

SOUTHPORT COMMERCE PARK
Land Allocation Policy Review



Final Report

May 2005

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been produced by BE Group, on behalf of Sefton Council. The purpose of the report is to assist the Council in a review of the land allocation policy relating to Southport Commerce Park.

Study Brief

1.2 The work, undertaken during March and April 2005, has in accordance with the original brief comprised the following tasks:

- A review of existing and anticipated market demand for B1, B2, B8 and Sui Generis uses in the Southport area.
- A review of the historical take up of employment land in the Southport area, and commentary on the Commerce Park's performance in relation to the wider demands and needs of the Southport economy.
- Undertaking an assessment of available alternative employment sites and opportunities in the Southport area and their suitability to meet anticipated demand.
- To draw conclusions regarding the Commerce Park's future role, and the need or potential to consider widening the range of permissible uses – and if so how, in broad master planning terms, this might be achieved.

1.3 At the project start up meeting with the client representatives, it was further agreed that BE Group should comment upon the possible extension of the Commerce Park onto an area of land currently allocated for residential use, and the serious shortage (or otherwise) of employment land in Southport.

Methodology

1.4 The study has been carried out through a mix of face to face and telephone consultations; site visits; desk top research and the review of existing documentation.

1.5 Reflecting the requirements of the brief BE Group have assessed market demand by reference to consultations with property developers and agents, as well as data held by the public sector, rather than through primary research amongst existing businesses.

- 1.6 Historical take up of employment land has been considered from data supplied by Sefton Council, augmented by consultations with developers and agents. A list of consultees and bibliography is included at Appendix 1.
- 1.7 With regard to supply considerations, a trawl has been made of all existing undeveloped/under-developed sites in Southport. In particular these include the three sites identified in the study brief – namely Cobden Road; Crossens Way and Butts Lane/Foul Lane. Site proformas, which include aerial photos, are included at Appendix 2.

Report Structure

- 1.8 In the following sections of the report BE Group set out the site's background in terms of planning policy, ground conditions and development status (Section 2); provide commentary on demand, including historical take up rates (Section 3); detail existing available supply (Section 4). The study's conclusions and recommendations and next steps are contained in Sections 5 and 6 respectively.

2.0 BACKGROUND ISSUES

The Site

- 2.1 Southport Commerce Park is located off Town Lane. It was established in early 1997, following the grant of planning permission for a business park in 1995, and the completion of necessary initial infrastructure works during 1996.
- 2.2 The land was owned by Sefton Council, and this remains the case for all the undeveloped plots. The original intention was that the Commerce Park should be available solely for B1 uses under the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order.
- 2.3 The original Commerce Park designation covered approximately 13 ha of land. Plan 1 indicates the Park boundaries, but also identifies a subsequently proposed 4.4 ha extension.
- 2.4 The initial development partnership agreement between Sefton Council and CTP is no longer in place. Rather the Council is now working with Southport-based Blythe Developments as the preferred developer for the Commerce Park.
- 2.5 To date 4.52 ha have been developed, accommodating six different occupiers. Five fall within Use Class B1. One, the Post Office, is a Sui Generis use, and was accommodated on the Commerce Park as there were no alternative relocation possibilities and the Council felt that a location outside Southport would be detrimental to the town's postal delivery service.

Planning Policy Context

- 2.6 The existing Sefton Unitary Development Plan policy, adopted in 1995, states:

POLICY E4
Southport Business Park

The Council will release approximately 13 hectares of land at Town Lane for the development of a Business Park during the plan period. A detailed development brief will be prepared which will require high quality, low-density business development set within a generously landscaped setting. Landscape proposals must be consistent with the site's location within a Landscape Renewal Area. In addition a substantial landscape buffer will be required on land adjoining the neighbouring housing sites and on the edge of the Green Belt. In addition the development brief will require that new business development should take full account of the topological ground condition, drainage and traffic implications of the development, both within the site and the surrounding area.

- 2.7 Sefton have however proposed within their UDP review the following policy for the Commerce Park:

**POLICY EDT4
Southport Commerce Park**

Planning permission will be granted for major employment generating development for business and light industrial (Class B1) uses on the Southport Commerce Park. Development on the Commerce Park extension will only be permitted if the development cannot be accommodated on the existing park.

- 2.8 In promoting this policy the Council provides the following explanations:

Para 5.27 'The site is intended for locally based footloose industry (class B1) use wishing to locate in a high quality business environment. Planning permission will not normally be granted for general industry or storage and distribution (classes B2 and B8 respectively) unless they are compatible with a business park setting.'

Para 5.28 'The proposed extension to the Commerce Park will increase the developable area by a further 4.4 ha. Development on the commerce park extension will only be permitted once the existing commerce park is substantially complete or the proposed development cannot be accommodated on the remaining undeveloped area.'

- 2.9 The UDP Review document makes the point that:

Southport Commerce Park is the largest industrial and business development site in the north of the borough, and is the only purpose built Business Park in Southport. The Commerce Park has a developable site area of 11.5 hectares, of which approximately 4.0 hectares have already been developed or are under construction, leaving a further 7.5 hectares available for development. The proposed extension to the Commerce Park covers a further 4.4 hectares, giving a total site area of 11.9 hectares.

At present approximately 200 people are employed on the Commerce Park. A further 550 jobs could be created when it is fully developed and a further 300 jobs could be provided on the extension to the Commerce Park, providing a total of over 1,000 jobs.

- 2.10 The UDP Review Inquiry has been held and the Inspector's report received by Sefton. The Inspector concluded no modifications were required to proposed Policy EDT4. She is in full agreement with the proposed extension of the Commerce Park

as she considers it could ensure an adequate supply of employment land, particularly within north Sefton.

- 2.11 Given that the planning permission for the Park is B1 it is prudent, therefore, to note what this covers. According to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2005 the classification includes not just offices, but also research and development premises and light industrial space. There is also capability to accommodate small distribution uses:

B1 Business	Class ii (a) Offices not within A2	Permitted change to B8 where no more than 235 sqm
	(b) Research and development, studios, hi-tech	
	Class iii (c) Light industry	

Ground Conditions

- 2.12 Ground conditions are a significant influence upon development proposals at the Commerce Park. The allocated land comprises a former household waste site. Although only modest levels of contamination still exist some local hotspots remain. The legacy of this use is that levels of methane gas generation continues to be classed as 'low', and as such there is still a requirement from funders and insurers, for development to incorporate protection and prevention measures.
- 2.13 Furthermore the underlying geological structure of the site necessitates deep piling (30 metres) to stabilise the ground for development. Abnormals generated by ground conditions, according to Sefton Council's technical officers, equate to £120 of additional costs per sqm of development.

Services Infrastructure and Funding

- 2.14 Although all services are available to the site, further development will be affected by additional costs for drainage and electricity infrastructure. Topography means that further pumping stations will be needed to connect with the existing on-site pumping station. SP Manweb state that the electricity supply is at capacity. Not only will this require a new sub-station(s), according to the level of demand, but contributions are required to upgrade offsite network infrastructure.
- 2.15 The combination of poor natural ground conditions and contamination arising from previous landfill activity means that the ensuing abnormal costs cannot be overcome

without public sector gap funding. Indeed the Commerce Park has already relied upon over £3 million of public sector investment to achieve its current status.

- 2.16 The initial reclamation and infrastructure costs for the Park were jointly funded by Government Office Merseyside (Objective 1 programme) English Partnerships and Sefton Council. Subsequent funding has been delivered by Government Office Merseyside (Objective 1 programme) and the NWDA, including the recently completed Barnetts development project.
- 2.17 Consultations with the NWDA have established that the Commerce Park is not seen as a priority site and whilst monies are being earmarked for other areas within Sefton, none will be available for the Park.
- 2.18 Government Office advise that as the Commerce Park is not within a Strategic Investment Area there is little money left within the budget that has helped fund the three speculative buildings which are shortly to be constructed by Blythe Developments. The existing Objective 1 programme theoretically allows for funding support offers to be made up to 30 December 2008 – but this will depend on underspend of other planned programmes.
- 2.19 Post 2008, Merseyside is expected to receive some form of further funding under the European Union's Community and Competitiveness streams. The latter will offer capital build support – and thus could be a future source of public sector grant aid.
- 2.20 The Commerce Park is served by Wight Moss Way which is a single spine road. This is presently a cul de sac, and as such is a constraint to the provision of public transport services into the site. Without either a circular route within the site, or a through route connection to Town Lane (to the south), local bus operators will not serve the Commerce Park.
- 2.21 Furthermore the Commerce Park already suffers from car parking problems which mean the main access spine road is in use as a car park. This also mitigates against bus services (due to a lack of space for bus manoeuvring), although in part the problem may be because there are no such services. We understand the Council is taking steps to overcome this problem by creating a temporary off-road car park within the Commerce Park.

