

PARKSIDE UPDATE

Parkside Action Group
Newsletter – Spring 2010
www.parksideactiongroup.org.uk

Bringing you up to date

The original Parkside application was submitted back in 2006 by Astral Developments.

This was to be a warehousing park almost the size of Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown combined. Although presented as a strategic rail freight terminal, in reality this was a minor part of the operation with the major part being “road to road”.

Not surprisingly given the implications for the quality of life of the residents of Newton-le-Willows and surrounding areas there has been substantial local opposition.

The campaign has continued since 2006 and in September 2009 ProLogis (the new owners of Astral Developments) made the following statement.

“The viability of the project in its present configuration has to be balanced against today’s market circumstances and in comparison with the marketplace when the project that was conceived over five years ago”.

Simon Jenkins – Prologis First Vice President of Development.

This led to Pro Logis suspending the original Astral planning application to St Helens MBC. Currently the original application formally still remains on hold.

Pro Logis have recently been conferring with local planning authorities about amended plans.

They have also circulated plans, which are of a similar scale of impact to the original ones via the local press.

Recently St Helens MBC has submitted their modifications to the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The LDF details the Council’s future planning policy.

St Helens MBC is still in essence planning to remove green belt land and is ignoring the views of significant numbers of local people challenging this plan in the previous version of the LDF

See overleaf for what action you can take now to stop them.



What this development will mean to you, your family and your quality of life

HGV’s and plenty of them. In order to assess the potential traffic impact one needs to appreciate the scale. This will be the largest warehousing complex in Europe and it will concentrate an astonishing * 6 million additional HGV movements per year into the Newton area and almost all goods movements will be by road.

* based on Astral’s previous traffic assessments

An area over 80% the size of Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown combined will be removed from green belt. Unremitting noise, high traffic density, light pollution, concrete and huge containers will blight the landscape.

Newton-le-Willows has been declared an Air Quality Management Area. Parts of the town have air quality that is below recommended EU safe levels and is regularly monitored by specialists in St Helens MBC. This is entirely due to pollution from existing traffic flows. Adding extra traffic volumes on such an immense scale will worsen public health outcomes.



A dismal scene all too familiar to most of us a traffic “snarl up” Try to imagine what life would be like round here with an extra 6 million HGV’s per year on the motorway arteries and local roads. Would this develop or permanently strangle the local economy?

The claim for new jobs created has already been much reduced in the new LDF and the Pro Logis latest factsheet now has reduced job claims from 10,000 to 5,500.

However based on job density studies at other sites it is believed these are still vastly exaggerated. But in any event the jobs quoted are substantively relocations of jobs already within the region as existing warehousing is consolidated into a single site. The barrier of the severe motorway congestion and its influence on attracting future jobs and prosperity to the region has not been quantified.

European Union Transport Chair speaks out against the Parkside development

Brian Simpson North West MEP and Chair of Transport Committee European Parliament has questioned the strategic grounds for Parkside to St Helens MBC. His statement below

"I would like my objection to Parkside being removed from the greenbelt noted. I cannot support plans put forward by Astral because I do not believe Network Rail have any spare capacity on the railway for new freight services so the plans do not add up. I ask that you present my objections to the above when the planning goes to committee."

All adjoining authorities Warrington, West Lancashire and Wigan MBC, have either formally opposed or expressed significant concerns over the local impact of the HGV movements and the job relocation.

Note a recent application for the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Terminal on green belt land in Kent (KIG) has been rejected by Maidstone MBC on the grounds that it would provide a low density of jobs and the development would become a road to road distribution centre operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week damaging the local environment and particularly the regional economy.

The impact on our own local regional development once the motorway arteries are choked-up can only be guessed at. This could have a damaging and material impact on the creation of real new jobs for the area.

Competitors to developing Parkside

There are a number of new competitors to Parkside emerging since 2006, one is the "Ocean Gateway".

This £50 billion project will have enormous benefits for the North West region. The transport logistics extends well over 50 miles along the Liverpool and Manchester corridor with inland ports at Wirral, Warrington, Salford and Ince. This will involve facilities to accommodate the huge Panamax freight ships into Liverpool docks and environmentally sound transport links such as the re-development of the Manchester Ship Canal to shift bulk freight inland to distribution ports.



Peel Holdings £50 billion Ocean Gateway project plans to redevelop the Manchester Ship Canal to move freight inland from Liverpool Docks.

Other local competitors are the expanding Ditton Freight interchange at Widnes and also the proposed Omega complex at Burtonwood which has now received planning permission.

Save The Green Belt – Your Chance To Help

In the previous version of the LDF St Helens council proposed that the whole of the area for Parkside be removed from green belt status in advance of any development being approved. There was an overwhelming public reaction with over 1,780 people responding, many appending their personal comments. This formed over 90% of respondents for the whole LDF. Although there has been some subtle amending of wording, so that the land will only now be removed on approval of an application, in essence the provision for the removal of Green Belt remains unaltered and fundamentally those public comments have been discarded.

We now have a public consultation on the amendments and once again we ask you to give a little of your time to respond. Your responses are influencing St Helens MBC. Please keep up the good work.

What you need to do now

PAG has reviewed the amendments in detail and we have highlighted the significant Parkside issues. If you agree with us please sign the attached form and feel free to add your own comments in the box on the form.

Either post the form or process it online see PAG website (below). Forms can be returned to the Spar shop - 105 / 107 Newton High Street before 6pm Tuesday 27th April.

Parkside Action Group Working for You

View our regularly updated website for new developments and how you can help. www.parksideactiongroup.org.uk Or write to: Parkside Action Group, PO Box 17, Newton-le-Willows, WA3 3WX.

Email: help@parksideactiongroup.org.uk

Come along to our Monthly Meeting

PAG meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 8:00pm at Winwick Leisure Centre. Everyone is very welcome whether you want to find something out, help or just listen. The environment and character of the entire area are at risk and are worth understanding whether you agree with us or not.

Next meeting is Wed 5th May 2010 if you have never been before why not come along?

We are an entirely non political Group

*We have no political preference.
We don't sit on the Left.
We don't sit on the Right.*

The only Left and Right we care about is understanding what is "Right" before there is nothing "Left".