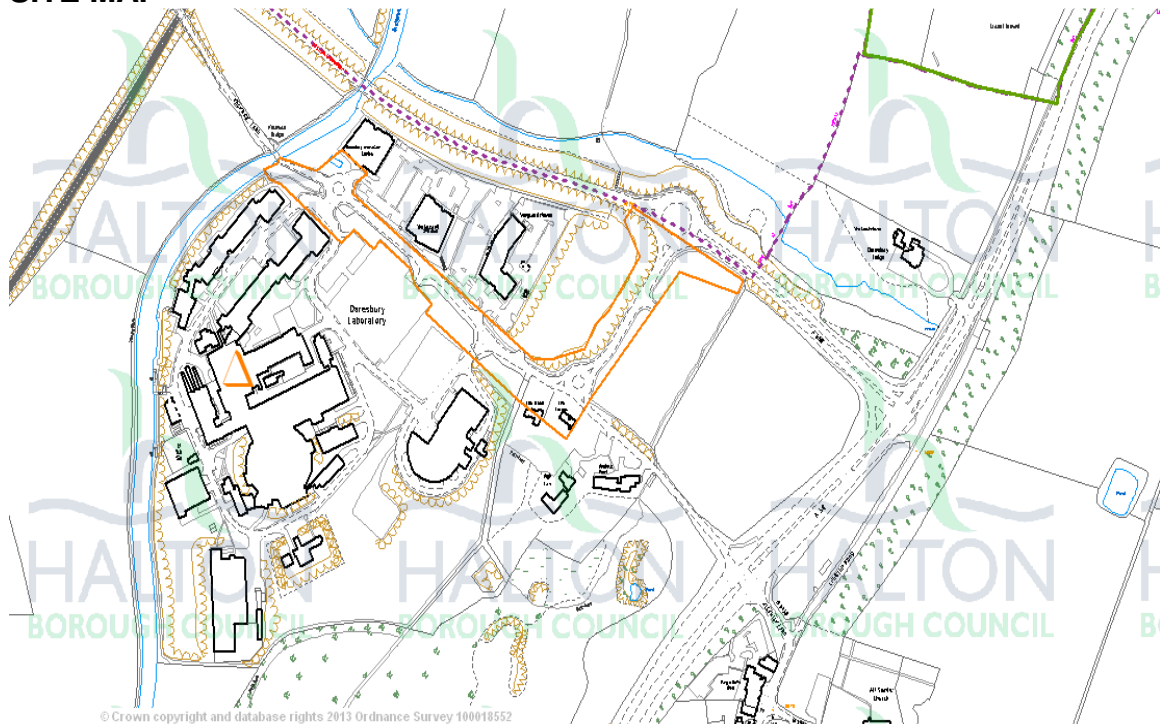


APPLICATION NO:	13/00350/FUL
LOCATION:	Sci Tech Daresbury, Keckwick Lane, Daresbury
PROPOSAL:	Proposed creation of a linear park and square, improvements to Innovation Way and Keckwick Lane together with associated landscaping, lighting, demolition of single bungalow and retrospective planting works
WARD:	Daresbury
PARISH:	Daresbury
CASE OFFICER:	Pauline Shearer
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre LLP, Sci-Tech Daresbury, Keckwick Lane, Daresbury
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:	No objections
KEY ISSUES:	Highway safety; design; landscaping
RECOMMENDATION:	Approval

SITE MAP



1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site

The site is located at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre (DSIC) on Keckwick Lane, Daresbury. The land either side of this application site on Keckwick Lane is in the ownership of DSIC containing buildings and infrastructure relating to the use of the campus for scientific developments.

The site is identified as the Daresbury Strategic Site within the East Runcorn Key Area of Change in the Halton UDP and Core Strategy.

1.2 Planning History

There is no particular planning history which is relevant to the development along Keckwick Lane.

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 The proposal

The proposal is a result of a site connectivity project undertaken by DSIC, now branded Sci-Tech Daresbury (and will be referred to as such during the remainder of this report), to deliver a joined up, public realm and highways scheme along Innovation Way and Keckwick Lane to improve access and movement to and within the campus. The works include the demolition of an existing bungalow known as 'Low Wood' which is located at the current Innovation Way/Keckwick Lane roundabout; relocation of the existing campus boundary to allow for an improved landscaping of Keckwick Lane incorporating footpath/cycleway, hard and soft landscaping; widening and landscaping of Innovation Way in order to link in to the Council's pinch-point improvements.

