

Parkside Action Group

Response to Parkside Phase 1 Planning Application

Traffic, Air Quality, and Planning Statement

March 2018



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Table of Contents

1	Purpose	4
2	Introduction	4
3	Traffic Assessment (TA).....	5
4	Air Quality	9
5	Planning Statement.....	12
6	Summary and Conclusions.....	19

Pictures Front Page Top to Bottom:

- 1. Summer Parkside East (proposed rail freight container depot)*
- 2. A49 near Parkside Entrance (proposed Langtree Warehouse Development)*
- 3. Winter Parkside East*
- 4. Summer Parkside East adjacent to the M6*

Document History

Version/Date	Author	Updates
Draft 0.1/05-Mar-2018	Dave Tyas	New document
Final 1.0/08-Mar-2018	Dave Tyas	Final amendments following reviews

Glossary

Term	Description
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
ELNS	Employment Land Needs Study
ES	Environmental Statement
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PLR	Parkside Link Road
RSS	(North West) Regional Spatial Strategy
SHC	St Helens Council
SRFI	Strategic Rail Freight Terminal
TA	Traffic Assessment

Document References

Ref	Filename/Description
1	P_2018_0048_OUP-PART_2_PAPER_2_TRAFFIC_AND_TRANSPORTATION-994159.pd Traffic and Transport Technical Paper, Curtins 03-Jan-2018
2	P_2018_0048_OUP-PART_2_PAPER_2_APPENDIX_2.1_-_TRANSPORT_ASSESSMENT-994108.pdf Transport Assessment, Curtins 11-Jan-2018
3	ES Air Quality P_2018_0048_OUP-PART_2_-_PAPER_8_-_AIR_QUALITY___DUST-994097.pdf Part 2 – Air Quality and Dust Technical Paper 8, RPS 11-Jan-2018
4	St Helens Council 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report, August 2016
5	P_2018_0048_OUP-PLANNING___REGENERATION_STATEMENT-993766.pdf Planning & Regeneration Statement, Spawforths 11-Jan-2018
6	PAG Response to SHC Local Plan Preferred Options December 2016

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This document provides a response to the Parkside Phase 1 Planning Application February 2018 Ref. P/2018/0048/OUP on behalf of Parkside Action Group.
- 1.2 The document addresses the following areas from the EIA included in the Planning Application:
 - a. Traffic Assessment
 - b. Air Quality
 - c. Planning Statement

2 Introduction

- 2.1 PAG was formed in 2006 to protect the land around the site of the former colliery from unsuitable development.
- 2.2 PAG has previously responded and contributed to several consultations and planning applications including:
 - North West Regional Spatial Strategy including Examination in Public, 2006 thru 2008.
 - Newton Park Farm Planning Application including NPPF considerations, 2007.
 - St Helens LDF Core Strategy 2009 thru 2012.
 - St Helens Local Plan (Preferred Options) 2016.
 - Astral/Prologis Parkside Planning Applications 2006 thru 2009.

