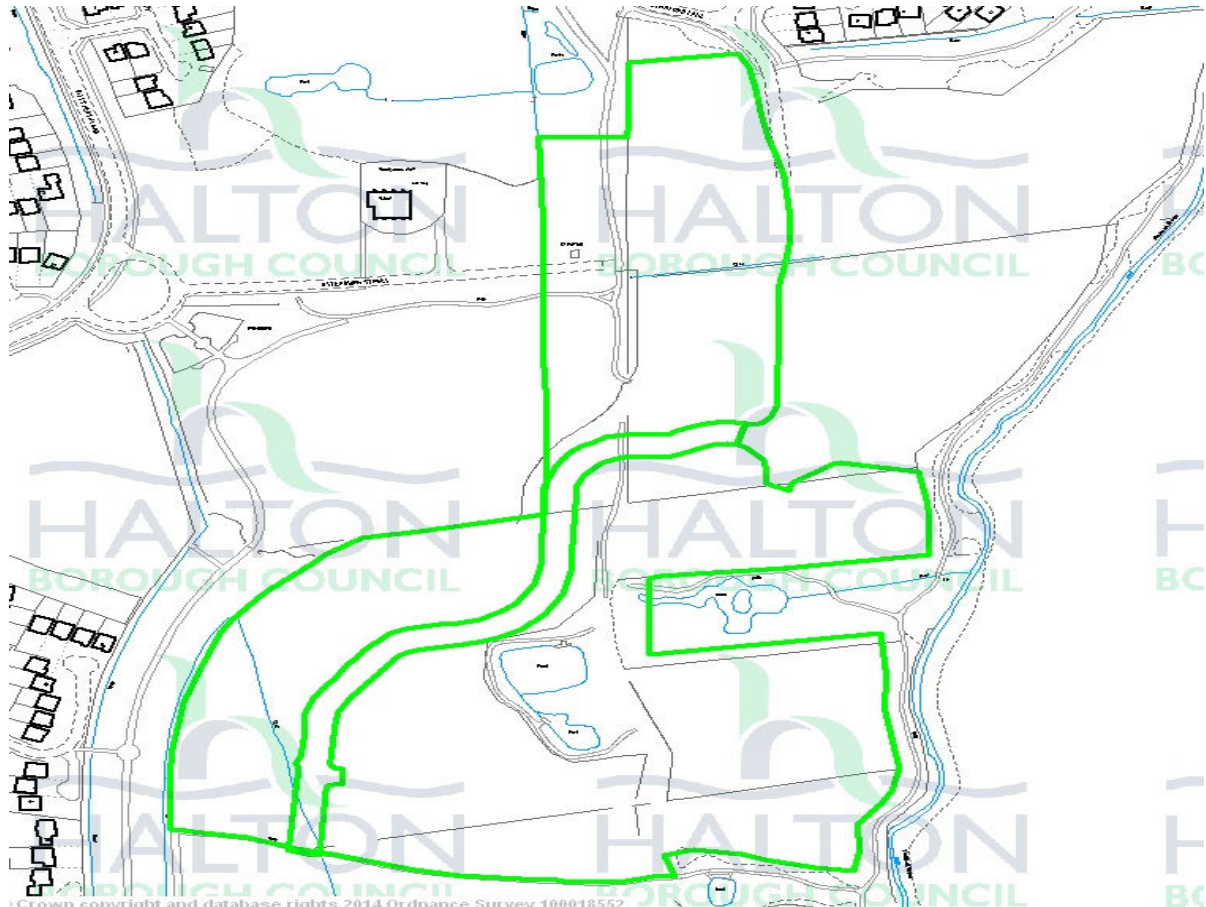


APPLICATION NO:	14/00161/FUL
LOCATION:	Sandymoor North, Phase 1. Land off Wharford Road, Sandymoor, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1QD
PROPOSAL:	Development of 219 homes comprising two, three and four bedroom mews and detached dwellings and apartments together with associated infrastructure and landscaping.
WARD:	Daresbury
PARISH:	Sandymoor
CASE OFFICER:	Glen Henry
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Morris Homes
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION: National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)	UDP Phase 2 Allocated Housing Site; Proposed Greenspace and Proposed Greenway
DEPARTURE	No
REPRESENTATIONS:	Objections
KEY ISSUES:	Allocated housing site; housing need; ecology impacts; loss of green space; drainage and highway impacts
RECOMMENDATION:	Delegated Authority to Approve

SITE MAP



1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site

The site measures 9.04 hectares and comprises part of the area known as Sandymoor in Runcorn. The net developable area is 6.38ha with the remainder comprising open space. The site is a greenfield site and is allocated for housing in the Unitary Development Plan.

