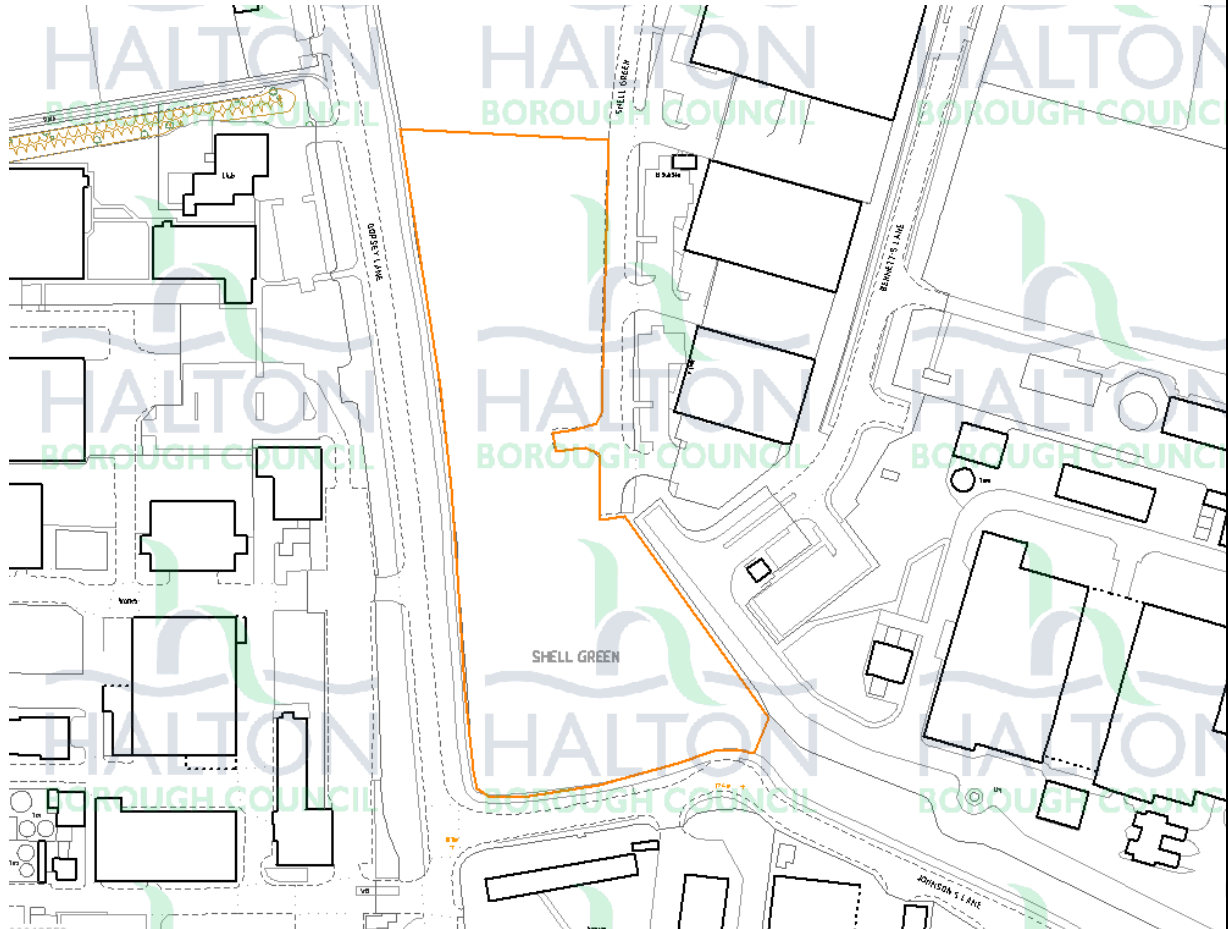


APPLICATION NO:	13/00175/FUL
LOCATION:	Land to the north Easter Park, Gorsey Lane, Widnes
PROPOSAL:	Proposed new food production facility, warehouse, tank farm, vehicle access and external works
WARD:	Halton View
PARISH:	N/A
CASE OFFICER:	Rob Cooper
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Mr Andrew Strickland
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:	
National Planning Policy Framework (2012) North West Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (2008) Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)	
DEPARTURE	No
REPRESENTATIONS:	One objection
KEY ISSUES:	Design and appearance, flood risk and drainage, air quality, odour, noise, transport and highways
RECOMMENDATION:	Approval

