

**REPORT TO:** Development Control Committee

**DATE:** 3 November 2014

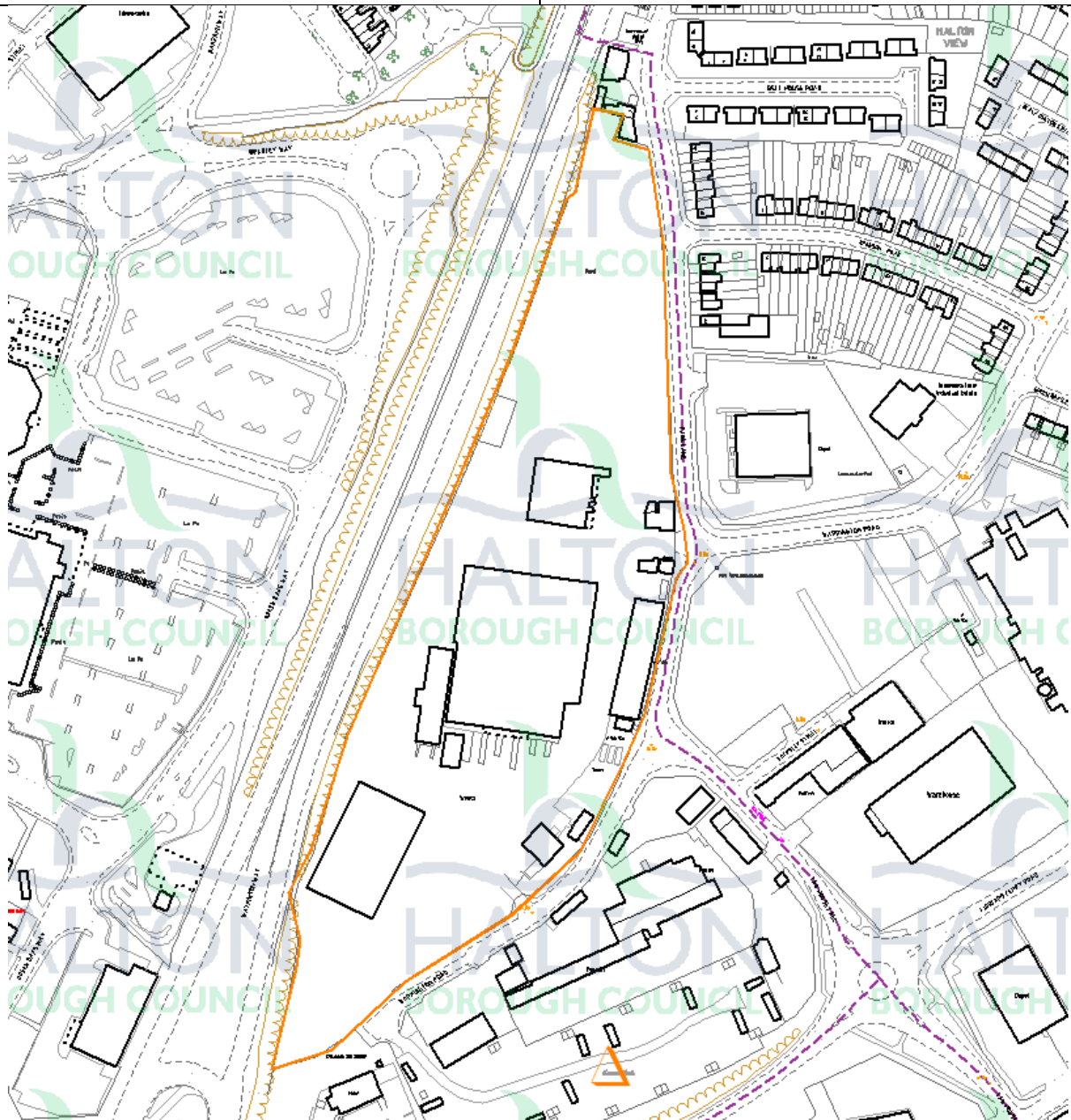
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Policy & Resources

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

**WARD(S):** Boroughwide

<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	14/00455/FUL
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Land bounded by Warrington Road and Page Lane, Widnes, Cheshire.
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Proposed demolition of existing buildings and development of 175 no. dwellings with associated infrastructure including parking, pedestrian access, highway works, landscape and boundary treatments and public open space area, vehicular accesses from Page Lane and Warrington Road (Phase 1 and 2); and site clearance / demolition and remediation, hard standing and a further vehicular access to serve the site from Warrington Road (Phase 3).
<b>WARD:</b>	Appleton
<b>PARISH:</b>	None
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b>	Jeff Eaton
<b>AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):</b>	Russell Homes
<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)	Proposed Road Link – Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System.
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	Yes
<b>REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	Two representations received from the publicity given to the application.

