

# Public Document Pack



## Development Control Committee

**Monday, 1 August 2016 6.30 p.m.  
The Board Room - Municipal Building,  
Widnes**



**Chief Executive**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor Paul Nolan (Chair)
Councillor Keith Morley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Bradshaw
Councillor Arthur Cole
Councillor Robert Gilligan
Councillor Ron Hignett
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh
Councillor June Roberts
Councillor Dave Thompson
Councillor Bill Woolfall
Councillor Geoff Zygodllo

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 Ext. 16 8276 or  
[ann.jones@halton.gov.uk](mailto:ann.jones@halton.gov.uk) for further information.  
The next meeting of the Committee is on Monday, 5 September 2016*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	<b>1 - 9</b>
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
<b>3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE</b>	<b>10 - 86</b>

***In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.***

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

*At a meeting of the Development Control Committee on Monday, 4 July 2016 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Nolan (Chair), J. Bradshaw, Cole, Gilligan, R. Hignett, C. Plumpton Walsh, June Roberts, Thompson and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Zygadllo

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor Keith Morley

Officers present: A. Jones, J. Tully, T. Gibbs, M. Noone, A. Plant, J. Eaton, R. Cooper and J. Farmer

Also in attendance: Councillors Rowe, N. Plumpton Walsh and G. Stockton and 27 members of the public.

**ITEMS DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

	<i>Action</i>
DEV5 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2016, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
DEV6 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE	
<p>The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described below.</p>	
DEV7 - 15/00563/OUT - OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED FOR DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND ERECTION OF UP TO 53 DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, LANDSCAPING AND ANCILLARY WORKS AT FORMER WAREHOUSE, HALTON COURT, RUNCORN, WA7 5XS	
<p>The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.</p>	

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to:

- a) The applicant entering into a legal agreement in relation to the payment of a commuted sum for off-site open space; and
- b) Conditions relating to the following:
  1. Standard outline conditions for the submission of reserved matters applications x 3 conditions (BE1);
  2. Plans condition listing relevant drawings i.e. site location/red edge (BE1 and TP 17);
  3. Prior to commencement, the submission of a reserved matters proposal which incorporates a full proposal for drainage of the site (BE1);
  4. Prior to commencement, submission of levels (BE1);
  5. Prior to commencement, submission of materials (BE1 and CS11);
  6. Condition(s) for submission of hard and soft landscaping (BE1);
  7. Prior to commencement, submission of a construction/traffic management plan which will include wheel cleansing details (TP17);
  8. Avoidance of actively nesting birds (BE1);
  9. Prior to commencement, details of on-site biodiversity action plan for measures to be incorporated in the scheme to encourage wildlife (GE21);
  10. Prior to commencement, details of a landscape proposal and an associated management plan to be submitted and approved (BE1, GE21);
  11. Prior to commencement, details of boundary treatments (BE22);
  12. Provision of a Site Waste Management Plan (WM8); and
  13. Provision of bins (WM9).

*In order to avoid any allegation of bias Councillor Cole did not take part in the debate or vote on the following item as he is a Board Member of Halton Housing Trust.*

*In order to avoid any allegation of bias Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh did not take part in the debate or vote on the following item due to a recent press release on the development which included a comment she made.*

DEV8 - 16/00069/FUL - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF 22 NO APARTMENTS AND 6 NO HOUSES INCLUDING CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDING, SELECTIVE DEMOLITION AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AT VICTORIA HOUSE, HOLLOWAY, RUNCORN, CHESHIRE

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

Members were referred to the Update List where an additional representation had been made since the publication of the Committee report by Victoria Jones, objecting to the scheme.

The Committee was then addressed by Victoria Jones who reiterated the objections set out in the Update List on behalf of the neighbouring residents arguing that the views of the local community had not been taken into consideration. She tabled several photographs and annotated plans which were passed around for Members to see.

Mr James Nicholls, the architect representing on behalf of the applicant, then addressed the Committee. He advised that they had submitted a revised scheme after hearing the residents comments from the last meeting, and this included the removal of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. He reminded all that Halton Housing Trust was a not for profit organisation which had been awarded a grant from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for the development of the site. Conditions were attached to this with regards to the timing of the development which meant that it would have to be completed within two years otherwise the funding would be lost. He advised that the parking and highways issues had been resolved; the historic original features would be reinstated; and revisions were made to the side extension, roof shapes, materials to be used and windows. Further the development complied with all planning policies of the Council and would consist of high quality affordable homes, having a positive impact on the environment and local economy.

The Committee was then addressed by the Heath Ward Councillor Rowe. He stated that the residents understood the need for new homes and did not object to the development, but he stated that despite the amendments to the scheme there were still a number of concerns with the design:

- The development being out of character, too big and too tall;
- Too modern;
- Existing properties would be overlooked;
- Not sympathetic to the area;
- Not in keeping with surrounding properties;
- Privacy issues;
- Burland Close and Holloway properties affected;
- Guidelines still not met;
- Loss of sunlight;
- Insufficient parking (already problems in the area due to the Railway Station);
- Flooding issues not being addressed (reference to recent flooding in Burland Close in the past 10 years);
- Measurements were not true;
- Smells from pumping station;
- Loss of greenspace and trees;
- Site too small for number of properties proposed;
- Traffic noise during construction; and
- Lack of consultation by HHT on the amended plans.

Officers advised that the above concerns were addressed in the report and update list. The distances between the properties was clearly explained and it was clarified that Officers' recommendations were based on guidelines within the *Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document* and where necessary, Officer judgement.

With regards to comments made regarding the recent flooding in Burland Close, the Highways Officer advised Members that the latest plans recommended a gravity system be used in place of the *soakaways* which were not suitable for this development. The implementation of an appropriate surface water regulatory system would be secured by condition.

Officers also explained that the payment of a commuted sum in lieu of on-site open space provision was not possible on this scheme, as it would compromise the viability of the scheme.

After taking the Officer report, representations, amended plans and updates into consideration, the Committee decided to approve the application subject to the conditions below.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit – full permission;
2. Approved plans;
3. Implementation of proposed site levels (BE1);
4. Facing materials to be agreed (BE1 and BE2);
5. Submission of detailed soft landscaping scheme, implementation and subsequent maintenance (BE1);
6. Implementation of submitted hard landscape and boundaries layout and subsequent maintenance;
7. Breeding birds protection (GE21);
8. Submission of a swift nesting boxes scheme, implementation and subsequent maintenance (GE21);
9. Retention of trees (GE21);
10. Submission of a lighting scheme designed to protect ecology – (GE21);
11. Hours of construction (BE1);
12. Removal of permitted development – all dwellings (BE1);
13. Submission of a construction management plan (BE1);
14. Provision and retention of parking for residential development (Curtilage) (BE1);
15. Provision and retention of parking for residential development (not in curtilage) (BE1);
16. Submission of cycle parking scheme for apartments and subsequent implementation (BE1);
17. Implementation of access and servicing provision (BE1);
18. Implementation of off-site highway works (site access points from Penn Lane) (BE1);
19. Submission of a parking management plan and subsequent implementation (BE1);
20. Submission of a surface water regulatory system for approval and subsequent implementation (PR16);
21. Foul and surface water on separate systems (PR16);
22. Ground contamination – remediation strategy and site completion report (PR14);
23. Submission of a waste audit (WM8); and
24. Submission of a scheme for the provision of future charging points of ultra-low emission vehicles (CS19).

DEV9 - 16/00144/FUL - PROPOSED PHASED REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING HIGH SCHOOL COMPRISING PROVISION OF SEPARATE CONSTRUCTION AND SCHOOL ACCESSIBLE ZONES, DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS, DEMOLITION OF REDUNDANT BUILDINGS, HARD AND

SOFT LANDSCAPING AND PROVISION OF SPORTS FACILITIES AT THE HEATH TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE, CLIFTON ROAD, RUNCORN

The Committee was advised that the original planning application was submitted in 2013 for a 1650 pupil high school and recommended for approval at Development Control Committee on 4 November 2013. Although the proposal was in accordance with the Council's Policies that dealt with risk, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advised against the application due to its proximity to the INEOS site and the potential associated risks in the event of a chlorine gas release. Following the Committee's decision to approve the application the HSE requested the Secretary of State to call the application in, triggering a public inquiry.

It was reported that this public inquiry was never held as the application was eventually withdrawn by the applicant following discussion between the HSE, the School and the Education Funding Agency.

It was highlighted that the application before the Committee was a new scheme that sought to deal with the issues that were raised in objection to the earlier scheme.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

It was reported that since writing the Committee report the updates had been received from Natural England; Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, HBC's Open Spaces Division and Sport England, all of which were detailed in the published update list. Members were also advised of one further representation from a local resident regarding the changes made to relocate the bin store and water tank.

It was noted that the condition recommended by network rail from a vibro-impact assessment should be removed as it was not necessary. Also, further conditions were recommended for the detail of surface water drainage and for an updated construction traffic management plan.

Members were advised that very careful consideration had been given to the advice provided by the HSE and their position which was to 'advise against the grant of planning permission on grounds of public safety'. These matters were considered in the context of the Core Strategy and Unitary Development Plan policies, together



with the Planning for Risk Supplementary Planning Document.

Members were advised that if they were minded to approve the application, the HSE would need to be given formal notification and provided 21 days for them to decide whether or not they would like to request the application to be called-in by the Secretary of State. Officers would require delegated authority to issue the decision following their response.

The Committee received speaker Andy Young, a local resident, who did not object to the School itself, but objected to the position of the buildings. He stated that the scheme could be improved simply by relocating the footprint and argued that the School building and the industrial tank were both too close to residents. He referred to the HSE decision regarding the previous application and its proximity to INEOS and the dangers and that this application proposed to increase pupil numbers and therefore increasing the risk. He also stated that the scheme was overbearing and unneighbourly and would result in noise and nuisance; as well as loss of privacy and amenity for surrounding residents. He questioned why the School was next to the residential area when there was such a big field that could be made use of.

The Committee was then addressed by Ward Councillor Gareth Stockton, who spoke on behalf of the local residents. He said the residents understood the need to update the School but felt that it was on top of them with it being so close to the houses. He stated that there would be privacy issues from the main school building and questioned why it could not be relocated on such a large plot of land.

Members discussed the HSE's response detailed on page 47 of the report and Officers provided clarity over the assessments made and how the risk of death was determined by them and how it was determined using the Council's policy.

After taking the Officers report, the updates provided and the representations into consideration, the Committee voted to approve the application.

**RESOLVED:** That the application be approved subject to conditions and the amendments to the conditions stated above and the application not being called in by the Secretary of State:

1. Time limits condition;
2. Approved plans (BE1);
3. Materials (BE2);
4. Drainage condition(s) (BE1);
5. Submission and agreement of existing and finish site levels and floor levels of building (BE1);
6. Vehicle access, parking, servicing;
7. Condition(s) relating to full details of hard and soft landscaping, including planting scheme, maintenance, and replacement planting (BE1);
8. The hours of demolition/construction of building onsite shall be restricted to 0700 hours to 1800 hours Monday to Friday, 0730 hours to 1400 hours on Saturday with no work at any other time including Sundays and Public Holidays (BE1 and BE2);
9. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed, or removed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority (BE1 and BE2);
10. Any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without such consent, or which die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced (BE1 and BE2);
11. Hedge or tree removal shall be undertaken outside the bird nesting season; where this was not possible an ecologist to inspect prior to works taking place (GE21);
12. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures outlined in the submitted ecological surveys (GE21);
13. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the proposed construction management/phasing plans submitted with the application unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority;
14. The Travel Plan shall be updated and reviewed in accordance with current guidelines with appropriate new targets and measures set. It should be regularly monitored in accordance with the timescales set out in the plan with the results being submitted to the Local Planning Authority;
15. Full details of surface water drainage; and
16. Submission of an amended construction traffic management plan.

DEV10 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

**The following applications had been withdrawn:**

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>16/00041/FUL</b> | Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement detached dwelling with two bedrooms in the roof space at 153 Pit Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 9HR.   |
| <b>16/00122/TCA</b> | Proposed works to trees in conservation area as follows: T14, Sycamore, over hanging bow to be cut back, T16, Sycamore, remove, T17, Holly, remove, T19, Field Maple, remove, T20, Common Juniper, remove or relocate, Group 3, Leylandii, remove, all at 5 Weston Road, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4JU. |
| <b>16/00134/PDE</b> | Proposed single storey rear extension projecting from the rear wall by 4.25 metres, the extension has a maximum height of 3 metres and an eaves height of 2.5 metres at 27 Weston Road, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4JX.  |
| <b>16/00063/TPO</b> | Proposed pruning / maintenance work to trees T1 to T5 inclusive as detailed in the accompanying plan and schedule and covered by Tree Preservation Order 038 of 1989 on Land between 82 and 92 Moorfield Road and 7 and 10 Romney Close, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 3JA.                                  |

*Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Development Control Committee

**DATE:** 1 August 2016

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director –  
Enterprise, Community and Resources

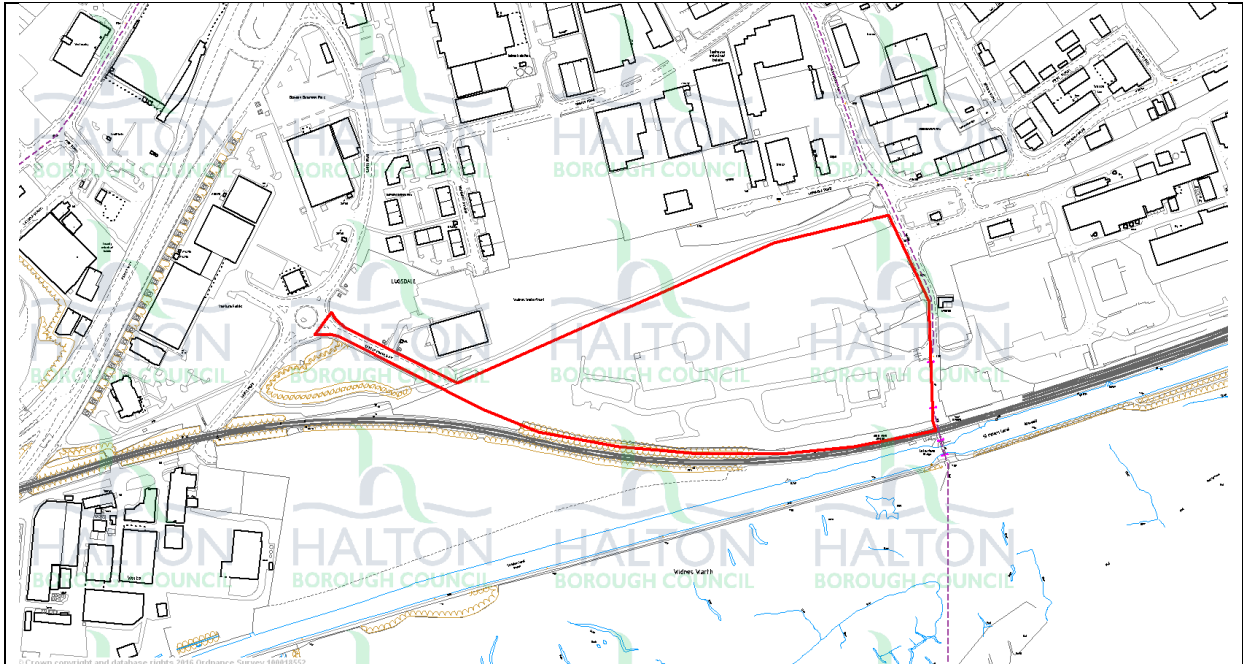
**SUBJECT:** Planning Applications to be Determined by the  
Committee