1.2 The wider Sandymoor neighbourhood is situated on the eastern edge of Runcorn. It is bounded to the north by the Daresbury Expressway (A558) which provides primary access points to the existing residential areas in Sandymoor. The West Coast Main Line and Manchester – Chester railway lines lie close to the east, whilst the Bridgewater Canal runs near to the western and southern boundaries of the site.

1.3 Planning History

The site does not benefit from existing residential planning permissions however the planning principles are articulated in the adopted Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document (SSPD) (July 2009). The majority of the site is allocated for residential development within the Unitary Development Plan (April 2005) and supported by policies in the Core Strategy (April 2013)

1.4 Planning permission was granted (12/00328/FUL) on 22 October 2012 for associated highway, flood mitigation and utilities infrastructure. Amendments to that permission were granted on 5 April 2013 (13/00063/FUL).

1.5 Planning permission was granted for a new secondary school immediately adjacent to the site (to the east). Full planning permission was granted on 12 August 2013 (13/00190/FUL) for a 900 place school with sports and media / arts centre. Construction on the Sandymoor Free School commenced in September 2013.

1.6 Application 13/00478/FUL has been approved for phased highways infrastructure works. In addition, 13/00479/S73 has been approved to vary conditions on planning permission 09/00129/OUT.

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 The proposal

The proposal seeks permission to develop the site for a residential development of 219 homes comprising two, three and four bedroom mews and detached dwellings and apartments together with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

2.2 Documentation

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

Design and Access Statement
Planning Assessment
Transport Statement
Flood Risk Assessment
Flood Risk Mitigation Report
Drainage Strategy
Surface Water Management Plan
Ecological Appraisal, Amphibian Survey, Himalaya Balsam Method Statement, Water Vole Method Statement, Breeding Bird Survey
Phase 1 Habitat Survey
Tree Survey, Removal and Protection Plan
Ground Investigation (Phase II)
Geotechnical Assessment
Railway Noise Assessment

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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

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

3.5 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The following 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
GE6 Protection of Designated Greenspace

GE7 Proposed Greenspace
GE8 Development within Designated Greenspace
GE19 Protection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
GE21 Species Protection
GE25 Protection of Ponds
PR5 Water Quality
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
TP17 Safe Travel for All
H1 Provision for New Housing
H3 Provision of Recreational Greenspace

3.6 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
CS7 Infrastructure Provision
CS11 East 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

3.7 Supplementary Planning Documents

- Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document
- New Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document
- Designing for Community Safety Supplementary Planning Document
- Draft Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document

4. CONSULTATIONS

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

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

Parish Council

Health and Safety Executive – Does not advise against on health and safety grounds

Environment Agency

National Grid – no objections

Woodland Trust

Natural England

Scottish Power

Peel Holdings / Bridgewater Canal Company - Objection based on the interface between the Keckwick Brook catchment and Manchester Ship Canal and request that the developer demonstrates the development will not contribute to any increase in surface water flows beyond those existing. – Addressed at Section 6 – Flood Risk and Drainage

Sabic Pipelines

Council Services:

Highways Authority

Environmental Health

Open Space Services

Contaminated Land – no objections

5. REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 The representations that have been received as a result of the initial public consultation are summarised below, together with a brief comment by the planning officer in response to the matter raised:

- The need for the application to be decided by the Development Control Committee (DCC).
 - The application will be determined by DCC.
- That new developments in the vicinity of the Bridgewater Canal should always make the most of potential interfaces with the canal and contribute to enhancement and maintenance.
 - This site is not directly adjacent to the canal. Links with the canal have been taken into account through the Sandymoor SPD and wider master planning work.
- Issues with number of residences consulted by letter.
 - Adjoining land owners have been consulted as per regulatory requirements. Properties beyond immediate adjoining land owners have also been consulted. Site notices, press notices, and web adverts have also been placed. Adequate notice of the consultation is considered to have been given by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- Concerns about junction safety and capacity at Newmoore Lane and Wharford Lane.
 - Addressed under Section 6 – Highway Considerations.
- Concerns about flooding and that existing gardens retain water after rainfall.
 - Addressed under Section 6 – Flood Risk and Drainage.

