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Date: 4 August 2018

Head of Service
Planning Policy & Programmes
Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
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Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Sir / Madam / Ms

Warrington Borough Council Local Plan - Preferred Development Option Regulation 18 Consultation July 2017

Merseytravel notes the above document, which is the currently the subject of a public consultation exercise, and in response to this due consultation process, Merseytravel would wish to offer the following comments.

Firstly Merseytravel welcomes the inclusion of statements within the proposed revisions to the Local Plan, which seek to recognise and protect the potential alignments of future High Speed / Northern Powerhouse Rail lines, such as the statement made in Paragraph 2.31.

Para 2.31 One specific comment related to the potential impacts of HS2 on the Green Belt Assessment findings. The HS2 route was not used as a boundary in the Green Belt Assessment as paragraph 76 of the assessment explains that 'only existing boundaries were used. Boundaries relating to proposed development or infrastructure were not used'. Given the likelihood and scale of HS2, Arup has subsequently reassessed those parcels adjacent to or in close proximity to the safeguarded route.

Based upon the positive recognition status, that the Plan thereby affords current High Speed Rail projects, Merseytravel would wish to request that Warrington Borough Council ensures that all elements of the revised Local Plan would offer appropriate protection for all current proposed options for High Speed and Northern Powerhouse Rail routes through the Borough, as defined within current rail industry documentation. It is Merseytravel's view, that this protection should be considered as part of all relevant elements of the Plan currently under consultation, such as the Garden City Suburb, the various relevant parcels of proposed housing development, and the potential western link road alignment.

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Secondly, Merseytravel additionally welcomes the statements made in the Preferred Option Document (July 2017), in respect of cross boundary cooperation upon potential, significant housing and employment land use sites that adjoin or are close to the Liverpool City Region -Warrington border, such as the statements made in paragraphs 2.38 and 2.39;

Para 2.38 In discussions with St Helens Council, Warrington has agreed in principle that the extension to the Omega employment site proposed in St Helens' emerging Local Plan should contribute to meeting Warrington's employment land needs. This is however dependent on demonstrating that the development can be accommodated by the improvements to Junction 8 of the M62 which are being undertaken to facilitate the development of the Omega site based on its current extent.

Para 2.39 In addition, the Council has met regularly with Halton and St Helens Councils (the other authorities within the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area) to specifically discuss housing need issues. Halton and St Helens are part of the Liverpool City Region and they are separately part of an assessment to understand development needs across the City Region area. Warrington is not part of the City Region but remains within the Mid-Mersey housing area so it is important to ensure that Warrington's evidence base work is consistent to that being under taken by the Liverpool City Region.

In line with these statements, Merseytravel would wish to request that any revisions to the Warrington Local Plan should pay due regard to the provision of adequate and appropriate sustainable transport links, including public transport alignments and services, between all areas proposed for future significant housing and economic development, within the Borough of Warrington, and all appropriate destinations within the Liverpool City Region.

I trust that the above comments clarify Merseytravel's views upon the current Warrington Local Plan consultation, however should you require any further information or assistance from ourselves upon this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely


Forward Planning Officer