

**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND ON
EMPLOYMENT LAND**

for

**OMEGA ZONE 8, ST HELENS (“OMEGA
WEST”)**

between

OMEGA ST HELENS LTD / T.J. MORRIS LTD

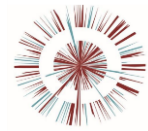
and

ST. HELENS COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 SECTION 77

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES
PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) RULES 2000**



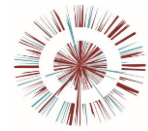
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REF: 2020/0061/HYBR
SECRETARY OF STATE REF: PCU/CONS/H4315/3252458
PLANNING INSPECTORATE REF: APP/H4315/V/20/3265899

SITE:

**LAND TO THE WEST OF OMEGA SOUTH & SOUTH OF THE M62
BOLD ST HELENS**

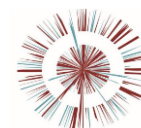
DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT:

HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT (MAJOR DEVELOPMENT); (i) FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE ERECTION OF A B8 LOGISTICS WAREHOUSE, WITH ANCILLARY OFFICES, ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPING; AND (ii) OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR MANUFACTURING (B2) AND LOGISTICS (B8) DEVELOPMENT WITH ANCILLARY OFFICES AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS (DETAILED MATTERS OF APPEARANCE, LANDSCAPING, LAYOUT AND SCALE ARE RESERVED FOR SUBSEQUENT APPROVAL)



1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement of Common Ground on Employment Land ('SoCGEL') has been prepared in respect of the Omega Zone 8, St Helens project (referred in the documents as 'Omega West').
- 1.2. It has been prepared between St Helens Council ('the Council') and Omega St Helens Ltd / T.J. Morris Ltd ('the Applicants') in order to clearly identifying areas of agreement and disagreement between the two parties in relation to the project.
- 1.3. It is a working document which may be updated in due course should ongoing discussions resolve, or refine, the extent of agreement / disagreement between the two parties.
- 1.4. This SoCGEL has been prepared in accordance with reference to the PINS Statement of Common Ground Guidance (August 2019).
- 1.5. It should be read alongside the SoCG dealing with planning issues which sets out the details of the development and relevant planning policy.
- 1.6. This SoCGEL deals with only the evidence base for employment land need is structured under the following sections:
 - Evidence Base documents
 - Evidence Base – key findings
 - Current Site Availability

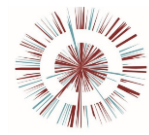


2. Evidence Base Documents

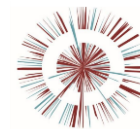
2.1. The Application Site is located in St Helens Borough. St Helens is one of six council areas within the Liverpool City Region (LCR). The Application Site’s eastern boundary is part of the local authority boundary between St Helens and Warrington. St Helens Council, Warrington Council and the LCR Combined Authority have produced evidence relating to employment land requirements to support plan making. The LCR evidence base also covers the West Lancashire Council area. The following documents form part of the Council’s evidence base and are a material consideration:

Table 1

	St Helens	Warrington	LCR
2012	St Helens Local Plan - Core Strategy (2012)		
2014		Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy (July 2014)	Liverpool City Region SuperPort: An Analysis of the Supply of, and Demand for, Distribution Space within the Liverpool City Region (March 2014)
2015	St Helens Allocations Local Plan - Economic Evidence Base Paper (EEBP) (September 2015)		
	St Helens Employment Land Needs Study (October 2015)		
2016		Warrington Economic Development Needs Assessment (October 2016)	LCR - Assessment of the Supply of Large-Scale B8 Sites June 2016
			Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership, November 2016
2017	Employment Land Needs Assessment Addendum Report (October 2017)		
2018			LCR - Strategic Housing and Employment Land Assessment (SHELMA) March 2018
			LCR - Assessment of the Supply of Large-Scale B8 Sites June 2018
2019	Employment Land Needs Assessment Addendum Report (October 2017, amended January 2019)	Warrington Economic Development Needs Assessment (February 2019)	Liverpool City Region Spatial Planning Statement of Common Ground (October) 2019
		Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2017-2037 (March 2019) (now withdrawn)	LCR - SHELMA Areas of Search Assessment (August 2019)



		LCR - SHELMA Areas of Search Assessment - Addendum (November 2019)
2020	St Helens Local Plan - Employment land need and supply background paper (October 2020)	
2021	SHBC response to preliminary matters and issues for examination including some initial questions and comments (January 2021)	