- Concerns about wildlife and habitat loss. Concern that Natural England have not granted licences to move Great Crested Newts (GCN) and Badger setts. Water voles in the locality.
 - Addressed under Section 6 – Ecology and Wildlife.
- Noise and disturbance to existing residents associated with construction and use of Walsingham Drive by construction traffic. That Construction traffic should use Windmill Hill as stated in the SPD – Addressed under Section 6 – Design and Residential Amenity.

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principle of Use

The site is designated on the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map as a Phase 2 Allocated Site and UDP Policy H1 applies.

6.2 The Core Strategy supports the greenfield expansion of East Runcorn. Policy CS3 seeks the development of a minimum rate of 500 units per annum (net gain). Policy CS11 sets out the requirement for an additional 1400 units to the south and west of the existing Sandymoor community.

6.3 Development Plan policies are supplemented by the Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted in 2009. This SPD sets out further detail on the development of the wider Sandymoor area, of which this site forms a component part.

6.4 A small area (approx. 0.5 hectares) of the application site overlaps onto an area designated as proposed greenspace on the UDP Proposals Map. Space is made available for compensatory greenspace provision within the scheme. Such minor land use exchange is considered acceptable as it provides for a better development layout with the greenspaces across the development becoming better connected and allowing improved movement of people and wildlife between the retained natural areas, and throughout the area. This is considered to comply with UDP Policy GE6 (Protection of Designated Green Space) and GE7 (proposed greenspace designations) for Sandymoor open spaces and structural landscaping. Policy GE7 allows the Council to continue to improve the Borough by creating further open space and upgrading existing areas for its recreation or wider amenity value. The development is reported to provide for a net gain of greenspace across the development of 2772 sqm.

6.5 Sandymoor Wood, Keckwick Brook and Brook Wood are all classified as Areas of Special Landscape Value in the Unitary Development Plan. All these areas are to be retained in their entirety.

6.6 The development proposal that is the subject of this application will deliver much needed housing on a long designated site and is considered acceptable in principle.

6.7 Design and Residential Amenity

Design inspiration has been taken from the surrounding Cheshire Villages of Frodsham, Great Budworth and Tarporley and this has resulted in character areas being established within the development. Statement buildings are utilised at key junctions within the development to give a strong sense of place. Focal buildings will have white painted stone lintels and cills and Georgian patterned windows in keeping with the Georgian elements of traditional village streets. Houses are to be constructed from local red brick with grey or red roof tiles. Occasional feature gables and changes in roof pattern should vary the street scene and roof scape. Front gardens on properties fronting The Avenue and Village Street will be defined by estate railings, hedging and detailed piers to focal areas to enhance the Cheshire Village feel to the development and create the entrance and journey through the site.

6.8 The development is to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 to comply with Core Strategy Policy CS19.

6.9 The criteria for Secured by Design have been used to design a development with overlooking aspects onto footpath links and public areas.

6.10 A noise assessment has been undertaken. The development is approximately 200m from the West Coast Main Line which is the main noise source. Within the report it is identified that the closest dwellings are within area NEC B (Noise Exposure Category banding: A = noise not an issue; D = development should be refused), however behind these dwellings the acoustic shadow provided by those initial buildings results in the remainder of the development being categorised as NEC A. Whilst the assessment is considered out of date being based on now revoked Planning Policy Guidance the findings are considered to adequately demonstrate that the proposals do not raise significant issues with respect to railway noise to warrant further assessment or mitigation.

6.11 Amendments have been required to satisfy highway issues and to resolve inaccuracies in the plans as originally submitted. The scheme is considered to offer a quality of development suited to the scale and character of existing surrounding residential properties. The scheme is considered to offer appropriate spacing to achieve satisfactory privacy standards and interface distances in accordance with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document for New Residential Development and complies with Policies BE1 and BE2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan, Core Strategy and NPPF. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal as amended would not result in significant harm sufficient to justify refusal in this case.