2.2 Documentation

The applicant has submitted a Planning Application, drawings and the following reports:

Design and Access Statement
Ecological Assessment
Bat Survey & Report
Tree Survey

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
- TP6 Cycle Provision as Part of New Development
- TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
- TP17 Safe Travel for All

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
- CS11 East Runcorn
- CS15 Sustainable Transport
- CS18 High Quality Design
- CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- CS20 Natural and Historic Environment

4. CONSULTATIONS

The application has been advertised by a site notice posted near the site. All residents and occupiers of adjacent properties have been notified by letter. Daresbury, Moore and Sandymoor Parish Councils have been notified by letter.

Daresbury Parish Council has raised no objection to the proposal but feels it inappropriate to lose the existing bungalow and reduce housing stock within

the village. In response to this concern it should be pointed out that Core Strategy Policy CS11 seeks the phased delivery of 1400 new dwellings within the Daresbury Strategic Site, Phase 1 of which seeks the delivery of 500 dwellings on land known as Delph Lane west, it is therefore considered that the loss of this bungalow will not have long term impact on available housing supply in this area.

The Council's Nature Conservation Consultants, Cheshire Wildlife Trust has been consulted in relation to the site's potential as bat habitat and other ecological factors. It has raised no objection subject to conditions relating to the finding in the submitted survey and mitigation measures as suggested.

The Environment Agency has requested a Flood Risk Assessment and the applicant was submitting this at the time of writing the report. Any comments in relation to the FRA will be presented verbally to committee.

Greystar Europe UK has confirmed that the proposed development will not affect pipelines from the Stanlow complex.

The Council's own highways department and open spaces department have been consulted, and any comments received have been summarised below in the assessment section of the report.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

No objections have been received as a result of the public consultation.

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principle of Use

The site is situated in an area which is identified as the East Runcorn Key Area of Change in the adopted Halton Core Strategy. This part of that area is dominated by the existence of the Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre campus, which straddles Keckwick Lane and runs from Keckwick Bridge to Innovation Way. The majority of the area which is to form the landscaped footway/cycleway is currently within the eastern boundary fence of the laboratory site, the remainder shows highway improvements to Innovation way.

The area is allocated as a Strategic Site within the East Runcorn Area of Change in the adopted Halton Core Strategy and as such, supersedes previous land allocations and related policies adopted through the Unitary Development Plan. Members should note that UDP policy E1 still exists and contains references to particular requirements for 'Daresbury Laboratory'. However, as the Core Strategy Policy CS11 relates to a Key Area of Change, this enables a re-allocation of the land use in that area and the related policy supersedes the existing UDP Policy E1 where it relates to Runcorn East, specifically DSIC and Daresbury Park.

Policy CS11 expects Sci-Tech Daresbury to expand with B1 uses that include science, high tech and research development. Development will be expected to deliver a network of open spaces for nature conservation and recreation including conservation of Daresbury Firs and creation of smaller green spaces integral to individual developments. Development should facilitate strong connectivity through public transport and promote walking and cycling routes.

The main issues to consider arising from the proposal are: - Highway safety; habitat; landscaping and visual appearance. These issues are explored below.

6.2 Highway Safety

The proposal incorporates work to the highway of Innovation Way which integrates with the Council's own junction improvements at the Daresbury Expressway/Innovation Way roundabout. There is no objection to the proposal in relation to the capacity of the existing network based on the scheme submitted. Members should note that an additional access is being created on the Keckwick Lane/Innovation Way roundabout, which does not serve any particular additional development. To ensure full control over the future of this access, it is proposed that approved plans clearly state that any future development, accessing off this access has not been agreed in principle and an informative on the decision notice will state the same.

The applicant has provided further details in relation to technical highway matters which are acceptable. Some matters of detail still need to be agreed before development begins, but are able to be dealt with through conditions. Other conditions are recommended in relation to levels, materials and hard landscaping in the highway, construction management control, wheel cleansing.

6.3 Impact on Ecology

The application was accompanied by an Ecological Assessment (ecus, August 2013), which addressed the following aspects:

- extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey
- desktop record search
- habitat assessment and evaluation
- hedgerow assessment
- protected species (GCN ponds, badger signs, bat roost potential in buildings and trees, incidental bird records, reptile site suitability assessment, riparian mammals, any other species.)
- invasive species

All have been addressed in a thorough manner and in accordance with accepted methodologies by suitably-qualified persons and CWT recommends that they are accepted as accurate for the site.

