

# ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2020—2035 EXAMINATION

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**Agenda**  
**Session 6 – 09.30 Thursday 10 June 2021**  
**Matter 4**  
**Allocations, Safeguarded Land and Green Belt Boundaries**  
**Parkside and Newton-le-Willows/Earlestown**

This matter considers the proposed allocations and safeguarded land at Parkside (7EA, 8EA) and Newton-le-Willows/Earlestown (7HA, 2HS, 4HS, 5HS)

**Policies to be covered by Matter 4: LPA04, LPA04.1, LPA05, LPA05.1, LPA06, LPA10**

### **Main Evidence Base**

SD022 – Employment Land Need and Supply Background Paper  
SD024 – Parkside SFRI Background Paper  
SD025 - Housing Need and Supply Background Paper  
SD9026 - Developing the Strategy Background Paper  
SD020 – Green Belt Review 2018  
GRE001 - St Helens Local Plan Draft Green Belt Review 2016  
EMP005 – EMP006 – Parkside Logistics and Rail Freight Interchange Study and Addendum  
EMP010 - Parkside Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Report Capability & Capacity Analysis  
SD013 – Infrastructure Delivery Plan  
SD031 – Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) with Highways England May 2021  
SHBC001 & SHBC005 – Council response to Inspector’s preliminary questions  
SHBC010 - St Helens Local Plan Draft Schedule of Modifications  
SHBC012 – Site Selection Paper

### **Participants**

Please refer to the latest Hearings Programme (INSP009C)

### **Examination library link**

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-examination-library/>

### **Statements**

St Helens Borough Council

Peel L & P

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Redrow Homes (NW) & Wallace Land Investments  
Murphy Group  
Jones Homes ((NW) Ltd  
Parkside Action Group  
CPRE  
Wainhomes (NW) Ltd  
Parkside Regeneration LLP  
Isec

## **Introduction to the hearing session**

**Main Modifications (MMs) relevant to the session** – MM005, MM018, MM038, and Annexes 1 and 2 to SHBC010.

## **Issue 1: Parkside East (7EA) and Parkside West (8EA), Newton-le-Willows**

Sites 7EA and 8EA are allocated for employment and comprise strategic sites. Policy LPA10 identifies Parkside East as suitable in principle for a SRFI. The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN) references the Planning Act 2008 and that SRFI sites qualifying as NSIPs must be capable of handling 4 goods trains per day as a minimum (paragraph 4.89).

A public inquiry in January 2021 considered applications for employment floorspace at Parkside West and the Parkside Link Road. The outcome is not yet known. The Council have also commissioned a study which will look at the potential capacity of the rail network to serve the Parkside site. This is expected to be published in March 2021.

- 1. Do the Green Belt assessments support the allocation of Sites 7EA and 8EA and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of the land from the Green Belt?*
- 2. If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the Plan?*

*The Council note paragraphs 4.36.14 – 4.36.16 in particular in this regard.*

- 3. Is the configuration and scale of the allocations and safeguarded land justified taking into account development needs and the Green Belt assessments?*

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- a. *Is the allocation of a SRFI of the scale proposed in the Plan justified?*
- b. *Would a facility of a smaller scale (for example handling up to 8 to 10 trains daily) achieve similar benefits whilst minimising potential impacts (for example a reduced amount of Green Belt land needing to be released as these smaller options would only utilise land to the east of the M6 for road and rail infrastructure)?*
- c. *Could the Plan's aim of seeking to maximise the opportunities of delivering an SRFI of regional and national significance still be achieved?*
4. *Would the adverse impacts of developing Sites 7EA and 8EA (Green Belt impacts, landscape impacts, highway safety, flood risk, agricultural land, air quality) outweigh the benefits?*
5. *Are the requirements for Sites 7EA and 8EA within Policies LPA04, LPA04.1 and LPA010 (Site 7EA) and Appendix 5 (Site Profiles) positively prepared and effective?*

*SHBC010 (MM005 and Annex 1) propose more specific requirements for sustainable modes of travel for Site 8EA.*
6. *Are the indicative site areas, appropriate uses, net developable areas, minimum densities and indicative site capacities within Table 4.1 justified and effective?*
7. *Will infrastructure to support the allocations be delivered at the right time and in the right place?*
8. *Would there be delivery implication for sites 7EA and 8EA if a suitable connection to J22 (whether via the proposed Link road or an alternative link) is not delivered during the Plan period?*
9. *In terms of feasibility and deliverability, will the future capacity of the rail network be capable of facilitating the delivery of an SRFI at Parkside?*
10. *What level of certainty is there that there will be sufficient capacity and is that sufficient to demonstrate that the proposed facility will be deliverable during the Plan period?*

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11. *Are there any barriers to Sites 7EA and 8EA coming forward as anticipated?*

## **Issue 2: Newton-le-Willows/Earlestown (7HA, 2HS, 4HS, 5HS)**

Site 7HA is allocated for housing with an indicative site capacity of around 180 dwellings. The Plan proposes safeguarding Sites 2HS, 4HS and 5HS.

12. *Do the Green Belt assessments support the allocation of Site 7HA and the safeguarding of Sites 2HS, 4HS and 5HS and demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the removal of the land from the Green Belt?*
13. *If exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated have these been clearly articulated in the Plan?*

*The Council acknowledge that the exceptional circumstances could be more clearly articulated in the LP.*

14. *Should Sites 2HS, 4HS and 5HS be allocated rather than safeguarded so that they can contribute to meeting needs in the Plan period?*
- 14a. *If it was found necessary for soundness to allocate additional sites to meet housing needs, potentially utilising safeguarded sites, what additional evidence would be required and what would be the implications for the timescale of the examination?*
15. *Is the configuration and scale of allocation 7HA and safeguarded sites 4HS and 5HS justified taking into account development needs, the Green Belt assessments and, in the case of 4HS, the effects on the setting of the Vulcan Village Conservation Area and recreational facilities?*
- 15a. *Should Site 7HA be extended to incorporate land to the south (Red Bank Farm)?*
- 15b. *Is their justification for extending Site 5HS to the south?*
16. *Would the adverse impacts of developing Site 7HA (Green Belt impacts, highway safety, loss of playing field) outweigh the benefits?*

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17. *Are the requirements for Sites 7HA and 2HS, 4HS and 5HS within Appendices 5 and 7 (Site Profiles) positively prepared and effective?*

*SHBC010 (MM005, MM038 and Annexes 1 and 2) propose more specific requirements for sustainable modes of travel.*

18. *In particular in relation to Site 7HA, will the Plan ensure that any playing fields lost will be replaced by the equivalent or better provision?*

*The Council suggest an MM to the site profile relating to replacement playing field provision.*

19. *Are the indicative site areas, net developable areas, minimum densities and indicative site capacities within Tables 4.5 and 4.8 justified and effective?*

20. *Will infrastructure to support the allocation be delivered at the right time and in the right place?*

21. *Are there any barriers to Site 7HA coming forward as anticipated by the housing trajectory?*

*21a. Does the proposal to redevelop the site for educational provision result in the site having a reduced capacity or not realistically being deliverable or developable at all?*

*21b. Taking into account the above is there a need to allocate additional land for housing in Newton-le-Willows?*

## **Issue 5: Other Green Belt boundaries**

22. *Are the Green Belt boundaries elsewhere in Newton-le-Willows/Earlestown justified?*

## **Actions arising from the hearing session**

### **Examination library link:**

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-examination-library/>