6.12 Objectors have stated their view that there exists an alternative and preferable means of access for construction traffic. Officer advice has confirmed that Wharford Lane is capable of accommodating the anticipated levels of construction traffic and that construction traffic is not likely to result in significant highway safety issues or loss of amenity to residents. On this basis it is considered that any efforts to restrict construction traffic routeing to an

alternative route by condition would fail the six tests for planning conditions as outlined by Planning Policy Guidance and Annex 1 to Circular 11/95 as such could not be considered valid and would be unenforceable.

- 6.13 Conditions relating to submission and agreement of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, hours of construction and wheel wash facilities will be included on any permission granted to ensure that disturbance to existing local residents are kept to a minimum. Conditions relating to materials to be used, landscaping and highways provision are also required to ensure the quality of the final scheme.
- 6.14 Highway Considerations
An independent transport consultant has carried out a transport assessment for the proposed development. A travel plan has been included within the transport assessment report.
- 6.15 The proposed development is considered to be in an accessible location in terms of pedestrian, cyclist, and public transport routes within the vicinity of the development. A traffic free cycle route is located to the west of the site which links a number of routes leading to and from the Halton and Runcorn areas including Runcorn East railway station. A cycle link is provided to Otterburn Lane with vehicular access restricted with retractable bollards. This is to be used for emergency access only. Bus stops are accessible from the site providing a number of frequent bus services connecting the site with Runcorn and Warrington. The Village Street is to be designed so as to provide a future bus link / loop into the remaining parts of Sandymoor eventually linking up with Walsingham Drive.
- 6.16 An accident analysis suggests that there is a low collision occurrence rate at key junctions within the study area therefore it is considered the development would not have an adverse impact on the safety record of the local highway network in the vicinity of the site.
- 6.17 The additional development traffic is predicted to have minimal effect on the queuing traffic on key junctions along Pitts Heath Lane in both the 2014 and 2025 assessment years.
- 6.18 Construction traffic is expected to use Pitts Heath Lane and Daresbury Expressway routes to access the site via Wharford Lane. The transport assessment report concludes the development will have minimal impact on traffic within the vicinity of the development. Through a Construction Environmental Management Plan signage can be required to be erected by the applicant to discourage access to surrounding roads by construction and delivery traffic. The Council's enforcement powers in this regard to restrict use of adopted highways by licensed vehicles are not however not strong.
- 6.19 Minimum car parking requirement of 200% is provided. In accordance with Manual for Streets guidance garage sizes need to be a minimum of 6m X 3m where they are to be counted as a useable parking space and their future

conversion to habitable use restricted by appropriate planning condition. Both these requirements are the subject of a recommended planning condition.

6.20 Despite resident concerns, the Council's Highways Engineers have confirmed that their main issues are raised in relation to detailed highway arrangements within the scheme including driveway and access visibility along the main village street. Further amended plans have been provided dealing with numerous minor highway details, tracking plots and drainage details. These latest proposals are currently being considered by the Council's Highways Engineers and, whilst further minor amendments may be required it is considered that these can be resolved through ongoing negotiation with any outstanding matters resolved through further relatively minor amendments and / or by condition. Members will be updated accordingly on such outstanding issues.

6.21 Ecology

The necessary habitat surveys have been submitted as part of the application documentation. There are no statutorily protected sites (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar, SAC) within the site or within 500m of the site. Sandymoor Wood which abuts the land in the north is classified as ancient woodland and is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Dorchester Park located 100m northwest of the site is designated as a SINC and local Nature Reserve. Sandymoor Wood, Keckwick Brook and Brook Wood are all classified as Areas of Special Landscape Value in the Unitary Development Plan. All these areas are to be retained in their entirety. There are no Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats within the proposed development site.

6.22 The site is dominated by semi-improved grassland. It contains a number of native species hedgerows, small areas of amenity grassland, marshy grassland, and broadleaved plantation woodland. There are two ponds on site. There are a further four ponds that are within 100m of the site. Keckwick Brook runs from south to north to the east of the site.