<b>KEY ISSUES:</b>	Principle of Residential Development, Proposed Road Link, Design, Amenity, Affordable Housing, Open Space, Access, Ground Contamination.
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Grant planning permission subject to conditions.
<b>SITE MAP</b>	



## **1. APPLICATION SITE**

### **1.1 The Site**

The site subject of the application is bounded by Warrington Road and Page Lane to the east / south east and Watkinson Way (A557) to the west. The site is 3.84ha in area.

The site was previously used more intensively for warehousing and distribution (Use Class B8), however the site has been predominantly vacant in recent years and a number of the buildings on site were removed. Some buildings still remain and small proportion of the site is currently being used for trailer storage. Access to the site is currently gained on Warrington Road and at the junction of Warrington Road and Page Lane.

Located to the east of the site on the opposite side of Page Lane are residential properties and the site located at the junction of Page Lane and Warrington Road which has recently been granted planning permission for the erection of 21no. houses and 18no. apartments by application 14/00075/FUL.

Located to the east further south 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 which is less than 100m from the site's northern boundary.

The site is part of the Warrington Road / Eastern Widnes Bypass site as identified by the Halton Unitary Development Plan. A proposed road link runs through the application site which is detailed in Policy TP11 as the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System. 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**

The application proposes the demolition of the existing buildings and development of 175 no. dwellings with associated infrastructure including parking, pedestrian access, highway works, landscape and boundary treatments and public open space area, vehicular accesses from Page Lane and Warrington Road (Phase 1 and 2); and site clearance / demolition and remediation, hard standing and a further vehicular access to serve the site from Warrington Road (Phase 3).

The proposal has been amended during the processing of the application to incorporate in the site clearance / demolition, hard standing and a further

vehicular access on the land labelled up as Phase 3 on the phasing plan. The layout has also been amended which has resulted in the reduction of the number of dwellings from 176 to 175.

## **2.2 Documentation**

The planning application is supported the following documents/plans:

- Updated Ecological Review & Bat Survey.
- Stage 1 Flood Risk Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Swept Path Analysis
- Employment Land Statement
- Planning, Design and Access Statement
- Geo-Environmental Site Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Consultation Statement
- Phasing Plan
- Local Equipped Area for Play Site Layout
- Soft Landscape / Boundary Treatment / Hard Surface details
- Landscape Maintenance Plan
- Drainage Strategy
- Indicative Cover Systems Plan
- Delivery Access Routes
- Logistics Plan
- Site 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 designated as a Greenspace in 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;
- PR4 Light Pollution and Nuisance;
- 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;
- TP11 Road Schemes;
- 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

The scheme has been amended to address observations raised. No objection to the proposed development is raised subject to the attachment of a number of conditions.

#### 4.2 Highways - Drainage

Before the drainage system can be approved, there are number of points which need to be clarified. A response from the agent is awaited.

#### 4.3 Open Spaces – Design & Development

Initially concerns were raised over the draining of garden areas given the previous heavy industrial use, however the indicative cover system proposed appears to be an acceptable solution.

The landscape shrub and tree planting proposed is considered to be acceptable.

The height of the railings enclosing the open space have been increased from 900mm to 1200mm and further details have been provided on gate design and surfacing based on initial observations made.

#### 4.4 Open Spaces – Trees

There are no Tree Preservation Orders in force at this site and the area does not fall within a designated Conservation Area.

The absence of trees within the development site has precluded a need to include a tree report however the developer will need to consider the impact of the trees along the boundary with Watkinson Way during the construction of the 2.5 metre high acoustic fence.

The Ecological Assessment suggests the site has little importance but recommendations within the report should be considered by the developer, especially in connection with roosting bats and the removal of slates during the demolition of the existing buildings.

#### 4.5 Contaminated Land

No objection to the proposed development subject to the attachment of a full ground contamination condition.

