

Proposed Property Disposal

Application by Network Rail Infrastructure Limited to dispose of land in accordance with the Land Disposal Condition of the Network Licence

1. Site	
Site location and description	<p>Land to the East of St Helens Central station. Off Parr Street, St Helens, Merseyside. WA10 1DQ</p> <p>The site under consideration is located across the tracks opposite St Helens Central station and comprises the unused land behind Platform 2. It is physically separated by existing fencing.</p> <p>The site is shown in blue on the attached site plan (“the disposed property”).</p>
Plans attached: (all site plans should be in JPEG format, numbered and should clearly show the sites location approximate to the railway)	<p>The following plans/drawings are attached:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aerial view 2. No. 5581631(1) – original sale plan 3. No. 55581631(2) – Final sale plan following consultation 4. No. 5254568 – 2 showing the sale plan with retained Network Rail ownership, existing station lease footprint to Merseyrail and changes made to the sale plan following consultation for illustration.
Clearance Ref:	CR/29594 (certificate no. 38754)
Project No.	153365
Ordnance survey coordinates	<p>Easting (x) – 351726</p> <p>Northing (y) - 395489</p>
Photographs (as required)	Appendix 1 - Photos from 20 September 2016 when it was last inspected, taken of the boundary of the site.
2. Proposal	
Type of disposal (i.e. lease / freehold sale)	Proposed statutory transfer to intra-government department “HCA” (Homes and Communities Agency) with a view to marketing the site for residential development.
Proposed party taking disposal	HCA with a view to marketing the site out to developers/partners.

Proposed use / scheme	Network Rail proposes to transfer the freehold to HCA as part of the wider residential development scheme to contribute towards the company's residential targets. It is envisaged that it will likely comprise high density apartments (alternatively family homes or a mix). All are subject to a full planning application.
Access arrangements to / from the disposal land	Access will be taken off the existing entrance on Parr Street with a secondary access likely to be required off Standish Street. It is also envisaged that the development will create pedestrian access to the station to promote sustainable travel.
Replacement rail facilities (if appropriate)	Not applicable. It should be noted that the tracks at the South that splits off to the East is not part of the disposal as there is a future scheme to link up St Helens Central to St Helens Junction.
Anticipated Rail benefits	There will be no direct rail benefits created.
Anticipated Non-rail benefits	<p>The development will be of benefit to the local environment, community and economy as well as local businesses and it will support sustainable travel with it being close to St Helens Central Station. Temporary construction jobs will be created during the building works and supply of housing.</p> <p>It is assumed that there will be some site contamination due to previous use and any necessary site clean-up will be undertaken by the HCA/developer. The site itself is currently overgrown so development of the site itself will visually improve the immediate local area around St Helens Central Station.</p> <p>Network Rail currently has a target to bring unused and underutilised land for residential development and this disposal will count towards the company target.</p>
3. Timescales	
Comments on timescales	Disposal is expected to complete upon LC7 consent – predicted during the financial year 2017/18.
4. Railway Related Issues	
History of railway related use	<p>Historic deeds have been searched and the plan shows the site previously used to accommodate sidings, likely for coal.</p> <p>A photograph taken in 1975 shows the site partly used for stabling freight trains with the remainder open grassland. We are also aware that the site was likely to have been part of the old St Helens Station which was slightly north of where it is today (off Corporation Street) and</p>