**WARD(S):** Boroughwide

Application No	Proposal	Location
05/00057/OUTEIA	Outline application, with all matters reserved, for a mixed use development comprising up to 624 residential units, up to 1275 sqm of Use Classes A1 (Shops) and A2 (Financial and Professional Services) up to 500 sqm of Use Classes A3 (Food and Drink) and A4 (Drinking Establishments), up to 2400 sqm of Use Class B1 (Business) and up to 300 sqm of Use Class D1 (Non Residential Institutions) with associated roads, infrastructure and landscaping.	Land to north of railway and west of Tanhouse Lane, Widnes.
16/00131/OUT	Outline application, with all matters reserved, for development of up to 120 dwellings, open space, infrastructure and associated works.	Former Riverside College, Percival Lane, Runcorn
16/00225/OUT	Proposed hybrid application seeking full permission for development comprising 2 storey office building (Use Class B1), associated depot building (Use Class B8) and related car parking, access and services with landscape and boundary treatments together with an outline application for a	Land bounded by Warrington Road and Watkinson Way, Widnes, Cheshire.

	residential development of up to 10 no. dwellings with all matters other than access reserved for future consideration.	
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<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	05/00057/OUTEIA
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Land to north of railway and west of Tanhouse Lane, Widnes
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Outline Application, with all matters reserved, for a mixed use development comprising up to 624 residential units, up to 1275 sq m of Use Classes A1 (Shops) and A2 (Financial and Professional Services) up to 500 sq m of Use Classes A3 (Food and Drink) and A4 (Drinking Establishments), up to 2400 sq m of Use Class B1 (Business) and up to 300 sq m of Use Class D1 (Non Residential Institutions) with associated roads, infrastructure and landscaping
<b>WARD:</b>	Riverside
<b>PARISH:</b>	N/A
<b>AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):</b>	J Routledge & Sons
<b>DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:</b>	Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) - RG3 Widnes Waterfront Action Area  Halton Core Strategy Local Plan - CS9 South Widnes Key Area of Change
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	Yes
<b>REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	Yes
<b>KEY ISSUES:</b>	Regeneration Traffic Impact Contaminated Land COMAH Risk Noise Air Quality Affordable Housing Provision
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Approval subject to conditions and S106
<b>SITE MAP</b>	



## **1. APPLICATION SITE**

### **The Site and Surroundings**

The Site is located within the Widnes Waterfront regeneration area and comprises a triangular piece of land bounded by the linear park to the north and the existing railway line to the south. To the east the Site is bounded by Tanhouse Lane. The Site was formerly a chemical works in the mid-late twentieth century and has been developed to both the east and south of the site with the remaining area derelict and vacant.

The Site is located approximately 1km to the south of the town centre in what is at present a predominantly commercial/industrial area. To the north west of the Site is the Hive leisure development; to the north is the office development on Mulberry Avenue and the linear park which was constructed along the line of a former railway.

### **Planning History**

The Site has an extensive planning history. There have been numerous applications affecting both individual buildings and the site as a whole, including:

- A new security gatehouse (92/00676/FUL-permitted).
- Change of use of existing office to media centre (92/00681/FUL-permitted)
- Storage of deemed hazardous substances (92/00706/HSC-permitted)
- Outline permission for the development of B1, B2 and B8 commercial units (96/00577/OUT-permitted), reserved matters were not submitted and as such the permission has since expired.
- Change of use for conversion of a drum storage unit to a commercial vehicle centre (00/00651/COU-permitted).

- Construction of a road and cycleway (04/01154/HBCFUL) which will lead into the site.
- Planning permission 05/00109/OUTEIA was granted in November 2009 for a similar mixed used development comprising of 624 dwelling, retail and commercial development.

#### CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION:

The proposals have been advertised as EIA development and a departure by way of both a site and press notice. Neighbouring businesses have been consulted by way of letter. A number of external bodies have also been consulted, namely;

- Network Rail
- The Canal and River Trust
- Natural England
- Historic England
- The Health and Safety Executive
- Environment Agency
- United Utilities
- Cheshire Fire Service
- Cheshire Police Service
- Halton Friends of the Earth
- Secretary of State (National Planning Casework Unit)
- The Coal Authority

Network Rail has raised concerns in relation to the scale of the proposed development and the potential to increase the number of people using the pedestrian level crossing at the bottom of Tanhouse Lane. These concerns have been addressed in the assessment section of this report. Further standard comments were provided in relation to working practices in the proximity of Network Rail land, these comments will be provided to the applicant as an informative.

The Health and Safety Executive “do not advise against” the granting of planning permission and matters in relation to risk have been addressed in the assessment section of this report.

The Environment Agency has no objection in principle, but require and recommend conditions be imposed on any permission given in relation to flood risk and contaminated land.

United Utilities do not object but have recommended conditions in relation to drainage details.

Natural England have no objections and their response is included in the ecology section of this report.

Historic England, The Coal Authority and the Canal and River Trust did not have any comments to make on the application.



No comments have been received from Cheshire Fire Service, Cheshire Police Service, Halton Friends of the Earth or Government Office for the North West.

Internally the Council's Open Spaces Officer, Highways Engineer, Lead Local Flood Authority, Environmental Health Officer and Regeneration Officers have also been consulted, their comment and observations have been included in the assessment section of this report.

Six representations have been received from 3 different objectors raising the following concerns:-

- Noise impact on potential residents from existing industrial sites, notably Saffil
- Air quality impacts on potential residents from existing industrial sites, notably Saffil and road traffic
- Contaminated Land
- Proximity to a top tier COMAH site (Shepherds) and non-compliance with policy CS23(b) of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.
- Increase in traffic and highway impact on surrounding road network
- Flooding
- Number of proposed residential units and non-compliance with Policy CS9 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan and The Widnes Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document.

## **2. THE APPLICATION**

### **2.1 Documentation**

The application has been submitted with the requisite planning application form, illustrative plans and supporting information including a design and access statement.

The application is considered to be EIA development and in accordance with the Environmental Impact Regulations 2011 and Environmental Statement (ES) has been submitted including sections on alternatives, planning policy, contaminated land, ecology, air quality, noise, hydrology, socio-economic, traffic, landscape, health impact assessment, sustainability, health and safety, the applicant has also submitted a viability assessment.

## **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development

plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

### **Development Plan Policies**

The land is designated as being within an Action Area, within the Developed Coastal Zone and as a Priority Employment Redevelopment Area, in the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the key UDP policies, which relate to the development, are: -

RG3	Action Area 3 Widnes Waterfront
BE1	General Requirements for New Development
BE2	Quality of Design
GE21	Species Protection
GE30	The Mersey Coastal Zone
PR1	Air Quality
PR2	Noise Nuisance
PR3	Odour Nuisance
PR6	Land Quality
PR7	Development Near to Established Pollution Sources
PR8	Noise Sensitive Developments
PR12	Development on Land Surrounding COMAH Sites
PR14	Contaminated Land
TP1	Public Transport Provision As Part of New Development
TP6	Cycle Provision as Part of New Development
TP7	Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
TP12	Car Parking
TP15	Accessibility to New Development
TP16	Green Travel Plans
TP18	Traffic Management
TC5	Design of Retail Development
TC6	Out of Centre Retail Development
H2	Design and Density of New Residential Development
H3	Provision of Recreational Greenspace
E3	Priority Employment Area
E5	New Industrial and Commercial Development

Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)

CS2	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CS5	A Network of Centres
CS7	Infrastructure Provision
CS9	South Widnes Key Area of Change
CS13	Affordable Housing
CS18	Quality of Design
CS20	Natural and Historic Environment
CS23	Managing Pollution and Risk

Joint Waste Local Plan 2013

WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management  
WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New Development

In respect to policies WM8 and WM9 conditions are recommended for the provision of a Site Waste Management Plan, and the provision of bin storage.

Supplementary Planning Documents

The Council's New Residential Guidance Supplementary Planning Document and Draft Open Space Supplementary Planning Document are also of relevance.

**4. ASSESSMENT**

The application, 05/00057/OUTEIA seeks approval for outline permission, with all matters reserved, for a mixed use development comprising up to 624 residential units, up to 1275 sq m of Use Classes A1 (Shops) and A2 (Financial and Professional Services) up to 500 sq m of Use Classes A3 (Food and Drink) and A4 (Drinking Establishments), up to 2400 sq m of Use Class B1 (Business) and up to 300 sq m of Use Class D1 (Non Residential Institutions) with associated roads, infrastructure and landscaping.

The indicative layout for the proposal includes a main access road to be taken from the existing spur off Earle Road (next to Pure Gym) to Tanhouse Lane, with the residential accessed off this, with separate access from Tanhouse Lane to serve the commercial elements of the proposals.

The proposed residential development will comprise apartments, town houses, detached and semi-detached house types. The apartments will be located along the southern boundary of the site, which would overlook the railway and St Helens Canal, giving views over the River Mersey and beyond.

The apartment blocks would be up to six storeys in height, and located closest to the Mersey. The detached, semi-detached and mews style properties will be located to the centre and north of the application site and laid out in a series of inter-connected estate roads leading to informal, shared open spaces.

The office accommodation will be located to the north east of the site, comprising of a series of six three storey buildings with associated car parking and landscaping. It is proposed that the office buildings will provide a buffer to the residential component from the industrial uses further to the east.

The retail aspect of the development will be located towards the south-east corner of the site. It is proposed that the retail units will serve the local community and workers created by the development proposals. These units will be based around a central service yard and accesses from a separate entrance to the residential areas of the site.

The public house will be located to the west of the application site. It is proposed that the building will be single storey with associated car parking spaces. It is intended that the public house will be accessed from the Tanhouse Lane Boulevard, from a separate entrance to the residential areas.

### **Policy and Principle of Development**

#### **Unitary Development Plan**

The site is located within the Widnes Waterfront Action Area, Policy RG3 is the main policy that sets out and guides what are considered to be appropriate uses within the Waterfront Area. However, it is left to supplementary planning guidance to determine the most suitable locations for the land uses.

Policy RG3 includes for residential use in the wider waterfront area.

The Widnes Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in 2005, this document did not specifically identify the application site for housing, however page 14 of the document states that:

*'It is recognised however, that in the longer term, as the renaissance of Widnes and the wider waterfront environment is uplifted and its character has shifted away from its present heavy industrial character, there may be scope for an element of residential development to be brought forward'.*

*'Any proposals for new residential development in the meantime would have to be considered according to the constraints of land contamination, air and noise pollution, risk associated with nearby COMAH sites and flooding, and compatibility with existing or proposal uses. In general, proposals would also be assessed against the appropriate UDP policies'.*

The submitted application, Environment Impact Assessment and supporting information seek to demonstrate this suitability in this regard.

In April 2009 the Widnes Waterfront Masterplan Framework Phase 2 was published for consultation, this document identified three different approaches to development in the Widnes Waterfront, approaches 2 and 3 both identified potential use of the site for housing. Whilst this document is a material consideration it does not form part of the adopted planning framework and can only be afforded limited weight.

It should also be noted that since the UDP Policy RG3 and the Supplementary Planning Document were adopted, the Widnes Waterfront has seen a significant amount of physical change. The Hive has now been completed, as well as new offices on Mulberry Avenue, and the construction of Pure Gym, these proposals would complement the ongoing regeneration of the area.

The site also falls with the policy designation of 'Developed Coastal Zone' as identified within Policy GE30 of the Unitary Development Plan. In this location development proposals should acknowledge their location within the Mersey Coastal Zone by paying particular attention to environmental quality, and where possible, to improving accessibility to the coast. Proposals which would contribute to regeneration, and/or to the enhancement of environmental quality, tourism and recreation will be encouraged.

The site lies within the Widnes Waterfront Regeneration Area as defined in the Halton UDP (2005). This identifies a range of suitable uses including residential uses (C2 and C3). The Widnes Waterfront SPD identifies the application site as Site F identifying appropriate uses as being offices and light industrial (Use Class B1). It should be noted however, that SPD's cannot allocate land and as such, whilst the proposed residential use is contrary to the SPD it does conform to the UDP designation.

### **Halton Core Strategy Local Plan**

One objection has been received in relation to Core Strategy Policy CS9: South Widnes Key Area of Change, and raises concerns that the development would be contrary to CS9 by providing more than 400 dwellings.

The objector contends that the provision of 624 dwellings on the application site within the wider South Widnes Key Area of Change represents an over provision of housing within this area and may be detrimental to the development of housing in the existing residential areas of the Key Area of Change (i.e. West Bank).

Policy CS9 for the Core Strategy identifies potential for around 400 units across the South Widnes area. This is not intended as a maximum, indeed housing policy figures are routinely considered as minimums. In the case of CS9, the policy is intended to 'set the scene' for more detailed policies in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan and simply sets out, in broad terms, the likely quantum of development that the Key Area of Change may accommodate.

The Site had the benefit of an extant permission at 2010, the base date for the Core Strategy. Table 1 on page 31 of the Core Strategy Local Plan showed the potential housing that could be accommodated within the South Widnes area from the 2010 SHLAA as 741. The figure for the likely distribution of housing (400 units) at table 2 on page 33 of the Core Strategy Local Plan and incorporated into CS9 acknowledged a degree of uncertainty concerning the delivery of units on the application site. Therefore, the application is not inconsistent with policy CS9.

### **Planning for Risk**

Objections have been received in relation to risks associated with the top tier COMAH site of Shepherds Widnes, and they have referred to Policy CS23 (b).

In relation to development around such sites the policy states that the local authority will prevent and minimise risk from potential accidents at hazardous installation and facilities by *'Controlling inappropriate development within identified areas of risk surrounding existing hazardous installations of facilities to ensure that the maximum level of acceptable individual risk does not exceed 10 chances per million and that the population exposed to the risk is not increased'*.

The Health and Safety Executive have been consulted on and assessed the previously consented Hazardous Substances Consent applications for Shepherds and confirmed that the significant levels of risk (10c.p.m) are kept within the Shepherd site itself, resulting in a risk zone equivalent to the boundary of the Shepherds site. It follows that the application site (05/00057/OUTEIA) does not and cannot fall within an area of significant risk in respect of Shepherds and the off-site risk that arises from their onsite processes.

The HSE have been consulted on this application planning application 05/00057/OUTEIA, and have confirmed that they do not advise against the granting of planning permission.

It is noted that the only HSE consultation zone that encroaches onto the site is the outer zone of the Warrington / Ditton Natural Gas Main, HSE consultation has been carried out through the PADHI+ system which 'does not advise against' the proposed development.

The proposed development is considered to comply with Policy PR12 of the Unitary Development Plan, CS23 of the Core Strategy Local Plan and the adopted Planning for Risk Supplementary Planning Document.

### **Air and Noise Pollution**

The Environmental Statement (ES) assesses air quality in terms of emissions from vehicles, the nearby industrial estates, construction, and, odour issues in relation to nearby industrial businesses. It concludes that the development will not have a major impact on residential development at the site in terms of air pollution. The objections received from Saffil and Shepherds have been fully considered and taken into account and a refusal could not be justified on these grounds as there is insufficient evidence of significant impacts.

The statement concludes that there is minor environmental impact to air quality as a result of construction traffic and that these can be mitigated through measures such a wheel wash. With regard to industrial odour issues the assessment concludes that there are unlikely to be any impacts, based on information gathered from both the Council and the Environment Agency.

