaning schedule;
- Incident management; and
- Off street parking plan.

## 5.12 Summary

- 5.12.1 The TA has been prepared following the methodology and scope agreed with StHC. There have been a number of supplementary documents produced to provide addition clarification and detail following initial submission. The process has engaged with the neighbouring authority of Warrington together with Highways England.
- 5.12.2 The nearest rail stations of Sankey for Penketh and Warrington West are beyond acceptable walking distances of 2km but within acceptable cycle distance of 8km stated in SPD Ensuring a Choice of Travel [CD 3.2]
- 5.12.3 Walking distances to St Helens exceed the 2km maximum stated in SPD Ensuring a Choice of Travel. Much of the residential areas of St Helens are outside of the maximum 8km cycle distance the in guidance.
- 5.12.4 The Framework Travel Plan reflects the hybrid nature of the application and provides a good basis for a detailed Travel Plan.
- 5.12.5 The proposed parking provision for the detailed element of the application is below the maximum provision derived from StHC guidance which is a positive measure to reinforce the adoption of alternative travel modes and encourage car sharing and support Core Strategy Policy objective CIN 1 and NPPF Paragraph 108.
- 5.12.6 Proposed highway mitigation is within Warrington and on the SRN (M62 / Junction 8) managed by Highways England. Mitigation has been agreed with both parties.
- 5.12.7 The approach to trip generation, growth, distribution and assignment together with the consideration of committed developments follows a logical methodology and was agreed by the applicant through a TA scoping exercise aligned to the objectives of StHC TA Guidance Note for the submission of Transport Assessments [CD 30.XX]<sup>42</sup>. The approach also follows NPPF Paragraph 102 which encourages transport issues being considered at the early stages of proposal development in order that development impacts on the

---

No Core Document reference allocated as of 26<sup>th</sup> March

highway network can be addressed, and exploring opportunities for sustainable transport modes, such as walking and public transport.

- 5.12.8 The proposed diversion of the B52 bus service, together with a contribution to support the diversion of an existing 30 or 32 bus services will strengthen the accessibility of the site and provide an alternative travel choice and off-set some of the walking and cycling access limitations of the site. This accords with the NPPF Paragraph 102 that encourages the adoption of opportunities for sustainable transport modes such as walking and public transport.

## 6 Statement of Matters

- 6.1.1 The Secretary of state has identified a number of issues that they wish to be informed about. Relevant to transport and highways are the following matters referenced from the management case conference.
- 6.1.2 Relevant to Highways and Transport are;
- *The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong, competitive economy (NPPF Chapter 6)*
- 6.1.3 NPPF Chapter 6 paragraph 84 recognises the challenges of development sites in locations that are not well served by public transport and the pressure that can result on the local road network. Where such sites are developed the policy recommends exploiting sustainable modes of travel.
- 6.1.4 In my evidence I have noted that Omega Zone 8 is not easily accessible to St Helens by walking and cycling. The accessibility assessment shown in Appendix E & F shows the result of the required 2km walking and 8km cycling isochrone assessment.
- 6.1.5 I have set out the accessibility analysis in section 5.9.18 of my evidence identifying how areas of multiple deprivation in St Helens can be connected to the Omega Business Park development by extending an existing bus service. The developer has committed to funding such a service for 5 years by contributing £150k per annum. In addition, the developer has committed to providing further funding of £180k per annum for 5 years to support the extension of the existing B52 Omega bus service.
- 6.1.6 Aligned to NPPF Chapter St Helens Core Strategy [CD 3.2] Policy CE1: A Strong and Sustainable Economy at paragraph 4 requires economic development to be focused on sites that are close to or have easy public transport access to the most deprived areas of the Borough. Development will be expected to improve access to acceptable standards.
- *The effect of the proposal on the highway network and how the development can contribute to meeting sustainable transport objectives.*
- 6.1.7 In Chapter 5 of my evidence I have considered the approach the applicants' transport consultant WSP undertook to assess the development impacts on the highway network. A scoping exercise was undertaken with StHC, WBC and HE

to determine the study area. The scoping exercise identified Junction 8 of the M62 and a series of local highway junctions all within Warrington.

