

# Warrington Updated Proposed Submission (PSV) Local Plan Examination Hearing

## Statement from David Thrower in Relation to Matter 6f (Main Development Area South East Warrington Urban Employment Area)

### Matter 6f (South East Warrington Employment Area)

1. The proposal to establish a very large logistics employment centre close to the junctions of the M6 and M56 does not meet the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria of being positively prepared because it fails to sufficiently and realistically address the highly-likely adverse transport effects that would flow from its implementation. These are consistently played-down in the Plan.
2. The proposal would generate significant additional HGV, LGV and employee-car traffic on the surrounding highway network. It would be wholly unrealistic to expect this additional generated traffic to be solely confined to the M6 and M56 motorways. Its location would be difficult to serve economically by bus, partly because any bus service would be unlikely to be able to serve anywhere else, and partly due to the complete lack of non-commuter potential.
3. The SEWEA 6-56 logistics proposal is not justified in NPPF terms because it uses Green Belt land, that would otherwise be utilised for increasingly-important agriculture, rather than a brownfield site alongside the West Coast Main Line and (preferably, also) the Manchester Ship Canal.
4. The SEWEA 6-56 logistics proposal is not consistent with national policy. It is even in conflict with the Council's own policies. In the Logistics Growth Review - Connecting People With Goods, Department for Transport (DfT, November 2011, it states: "It is extremely important that more modern, high specification logistics buildings and intermodal terminals in the form of Rail Freight Interchanges are now approved." The 6-56 proposal does not meet this requirement, whereas a brownfield site alongside the West Coast Main Line (similar to Parkside, St Helens MBC) clearly does but is currently not being pursued by Warrington.

5. In the National Policy Statement for National Networks (DfT December 2014) it states: “The users and buyers of warehousing are increasingly looking to integrate rail freight.....This requires the logistics industry to develop new facilities that need to be located alongside the major rail routes.”
6. It further states “A network of SRFIs (Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges) is a key element in aiding the transfer of freight from road to rail, supporting sustainable distribution and rail freight growth and meeting the changing needs of the logistics industry.....SRFIs also play an important role in reducing trip mileage of freight movements on the national and local road networks.”
7. In the Rail Freight Strategy - Moving Britain Ahead (DfT September 2016) it states: “In 2014, HGVs were responsible for 17% of total UK transport emissions. Shifting more freight from road to rail therefore has the potential to make a real contribution to meeting the UK’s emission reduction target.....The key constraint to unlocking potential in this sector (is the) availability/construction of suitable rail-connected terminal facilities, including SRFIs.”
8. Under “Government’s policies for addressing need for SRFIs, it states: “The Government’s vision for transport is for a low carbon sustainable transport system that is an engine for economic growth.....The transfer of freight from road to rail has an important part to play in a low carbon economy, and in helping to address climate change.”
9. In the 2021 Department for Transport policy paper, “Decarbonising Transport - A Better, Greener Britain” it states: “We (the Government) will support and encourage modal shift of freight from road to more sustainable alternatives such as rail.....and inland waterways.....The modal shift of freight from road to rail would not only lead to a reduction in GHG levels, but also reduce congestion and noise pollution.”
10. The most recent statement of Government policy has emerged since my evidence was submitted to the Inspectorate. The Future of Freight - Long Term Plan (June 2022) states: “Rail freight is modelled to have resulted in 6.4m fewer lorry journeys in 2019-20, reducing congestion on the road.....At the heart of the Government’s ambitions for an improved planning system is more use of environmentally sustainable transport modes and a decarbonised transport network.....The area where (the) cross-modal approach has been most visible

has been in work to facilitate modal shift through investment in rail freight interchanges.”

11. It continues: “Interchanges such as (Daventry).....with rail connections to the West Coast Main Line and onwards to the Channel Tunnel and deep-sea ports.....allow the import/export and transport of goods in a strategic multi-modal and low-carbon fashion (and).....wider Government objectives around decarbonisation and congestion.....Government will consider the growing importance of major freight schemes to our economy, particularly the increasingly important role of strategic rail freight interchanges.....Building on the success of investment in strategic rail freight interchanges will require long-term strategic action from Government and industry.”

12. The above clearly sets out why a totally road-based logistics park such as the South East Warrington Employment Area is wholly inappropriate for the 2020s and beyond, and that its proposed construction runs directly counter to current and likely future Government policy.