On the basis of the ES findings the statement confirms that the proposed development would not experience significant environmental impact from operations outside the application site. Similarly the development would not have adverse environmental impacts on the surrounding area through traffic generation.

The application has been supported with a noise report, this indicates that the existing sources of noise include the local roads and rail traffic on the adjacent rail line to Fiddlers Ferry Power Station. In addition there are industrial activities within the surrounding area including Saffil and Shepherds. The proposed development itself will also have the potential to generate noise.

The ES concludes that after some noise monitoring the resulting findings indicated that the noise levels at the site are appropriate for residential development with some mitigation that can be designed into the scheme and a condition will be attached to achieve this.

From the submitted noise and vibration assessment it is evident that no significant environmental impact will be experienced by residents within the proposed development. In addition the ES shows that no significant environmental impact will result as a consequence of construction, traffic or operation of the proposals.

The potential for noise and air pollution on the site is not in question, however the Council's Environmental Health Service has commented that observations indicate that the main noise sources in the area are road traffic and existing industrial plant operations. The railway line described as 'dismantled' within the EIA is in fact operational and is used day and night by heavy freight trains. Thereby it can be concluded that there are a number of air and noise pollutants which surround the site and will have a direct impact on the amenity of future residential and working populations but are not significant enough to have a major impact on residential amenity or the environment.

In accordance with policies PR1 and PR2 the Council's Environmental Health Officers do not object to the applications submitted but recommend conditions are attached to any permission so that BS8233:2014 is met in order to protect future residential amenity.

In addition to this the applications refer to retail and office uses being incorporated within the development as well as a public house. The uses require specific consideration with regard to the potential impact on the proposed residential dwellings and as such the Council's Environmental Health service has confirmed that these issues can be dealt with during the application for reserved matters, but will result in the requirement for noise conditions on construction hours, a noise mitigation scheme, opening hours for shops and offices and delivery hours restrictions.

### **Highways, Transportation and Sustainability**

The application has been submitted with a traffic impact assessment and the Council's Highways Engineer has been consulted. The main issues raised relate

to additional vehicles being added to the highway network and the impact on the gyratory and Earle Road.

Mitigation measures have been identified for the widening of Earle Road to include an additional lane to relieve congestion. The works will require a financial contribution from the applicant or developer so that the Highway Authority can carry out the work. Subject to the applicant agreeing this contribution in a S106 the Highway Authority raises no objections.

The development site is located 1km from the town centre and 2km away from Widnes Train Station, and 2.5km away from Runcorn Train Station. Policy TP1: Public Transport Provision as Part of New Development states that no building within a development site should be more than 400m walking distance from a bus stop or railway station. 400m is considered to be the reasonable distance to expect people to walk to the nearest bus stop.

The nearest bus stops to the site are located at the Hive to the west of the site and on Tanhouse Lane to the north east. Both of these stops are currently served by the 26 and 26A buses which run hourly during the day (excluding Sundays and evenings). These stops are within 400m of eastern and western parts of the site, with the central section being approximately 500m to 600m away from a bus stop.

There would therefore be a small gap in the provision of bus stops to fully comply with policy TP1. However, this is not considered significant enough to refuse the application purely on these grounds. Furthermore there will be opportunities to include the provision of bus stops within the site to facilitate extended services with the agreement with the Transport Authority. This can be secured with an appropriate worded condition for these details to be submitted with the reserved matters application.

Policy TP16: Green Travel Plans states that where a development has associated traffic problems a travel plan will be required in order to address some of the issues, it is reasonable for this to be controlled by condition.

Further conditions are recommended for a construction traffic management plan, and timetable outlining the timescale and phasing of the development, and a condition for the provision of secure cycle parking for the flats, the retails and commercial parts of the development, and that the car parking, access and service areas be implemented in accordance with approved plans in order to comply with policy TP6, TP7, TP15 and TP18 of the Unitary Development Plan.

### **Design Layout and Amenity**

The applicant has provided a purely indicative layout drawing illustrating how they envisage how the mix of dwellings, retail and offices would be accommodated within the site.

The New Residential Development SPD requires development interface distances to achieve the 21m separation (between habitable room windows) and 13m separation (between habitable room windows and blank/non habitable



elevations) to be measured from the centre of any habitable room window. Proposed layouts are also expected to comply with the standards for interface distances, garden sizes and provide sufficient internal access roads, parking and servicing as set out in the Design of Residential Development SPD.

The Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development SPD and the Shop Front, Signage and Advertising SPD provide further guidance on the design of the proposed commercial and retail elements of the scheme.

Policy H3 of the Unitary Development Plan 'Provision of Recreational Greenspace' provides guidance on the standards of greenspace, which should be provided as part of residential development. The site layout falls short of the recommended levels of 0.8 hectares per thousand for children's play and casual recreation space and 1.6 hectare per thousand for formal, sport and recreation space. The current proposals are outline, and do not detail what open space provision would be provided onsite, at the reserved matters stage further details would be provided. In accordance with the policy, any of the open space that cannot be provided on site will require a financial contribution in lieu of this shortfall to provide elsewhere, this would therefore need to be secured by a S106 agreement with the applicant.

As this application is in outline, the plans submitted are indicative only and are purely for illustrative purposes only. However they provide enough information to demonstrate that there is sufficient space within the Site to accommodate the necessary standards within the final design, to be demonstrated during a future submission of a reserved matters application. A scheme of up to 624 dwellings can be designed and accommodated within the site that would comply with the design of New Residential Development SPD, and the retail and office proposals would comply with the relevant guidance and Policies BE1, BE2, E3, E5, H2, H3 and TC5 of the Halton UDP and CS18 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

### **Landscape**

The applicant has submitted a landscape assessment which concludes the following. Any new development may result in potentially significant effects to the townscape/landscape resource and visual amenity. In the case of the proposed development, some localised significant effects on landscape quality and visual amenity will exist within the immediate environs of the site. It should be noted that significant effects are not necessarily deemed to be unacceptable, especially where good design and high quality build are combined to produce an attractive environment in which to live as a replacement for post-industrial vacant/derelict land.

Overall, this assessment has established that the proposed development will change the baseline conditions in terms of direct effects, townscape/landscape character and visual amenity. Some significant adverse visual effects have been identified, which are restricted to the area relatively close to the proposed development. However, in the main the predicted impacts are predicted to be positive and the key elements of the proposed development will result in beneficial changes taking place.

No significant effects are predicted in relation to the townscape character area that the Site is located within, or the two townscape/landscape character types defined within the surrounding Study Area. The effects are also generally predicted to be positive, due to the redevelopment of a vacant brownfield site that currently detracts from local character in its derelict state.

It is considered that with suitable final designs to be agreed at the reserved matters stage and agreement of final landscaping the proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of landscape.

### **Land Contamination**

Policy PR14 'Contaminated Land' of the Unitary Development Plan and CS23 (a) of the Core Strategy Local Plan require the applicant to identify remedial measures required to deal with any hazard to safeguard future development in neighbouring areas.

The Environment Agency and the Contaminated Land Officer have been consulted on the application, the environmental statement and the accompanying contaminated land reports. The reports conclude that risks to the identified nearby controlled waters receptors from contamination identified at the site are not likely to be significant enough to warrant specific remedial action at this time.

However, remedial action has been identified as being required for purposes other than the protection of controlled waters and the submitted reports have also highlighted the need to manage shallow contamination appropriately and ensure migration pathways are not created which would allow further migration of contaminants present in shallow groundwater.

Therefore both the Contaminated Land Service and the Environment Agency have no objections, subject to conditions relating to further investigations, a remediation strategy to be submitted prior to the commencement of development and validation of the works

Subject to these conditions the proposals are considered to comply with policy PR14 of the Unitary Development Plan and CS23 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

### **Ecology**

The application was submitted with an ecological report, and the ecologists at Mersey Environmental Advisory Service and Natural England have been consulted.

Natural England has stated: 'There are no significant residual impacts anticipated for any ecological receptors including the River Mersey Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar site as well as Wigg Island Local Nature Reserve, which is located approximately 1.5km to the south of the

site. There will also be no significant impacts on non-statutory conservation and local wildlife sites’.

‘The loss of breeding habitat /destruction of nests of ringed plover and lapwing will be addressed by mitigation measures to provide compensatory habitat improvement works on nearby Local Wildlife Site / Local Nature Reserve. This potentially significant impact will be offset by enhancement of off-site habitats. Any damage to other active birds’ nests (potential breach of legislation) will be avoided by working outside of breeding seasons or checking for nests by suitably qualified ecologist. Mitigation measures set out under Flood Risk and Hydrology will address any potential negative impacts on water quality in River Mersey SPA / SAC / Ramsar / SSSI and LWS’.

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service have carried out a Habitat Regulations Assessment and have concluded that there is no pathway that could give rise to likely significant effects on the European sites or their designation features and no further assessment is required in this respect.

It is recommended that the mitigation measures outlined in paragraph 7.6 of the Environmental Statement are conditioned if the proposal is consented. This will include: full design details of the drainage system with landscaping and habitats creation details, avoidance of breeding birds, tree planting and bird, bat and invertebrate boxes.

In conclusion, in light of the comments above, the proposals accord with the Habitat Regulations and policies CS20 and GE21, which are consistent with guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

The site is located in an area designated as flood zone 1, this indicates that the annual probability of flooding the site from tidal and major fluvial sources is currently less than 0.1%., the applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment with the application which concludes the following:

*“The Mersey Estuary is located to the south of the site. Data provided by the Environment Agency has been adjusted in line with Defra guidance to account for climate change to give,*

*i. a design flood level locally (1% annual probability) of 8.08m AOD and*

*ii. an extreme flood level estimate of 8.51m AOD (0.1% annual probability). Given a minimum site elevation of 8.5m AOD and a minimum finished floor level of 8.8m AOD risks posed to the development proposals associated with tidal flooding are all assessed to be low.*

*A watercourse called Bowers Brook passes approximately 200m to the west of the site within a culvert. Data provided by the Environment Agency for a location just upstream of the site indicates that under design flood condition (i.e. 1% annual probability event plus an allowance for climate change) water levels might reach*

*an elevation of 10.56m AOD which is higher than land to the south and east of the site.*

*Land between Bowers Brook and the site forms a continuous barrier to an elevation of 11.2m AOD. This elevated land would prevent flood flows migrating towards and onto the site and ensure that any water followed the landform and flow away in a south-westerly direction along Earle Road and beneath the railway line to the lower land along the St Helens Canal. Given this, the risks posed to the development proposals associated with fluvial flooding are all assessed to be low.*

*A number of small localised floods sources exist around the site, including storm drains, foul drainage systems and mains water systems. Ensuring that finished floor levels and thresholds into any basement car park areas are all set at least 300m above adjacent road levels will ensure that risk from these sources are negligible.*

*Runoff from the site following development will be minimised by maximising the use of permeable surfacing wherever reasonably possible. Detailed drainage plans detailing the management of surface runoff from residual impermeable areas will however only be developed post planning following consultation with relevant stakeholders. This assessment has demonstrated that sufficient space exists to achieve greenfield runoff rates should this be necessary”.*

The Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority have been consulted and have raised no objections in relation to flood risk and drainage. The Environment Agency have stated that ‘the discharge of surface water from the proposed development should mimic that which discharges from the existing site. If surface water is to discharge to mains sewer, the water company should be contacted for confirmation of the acceptable discharge rate’.

‘The discharge of surface water should, wherever practicable, be by Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS, in the form of grassy swales, detention ponds, soakaways, permeable paving etc., can help to remove the harmful contaminants found in surface water and can help to reduce the discharge rate’.

Conditions are recommended for a fully detailed surface water drainage scheme and for a scheme to manage the risk of flooding from overland flow.

### **Retail and Town Centre Impact**

Policy TC6 of the Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS5 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan aim to protect the vitality and viability of existing town centres.

Policy TC6 part 1 of the Unitary Development Plan recommends that retail development outside of the town centre will be required to a) demonstrate that there is a need/demand for the development and that a sequential approach has been applied in selecting the location of the site, b) the proposed development would not undermine or damage the prospects of enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre, c) the proposal would not damage the vitality or viability of nearby neighbourhood centres and d) the proposal would not create an

increase in the need to travel by car and would be accessible by a choice of means of transport.

Policy TC6 (2) states that small scale retail developments to serve purely local needs within primarily employment areas or primarily residential areas would be permitted providing that (a) The Local Need is demonstrated (b) the scale of the proposed retail is of a size and scale appropriate to address the local need and (c) the proposal would not individually or in combination damage vitality or viability of nearby neighbourhood centres.

Policy CS5 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan no longer requires a needs assessment, and states that an impact assessment is only required for development providing over 2000 sq.m of floor space, this development proposes less than this amount, and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

The proposal includes up to 1275 sq m of Use Classes A1 (Shops) and A2 (Financial and Professional Services) up to 500 sq m of Use Classes A3 (Food and Drink) and A4 (Drinking Establishments), a total of 1,775 sq.m of retail space. It also includes 300 sq.m of class D1 floor space (i.e. doctors surgery, dentist, small scale health centre).

In this case the size and scale of the retail proposals are considered reasonable to support the amount of new residential properties and commercial development that is proposed, and help serve and provide for existing sites in the Widnes Waterfront area. The amount of retail floor space proposed could provide for a range of small shops and services that you would expect to have in a local centre to serve local need. Furthermore, the siting of this next to a new residential development would obviously be sequentially preferable for the sustainability of the wider development, reducing the need for future residents to travel by car. It is considered that the relative minor scale of the retail element would not damage the vitality or viability of any nearby neighbourhood centres or town centres.

### **Affordable Housing and Viability**

In accordance with Policy CS13 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan, the application has been submitted with a viability appraisal. The appraisal details and breaks down the costs of the development and provides an analysis of how market conditions would make the implementation scheme unviable if the Local Planning Authority were to insist on the provision of affordable housing and open space payments. It is agreed that the assessment confirms that the provision of affordable housing on this site would not be viable. In demonstrating this, the proposal complies with policy CS13 of the Core Strategy Local Plan.

### **Other matters**

Network Rail have raised concerns in relation to the scale of the proposed development and the potential to increase number of people using the pedestrian level crossing at the bottom of Tanhouse Lane. They have requested that the applicant pay up to £2000 per dwelling which would equate to £1,248,000, stating

that this should be used to provide a new bridge across the railway line for pedestrians.

Network Rail have been asked for a justification in terms of risk assessments to support their claims and request, however after multiple requests over the last couple of years they have not provided any such information or justification. It is therefore considered that such a request could not be justified or sustained, furthermore a S106 contribution of this scale would render the scheme unviable.

## **5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The site is identified as falling within the Widnes Regeneration Area in policy RG3 of the UDP and a Key area of change in Policy CS9 for the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan. The provision of housing, retail, and office is considered to be acceptable and consistent with these policies, and would help to meet the councils aspirations for regeneration in the Widnes Waterfront area.

The application is supported by an indicative plan (it is an outline application), and this is purely for illustrative purposes only. However it provides enough information to demonstrate that there is sufficient space within the site to accommodate the relative standards upon the final design and submission of reserved matters, and that a scheme of up to 624 dwellings can be designed and accommodated within the site that would comply with the design of New Residential Development SPD, and the retail and office proposals would comply with the relevant guidance and Policies BE1, BE2, E5 and H3 of the Halton UDP and CS18 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

In accordance with Policies PR1-3, PR6-8 and PR12-14 of the Unitary Development Plan the Council's Environmental Health and Contaminated Land services have confirmed that the EIA and supporting information is adequate enough to prove that the site is capable of residential development provided remediation of the contamination is carried out prior to the commencement of development, and any noise impact can be mitigated for in the design of the final scheme.