SITE MAP



1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site

The site is located off Gorse Lane within the Widnes Waterfront Area, it is bounded to the north by a vacant employment land, to the east by Shell Green, which leads onto Bennett's Lane, to the South the site is bounded by Johnson's Lane.

The site is currently vacant, identified in the Halton UDP as primarily employment land the surrounding areas are classed as Primarily Employment Areas.

1.2 Planning History

06/00629/S73 - Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act to provide an extension of time for the submission of reserved matters (variation of Cond.3 of planning permission 03/00882/OUT) Permitted 18 / 10 / 2006

06/00660/REM - Reserved Matters application for construction of 4 No. light industrial/warehouse units with ancillary offices and associated forecourt/service yard facilities with all matters for consideration Permitted 06 / 11 / 2006

08/00355/REM - Reserved Matters application (with all matters for consideration) for construction of light industrial/warehouse units with ancillary offices and associated forecourt/yard facilities Permitted 03 / 09 / 2008

10/00221/S73 - Proposed variation of condition No.4 on planning consent 03/00882/OUT to allow for a further 2 years for the commencement of development Permitted 02 / 08 / 2010

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 The proposal

The proposal is for a new food production facility, warehouse and tank farm, the applicant states that this will bring new employment opportunities to the area, The proposed development will bring into use a piece of land which has remained vacant for a number of years.

The manufacturing process which the applicant proposes is to take part refined vegetable oils and cocoa butter and provide a finishing process before sale to the food industry. Vegetable oils will mainly be delivered to site as liquids and these will be stored in stainless steel vessels prior to processing.

Cocoa butter will be delivered to site as solid blocks. These blocks will need to be removed from their cartons and melted prior to processing. Part processed and finished products will be stored in a number of dedicated stainless steel vessels.

The factory will carry out up to three processes depending on the quality of the received products and the final product use. Some products will be deodorised, some will be bleached and deodorised and some will be de-gummed, bleached and deodorised.

The factory will be developed as two process lines, each capable of processing up to 40,000 tonnes per annum of feed stocks. In addition to the process equipment, the site will house a steam boiler, chillers and other services equipment. The processes will be designed to be as energy efficient as possible and where practical, high efficiency heat recovery and re-use systems will be employed.

Once processed, the final product will be stored in the proposed new warehouse, together with an existing warehouse on Easter Park that the applicant intends to occupy. The product will then be distributed from the site to the end users who will predominantly be in the food manufacturing industry.

Furthermore the applicant states that the construction of the site will generate jobs, as will the future maintenance of the site. It is estimated that the new facility will employ 60 full time staff and 15 part time staff.

2.2 Documentation

The applicant has submitted a Planning Application Statement with the application that includes the following reports:

- Design and Access Statement
- Transport Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Topographical Survey
- Location Plan
- Existing and Proposed Cross Sections
- Proposed and Existing Site Plans
- Proposed Floor Plans and Roof Plans
- Proposed Elevations

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.

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.

3.2 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

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

- BE1 General Requirements for Development
- BE2 Quality of Design
- BE22 Boundary Walls and Fences
- PR1 Air Quality
- PR2 Noise Nuisance
- PR3 Odour Nuisance
- PR5 Water Quality
- PR16 Development and Flood Risk
- TP6 Cycle Provision as Part of New Development
- TP12 Car Parking
- TP16 Green Travel Plans
- E5 New Industrial and Commercial Development

Supplementary Planning Document 'Design of New Commercial and Industrial Development'.