3 Traffic Assessment (TA)

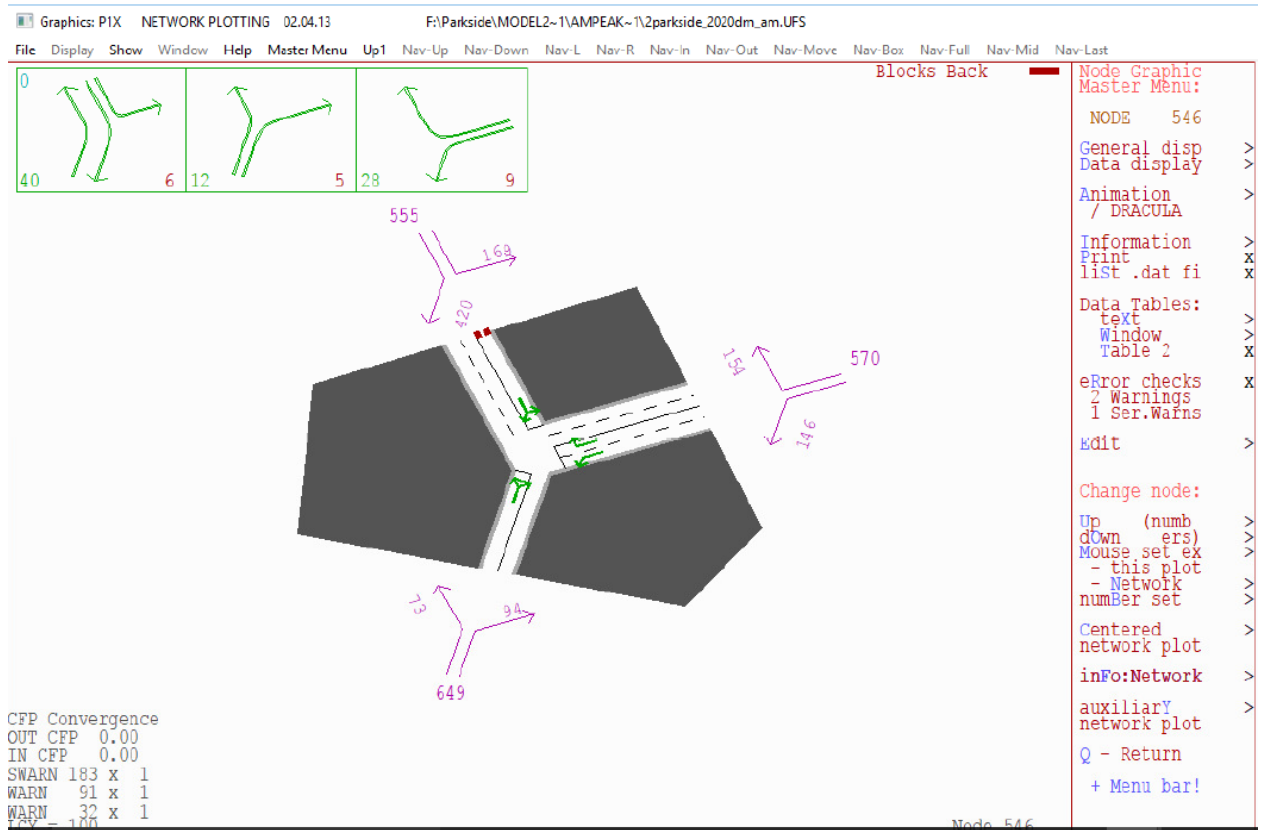
- 3.1 Two TA documents have been supplied as part of the ES, namely the Traffic and Transport Technical Paper (Ref 1.) and the Transport Assessment (Ref 2.). These documents contain a high level of duplicated content. This section of our response refers to these two documents.
- 3.2 Although the TA provides details of AM/PM peak flow rates and metrics on junction capacity, no information for overall daily site traffic volumes appear to have been supplied. Volumes should be broken down by employee, LGV and HGV trips in hourly increments over a 24-hour period. This information needs to be supplied so that reviewers may ascertain the anticipated scale of increased traffic volumes to local roads.
- 3.3 Further to this the assumption appears to be that AM/PM periods specified would be the peak period for the site when this may not in fact be the case (Ref 1, para 5.27). It is likely that operators at the site would operate 24 hours a day. The workforce is likely to work shifts. Operators are likely to move freight in certain key periods. None of this is detailed or appears to have been built into the traffic modelling.
- 3.4 The application proposes to use the A49 for all site traffic. The possible routing of traffic to/from the site is therefore as follows:
- i. A49 North, thereafter possible routes:
 - a. A49 Newton High Street
 - b. A572 Southworth Road
 - ii. A49 South through Winwick
- 3.5 The percentage and total traffic volume that has been assumed to be routed north from the site is critical to the validity of the traffic modelling undertaken (rubbish in, rubbish out). The next few paragraphs examine what assumptions the TA has taken in this regard.
- 3.6 Northern routes are particularly sensitive because they pass through AQMA (see section on Air Quality later in this response). As well as the A49 through Newton High Street, contrary to Ref 3 (Air Quality Submission), the A572 Southworth Road also transverses an AQMA which extends the entire length of the M6 for the St Helens borough.
- 3.7 With regards LGV northern routing, Ref 1, para 7.29 states that *'The methodology briefly comprises the use of National Census Data in order to forecast the location and route choice of staff vehicles and LGVs, based on 2011 census "journey to work" data for the Newton-le-Willows employment areas, with manual route choice decisions made based upon local knowledge.'*

This assumption is surely flawed given that LGV distribution traffic would route entirely to employment areas. Internet shopping dictates that predominant destinations would be domestic properties. For example, if a company needed to distribute goods to the Knowsley area, it is highly likely that the driver would route north using the A49 to the A580. Another example would be a load intended for the Leigh and Atherton areas. Here the driver would route A49 north, A572, and A580. It is extremely unlikely a driver would route south to such destinations. The logic is partially validated by the map in Ref 2 para 6.11.2, however, the key point is **that the TA does not state what percentage of LGV traffic has been assumed to flow north.**

- 3.8 With regards HGV northern traffic routing, Ref 1, para 7.31 states *'This was determined by taking the observed total hourly HGV movements on roads crossing the boundaries of the geographical study area and applying these proportionately to the forecast Parkside Phase 1 HGV traffic to calculate the HGV distribution.'* **No data appears to have been supplied to evidence this** i.e. what volumes were observed at what geographic boundaries at what times?
- 3.9 Ref 2, para 6.13.3 states *'The proportional split directs 90% of the proposed development's HGV traffic to/from the south, with the remaining 10% of HGVs being directed to/from the North.'* **This assumption is quite simply not credible and needs to be properly evidenced.**
- 3.10 No information is supplied on the breakdown of employee trips or **what percentage of employee trips have been assumed to route north?**
- 3.11 In summary:
- There is a lack of information about total traffic volumes for the north and south routes.
 - There is a lack of clarity about what traffic has been assumed to flow north on the A49 through sensitive AQMA.
 - False assumptions about northern traffic routes also mean that the entire traffic modelling is also flawed because a higher northern flow could and is likely to impact junction capacity on those onwards routes.
- 3.12 Ref 1, para 7.27 provides agreed trip rates supplied by SHC. No evidence has been supplied to underpin these rates. The table mentions 'Bericotes rates'. Where are these documented and how were they validated?
- 3.13 Ref 1, para 4.39, para 7.2 presents a mechanism of assessing subjective impact of increased traffic caused by the development. Percentage increases quoted are not properly defined i.e. percentage of what, at what time of day? Surely increased traffic at night would have a high impact for instance? This aspect is not covered in the TA.
- 3.14 The TA overall presents a confused picture concerning the PLR.
- Data is supplied for the 2020 and 2030 timeframes, both baseline and with the development **excluding the PLR as a dependency.**
 - Ref 1, page 15 states *'As the PLR planning application is being progressed by another party, it was agreed that the cumulative assessment contained within this chapter of the ES would only be presented for information purposes and that the focus of material comments upon the Phase 1 planning application would be the scenario which does not include the PLR proposals.'*
- 3.15 It is not clear whether the illustrative cumulative assessment also factors in the effect of the PLR. We assume not given that the cumulative effect on the A49 at Winwick is as expected shown to be worse when other developments in the area are taken into consideration.