Potential Employment Generation

- 2.22 It is a commonly held view that offices accommodate more jobs than such as industry and Sui Generis uses, however the difference between these uses is not always so great.
- 2.23 English Partnerships' "Employment Densities: A Full Guide" reports that on average each employee in a general industrial building occupies 365 sqft compared to 205 sqft in a typical office. Equating this to a 10,000-sqft building generates 27 and 49 jobs respectively.
- 2.24 Furthermore Sui Generis uses such as car dealerships also have an important employment role. Riversway in Preston is a mixed-use business park which incorporates a cluster of seven car dealerships. Combined they employ in excess of 200 people.

3.0 LAND AND PREMISES DEMAND

Introduction

- 3.1 In accordance with the brief we have considered demand for B1, B2, B8, Sui Generis and other uses, which could in-principle be accommodated within the Commerce Park. Research has drawn on the views of property agents with either a good local knowledge of the Southport market, or who have an understanding of Merseyside's regional dynamics. We have also sourced enquiry data held by Sefton Council. This represents enquiries received directly by the Council as well as those passed on to Sefton by the wider Mersey Partnership.

Enquiry Data

- 3.2 At the commencement of the study Sefton Council provided two separate schedules of enquiries, one relating to enquiries for the whole of the Borough and one for Southport Commerce Park. In relation to the two schedules we note the following:

- Both schedules relate to a three-year period of April 2002 to February 2005.
- The Borough wide schedule contains purely numerical data.
- The Commerce Park enquiries, though scheduled through time and identifying the potential companies, do not contain spatial requirements. It is presumed all these enquiries are reflected in the Borough-wide figures.

- 3.3 Consideration of the data raises a number of observations about both the characteristics of the demand and the scope for quantitative analysis. The Southport Commerce Park enquiries schedule leads to the following observations.

- Although dated March 2005 the enquiry status data is clearly outdated, evidenced by the commentaries for Barnetts, United Automation and KLH Electronics – all of whom are actually in occupation of completed buildings.
- Whilst the schedule purports to represent 43 enquiries, dated between May 2002 and January 2005, in reality the figure is 37 – once duplications have been deleted.
- By year the enquiries total 15 for each of 2002 and 2003, with a sharp drop to only 6 last year. To date in 2005 only one enquiry is recorded.
- The dates of the enquiries indicate a most irregular pattern with clusters of similar or close dates being punctuated with periods of as much as five months without a single enquiry being registered.

- Three enquiries relate to developers rather than occupiers – one being Blythe Developments. The two earlier enquiries were from developers and investors more known for industrial rather than office projects.
- 18 of the 34 enquiries from potential occupiers are readily identified from their telephone numbers as being Southport area based. This number may be greater but some enquiries have no contact details or provide just a mobile phone as a point of reference.
- The recorded requirements do not always specify the proposed activity (and thus appropriateness to the Business Park concept), although at least four (representing 67 percent of 2004's enquiries) represent activities viewed by Sefton Council as not suited to the Commerce Park vision.

3.4 We do however acknowledge that the data supplied to us constitutes an “internal use” only document which has the dual roles of providing a snapshot of existing tenants, for Sefton Council aftercare purposes and scheduling of new enquiries.

3.5 The Borough-wide schedules do not provide the opportunity for comprehensive analysis for two key reasons:

- First, property requirements are provided as a total and then only for offices. Thus B1 light industrial use, permissible in respect to the Commerce Park planning consent, is not identified.
- Second, because enquiries that span more than one size band are counted for each band concerned, there is not a true correlation between the totals received and the sub totals drawn from within the schedules. This is exemplified by the supplied breakdown of site enquiries. The total number of enquiries is 124 yet adding each of the size band subtotals indicates 175 enquiries.

3.6 We provide here analysis of the enquiry data supplied to us, together with, where possible, applicable commentary. Unless otherwise stated the data is based on the whole of Sefton.

Table 3.1 – Sefton Industrial Enquiries By Size (April 2002 – Feb 2005)

Size Sqft	Number of Enquiries
0 – 4,999	87
5,000 – 9,999	43

10,000 – 19,999	40
20,000 – 39,999	21
40,000 – 59,999	11
60,000 – 99,999	1
Over 100,000	2
Unclassified	272
Total number of enquiries	407

- 3.7 Table 3.1 suggests that where spatial requirements are known, the demand is heavily weighted towards small properties (less than 5,000 sqft). This suggests, from our experience, demand for existing rather than custom-built accommodation.

Table 3.2 – Sefton Office Enquiries By Size (April 2002 – Feb 2005)

Size Sqft	Number of Enquiries
0 – 2,999	43
3,000 – 4,999	5
5,000 – 9,999	4
10,000 – 19,999	6
Over 20,000	3
Unclassified	64
Total number of enquiries	103

- 3.8 As Table 3.2 illustrates the overall enquiries characteristic of small space requirements is equally reflected in the data provided for offices. Comparing the two figures would suggest that only about 25 percent of all the enquiries for premises relate to offices.

Table 3.3 – Sefton Land Enquiries by Size (April 2002 – Feb 2005)

Size Acres	Number of Enquiries
1 – 2	27
3 – 5	26
6 – 10	6
11 – 20	3
Over 21	7
Unclassified	106
Total number of enquiries	124

- 3.9 In view of the numeric discrepancies provided by Table 3.3 it is difficult to make assumptions or draw any characteristics from the data. Certainly Table 3.3 suggests the majority of demand relates to sites of less than 5 acres. This accords with Southport Commerce Park's experience where the largest land transaction, Hibernia Atlantic, equates to 1.23 ha (3.04 acres).

3.10 We were supplied with a summary of enquiry location sources. The numbers indicated a total of over 2,500 enquiries, for which there is no correlation whatsoever with the April 2002 – February 2005 totals for sites and premises – 531. However it is possible, from the breakdown supplied to glean a picture of where demand emanates from.

3.11 As might be expected the vast majority, 66 percent, is indigenous to Sefton. A further 9 percent of the demand comes from elsewhere within Merseyside. These two figures might in reality be higher as around one fifth of all enquiries were not classified. The parochial characteristic of demand is reflected by the fact that even when unclassified enquiries are excluded, less than six percent of this demand is sourced from the rest of North West.

Table 3.4 Demand – Preferred Locations (April 2002 – Feb 2005)

Location	All Property %	Land %	Offices %
North Sefton	13.5	16.9	11.7
Mid Sefton	6.3	12.9	6.8
South Sefton	49.4	29.0	56.3
Unclassified	30.8	41.1	25.2

3.12 In Table 3.4 we have consolidated information provided regarding the preferred locations for demand. Southport is represented by North Sefton. Underpinning the analysis is the significant percentage attributed in each category to ‘unclassified’ locations. It is not possible to comment whether the latter truly represents genuine footloose (in terms of any locations within the borough) demand or merely indicates the data has not been recorded.

3.13 Importantly Table 3.4 illustrates that although North Sefton features strongly in terms of demand for sites, it fares less well in terms of office demand. The perception of Southport as a location for the office services sector is belied by the fact that the percentage share for all property demand is 1.8 percentage points above that for offices.

3.14 In terms of numbers of enquiries where North Sefton is the preferred location, the figure for sites and premises totals 76. Of the 55 premises enquiries contained within this figure, just over 1 in 5 relate to the office market sector. This ratio is similar to those exhibited by other areas of Sefton.

