

REPORT TO: Development Control Committee

DATE: 9 September 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & Resources

SUBJECT: Planning Applications to be determined by the Committee

WARD(S): Boroughwide

APPLICATION NO:	13/00188/FUL
LOCATION:	Land at The Barge, Castlefields Avenue East, Runcorn
PROPOSAL:	Proposed re-plan of plots 12-52 to the residential development approved under application reference 12/00238/FUL (residential development consisting of 87 no. dwellings, roads and ancillary development).
WARD:	Halton Castle
PARISH:	N/A
CASE OFFICER:	Glen Henry
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Keepmoat Homes
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:	
Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)	RG6 Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory
DEPARTURE	Yes
REPRESENTATIONS:	One
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to Conditions.
SITE MAP	

1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site and Surroundings

Site of approximately 2.34 Ha located within the Lakeside Development area within the Castlefields SPD. The site is essentially oval in shape bounded by Castlefields Avenue East and the Bridgewater Canal. A former Busway bridge remains as a crossing to the canal but the section of former has been removed at this point to be replaced by footpath link.

1.2 Planning History

Outline Planning Permission was previously approved (07/00122/OUT) for a much wider development of up to 355 dwellings incorporating approximately two-thirds of the current application site but excluding the portion of the site then occupied by The Barge public house. This has since been destroyed by fire and demolished. A subsequent planning permission (ref 12/00238/FUL) was approved for residential development consisting of 87 no. dwellings, roads and ancillary development.

1.3 Background

This scheme proposes amendment to a previous scheme of residential development approved by planning permission 12/00238/FUL. Amendments are proposed which reduce the overall number of units from 87-86 by alteration to plots 12-52 and the omission of plot 53. The amendments have been required to accommodate an existing sewer and provide required easements outside property boundaries. The scheme now also proposes to include an additional relatively small area of land to the east for the creation of SuDS reed bed to provide drainage interception from the development before discharge to the adjoining lake.

This scheme forms part of the wider regeneration proposals for Castlefields which seeks to replace existing deck access and outdated dwellings with new build and refurbished dwellings and to widen the tenure mix within the area. The regeneration strategy for the Castlefields area sets out to deliver a broader based community in the area. This requires the radical restructuring of housing provision including the demolition of a significant number of properties, predominantly in the form of unpopular deck access blocks, redevelopment of more popular social housing and introduction of private sector housing stock as part of an overall masterplan. Given the high density of the original deck access blocks the scope to provide adequate redevelopment within the existing built form was limited. In order to secure a balance of new housing, areas of undeveloped land were identified through the masterplan to accommodate new development. This principle was translated into the Supplementary Planning Document for the Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area adopted by the Council in 2005

The site had been previously envisaged within the Castlelds SPD as a new Local centre but the need for this has now been superseded by the new Village Square development recently completed on the original local centre site.

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 Proposal Description

The scheme proposes residential development consisting of 86 no. dwellings, roads and ancillary development being a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed dwellings at 2, 2.5 and 3 storeys and designed as detached, semi-detached and mews

format. Included in the proposed 86 dwellings are 20 no. 2 and 3 bed units which are to be provided as affordable housing units in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord.

The proposals have been amended from the layout as originally submitted and additional information provided in response to issues raised by various consultees and Council retained advisers.

2.2 Documentation

The planning application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, Tree Survey, Ecology Survey, Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, Flood Risk Assessment, Code for Sustainable Homes Assessment and Geo Environmental Appraisal.

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 site lies entirely within Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. Within that wider designation part of the site is designated Green Space and part (the site of the former Barge public house) is identified as Unallocated Land. A number of Proposed Greenways bound the site. The application has been advertised as a departure from the development plan.

The site includes the area formerly occupied by the Barge Public House and associated parking areas as well as an area of rough grassland which acts as informal open space. The site is identified as a proposed New Local Centre in the adopted Supplementary Planning Document for Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area.

Land use allocations for such sites cannot be made through Supplementary Planning Documents and the Unitary Development Plan is the development plan. Such documents and the previous grants of planning permission for residential development on of the site are however material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

The following National and Council Unitary Development Plan policies and policy documents are of particular relevance: -

RG6 Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory
S22 Unallocated Land in Urban Areas
BE1 General Requirements for Development
BE2 Quality of Design
GE6 Protection of Designated Greenspace
H2 Design and Density of New Residential Development
H3 Provision of Recreational Greenspace
TP6 Cycling Provision as part of New Development
TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
TP12 Car Parking
TP17 Safe Travel for All
PR14 Contaminated Land

3.3 Halton Core Strategy (2012)

Policy CS13 Affordable Housing is of particular relevance

3.4 Relevant SPDs

Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area; New Residential Development SPD; Designing for Community Safety SPD; Draft Open Space Provision SPD are of particular relevance

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 Halton Borough Council–

Contaminated Land – No Objection
Highways – No Objection
Open Spaces – No Objection
Major Projects – No Objection

4.2 Cheshire Wildlife Trust – No Objection

4.3 Environment Agency – No objection

5. **REPRESENTATIONS**

- 5.1 One letter of representation has been received from an objector raising issues that the project and others are not keeping to the tree strategy; that Castlefields schemes have resulted in the loss of car parks and green space in the area; that it is not regeneration which should be a replacement sports centre, youth centre, old people's home and school for those lost.