#### 4.6 Cheshire Wildlife Trust

No objection to the proposed development subject to the attachment of conditions relating to the protection of breeding birds and biodiversity enhancements and an informative in relation to bats.

#### 4.7 Environmental Protection

Full observations on the proposed development are awaited.

#### 4.8 Environment Agency

We would have no objection in principle to the proposed development but would like to make the following comments.

##### *Flood Risk*

Please note that the introduction of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 has passed responsibility for ordinary watercourses and surface and ground water flooding to the Lead Local Flood Authorities. Therefore, from 1st June 2014 we would ask that the attached Standing Advice is applied to development proposals over 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1 to manage flood risk. Your local drainage engineers may be able to advise further.

##### *Groundwater*

A condition which secures the submission of a scheme detailing the disposal of foul and surface water is suggested.

#### 4.9 Natural England

Based upon the information provided, Natural England advises the Council that the proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes.

They have advised that there may be opportunities for both landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

#### 4.10 Coal Authority

The application site does not fall within the defined Development High Risk Area and is located instead within the defined Development Low Risk Area. This means that there is no requirement under the risk-based approach that has been agreed with the LPA for a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to be submitted or for The Coal Authority to be consulted.

In accordance with the agreed approach to assessing coal mining risks as part of the development management process, if this proposal is granted planning permission, it will be necessary to include The Coal Authority's Standing Advice within the Decision Notice as an informative note to the applicant in the interests of public health and safety.

#### 4.11 Cheshire Police

It is recommended that the developer contact Cheshire Police with the view to commissioning a crime impact statement prior to any work commencing on the site.

## **5. REPRESENTATIONS**

5.1 The application has been advertised by a press advert in the Widnes & Runcorn World on 10/09/2014, four site notices posted on 18/08/2014 (Green Oaks Way – adjacent to Widnes Market, Page Lane x2 and Warrington Road) and 308 neighbour notification letters sent on 14/08/2014.

5.2 Following the description being amended as set out in paragraph 2.1 and the receipt of amended plans, the application has been advertised by a press advert in the Widnes & Runcorn World on 08/10/2014, four site notices posted on 01/10/2014 (Green Oaks Way – adjacent to Widnes Market, Page Lane x2 and Warrington Road) and 308 neighbour notification letters sent on 01/10/2014.

5.3 Two representations have been received from the publicity given to the application. The observations raised are summarised below:

- The borough would be losing a future commercial development site.
- Concerns that the existing light industrial unit which has been established for 30 years would be to the detriment of amenity of persons residing in the residential properties proposed in terms of noise, light and general disturbance.
- The proposal should make a significant contribution to improving the pedestrian / cycle network adjacent to the proposed development, particularly across Watkinson Way into the town centre.
- The design of the estate should restrict vehicle speeds to less than 20mph.
- Conveniently sited, secure, under-cover cycle parking should be provided for any smaller properties without a garage.
- Travel planning with targets, monitoring and sense of purpose should be set up for the site.

## **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 is for a residential use on this site and this 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 a residential development does not represent a departure from the plan in respect of both Policies TC1 & TC3.



The site has benefitted from an outline planning permission for 15,455sqm of retail warehousing by the granting of application 11/00231/OUT over two years ago and the Employment Land Study 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 is for this reason that a residential development on the site is now being pursued.

## 6.2 Road Schemes – Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System

The Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map shows the northern part of the application site being a proposed road link which would be part of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System and the relevant policy consideration is Policy TP11. This policy indicates that planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the construction of these roads.

The Highway Officer has commented that the Watkinson Way / Fiddlers Ferry Road Gyratory have ongoing capacity issues and the strategy to date has been to address these issues incrementally. It must be noted that, as an 'at grade' junction, the gyratory has constraints which result in a finite capacity, and will prevent significant additional capacity being gained from the junction in the future to deal with ongoing developments and traffic growth (including that which may result from the Mersey Gateway scheme).

It is acknowledged that the provision of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System would greatly assist with relieving capacity at the gyratory junction. (This is true if north facing slips were also added at Bradley Way. Without this provision the loop road would only have a marginal capacity benefit).

Considering the continued safeguarding of this Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System in relation to this residential development, the proposed residential use would have less direct association with the town centre than the previously approved retail use, which would have had greater benefit from vehicular connection to the rest of the town centre. The Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System scheme would be very costly with recent estimates (including slip roads) totalling in excess of £11m. Therefore its feasibility is questionable. Safeguarding the land for a potentially long period of time would blight the site, creating an empty and derelict site in a prominent location adjacent to the A557 Watkinson Way which is main route through the borough. It is also noted that the provision of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System including new bridge and approach highways at a high level would cause environmental and amenity concerns for nearby residents of Page Lane and the proposed development.