Property Agents Comment

- 3.15 We have spoken with each of the commercial property agents with offices in Southport and with those Liverpool based agents known to be active in the town's industrial and office markets.
- 3.16 The observation was generally made that whilst Southport has numerous good quality businesses, they are constrained by operating from outdated premises in secondary locations, which have poor access and communication difficulties. Often the premises are located to the rear of residential properties with narrow access between houses. Many are considered to be uses falling within B1 classifications and as such are perceived to be suitable for the Commerce Park.
- 3.17 The consensus amongst the agents is that Sefton, and in particular Southport, is in danger of losing these quality businesses due to the inflexible planning policy approach to development on the Commerce Park.
- 3.18 Our consultations with local agents suggest the local demand for industrial and/or distribution space is strong, although Southport is not a location for accommodating large-scale warehousing because of its distance from the motorway network. The comment was made that there are companies wishing to occupy new industrial space but they are being frustrated by the lack of suitable sites or modern premises. For example John Fitton and Co report a steady flow of such enquiries, as well as for warehousing space, for premises of 5-10,000 sqft. Anthony Hill Partnership state they have a waiting list for light industrial (B1) units of 5,000 sqft, with around 80 percent of demand emanating from Southport. Current enquiries include a joinery; a window blinds company; white goods and healthcare products distribution operations. This was a point reiterated by both Mason Owen and Keppie Massey.
- 3.19 For some growing industrial businesses, formed in Southport, the lack of local expansion premises has led to relocation out of the town, especially to Skelmersdale. Anthony Hill Partnership drew attention to two such companies – one a computer assembly company, the other an auto repair company.
- 3.20 During our research attention was drawn to Cooperheat, another Southport business that has also relocated to Skelmersdale. However the company's European owners have now decided that the operations should relocate back to Southport because the

town's image is more akin to that of the company's – and consequently negotiations are ongoing for part of the former Phillips plant.

3.21 Agents also report good demand for offices, with enquiries for properties of all sizes from 2000 up to 20,000 sqft. The Park is in competition with better located, more high profile schemes elsewhere in Merseyside and along the motorway axes, e.g. Kings Park. However if the rentals are pitched appropriately, £10-12/sqft for office space, then it has the capability to be successful. There is also a view that a serviced office centre, in conjunction with managed workspace and self-storage would work very well in the location.

3.22 The key characteristics of the local property market are shown in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5 – Agents' Comments about Southport

Comment	A Hill P'ship	Mason Owen	Fitton & Co	Keppie Massie	King Sturge	Lawler Developments
Insular property market due to remoteness		✓		✓	✓	
Strong local demand	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lack of small industrial units	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Skilled local labour	✓		✓			
Local businesses lost because of lack of property options	✓	✓	✓			
Strong freehold demand		✓				
Other					Limited involvement in Southport with outdated building	

3.23 The local agents also report that there is demand from other uses that might be applicable to the Commerce Park location. There is demand for new car showroom sites, in part from dealerships not currently represented in Southport, such as Mercedes, and in part from existing operations interested in relocating to more suitable sites – such as Road Range and Ford. The expectation is that as is the case elsewhere, for example Riversway, Preston or Winwick Road, Warrington, the dealerships will deliver high quality designed buildings compatible with the standards being promoted for the Commerce Park.

3.24 Enquiries have also been received from national crèche operators such as Leapfrog and Princess Christian. Reflecting work place demands, the structure of family life

and modern living, there is increased demand for crèches close to the workplace. Many business parks have incorporated crèches as an integral part of their development, based on the fact it makes the work place more attractive for employers and employees alike.

3.25 In particular Leapfrog look for the following site characteristics:

- Highly accessible 0.35 – 0.5 acre greenfield / brownfield sites
- Conversions / redevelopment opportunities considered, up to 8,000 sqft including dedicated play space – external preferred
- On site parking beneficial (will consider shared parking situations)
- Quality locations with working populations in excess of 100,000
- Neighbouring business users are an advantage, e.g. neighbourhood centres /convenience stores, offices, mixed retail, leisure, hotels and public houses
- Proximity to residential area beneficial.

3.26 From discussions with Blythe Developments we are also aware of demand from healthcare related activities that are envisaged as being compatible with the Commerce Park location. There are two private hospitals seeking sites in Southport. There is also demand for residential care home provision – new facilities to replace the older existing properties being acquired elsewhere in the town for residential redevelopment. Blythe Developments also drew attention to the local area requirement for a new GP surgery, and the opportunity this presents to be the catalyst for a healthcare ‘village’ incorporating a pharmacy, optician, and dentist.

3.27 Blythe Developments also confirm they have ongoing interest from three car dealerships for sites on the Commerce Park. Two would be new dealerships to Southport, one would be a relocation from a residential area which experiences congestion and pedestrian safety issues.

Employment Land Take-up

3.28 Employment land take-up statistics supplied by Sefton Council are contained in Table 3.6. The figures indicate annual performance for the seven years period 1997 to 2004.

Table 3.6 Employment Land Take-up, Sefton 1997-2004

Year	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	Total
No. of Sites	7	7	4	0	1	2	1	22
Hectares	10.03	8.74	5.07	0.00	0.42	1.03	2.30	27.59

- 3.29 We were also supplied with statistics for the six years period prior to 1997. Comparison with those statistics indicates that post 1997 there has been a marginal reduction in the annual average for the number of sites, but a more significant one for the amount of land taken up – down from 6.28 ha to 3.94 ha annually.
- 3.30 Sefton Council produced an ‘Employment Topic Paper’ in support for the Unitary Development Plan Public Local Inquiry 2004. The document makes reference to employment land take up over the period 1993-2003. It indicates that during the decade the annual average for the borough was 5.06 ha, with an average of only 0.58 ha being attributable to North Sefton (i.e. Southport and Formby).
- 3.31 However the sub-set figures for the latter half of the decade, i.e. 1998 onwards, reveal that whilst the borough total dropped by some 40 percent to 3.05 ha per annum, North Sefton’s annual figure rose to 0.78ha. From representing only five percent of the borough take up between 1993 and 1998, North Sefton reflected over 25 percent of the take up for the period 1998 to 2003.
- 3.32 Detailed examination of the take-up since 1997 indicates that just under a third of the sites (seven) relate to Southport locations - with five associated with the Commerce Park. Other key points to note are:
- The seven sites total 5.46 ha, approximately one-fifth of all the land taken up across the borough.
 - The 3.91 ha taken at the Commerce Park represents 71 percent of land taken in Southport.
 - Since 1999 the Commerce Park has clearly been Sefton’s key investment location for development land, with half of all the borough’s transactions during this period.
 - With the exception of the Health & Safety Executive’s new offices in Bootle, all the remaining recorded B1 office land activity is centred upon Southport Commerce Park.

- The remaining land take-up transactions recorded are dominated by port related and distribution/haulage yard activities.
- The data does not record the MCL Experian land transaction of 0.62 ha, which took place after the Employment Topic Paper was prepared.

4.0 LAND AND PREMISES SUPPLY

Introduction

- 4.1 This section considers the supply of employment land and premises in Southport. It illustrates the lack of quality alternative development options to Southport Commerce Park.
- 4.2 It also assesses the existing employment areas in the town to illustrate the lack of available premises to accommodate local businesses.
- 4.3 Site plans and proformas for each of the sites are included in Appendix 2.

Alternative Employment Sites

EDT 6.19 - Junction of Butts Lane and Foul Lane, Crowland Street Industrial Estate

- 4.4 This is a small 1.0 ha vacant greenfield site situated between a railway embankment and a proposed strategic park and ride development, on the edge of the established Crowland Street Industrial Estate.
- 4.5 Although relatively close to the end of the A570 and Kew/Meols Cop Retail Park, the final access is poor and through a residential area. Consequently it lacks prominence, scale and is in an area of poor environmental quality, as the Crowland Street Industrial Estate predominately caters for lower grade uses.
- 4.6 The site is likely to need expensive piling to stabilise the ground conditions. Other constraints include potential congestion from the adjacent park and ride site that is currently under construction, while it also abuts greenbelt, part of which, is designated as a site of local biological and geological interest.
- 4.7 Although adjacent to the better quality Old Hall Business Park it is unlikely to attract quality users and is not an office location. It is better suited to small businesses requiring workshop space.

- 4.8 Its market availability is questioned as a local property agent has indicated that the site has recently been purchased by a Southport business for its own uses, probably for vehicle repairs.

EDT 6.20 - Cobden Road, Crowland Street Industrial Estate

- 4.9 A 0.5 ha vacant, brownfield site situated in the heart of the established Crowland Street Industrial Estate.
- 4.10 Although relatively close to the end of the A570 and Kew/Meols Cop Retail Park, the final access is very poor and through a mix of industrial and residential areas. As a backlands site it lacks prominence (there is minimal frontage to Cobden Road), scale and is in an area of poor environmental quality, as Crowland Street Industrial Estate predominately caters for lower grade uses, even though it is next to the better quality Enterprise Business Park.
- 4.11 It is unlikely to attract quality occupiers or development, particularly not offices, and is better suited to small businesses requiring workshop uses. However any development will probably require piled foundations due to its poor ground conditions.
- 4.12 This site has also recently been purchased by an owner-occupier, Southport Skip Hire.

