

Warrington Local Plan 2021-2038: Examination in Public

Hearing Statement by Peel L&P (Holdings) UK
Ltd (representor no. UPSVLP 0426)

Matter 6a: Main Development Area:
Warrington Waterfront

July 2022

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Client

Peel L&P (Holdings) UK Ltd

Our reference

PEEM3056

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement is prepared by Turley on behalf of Peel L&P (Holdings) UK Ltd (hereafter called 'Peel') in respect of the examination of the Warrington Local Plan 2021-2038. It provides Peel's response to the Matters, Issues and Questions ('MIQs')¹ identified by the Inspectors in respect of Matter 6a: Main Development Area: Warrington Waterfront.
- 1.2 The context to Peel's representations, including its development interests in the Borough, is set out in its Matter 1 statement.
- 1.3 This Statement should be read alongside Peel's statements in relation to Matters 1, 3, 4, 6b and c, 7a, b, c and d, 8, 11 and 14. It should also be read alongside statements submitted jointly on behalf of Peel L&P (Holdings) UK Ltd and Peel Ports (representor number UPSVLP 0438) which relate specifically to Peel's land interest at Port Warrington and Warrington Waterfront.

¹ ID02

2. Matter 6a: Main Development Area: Warrington Waterfront

Q5: Does the policy identify all appropriate and necessary infrastructure requirements? How will these be provided and funded? Is this sufficiently clear?

Q6: Have the funding and programme for the Warrington Western Link been confirmed? On this basis, is it reasonable to anticipate the first homes to be completed in 2027/28?

- 2.1 The Western Link relief road is identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) [Examination Document IN1] as a key part of the Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan ('UPSVLP') and necessary to realise the delivery of the Warrington Waterfront Main Development Area (Policy allocation MD1).
- 2.2 The IDP notes that the Western Link will cost c. £220m with committed funds totalling c. £142m in place and a funding gap of c. £72m. It is clear that the Government has committed significant funds to the Western Link and it is therefore unlikely that additional funds from the national purse would be available.
- 2.3 It notes an expected start on site for the delivery of the Western Link of 2023 and completion by 2025/26. It states that a planning application is to be submitted during summer 2021 to enable this. At the time of writing, the planning application for this development is still awaited.
- 2.4 Paragraphs 5.32 to 5.41 of Peel's 2021 representations to the UPSVLP [Document UPSVLP-0426-P1] set out that there is now significant uncertainty regarding the deliverability of the Western Link – an absolutely critical piece of infrastructure to deliver the plan, and the Warrington Waterfront – in light of the decision to remove previously proposed development allocations at the South West Urban Extension (SWUE) and Port Warrington as proposed through Policies MD3 and MD1 respectively of the 2019 Proposed Submission Version Local Plan ('PSVLP') [Examination Document PVLP 1]. These sites, which have an inherent relationship with the Western Link, were proposed to make a financial contribution to the Western Link which would have gone some way to addressing the funding gap. The Council is now closing off a critical funding stream in no longer proposing the allocation of Port Warrington and SWUE.
- 2.5 There are limited, if any, options for securing meaningful contributions from other developments towards the Western Link. The Council's viability evidence [Examination Document V1 and V2] clearly demonstrates that development at the Waterfront is, at best, very marginal in normal market terms² and so there is limited, if any, prospect of this development contributing to the Western Link. It is noted that the viability assessment assumes no off -site highway contributions and thus a financial

² See Examination Document V2 paragraphs 1.49, 1.67 to 1.98

contribution towards the Western Link has not been factored into the viability assessment³.

- 2.6 Whilst the 2022 addendum suggests an improved viability position following sensitive testing, viability is still not at a level where the development could tolerate making a contribution to the Western Link⁴.
- 2.7 As noted, the Western Link is a critical piece of infrastructure needed to deliver the Warrington Waterfront. In the circumstances, it is concluded that the allocation has not been proven to be deliverable over the plan period in the absence of any clear means of delivering the Western Link.
- 2.8 Further, given the delay to the progression of the Western Link planning application, and the funding gap which is evident, there is significant doubt as to the ability of the Warrington Waterfront allocation to begin delivering homes by 2027 / 28 as indicated in the Housing Trajectory at Appendix 1 of the UPSVLP. Even if the above matters were resolved, the Waterfront is evidently not going to be able to provide the number of homes assumed during the plan period owing to this with, at best, a latter start on start than currently assumed being a likely outcome.

Q13: Is the development proposed viable and deliverable within the plan period? What is the situation in relation to land ownership and developer interest?

- 2.9 Attention is drawn to the relevant sections of the UPSVLP viability evidence, as noted above, which demonstrate that the development's viability is, at best, marginal and, in this context, its inability to contribute towards the delivery of the Western Link which is necessary to enable the delivery of the Warrington Waterfront. The deliverability of the development is unproven at this point.
- 2.10 The reinstatement of allocations at the SWUE and Port Warrington would go some way to addressing this point of soundness by providing a means the Western Link can be viably delivered through providing some of the capital needed to address the current funding gap.

³ See Examination Document V2a Appendix 13

⁴ See Examination Document V1

Turley Office



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