- 3.16 The above calls into question the whole strategy of the application and the associated approach to traffic. For the application to be viable significant modifications would be required to various junctions at Winwick. However, the PLR may remediate this significantly. Our understanding is that Warrington BC would only support the application alongside a PLR implementation.
- 3.17 PAG also has significant concerns about the PLR, particularly over likely impacts to traffic routing north as highlighted earlier in this response.
- 3.18 The ES does not appear to present any data concerning parking allocation for the development. These need to comply with planning guidelines and align with expected employee movements over a 24-hour period.
- 3.19 The applicant's drawings of the site layout appear to show only areas for freight movements, loading bays etc., but no parking space. Parking is a huge concern in Newton-le-Willows where people using the train station park on local roads. The parking arrangement for the site needs to be clearly presented and shown not to make the situation worse than it currently is.
- 3.20 The development also needs to be shown to accommodate enough parking space for people who will travel by car to the site. There is strong evidence that many distribution operators relocate to larger or custom warehouses bringing a high proportion of their staff with them. Depending on previous location, there is a high likelihood that many of these former employees will travel by car, as public transport will prove too challenging both in terms of cost and time.
- 3.21 As we have previously commented in other responses to the Council, it is extremely disappointing to find the Council continuing to support a strategy of promoting logistics & distribution rather than technology or entertainment which would bring better employment skills to the area.
- 3.22 The TA refers several times to the 'Parkside Link Road Team' e.g. Ref 1, para 3.2. Who is this body?
- 3.23 Ref 1, para 4.36 categorises the M6 and M62 as 'Regional' receptors. We would argue these roads are part of the National Highways network forming strategic routes as defined by Highways England from North to South and East to West. This needs to be corrected and associated impacts reassessed.
- 3.24 It is unclear whether junction SH8 A49 at Alfred Street has been modelled with traffic lights or not. The junction does not currently have traffic lights, but our understanding is that the junction will be updated in the near future to accommodate increased demand at the new Newton-le-Willows Station that is currently under construction. The addition of traffic lights at this point is likely to change traffic flows significantly. The traffic model needs to address this.

3.25 The traffic flow diagrams presented in the TA appendices are incomprehensible. For example, what do the numbers represent on the diagram below?



There is no value in supplying pages and pages of diagrams with no explanation of how they should be interpreted. **What is needed is a clear summary of what traffic volumes have been assumed at each junction for the modelling and at what times of day.** Without this it is not possible to validate if credible inputs have been supplied to the model.

3.26 All acronyms should be defined in the document. **This is basic engineering practice.** For example, Dos, Q and RFC are not defined. Additionally, industry recognised high water marks for these metrics should be properly detailed to form a view of junction impacts.

4 Air Quality

- 4.1 The EU and recently the UK government has recently placed increased focus on areas exceeding air quality limits due to the strong evidence that links air quality issues with serious health problems.
- 4.2 All A49 routes northwards from the development pass through Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). Both Newton High Street and Southworth Road pass through AQMA.
- 4.3 Ref 3, Appendix 8.3 shows a map of AQMA. **The map incorrectly shows the M6 AQMA** which runs along the entire length of the M6 through the St Helens Borough. This is concerning as it may indicate the author did not correctly understand the AQMA topology and therefore may not have made the correct assessment. Correct maps may be found on the SHC web site.
- 4.4 Ref 3, para 5.5 describes the AQMA near the development. These are described in terms of distance from the development. **This is misleading because the most significant traffic impacts from the development are likely to be felt in sensitive locations (like Newton High Street) on traffic routes northwards on the A49, and not necessarily in the immediate vicinity of the site itself.** The approach is deceptive.
- 4.5 Newton High Street has shown increased use as a social hub over recent years. It has restaurants, local amenities, and pedestrian routes to local schools (Newton Primary and Hope Academy) with high foot falls at certain times in the day.
- 4.6 The other route traffic may take northwards is along Southworth Road which traverses residential areas before crossing the M6 AQMA.
- 4.7 Ref 3, table 8.1.2 contains the following scoping response from SHC. *'Should the right-turn be proposed, it would need to be demonstrated within the planning application that the right-turn would not result in an unacceptable impact on Newton-le-Willows, in particular on the highway network and Air Quality Management Area.'* Although the majority of traffic is expected to turn left out of the site, the transport consultant confirmed that they "had to enable the junction to allow all turning movements". **Therefore, the results presented in this Paper assume 10% of vehicles turn right from the site and assesses the effect on the Newton-Le-Willow AQMA.'**

As stated earlier in this response an assumption that only 10% of the site traffic would turn northwards is simply not credible (see para 3.7 of this response).