EDT 6.18 - Crossens Way, Crossens Way Primary Industrial Area

- 4.13 The largest alternative site in Southport at 1.5 ha Crossens Way is on the northern edge of Southport in the established Crossens Way Primary Industrial Area. And of all the sites, it is the least well allied to the motorway network or the rest of Merseyside, and particularly Liverpool.
- 4.14 It has limited prominence, although it does front Marine Drive. However there are a number of constraints to it which reduce its attractiveness for development, not least of which is that it is adjacent to a sewage works and suffers from its associated polluting elements. There are also a number of other issues: it is likely to require piling, it is adjacent to residential areas and a playing field; while it is also adjacent to

a country park, a coastal planning zone and a site of local biological and geological interest.

- 4.15 Although not on the market, its owners, Railex, have entertained discussions with potential purchasers. Given its situation the site is most appropriate for industrial use and is unlikely to interest office occupiers or developers.

Existing Major Employment Areas

Crowland Street Industrial Estate

- 4.16 Crowland Street Industrial Estate is the largest employment area in Southport; it contains a mix of B1, B2, and B8 uses in a multiplicity of ownerships and is a secondary location when considered against the rest of the Merseyside market as a whole. There are very few offices in the area, and those that do exist are allied to larger industrial units. The Industrial Estate also includes a wide variety of properties, both in terms of their age and size. However it is predominately older stock, dating from the 1950s to 1970s, with some smaller, newer in-fill schemes. On the whole the Estate is poorly presented and lacks environmental quality and image, generally because of the low grade users it tends to accommodate, such as scrap metal dealers and vehicle repair outfits.
- 4.17 Blowick Business Park makes up part of Crowland Street Industrial Estate and also contains low grade, low value properties. Two of the newer schemes include Old Hall Business Park and Enterprise Park. The former comprises 14 modern units all of which are let, and the owner, Lawler Developments, states that there is strong demand for similar units of around 2,000 sq ft, especially those which have the capability to accommodate wholesale uses.
- 4.18 The Enterprise Park consists of modern, quality light industrial units within well-landscaped grounds. The development consists of 12 units; of these only one remains vacant, again highlighting local demand for such units of between 2,000 sq ft and 5,000 sq ft.
- 4.19 Across the whole Estate there are almost no obvious vacant properties and few marketing boards, suggesting an extremely high occupancy rate.

Slaidburn Industrial Estate, Slaidburn Crescent

- 4.20 This is a small industrial estate in the north of Southport comprising of about 15 units, mostly of moderate quality. Although surrounded by residential areas, constraining easy access, it remains popular, illustrated by the lack of property agents' marketing boards. Slaidburn Industrial Estate is also home to a Corkhills Volkswagen car dealership, even though it does not possess main road prominence or benefit from passing trade, the usual requirement for such a use.

Crossens Way Industrial Estate

- 4.21 Crossens Way Industrial Estate is a small, low grade industrial area comprising of two main users, Railex and a sewage works. On the northern boundary of Southport it is close to the end of the dual carriageway section of the A565 which leads to Preston.

Balmoral Drive

- 4.22 The final employment area is not an industrial estate but the site of the former Phillips complex that fronts Balmoral Drive. Again this is in the northern part of Southport, close to Slaidburn Industrial Estate and Crossens Way Industrial Estate, and suffers from the same access and residential neighbourhood issues.
- 4.23 The complex covers a large proportion of the site, and has minimal car parking areas associated with it. Whilst part of the site, at the corner of North Road and Balmoral Drive is occupied, the former main factory building remains substantially empty. King Sturge is marketing the property. The perceived poor quality of the accommodation is reflected in the asking rent of £1.50 - £2.00 per sq.ft. The property is available on three-year leases, or leases with a break at three years – a reflection of plans to pursue alternative development use in due course.
- 4.24 The building is vacant although there is interest in part, and its outdated specification and large size means that demand for its space is slow and intermittent.

Vacant Premises Supply

- 4.25 An analysis of Sefton Council's Commercial Property Register February 2005 has been made and is presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.
- 4.26 The bulk of the available industrial properties in Southport are up to 2000 sqft, and there are only 12 vacant in total. However the accuracy of the data reflects the input to Sefton Council by agents marketing space. Most notably, because the agents marketing the Phillips complex at Balmoral Drive have not responded to requests for information, this property comprising over 100,000 sq. ft of accommodation has not been included in the Commercial Property Register.
- 4.27 Elsewhere in Sefton there are almost twice as many properties, and especially in the larger size bands, which mean the rest of the Borough has ten times as much floorspace as Southport.

Table 4.1 – Amount of Vacant Industrial Property

Size band sq ft	0-500	501-1000	1001-2000	2001-5000	5001-10,000	10,001-20,000	20,000+	Total, sq ft
Southport								
Numbers	1	6	4	-	1	1	-	12
Floorspace	500	4,800	4,500	-	7,000	13,928	-	30,756
Rest of Sefton								
Numbers	-	2	-	6	5	7	3	23
Floorspace	-	1,525	-	18,487	46,544	92,710	177,200	336,466

- 4.28 The office analysis illustrates Southport's strong service sector economy, where there are more than twice as many available office properties as there are industrial. This situation is highly unusual, as more often than not, the number of industrial premises far outweighs offices. Furthermore the town has over two thirds of the Borough's total office stock, even though the boundary of the borough stretches to the edge of Liverpool, and includes Bootle.

Table 4.2 – Amount of Vacant Office Property

Size band sq ft	N/k	0-500	501-1000	1001-2000	2001-5000	5001-10,000	10,001-20,000	20,000+	Total, sqft
Southport									
Numbers	12	5	6	4	1	-	-	-	28
Floorspace	-	1,352	5,172	6,360	2,100	-	-	-	14,984
Rest of Sefton									
Numbers	5	2	1	-	2	-	-	1	11
Floorspace	-	700	940	-	9,350	-	-	80,000	90,990

4.29 Much of the data is incomplete making detailed analysis difficult. However most of the available space comprises small suites of up to 2000 sqft, which replicates the wider need and demand emanating from the local market.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 In drawing together our conclusions regarding Southport Commerce Park, we have taken into consideration the following elements:

- Our consultations with key stakeholders and influences in the Southport commercial property market sector
- Our own inspections of the Commerce Park and other employment land allocations and premises in Southport
- A context review of previous reports relevant to employment land provision in general in Sefton, and Southport Commerce Park in particular. Reports have also been reviewed relating to planning and ground conditions/infrastructure matters impacting on the Commerce Park
- Our own experience of planning, developing and marketing business park schemes across the UK.

Current Planning Permission

5.2 Although it is unclear as to how the situation has arisen, we have found divergence of opinion and confusion amongst some consultees, regarding what kind of development is currently permissible within the Commerce Park.

5.3 This has been evidenced by:

- Blythe Developments 'Development Proposal' document, dated August 2004, which refers to the site having consent for Use Classes B1, B2 and B8.
- Comments from Sefton Council officers that industrial use is precluded and, notwithstanding the presence of the Sui Generis postal sorting office, that any intention to propose industrial use would require consultation with the existing occupiers as they are expecting all development to be of an office nature.
- Sefton Council's Property Register which refers to the Park as suitable for B1, B2 and B8.

5.4 The evidence of our research is that the existing Commerce Park has a B1 Use Class consent. Whilst B1 has subdivisions to B1a (offices); B1b (research and development) and B1c (light industry), nowhere has a policy been produced that distinguishes between these three subdivisions. This has been introduced for some

Business Parks, for example Daresbury Park, Halton which restricts uses to only offices and research development. For Southport Commerce Park it is a blanket B1 Use Class allocation.

- 5.5 Consequently there is no justification to exclude industrial uses that comply with B1c notation, namely... *“any industrial process being a use which can be carried out within a residential area but without causing detriment to the amenity of that area (e.g. through creation of noise, vibration, fumes, smell).”*
- 5.6 If it is an objective of the Council to constrain such uses within the Commerce Park then in our opinion this is achievable by one of two approaches. First, a land pricing structure which makes industrial uses uneconomic. Second, by seeking to achieve design standards for the Commerce Park. These would prove a deterrent to those occupiers/investors unwilling to match the ethos of the Park.
- 5.7 Whilst we note the Council does not wish to see warehousing or distribution activities on the Park, it must be remembered that planning legislation permits change of use from B1 to B8 (storage and distribution), provided the floorspace in question does not exceed 235 sq. m (2,529 sqft).
- 5.8 We note this planning situation applies to the original Commerce Park boundaries and the approved extension, therefore there is scope, should Sefton Council wish to do so, to be more restrictive on the planning uses permitted for the potential additional south east quadrant which is currently allocated for residential use.