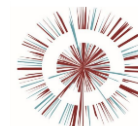
3. Evidence Base – Key Findings

St Helens Need

- 3.1. The Adopted Core Strategy (2012) identifies a requirement for at least 37 ha of employment land between 2012 and 2027. However, we consider this requirement to be very out of date and not reflective of recent and current demand.
- 3.2. The St Helens draft Local Plan (Submission version 2019) identifies a residual requirement for employment land of 215.4 ha (2018 to 2035). The 215.4 ha is based on an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) of 227.4 ha between 2012 and 2035, and then accounting for take up of 9.3 ha between 2012 and 2018 and existing supply of developable employment land of 2.7 ha as of 31 Mar 2018.
- 3.3. This was then increased by 3.8 ha to 219.2 ha by a proposed modification of the Local Plan AM015 (p20 and p22, St Helens Borough Local Plan 2020 – 2035, Response to the primary matters, issues and initial questions, January 2021). This is equivalent to 12.9 ha per annum.
- 3.4. The OAN is based on historic growth (which is called “baseline OAN”) plus an allowance for SuperPort and Parkside SFRI.
- 3.5. The St Helens Local Plan - Employment Land Need and Supply Background Paper (ELNSBP October 2020) updated the residual requirement for the time period 2020 to 2035, to take into account take up between 2018 and 2020, which was 56 ha (see Table 4.1 of the ELNSBP).
- 3.6. This results in a residual requirement between 2020 and 2035 of **165 ha**. This is equivalent to **11ha** per annum.

Warrington Need

- 3.7. The Adopted Core Strategy (2014) identifies a requirement for up to 277 ha of employment land for business, general industrial and storage/distribution (principally B1, B2, B8) to be available over the period 2006 to 2027. This compared to an available supply of 345.45 ha of employment land, including 130.19 ha at Omega Warrington. We consider these figures to be very out of date and not reflective of the current supply and demand in Warrington. The 2019 Warrington Economic Development Needs Assessment (February 2019) identified an OAN for employment land of 361.71 ha for the period 2017 to 2037. The supply of employment land in Warrington had reduced to 83.91 ha, including 59.97 ha at Omega Warrington at the time of this report.
- 3.8. The Warrington Proposed Submission Version Local Plan 2017-2037 (March 2019) includes a provision for a minimum of 362 ha of employment land between 2017 and 2037 for local and wider strategic land. In meeting this total requirement, the draft Local Plan includes the St Helens Omega West Extension site (31.2 ha), which is part of the Application Site.
- 3.9. Even including the Omega West site, as well as the 2019 supply and Town Centre and Waterfront Masterplan sites, there is a Green Belt requirement for 215.14 ha. The draft Local Plan identified Warrington Garden Suburb, Port Warrington and Waterfront Business Hub as meeting this Green Belt requirement, though these are long term schemes.



LCR Need

- 3.10. The LCR Strategic Housing & Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA, 2018) identifies a need for 1,590,000 sqm of B8 floorspace for the period 2014 to 2037 (SHELMA Table 69¹) in the 'Do-something/ Transport for the North Strategy'.
- 3.11. The LCR applies a plot ratio of 40%, resulting in a B8 land requirement of 397 ha (SHELMA Table 69).
- 3.12. The LCR then applies a 10% buffer resulting in a need for 437 ha of Strategic B8 land (Paragraph 2.9/Table 6, LCR Areas of Search Assessment, August 2019) for the period 2014 to 2037 .
- 3.13. This does not include: all B2 need (an additional 139.8 ha to 437.3 ha requirement between 2012 and 2037, SHELMA Table 62); small scale B8 (an additional 118 ha requirement between 2012 and 2037, SHELMA Table 62) or the need for additional land for specialist employment uses (including commodities storage and land needed to support major inward investments) across the LCR Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA).

St Helens Land Allocations

- 3.14. The St Helens draft Local Plan (2019) identifies 265 ha of employment land to be allocated, of which 234 ha is to meet St Helens' own need. It allocates 31.2ha of the Omega West Site (site 1EA) to meet Warrington's Need.
- 3.15. Of the 265 ha of allocated employment land, 251 ha are also identified by the LCR Areas of Search Assessment to meet the LCR need across Stage One and Stage Two.
- 3.16. The LCR methodology is to assume that for sites that could come forward as either B2 or B8, 80% of land would be B8 and 20% would be B2 (Footnote of Table 4, LCR Areas of Search Assessment; August 2019). This means that the LCR anticipates that the 251 ha of employment land would result in 213 ha of B8 land.
- 3.17. Of the 234 ha of employment land allocated to meet St Helens' need, 52 ha has already been delivered (Paragraph 4.2 St Helens Employment Land Need and Supply Background Paper, October 2020²), leaving a residual supply of 182ha.
- 3.17.1. This includes some land that will not be delivered until after the plan period (ie after 2035). Parkside East: is anticipated to be operational in 2030 but is not anticipated to be fully compete until 2045 (St Helens Employment Land Need and Supply Background Paper, Appendix 1 - October 2020).

Meeting LCR Need

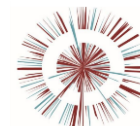
- 3.18. The LCR evidence base includes the LCR Areas of Search Assessment (August 2019)³ which identifies potential sites for meeting the LCR's identified need. This report was subsequently updated by the LCR Areas of Search Assessment Addendum Sheet (November 2019)⁴.