The proposal is considered to be sustainable development consistent with the economic, social and environmental roles of sustainable development outlined in paragraph 7 of the NPPF and policy CS2 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

The site lies within the Widnes Waterfront Regeneration Area as defined in the Halton UDP (2005). This identifies a range of suitable uses including residential uses (C2 and C3). The application is not inconsistent with Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy. The proposed development therefore broadly conforms with the local Development Plan policies. Significant weight has been given to the regeneration potential of the scheme, the re-use of a derelict brownfield site, and the delivery of new housing and commercial space. These benefits are considered to outweigh any negative impacts on the environment, and amenity issues for surrounding land uses.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the application be approved subject to:

A) The applicant entering into a legal agreement in relation to the payment of a commuted sum for the Earle Road/Gyratory improvements and a contribution in lieu of any shortfall of onsite open space provision.

B) Conditions relating to the following;

1. Standard outline condition(s) for the submission of reserved matters applications (BE1)
2. Plans condition listing relevant drawings i.e. site location / red edge (BE1 and TP17)
3. Conditions for the submission of contaminated land report, remediation strategy and validation.
4. Condition(s) for submission of full foul and surface water drainage details of the site (BE1)
5. Prior to commencement, submission of levels (BE1)
6. Prior to commencement, submission of materials (BE1 and CS11)
7. Conditions(s) for submission of hard and soft landscaping (BE1)
8. Prior to commencement, submission of a construction / traffic management plan which will include wheel cleansing details, and timetable setting out timescales and phasing of the development (TP17)
9. Avoidance of actively nesting birds (BE1)
10. Prior to commencement, details of on-site biodiversity action plan for measures to be incorporated in the scheme to encourage wildlife (bird, bat and invertebrate boxes) (GE21)
11. Prior to commencement, details of a landscape proposal and an associated management plan to be submitted and approved (BE1, GE21)
12. Prior to commencement, details of boundary treatments (BE22)
13. Provision of a Site Waste Management Plan (WM8)
14. Provision of bins (WM9).
15. A1, A2 and A4 opening hours restricted to 0700 to 2330 hours;
16. no deliveries to A1, A2 and A4 uses between 1900 and 0700 hours;
17. Submission of a travel plan;
18. Noise mitigation scheme so be submitted with reserved matters;
19. Construction hours for work audible at the site boundary;
20. Details of the proposed public transport provision and road connections

C) That if the legal agreement is not executed within a reasonable period of time authority is delegated to the Operational Director- Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of this Committee to refuse the application on the grounds that it fails to comply with Policy CS7 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

## **SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

As required by:

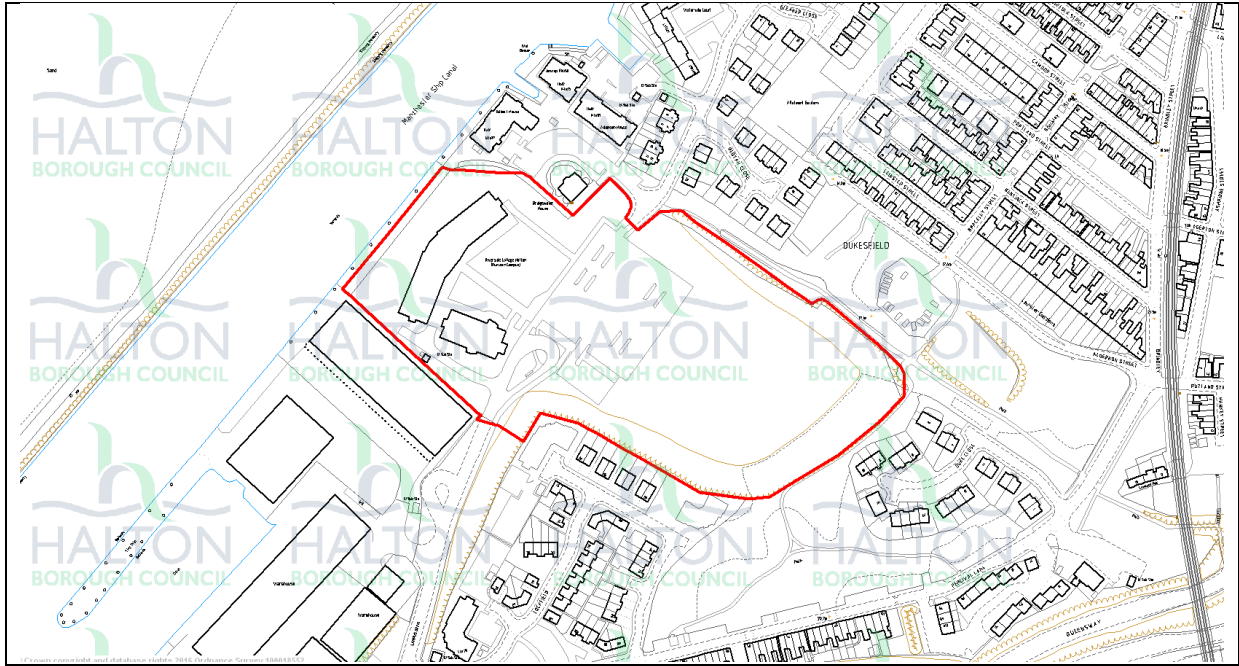
- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;

- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.



<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	16/00131/OUT
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Former Riverside College Percival Lane Runcorn
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Outline application, with all matters reserved, for development of up to 120 dwellings, open space, infrastructure and associated works
<b>WARD:</b>	Mersey
<b>PARISH:</b>	None
<b>AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):</b>	Riverside College
<b>DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:</b> National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)	UDP Action Area 4: Runcorn & Weston Docklands Canal Safeguarding Area Key Area of Change: West Runcorn
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	No
<b>REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	5 letters of objection 1 Representation form owners of Bridgewater House Further letters of objection from: Runcorn Locks Restoration Society Peel Land & Property and the Bridgewater Canal Co. Ltd Manchester Port Health Authority Peel Ports/ Manchester Ship Canal Co.
<b>KEY ISSUES:</b>	Principle of development; Regeneration; canal safeguarding; housing need; ecology impacts; drainage; residential amenity and highway impacts
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Approve Subject to Conditions
<b>SITE MAP</b>	



## **APPLICATION SITE**

### The Site

The Site is approximately 4.15 hectares and is adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal approximately 1km south west from Runcorn town Centre. The Site comprises the former Riverside College, which is now vacant. Bridgewater House, a Grade 2 listed building lies immediately to the north east. Land to the north east and south is predominantly residential in character. Land to the south west is in predominantly employment use. The nearest employment use is the adjacent Runcorn Docks site. The Manchester Ship Canal lies to the north of the site.

### Planning History

None directly relevant to this application.

## **THE APPLICATION**

### The proposal

This outline application seeks permission to develop the site for a residential development of up to 120 dwellings with all matters reserved, except for means of access. It includes the demolition of all former college buildings on the site. Subject to detailed design it may be necessary to relocate an existing substation, however, this will be determined at a future reserved matters application stage.

### Documentation

The applicant has submitted a planning application, drawings and the following reports:

Design and Access Statement  
Transport Statement  
Phase 1 and 2 Site Investigation/ Contaminated Land Report  
Statement of Community Involvement  
Aboriginal Impact Assessment  
Phase 1 Ecological Report  
Japanese Knotweed Treatment Update Report  
Flood Risk Assessment  
Noise Assessment  
Heritage Statement  
Viability Assessment

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

The government has published its finalised Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to compliment the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### **Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)**

The following Unitary Development Plan policies and policy documents are relevant to this application: -

- RG4 Action Area 4 – Runcorn and Weston Docklands
- BE1 General Requirements for Development
- BE2 Quality of Design
- BE5 Other Sites of Archaeological Importance
- BE10 Protecting the Setting of Listed Buildings
- GE9 Redevelopment and Change of Use of Redundant School Buildings
- GE21 Species Protection

GE29 Canals and Rivers  
GE30 The Mersey Coastal Zone  
PR1 Air Quality  
PR2 Noise Nuisance  
PR4 Light Pollution and Nuisance  
PR5 Water Quality  
PR6 Land Quality  
PR7 Development Near to Established Pollution Sources  
PR14 Contaminated Land  
PR16 Development and Flood Risk  
TP1 Public Transport Provision as Part of New Development  
TP3 Disused Public Transport Facilities  
TP14 Transport Assessments  
TP15 Accessibility to New Development

#### Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Core Strategy are of relevance:

CS1 Halton's Spatial Strategy  
CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
CS3 Housing Supply and Locational Priorities  
CS10 West Runcorn  
CS12 Housing Mix  
CS13 Affordable Housing  
CS15 Sustainable Transport  
CS18 High Quality Design  
CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change  
CS20 Natural and Historic Environment  
CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk

#### Joint Waste Local Plan 2013

WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management  
WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New Development

#### Supplementary Planning Documents

- New Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document
- Designing for Community Safety Supplementary Planning Document
- Draft Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document
- Affordable Housing SPD

### **CONSULTATIONS**

The application has been advertised as a departure via the following methods: site notices posted near to the site, press notice, and Council website. Surrounding residents and landowners have been notified by letter.

The following organisations have been consulted and any comments received have been summarised below in the assessment section of the report:

Environment Agency – Objection based on FRA issues  
United Utilities – No Objection  
Peel Land & Property and the Bridgewater Canal Co. Ltd – Object  
Manchester Port Health Authority - Object  
Peel Ports/ Manchester Ship Canal Co. - Object

Council Services:

HBC Open Spaces – No Objection  
HBC Environmental Health – No Objection  
HBC Contaminated Land – No objection  
HBC Highways – No Objection

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

5 letters of objection have been received raising concerns regarding the following:

- Traffic generation and highway capacity
- Dust, noise and other construction and demolition impacts
- Opening up the locks would be a better option bringing back the heritage along with a barge route bringing new business to Runcorn
- Potential to open Old Coach Road to be a through route for HGVs accessing the docks unless some physical barrier is installed
- Better suited to redevelopment as a leisure facility related to the refurbishment and reopening of Runcorn locks. As a tourist attraction it would offer more income streams to the Council and put “Halton on the map”
- Lack of need for extra properties
- Chance to develop the canal as a heritage centre will be lost
- Conversion to such as a hotel might be more sustainable as building is only 15 years old
- That road access should be restricted or engineered as a bridge to allow the canal to be reinstated at ground level.

A letter of representation has also been received from the current owners of Bridgewater House stating that the building is currently used as managed office space and opportunity should be taken to provide additional parking within the site for use by those offices. This is considered a private matter between two land owners and no policy justification exists to require additional parking to be provided for a separate private use.

A letter has been received on behalf of the Runcorn Locks Restoration Society which states that:

*“Whilst we understand that this planning application would not prevent the Locks themselves being re-opened, one of the potential opportunities for investors in this scheme is the possibility of developing a Marina on the site of this proposed housing development- therefore we are opposed to the application as it stands as it will prevent further town regeneration in the form of a Marina in favour of yet another*

*generic new build housing estate and deter potential investors in our overall scheme.”*

A letter of objection has been received Peel Land & Property and the Bridgewater Canal Co. Ltd (BCCL) stating that whilst the application is in outline only they consider that the scheme conflicts with the policy and overall vision for the Runcorn Waterfront Area and “*fails to provide evidence of link or assimilation with the reinstatement of the former Lock system*”. They confirm that the proposals will not impact on the operation of the Bridgewater Canal. They consider the scheme to be a departure from the development plan, adding that:

*”The Runcorn Waterfront Area may provide a significant amount of housing in the longer term, the Riverside Campus development, as it is currently submitted, will set a precedent for development which underutilises and fails to incorporate the key assets available. This is a key site and its development should drive high quality development and growth within the area, in line with the adopted policies in the area. Not only are the proposals unassuming in terms of their content and detail, we consider the scheme to be isolated and not considered in terms of its integration into its surroundings as well as the aspirations of the adopted Local Plan Policy”.*

Manchester Port Health Authority state that they are the statutory enforcing authority for most elements of environmental health on the docks at Runcorn. They state that cargo tonnages for Runcorn Docks have risen in recent years and that this is scheduled to increase significantly (50% increase in the next two years) with recent and proposed investment. They therefore raise concerns regarding the potential for increases in disturbance, congestion, noise, dust and other pollution associated with such activities. They state that:

*“In the opinion of the Port Health Authority, despite the efforts of Peel Ports to improve their loading/ unloading operation, we feel the very nature of the business which concentrates on mineral handling for many of the industries in this area, will impinge on the environment of potential residents. Any development of a residential nature probably will result in pollution problems for both the Port Health Authority and Halton Borough Council. Therefore we feel it prudent to oppose the proposed development”.*

Manchester Ship Canal Company as owners of Port Runcorn has also objected to the planning application on the grounds that a residential use for the site would “*be an inappropriate proposal of development alongside a long established and designated land use, as potential residential occupiers would be likely to raise complaints about our port operations*”. They state that the application “*will have detrimental impacts on the workings of an operational port facility*” and would “*undermine current and continued use at this site*”. They further state that:

- *The proposed introduction of a residential development immediately adjoining the operational port estate at Port Runcorn which specialises in handling of bulky cargoes, which are often dusty, and is currently subject of an investigation with the Manchester Port Health Authority (MPHA), therefore we do not believe it to be a compatible use due to potential complaints about our operations. We would recommend consultation with MPHA on this proposal.*

- *We do not believe that the submitted noise assessment, specifically point 5.0 Sound Attenuation scheme proposal takes our operations into account as it is based on 'external and internal noise measurements undertaken by ENS at other sites'. Our site, adjacent to the proposal represents noise issues outside normal conditions and therefore we would like to see a more comprehensive, varying time and site specific report undertaken.*
- *Vessels transit and dock within the Canal 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without restrictions. We therefore do not believe the current noise assessment takes this into account as it is suggested that our works are 'sporadic' and that, at the time of the survey in very early January 2016, there was 'no activity or noise from the warehouse' with suggestion also that there is 'minimal daytime activity in the vicinity of the docks'.*
- *Peel Ports have also invested significantly to develop the Manchester Ship Canal enhanced Port operations, in order to handle the increase in cargo expected from the new £300 million deep water facility, Liverpool2. Access to the Ship Canal means that products going further inland via ship helps to promote multi-modal usage and greener transport links thus helping to remove lorry-miles (incl. empty backhaul) from the Region's congested roads. We would therefore not be in a position to support any development which hinders this multi-modal opportunity.*

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Background**

The application seeks permission to redevelop the site of the former college site at Runcorn. The purpose built college buildings were constructed in early 2000 but have remained vacant for approximately two years following relocation and consolidation of facilities to the College's Widnes Campuses. The application states that the redevelopment of the site will generate capital for the college to invest in the continued improvement and expansion of its retained campuses.

### **Principle of Use**

The site is designated within Action Area 4: Runcorn and Weston Docklands on the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map as a Phase 2 Allocated Housing Site. UDP Policy RG4 specifically lists housing as an acceptable use within the area. The justification to that policy (para 16) also states that:

"On an area of land adjoining the Dukesfield housing area there is an opportunity for building a new education building for Halton College. Alternatively this area would be suitable for waterside housing."