6. **ASSESSMENT**

6.1 Principle and Loss of Greenspace

The site lies within Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. Within that wider designation part of the site is designated Green Space and part (the site of the former Barge public house) is identified as Unallocated Land. A number of Proposed Greenways bound the site. The site is identified as a proposed New Local Centre in the adopted Supplementary Planning Document for Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area.

Redevelopment of green space and areas of undeveloped land to provide housing in lieu of demolished outdated dwellings and re-balancing the tenure mix forms an integral part of the Castlefields regeneration strategy. The area designated as green space is informal rough grassland only and whilst it does provide some amenity value it is considered, on balance, that the loss of the greenspace would not be significantly harmful to the wider area and must be considered in the context of the wider open space strategy for the area which has included substantial investment in the nearby Phoenix Park. It is also considered that any harm resulting from its loss would be far outweighed by the contribution of the scheme to the wider area regeneration strategy.

The site had been identified for development through the adopted Supplementary Planning Document albeit as a potential new local centre with the retained public house. This requirement has been superseded by the construction of the new village square development and the demolition of the public house following a fire. The area of the public house is Undesignated within the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

Planning permissions have previously been approved in outline and full for residential development on the land and it is therefore considered that the principle of such development has therefore been accepted.

Any application for residential development at such a site would normally require developer contributions to compensate for the loss of open space, provision of off-site open space and Bridgewater Way/ greenway contributions in accordance with adopted UDP Policy and the SPD. Given the unique nature of the development with the Council as landowner, the wider open space strategy and the role of the scheme in the wider regeneration of the

area it is considered that an exception to policy can be justified in this case. Such an approach was also agreed through the previous grants of outline and full planning permission.

6.2 Flooding

As the site area is over 1 hectare the application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. The site itself is considered to be at low risk of flooding but efforts are required to ensure that the proposed development does not impact unduly on drainage and flooding elsewhere.

The amended scheme also includes an additional area of land to the east for the creation of a reed bed to intercept water drained from the site before discharge to the adjoining lake.

The Councils Open Spaces and Landscape Design Officers have confirmed that the proposals are considered to provide sufficient interception in design terms. Further information is required with respect to the management of the system and this can be adequately secured by appropriate planning condition. Financial contributions for future management have also been calculated to be provided by legal or other appropriate agreement.

The Environment Agency has confirmed that they raise no objections to the proposals subject to conditions relating to agreement of schemes to limit surface water run-off and manage over-land flow of surface water to be submitted and approved.

6.3 Other material Considerations.

Issues relating to Design, Character and Amenity; Highways Parking and Servicing; Contamination; Affordable Housing Provision; Impact on trees, hedgerows and wildlife and other considerations were substantially addressed through the earlier scheme and included submission of relevant survey and mitigation information as required. The scheme is considered to result in a relatively minor re-plan of the previously approved scheme and has been further amended in line with officer advice and advice from consultees and Council retained advisers. This latest scheme is not considered to raise issues which could sustain objection to justify refusal of planning permission and it is considered that all outstanding matters can be adequately secured by appropriate planning conditions.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The scheme was previously acknowledged to have the potential to play an important role in the on-going redevelopment and regeneration of the area. Whilst the submitted scheme as originally submitted raised a number of issues with respect to detailed layout and requiring submission of additional information it is considered that this has been supplied in line with officer advice. The scheme is considered to offer a good quality of development similar to that previously approved, suited to the character of the site and the

wider area. It is considered that the requirements and aspirations of UDP policy, the Castlefields Masterplan and SPD can be met.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to conditions and:-

(a) The entering into a Legal Agreement or other appropriate agreement requiring provision of affordable housing and a financial contribution towards SuDS maintenance.

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

CONDITIONS

1. Standard 3 year permission (BE1)
2. Condition specifying amended plans (BE1)
3. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
4. Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of hard landscaping materials (BE2)
5. Requiring implementation of soft landscaping in accordance with the approved details and requiring all replacement tree planting. (BE2)
6. Boundary treatments including retaining walls to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE2)
7. Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE1)
8. Conditions relating to protection of retained trees (BE1)
9. Condition requiring retention of existing sandstone feature wall (BE1)
10. Requiring development be carried out in accordance with approved finished floor and site levels. (BE1)
11. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
12. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
13. Condition restricting permitted development rights relating to boundary fences etc. (BE1)
14. Conditions requiring submission and agreement of scheme to limit surface water run-off and manage risk of flooding from overland flow of surface water (PR16)
15. Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)
16. Conditions requiring development be carried out in accordance with the recommendation of the submitted ecological assessment (GE21)
17. Submission and agreement of bird nesting boxes and hedgehog box (GE21)
18. Conditions relating to tree protection during construction (BE1)

19. Submission and agreement of a SuDS management and Monitoring Report (BE1/ PR16)

9. 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.