- 4.8 In addition, as described earlier in this response, the TA, is unclear whether a 10% assumption applies to all traffic i.e. LGV and employee trips. In fact, the TA (falsely in our opinion) implies that LGV traffic would route to employment areas, the implication clearly being that northern routing would be significantly higher than 10% (probably 50% or greater).
- 4.9 Ref 3, table A.8.2 provides Daily Two-Way Vehicle Flows for various points on local roads, with and without the development for the year 2020. The table below shows the data for the points immediately north and south of the site entrance.

Road Link Name		LDV	HDV	Total	Split
Link 5. Mill Lane (N of Site Access) <i>A49 North of Site Access</i>	Base	12780	587		48.27%
	With Dev	14084	647		
	Increase	1304	60	1364	
Link 6. Newton Road (N of Hermitage Green Lane) <i>A49 South of Site Access</i>	Base	12600	606		51.73%
	With Dev	13531	1137		
	Increase	931	531	1462	

Some simple arithmetic shows that estimated increased traffic volumes for the development in 2020 are split 48.27% for the northern route and 51.73% for the southern route. This clearly contradicts with the modelling assumptions of only 10% for the northern route?

- 4.10 The TA provides no information on employee trips therefore it is not possible to validate what assumptions have been made there, however, common sense would suggest that these would be higher than the 10% assumption.
- 4.11 The Air Quality modelling methods are not adequately described, for instance what software package was used, what inputs were supplied, what types of impact were modelled e.g. NO² and or particulates? The projected impacts therefore do not appear to be evidence based.

- 4.12 Ref 3, para 5.19 states there is only one automatic monitoring stations where roadside NO₂ continuous automatic instruments. **This is incorrect. There are 4 such instruments in the St Helens Borough as detailed in the Ref 4, St Helens Council 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report, August 2016.** Two of the automatic instruments AN2 & AN3 are in Newton-le-Willows AQMA. These instruments are known to be more accurate than other instruments like diffusion tubes which require correction factors for various manufacturers.

Appendix A: Monitoring Results

Table A.1 – Details of Automatic Monitoring Sites

Site ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref	Y OS Grid Ref	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA?	Monitoring Technique	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Inlet Height (m)
AN1	Linkway	Roadside	350815	395260	NO ₂ ; PM ₁₀	Y	Chemiluminescent; TEOM	165	5.35	2.44
AN2	Southworth Road	Motorway	360045	395643	NO ₂	Y	Chemiluminescent	10	3.2	2.0
AN3	High Street	Roadside	358975	395804	NO ₂	Y	Chemiluminescent	0	3.65	2.0
AN4	Borough Road	Roadside	350403	394961	NO ₂	Y	Chemiluminescent	23	2.5	1.48

- 4.13 Ref 4 also provides the annual mean NO₂ monitoring results for the years 2011 thru 2015 as shown below.

Table A.3 – Annual Mean NO₂ Monitoring Results

Site ID	Site Type	Monitoring Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2015 (%) ⁽²⁾	NO ₂ Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³) ⁽³⁾				
					2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
AN1	Roadside	Automatic	99.4	99.4	35.91	37.6	40.7	37	38
AN2	Motorway	Automatic	96.5	96.5	56	52.72	47.5	47	53
AN3	Roadside	Automatic	85.6	85.6	35.4	41.97	34.4	33	33
AN4	Roadside	Automatic	95.6	95.6	-	-	35.5	35	38

- 4.14 PAG has downloaded the data for year 2016 for AN3 and calculated the Annual Mean to be 36 µg/m³. AN3 (Newton High Street) is likely to be close to or have exceeded EU and national limits of 40 µg/m³. AN2 (Southworth Road M6 area) exceeded these limits by 33% in 2015.
- 4.15 Any small incremental increase in traffic volumes is likely to make a very bad situation worse. For this reason, it is critical to correctly evidence and understand the northern traffic flows.