The site is also within the Key Area for Change: West Runcorn as defined by Core Strategy Policy CS10. Whilst that policy identifies Halton Riverside College as an existing use, provision is made within that policy for residential development. The site is also sandwiched between previous residential development at Dukesfield and an area identified within the policy as Runcorn Waterfront. CS10 makes clear provision for residential development as a principle use within the redevelopment and regeneration of that area. In addition, Core Strategy Policy CS3 aims to deliver

at least 40% of new residential development on previously developed land, to which this scheme would contribute.

UDP Policy GE9 specifically relates to redevelopment of redundant school buildings and makes no reference to college buildings. Notwithstanding that we are not aware of any evidence that the site is meeting, or is likely to meet in the near future, the current needs of the local community for any use listed within Policy GE9(2) and it is not considered that any argument could be sustained that the proposals would conflict with that policy.

A number of objectors have suggested preferential alternative uses. In the absence of any adopted detailed policy in this regard it is considered that no significant weight can be given to such suggested alternative uses. On that basis it is considered that a clear policy justification can be made in principle for residential development of the site.

### Design and Density

The application is in outline only with all matters reserved except for means of access. The application is supported by an indicative layout plan which shows a mix of detached, semi-detached and townhouses. Approval is sought for means of access to the site which includes potential for dual access from Campus Drive and Old Coach Road. The indicative layout plan seeks to demonstrate that 120 dwellings can be appropriately accommodated within the site. Whilst this is a sketch layout only it is considered that 120 dwellings could be satisfactorily accommodated within the in compliance with the Council's adopted New Residential Development Guidance.

The indicative layout plan shows how provision can be made for access through the site providing potential future through connection for buses and links to Runcorn Old Town. The route of that road has been defined, in part at least, by the route of an existing main sewer which crosses the site. That plan also makes provision for open space and properties fronting both the, Listed Building at Bridgewater House and the Canal Safeguarding Area. It also shows properties fronting the Manchester Ship Canal with an intervening area of open space which it is considered could be designed to provide pedestrian and cycle links to the Canal if access could be secured. The current site is also privately owned and securely fenced thereby limiting current access. It is considered that adequate opportunity would arise to address these issues including quality of the built form at reserved matters stage.

The Design and Access Statement indicates that based on the submitted indicative layout a scheme density of 29 dwellings per hectare (dph) is achieved. Whilst this falls marginally below the 30 dph required by Core Strategy Policy CS3 this is indicative only at this stage. The Design and Access Statement also indicates that account should be had for steep wooded banks around the eastern edge of the site and open space retained along the Bridgewater Canal and around the Bridgewater House. In addition land to be protected for the route of the Canal Safeguarding Area in accordance with UDP Policy TP3. In addition, the Design and Access Statement indicates that the scheme aims to "create a desirable area through the use of aspirational housing types including detached and townhouses suitable for families".



Such a strategy accords with aspirations identified within para. 13.7 of Core Strategy Policy CS10 which identifies West Runcorn as having capacity to contribute to diversifying the housing offer through the addition of higher quality residential development. That policy identifies the adjoining land at Runcorn Waterfront as providing particular opportunity to deliver such housing. It is considered logical that such an aspiration should be attributed to the application site which directly adjoins it. The application is in outline only and it is considered that appropriate relationships to the waterfront, adjoining listed building and future line of the restored canal can be secured at detailed design stage.

### Highway Considerations

The application is supported by submission of a Transport Assessment. The assessment predicts that, compared with the previous use of the site, the proposed development would result in a substantial reduction in weekday and daily trips. No significant highway safety issues are raised and it is therefore considered acceptable based on NPPF and UDP Policy TP15.

Any potential for through traffic must be balanced against the benefits of futureproofing potential bus links through the site. It is considered that given the wider expressway network it is unlikely that substantial volumes of traffic would be attracted to utilise the new road linkages as a shortcut to through traffic much greater than local traffic. Traffic calming and detailed design can further be used to reduce the attractiveness of the route. With respect to concerns that the route would encourage use by HGV's to access surrounding employment areas it is considered that powers exist for the Council as Highway Authority to apply appropriate weight restrictions as required.

Bus stops are in excess of 400m from the site (reported as 540m and 740m) as required by UDP Policy TP1. The site is located approximately 1km from Runcorn Old Town and 600m from Runcorn train station. The Council's Transport Officer has confirmed that bus service operators are unlikely to be willing to divert services for such a small development. The scheme directly adjoins existing residential development and does provide the opportunity for direct access to bus travel by allowing a circular bus route through the new link road including connection to wider future development and review of public transport provision as part of any future development of Runcorn Waterfront. On this basis it is considered that the site is well located with respect to access to Runcorn town centre, train station and bus stops and that refusal of planning permission could not be justified on these grounds.

Potential construction impacts, including routeing, timing of deliveries, wheel wash and construction parking can be addressed through submission and agreement of a Construction Management Plan secured by suitably worded planning condition. This will also help to ensure that disturbance to existing local residents are kept to a minimum. Members do need to be aware that, whilst all reasonable efforts can be made to minimise disturbance and potential conflict such issues are largely a site management issue.

The Councils Highways Engineers have confirmed that they raise no objection.

## Heritage Impacts

The NPPF requires that in determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement which includes a summary of relevant planning policy and guidance at national and local levels and consideration of the impact of the proposals on the setting of heritage assets.

The heritage statement identifies that there are four listed buildings which have the potential to be impacted by redevelopment of the site, however it states that three of these, the Former Tide Dock of Bridgewater Canal and Lock to North, Runcorn Railway Bridge over the River Mersey and Runcorn Widnes Road Bridge, will see no impact to their significance by the proposed development.

Bridgewater House, which dates from circa 1760, is a Grade 2 listed building and was the occasional residence of the Duke of Bridgewater, his agent, John Gilbert, and engineer, James Brindley who were responsible for the construction of the Bridgewater Canal (1759-61). According to the heritage statement it is not considered that the site currently makes any significant contribution to the significance of the building. The proposals would result in built development being brought closer to the heritage asset, further surrounding the building. The development proposed is for smaller residential units, which will be substantially smaller in scale than the heritage asset. Whilst the development will sit in relatively close proximity, the scale, massing and dominance of the listed building will still be apparent. Removal of the existing college buildings is reported to represent a positive impact.

The indicative layout provides for an area of open space adjacent to the listed building which it is considered will allow for a degree of separation between the heritage asset and the new development. The primary elevations of the building are also reported to be the north-east elevation, where the main entrance is located, and the north-west elevation. The proposed development does not spread to surround these elevations, and therefore the locations in which the building is primarily appreciated from will be largely unaffected by the proposals.

UDP Policy BE10 seeks to preserve both the character of the setting and its historic relationship to the listed building. NPPF para. 132 provides that "*Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.*" It is considered that the proposed development has the potential to cause some degree of harm to the setting of the heritage asset, through bringing development closer to the building. The heritage statement confirms however that this will be:

"markedly less than substantial, located at the low end of that spectrum, at a minor level of harm"

The wider benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh any such low level harm and it is not considered that refusal of planning permission can be justified on this basis.

### Canal

The Halton UDP policy TP3 seeks to ensure that development does not prejudice the re-opening of disused public transport facilities including the Bridgewater Locks which connects the Bridgewater Canal to the Manchester Ship Canal. The UDP Proposals Map provides an indicative line for the safeguarding of the former canal, defined as the Canal Safeguarding Area which runs along the north eastern boundary of the site. The applicant has agreed to protect sufficient land within its control which considered necessary to safeguard the line of the canal. This land is shown as green space within the indicative layout plan. The applicant has also agreed to enter into a legal agreement to allow the land to be landscaped and managed as part of the proposed development but to gift the land to the Council should a viable scheme be developed for re-instating the canal in whole or in part. It is therefore considered that, for the land under the control of the applicant, not only are the proposals able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of UDP Policy TP3 but also provide the Council with sufficient control over the land currently under private ownership to facilitate the implementation of the scheme in future.

### Trees

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. A Tree Preservation Order is in force with respect to trees immediately adjacent to the site at Bridgewater House. The site does not fall within a Conservation Area. The development will potentially require the removal of a number of trees from within the site but none are judged worthy of statutory protection. It is considered that sufficient opportunity exists that provision can be made for a significant replanting scheme. It is considered that this can be secured by appropriately worded planning condition and on that basis the Council's Open Spaces Officers raises no objection in this regard.

### Ecology

In accordance with national and local planning policy, a Phase 1 Ecological Survey has been conducted. The survey concluded that there are no protected species present on the site and none of the buildings or trees were found to have potential for roosting bats. The Survey identified a small area of invasive non-native plant species Japanese knotweed and includes details of its treatment. That Japanese knotweed has now been confirmed to be on Council owned land and is being treated accordingly. This is not therefore considered to warrant further consideration with respect to this planning application.

The assessment has identified that the Mersey Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar site, Special Protection Area and Local Wildlife Site lies approximately 100m to the north of the site. Natural England has raised queries regarding the level of records information survey effort undertaken by the applicant's ecological consultant and the potential for noise impacts on the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites. The Council's retained adviser on ecology matters has responded confirming that they have reviewed the referenced additional survey information and supplied the relevant data. They have also confirmed their opinion that:

*there will not be a significant effect on these species due to:*

- *The separation distance of 100m between of the proposed development site and the Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar site;*
- *The predicted noise levels at 100m separation;*
- *The ambient noise level in the area, including noise from the Runcorn docks, traffic noise, the West Coast Main Line and freight trains, and shipping use of the Manchester Ship Canal; and*
- *The barrier effect of the Manchester Ship Canal bank.*

They also advise that the likely level of noise, based on a worst case scenario may have a moderate response to the disturbance, involving head turning, scanning behaviour reduced feeding and movement to other areas close by, it would not result in birds leaving the area. That response has been sent to Natural England and their response is awaited and members will be updated accordingly.

Water voles are a protected species and Core Strategy Policy CS20 applies. Developments that may affect water vole and/or its habitat may require a Water vole Development License from Natural England. The Council's retained adviser has advised that no works should be carried out within 5 metres of the top of the bank and details of methods of protection to this zone should be submitted for approval. This can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition. A further condition is recommended relating to lighting design to minimise light spill onto surrounding habitats.

On this basis it is considered that, subject to the appropriate mitigation through a Construction Environmental Management Plan, and opportunities for enhancement, the proposed development will have no significantly adverse impacts upon any protected habitats or species, and has the potential to provide a net gain in terms of biodiversity. The applicant will be reminded of their duties to comply with relevant legislation with regards to breeding/ nesting birds by way of informative attached to any planning permission.

#### Noise and Other Amenity Issues

The application is accompanied by a Noise Report which assesses existing noise levels over the site. The report assesses the existing background levels and noise sources in the area and applies the internal standards contained within BS8233:2014 'Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings'. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that this is considered an appropriate methodology and appears to have been applied in accordance with the standard. The report concludes that internal noise levels within the proposed dwellings will meet the standards within BS8233:2014 with standard double glazing fitted. The external background levels are all within the BS8233 levels. This demonstrates that the noise levels in the gardens will be acceptable.

Objections have been made due to the proximity of the proposed housing development to Runcorn Docks. They state that the noise report assumes the activities at the Docks are 'sporadic' and that further growth in the use of both the Docks and the Manchester Ship Canal are proposed. It is suggested within those

objections that the noise report does not adequately assess the future use of the Docks and the Ship Canal.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that the report adequately addresses the noise environment as existing and it would not be appropriate to expect any assessment of future activities that cannot be predicted. Contrary to the assertion of the objectors that the noise report is based on noise assessments undertaken at other sites the Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that this appears to be a misunderstanding as the report clearly uses background levels on the site itself to calculate the noise conditions.

On the basis of the noise report and in consideration of the NPPF the Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed her opinion that refusal of planning permission could not be justified on the basis of noise.

With respect to other sources of pollution from the adjoining commercial uses such as dust and odour UDP Policy PR7 provides as follows:

*“Development near to existing sources of pollution will not be permitted if it is likely that those existing sources of pollution will have an unacceptable effect on the proposed development (as defined in Policies PR1, 4, 5, 6 13 and 14) and it is considered to be in the public interest that the interests of the existing sources of pollution should prevail over those of the proposed development.”*

In this regard no evidence has been provided that such forms of pollution are an inevitable result of essential activities by the adjoining commercial uses and necessary for the future of those commercial activities. No evidence has been provided that such form of pollution, if they do exist, cannot be mitigated by appropriate management of those activities. It is considered that the benefits of the scheme in terms of regeneration and provision of much needed housing are considered to outweigh any benefits from the unrestricted activities of the adjoining commercial uses and any resultant nuisance from those activities in future can be controlled through other appropriate legislation.

It is considered that construction impacts on adjoining existing residents can be minimised by restricting construction and delivery hours and requiring the developer to submit a Construction Environmental Management Plan including appropriate wheel wash provisions. These can be secured by appropriately worded planning conditions.

### Flood Risk and Drainage

The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy. The Environment Agency identifies that the application site lies entirely within an area at the lowest risk of flooding (Flood Risk Zone 1). A small area of Flood Risk Zone 2 lies along the western boundary adjacent to the Ship Canal; this area is outside of the application site boundary. The Flood Risk Assessment considers all potential sources of flood risk and recommends mitigation measures in order to ensure that the proposed development is not at risk of flooding and does not increase flood risk at the site or elsewhere. Mitigation measures have been

suggested to include setting appropriate site and finished floor levels, monitoring groundwater levels prior to construction, appropriate drainage design including land drainage and attenuation in order to control surface water run-off.

In accordance with national and local policy, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment identifies that the proposed development is located within an area of low flood risk. Whilst the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has raised some technical questions and a response has been provided by the applicant which is currently being reviewed and members will be updated accordingly. United Utilities and the LLFA raise no objection in principle subject to detailed drainage design which can be secured by appropriately worded planning condition. The proposals are considered to accord with NPPF, UDP Policy PR16 and Core Strategy Policy CS23.

### Contaminated Land

The application is supported by a phase 1 and 2 site investigation reports. The reports have been reviewed by the Council's Contaminated Land Officer who has confirmed that they provide a good assessment of the potential pollution linkages. There is a need to delineate the extent of some localised areas of contamination within the site and further targeted investigation to allow a detailed remediation strategy to be developed. The current outline proposals for remediation are a soil cover system. The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has confirmed that the assessment provides sufficient information to determine the application subject to appropriate planning condition. The Environment Agency also raises no objection subject to a recommended condition.

### Archaeology

The proposed development is reported to lie on the site of the 19th-century complex of docks, locks, basins, wharves and warehouses which once surrounded Bridgewater House. Previous archaeological investigation of part of the site in 2002 in relation to the construction of the existing college buildings to be demolished encountered evidence for surfaces and walls surviving at a depth of up to 5m below the current ground surface, whilst works on an area adjacent to Bridgewater House in 2006 recorded substantial dock structures surviving at depths of up to 3m across the site. The in-filled canal arms and locks also retain the potential to contain the remains of abandoned canal boats, as was recorded during earlier monitoring works in the 1980s.

Whilst it is anticipated that piled foundations are likely to be required grubbing out works, as well as any other deep excavations, are considered to have the potential to encounter both surviving structural remains associated with the docks, as well as the remains of abandoned canal barges. Such remains would not be considered to be a constraint upon development but rather as being of local or regional significance and therefore worthy of preservation by record. Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service therefore recommends that the developer be required to undertake a programme of archaeological work, and that such works be secured by means of appropriately worded planning condition.

