Dear Mr Carpen

Application by Halite Energy Group Ltd for a Development Consent Order for an Underground Gas Storage Facility at Preesall, Lancashire [Ref: EN030001]

We write on behalf of our client, Rossall School, in connection with the above application by Halite Energy Group [HEG]. Rossall School is the owner of part of the land to which the application relates and therefore an interested party (ref: ).

Rossall School owns a substantial area of land between Fleetwood and Cleveleys (see attached plan). The site comprises Rossall School complex in the centre of the site, recreational open space to the south and north east and under used open fields to the north.

Rossall School is currently considering how the longer term educational needs of the children can be met on the site. This has implications both for the development of new facilities and/or the potential release of surplus land for other forms of development. No decisions have been made, as yet, but a detailed review is currently being progressed. This may involve the release of land towards the northern boundary of the estate for residential development or other alternative uses.

Whilst land towards the northern boundary of Rossall School is located in the Green Belt, this is subject to review as part of the emerging Wyre Local Plan Strategy and Core Policies document, which is currently at a relatively early stage of preparation and not expected to be adopted until Spring 2014. Rossall School is promoting the development of this land through the emerging Local Plan and therefore wishes to keep the widest possible options open for the land both in the short, and longer, term.

In this context, the School have reviewed the documents which form part of HEG’s application for a Development Consent order and wish to make the following comments: -

1. Rossall School has no objection, in principle, to the proposed underground gas storage facility.

2. The proposals involve the construction of a new underground brine pipeline running East-West cuts across the School’s land where long-term development options are being considered.
3 The Land Plan (Sheet 2 of 23, drawing ref: 021/Halite/LP/18/11/2/6.0) and Book of Reference, submitted with the application, confirm that HEG is seeking to compulsorily acquire new rights in, over and under land owned by the School. If permitted, it is understood this would prevent the School from constructing ‘any new building, structure or erection which is within the said 20 metres wide strip of land’.

4 An underground sewer currently runs east-west, close to the northern boundary of Rossall School.

5 In order that the School’s long-term development interests are not prejudiced by HEG’s proposal, Rossall School wishes to ensure that the land take, for the proposed underground brine pipeline, is minimised in the following way:-

   a The pipeline should be located as close to the existing sewer as possible, which has a 5m easement either side of it.

   b The width of the subsequent access strip should be as narrow as possible (it is considered that 20 metres is excessive and no justification has been provided for this). This is critical in order to ensure that the area of land sterilised by the pipeline, and the adverse effect on the future value of that land, is minimised.

   c Halite Energy Group should consider how the safeguarded areas associated with the existing underground sewer and proposed underground brine pipeline could be combined and provide a map illustrating the proposed arrangement.

We consider that these are reasonable requests and would facilitate the future growth of Rossall School and the wider economic growth of this rural part of Wyre, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework [para.28]. The Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions [para.196].

We trust that you will take our comments into consideration and keep us informed of the application’s progress. If, in the interim, we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Watts
Director

cc. Stephen Palmer, Rossall School