5 Planning Statement

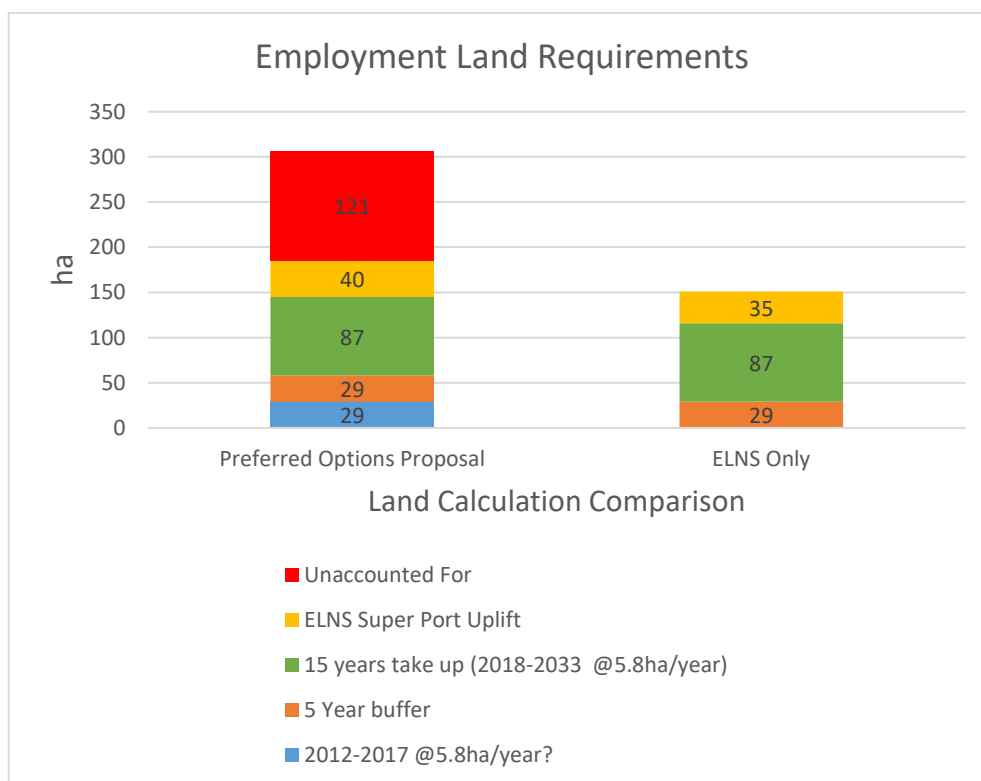
5.1 PAG strongly refute the following findings of Ref 5., the applicants Planning Statement namely that:

- The employment land needs of the borough justify the development.
- The currently adopted SHC Core Strategy is 'out of date', particularly with reference to policy CAS 3.2
- The need to demonstrate 'special circumstances' for the release of Green Belt is justified for the proposed development.

5.2 The SHC Local Plan will eventually supersede the currently adopted SHC Core Strategy. There was a huge response to the SHC Local Plan Preferred Options consultation in early 2017 challenging many different aspects and content including elements of its evidence base like the ELNS.

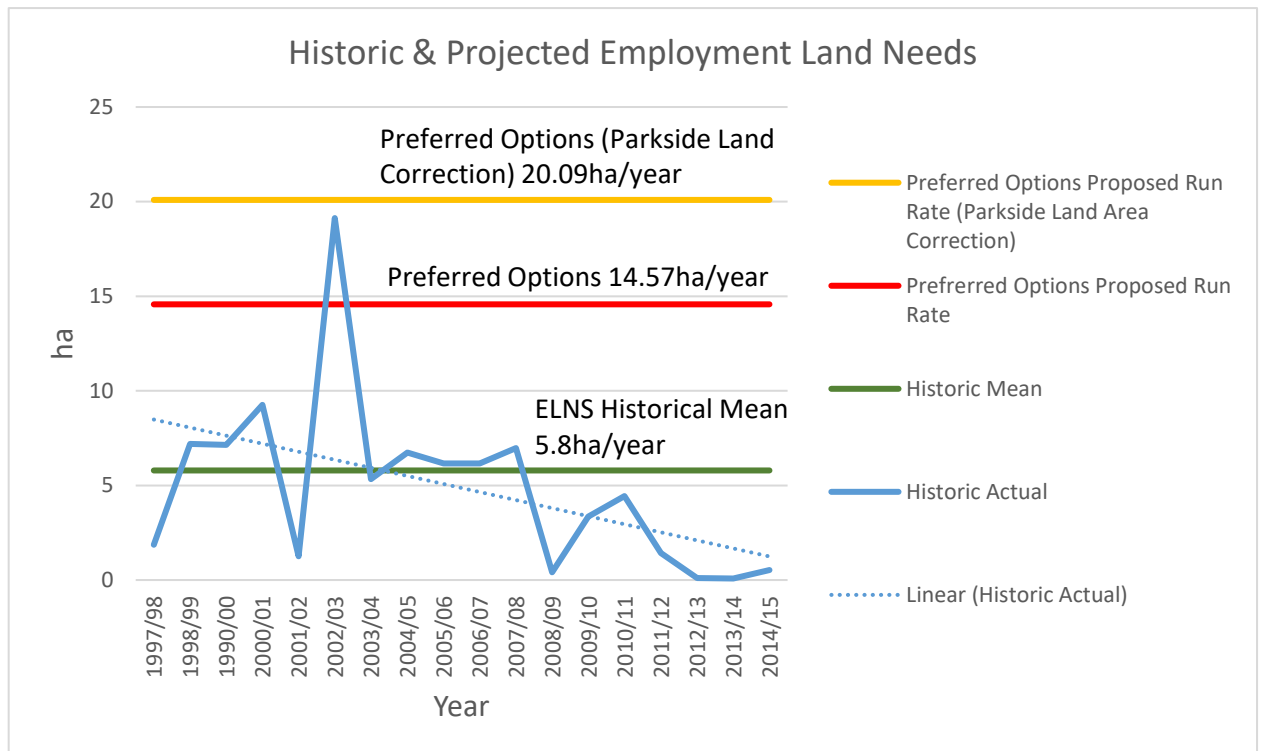
5.3 The following paragraphs have been extracted from our response Ref 6 to the SHC Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation December 2016.

