

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

**Acquisition of Land Act 1981**

**Inquiry into:**

**THE ST HELENS BOROUGH COUNCIL (ST HELENS TOWN CENTRE) COMPULSORY  
PURCHASE ORDER 2022**

**St Helens Bus Station**

**Summary Statement of Evidence  
of**

**Andrew Cairns**

**of Merseytravel**

**13 July 2023**

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## 1. **QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE**

1.1 My name is Andrew Cairns, I have a BA (Hons) in Business Administration, and I have been a Member of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport since 1998. I have been the Infrastructure Manager at Merseytravel since March 2020.

1.2 I have worked in the public transport and transport planning sectors for 28 years, holding a variety of positions and grades in both the public and private sector. I have been involved in a broad range of transport projects, most notably in the field of public transport. I was a Principal Officer at Merseytravel between 2001 and 2007 with responsibility for delivering a number of bus capital projects, and I was part of the core team that successfully developed and built the new bus station at Liverpool One in Liverpool city centre. Between 2008 and 2020 I worked for transport engineering consultants (Mouchel from 2008 to 2016, where I was team leader and operational lead, and WSP from 2017 to 2020 where, as Technical Director, I led the Transport team in the Northwest). During that period, I fronted a number of significant studies and pieces of work (including leading the Trans Pennine Tunnel Study for the Department for Transport, National Highways and Transport for the North between 2016 and 2020; A Streets for All programme for Transport for Greater Manchester; and, Stoke Councils Transforming Cities Bid).

1.3 My role in this Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and the First Phase Development (which includes the redevelopment of the St Helens bus station) has been as part of the Merseytravel team in supporting St Helens Borough Council, since May 2020, in the redevelopment of the bus station as part of the wider regeneration of the town centre (“the Scheme”). My role has involved establishing Merseytravel’s requirements as end user of the redeveloped bus station and ensuring that all operational and safety requirements and specifications are clear and understood by all parties (St Helens Borough Council, WSP, and English Cities Fund (ECF)). I have also played a key role in the option selection and identification of the location and design of the redeveloped bus station. I have also been a key individual in the discussions with St Helens Borough Council regarding the scheme delivery models.

1.4 Having worked for Merseytravel for over ten years (2001 to 2007 and 2020 to date) I have a particularly good knowledge and understanding of our infrastructure and our assets, and the public transport network (buses) that serve those assets and the various local communities, including St Helens, and the towns bus station.

1.5 Merseytravel is the strategic transport advisor to the LCRCA (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority) and is also responsible, on its behalf, for transport delivery. Merseytravel’s focus is on supporting the economic growth of the Liverpool City Region by improving connectivity across the region and beyond, supporting and maintaining an integrated transport network and improving the customer experience. LCRCA is led by the Metro Mayor and brings together the Liverpool City Regions six local authorities – Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens, Wirral and Halton. Through their devolved powers LCRCA works with all six local authorities to make decision, plan investments, and deliver initiatives in transport, employment, culture, digital and housing.

1.6 Merseytravel have responsibility for managing the operations of all bus stations across the Liverpool City Region, including the current bus station in St Helens town centre. Merseytravel has guidelines outlining the minimum requirements for these types of facilities including standards around layouts, accessibility and back office /support functions.

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Current facility

2.2 The current bus station was built in the 1990s to provide significant enhancements to St Helens public transport provision. At that time, the initial plans for the bus station development included the land upon which the Swan public house and Town Fryer chip shop are presently located. However, the decision was taken to retain the two local food and drink retail premises, which created a significant development constraint, meaning the bus station was brought forward on a limited footprint creating a bus station with a major internal division, (i.e., split into two distinct halves) which has restricted the operation of the bus station since its inception and subsequent build.

2.3 The 1990’s bus station design, without the land at the north-eastern section of the bus station area (where the Swan and the Town Fryer currently stand), dictated the station’s vehicular access and egress routes, and resulted in a station of two distinct halves. Three bus stands could be used in an eastbound direction and six stands could be used in a westbound direction, with no internal vehicular link capable between the two halves. Nevertheless, buses can move between all of the current bus stands by use of Bickerstaffe Street and Corporation Street which abut the bus station, albeit outside its perimeter.

- 2.4 The existing bus concourse has nine internal stands with three and four external stops located on Bickerstaffe Street and Corporation Street respectively. The station has circa 160 services arriving / departing during the peak hours and has no practical additional capacity to cater for future growth in bus services in its current layout. Coupled with a broad range of significant operational constraints and safety concerns it is clear that the existing bus station therefore requires redevelopment and expansion.