On balance, the above discussion is considered to form a justification for the proposed development which would compromise the implementation of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System.

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

### 6.4 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 current 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.

The application is accompanied by an Employment Land Statement. The statement concludes that this site would not harm the supply of employment premises in the borough; 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 is considered that the Employment Land Statement provides 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. Based on this is considered that the proposal is compliant with Policy CS4 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

### 6.5 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.

It is considered that the development of the large predominantly vacant site which is located adjacent to A557 Watkinson Way would significantly enhance the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy BE3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

## 6.6 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 deliver a significant number of dwellings 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.

## 6.7 Principle of Residential Development

Based on the above considerations, the proposed 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.

The proposed development would prejudice the implementation of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System, however it is concluded based on the benefit that the vehicular connection to the town centre would have for a residential use, the feasibility of implementation along with the blighting of the site and environmental / amenity concerns for nearby residents, the proposal which would prejudice the implementation of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System is on balance considered to be acceptable.

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 provided 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 is evident from the marketing undertaken.

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 recently granted 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.

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.

Issues in terms of relationships at the southern end of the site in respect of the land available for open storage – B8 use (Phase 3 of this development) and the Warrington Road Industrial Estate will be considered in more detail in the noise section of the report at paragraph 6.14.

The principle of residential development on this site is considered to be acceptable.

## 6.8 Highway Considerations

The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment which concludes that the 175 dwelling development would not have a detrimental impact upon the highway/transport network. The Highway Officer agrees with this statement and does not object to the application on traffic grounds.

The issue regarding the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System have already been considered at paragraph 6.2.

Following the receipt of amended plans, the Highway Officer is generally satisfied with the proposed layout from a highway safety perspective. Solutions to the issues raised by the Highway Officer have been found and a few minor alterations to the layout are required.

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.

In terms of car parking, the Highway Officer has commented that all houses / bungalows have parking provision for two cars in accordance with the Council standards. Apartments all have parking provision for one car with visitor parking being accommodated where possible. This is considered to be an acceptable solution and the widening of carriageways to 5.5m would increase the potential for on-street visitor parking when necessary.

In order to promote more sustainable modes of travel and comply with Code for Sustainable Homes, the applicant is proposing cycle parking for each of the affordable units which is desirable. No cycle parking is proposed for the open market rent units or for the private sale units, however there is sufficient space within the curtilage of each property to provide such provision if the occupier of the dwelling requires this. It is not considered reasonable to secure additional cycle parking provision by planning condition in this case.

One of the representations has raised an issue regarding the securing of a significant contribution for improving the pedestrian / cycle network adjacent to the proposed development, particularly across Watkinson Way into the town centre. The site is located in close proximity to Widnes Town Centre with a footbridge across Watkinson Way leading to the Town Centre located approximately 100m from the northern boundary of the site. In this particular instance it is not considered beneficial or reasonable to seek a contribution for improvements to the pedestrian / cycle network.

With regard to the issue relating to the restriction of vehicle speeds within the site, it is noted that some traffic calming measures are proposed which would limit vehicle speeds.

In respect of imposing a condition which would secure the submission and implementation of a travel plan, in this case given the proximity of the site to Widnes Town Centre and general accessibility it is not considered to be justified.

The Highway Officer has advised that some off-site highway works are required which should be secured by condition.

A construction management plan has been provided to accompany the application and the Highway Officer's comments on this are awaited. The implementation of an appropriate construction management plan 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.

## 6.9 Layout

The proposed site layout has been amended during the processing of the application to provide active frontages, improved relationships between proposed dwellings and sufficient parking provision.

The layout generally provides separation in accordance with the privacy distances for residential development set out in the Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document. There are some minor shortfalls in separation (distance between front elevations across the street, properties located at angles to each other etc.) but these are not considered to be to the significant detriment of residential amenity which would warrant the refusal of the application.

With regard to private outdoor space, the Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document states that houses having 1-2 bedrooms shall have a minimum private outdoor space of 50sqm per unit with properties with 3 bedrooms having a minimum private outdoor space of 70sqm per unit. The scheme has been designed so that it generally accords with this standard

and would ensure that each house / bungalow has a usable private outdoor space.

The Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document indicates that a usable private outdoor space for apartments of 50sqm per unit should be provided as a guide. This scheme falls below this standard, however given that the aim with this scheme is to provide a significant element of affordable housing and each apartment would have its own private amenity space which would offer drying space and cycle storage etc, this shortfall is considered to be appropriate in this instance and would not be unduly detrimental to residential amenity.

In terms of Housing Mix, the proposal seeks to deliver a range of property sizes including 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties with the property types including houses, apartments and bungalows. In terms of tenure, there would be a mix of private sale, open market rented units, and affordable rented units. There is considered to be properties to meet a variety of needs on site. The detail submitted with the application also indicates that the affordable units would meet Lifetime Homes standards which would reduce reliance on specialist housing in the future.

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. In terms of Housing Mix, the proposal is considered to be compliant with Policy CS12 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.10 Scale

The houses, bungalows and apartments hereby proposed are single storey and two storey in height and would not be dissimilar in height to the many of the existing residential properties in the surrounding area and are considered acceptable in respect of scale.

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

#### 6.11 Appearance

The elevations show that buildings proposed would be of an appropriate appearance with some variety in materials to add interest to the overall external appearance. 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.

#### 6.12 Landscaping & Trees

There are no Tree Preservation Orders in force at this site and the site does not fall within a designated Conservation Area.

The absence of trees within the development site has precluded a need to include a tree report to accompany the application. The Open Spaces Officer has advised that the developer will need to consider the impact of the trees along the boundary with Watkinson Way during the construction of the 1.8 metre high acoustic fence. It is considered appropriate to attach an informative to bring this issue to the applicant's attention.

Detailed landscaping and boundary treatments plans have been provided to accompany the application. In respect of the soft landscaping scheme proposed, the Open Spaces Officer has commented that the landscape shrub and tree planting is acceptable and a condition securing the implementation and maintenance of the scheme.

The boundary treatments plan submitted includes a number of different boundary types according to the location within the site and is considered to ensure that satisfactory levels of privacy and appearance. A condition securing the implementation of the approved scheme and implementation thereafter is considered reasonable.

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

#### 6.13 Site Levels

The application is accompanied by a topographical survey of the site and proposed site levels. These have been considered and would result in an acceptable development in terms of appearance and relationships to existing roads. It is considered reasonable to attach a condition which secures implementation in accordance with the proposed site levels.

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

#### 6.14 Noise

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

The report identifies that mitigation measures are required due to road traffic and due to potential HGV activities on Phase 3 of the application site.

In order to achieve the required internal noise levels in habitable rooms, a cavity masonry wall with standard double glazing (based on a window area not exceeding 33%) along with trickle vents is identified as being sufficient.

In order to control noise levels from potential HGV activities to acceptable noise levels to allow ventilation to be provided by openable windows, during the daytime a 2.5m high acoustic screen would be sufficient, however at night

time this would not be acceptable with the requirement being for enhanced glazing and a mechanical ventilation system based on the fact that windows could not be opened. The solution outlined in the report is that if coupling and uncoupling of trailers is not allowed at night, the required internal ambient and maximum noise levels in bedrooms could be achieved by a 2.5m high acoustic barrier, standard double glazing and acoustic trickle vents.

The attachment of conditions securing the implementation of the noise mitigation measures as well as restriction on the hours of operation on the part of the site to be used for B8 (Phase 3) to ensure compatibility with the proposed residential development are considered reasonable and are conditions that the applicant is amenable to and would secure the best solution from an amenity perspective.

Observations from the Environmental Health Officer are still awaited.

An existing light industrial business located on Page Lane has raised an issue that their existing operation would have a detrimental impact on residential amenity in terms of noise, light and general disturbance. The Noise Impact Assessment has considered the impact that the surrounding land uses would have on residential amenity and has concluded that the noise mitigation measures proposed would ensure that amenity would not be unduly harmed. It is also noted that a light industrial use (Use Class B1c) is compatible in planning terms with a residential land use.

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

#### 6.15 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.

A mix of tenures is proposed on this site including market sale, market rent and affordable rented units. 113 of the 175 dwellings proposed would be affordable which would be in excess of the 25% of units sought by the policy. A condition which secures provision in accordance with the policy is considered reasonable.