5.4 Ref 6, Para 3.5 3.5 - *The overall commercial strategic sites position detailed in policy LPA04 is summarised by the chart below. The chart is an attempt to illustrate how the Preferred Option document accounts for the total land for the strategic sites (306 ha total), and as a comparison what the ELNS predicts following corrections for the incorrect addition of 29ha for a period between 2012 and 2017 in the ELNS.*



- 5.1 Ref 6, para 3.6 - *The stacked bar to the left illustrates a breakdown of the land that is required for the strategic sites listed in policy LPA04 (a total of 306ha). The breakdown is described as follows:*
- i. *29ha for a period 2012-2017 as described in the ELNS that has been inherited by the Preferred Option document mistakenly. This period is outside the life time of the plan and should not be part of the forecast.*
 - ii. *29ha that the ELNS recommended as a 5 year buffer.*
 - iii. *87ha calculated by multiplying the ELNS recommended historic mean of 5.8ha/year by the life time of the plan 15 years.*
 - iv. *40ha recommended by the ELNS to account for demand from the Port of Liverpool. In fact the ELNS recommended 30-40ha, so in the second stacked bar on the right we have taken the mean of this value at 35ha.*
 - v. ***121ha that are partly unaccounted for.*** *Para 4.77 states 'Responses to the Local Plan Scoping Consultation (2016) suggested ... at least 70ha of land for logistics over and above levels of demand'. Therefore we assume that 70ha of this unaccounted amount is a component of the 121ha, but this still leaves 51ha unaccounted for? Please also see Ref 6., para 3.3 of this document regarding the credibility of the 70ha too. (not evidenced).*
- 5.2 Ref 6, para 3.7 -*The stacked bar to the right shows only the ELNS recommendation for the period of the plan. This is made up of:*
- a. *29ha that the ELNS recommended as a 5 year buffer.*
 - b. *87ha calculated by multiplying the ELNS recommended historic mean of 5.8ha/year by the life time of the plan 15 years.*
 - c. *40ha recommended by the ELNS to account for demand from the Port of Liverpool. The ELNS recommended 30-40ha, so we have taken the mean of this value at 35ha.*
- 5.3 Ref 6, para 3.8 - ***The Preferred Options document therefore is proposing approximately twice as much land as the ELNS recommended.*** *This is clearly excessive. Growth forecast of this proportion should be correctly justified and accounted for.*

5.4 Ref 6., para 3.15 *The chart below illustrates historic and projected Employment Land Needs:*



A net decline in historic land take up can be seen (plotted through the in-built Microsoft Excel Trend feature).

The Green line shows the ELNS recommended historic land take up mean of 5.8ha/year.

The Red line shows a strategic land take up rate of 14.57ha/year based on the Preferred Options allocation of 306ha over the period of the plan.

The Yellow line shows a land take up of 19.24ha/year based on a recalculated size of land for Parkside East and Parkside West of 272ha less 12.1ha for the colliery soil heap (detailed in the footnote to the table in LPA04) which the document says will no longer be developed. The rate will be even higher if the land requirements for other sites have been incorrectly under stated.

5.5 Ref 6, para 3.16 - ***From the above it is clear that the Council’s anticipated employment land needs of 306ha are highly inflated and badly estimated. The estimate is in conflict with rejected options in para 4.90 and 4.91 in the Preferred Options document***

5.6 The following paragraphs are extracted from the conclusions of Ref 6., PAG response to the SHC Preferred Options consultation December 2016.

5.7 Ref 6., para 14.3 - ***Employment land needs appear to have been over-inflated to justify sites that we suspect potential developers ‘may’ have shown an interest in.***

5.8 Ref 6, para 14.3 - ***Vital evidence that is referred to in the Preferred Options document and which underpins the employment land calculations has not been provided.***