Commerce Park – Potential Expansion

- 5.9 Our investigations have confirmed that there is a serious lack of alternative quality sites in Southport that might serve a comparable function to the Commerce Park. In any event, the study has confirmed that there is a general shortage of employment land in Southport, in both numbers of sites and volumes of land. This therefore justifies committing the planned extension of 4.4 ha, as endorsed by the Unitary Development Plan Public Local Inquiry Inspector. We also consider that the Commerce Park boundaries be further extended to include the ‘south east quadrant’ area, presently proposed for residential use.

- 5.10 Our reasons for this are threefold. Firstly a defensible boundary (Town Lane) would be created between the Commerce Park activities and the established and emerging residential areas to the east and southeast.
- 5.11 Secondly the merger of the three currently separate areas of land will physically permit a loop road system around the whole of the site, and thus help justify the feasibility of public transport services into and through the Commerce Park. It negates the argument that there is only cul-de-sac provision which is unacceptable to bus service operators.
- 5.12 Thirdly the inclusion of the southeast quadrant will ensure a continuum of supply during the new UDP period, for Southport. This is the only location where such a supply could realistically be delivered. Two of the three other sites have been sold to end-users for industrial purposes, while the third site, Crossens Way, is poorly situated and located.
- 5.13 Southport needs to protect the future growth of its economy as it is clearly in a healthy state, as our consultations with property market stakeholders show. However there are a lack of options for occupiers seeking quality accommodation, both for office and light industrial.
- 5.14 To date, Southport Commerce Park, has offered a solution for large space requirements. It is unlikely that this demand will continue indefinitely. Future demand would be better served by providing high quality light industrial schemes of 5,000–10,000 sqft and office buildings sub-divisible into units of 2,000–5,000 sqft. Freehold availability would also be highly successful.

Introduction of Alternative Uses

- 5.15 We have considered both the demand and rationale for permitting alternative uses on the Commerce Park, beyond the approved B1 use class.
- 5.16 We conclude that Sefton Council should proactively consider the introduction of the following:
- A crèche and fitness facility. The Commerce Park is styled as a strategic business park within Sefton. As experienced readily demonstrates elsewhere

in the UK, crèche facilities are usually one of the first support functions associated with modern business parks – an aid to occupiers to attract staff; an attraction for potential employees when considering employment opportunities. For similar reasons fitness facilities are also a feature of business park developments. The possible location for such facilities might best be suited to within the south east quadrant area, so that it could serve Commerce Park employees and residents of the adjacent housing area.

- Sui Generis use in the form of quality car dealerships. There are precedents elsewhere for such provision in conjunction with employment areas or business park developments. Visually, modern dealership developments tend to create good architecture imagery – compatible with the standards being sought for the Commerce Park. They also generate jobs, for example Riversway in Preston incorporates a cluster of seven car dealerships which employ in excess of 200 people. Significantly they attract higher land values (research suggests upto 50 percent above the level of B1 space) and therefore provide the opportunity to cross subsidise B1 development on other parts of the Park. We believe by sensitive masterplanning, it is feasible to create a dedicated district ‘car dealership’ area within the overall site, capitalising on the main road frontage – a prerequisite for the dealership operators.

5.17 Attracting a hotel to the Commerce Park would ordinarily be a key thrust towards delivering on-site ancillary services, which are seen as beneficial to occupiers. However the location, and the scope associated with Southport’s wider leisure and tourism offer as a coastal town, suggests any such demand might gravitate to other areas of the town.

5.18 We are aware of local demand within the healthcare and care home markets and Blythe Developments idea of creating a healthcare village as an integral part of the enlarged Commerce Park. We acknowledge such activity would create some level of employment, however we suggest there ought to be better or more appropriate locations associated with residential areas, rather than utilising Southport’s, and indeed one of Sefton’s, premier strategic employment sites.

Design and Management Structures

5.19 The Commerce Park currently lacks any agreed design and management framework or implementation programme, to reflect the development standards originally

envisaged. There is also considerable under investment in landscape/streetscape provision and especially in maintenance. There is no mechanism for property and landowners to collectively manage issues and opportunities.

- 5.20 There is need to introduce design guidelines. These will help achieve connectivity between office and industrial developments, and self-police the objective of quality. Importantly there is also need to address the current lack of directional signage throughout Southport relating to the Commerce Park.
- 5.21 Our conclusions reinforce the comment made in Blythe Developments' Proposal document dated August 2004, that there is at present no coherent plan which locates together like-minded businesses; no design co-ordination nor landscaping scheme. This gives the appearance of one-off operations as opposed to the unity of a true commerce park. Indeed the Blythe Developments document provides a start point for progression to agreed standards.

Commerce Park's Role within Southport's Economy

- 5.22 We have found, amongst property agents based outside Southport, nervousness about the ability of the Commerce Park to successfully compete in the sub regional business park market. It is acknowledged that the Commerce Park is, after a somewhat stilted start, now emerging as a genuine business park location. The inference of this is that past delays or poor performance have blighted its credibility as a real offer.
- 5.23 Nevertheless the poor connections to the wider regional road network, as well as restricted public transport provision, are perceived as ongoing constraints to attracting occupiers other than those already indigenous to Southport.
- 5.24 Our analysis of land take-up performance shows that the Commerce Park has exhibited a pivotal role since 1997, representing at least 71 percent of all the employment land developed in Southport. It provides the opportunity to deliver property solutions for the service industry sector – a sector important for Southport's future economic well being.
- 5.25 Land availability alone is not necessarily the panacea for economic activity. Property availability is similarly important and the provision of speculative development

creating readily available shelter for business, is therefore crucial. All of the UK's major, and successful, business parks have followed this route. Clearly this impacts on land take-up rates.

- 5.26 Consequently we consider that the past perceived low level of land take-up should not lead to the presumption that this will continue in the future. The early years of the Park's existence have been characterised by engagement with a reactive/non-active development partner. The introduction, now, of a proactive developer (Blythe Developments) is likely to see an increased take-up performance.

Financial Feasibility of Development

- 5.27 To date the Commerce Park has very much seen a high dependence on public sector grant funding to achieve development. In part this reflects the poor ground conditions (leading to abnormal building costs) and in part the low rental values in Southport – influenced by the area's peripheral location and poor network connections. Land values are low (£70-90,000 per acre, by comparison with £400,000 in Warrington) and the abnormal and remediation costs result in a negative figure in any residual calculation. Site values attributed are therefore nominal.
- 5.28 Discussions with Government Office Merseyside and the NWDA have determined that from the latter there will be no further public sector funding support, and from the former in the short term (next two years) it is improbable any additional grant aid will be available. Objective 1 underspend might occur and might enable additional funding applications to be made for the Commerce Park. This uncertain situation will continue to 30 December 2008, when the Objective 1 programme ends.
- 5.29 Beyond 2008 it is likely Merseyside will receive some new European funding, but this is the subject of ongoing discussions between the UK Government and the European Union. Should new funding be secured then this will provide scope for the Commerce Park to bid into the programme.
- 5.30 What this means is that any further development of the Commerce Park cannot plan for public sector funding support. It will require an alternative approach to the delivery of both new infrastructure and buildings.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Recommendations

- 6.1 Support the B1 designation on Southport Commerce Park by allowing clean, high-tech, light industrial uses (and therefore small scale distribution as well), protect the quality of the park by enforcing strict design guidelines. In this respect Design Guidelines should be prepared, based upon the frameworks applied at other business parks.
- 6.2 Encourage smaller office solutions within larger sub-divided buildings to cater for expected demand.
- 6.3 Extend the Commerce Park to include the southeast quadrant of land currently allocated for housing and consider limiting development in this area to Use Class B1(a) – offices – and B1(b) – research and development – functions.
- 6.4 Allow Sui Generis car dealership uses on the Town Lane frontage.
- 6.5 Allow a crèche on the Commerce Park, close to neighbouring housing areas on the 'new' extension. Also allow the provision of a commercial fitness facility.
- 6.6 Do not permit health care uses on the Commerce Park.
- 6.7 Consider changing the 'Commerce' in the Park's name back to 'Business' to improve its image and marketing. To this end, improve the directional signage to the Park from key highway routes.

