

Response to Preliminary Matters, Issues and Initial Questions (January 2021)

Matter 10 Infrastructure and Delivery - I have the following query regarding St Helens Council Response

Council Response

Paragraph 2 page 57 – “The Council state that the additional traffic growth (in the region of 14-16%) associated with traffic from the Local Plan Sites is also forecast to worsen the level of operations at some locations. However, the forecast models indicate that the impact that can be subsequently mitigated by a combination of committed and emerging future highway infrastructure projects, modest changes in travel behaviour and lower costs improvements across key junctions”.

It would appear that the TIA for the local plan does not include Strategic Safeguarded Sites within its outdated (2017) SATURN model, can the council please confirm this? Some Traffic Data used in this model are very old going back to 2012 (see page 15/16 of the Saturn Local Model Validation Report).

If these strategic safe guarded sites were added to the model, it may further demonstrate that existing highway infrastructure may approach or even exceed current capacity. The Council states in paragraph 6 page 57 of their response when discussing cumulative impacts of traffic on the network “more detailed local assessment work associated with individual planning applications and Transport Assessments” may be made inferring that it would revisit individual sites when the planning application was submitted.

The opportunity to analyse junctions affected by the development of the former Eccleston Park Golf Club (3HS), identified by the Council as a Strategic Safeguarded site, has been presented by the early Hybrid planning application for this development. With reference to SCP Transport Assessment Doc Ref CT18706/TA/01 which forms part of this planning application supporting documentation. This report provides LINSIG data that demonstrates that signal/capacity problems exist at many junctions within the area, for example the Junction of A57 Warrington Rd/B5413 Rainhill Rd pages 59/ 60, item 8.29 to 8.31, the report identifies a capacity problem and then argues that no mitigation measures are considered necessary at this junction, probably because none can be achieved due to site constraints of skew bridge. Furthermore, there is no reference to pedestrian facilities which are provided at many of the junctions, and whether the results assume that the pedestrian stage has been called or not? It is unclear if existing signal timings have been used in the analysis of junctions? The A570 St Helens Linkway/Elton head Rd signals adjacent to Mere Grange is close to the development but appears not to be included within the model. **Can the Council make comment and update the interested parties on queries contained within this paragraph?**

Mulbury (Warrington) Ltd have claimed (See Hearing statement page 7) that they have prepared a TA that confirms that the site (3HS) could accommodate up to a 1000 dwellings. This has clearly not been demonstrated and the Council must be indeed aware of this.

It can be argued that all strategic safeguarded sites should be contained within an updated SATURN model and more detailed signal/junction capacity analysis carried out prior to removal of these sites from the Green Belt, otherwise removal from Green Belt is premature. Many Developers have already invested in employing Traffic Engineering Consultants, Traffic Data Surveys and Software to make this possible. Until this is done development is speculative and lacks sound planning outcomes. It would appear that the Council in their Transport Impact Assessment modelling have not presented a robust and worst- case scenario as indicated in paragraph 1 page 58 of the Councils response.