- 5.9 Ref 6, para 14.5 *The proposed Green Belt deallocation for commercial development is almost entirely hinged on the employment land calculations¹. Green Belt deallocation should only be justified on Special Circumstances and not speculative development opportunities.*
- 5.10 Ref 6, para 14.6 *Not enough evidence has been provided to show strategic sites are sustainable. The entire approach is focussed on perceived growth but little is demonstrated of expected sustainable returns particularly around the unaccounted land estimate highlighted in Ref 6, section 3.*
- 5.11 Ref 6, para 14.9 *Key criteria have not been assessed for employment sites in the Sustainability Assessment. Some of the scoring is suspect because we suspect a visual inspection was not carried out or the authors may be lacking in knowledge of the area concerned. Specific examples have been provided in our document.*
- 5.12 Ref 6, para 14.10 *The Green Belt review fails to properly assess proposed parcels of land again because it appears to have been desktop based. Specific examples have been provided in our document.*
- 5.13 It is therefore hugely misleading and erroneous for the applicant to refer to SHC Local Plan Preferred Options and ELNS to justify the need for the development. The outcome of the consultation has yet to be published and may contain a completely different view of actual land requirements and existing take up.
- 5.14 Turning to the Core Strategy policy CAS 3.2, the policy was not constructed *entirely* around the previous Astral/Prologis planning application as the applicant alludes. This is one of the key reasons the applicant suggests the Core Strategy is 'out of date', given that the Prologis planning application is now withdrawn.
- 5.15 CAS 3.2 embraced the findings of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy in 2008 which specifically focused on Parkside as the location for a potential SRFI. PAG was represented on the Panel which discussed this.
- 5.16 RSS Policy W2A Inter-Modal Freight Terminals provides a strategy statement specifically with regards RFI. The policy states: '*Sites should be allocated planning permission granted only where **the local planning authority is satisfied that interchange between transport modes is the primary purpose of the development.** A review of the Green Belt boundary in the local development framework would be justified in order to accommodate an inter-modal freight terminal in accordance with this policy. If Land is removed from a Green Belt in accordance with this policy, the relevant development plan document **should include a presumption against its development for the purposes other than an Inter-modal freight terminal**'.*
- 5.17 CAS 3.2 was developed as a criteria-based policy partially to attempt to enforce the principles of the RSS and partly to represent public feedback at the preferred options stage. With regards the RSS:

Criteria 8 - All uses within the site should have the primary purpose of facilitating the movement of freight by rail. Any ancillary uses to this main use must be directly related to the movement of freight by rail and must demonstrate clearly why they need to be located on the site

The RSS Panel endorsed the view supported by PAG that a *road only* facility (like this application) would not meet the 'special circumstances' required to meet the release of Green Belt.

¹ shown to be extremely dubious in our response.

- 5.18 PAG recognise that the Council are proposing to target Parkside East as the location for an SRFI and this has also been challenged by PAG and others in the SHC Local Plan Preferred Options consultation.
- 5.19 Parkside East was never part of the old colliery. The land is completely Green Belt, Green Field and open country side. The only reason Parkside East was originally brought into scope of an SRFI was to meet the needs of the Prologis Freight Terminal Plan. Prologis claimed it would not be viable to build an SRFI without the land to the East.
- 5.20 A previous Network Rail Freight Terminal Plan in 2001 was entirely focussed on the Parkside West site. The Phase 1 planning application completely removes the future possibility of a Parkside West based Freight terminal and places emphasis on the use of Green Field at Parkside East.
- 5.21 CAS 3.2 also includes other important criteria relevant to this and future applications previously raised by the community at the preferred options stage:

*Criteria 2 - Direct access to the site from the M6 for HGVs can be obtained avoiding use of Traffic Sensitive Routes identified in the Network Management Plan. **Adverse impacts on the Strategic Road Network will be mitigated***

Criteria 4 - The ability of the local road network to accommodate traffic generated by the development without unacceptable impact on residential amenity and traffic flows

Criteria 6 - That the character and amenity of the Newton High Street and Willow Park Conservation Areas are preserved or enhanced

Criteria 7 - Significant adverse impacts from the development itself or associated road and rail access routes should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, measures to mitigate the impact should be adopted. Where adequate mitigation measures are not possible, compensatory measures should be considered and adopted if appropriate. The aim should be to minimise any adverse impact. In applying this policy, a developer should address the following land use impacts as a minimum: environment; biodiversity/ecology; heritage; archaeology; agricultural land; community; quality of life; health; air quality; light; noise; visual intrusion; buffer zones; contributions to sustainable development; waste management; energy generation by renewable means; energy efficiency; water conservation and sustainable drainage; reuse of materials; traffic and sustainable transport; and remediation of land affected by contamination or surface hazards caused by past mining activity

Criteria 9 - Impact on Green Belt and landscape character is mitigated by significant landscape and green infrastructure enhancement, including tree planting

Criteria 11 - Special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving the Listed Buildings at Newton Park Farm, their setting or any features of special architectural or historical interest which they possess. Should a suitable SRFI scheme require the removal of the Listed Buildings then substantial public benefits will be required including the relocation of the listed structures in a rural setting within the vicinity of Newton-le-Willows and preferably within the St. Helens local authority area

- 5.22 As acknowledged by the applicant, **the application fails to meet several of the criteria in CAS 3.2 and is therefore not compliant with the currently adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy).**