Next Steps

- 6.8 Acceptance of our conclusions and recommendations leads to consideration as to what actions are required for their implementation. In this respect we consider Sefton Council:
- Needs to determine whether the development partnership agreement with Blythe Developments is to be an exclusive one for all of the Commerce Park area – or whether an opportunity can be created to accommodate end users

wishing to employ their own design and contractor teams, or other developers who might be interested in building on either a bespoke or speculative basis.

- Needs to take responsibility for producing, or commissioning the production of, design guidelines and a master plan framework for the whole of the Commerce Park. The masterplan should incorporate the existing agreed extension and the proposed area for re-allocation from residential to employment use.
 - o It will require, as an integral part of the masterplan, consideration of highways and traffic assessments. The design guidelines and masterplan will serve as detailed guidance to support the development control requirements in terms of design, environmental and traffic matters. They will also serve as controls to protect the Council as landowner and as a basis for developer partnership arrangements, in achieving development quality objectives.
 - o The masterplan should illustrate road infrastructure layouts; provide plot layout options; indicate locations for different uses and structural landscaping. The design guidelines should address building design, materials, directional and street signage, lighting, fencing, promotional signage on buildings, streetscape fittings and finishes, car parking standards, access and egress arrangements, and structural and on-site landscaping.
- In accepting the principle of re-allocation of the southeast quadrant area to employment use, needs to promote (and consult) on this through the new Local Development Framework programme. Sefton Council will also need to determine how policy restrictions to limit development to offices and research and development uses within this area might best be introduced.
- Needs to determine whether it uses either landownership or planning controls, or a combination of both, to permit Sui Generis uses associated with car dealerships. The Council also needs to decide the number of dealerships to be permitted. We consider six is appropriate and that these should be limited to quality car marque showrooms and not for second hand car sales.
- Needs in the absence of future public sector grant aid support to consider whether it could link approvals for new development proposals elsewhere in Southport with commuted sums to contribute towards infrastructure funding for the Commerce Park.

6.9 Finally as a consequence of the study research it is apparent to us the former Phillips complex at Balmoral Drive represents the major opportunity to accommodate the

industrial and warehousing activity that is inappropriate to the Commerce Park. It is also apparent from the marketing stance of Phillips' agents that there are aspirations for alternative development proposals.

- 6.10 Given the paucity of available provision in Southport, we suggest Sefton Council should consider an approach to Phillips to clarify their aspirations and ensure they understand the strength of the arguments for its retention as an employment site.

Appendix 1 – Consultees and Bibliography

Bibliography

Draft Design Guide – Southport Commerce Park
English Partnerships – Employment Densities: A Full Guide (June 2001)
Sefton MBC Unitary Development Plan (adopted 1995)
Sefton MBC Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan including proposed changes (August 2004)
Sefton MBC Unitary Development Plan Review – Inspectors Report
Sefton MBC – Employment Topic Paper (2004)
Sefton MBC Property Register (February 2005)
Sefton MBC - Town Lane Feasibility Study (Cass Associates 2001)
Sefton MBC – Study of Business Land and Opportunity in Southport and Formby (Mason & Owen)
Sefton MBC – Industrial Land Supply – Industrial land take-up (1991-2004)
Sefton MBC – Property and Land Enquiries (April 2002-February 2005)
Sefton MBC – Enquiries Southport Commerce Park (2002-2004)
The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2005

Consultees

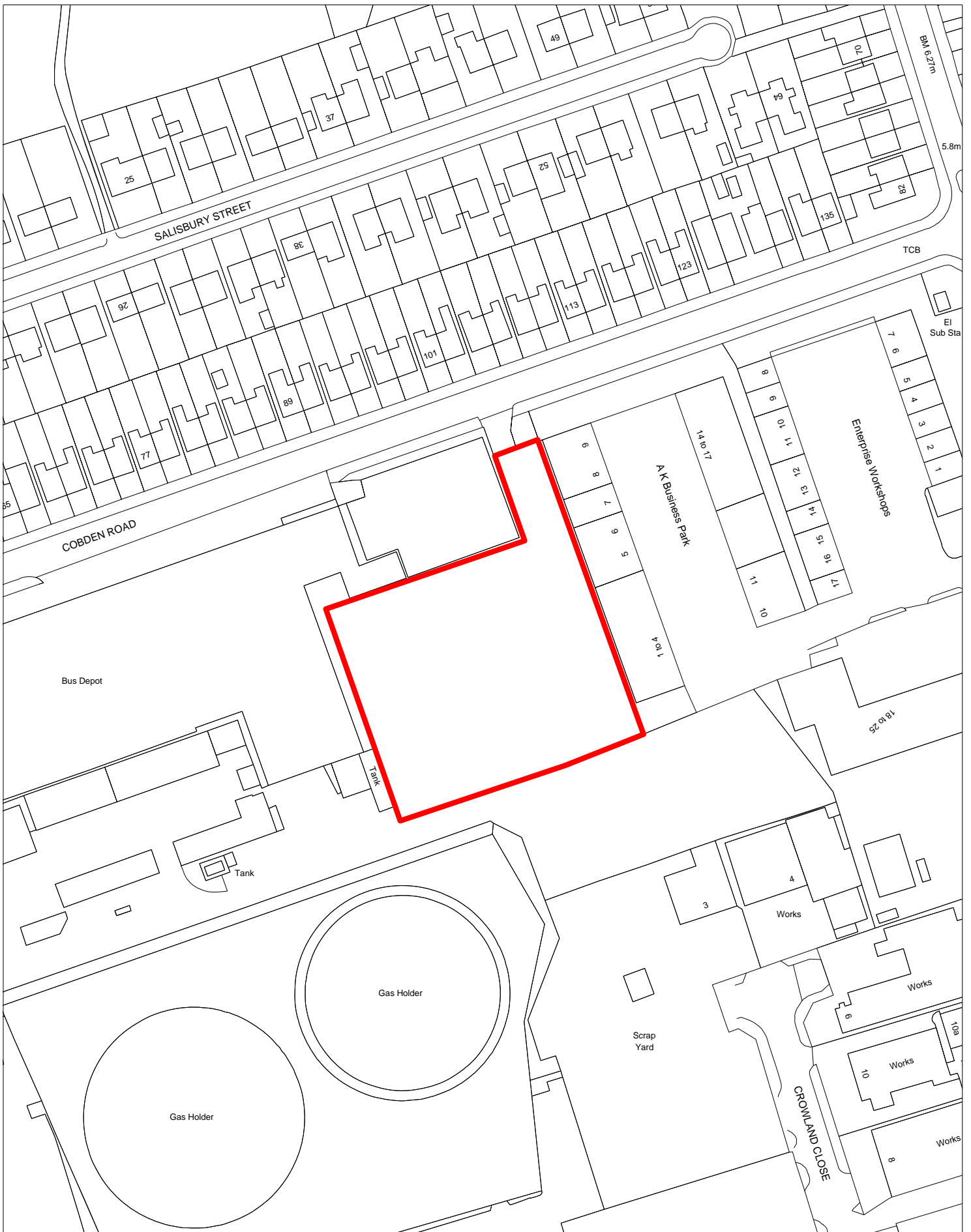
Government Office Merseyside
Mersey Partnership
North West Development Agency
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Anthony Hill Partnership
CBRE
Fitton & Co.
Keppie & Massie
King Sturge
Lawler Developments
Mason Owen
Blythe Developments

Appendix 2 – Site Proformas and Plans

Address	Cobden Road
Site	EDT 6.20
Description	Vacant brownfield site in heart of established Crowland Street Industrial Estate
Owner	Recently acquired by Mr R Watts (Southport Skip Hire) potentially for own use
Prominence	Very poor, minimal frontage to minor road in backlands area
Current use	None
Size, Ha	0.5
On the market	No
Price £	Unknown
Developer tied	N/a
Previous land use	Industrial
Topography	Flat
Access constraints	Poor, although close to A570, final access through residential area
Distance to motorway, km	15
Distance to A-road, km	1.2
Distance to rail station, km	0.7
Distance to Bus Stop, km	0.5
Current planning status	Employment allocation B1, B2 and B8 acceptable
Ground conditions	Will probably require piled foundations
Development potential	Industrial
Planning constraints	Included in industrial improvement area Opposite residential area
Other Constraints	None
Local facilities	Local shops
Utilities	Presumed all available
Other information	None
Availability, years	0-2
Recommendation	Industrial