- 6.1.8 A mitigation scheme to amend the road markings at Junction 8 has been agreed by HE with the applicant [CD 34.28]. Similarly, WBC have considered and agreed mitigation on their junctions. WBC offered no objection to the proposals [CD 34.58].
- 6.1.9 With regards to contributing to sustainable transport measures the applicant has committed to a S.106 agreement supporting and extending two bus services for a period of up to 5 years. The B52 service is an existing bus route specifically established to connect the Omega Park development to the wider community. The proposed extension of bus route 30 or 32 discussed in my evidence will further enhance connectivity to St Helens connecting areas of multiple deprivation.
- 6.1.10 The development proposals include car parking provision below the maximum levels in St Helens SPD guidance [CD 3.2]. This will support the Framework Travel Plan objectives and encourage the use of alternative modes of transport including bus.

## 7 Objections and Representations

### 7.1 Preamble

7.1.1 There are no Rule 6 objectors making representations at this Inquiry. However, during the planning application consultation process there were a large number of representations submitted.

7.1.2 There are a number of recurring topics in the representations which I have summarised below.

#### ***Unit 1 Parking Provision***

7.1.3 The parking proposals for the detailed element of the application (Unit 1) have been developed to respond to the requirements of the identified occupier and will be able to accommodate peak demands at shift changeover times.

7.1.4 The parking provision has been assessed against other existing units on the Omega Business Park site and found to be consistent with their provision in relation to *maximum* standards.

7.1.5 The parking provision proposed for the B8 development, which in conjunction with the requirements on occupiers to implement travel plans to promote sustainable travel, seeks to reduce the demand for car parking, and is therefore part of the strategy for reducing private vehicle borne travel. Further, other controls exist to control parking, should it become a problem for residential amenity (such as TRO's). However, this is not considered to be likely on the basis of the evidence.

#### ***Benefit to St Helens vs Disbenefit to Warrington***

7.1.6 Although the context of this representation is written in favour of the application from St Helens' perspective, it needs to be considered in light of the fact the highway infrastructure in Warrington has been thoroughly considered and tested as part of the Transport Assessment, and any disruption effects due to construction or impacts associated with operation have been demonstrated to be appropriate and not a severe impact in accordance with NPPF para 109. That conclusion applies in St Helens *and* Warrington, on the basis of independent assessments by St Helens and Warrington Councils as Local Highway Authority.

***Restrictions to Bridleway Network.***

- 7.1.7 At present, Public Right of Way 102 is only designated to footpath standard, and this is linked to the fact that the motorway crossing only has a stepped access and as such is unsuitable for cycle or horse use. A realignment and direct connection from the development site is proposed to this Public Right of Way, and the development does not therefore limit or remove expansion of the bridleway network associated with existing rights of way.

***Lack of support for the infrastructure.***

- 7.1.8 From the perspective of highway infrastructure, the amendments to the local highway network and to M62 junction 8 are deemed appropriate by both Highways England and Warrington Borough Council.

***Roads, schools, and doctors cannot cope with the level of development.***

- 7.1.9 The development is an employment opportunity and not an increase in housing, which would create additional demands on schools and doctor surgeries. In relation to the roads, the internal roads of the existing Omega development have been appropriately designed to accommodate heavy vehicles and forecast traffic movements. This is confirmed by the acceptance of Warrington Borough Council's highway authority and their recommendations in relation to the application.

***Cross Boundary implications and related applications***

- 7.1.10 The Transport Assessment considers the housing application for circa 600 units, which represents a 300 unit increase on consented numbers (application reference 2019/36241). The transport impacts of these units are accounted for in all junction assessments associated with the Zone 8 application and is part of the planning strategy for the application. Cross boundary concerns have therefore been considered (so far as relevant).

***Access benefits all skewed toward Warrington***

- 7.1.11 The development proposals include a commitment by the applicant to fund an extension of an existing public transport service from St Helens into Warrington and to the development site. Specific routing and service needs will be considered in conjunction with MerseyTravel and the service would be in operation from opening of the proposed development.

## 8 Summary and Conclusions

### 8.1 Summary

- 8.1.1 Within my proof of evidence, I have considered the assessment undertaken to present the transport impacts of Omega Zone 8.
- 8.1.2 In Chapter 4 I have consider the relevant national and local transport policies and guidance considered relevant to the proposals.
- 8.1.3 In Chapter 5 I consider the approach taken to assess the transport impacts.
- 8.1.4 In Chapter 6 I have considered the matters raised by the Secretary of State relevant to transport.
- 8.1.5 In Chapter 7 I have considered a summary of the representations and objections submitted during the planning application consultation.