3.3 Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)

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

- CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CS7 Infrastructure Provision
- CS15 Sustainable Transport
- CS18 High Quality Design

4. CONSULTATIONS

The application has been advertised by a press notice and a site notice posted near the site. All adjacent and residents and occupiers have been notified by letter.

The Environment Agency have been consulted and has no objection subject to conditions relating to surface water run-off and overland flow.

The Councils own highways department, open spaces department and environmental health department and major projects team have been consulted any comments received have been summarised below in the assessment section of the report. Ward Councillors have also been notified of the application.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

One objection has been received from the neighbouring manufacturing facility of Innospec. The objection raises concerns in relation to potential for odorous particles from the proposed development impacting on the quality of Innospec final products which consists of aroma chemicals.

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principle of Use

Food manufacturing falls within the B2 use class of the Town and Country Planning Use Class Order 1987.

The site is located within the South Widnes Key Area of Change as identified in Policy CS9 of The Core Strategy Local Plan. The site is also located within a Primarily Employment Area identified in in Policy E3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

Both Policies CS9 and E3 allow for B2 uses, the application there complies with the above Policies and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Design, Appearance and Visual Impact

The proposal is to construct two new buildings associated, access, servicing and tank farm to accommodate a food manufacturing facility.

The new buildings have been designed to be in keeping with the adjacent units 1-4 on Easter Park, in that each of the units feature gently curving roofs and profile steel cladded facades of a similar colour scheme.

The two new buildings consist of the production building and a new ware house. The production unit will provide a floor space of 2220m², the building itself will vary in height from 7.8m to 17.8m with one area of roof being 22m tall to accommodate manufacturing plant internally. This highest part of the building covers a small area and would be located centrally within the site.

The new warehouse building would create a floor space of 1440m², the height of the building would be approximately 8.7m tall, would have a barrelled roof and be of a similar scale and appearance to existing unit 4 Easter park. As a comparator the adjacent unit 4 is 1340m² and 9m tall.

The tank farm would consist of a number of different storage tanks of a maximum height of 10m.

Both the new food production building and warehouse will be clad with insulated metal cladding sheets to match the adjacent existing units 1-4. The tallest element of the production building will be constructed from translucent panels to minimize the visual impact.

With regards to the site layout, this has been amended from the originally submitted scheme to provide a wedge of landscaping between the production building and Gorse Lane, to allow for a planting scheme to include trees to soften the appearance of the site. The warehouse building was also moved further away from Gorse Lane. Any proposed fencing would be a paladin mesh style fence to comply with policy.

The proposed design and appearance of the scheme is considered to comply with Policy BE2 of the Unitary Development Plan and the Supplementary Planning Document 'Design of New Commercial and Industrial Development'.

Flood Risk Assessment

The site is over 1 hectare in size, in accordance with the Technical Guidance to The National Planning Framework the application has been accompanied with a flood risk assessment.

The proposal is to include a Sustainable Urban Drainage system into the scheme, details provided to date show that this would include a swale and a pond in the southern end of the site.

The Environment Agency has been consulted and has no objection subject to conditions relating to surface water run-off and overland flow. Confirmation is being sought as to whether the applicant would seek the Local Authority to adopt and maintain the SUDs. Further updates will be provided on this matter at committee.

Emissions and Odour

The proposed development will require an environmental permit for the operation of the manufacturing facility, therefore emissions and odours will be strictly controlled. However the applicant has provided a significant amount of information of the manufacturing process with the planning application to enable the Environmental Health Department access the acceptability of the proposals.

The Environmental Health officer has reviewed the whole manufacturing processes including the de-gumming, bleaching and deodorising and the associated plant and methods that would be used to minimise emissions and prevent odour from the site. The Environmental Health officer is satisfied that emissions and odour can be satisfactorily controlled through the permitting process, and that they are unlikely to result in future nuisance.

One objection has been received from the neighbouring manufacturing facility of Innospec. The objection raises concerns in relation to potential for odorous

particles from the proposed development impacting on the quality of Innospec final products which consists of aroma chemicals. However, at this stage the representation does not substantiate this claim with any evidence. In light of the no objections received from the Environmental Health officer, together with the environmental permitting regime, Innospecs concerns can be given little weight.

