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**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014  
Your ref: 11/00269/FULEIA**

**By e-mail**

T Gibbs Esq  
Divisional Manager – Policy & Development Services  
Halton Borough Council  
Municipal Building  
Kingsway  
Widnes WA8 7QF

Dear Mr Gibbs

**PROPOSED SINGLE RAIL SERVED BUILDING FOR STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION PURPOSES AT HBC FIELD,  
HALE BANK ROAD, HALE BANK, WIDNES**

Thank you for your recent further consultation on the above. This letter sets out the comments of Hale Bank Parish Council (HBPC). As we have previously observed, this application remains a very complex submission for a very large scale development. The responses to my previous letters and the recent updates to the supporting reports are often highly complex and technical, so they are not always easy for Parish Councillors, local residents or even planning consultants such as me to respond to.

We have identified two material changes to the site layout. One is the addition of two small ponds as part of the amended surface water drainage scheme. The HBPC have no comments on this amendment.

The second change that we have identified is an increase in the height of the acoustic fence at the rear of Linner Farm from 2 metres to 5 metres, together with associated changes to the screening and landscaping. The AMEC noise and vibration report appears to have been completely updated. It claims that the acoustic fence has been increased in height *“to reduce noise impacts from HGV movements and loadings”*. The schedule of reports and changes also refers to reducing noise from on-site employee vehicle movements. We would assume that this is confirmed in the AMEC report, but I have been unable to find any reference to it. If it is not covered in the report, then we are unable to properly comment on it.

Nevertheless, we have received further advice from our consultant, Paul Bassett of Hepworth Acoustics. His salient comments now relate mainly for the need to impose robust conditions to ensure that the physical and managerial mitigation measures are fully carried out, thereafter retained and achieve their purpose. The Council has already seen the conditions suggested by Mr Bassett in his letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> March. HBPC fully endorse his suggestions.

It is claimed that the lighting proposals will have only a low impact and that this will be achieved by good design and screening. Nowhere have we been able to find out exactly how ‘good design’ will be translated into ‘low’ impact. For example, the tall lighting columns will be visible from a wide area, as will the reflected glow from them throughout the hours of darkness. Maybe they do shine down and therefore spread less

light, but there will be no hiding from them. We have been unable to find any clear explanation how the impact of floodlighting a huge 32 ha site can be regarded as 'low'. There will be too many lights covering such a wide area that they cannot be screened and there will inevitably be a reflected 'glow' during the hours of darkness as with any large floodlit site as can be seen.

The lighting chapter of the revised Statement refers to "a new access and junction ..... for the development which joins Hale Bank Road to the south of the site". The HBPC trusts this is not actually a new vehicular access, but the bus and emergency access as originally proposed. If it is not, then the public have been misled and the consequences for traffic, together with the loss of amenity to those living along Hale Bank Road will be catastrophic.

The application proposal is described in the application as "rail-served". We thus expected the current application for the new sidings (ref: 14/00382/HBCFUL) to demonstrate how the sidings will serve the proposed warehouse. In fact, they appear not to. The proposal is described on that application form as:-

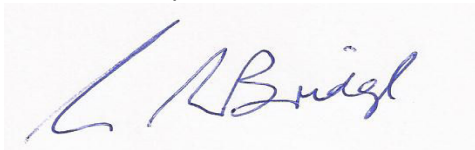
*"Proposed construction of 5 no. railway sidings to be implemented on a phased basis to serve the Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) connecting to the national rail network West Coast Mainline via Ditton Junction sidings at Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park Ditton Road (west) Widnes Cheshire"*

In other words, it serves the Mersey Multimodal Gateway, not the warehouse. The sidings application effectively confirms this. The applicant is Halton Borough Council, not Pro Logis, so the sidings proposal has nothing to do with them. I have also been unable to find anything in the supporting documentation that explains how the sidings will be linked with the warehouse. The application plans show the sidings in a cutting and they do not show any details of the proposed warehouse. There is thus no indication of how the sidings will be linked with the warehouse or how goods can be transported between the warehouse and the trains. Indeed, the application layout plans suggest that such links will not be possible to achieve.

In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the HBPC are now even more convinced that the application description of the warehouse as being rail linked is wrong. Indeed the current plans for the sidings actually confirm their fears. This does, of course, fly completely in the face of why the HBC Field was released from Green Belt and allocated for development in the first place. Once again the HBPC feel that they and the residents of Halebank have been misled by the Council.

HBPC remain very unhappy with this application and the way it is being presented. The success or otherwise of the noise mitigation measures is wholly dependent upon the imposition and compliance with robust conditions, which they are not confident will be enforced. They still see no evidence, other than the applicant's assurances, that the lighting scheme will actually have the low impact claimed for it. The proposed use of the vehicular access onto Hale Bank Road is now confused, so clarification is required. Finally, they still see no evidence whatsoever that the warehouse will, as stated in the description of the development in the application, actually be rail served. Indeed, the plans for the sidings application suggest that it will not and cannot be rail served.

Yours sincerely



**Glyn R Bridge**  
on behalf of Hale Bank Parish Council