Results were generally negative for valuable habitats, important hedges and presence of protected species, although further survey work was required to confirm the absence of roosting bats at Low Wood Bungalow, which is to be

demolished as part of the improvement works. An emergence survey was subsequently carried out in September 2013, and found no evidence of the use of the bungalow by bats. There are therefore no Natural England licence requirements. However, should bats be discovered on site at any time, works in the immediate area should be halted and an appropriately trained, qualified and licensed person consulted at once.

It is recommended that the recommendations in the Ecological Assessment are attached as planning conditions as follows:-

- Provide a scheme for protection of retained existing trees (see 4.3.2).
- Use of native species in replacement tree and hedge planting, and in new shrub, bulb and wildflower planting (see 4.3.3, 4.3.5/6 and 4.3.10).
- Precautions to be taken to protect badgers during the construction phase (see 4.4.3).
- Provision of bat boxes in groups of 3 on trees (see 4.4.7). Details to be confirmed by ecologist.
- Avoidance of actively nesting birds or surveys to be undertaken 2 days in advance of site/vegetation clearance (4.4.10).
- Provision of bird boxes on trees (4.4.11). Details to be confirmed by ecologist.
- Precautions to protect hedgehogs during the construction phase (4.4.13).

6.4 Landscape and Visual Appearance

The proposal will create new landscaping along Innovation Way and Keckwick Lane, providing a strong gateway to the Sci-Tech Daresbury development. Keckwick Lane will be opened up to create a recreational linear park that will draw site users into a common recreational space whilst offering an improved public realm. The levels along the linear park will be dropped to create a terrace with accessibility and opportunities for rest spaces and opening up views across the site. The work includes retrospective landscaping work along Innovation Way and new tree planting throughout the linear park, together with bollard lighting and bus stop relocation.

The proposal offers a vast improvement to the existing format along Keckwick Lane which currently has footway only to the eastern side of the carriageway. The linear park layout offers a significant improvement to the street scene and improves connectivity in and around this area with stronger linkage to the south towards the Expressway and Chester Road and along the north/south axis on Keckwick Lane.

A significant number of trees will be lost in the creation of the linear park. This is in addition to those lost in the proposed road widening scheme for Innovation Way and a group of mature trees in the grounds of Low Wood. Singularly, none of the trees lost in the grounds of Low Wood are considered of such quality to be worthy of statutory protection, but it is worth noting that as a group, they provide a high degree of visual amenity at the junction of Keckwick Lane. Overall, the replacement trees proposed within the whole landscape scheme will compensate for trees lost in this development.

Conditions are recommended in relation to protecting those trees that are to be retained and for all works to take place outside of the bird nesting season.

An additional condition is also recommended in relation to Soft Works Plan numbered PL1094.SC.M102 Rev A which references a wildflower meadow which must be planted to provide a sustainable habitat for wildlife. Seed mixes used in the creation of these areas should be native and if possible sourced locally.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, 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 report the proposal is consistent with the over-arching policy for East Runcorn Strategic Site and complies with Policy CS5. It achieves environmental improvements with the aim of enhancing the strategic role of Sci-Tech Daresbury and with conditions minimises adverse impact on highway safety and the wider ecology of the area.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to the following conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year implementation period (BE1)
2. Amended Plans (BE1 and TP17)
3. Prior to commencement scheme for retained tree protection (BE1)
4. Prior to commencement submission of highway levels (TP17)
5. Prior to commencement submission of materials to be used in and around the highway and within the scheme (BE1 and TP17)
6. Prior to commencement submission of hard landscaping and structures within the highway (TP17)
7. Prior to commencement submission of boundary treatment (BE22)
8. Prior to commencement submission of construction management plan (TP17)
9. Prior to commencement submission of wheel cleansing details (TP17)
10. Prior to commencement submission of details of bat and bird boxes (BE1)
11. Prior to commencement submission of details of replacement tree, hedge, shrub, bulb and wildflower planting using native species in accordance with paragraphs 4.3.3, 4.3.5/6 and 4.3.10 of the submitted Ecological Assessment Aug 2013 (BE1)
12. Precautions to be taken to protect badgers during the construction phase in accordance with paragraph 4.4.3 of the submitted Ecological Assessment Aug 2013 (BE1)
13. Avoidance of actively nesting birds or surveys to be undertaken 2 days in advance of site/vegetation clearance phase in accordance with

paragraph 4.4.10 of the submitted Ecological Assessment Aug 2013 (BE1)

14. Precautions to protect hedgehogs during the construction phase in accordance with paragraph 4.4.13 of the submitted Ecological Assessment Aug 2013 (BE1)

Informative

This permission does **not** agree in principle any future development proposal for the East Runcorn Strategy Site.

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.