Noise

The nearest existing residential property is approximately 300metres away to the northwest of the site. All of the manufacturing and processing would be carried out within the proposed buildings, although there may be some requirement for external plant such as fans and heat exchangers. The applicant has submitted a noise assessment, the report identifies the nearest residential receptors on Cheryl Drive and Naylor Road, and concludes that the indicative predictive calculations suggest that ambient noise levels will not be increased by the site operations and that, in accordance with the guidance contained in BS 4142, therefore complaints are unlikely.

Based on the assumptions contained within this report, noise mitigation measures will not be required. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has been consulted based on this assessment has no objections in relation to noise.

Taking into account the distance to sensitive properties there would be no noise impacts in terms of residential amenity. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has been consulted and has not raised any particular concerns, any detailed comments or recommendations shall be reported via the amendments list or orally at Committee.

Residential Amenity

The site is located within the Widnes Waterfront Area, existing surrounding sites are either vacant industrial land or within existing industrial and employment uses. There are no existing residential properties within the immediate vicinity of the site, the nearest is 300m away to the Northeast across the former Bayer Crop site, and across Fiddlers Ferry Road; given the distances and the physical land features the proposal would not impact on residential amenity.

Transport and Highways

The application has been submitted with a transport statement proposed development, the statement estimates that the development would result in 15 arrivals and 3 departures in the AM peak (08:00 to 09:00). And there would be 4 arrivals and 16 departures in the PM peak (16:00 to 17:00).

The proposal is to utilise the existing access off Bennetts Lane, and create a second new entrance onto Johnsons Lane. The Highways Authority are satisfied that cumulatively the number additional vehicle movements would not have a detrimental impact on the highway network.

Final design details of the new access crossing onto Johnsons Lane and any associated highways improvements would still be required. A suitable pre-commencement condition is recommended that these details are provided and agreed in writing.

The development will provide parking for the staff and visitors to the site. 25 spaces will be provided including 3 disabled spaces, 1 motorbike space and the provision of cycle spaces. These spaces will incorporate disabled parking bays closest to the reception. The existing Unit 4 Easter Park which the applicant will also utilise also provides existing parking. A condition is recommended for full details of the provision for secure cycle parking.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the proposed development will provide significant investment in a currently vacant employment site that will provide employment in the local area. The applicant has provided a significant amount of information in relation to the manufacturing process, and it is considered that the development will not have any detrimental impacts in relation to emissions, odour and noise and that the environmental permitting regime will provide sufficient controls over the site. In this respect the proposal is considered to comply with Policies, PR1, PR2 and PR3 of the UDP.

Furthermore, a flood risk assessment has been submitted, the Environment Agency has no objections and the proposal is considered to comply with Policy PR16 of the UDP.

The applicant has demonstrated that there would be no significant highways impacts, and that sufficient car parking provision can be made to comply with Policy TP12 of the UDP.

Furthermore, the proposed design and appearance of the scheme is considered to comply with Policy BE2 of the Unitary Development Plan and the Supplementary Planning Document 'Design of New Commercial and Industrial Development'.

The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Approval subject to conditions

9. CONDITIONS

1. Time limits condition
2. Approved Plans – (Policy BE1)
3. Materials – (Policy BE2)
4. Drainage conditions including EA surface water and overland flow conditions, and full design and maintenance details of the SUDs– (Policy BE1)

5. Boundary Treatments – (Policy BE22)
6. Submission and Agreement of finished floor and site levels – (Policy BE1)
7. Prior to commencement bin storage facilities to be submitted and agreed – (Policy BE1)
8. Condition restricting no outdoor storage (BE1 and E5)
9. Travel Plan (TP16)
10. Prior to commencement submission and agreement for new vehicle access and associated highways works (BE1)
11. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc. to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/commencement of use – (Policy BE1)
12. Condition(s) relating to full details of hard and soft landscaping, including planting scheme, maintenance, and replacement planting (BE1)

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.