### Waste

The proposal involves demolition and construction activities and policy WM8 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (WLP) applies. This policy requires the minimisation of waste production and implementation of measures to achieve efficient use of resources, including designing out waste. In accordance with policy WM8, evidence through a waste audit or a similar mechanism (e.g. site waste management plan) demonstrating how this will be achieved must be submitted and can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

The applicant has not provided information with respect to provision of on-site waste storage and management to demonstrate compliance with policy WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan. It is considered that this can be secured by a suitably worded condition.

### Prematurity

The application site is located between the Dukesfield Residential Neighbourhood and Runcorn Waterfront as identified by Core Strategy Policy CS10. The site is identified within that policy by its former use as Halton Riverside College. Residential development of the site would act as a natural progression of the existing Dukesfield Residential Neighbourhood. It is not considered that the development of the site for residential use would in any way prejudice the future development of Runcorn Waterfront for the uses identified by UDP Policy RG4 or Core Strategy Policy CS10. No masterplan or other detailed policy document exists for the area and the opening up of access through the site could be argued to contribute to the future development potential for Runcorn Waterfront. On that basis it is not considered that any argument of prematurity or prejudice to the future regeneration aspirations for the area could be sustained.

### Other Material Matters

Under normal circumstances the development would be liable for the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS13 and provision of open space in accordance with UDP Policy and the Open Space SPD. The application is supported by a Financial Viability Appraisal which concludes that the scheme would become unviable in terms of residual land value if such contributions were required. That assessment is currently being appraised by the Valuation Office Agency. Their response is awaited and Members will be updated accordingly. It is also considered worthy of note that the applicant is Riverside College and that the stated purpose of the application is to “generate capital for the College to reinvest in the continued improvement and expansion of its retained campuses”. Such potential benefit must also therefore be balanced against the benefits of securing affordable housing and/ or open space contributions.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The application seeks permission for the proposed demolition of the former college buildings (which have remained vacant for approximately two years) and

redevelopment of the site to provide up to 120 residential units. The application is in outline, with all matters except for access reserved for future determination.

Core Strategy Policy CS2 and NPPF paragraphs 14-16 set out the presumption in favour of sustainable development whereby applications that are consistent with national and up-to-date local policy should be approved without delay. As set out in this appraisal, the site falls within Action Area 4: Runcorn and Weston Docklands which specifically allows for housing as a suitable use and as a potential alternative to Halton College buildings on the site. The application is also consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS10, which promotes new dwellings across West Runcorn, with emphasis on Runcorn Waterfront. The proposals have the benefits of contributing much need housing in the Borough, in a sustainable location, on a brownfield site, close to the town centre, whilst making a positive contribution to the regeneration of the area. The application also states that the redevelopment of the site will generate capital for the College to invest in the continued improvement and expansion of its retained campuses. It is considered that sufficient provision can be made for protecting the amenity of surrounding land uses and that of future occupiers, securing appropriate design to mitigate any negative impacts, protecting the setting of the listed building at Bridgewater House, opening access to the waterfront, and safeguarding the route for the reinstatement of the Bridgewater Locks through consideration at a future reserved matters application stage.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the application is approved subject to:-

(a) The entering into a Legal Agreement or other agreement for the maintenance of specified land in accordance with the landscaping requirements of the Permission and the transfer of that land to the Council upon written notice for the purposes associated with the reinstatement of the former Bridgewater Canal.

(b) Conditions relating to the following:

1. Standard Outline Planning Permission conditions relating to submission of reserved matters and timescales
2. Specifying Approved Plans (BE1)
3. Requiring submission and agreement of a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan including wheel cleansing facilities, construction vehicle access routes, construction parking and management plan, noise and dust minimisation measures. (BE1 and GE21)
4. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
5. Landscaping condition, requiring submission and approval both hard and soft landscaping, including replacement tree planting. (BE2)
6. Submission and agreement of boundary treatment including retaining walls. (BE2)
7. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
8. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)



9. Condition relating to further detailed site investigation/ mitigation/ verification (PR14)
10. Condition relating to unidentified contamination (PR14)
11. Submission and agreement of details of on-site biodiversity action plan for measures to be incorporated in the scheme to encourage wildlife including dwellings to be fitted with bird/ bat boxes (GE21)
12. Conditions relating to tree protection during construction (BE1)
13. Submission and agreement of detailed surface water/ highway drainage scheme (BE1/ PR5)
14. Requiring submission and agreement of site and finished floor levels. (BE1)
15. Submission and agreement of scheme of protective fencing to watercourses to secure a minimum 5m buffer zone (GE21)
16. Submission and agreement of Site Waste Management Plan (WM8)
17. Submission and agreement of a sustainable waste manage plan (WM9)
18. Submission and agreement of detailed lighting scheme including measures to minimise light spill onto surrounding habitats and sky glow (PR4/GE21).

(c) That if the S106 Agreement or alternative arrangement is not executed within a reasonable period of time, authority be delegated to the Operational Director – Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Committee to refuse the application.

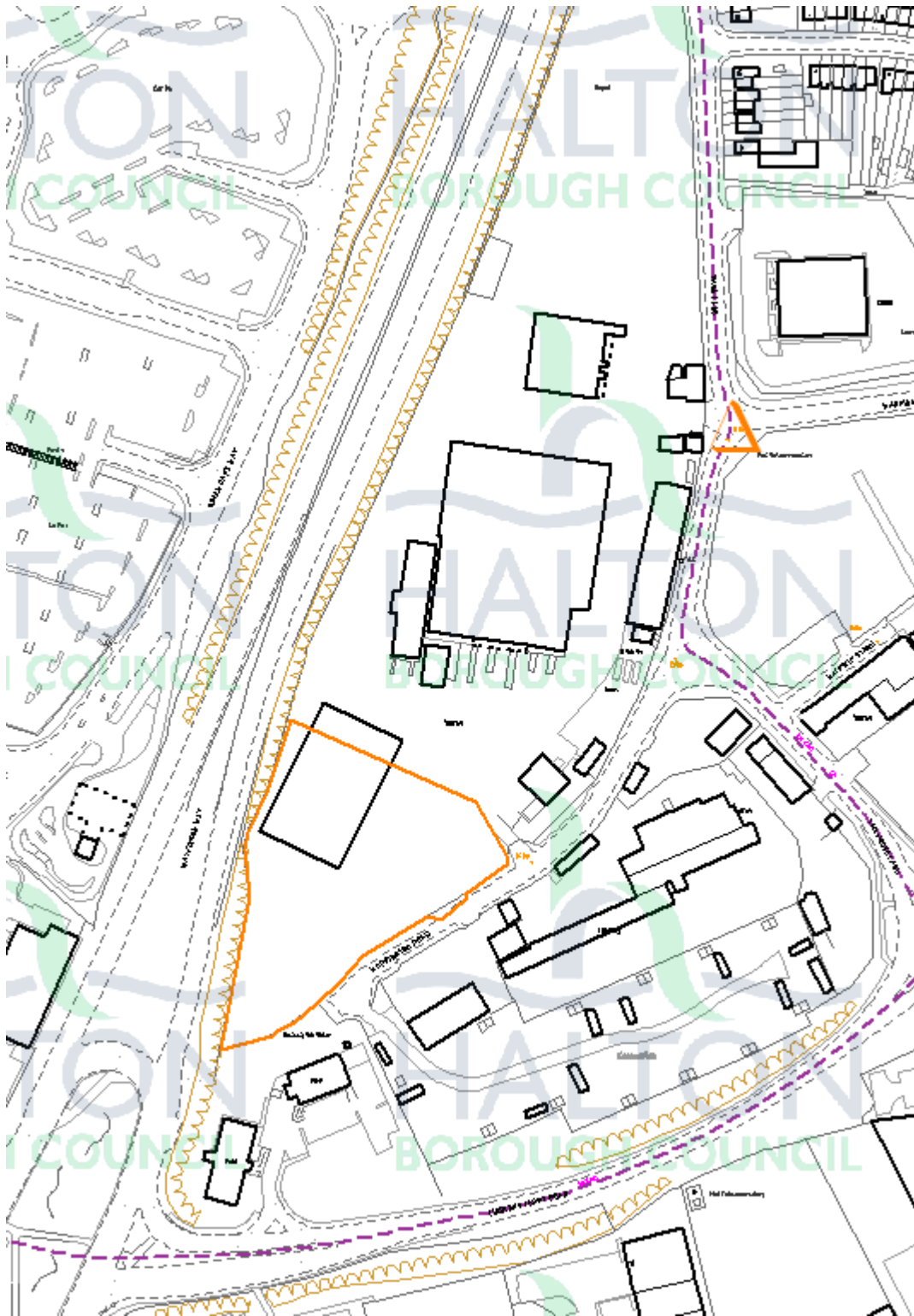
## **SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

As required by:

- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.

<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	16/00225/OUT
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Land bounded by Warrington Road and Watkinson Way, Widnes, Cheshire.
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Proposed hybrid application seeking full permission for development comprising 2 storey office building (Use Class B1), associated depot building (Use Class B8) and related car parking, access and services with landscape and boundary treatments together with an outline application for a residential development of up to 10 no. dwellings with all matters other than access reserved for future consideration.
<b>WARD:</b>	Appleton
<b>PARISH:</b>	None
<b>AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):</b>	Applicant - Halton Housing Trust. Agent – 5 Plus Architects.
<b>DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:</b>  National Planning Policy Framework (2012)  Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)  Halton Core Strategy (2013)  Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)	Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass site.
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	No
<b>REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	No representations received from the publicity given to the application.
<b>KEY ISSUES:</b>	Principle of Office Development, Principle of Residential Development, Design, Amenity, Affordable Housing, Open Space, Access, Ground Contamination.
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	The application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions suggested.
<b>SITE MAP</b>	



## **1. APPLICATION SITE**

### **1.1 The Site**

The site subject of the application is bounded by Warrington Road to the south east and Watkinson Way (A557) to the west. The site is 0.82ha in area.

The site was previously part of a larger site used more intensively for warehousing and distribution (Use Class B8), however the site has been predominantly vacant in recent years up until planning permission was granted (by 14/00455/FUL) for residential development on the land directly to the north. Development has commenced on the implementation of that planning permission.

The granting of application 14/00455/FUL also included the site clearance / demolition and remediation, hard standing and a further vehicular access to serve the site from Warrington Road end of the site which is the subject of this application.

The land to the north of the application site was previously referred to as Phase 1 and 2 with the site subject of this application being Phase 3.

Located to the east of the site on the opposite side of Warrington Road are a number of industrial uses with a caravan site located to the rear of these units.

Located to the west of the site is Watkinson Way which is a main route through the borough linking Widnes with the Silver Jubilee Bridge to the south and M62 junction 7 to the north. Located beyond this is Widnes Town Centre which is accessible on foot by a footbridge over Watkinson Way or via Tan House Lane.

The site is part of the Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass site as identified by the Halton Unitary Development Plan. In the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan, the application site falls within the South Widnes Key Area of Change.

## **2. THE APPLICATION**

### **2.1 The Proposal**

This is a hybrid application seeking full permission for development comprising 2 storey office building (Use Class B1), associated depot building (Use Class B8) and related car parking, access and services with landscape and boundary treatments together with an outline application for a residential development of up to 10 no. dwellings with all matters other than access reserved for future consideration.

### **2.2 Documentation**

The planning application is supported the following documents/plans:

- Ecological Update.
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Transport Assessment Addendum
- Design and Access Statement
- Geo-Environmental Site Assessment

- Phase II Geo- Environmental Site Assessment
- Ground Gas Addendum Letter Report
- Remediation & Enabling Works Strategy
- Remediation & Enabling Works Validation Report
- Noise Assessment
- Drainage Layout
- Construction Management Plan

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **3.1 National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

#### **3.2 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)**

The site is part of the Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass site as identified by the Halton Unitary Development Plan. The following policies within the adopted Unitary Development Plan are considered to be of particular relevance;

- BE1 General Requirements for Development;
- BE2 Quality of Design;
- BE3 Environmental Priority Areas;
- GE21 Species Protection;
- GE27 Protection of Trees and Woodlands;
- PR8 Noise Sensitive Developments;
- PR14 Contaminated Land;
- PR16 Development and Flood Risk;
- TP6 Cycle Provision as Part of New Development;
- TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development;
- TP12 Car Parking;
- TP14 Transport Assessments;
- TC1 Retail & Leisure Allocations;
- TC3 Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass;
- H3 Provision of Recreational Greenspace.

### 3.3 Halton Core Strategy (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Core Strategy are of particular relevance:

- CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- CS3 Housing Supply and Locational Priorities;
- CS4 Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities;
- CS9 South Widnes;
- CS12 Housing Mix;
- CS13 Affordable Housing;
- CS18 High Quality Design;
- CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change;
- CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk.

### 3.4 Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are of relevance:

- WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management;
- WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New Development.

## 4. CONSULTATIONS

### 4.1 Highways and Transportation Development Control

*UDP maximum parking standards for an office development of this size is approx. 54 spaces. It is noted that the development proposes 93 car parking spaces including 5 disability spaces. In addition to this, there would be 4 motorcycle spaces, 10 cycle spaces and 3 spaces for vans. Given the high density nature of the office, the Highway Authority considers that provision in excess of the maximum is appropriate. As noted in the Transport Assessment section below the site is intended to host 250 staff. This includes 160 'operational depot' staff, but the new operation will have materials delivered to site by separate Travis Perkins depot and only a small equipment store will be retained on this new site. The TA states that there will be little need for operational staff to attend the site, 124 of the 151 staff questioned in the sample currently travel by car (arriving in the main between 7-10am – it is understood that under the new model by the time the last of these have arrived others will have left the building on business). It is understood that visitors will need to make an appointment to visit the site. Provided the trips to the site are appropriately managed (particularly those of the operational staff) the Highway Authority considers that the number of spaces is adequate. Appropriate management should be secured through a travel plan condition.*

*The proposed dwellings have 2 spaces per property (one of which is an oversize garage in accordance with Manual for Streets) and this is considered*

*to be acceptable. The visitor parking opposite will be adopted as part of the highway and available for shared use by residents.*

*Proposed site levels appear to fit adequately without the need for retaining walls or non compliant gradients. Any alteration of site levels to requiring embankments/retaining structures would require consent and potentially commuted sums for adoption – this may be added as a condition/informative.*

*The TA outlines adequate bus access to the site. Pedestrian routes are available to the town centre. It is recommended by the Highway Authority that further consideration should be given to the creation of a more direct pedestrian link to the Fiddlers Ferry Road/Watkinson Way crossing points (and onto the town centre).*

*Construction management plan should be submitted prior to commencement. All construction related vehicle parking should be accommodated on site, and wheelwash, sweeper provided as appropriate, with winter management/gritting plan.*

*It is noted that the site is intended to host 250 staff. Whilst this includes 160 'operational depot' staff, the new operation will have materials delivered to site by separate TP depot. The TA states that there will be little need for operational staff to attend the site.*

*Peak hour considered is between 4-5pm*

*Surveys have been carried out among existing staff and 106 of 151 respondents would use a car to depart and 63 would do so in the 4-5pm peak (TRICS shows 65). 151 is considered to be a robust number for 'overall staff' using the building at one time given the proposed operational plan which will discourage 'depot' staff from attending the new building. It is understood that full seating capacity of the new building is around 200, however this consists of meeting rooms, break out areas, benches, sofas etc which are very unlikely to all be occupied at the same time. Therefore the worst case trip generation using the TRICS database is accepted by the Highway Authority.*