### 3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 3.1 As St Helens looks towards a once in a lifetime opportunity to invest and grow its new town centre (as outlined in the evidence provided by Iain Jenkinson, CBRE and Sean Traynor, St Helens Borough Council, both of which present the strategic and economic drivers) uses and patterns of behaviour, the bus station now needs to keep pace with the town centre, to maintain good, sustainable access for central St Helens, and to maintain the excellent interchange capacity with the rail network.
- 3.2 Whilst the bus station remains perfectly placed to fulfil its role in assisting with the next round of regeneration for the town centre, to make the bus station fit for purpose for the next two decades, it needs upgrading and expanding in its current location.
- 3.3 Driven largely by the decarbonisation agenda and needing to get to net zero by 2040 (for the LCR), there is as real need for significant modal shift to help achieve those aims. With 80% of the current public transport use and the momentum behind Bus Reform then there is a very strong need to expand operations for bus services across the Liverpool City Region.
- 3.4 This robust optioneering exercise has demonstrated that all possible locations and orientations have been explored, and balanced economic need, with safety and operational flexibility and practicalities the preferred design is viewed by all parties involved as the optimum design and location to achieve the aims of the town centre masterplan and the broader aims around an even greater move towards sustainable travel for the Liverpool City Region.
- 3.5 The current bus station was last developed in the 1990's and has a number of constraints which limits its operation and ability to grown and meet demand. A split layout with some services parked outside the facility results in a poor and unsafe environment for buses, bus users and pedestrians.

- 3.6 Merseytravel have worked extensively with St Helens Borough Council and their partners, on outlining and agreeing the essential requirements needed to ensure there is a functional bus station fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and into the future. These are based on safe and well-established practices at other similar bus stations across the Liverpool City Region.
- 3.7 The extensive optioneering and selection process that has taken place over three years has explored a broad range of locations, layouts, and sizes of bus station to serve St Helens town centre. Using the combined expertise and knowledge of St Helens Borough Council (and its partners ECF), Merseytravel, and both ably supported by WSP and Austin Smith Lord (with some earlier work from Watermans), detailed consideration has been given to how best to support the town of St Helens by more sustainable modes of travel at a time when climate emergencies have been declared and there is an onus on all responsible organisations to move towards net zero.
- 3.8 The extensive detail provided not just in this Merseytravel evidence, but also the evidence from St Helens Borough Council and the Statement and Options Technical Report from WSP annexed to this evidence, plus the evidence of others, demonstrates why the new bus station in St Helens town centre needs to be in the location proposed, and at the size and configuration as shown on the design.
- 3.9 In addition to responding to the need for more trips by bus to contribute to cleaner air, safety, is another critical factor driving the reasons for the bus station being the layout and size that it needs to be. The design moves the operations into a single location which reduces many of the current conflicting movements and allows the space to be better managed by Merseytravel's bus station staff, thus ensuring both safe and efficient operation.
- 3.10 Another factor driving the specific location proposed for the new bus station, is the need in the masterplan for high quality public realm to ensure that the redeveloped town centre is attractive to investors and visitors and ensuring that everyone can walk around the town in a safe and attractive environment with clear desire lines to major town centre destinations, with improved links to from the both the bus and rail stations.
- 3.11 Based on Merseytravel's operational requirement for such a facility, and at a time when there is significant emphasis on the need to grow bus and sustainable travel (nationally regionally and local) to tackle broad ranging challenges including the need for clean air and investing in local communities, then it's clear the optimum location requires the land currently occupied

by The Swan public house and the Town Fryer chip shop. The reasons for this are (in summary):

- The bus station needs to be as close to the rail station as possible to provide the town with an effective multi-modal interchange facility. If the Swan pub site is excluded from the scheme, then this removes some of the enhanced efficiencies of the newly proposed facility as the Hall Street entrance will be designed in a way that allows for a smooth efficient flow of buses and a safe, clear and legible link from the bus station, down to the railway station.
- The layout needs to meet all of Merseytravel’s operational and safety requirements, which include the need for full operational flexibility between the operational and layover stands, and a design which ‘houses’ all operations within its boundary to ensure all operations can be managed safely and efficiently. If the Swan is excluded from the scheme, then it will be possible to create an entrance/exit at both ends of the facility.
- The layout needs to meet the shared aspirations of Merseytravel, LCRCA and St Helens Borough Council to increase travel by sustainable travel (and bus in particular) to meet the plans envisaged through Bus Reform, the targets for achieving net zero and the anticipated growth resulting from the town centre redevelopment. If the Swan is excluded, then this provides the opportunity for an enhanced facility which addresses the constraints and issues with the current facility (and layout) and significantly increase opportunities to grow travel by bus.

#### 4. **STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

- 4.1 I confirm that I have made clear which facts and matters referred to in this report are within my own knowledge and which are not. Those that are within my own knowledge I confirm to be true. The opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinions on the matters to which they refer.



ANDREW CAIRNS

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13<sup>th</sup> July 2023