	larger than it is now so the site will have part of the old station footprint.
When last used for railway related purposes	It is understood that the disposal site was originally part of the old St Helens Station footprint which was larger than it is now. After that was closed the site was then partly used for stabling freight trains, likely to be for coal transportation and ancillary uses, until it was fully closed down in the 1980's and fenced off. Since, it has self-seeded itself into a heavily vegetated site.
Any railway proposals affecting the site since that last relative use	None we are aware of. The station and car park has been refurbished recently and the site itself was not part of that.
Impact on current railway related proposals	<p>None. The proposal will not have an adverse impact on the station itself. The proposal does have regard to a future scheme to link up St Helens Central and St Helens Junction and existing track there is not part of the disposal.</p> <p>There may be some build-up of extra road traffic temporarily during construction works but a highways assessment and discussions with the Local Authority will take place to ensure traffic disruption is minimised. It is not anticipated that there will be a material impact on traffic around the existing St Helens Central Station. Access itself into the site is physically separated from the station as it is located on the other side of the tracks via an over bridge.</p> <p>Construction activity will be at a safe working distance from the operational railway in a planned and in a manner upon consultation with the Asset Protection team so it will not have an adverse effect on the day to day operations of the railway.</p>
Potential for future railway related use	<p>We believe there is no reasonable foreseeable railway related use for the disposal site.</p> <p>It is noted that the St Helens Local Plan states that there is a future scheme to link up St Helens Central and St Helens Junction so the existing tracks and infrastructure at the South where it splits off is not part of the disposal area.</p>
Any closure or station change or network change related issues	No. It is physically separated from the station and the proposal does not affect any station facilities nor is it part of the current station lease footprint to Merseyrail. Network Change is required to disconnect the site from the operational track. Consultation will be undertaken in the usual manner. Following a stakeholder meeting with Network Strategy and Capacity Planning team, they had explained that Network Change is required to remove the old platforms off the sectional appendix. Before St Helens Central was refurbished, it contained four platforms instead of two.
Whether disposal affects any	No. There will be no physical interface with the operational railway

<p>railway (including train operator) related access needs, and how these are to be addressed in future</p>	<p>infrastructure and access routes as the works will all take place on the adjoining land owner's side.</p> <p>The Maintenance Protection Co-ordinator (MPC) has provided a list of buried utilities/services and railway related infrastructure for the developer to be aware of and they will be passed on along with a regular dialogue with the Asset Protection team.</p> <p>It is anticipated, but yet to be confirmed, that the proposed residential development will provide a walking/cycling route to and from the station thus promoting sustainable travel.</p>
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<p>Position as regards safety / operational issues on severance of land from railway</p>	<p>Whilst fencing already exists to the back of the platform, the disposal documentation will include arrangements under which the purchaser will be required (if necessary) to erect new boundary fencing to Network Rail's satisfaction. The purchaser will also be responsible for all other boundaries to the sale area. The fencing works will be done in accordance with the internal clearance conditions and recommendations from the LNW Asset Protection team. Network Rail will then maintain the railway boundary fence only thereon.</p> <p>The disposal is on a basis under which Network Rail has had due regard (where applicable) to impact of the disposal on lineside works, including railway troughing, signalling and their maintenance. The disposal is without prejudice to Network Rail's safety obligations, with which Network Rail will continue to comply. Network Rail's network licence requires compliance with Railway Group Standards. These set out requirements for – amongst other things – fencing, access and signal sighting. In addition, the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 require Network Rail to have a safety management system and safety authorisation in respect of its mainline railway system and its railway infrastructure. These, in turn, require Network Rail to comply with Railway Group Standards as well as its own internal standards; and also continually to monitor changes to the risks arising from its operations and to introduce new control measures as appropriate.</p> <p>The developer will be required to submit details of the proposed works for the prior approval of Network Rail's local Asset Protection team and the local MPC has provided detail of the railway infrastructure adjoining/adjacent to the site that the developer must be aware of.</p>
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5. Planning History and Land Contamination