6.23 The 2013 amphibian survey of ponds at Sandymoor did not identify Great Crested Newts (GCN) on the development site or within any of the ponds adjacent to this site. Great Crested Newts (GCN) were not identified in ponds on or adjacent to the site in 2011. Back in 2010 a single GCN was identified in the pond that is just outside the southern boundary. In 2012 a terrestrial pitfall trapping exercise was undertaken to confirm absence of GCN in the area proposed for the infrastructure works that have now been completed. This terrestrial survey covered the northern three quarters of the Phase 1 site and no GCN identified. Given the lack of GCN records from pond surveys in 2011 and 2013, and the lack of GCN in the 2012 terrestrial survey, it can be considered that GCN are no longer present within the site or the immediate surrounds.

6.24 GCN are present in low numbers in a pond to the west of Bog Wood, 325m south of the Phase 1 site but this pond is south of Sandymoor Brook which forms a partial barrier to newt migration. The Council's retained ecological advisor has commented that they agree the likelihood of GCN presence on

the site is low, and therefore advise that a Reasonable Avoidance Measures method statement for all amphibians should be followed during development including details of the procedures to follow should GCN be found on site during the construction process.

- 6.25 For the avoidance of doubt, Pond P20 will not form part of the SUDS scheme and will function as part of a wildlife area. It should be noted that pond P20 is outside of the Morris Homes' site. Some limited de-silting of this pond would be beneficial and this may extend to minor excavation, since pond P20 currently dries out nearly every year by the end of April. Whilst ponds that dry out occasionally are favourable for GCN, the current conditions in Pond P20 mean that the full life cycle of the species can never be completed. Standing water is required through to the autumn to allow GCN larvae to develop into adult newts. Measures to maximise the potential of pond P20 for GCN can be prescribed in a Habitat Management Plan. It is reasonable for management of this pond to be covered by a Habitat Management Plan associated with the development.
- 6.26 Common toad is listed as a species of principal importance on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and is present in ponds on site. Whilst a licence will not be required due to the presence of this species, a Reasonable Avoidance Measures method statement is recommended to cover works on site (works to ponds and terrestrial works) to ensure that impacts on amphibians on site are minimised.
- 6.27 Bats are UK and European protected species. A bat activity survey was undertaken on site in summer 2012. Only low numbers of common pipistrelle, myotis and noctule bats were recorded commuting or foraging on the site. There are no trees on site with features suitable for bat roosts. Bat activity recorded was generally associated with the Keckwick Brook corridor and with ponds and to a lesser extent with hedgerows. Replacement planting will be undertaken of native hedgerows where lost. A planting scheme will enhance the biodiversity of the development. Lighting schemes aim to avoid light spillage onto new or retained hedgerows or ponds to avoid disturbance to bat activity.
- 6.28 A breeding survey was undertaken in 2011. Five species of principal importance (NERC Act 541) were observed, namely Dunnock, House Sparrow, Reed Bunting, Skylark and Song Thrush. Dunnock, House Sparrow and Skylark are also Red Listed species (Birds of Conservation Concern). A total of 30 bird species were recorded over two visits. The site was assessed as being of local significance for breeding birds. Of the 541 species, only Dunnock was confirmed as breeding, with House Sparrow and Reed Bunting probable breeders, and Skylark and Song Thrush as possible breeders. However, during a walkover of the site in May 2013 at least one pair of Skylark were recorded as breeding in the grassland area to the west of the ponds on site. Whilst the majority of birds recorded will continue to thrive in the back gardens of new houses, Skylark require rough grassland with open areas where the grass does not become too tall and visibility is maintained if they are to breed. In this case the marshy grassland area provides suitable

conditions, breaking up the otherwise tall semi-improved grassland. The Council's retained ecology adviser agrees that the requirements of most species may be met through the retention and appropriate planting on site, however they raised concerns that the requirements of the Skylark (confirmed breeding 2013) will not be met. This is also the case with the yellow wagtail which was identified on site in 2011 (incidental record). Yellow wagtail is a species more typical of open arable farmland than of the grassland habitat found at Sandymoor. Whilst an incidental record of this species has been recorded on or near to the site, it is noted that the 2011 Sandymoor North breeding bird survey did not identify this species. Provision of off-site mitigation in the form of the habitats currently found on site would not particularly favour yellow wagtail, and mitigation for this species is not considered appropriate for this development. It is worth noting that 2.6 ha of land will be maintained as a newt reserve in the south of the Sandymoor Masterplan, approximately 850m to the south of the site and currently under Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) ownership. Whilst this area is primarily mitigation for GCN, as identified in the SPD, the grassland within it (approximately 2 ha) will be a large enough area to support Skylark once the grassland in this area is managed as rough grassland. Skylark was not identified in the 2011 Sandymoor South breeding bird survey, although at that time approximately half of the newt reserve area was managed as close-mown grassland.