*The report shows that the development results in significantly less overall impact than previous retail development with a 2 way impact of around 3% impact on Fiddlers Ferry Rd. (Approx 64 movements in PM peak compared with nearly 329 for the previous retail permission). This further reduces if the existing use of the site is taken into account.*

*This impact is of a similar order to the previous phase 1 and 2 residential development.*

*It is noted that there is a difference in the peak hour quoted between TA5.7 and TA 6.2. This appears to be a typographical error.*

*From the traffic counts in this area it has previously been noted that there is approx. 10% variation (approx. 80 vehs each way on Fiddlers Ferry Rd) between 2 sets of junction count figures on Fiddlers Ferry Road (gyratory and*

*tanhouse roundabout counts). This suggests the daily variation in flow could be of this order.*

*However, although impact is clearly only a fraction of the previous retail permission it should be noted that significant mitigation to the Fiddlers Ferry Road/Watkinson Way gyratory was secured as a planning obligation for the retail permission.*

*Given the low level of the impacts discussed above, the submitted TA does not carry out a capacity analysis on the gyratory (but does assess the Tan House Lane/Fiddlers Ferry Road roundabout junction and finds it to operate adequately).*

*The TA concludes (in 7.7.1) that the development will not have a detrimental impact upon the highway/transport network. The Highway Authority agrees with this statement and do not object to the application on traffic grounds.*

*Given the new working methods at the site there is a clear opportunity to introduce new travel habits. It is apparent that better pedestrian linkages to the town centre could be developed from the site which would assist with this. It is recommended by the Highway Authority as a minimum that a travel plan should be developed which builds around the proposed highly flexible working patterns, to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car and actively encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel for those journeys which are required.*

#### 4.2 Lead Local Flood Authority

*LLFA agree in principle with the conclusions of the Flood Risk assessment.*

*It is noted from the Flood Risk assessment that the site is not likely to be suitable for infiltration due to soil type and restricted space, although it is noted that no infiltration testing has been carried out. As there is no watercourse in the vicinity it is proposed to outfall to a newly adopted length of surface water sewer to the west of the site, and attenuate surface water on site via means of oversize pipes which is the same strategy as Phases 1 & 2. The location of the connection point into the proposed sewer to the west is not clear from the drawings. I would welcome clarification from the applicant on this point.*

*It is noted that the surface water runoff is to be attenuated to the current estimated rate of 69 l/s. This is accepted as the site is not within a critical drainage area. However the applicant should provide calculations to show that the storage proposed is adequate, together with resulting overland flow in the event of the 1 in 100 year plus climate change storm event. This may be secured by (prior to commencement) condition if necessary. I would also recommend that the 40% climate change uplift is tested as a sensitivity. The applicant should also confirm that the runoff from grass areas referred to are included in the 69 l/s resulting runoff.*



#### 4.3 Open Spaces

*There are no trees afforded Statutory Protection at this location and the site is not situated within a Conservation Area. There does not appear to be any trees on the development site and those which border the site do not appear to be affected.*

*There are no ecological constraints associated with the proposal however we would recommend that all works comply with current bird nesting legislation.*

#### 4.4 Contaminated Land

*The report provides a basic review of ground conditions and contaminant levels within this sector of the site with reference to the findings of previous investigations. No conceptual site model has been presented however and there has been no review of the site history and potential contamination sources, relative to the previous exploratory hole locations. Table 1.1 includes data that relates to the wider site, rather than a focussed review of ground conditions relevant to the planning application site and the sample numbers quoted in table 1.2 appear to be incorrect. The report makes reference to an Enabling Works Validation Report (ref. 10-089-r4) dated April 2016 however Halton BC has raised a number of comments on this document that are still outstanding. A number of these related specifically to this sector of the site, namely the deposition of hydrocarbon impacted soils (which exceeded the consultants' residential reuse criteria) in this area and the status of the historic interceptor system and associated pipework. The report discounts any potential risks to controlled waters on the basis that there is >10m of clay underlying the site. However there is a need to understand whether any of the development or remedial proposals will impact upon the conceptual site model and the potential for vertical and lateral contaminant migration to be increased. The ground gas assessment refers to mitigation measures commensurate with CS3 to be constructed in accordance with BS8485. This will require a verification plan to be agreed prior to the commencement of development in accordance with CIRIA C735.*

*The report advises that further supplementary site investigation will be required at the application site to allow the completion of an updated tier 1 assessment. I feel that these investigation proposals should be informed by a review of the conceptual site model for this part of the site, consideration of previous enabling works in this area and identification of any data/ knowledge gaps. It would be helpful if a scope of works for further investigation could be discussed and agreed with the developer/ consultant prior to any investigation being completed.*

In light of the above points, a condition which secures the undertaking of further site investigation, associated remediation and the submission of a completion report has been suggested.

#### 4.5 Ecological and Waste Advisor

*The site is Phase 3 of a larger application site that was granted planning permission in 2014 (Ref: 14/00455/FUL). The following ecological survey reports were submitted to support the larger application and reviewed to provide pre-application comments (Memo from Sophie Leadsom to Jeff Eaton, 6 May 2016, HA16-014):*

- *Ecological Assessment, Land at Tanhouse Yard, Widnes, Andrew Virtue, May 2011;*
- *Bat Survey Report, Land at Tanhouse Yard, Widnes, Andrew Virtue, August 2011; and*
- *Updated Ecological Review and Bat Survey, E3P, August 2014, Ref: 10-089-r3.*

*An updated ecological statement (Tan House Lane, Widnes – Development of Phase 3 (Planning Ref: 14/00455/FUL, Rachel Hacking Ecology, 24 May 2016) has also been submitted to support this application.*

*The statement confirms that the site has been cleared and prepared for building works and that there are no ecological constraints to development. This statement is accepted and I have no further ecological comments.*

#### 4.6 Environmental Health

A full BS4142 noise assessment has been undertaken with the conclusion being that the development would have little or no impact on the residential properties. The only thing on which clarification has been sought is confirmation that the proposed flats can achieve the current BS8233 standards for internal noise.

#### 4.7 Environment Agency

*We have no objection in principle to the proposed development but would take this opportunity to make the following comments;*

*We have reviewed the following reports with regards to potential risks to controlled waters from land contamination.*

- *Letter dated 24th May 2016. Phase 3 Sector Ground Investigation and Remediation Works. Tan House Lane. E3P. Letter Ref: 10-089-L12.*
- *Remediation and Enabling Works Validation Report. Tan House Lane. E3P. Report Ref: 10-089-R4. Date: April 2016.*
- *Remediation & Enabling Works Strategy. Tan House Lane. E3P. Report Ref: 10-089-R3. Date: June 2015.*

- *Phase II Geo-environmental Site Assessment. Tan House Lane. E3P. Report Ref: 10-089-R3. Date: March 2015.*
- *Geo-Environmental Site Assessment. Tan House Lane. E3P. Report Ref: 10-089-R2. Date: July 2014.*

*Based on the information provided to date the report does not indicate that the site is likely to pose a significant risk to controlled waters.*

The Environment Agency note the development may give rise to waste management issues and have suggested that some informatives be attached to any subsequent planning permission.

#### 4.8 Natural England

*Natural England has no comments to make on this application.*

### 5. **REPRESENTATIONS**

5.1 The application has been advertised by a press advert in the Widnes & Runcorn World on 16/06/2016, a site notice posted on 10/06/2016 on Warrington Road and 53 neighbour notification letters sent on 09/06/2016.

5.2 Following the receipt of supporting documentation and an amendment to the highway layout, 53 neighbour notification letters have been sent on 11/07/2016.

5.3 No representations have been received from the publicity given to the application.

### 6. **ASSESSMENT**

#### 6.1 Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass Site

This site forms part of the above site. This is not a site which has been allocated for a particular use given the operational use of the site at the time of adopting the Unitary Development Plan, however Policy TC3 indicates that the development for bulky goods retail warehousing and leisure uses will be acceptable on this site subject to the proposal meeting the criteria set out in the policy. This is also referred to in Policy TC1

The current proposal for an office development and the establishment of the principle of residential development for up to 10 dwellings on this site has to be considered on its merits. Based on the site never being allocated for the development for bulky goods retail warehousing and leisure uses, the current proposal for an office development and residential development does not represent a departure from the plan in respect of both Policies TC1 & TC3.

The site originally benefitted from an outline planning permission for 15,455sqm of retail warehousing by the granting of application

11/00231/OUT. The Employment Land Study which accompanied the application for residential development in 2014 (14/00455/FUL) details that the occupiers from the industrial, retail and leisure sectors have been actively targeted over a prolonged period of time without any concrete interest being forthcoming.

It was demonstrated that based on the market not considering the site suitable for employment uses, the active character of the area is residential especially given the relationship to the predominantly residential area of Halton View directly to the north, the granting planning permission for 39 dwellings at the junction of Page Lane and Warrington Road, the majority of the new dwellings would be adjacent to either existing or proposed residential development and the significant amount of affordable housing which would be delivered, it is generally considered that the proposed residential use would be sympathetic to surrounding land uses. It was on this basis that the principle of residential development on the site was considered acceptable.

One of the requirements set out in Policy TC3 for bulky goods retail warehousing and leisure uses on the Warrington Road / Eastern Bypass Site was a pedestrian link across the Eastern Widnes Bypass to the town centre. This is something which is encouraged with the uses proposed by this application. The applicant is unable to provide this through their site, however the opportunity of making a further link to the town centre via the adjacent site which is in different ownership is currently being explored.

#### 6.2 Principle of Residential Development on the Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass Site

Considering the establishment of the principle of a residential development of up to 10 dwellings on the application site, the parcel of land on which they would be located on would be directly adjacent to dwellings granted permission in 2014 and again would be considered sympathetic to surrounding land uses and therefore an appropriate land use for the parcel of land in question.

#### 6.3 Principle of Office Development on the Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass Site

In 2014, Halton Housing Trust did not have a fixed plan for the site subject of the application referred to as the Phase 3 land hence the application at that time only sought site clearance / demolition and remediation, hard standing and a further vehicular access to serve the site from Warrington Road.

Since this time, Halton Housing Trust have been assessing their estate and have made a decision to relocate their existing operations at Daresbury Point, Manor Park, Runcorn, WA7 1UG and Foundry Lane, Widnes, WA8 8TZ which are both leased to a new landmark Head Quarters (office and depot). This would result in a significant percentage of the Phase 3 land being used for this purpose. On the remainder of the site, the applicant is seeking to establish

the principle of residential development to ensure that the site is developed in a comprehensive manner which is sympathetic to surrounding land uses.

The Employment Land Study undertaken in 2014 demonstrated that the market did not consider the site suitable for employment uses, however Halton Housing Trust are now looking to relocate their bespoke operation to a site which is in their ownership, close to Widnes Town Centre and main routes through the borough. This operation would provide the necessary facilities for 240 staff as and when required and would also result in new employment opportunities for businesses looking to occupy the space which they currently occupy at Daresbury Point and Foundry Lane.

It is noted that an office use is a main town centre use as defined by NPPF and that this site is edge of centre. Based on the UDP indicating that the use of the site for bulky goods retail warehousing and leisure uses as being acceptable, a bespoke office and depot development of this size is considered to be appropriate and there are no sequentially preferable sites in Widnes Town Centre.

The principle of locating an office development and associated depot on the Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass Site is acceptable and would ensure the completion of a comprehensive development on the wider site.

#### 6.4 Key Area of Change – South Widnes

The application site is located within the South Widnes Key Area of Change with Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy Local Plan being relevant. The policy indicates that a mix of uses including a combination of employment, retail, leisure and residential development will be achieved across South Widnes over the Core Strategy period.

This application would deliver up to an additional 10 dwellings to the originally granted 175 residential dwellings which would provide a significant contribution towards the delivery of 400 residential dwellings across South Widnes, diversifying the current housing offer as set out in Policy CS9.

The relocation of Halton Housing Trust's operation to the site would also ensure the maintenance of the site for an employment use which would be a base for their 240 staff as and when required.

It is therefore considered that the granting of residential and office development on this site would not conflict with Policy CS9 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.5 Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities

Whilst the site is not located within a Primarily Employment Area as allocated by the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map, Policy CS4 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan is still relevant to this application given the previous use of the site. The policy states that any proposals for non-

employment uses within existing employment areas should be accompanied by an examination of the wider employment land situation in the Borough.

As stated in paragraph 6.1, planning application 14/00455/FUL was accompanied by an Employment Land Statement given that the proposal was for residential use. This remains relevant for the small amount of residential development sought by this application. The statement concluded that the loss of the overall site adjacent to Page Lane and Warrington Road would not harm the supply of employment premises in the borough; as it has been extensively marketed for a wide range of uses over a prolonged period; the site is suitable for residential development; and the provision of new affordable homes would be a significant benefit that outweigh any harm that the loss of the employment premises may cause.

It was considered that the Employment Land Statement provided a justification as to why the loss of this site is negligible in relation to the current supply of employment land available, demonstrates that the market does not consider the site suitable for employment uses, identifies that the active character of the area is residential especially given the relationship to the predominantly residential area of Halton View directly to the north and acknowledges the requirement for affordable housing in the Borough.

The above consideration is still considered to be relevant for the residential development proposed for this application which would provide up to an additional 10 dwellings following the granting of 175 dwellings in 2014.

For the remainder of the site which would be used for office development and an associated depot, this would ensure the continuation of this part of the site to be used for employment purposes.

Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with Policy CS4 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.6 Environmental Priority Areas

The application site is located within an Environmental Priority Area in which the Council will pay particular regard to significantly raising environmental standards as set out in Policy BE3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

The redevelopment of the wider largely vacant site is already enhancing the character and appearance of the area and the completion of the phase 3 proposals with the building of a landmark office building and associated residential development would ensure comprehensive development and further raise the environmental standards in the locality in accordance with Policy BE3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.7 Housing Supply and Locational Priorities

Policy CS3 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan states that a minimum of 9,930 new additional homes should be provided between 2010 and 2018 to

ensure an adequate supply of suitable housing for the Borough's existing communities and to accommodate projected growth in the Borough's population.

This site within the South Widnes Key Area of Change has the potential to increase housing supply where there is a housing opportunity.

The proposal would result in up to an additional 10 dwellings being built on a previously developed site in a sustainable location.

The proposal would be in compliance with Policy CS3 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.8 Principle of Residential Development

Based on the above considerations, the proposed residential development does not conflict with Policy TC3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan as it indicates that the development for bulky goods retail warehousing and leisure uses would be acceptable on this site but does not indicate that planning permission would be refused for a residential development.

In terms of the South Widnes Key Area of Change in which the application site is located, there is a requirement for residential development in this area and the Employment Land Statement previously undertaken indicates that there are better quality locations for the delivery of employment, retail and leisure opportunities which would be more attractive to the market than this particular site which was evident from the marketing undertaken at the time.

Based on the active character of the area now being residential given the predominantly residential area of Halton View and the recent granting of over 200 dwellings in the locality, it is generally considered that the proposed residential use would be sympathetic to surrounding land uses.

The noise assessment which accompanies the application considers the implications of road noise and noise from the adjacent industrial development and it concludes that noise levels at the proposed development may be controlled through the use of an appropriate sound insulation scheme which can be secured by condition.

The redevelopment of this key site adjacent to A557 Watkinson Way within an Environmental Priority Area would significantly enhance the character and appearance of the area.

The proposal would make a contribution towards attempting to ensure that there is an adequate supply of suitable housing for the Borough's existing communities and to accommodate projected growth in the Borough's population.

