CHAPTER SIXTEEN : CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

16.1 Introduction

16.1.1 Cumulative impacts comprise the combined effects of reasonably foreseeable human induced changes within a specific geographical area and over a certain period of time, and can be both direct and indirect. The significance of cumulative impacts needs to be assessed in the context of characteristics of the existing environment. This is to ensure that all of the developments:

- Are mutually compatible
- Are consistent with guidance on sustainable development and associated good practice; and
- Remain within the environmental capacity of the area and its environs.

16.1.2 The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a consultation draft of ‘Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to Good Practice and Procedures’ in June 2006 which identified two types of cumulative impacts that require consideration within EIA:

- The combined or synergistic impacts caused by the combination of a number of impacts on a particular receptor (taking into consideration impacts at both the construction and operational phases) which acting together may cause a more significant impact collectively than individually. An example could be the culmination of disturbance from dust, noise, vibration, human presence and visual intrusion on sensitive fauna (e.g. certain bat species) adjacent to a construction site. These are referred to as ‘Impact Interactions’; and

- The combined impact of the Proposed Development together with committed developments, i.e. schemes with planning permission (taking into consideration impacts at both the construction and operational phases), or those identified in local planning policy documents, referred to as the ‘Cumulative Impacts of the Proposed Development and Committed Schemes’.

16.2 Scope and Approach of the Cumulative Assessment

16.2.1 The assessment of cumulative impacts has been based on professional experience on similar types of schemes, the type of receptors being assessed and the nature of the proposed development. Each technical chapter of the Environmental Statement sets out the cumulative impacts of the proposals both in relation to the impact interactions and cumulative impacts with committed schemes. The full conclusions of this work are therefore not replicated here.

16.2.2 The assessment of impact interactions has been approached from the perspective of changes in baseline conditions at sensitive receptors, based on information presented in the technical chapters. A summary of the potential impact iterations are presented here.
16.2.3 A summary of the conclusions of the technical chapters in terms of the cumulative impact of the proposal with existing committed schemes is also set out.

16.3 **Assessment of Cumulative Impacts with Existing Committed Schemes**

16.3.1 Where appropriate each technical chapter has considered the cumulative impact of the proposal alongside committed schemes. The Transport Assessment includes as part of its scope, the effects of the other schemes as well as general increases in traffic. The other ES chapters conclude that cumulative impacts are related only to the interrelated planning permissions for the link road and the rail sidings.

16.3.2 During construction there is the potential for cumulative impacts in relation to noise and vibration, air quality, soil and land use and landscape and visual effect. In relation to each the conclusion of the technical chapters is that the cumulative effects will not be significant. The noise chapter concludes:

“There is potential for construction works associated with the proposed development to overlap with construction works associated with the new link road”

and

“The previous noise assessment indicated that the predicted noise levels during construction range from 65-72 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$. The noise levels predicted during the construction works associated with the proposed storage and distribution centre (51 – 63 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$) are lower than those associated with the new link road. It is therefore considered that the cumulative impact of these works being undertaken concurrently is no more significant than that assessed for the new link road in isolation”.

The land use and soils chapter concludes:

“The majority of the land over all three developments is ALC Grade 3b and is not classed as BMVL. The value of the receptor (agricultural land) is therefore assessed as being low, according to the criteria set out in Table 8.2. This adverse cumulative impact is certain to occur and is assessed to be of minor significance”.

and

“In conclusion, two cumulative impacts on soils and land use have been identified but the significance of these cumulative impacts is not assessed to be higher than for the HBC Field development alone”.

16.3.3 Having regard to the conclusions of the technical chapters the main cumulative operational impact is considered to be in relation to landscape and visual effects. The assessment undertaken in relation to this cumulative effect concludes that the effects will not be more significant than for the application proposals alone. The Chapter states

“The proposed development would be consistent with the character of the wider 3MG proposals, including the sites described above, which would reinforce the existing industrial urban character of this part of
Widnes. The significance of this cumulative effect would be negligible”.

and

“Cumulative effects of the proposed development, the new link road adjacent (and within) the western part of the site, and new rail sidings on the site’s northern boundary (previously approved and considered as part of the existing landscape, as noted in paragraph 5.2.27), would be no greater than anticipated effects on landscape character and on identified views resulting from the proposed storage and distribution development”.

16.4 Assessment of Impact Interactions

16.4.1 None of the technical environmental assessment work identify a significant environmental effect during the construction process. The construction process will be temporary and the activity on site will vary depending on the stage in the construction process. There is therefore limited interaction between the various environmental effects which might combine to have a significant cumulative effect. The site benefits from an established landscape setting with mounding and tree planting. This provides in-built mitigation for adjacent residential properties from the results of noise and visual effects.

16.4.2 Some cumulative minor negative effects of the construction process could occur on adjacent properties through the combined effects of noise, visual effects and air quality. However these are not anticipated to be significant individually or cumulatively and will be temporary in nature. These potential negative effects need to be balanced with the significant positive socio-economic effects during the construction process.

16.4.3 It is important to note that these impacts will be temporary and intermittent during the construction works. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be adopted to reduce and control any impacts on the existing environment.

16.4.4 The Table below provides an overview of the conclusions of the technical work in terms of residual impacts once proposed development is operational, following the implementation of recommended mitigation measures and having regard to cumulative effects. This provides a useful tool to help review the impact interactions once the proposal is operational. The main consideration in terms of residual effects is presented in terms of the adjacent properties, which are considered to be key receptors.
16.4.5 Once the proposed development is complete, the overall residual impact on the local residents, taking account of the potential for cumulative interaction of impacts, is considered to be minor negative. The main cumulative effects will result from the effects of noise, light and visual effects. These effects will be mitigated by the range of measures incorporated into the scheme and it is not anticipated that the interaction of the effects will increase the magnitude of the impacts.

16.4.6 It is important to note that the major positive benefits of the proposal through investment, job creation, health and well-being (the socio-economic benefits), will balance the negative effects of the proposal on some residents. This might be a direct benefit through new jobs, or indirectly through the wider economic benefits of the proposal to the local area.

16.5 Mitigation Measures

16.5.1 The negative impact interactions which are predicted during the construction phase of the Proposed Development will be mitigated through implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP will impose control measures on the contractors, and the specific works being carried out, such as hoarding to be used, dust and noise control measures and requirements for liaison with the local community.
16.5.2 The control and mitigation measures to be implemented during construction activities are discussed in each of the technical chapters of this ES.

16.5.3 A range of mitigation measures are proposed to limit the effects of the proposal during operation. Many of these are fully integrated into the design approach to the site and building. This includes the extensive landscape framework including mounding and woodland planting which will help mitigate the visual effects, noise, light and air quality. The potential negative impacts on the nearby sensitive receptors once the proposed development is complete will reduce over time as the proposed landscape planting becomes more established.