- 5.23 CAS 3.2 is not 'out of date' and has many important criteria that remain relevant to the Parkside site.
- 5.24 CAS 3.2 is not a policy that can be simply be cast aside as minor component of the whole Plan as alluded to by the applicant; aspects are central and key to the future use of the Parkside site.
- 5.25 With regards justification of the release of Green Belt. The application does not meet the needs of CAS 3.2 and therefore not justified with respect of the currently adopted Local Plan.
- 5.26 The five stated purposes of Green Belt as recognised in UK planning policy and guidance as follows:
1. To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 5. To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land
- 5.27 Phase 1 of the proposed scheme represents one component of a potential three-phase development when the SRFI at Parkside East is taken into consideration. In this context PAG allege the development would completely negate purposes 1 thru 4 above.
- 5.28 Once all three phases of the development are complete the green space between Newton-Le-Willows and Winwick will be severely depreciated. Phase 1 and Phase 2 alone will also depreciate this space significantly and severely between Newton-le-Willows and Hermitage Green.
- 5.29 With regards openness and visual amenity, the applicant presents a picture of a partially brown field site with a spoil heap. This picture is far from accurate with much of the site returned to its natural habitat supporting a wide range of wild life. The previous Parkside hard standing area is a small proportion of the overall site. The spoil heap has also evolved to appear as a natural hill and can no longer be recognised as spoil heap.
- 5.30 There are good open views from Parkside East and West providing an appreciation of the North West landscape embracing Runcorn Bridge to the West and Winter Hill to the East. The location is used by many walkers in the community. The construction of a vast area of 50m high sheds would depreciate openness and visual amenity of the area.
- 5.31 The site currently meets Green Belt purpose 5 namely to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land when taking into consideration its unauthorised public use today and potential if a different scheme were brought forward. The development would negate this purpose.
- 5.32 In summary the application does not meet the 'special circumstances' required to release Green Belt to support the development.
- a. The application fails to comply with the currently adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy) with respect to meeting specific criteria for the release of Green Belt.
 - b. Using employment need justification as sourced from the SHC Local Plan preferred options consultation is unsound as content and evidence has been challenged and validation/correction has yet to be published. The Local Plan is not yet adopted.

- c. It is clear that the 5 purposes of Green Belt as dictated by UK planning policy and guidance would be severely depreciated by the proposed scheme. Openness and visual amenity would be severely impacted by the scheme.

6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 The applicant's TA and Air Quality submissions lack clarity in certain areas and therefore their findings cannot be validated. In particular it is not clear what percentage of development traffic has been assumed to take northern routes. Specific details of employee, LGV and HGV trips over periods for a 24-hour operation are not provided.
- 6.2 It is recognised generally that there is a direct relationship between increased traffic and air quality depreciation. The net increase in traffic therefore for northern routes requires particular clarity and focus because these routes pass through AQMA where levels are already close to or have exceeded EU and National limits. It is widely accepted that poor air quality leads to a multitude of health issues.
- 6.3 Some areas of the TA and Air Quality reports refer to modelling assuming 10% of certain types of traffic using northern routes but it is not clear whether this assumption applies to all types of traffic i.e. Employee, LGV and HGV. In addition, the Air Quality report appears to contain conflicting data which indicates that 48.7% of development traffic would take northern routes.
- 6.4 From local knowledge of the area and a reasonable assumption that most drivers would take the quickest route, assuming 10% of development traffic would take northern routes is simply not credible. This in turn implies the traffic and air quality modelling are unsound.
- 6.5 It is impossible to understand what inputs have been used for modelling. Junction capacity estimates are derived from these inputs and are therefore also suspect.
- 6.6 The applicant's justification for the release of Green Belt is unsound for the reasons outlined in para 5.8 of this response. PAG object to the release of Green Belt associated with this application.
- 6.7 PAG also object to the application on the grounds that it is likely to bring unacceptable traffic increases to AQMA areas and therefore unacceptably depreciate the health quality in our community. The Air Quality modelling approach for prospective impacts is not adequately described.
- 6.8 PAG are concerned that appropriate planning conditions may not be made a pre-requisite of granting approval. For instance, the application should not be granted unless there is a binding commitment to:
 - a. Implement proposed junction improvements.
 - b. Implement habitat and wildlife restoration where depreciated, e.g.re-planting, nesting boxes etc.
 - c. Provide appropriate car parking space for employees that need to travel by car.
 - d. Provide the correct construction controls associated with moving 60% of the spoil heap, including management of hazardous materials alluded to by the applicant, particularly as material may inadvertently be moved closer to residential properties that adjoin the site.

- 6.9 The whole strategy of the application and the associated approach to traffic needs to be considered by SHC Council and Planning Department. For the application to be viable significant modifications would be required to various junctions, mostly at Winwick. However, the PLR may remediate this significantly and avoid unnecessary public spending and disruption to local traffic if it can be shown to have acceptable impacts to northern A49 routes and associated AQMA. Our understanding is that Warrington BC would only support the application alongside a PLR implementation.
- 6.10 PAG object to the application on grounds of:
- i. The TA and Air Quality submissions contain unclear, inaccurate, misleading, and conflicting information. The assumption that only 10% (it is not clear) of the traffic would route north is not credible. There is therefore a high risk of incorrect junction assessment, driver delays, and unacceptable traffic and air quality impacts leading to a serious depreciation in quality of health in the community.
 - ii. Failure to justify the 'special circumstances' required for the release of Green Belt land and associated impacts due to the loss of Green Belt.
 - iii. Non-compliance with the SHC adopted Local Plan (Core Strategy) CAS 3.2
 - iv. Lack of clarity around governance of the plan going forward i.e. commitment to planning constraints including road improvements, replacement of trees and wildlife habitats, parking arrangements, management of hazardous materials associated with the movement of parts of the spoil heap, maximum height of warehouses and bunds.