The parcel of land on which the principle of residential development is sought is adjacent to the already granted residential development to the north and

parameters plans and an illustrative masterplan has been provided to demonstrate the suitability of the proposal in terms of site dimension and relationships with adjacent buildings.

The only matter under consideration with the residential part of the application is access with layout, appearance, scale, and landscaping reserved for future consideration. The suitability of the access proposed and associated parking layout is to be considered in paragraph 6.10.

The principle of residential development for up to 10 dwellings on this site is considered to be acceptable.

### 6.9 Principle of Office Development and Associated Depot

Based on the above considerations, the proposed office development and associated depot does not conflict with Policy TC3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan as it indicates that the development for bulky goods retail warehousing and leisure uses would be acceptable on this site but does not indicate that planning permission would be refused for an office development and associated depot.

Halton Housing Trust is now looking to relocate their bespoke operation to the application site, which is close to Widnes Town Centre and main routes through the borough. This operation would provide the necessary facilities for 240 staff as and when required and would also result in new employment opportunities for businesses looking to occupy the space which they currently occupy at Daresbury Point and Foundry Lane. This would ensure the continued use of part of the wider site for employment purposes and the location of the Halton Housing Trust office base on an edge of centre site with there being no sequentially preferable sites.

The principle of locating an office development and associated depot on the Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass Site is acceptable and would ensure the completion of a comprehensive development on the wider site.

### 6.10 Highway Considerations

The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment.

Following the receipt of amended plans, the Highway Officer is satisfied with the proposed road layout to serve both uses from a highway safety perspective.

The internal road network within the site has demonstrated that there is sufficient space for the Council refuse vehicle to enter and exit the site in forward gear.

As stated above the internal road network which would serve the proposed residential development is acceptable. The application is accompanied by an illustrative masterplan which shows the proposed dwellings have 2 spaces per



property (one of which is an oversize garage in accordance with Manual for Streets) which is considered to be acceptable, however at this stage, the layout of the residential development is not being considered so these elements would not be fixed at this time.

In terms of car parking for the office / depot development, the Highway Officer has commented that UDP maximum parking standards for an office development of this size is approximately 54 spaces. It is noted that the development proposes 93 car parking spaces including 5 disability spaces. In addition to this, there would be 4 motorcycle spaces, 10 cycle spaces and 3 spaces for vans. Given the high density nature of the office, the Highway Officer considers that provision in excess of the maximum is appropriate. As noted in the Transport Assessment (TA), the site is intended to host 250 staff. This includes 160 'operational depot' staff, but the new operation will have materials delivered to site by separate Travis Perkins depot and only a small equipment store will be retained on this new site. The TA states that there will be little need for operational staff to attend the site, 124 of the 151 staff questioned in the sample currently travel by car (arriving in the main between 7-10am – it is understood that under the new model by the time the last of these have arrived others will have left the building on business). It is understood that visitors will need to make an appointment to visit the site. Provided the trips to the site are appropriately managed (particularly those of the operational staff) the Highway Officer considers that the number of spaces is adequate. Appropriate management should be secured through a travel plan condition.

The TA shows that the development results in significantly less overall impact than previously granted retail development in 2011. It concludes that the development would not have a detrimental impact upon the highway/transport network. The Highway Officer concurs with this statement and do not object to the application on traffic grounds.

In order to facilitate access to the development, some off-site highway works are required and their implementation prior to the first occupation of the development should be secured by condition.

A construction management plan is required for the proposed development. The submission and its implementation can be secured by condition.

Based on all the above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a highway perspective compliant with Policies BE1, TP6, TP7, TP12 & TP 14 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.11 Layout

Only the layout for the proposed office development and associated depot is under consideration with this application.

The layout has been designed as to provide a public facing element facing the access road which would also serve the residential development and a more secure element to the rear.

Some regard has been had for the Warrington Road frontage by the creating of a legible access point to the building for members of the public. A plant room and a substation are located on this side of the building. This is acknowledged as being essential to the operation of the building, however from a design perspective; it would have been desirable for a more active frontage to be created, however this is not considered to be seriously detrimental to warrant the refusal of the application.

It is considered that proposed layout would result in a building of presence from both the access road and also from Warrington Road with it being sited in a manner which provides screening of the depot element and also of the parking area to the rear. Space has been allowed for the provision of soft landscaping which would help to soften the appearance of the development particularly in relation to car parking areas and Watkinson Way.

The layout of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and compliant with Policies BE 1 & BE 2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS18 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.12 Scale

The proposed office building would be two storeys in height, however would have generous floor to ceiling heights to suit the use proposed. This would result in the building having a height to the top of the roof of 13m. This would be taller than other buildings in the locality, however this proposal is for a landmark HQ building and it is considered that this provides sufficient justification for this. The building would also create a positive presence adjacent to Watkinson Way which is main route through the borough.

The associated depot building would be lower in height at a maximum of 7.5m. This building would be functional in terms of appearance given its proposed use and is considered to be of an appropriate scale.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of scale and compliant with Policy BE 1 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.13 Appearance

The elevations and floor plans of the proposed office building show that an innovative design approach has been taken to create a flexible environment in which to adopt new modern working methods.

The expressed roof forms make this building to other office buildings in the borough and would give the building identity and create a design statement.

The opening designs and the variety in materials would add interest to the overall external appearance of the proposed office building.

As alluded to above, the proposed depot building is functional in appearance and does not look to make the same design statement as the office building, however based on its height and reduced visibility compared to the office building coupled with the landscape screen from Watkinson Way, it is not considered that the appearance of this building would warrant the refusal of the application.

A material legend is shown on the submitted plans which gives a clear indication on external appearance, however it is suggested the submission of precise external facing materials for approval should be secured by condition.

This would ensure compliance with Policies BE 1 & BE 2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS18 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.14 Landscaping & Trees

There are no Tree Preservation Orders in force at this site and the site does not fall within a designated Conservation Area. There are no trees on the development site and those which border the site do not appear to be affected.

Indicative landscaping and boundary treatments plans have been provided to accompany the application. In respect of the soft landscaping, it is considered that an appropriate amount of space has been shown to allow for a soft landscaping scheme which would soften the appearance of the proposed development.

It is understood that the rear of the office building and depot building would be private hence the boundaries would be secure. This approach is understood and accepted, however precise details on how this would be done have not been provided up front with the application. It is considered reasonable to attach a condition securing the submission of a detailed boundary treatments scheme, its implementation and maintenance thereafter.

This would ensure compliance with Policies BE 1 and GE 27 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.15 Site Levels

The application is accompanied by a drainage layout which shows proposed finished floor levels. These have been considered and would likely result in an acceptable development in terms of appearance and relationships to existing roads. It is considered reasonable to attach a condition which secures the submission of precise proposed site levels and their subsequent implementation.

This would ensure compliance with Policy BE 1 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.16 Noise

The application is accompanied by a Noise Assessment. This considers the impact of road traffic noise and potential industrial estate activity.

The report identifies that mitigation measures are required due to road traffic and potential industrial estate activity.

In order to achieve acceptable internal noise levels in all rooms within the development scheme, the noise assessment suggests that mitigation measures would be required. Outline mitigation measures relate to standard glazing and acoustic trickle vents.

With the provision of an acoustic barrier of 1.8m height around all gardens, the proposed external noise level limit of 50dB<sub>L</sub>A<sub>eq</sub>, would be achieved in all the garden areas and potential noise impacts from industrial units would be suitably controlled.

Noise levels at the proposed development have been assessed, and may be controlled through the use of an appropriate sound insulation scheme.

The noise assessment concludes that appropriate planning conditions can be applied to the proposed development if required to ensure reasonable internal noise levels in the proposed accommodation. The Council's Environmental Health Officer raises no objection to the proposed development, however has sought clarification on one issue.

The proposal is considered to be compliant with Policy PR 8 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.17 Affordable Housing

Policy CS13 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan states that affordable housing units will be provided , in perpetuity, on schemes including 10 or more dwellings (net gain) or 0.33 hectares or greater for residential purposes.

This application seeks outline planning permission for up to 10 dwellings which would be available on the open market. The above policy is relevant to the determination of this application.

The applicant makes the case that this proposal is the Phase 3 of the development of the wider site and 114 of the 175 units granted on Phases 1 and 2 are affordable which results in 65% of the properties being affordable. This is well in excess of the 25% requirement. They also state that if up to 10 dwellings were market housing, a significant contribution towards affordable housing would be made on the overall site in accordance with Policy CS13.

The case made is accepted and if up to 10 market dwellings were built on the parcel of land subject of the application, over 60% of the properties on the overall site would still be affordable and would make a significant contribution to affordable housing in the borough.

It is also considered that an appropriate housing mix is provided across the wider site which includes properties of different types, sizes and tenures in compliance with Policy CS 12 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

This would ensure compliance with Policy CS 13 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan and the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

#### 6.18 Open Space

The requirements for the provision of recreational greenspace within new residential developments are set out in Policy H3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

The Open Space Requirement Calculator has identified that there is a deficit of both Provision for Children and Young Persons and Allotments in this particular neighbourhood.

The phase 1 and 2 application (14/00455/FUL) included a public open space which would have a Local Equipped Area for Play located on it. The public open space proposed would be 1855sqm in area with a 400sqm Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) located at its core.

The proposal at that time provided an open space in terms of dimension which exceeded the requirements and a LEAP located on it which accorded with the policy requirements.

The applicant argues that based on there being an over provision of open space on Phase 1 and 2 which was a forward thinking approach to achieve a well thought out scheme for the whole site which creates a successful place, there should be no further open space provision or commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision for this remaining parcel of land.

It is considered that the implementation of an open space on the Phase 1 and 2 sites would be a significant benefit for persons residing in the locality (including those who would reside on the site subject of the application) based on the lack of facilities currently available. The case made by the applicant in terms of open space provision is accepted.

In terms of allotment provision, the developer is not looking to make this provision on site which is understandable given the relatively low requirement in terms of area. In terms of off-site provision, a commuted sum is not being sought for this requirement based on there not being a facility in the locality in which this could be invested or the commuted sum would not fund the creation of a new facility.

Based on the above, it is considered that there would be sufficient residential greenspace to meet the local needs of the people living there in compliance with Policy H3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.19 Ground Contamination

The application is accompanied by a Geo-Environmental Site Assessment, Phase II Geo- Environmental Site Assessment, Ground Gas Addendum Letter Report, Remediation & Enabling Works Strategy and a Remediation & Enabling Works Validation Report.

This has been reviewed by the Contaminated Land Officer and no objection has been raised subject to the attachment of a condition which secures the undertaking of further site investigation, associated remediation and the submission of a completion report. This would ensure that any ground contamination is dealt with appropriately.

The attachment of the condition above will ensure compliance with Policy PR14 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.20 Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk from flooding. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment along with a Drainage Layout for the site. These documents have been reviewed by the Highway Officer dealing with Drainage and no objection has been raised. Some points of clarification have been sought. The implementation of an appropriate drainage strategy can be secured by condition. This would ensure compliance with Policy PR16 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS23 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.21 Biodiversity

The application is accompanied by an updated ecological statement (Tan House Lane, Widnes – Development of Phase 3 (Planning Ref: 14/00455/FUL, Rachel Hacking Ecology, 24 May 2016) has also been submitted to support this application.

The statement confirms that the site has been cleared and prepared for building works and that there are no ecological constraints to development. This statement is accepted by the Council's Ecological Advisor.

Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with Policy GE21 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.22 Sustainable Development and Climate Change

Policy CS19 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan outlines some principles which will be used to guide future development.

NPPF paragraph 35 which states that to further enhance the opportunities for sustainable development any future developments should be located and designed where practical to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

The incorporation of facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles could be realistically achieved for both the office development and residential development (charging points within integral garages) and a condition requiring the provision of future charging points for ultra-low emission vehicles is considered reasonable.

One of the principles referred to in the policy is Code for Sustainable Homes. Whilst it is desirable to meet such a standard given links with Sustainable Development and Climate Change, following the Government's Written Ministerial Statement in March 2015, it is no longer for Local Authorities to secure the implementation of a particular level of Code for Sustainable Homes by planning condition.

The proposal is compliant with Policy CS19 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.23 Waste Prevention/Management

Policies WM8 and WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are applicable to this application. In terms of waste prevention, a construction management plan will deal with issues of this nature and based on the development cost, the developer would be required to produce a Site Waste Management Plan. In terms of waste management, there is sufficient space for the storage of waste including separated recyclable materials for each property as well as access to enable collection.

### 7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the proposal would allow Halton Housing Trust to relocate their bespoke operation to a site which is close to Widnes Town Centre and main routes through the borough whilst ensuring the continued use of part of the site for employment purposes in the South Widnes Key Area of Change.

The residential development of up to 10 dwellings would respect the active character of the area which is now residential given the predominantly residential area of Halton View and the recent granting of over 200 dwellings in the locality. In terms of the South Widnes Key Area of Change in which the application site is located, there is a requirement for residential development and this proposal would contribute towards this.

The proposal would make a contribution towards attempting to ensure that there is an adequate supply of suitable housing for the Borough's existing communities and to accommodate projected growth in the Borough's population.

The completion of the phase 3 proposals with the building of a landmark office building of a high design quality and associated residential development would ensure comprehensive development and further raise the environmental standards in the locality.

Appropriate access points to site from Warrington Road and within the recently granted residential development would be achieved and the layout demonstrates sufficient space for movement within the site as well as an appropriate level of car parking.

For the residential development, whilst all matters except access have been reserved for future consideration, a parameters plan and an illustrative layout have been provided to demonstrate the suitability of the proposal for up to 10 dwellings in terms of site dimension and relationships with adjacent buildings.

The office development and associated depot proposal is considered to be of an appropriate design with active frontages to the new access road and Warrington Road and the elevations indicate a mix of materials to add interest and result in well designed development adjacent to a key route through the borough..

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions suggested.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

The suggested conditions are linked to the Parameter Plan 02 - Use (Drawing Number 05507 B3\_00\_0101 Rev A).

### **Conditions applicable to all parts of the proposal.**

- Drainage Strategy – (Policy PR16)
- Implementation of Access Road from Warrington Road and Adjacent Residential Development – (Policy BE1)
- Construction Management Plan – (Policy BE1);
- Off Site Highway Works – (Policy BE1)
- Highway to be made good following connection works – (Policy BE1)

### **Conditions – Office and Depot – Full Permission**

- Time Limit – Full Permission;
- Approved Plans;
- Site Levels – (Policy BE1);
- Facing Material – (Policy BE1);
- Hard Landscaping and Boundary Treatments – (Policy BE1);



- Soft Landscaping – (Policy BE1);
- Implementation of Parking and Servicing – (Policy BE1);
- Implementation of Cycle Parking – (Policy BE1);
- Remediation Strategy & Completion Report – (Policy PR14)
- Noise Mitigation Measures – (Policy PR8)
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points (Policy CS19)
- Travel Plan – (Policy TP16)
- Drainage Strategy – (Policy PR16)

**Conditions – Residential Development of up to 10 dwellings – Outline Permission**

- Time Limit – Outline Permission;
- Submission of Reserved Matters;
- Ground Contamination – (Policy PR14);
- Site Levels – (Policy BE1);
- Noise Mitigation Measures – (Policy PR8);
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points (Policy CS19);
- Drainage Strategy – (Policy PR16).

**Informatives**

- Environment Agency Informative.

**10. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

As required by:

- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.