- 6.29 In relation to the legislation set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, works should take place outside of the nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August inclusive), unless the site has been checked for nesting birds by a qualified ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to commencement. If nesting birds are found, an appropriate exclusion zone should be established and maintained until nesting is complete. The details of any exclusion zone should be agreed with the ecologist.
- 6.30 Water vole is present on Keckwick Brook and is a UK protected species. Although the site boundary is more than 10m from the brook, it should be noted that outfalls from the site into Keckwick Brook may disturb water vole habitat and a water vole method statement will be required, to be prepared in liaison with the local Environment Agency Biodiversity Officer. Any works in the Keckwick Brook corridor would need to adhere to the Water Vole Mitigation Method Statement (TEP document KGIPAT331.004).
- 6.31 No evidence of badgers has been identified during site surveys on the site.
- 6.32 The non-native, invasive weeds Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are present in the Keckwick Brook corridor, although neither has been identified on site. Where outfalls to Keckwick Brook are required, a method statement designed to prevent the spread of non-native invasive species has been provided.
- 6.33 A full tree survey has been undertaken to establish any tree constraints and requirements for tree protection. The required standoff (20m) from existing woodland will be maintained as the site borders Brook Wood, owned by the

local Woodland Trust. Replacement tree planting will be provided throughout the development and is incorporated into the landscape design.

- 6.34 The introduction of the surface water attenuation pond will introduce a new wetland area to the development.
- 6.35 The biggest impact of the development will be the loss of semi-improved grassland on site. Whilst this habitat is not protected, it is an ecological resource that will be significantly impacted by development at Sandymoor. This has been highlighted by Halton's ecological advisor. Some habitat will be retained across the wider Sandymoor area through the strategic open spaces and in the dedicated wildlife reserve area to the south of the wider Sandymoor development area adjacent to the Bridgewater Canal. It is acknowledged that the net loss of this habitat is a material consideration that carries significant weight in the decision making process. However, on balance the fact that some suitable habitat will be retained combined with the significant need for new housing development on site allocated through the local plans process outweighs the benefits of retaining a larger area of the grassland habitat.
- 6.36 Flood Risk and Drainage
The development of the site will be served by separate systems for foul and surface water drainage networks. Foul drainage will be discharged to the local public sewer network. The northern catchment of the development will discharge to the currently un-adopted sewers already in place within the recently constructed highway, whilst the southern catchment will discharge to the sewers to the west of the site. It is reported that United Utilities have confirmed that there is adequate capacity within the local sewer system and they have raised no objection.
- 6.37 The scheme is supported by the Sandymoor North Area Flood Risk Mitigation Report. The maximum rate of surface water discharge from the site will be the equivalent greenfield runoff rate from the site. Based on the equivalent greenfield runoff rate, estimate of the required attenuation and storage volumes across the site have been determined. Surface water flows will ultimately be discharged in a controlled manner into Keckwick Brook.
- 6.38 The flood risk assessment (FRA) indicates that there is a risk of flooding from Keckwick Brook. The EA Flood Map indicates Sandymoor North is at risk from the 1% AEP event (Flood Zone 3a) from Keckwick Brook, but shown as benefiting from defences. The FRA report sets out recommended slab levels. All pavements, roads and parking areas will be set at or above the 1% AEP plus climate change plus 300mm freeboard level of the brook.
- 6.39 The drainage strategy proposed for both foul and surface water is considered to demonstrate that it is possible to discharge flows from the proposed development safely and effectively without increasing flood risk to or from the site. The Environment Agency has confirmed that it raises no objection to the proposals subject to conditions requiring the development be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Mitigation Report and submission and agreement of a scheme to manage risk of flooding from overland flow or

surface water. On this basis it is considered that any outstanding objection to the granting of planning permission by Peel Ports/ Manchester Ship Canal Co. on the stated grounds could not be sustained.