Site EDT 6.20 Land at Cobden Road, Southport





Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department Andy Wallis - Director <small>Planning & Economic Regeneration is part of the Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate</small>	Site EDT6.20 Land at Cobden Road, Southport 0.5ha	Standard Site Plan <i>Scale: 1:1250</i> <i>Date: 20/7/2006</i> <i>Drawn By: WARDSU on</i>
	OSGR: 336308, 416848 Sheet(s): 472A Area: 25649 sqm	<i>Ward(s): Norwood</i> <i>Postcode Sector(s): PR9 7</i> <i>Polling District(s): V3</i> <i>Parish(es): None Found</i>
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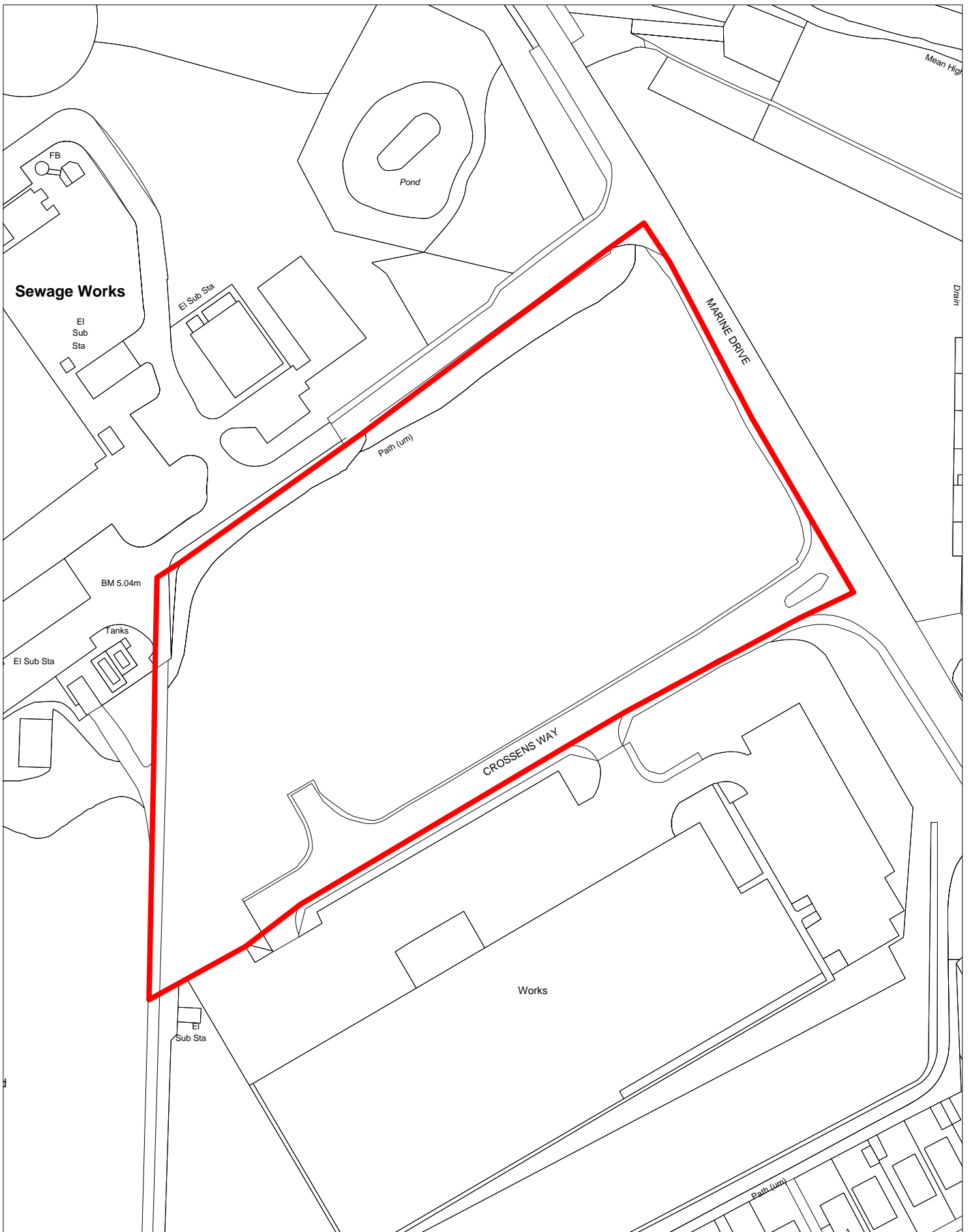
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Created by Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department using MapInfo

Address	Land at Crossens Way
Site	EDT 6.18
Description	Vacant greenfield site at heart of established Crossens Way Primarily Industrial Area
Owner/Agent	Railex
Prominence	Poor, although has frontage to Marine Drive
Current use	None
Size, Ha	1.5
On the market	No
Price £	Unknown
Developer tied	No
Previous land use	Sewage works
Topography	Flat
Access constraints	Close to end of A565, however final entrance through residential area
Distance to motorway, km	18.0
Distance to A-road, km	0.4
Distance to rail station, km	4.8
Distance to Bus Stop, km	0.5
Current planning status	Employment allocation B1, B2 and B8 uses acceptable
Ground conditions	Probably require piled foundations
Development potential	Industrial Sui Generis
Planning constraints	None
Other Constraints	Adjacent to a playing field Close to residential areas Adjacent to a coastal park Strategic path for countryside recreation runs in front of site Adjacent to a coastal planning zone Adjacent to a site of local biological and geological interest Adjacent to sewage works
Local facilities	Local shops only
Utilities	Presume all available
Other information	N/a
Availability, years	0-2
Recommendation	Retain for employment or sui generis use

Crossens Way, Southport





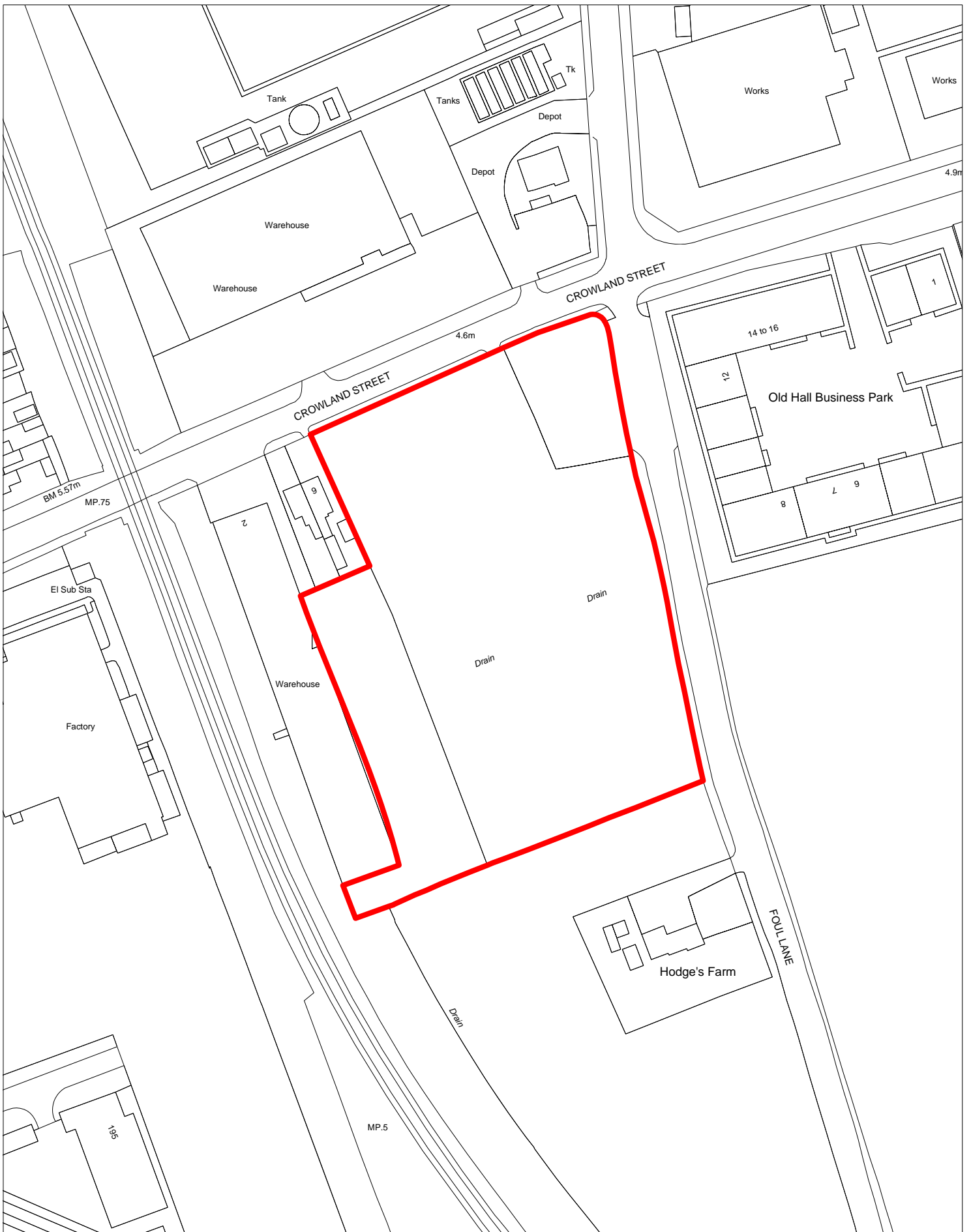
Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department Andy Wallis - Director <small>Planning & Economic Regeneration is part of the Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate</small>	Site EDT6.18 Land at Crossens Way, Southport 1.5ha	Standard Site Plan <i>Scale: 1:1250</i> <i>Date: 20/7/2006</i> <i>Drawn By: WARDSU on</i>
	<small>OSGR: 337156, 420687</small> <small>Sheet(s): 553A</small> <small>Area: 52394 sqm</small>	<small>Ward(s): Meols</small> <small>Postcode Sector(s): PR9 8, PR9 9</small> <small>Polling District(s): Y1</small> <small>Parish(es): None Found</small>
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Created by Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department using MapInfo