<p>Planning permissions / Local Plan allocation (if applicable)</p>	<p>St Helens Council has been notified of Network Rail's aspirations to develop this site for residential housing. A meeting with the Council will take place to discuss in more detail.</p> <p>Initial work has been completed to produce a layout drawing, master plan and highways assessment for the Council for planning support. A buried utilities search and mining search has also been completed.</p>
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<p>Contamination /</p>	<p>None known, however the HCA/developer will undertake ground</p>
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Environmental Issues (if applicable)	investigations and surveys. Due to its previous use it is likely that there will be some degree of land contamination.
6. Consultations	
Railway (internal – Network Rail)	<p>Network Rail internal land clearance (both business and technical) has been secured. The generic conditions to ensure the future protection of the operational railway and infrastructure will apply.</p> <p>A site specific comment/condition relates to the St Helens Local Plan 2012 by leaving a parcel of land at the South of the site for a future link up between St Helens Central and St Helens Junction. This has been agreed by excluding a thin strip of land at the Southern tip of the site as a buffer from the sale.</p>
Summary of position as regards external consultations	<p>27 stakeholders were consulted, 22 responded confirming they had no comment and/or no objection, 2 gave no response and 3 objected. Efforts were made to contact London Midland and Roadways Container Logistics (RCL) for a response but none were provided. The disposal is outside the operating area of London Midland and not near a port/coast line for RCL so their response is considered not critical. Plus, Network Rail has made reasonable efforts to seek their comments via follow-up emails and telephone calls made without any response.</p> <p>Freightliner had no objection but commented that the Northern part of the site (North of Corporation Street bridge) had been let to EWS (now DB Cargo) from c. 1994-2001 for use as engineer's sidings under a privatisation type lease.</p> <p>St Helens Council Transport Department, Northern Rail and Mersey Travel all provided a joint objection to the sale of the land, on the basis of it having potential future use for extra parking and possible station platform expansion.</p>
Analysis of any unresolved objections together with recommendation by Network Rail as regards a way forward	<p>Having considered the joint objections and gained a better understanding of the objectors' aspirations, Network Rail do not believe that there is a scheme in place that has sufficient grounds to justify Network Rail not disposing of the site for alternative use.</p> <p>The Council wanted to hold back the Southern section of the site only (land between Parr Street and Corporation Street overbridge) for the purpose of a station expansion scheme including new track into the site. During correspondence (see consultation report), St Helens Council, Northern Rail and Mersey Travel's holding objections are based on St Helens Council's Transport Team's aspiration for the site but have confirmed that there is no actual scheme in place, no funding and relies on planning policy from the 1998 Unitary Development Plan (plus the Council refer to an unnamed report in 2006) which are out of date and has had nearly 20 years to happen. The Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment confirms that there is no known or existing</p>

	<p>policy that would constrain the site for residential development.</p> <p>The Council's aspiration would take away the primary access into the site as there is no existing access into the Northern end of the site between Corporation Street overbridge and Standish Street so it is an unrealistic request and would prevent any viable development scheme. Parr Street provides the primary access into the site and if possible Standish Street would only provide a small secondary access for emergencies. Network Rail did agree to hold back a strip of land along Platform 2 of the station and a strip at the Southern end of the site for a future rail link between St Helens Central and St Helens Junction disused line.</p> <p>Network Rail met with the Council on 06 February 2017 to discuss the site and to try and resolve the objection as well as to discuss the residential scheme in tandem. The Council informed Network Rail that despite the objection, they are supportive of the site being used for non-railway purposes as long as a car park and a hotel are provided as well as residential. Network Rail is willing to work with the Council to develop that further but as the Council support non-railway use on site, Network Rail asked the Council to withdraw their objection. The Council were happy to withdraw on the basis that Network Rail guarantees that the site will become a mixed use site instead of all residential. Network Rail informed the Council that it is a planning matter rather than a railway regulatory matter. However the Council insisted on the guarantee for the benefit of their elected members so the objection stands.</p> <p>Merseytravel's objection is a joint objection with the Council, however they also wish to hold back the site for a park and ride facility. They have also made reference to a draft Town Centre Masterplan looking at car parking options. Network Rail has confirmed back that it is also a planning matter to be reviewed with the Council as part of a planning application rather than a regulatory matter. Plus, the station car park has been refurbished along with the construction of new station buildings in 2007.</p> <p>Network Rail's Station Portfolio Surveyor covering Merseyside also confirmed that Merseytravel do not have any schemes or funding in place relating to additional car parking at St Helens Central.</p> <p>Northern Rail did not provide any detailed reasons for objecting but they initially objected and directed Network Rail to Merseytravel (who were also consulted).</p> <p>Overall, Network Rail does not believe that the objections provide evidence of a realistic foreseeable railway use for the land. It is therefore recommended that this site is brought forward for disposal.</p>
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7. Local Authorities	
Names & Email Addresses:	St Helens Council – @sthelens.gov.uk
Local Transport Authorities:	Merseytravel – @merseytravel.gov.uk

Other Relevant Local Authorities:	Not applicable.	
8. Internal Approval		
Recommendation:	Based on the above, I recommend that Network Rail proceeds with the disposal.	
Declaration:	I have read and understood Network Rail's Code of Business Ethics and Policy on Interests in Transactions.	
Surveyor Name:	xxxx	
Approved by Property Development Manager	Name: xxxx	Date Approved by PDM: 24/03/2017