6.40 Further responses have been provided in relation to the outstanding concerns of the Council's Open Spaces Officers in relation to the design of the SuDs. However, whilst further minor amendments may be required, it is considered that these can be resolved through ongoing negotiation with any outstanding matters adequately resolved by further relatively minor amendments and/ or by condition. Members will be updated accordingly on such outstanding issues.

6.41 Contaminated Land

The application is supported by a Phase II site investigation and risk assessment tailored to the proposed development. The report highlights limited need for remediation actions, with ground gas protection measures being the only requirement. The full monitoring period had not been completed at the time of writing of the report, and therefore there is a need for this to be completed and the revised data and assessment submitted prior to commencement if the development is to be granted planning permission. It is considered that this can be adequately secured by appropriate planning condition and on this basis the Council's Contaminated Land Officer raises no objection.

6.42 Other Material Matters

Under normal circumstances the development would be liable for the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS5. The wider area of the Sandymoor development, including this site, is subject to an existing overarching legal agreement. This is considered to cover all available compensatory measures and therefore planning gain has already been negotiated to secure those benefits that have been prioritised by the Council. That original agreement did not cover affordable housing provision. Provision of affordable housing is acknowledged to place a financial burden and it is considered that any additional requirements in this regard would affect the viability of the scheme.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 In conclusion, this proposal seeks to bring forward much needed housing on an allocated site originally identified for development through the local plan process over 10 years ago. The development proposal submitted is consistent with Halton's Development Plan Policies. UDP Policy H1 and Core Strategy Policies CS1, CS3 and CS11 provide policy support for the development of this site at East Runcorn. 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 proposal is considered consistent with the aims of the relevant policies.

- 7.2 The biggest impact of the development will be the loss of semi-improved grassland on site. Whilst this habitat is not protected, it is an ecological resource that will be significantly impacted by development at Sandymoor. It is acknowledged that the net loss of this habitat is a material consideration that carries significant weight in the decision making process. However, on balance, the fact that some suitable habitat will be retained combined with the significant need for new housing development on a site allocated through the local plans process outweighs the benefits of retaining a larger area of the grassland habitat.
- 7.3 Further minor amendments may be required in relation to the design of the sustainable drainage scheme and also specific highway safety matters. It is considered that these can be resolved through ongoing negotiation with any outstanding matters adequately resolved by further relatively minor amendments and / or by condition.
- 7.4 Members are therefore asked to approve the application, but delegate the final decision to the Operational Director – Planning, Policy and Transportation in consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair, to enable further fine tuning of the drainage system and highways layouts to be undertaken to the satisfaction of the Local Authority.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To delegate authority to determine the application Operational Director – Planning, Policy and Transportation in consultation with the chair or vice chair, to enable further very detailed refinements to the drainage system, and highways layouts to be undertaken to the satisfaction of the Local Authority and to attach any necessary conditions. Approve subject to the following conditions:-
1. Standard 3 year permission (BE1)
 2. Specifying Approved and Amended Plans (BE1)
 3. Requiring that no development shall begin until written details and agreement of construction vehicle access routes and construction car parking and management plan (BE1)
 4. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
 5. Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of both hard and soft landscaping to include tree and hedgerow planting (BE2)
 6. Boundary treatments including retaining walls to be submitted and approved in writing (BE2)
 7. Construction Management Plan including wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing (BE1)

8. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development (BE1)
9. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use (BE1)
10. Condition restricting permitted development rights relating to frontage boundary fences (BE1)
11. No development shall take place until an updated ground gas monitoring and assessment report with recommendations for gas protection measures has been submitted to and agreed by the LPA. The installation of any such protection measures must be inspected and documented and the details of such submitted to the LPA upon completion (PR14)
12. Prior to commencement details of on-site biodiversity action plan for measures to be incorporated in the scheme to encourage wildlife including 10% of dwellings to be fitted with bat boxes / bricks, positioned on an appropriate aspect of the building (GE21)
13. Conditions relating to tree and hedgerow protection during construction (BE1)
14. Submission and agreement of detailed construction of surface water detention pond (BE1)
15. Survey for ground nesting birds to be submitted and approved; (BE1 and GE21)
16. Site and finished floor levels (BE1)
17. Requiring the development be carried out in accordance with the approved FRA and appropriate mitigation measures (PR16)
18. Submission, agreement and implementation of a scheme to manage the risk of flooding from overland flow of surface water (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.

- 9.1 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.