Address	Land at Junction of Butts Lane and Foul Lane
Site	EDT 6.19
Agent	N/a
Description	Vacant greenfield site on edge of established Crowland Street Industrial Estate
Owner/Agent	Recently purchased by Mr Lloyd – owner of a local accident repair centre – potentially for own use or industrial units
Prominence	Frontage to Butts Lane – main road through Crowland Street Industrial Estate
Current use	None
Size, Ha	1.0
On the market	No
Price £	Unknown
Developer tied	N/a
Previous land use	None – greenfield site
Topography	Flat
Access constraints	Reasonable access to A570, although final entrance through residential area
Distance to motorway, km	15
Distance to A-road, km	0.3
Distance to rail station, km	0.7
Distance to Bus Stop, km	0.5
Current planning status	Employment allocation B1, B2 and B8 acceptable
Ground conditions	Poor Development will require piled foundations
Development potential	Industrial Sui Generis
Planning constraints	None
Other Constraints	Potential congestion from adjacent park and ride site Abuts greenbelt, an element of which is designated as a site of local biological and geological interest
Local facilities	Close to Kew/Meols Cop Retail Park
Utilities	Presumed all available
Other information	N/a
Availability, years	0-2
Recommendation	Retain for employment or sui generis use

Site EDT 6.19 Land at junction of Butts Lane and Foul Lane, Southport





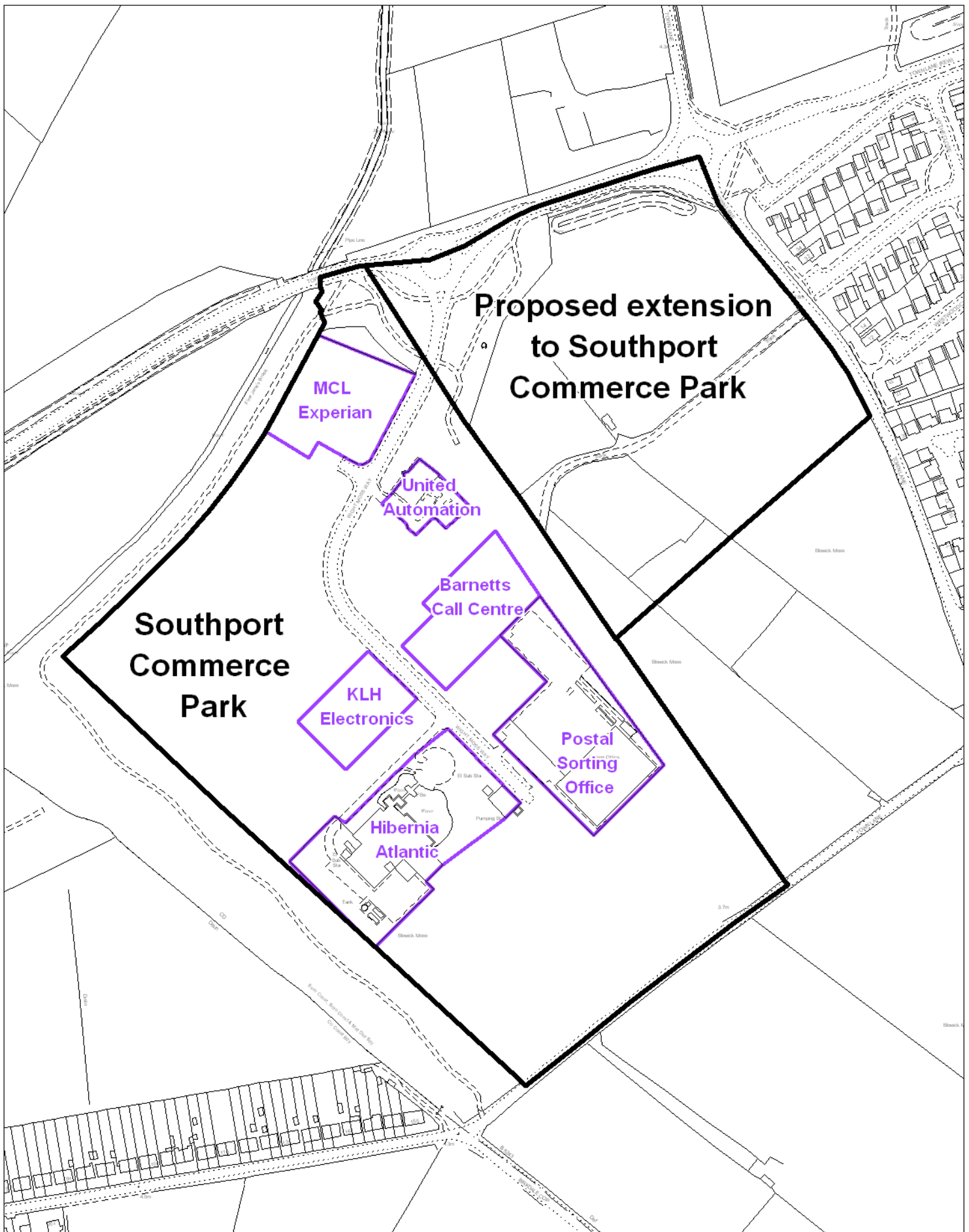
 Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department Andy Wallis - Director <small>Planning & Economic Regeneration is part of the Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate</small>	Site EDT6.19 Land at Junction of Butts Lane and Foul Lane, Southport 1.0ha		Standard Site Plan <i>Scale: 1:1250</i> <i>Date: 20/7/2006</i> <i>Drawn By: WARDSU on</i>
	OSGR: 335987, 416406	Sheet(s): 472A, 471D, 472B, 471C	Area: 27800 sqm
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Address	Southport Commerce Park
Site	EDT 4
Description	Part developed, prestige out-of-town business park
Owner	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council Blythe Developments
Prominence	Good frontage to Town Lane
Current use	Business park
Size, Ha	7.5 plus extension 4.4
On the market	Yes
Price £	Unknown
Developer tied	Yes
Previous land use	Domestic landfill site
Topography	Flat
Access constraints	Located off B5243 although close to A570
Distance to motorway, km	14
Distance to A-road, km	1.2
Distance to rail station, km	1.2
Distance to Bus Stop, km	0.5
Current planning status	Employment allocation B1
Ground conditions	Will require piled foundations
Development potential	Office Light Industry Distribution/storage (small scale) Sui Generis
Planning constraints	Adjacent residential area Adjacent housing allocation Adjacent green belt Adjacent Country Park
Other Constraints	Lack of public transport through route
Local facilities	Close to Kew/Meols Cop Retail Park
Utilities	Presumed all available
Other information	None
Availability, years	Immediate
Recommendation	Offices Light Industrial Storage/Distribution (small scale) Car Showrooms (part) Crèche

Site EDT 4 Southport Commerce Park
(Existing Park outlined yellow)





Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department Andy Wallis - Director <small>Planning & Economic Regeneration is part of the Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate</small>		Southport Commerce Park OSGR: 334814, 415057 Sheet(s): 430C, 431A, 451B, 450D Area: 411540 sqm		Standard Site Plan Scale: 1:3500 Date: 7/2/2005 Drawn By: robis on
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