### 8.2 Conclusion

- 8.2.1 In Chapter 4 I have considered the policy fit of the Omega Zone 8 proposals. Whilst the site has no means of access to the rail network, it does benefit from close and convenient access to Freight Priority Routes (FPR) M62 and M6. This a requirement of Core Strategy Policy CP2: Creating an Accessible. The M62 and M6 are similarly identified as the Strategic Freight Network (SFN) in Merseyside LTP3. Although the site has no opportunity for direct access to the existing rail network, on balance I consider that the benefits of convenient access to the FPR make Omega Zone 8 a good location for a distribution facility limiting impacts on the local highway network.
- 8.2.2 NPPF notes (Chapters 6 & 9) the importance of development, exploiting opportunities for delivering sustainable access and supporting the economic vitality of communities. This also aligns with Core Strategy Policies CE 1 and CIN 1.
- 8.2.3 The site has poor access to passenger rail services. The closest rail stations are Sankey for Penketh – 3.2km, and Warrington West – 3.8km. Both Stations are located to the south on Omega Park on the Liverpool to Manchester rail line. Both stations are beyond the recommended 800m walking distance to rail stations in St Helens SPD, Ensuring a Choice of Travel. However, both stations are within the 8km comfortable cycling distance identified by StHC.
- 8.2.4 The proposal site is not conveniently accessible by walking to St.Helens. StHC accept 2km as a comfortable commute by walking. Much of St Helens is

beyond this distance. The same guidance recommends 8km as a comfortable cycling distance. Whilst this extends further into St Helens the catchment area impact is nominal.

- 8.2.5 There is a bespoke B52 bus service that provides a connection to the wider community of Warrington. The nearest bus stop to Omega Zone 8 is outside the recommended 400m walking distance adopted by St Helens. The applicant has committed to fund a diversion of the B52 bus route to improve access Omega Zone 8 together with the installation of bus stop facilities.
- 8.2.6 In addition to the B52 service the applicant has committed to extend an existing bus service (likely to be the 30 or 32 route) to provide a connection to Omega Park and St Helens. Analysis of the proposed route shows that routing will provide connections to a number of areas of multiple deprivation.
- 8.2.7 In my opinion the locational benefits of being very closely located to the FPR together with the proposed measures to strengthen accessibility weigh in favour of the development and offset the existing access limitations walking and bus access.
- 8.2.8 In Chapter 5 I have reviewed the developers' approach to considering the development proposal transport impacts. As required by NPPF Chapter 9 the TA appraisal has followed an approach of working closely with highway and planning officers at StHC, WBC and HE and updating the TA with supplementary information as required. A scoping exercise was undertaken with the three highway authorities and the TA reflects local considerations.
- 8.2.9 The highway impacts (as agreed in the scoping exercise), including Junction 8 of the M62 are all within Warrington. Whilst I have not undertaken a detailed examination of these impacts, I note that the applicant has taken a logical approach to considering traffic impacts and that both HE and WBC have offered no objection to the proposals.
- 8.2.10 The Omega Zone 8 site provides a natural westerly extension to the well-established Omega Business Park development, and Catalina Way has been provided mindful of the potential extension. The TA has highlighted the sustainable access constraints the site has to address, and these have been considered and mitigated appropriately.
- 8.2.11 In my opinion the approach to assessing and mitigating the transport impacts is proportionate to the quantum of the development.
- 8.2.12 I have considered and responded to transport matters raised by the Secretary of State in Chapter 6 of my evidence.



- 8.2.13 In Chapter 7, albeit there are no Rule 6 Parties I presented some of the representations and objections relating to the more common themes that are relevant to transport and highways received by StHC during the planning application process.
- 8.2.14 I have used my professional judgement to carefully consider the development proposals which I have set out in my proof of evidence. My conclusion is that there are no transport impact or policy considerations that should prevent the proposals being granted planning consent. On the contrary, the proposal complies with all relevant transport policies in the statutory development plan and national policy.

## 9 Statement of Truth

- 9.1.1 The evidence I shall give is true, given in good faith and represents my professional opinion regarding the merits of the proposals and I have carried out my assessment in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the Institution of Civil Engineers and Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.

## 10 Appendices

### 10.1.1 List of appendices which are separately bound.

- Appendix A – Proposed site access roundabout.
- Appendix B – Highway route site access to Junction 8 / M62
- Appendix C – Junction 8 mitigation
- Appendix D – Public Right of Way crossing the development site
- Appendix E – Walking Access isochrone mapping
- Appendix F - Cycling access isochrone mapping
- Appendix G – Public transport accessibility mapping
- Appendix H – Bus route 30
- Appendix I – Bus route 32
- Appendix J – Bus route B52
- Appendix K – Omega Park development zones.