¹ Total of 1,590,000 sqm is the sum of replacement (952,000 sqm) and growth build (638,000 sqm)

² 52 ha is the sum of employment land at sites 2EA (36.67ha), 3EA (11.05ha) and 10EA (3.84ha) substantial take-up of employment land in the Borough in the past 8 years.

³ This was an update to a previous report published in June 2018 – LCR Assessment of the Supply of Large-Scale B8 Sites.

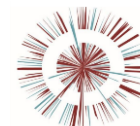
⁴ The addendum removes the Land to West of Haydock Industrial Estate west of Millfield Lane (Site 5EA, 7.75 ha) from Table 3 (which identifies sites as part of the Stage One Assessment); this site is included in Stage 2.



- 3.19. Stage One of the LCR Areas of Search Assessment (August 2019) identifies a total supply of 344.13 ha of B8 land (Table 6); this includes both committed supply (allocated or with planning permission at the time the report was written) and emerging / potential sites. This is subsequently updated to 342.68 ha by the November 2019 Addendum Sheet (Table 6).
- 3.20. Of the Strategic B8 land identified in Stage One, 166 ha of B8 land is assumed to be delivered by sites that are allocated in the St Helens draft Local Plan (based on November 2019 Addendum Sheet - Table 6⁵). This left a deficit of 94.32 ha in the LCR compared to the 437ha of need.
- 3.21. A second stage of site search then identified a further 359 ha of employment land at sites that were at the time unallocated, of which 281 ha was assumed to be B8 land (Table 8, LCR Areas of Search Assessment; August 2019)⁶. This included the following sites in St Helens (which are now proposed to be allocated):
 - 3.21.1. 25 ha of B8 land (31.2 ha total employment land) at Omega West that has been allocated to meet Warrington's needs (site 1EA in the draft Local Plan)
 - 3.21.2. 22 ha at of B8 land (27.5 ha total employment land) at 'Area of search at land to the west of Haydock Industrial Estate and land west of Millfield Lane'. This is a combination of Site 5EA (allocated 7.75 ha of employment land) and Site 6EA (20.58 ha of employment land) of the draft Local Plan
- 3.22. The allocation at Omega West cannot deliver for the LCR region as it is meeting Warrington's needs.
- 3.23. Excluding Omega West, sites allocated in the St Helens draft Local Plan are identified in the LCR work as meeting the need for 437 ha:
 - 3.23.1.1. Stage One of the identified 166 ha of B8 space in St Helens
 - 3.23.1.2. Stage Two identified a further 22 ha of B8 space (excluding Omega West) to contribute to the deficit left after Stage One.

⁵ The 166 ha is calculated by applying the LCR's assumption that 80% of the land on sites that could come forward as B2 or B8 would be B8

⁶ Stage 2 was not updated by the November 2019 Addendum Sheet

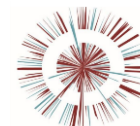


4. Current Site Availability

- 4.1. There are currently no sites available within St Helens administrative area that can offer a site of c 7 hectares to accommodate a unit of 27,870 sq m.
- 4.2. The St.Helens Local Plan 2020 - 2035 – Allocations for Employment Development, at Table 4.1 lists a number of sites that would form the land supply to 2035. It lists eleven sites, as providing the supply.
- 4.3. Of the eleven sites 1EA – 11EA, seven sites have a site area of 7 ha or more.
- 4.4. Of the seven sites of over 7 ha, 2EA - North Florida Farm, Haydock (36.67 ha) and 3EA land North of Penny Lane, Haydock (11.05 ha) have both been built out.
- 4.5. The remaining 5 sites - 5EA Land to the West of Haydock Industrial Estate (7.25 ha) and 6EA Land west of Milfield Lane (20.58 ha) cannot provide a regular shaped site to deliver a 27,870 sq m unit and are discounted.
- 4.6. The remaining three sites are 1EA Omega West, 7EA Parkside East and 8EA Parkside West. 7EA Parkside East has a specific policy (LPA 10) relating to its use as a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) and is excluded.
- 4.7. The only sites that are therefore capable of development for units in excess of 27,870 sq. m are EA1 Omega South West Extension and 8EA Parkside West.
- 4.8. The two sites are complimentary given the timescales for delivery and offer a choice of sites to occupiers.

5. Omega Business Park

- 5.1 The annual average floor space built out at Omega Business Park (Omega North and South) over the last 10 years is 47,612 sq m. This confirms the attractiveness of the Omega site to occupiers.



Signed on behalf of St Helens Council

Name *Anthony Meulman* .

Signature 

Position *Associate Director, BE Group*

Date *22 April 2021*

Signed on behalf of the Applicant

Name *Andrew Hunt*

Signature 

Position *Director, Quod*

Date *22 April 2021*

Signed on behalf of the Applicant

Name *Andrew Pexton*

Signature *Andrew Pexton*

Position *Director, JLL*

Date *22 April 2021*