

Langtree Property Partners

Warrington Local Plan Examination

Hearing Statement – Matter 2

July 2022



01 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 This is a Hearing Statement prepared by Spawforths on behalf of Langtree Property Partners (Langtree) in respect of:
 - Matter 2: The duty to co-operate
- 1.2 Langtree has significant land interests in the area and has made representations to earlier stages of the Local Plan process.
- 1.3 The Inspector's Issues and Questions are included in **bold** for ease of reference. The following responses should be read in conjunction with Langtree's comments upon the Warrington Local Plan 2021-2038 Submission Version, dated November 2021.
- 1.4 Langtree has also expressed a desire to attend and participate in Matter 2 of the Examination in Public.

02 Matter 2 – The duty to co-operate

Issue

- 2.1 Whether the Council has complied with the duty to co-operate in the preparation of the Local Plan.

Questions

Question 9: Specifically, how has the Council co-operated with St Helens Borough Council regarding the apportionment of the employment land at the Omega extension and what is the result of that co-operation?

- 2.2 The April 2022 updated Duty to Cooperate Statement (SP7a) explains on page 4 that “both authorities will continue to have dialogue as appropriate about the additional employment land available at Omega west, and the SoCG will be updated to reflect this”.
- 2.3 The April 2022 Statement of Common Ground (SP10) states in paragraph 4.11 and 4.12 that in principle the westward extension of Omega that is within the St Helens administrative boundary will contribute to meeting Warrington’s employment land needs, subject to resolving access issues.
- 2.4 Agreement 3 and 11 state:

WBC has agreed, in principle that the western 31.2 hectare extension of Omega in St Helens, as defined in the St Helens Local Plan Submission Draft (site 1EA, Omega South Western Extension, land north of Finches Plantation, Bold), will contribute to meeting Warrington’s employment needs.

WBC will continue to liaise with St Helens over the apportionment of the element of employment land at Omega west, which benefits from the planning consent issued by the Secretary of State in November 2021, but is above and beyond the 31.2ha proposed to be allocated in the St Helens Borough Local Plan.

- 2.5 Langtree considers that this agreed position reaffirms that there needs to be flexibility in the Plan and the identification of Six 56 Phase II as safeguarded land for long term development to provide flexibility within the Plan give this scenario.

Strategic housing and employment sites

Question 11: What cross boundary issues are there in relation to the Main Development Areas and how have these been dealt with through co-operation?

- 2.6 The April 2022 Statement of Common Ground (SP10) is clear on cooperation and agreements with adjacent authorities and key stakeholders in relation to the Main Development Areas. Paragraphs 4.20 to 4.26 explains the agreement with adjacent authorities on the South East Warrington Urban Extension and Employment Area, which culminates in Agreements 7 and 8 in relation to highways and transportation.
- 2.7 There are no cross boundary issues with regards to the South East Warrington Employment Area and the resolution to grant planning permission for the northern portion of the site, known as Six 56, in March 2022 confirms this. The committee report highlights that no objections to the proposed scheme were received from adjacent authorities or key stakeholders.

Question 12: Are there cross boundary issues that arise from strategic allocations or planning permissions in neighbouring authorities and if so, how have these been dealt with through co-operation?

- 2.8 As highlighted in response to Question 11 there are no cross boundary issues with regards to the South East Warrington Employment Area and the resolution to grant planning permission for Six 56 in March 2022 confirms this. The committee report highlights that no objections to the proposed scheme were received from adjacent authorities or key stakeholders.
- 2.9 Furthermore, this is reinforced by Cheshire East granting planning permission for the ecological mitigation (19/1685M).

Other strategic matters

Question 13: Taking each of the following in turn, what cross boundary issues are there and how have they been addressed through co-operation?

a) Green Belt alteration (within Warrington and elsewhere)

2.10 There are no cross boundary issues with regards to the South East Warrington Employment Area, which in March 2022 received a resolution to grant planning permission for the northern portion of the site, known as Six 56. The committee report highlights that no objections to the proposed scheme were received from adjacent authorities or key stakeholders. Furthermore, the Council's Statement of Common Ground and Duty to Cooperate statements highlight full agreement on matters.

b) Transport infrastructure and mitigation

2.11 The Council's Statement of Common Ground and Duty to Cooperate demonstrates that transport matters in relation to the South East Warrington Employment Area are fully agreed with adjacent authorities and National Highways.

2.12 The Statement of Common Ground states in Agreement 7 and 8 the following:

Agreement 7: WBC will continue to work with National Highways to ensure there is a full understanding of the impact of the proposed South East Warrington Urban Extension and South East Warrington Employment Area (both cumulative and individual) and to agree the detail of the required mitigation measures.

Agreement 8: WBC will share the outputs from the modelling work and seek to address any issues arising from the allocation of the South East Warrington Urban Extension and the South East Warrington Employment Area on the neighbouring authorities on Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester; including agreeing the mechanisms by which any mitigation measures within Cheshire East will be carried out and, in Cheshire West and Chester, if required.

WBC will provide information on the potential changes to commuting and migration flows arising as a result of the overall development proposed through the Local Plan particularly as they relate to Cheshire East, and provide greater clarity on their likely consequences for the transport infrastructure and networks within Cheshire East. This will form part of the Duty to Co-operate discussions.

2.13 The planning committee report for the first phase (Six 56) of the South East Warrington Employment Area demonstrates that there are no objections from National Highways or adjacent authorities and that all matters are agreed with appropriately worded planning conditions.

c) Other infrastructure needs

- 2.14 The planning committee report for the northern parcel of the South East Warrington Employment Area (Six 56) demonstrates that there are no objections from adjacent authorities or key stakeholders and that all matters are agreed with appropriately worded planning conditions.

d) Ecological/biodiversity issues

- 2.15 The planning committee report for the northern parcel of the South East Warrington Employment Area (Six 56) demonstrates that there are no objections from adjacent authorities or key stakeholders, including Natural England, Environment Agency and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. All matters are agreed with appropriately worded planning conditions.
- 2.16 Furthermore, this is reinforced by Cheshire East granting planning permission for the ecological mitigation (19/1685M).

e) Green infrastructure

- 2.17 As stated in response to d) above the planning committee report for the northern parcel of the South East Warrington Employment Area (Six 56) demonstrates that there are no objections from adjacent authorities or key stakeholders, including Natural England, Environment Agency and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. All matters are agreed with appropriately worded planning conditions.
- 2.18 Furthermore, this is reinforced by Cheshire East granting planning permission for the ecological mitigation (19/1685M).

Overall

Question 14: In overall terms has the Council engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in maximising the effectiveness of the preparation of the Local Plan?

- 2.19 Langtree considers that the Council has engaged effectively with adjacent authorities through the Duty to Cooperate and there are Statements of Common Ground. The Council has an agreed position with St Helens on Omega and there is no agreement on Omega Phase II, which emphasises the need for further flexibility in the Plan and the identification of safeguarded land.

Proposed Change

2.20 To overcome the soundness matters Langtree proposes the following changes:-

- Include flexibility in the Plan and identify safeguarded land, including Six 56 Phase II.