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

#### 6.16 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 application proposes the creation of 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.

Based on the size of development (175 dwellings and potential population of 530), the Provision for Children and Young Persons requirement is 1,060sqm with Policy H3 requiring this to take the form of a LEAP based on the approximate population. The policy requires the LEAP to have a minimum activity zone of 400sqm and have about 5 types of equipment and a small games area.

The proposal would provide an open space in terms of dimension which exceeds the requirements for this development and would have a LEAP located on it which accords with the policy requirements. It is considered that the implementation of an open space on this site would be a significant benefit for persons residing in the locality based on the lack of facilities currently available. The implementation and subsequent maintenance should be secured by condition.

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 the proposal would provide sufficient residential greenspace to meet the local needs of the people living there in compliance with Policy H3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.17 Ground Contamination

The application is accompanied by a Geo-Environmental Site Investigation.

This has been reviewed by the Contaminated Land Officer and no objection has been raised subject to the attachment of a full contaminated land condition to ensure that any ground contamination is dealt with appropriately

During the processing of the application, the application site has been enlarged to include the southern section of the site referred to as Phase 3 as to allow for site clearance / demolition and remediation at the same time as the rest of the site. This is considered appropriate and 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.

#### 6.18 Flood Risk and Drainage

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk from flooding, however based on the site area exceeding 1ha, the application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment along with a Drainage Strategy for the site. These documents have been reviewed by the Highway Officer dealing with Drainage and whilst no in principle objection, some clarifications have been requested to confirm that the scheme will work and the Drainage Strategy can be approved. The requirement for the submission of an appropriate drainage strategy and its subsequent implementation 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.

#### 6.19 Biodiversity

The application is accompanied by an Updated Ecological Review and Bat Survey. This follows on from previous reports undertaken on the site a number of years ago. The report concludes that there are no ecological constraints to the proposed development and in respect of bats, demolition can proceed without the need for further survey work (e.g. activity surveys) or bat mitigation due to the lack of evidence seen and the minimal potential of the property to support bats. Cheshire Wildlife Trust have reviewed this document and raise no objections subject to conditions securing protection for breeding birds and biodiversity enhancements. An informative regarding bats has also been suggested.

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

#### 6.20 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.

One of these principles is Code for Sustainable Homes. The applicant is proposing that the affordable units on the site would meet Level 3 and is requirement on schemes which are funded by the Homes and Communities Agency. It would be desirable for all properties to be built to this standard; however this is something which is encouraged rather than a requirement. It is not considered that the proposal significantly conflicts with Policy CS19 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

#### 6.21 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 deliver residential development within the South Widnes Key Area of Change for which there is requirement over the plan period. It is acknowledged that the proposal would result in the loss of an employment site, however the Employment Land Statement provided 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 is evident from the marketing undertaken.

The active character of the area is considered to be residential especially given its relationship to the predominantly residential area of Halton View to the north. The proposed residential use would be acceptable on this site from an amenity perspective as a result of the implementation of the suggested noise mitigation measures.

The proposed development would prejudice the implementation of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System, however it is concluded based on the benefit that the vehicular connection to the town centre would have for a residential use, the feasibility of implementation along with the blighting of the site and environmental / amenity concerns for nearby residents, the proposal which would prejudice the implementation of the Widnes Town Centre Circulatory System is on balance considered to be acceptable.

The proposal would deliver on-site affordable housing provision in excess of the policy requirement for which there is a significant requirement in the borough as well as on-site open space including a LEAP which would be of significant benefit of persons residing in the locality.

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

The residential layout proposed demonstrates sufficient separation for both light and privacy and each property would have an appropriate amount of private amenity space.

The proposal is considered to be of an appropriate design with active frontages provided to both Page Lane and Warrington Road and the elevations indicate a mix of materials to add interest and result in well designed properties.

The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Grant planning permission subject to conditions.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

1. Time Limit – Full Permission.
2. Approved Plans.
3. Implementation in accordance with Proposed Site Levels (Policy BE1)
4. Facing Materials to be Agreed (Policies BE1 and BE2)
5. Implementation of Submitted Soft Landscaping Scheme and subsequent maintenance (Policy BE1)
6. Implementation of Submitted Boundary Treatments Scheme and subsequent maintenance (Policy BE1)
7. Breeding Birds Protection – (Policy GE21)
8. Implementation of Open Space and LEAP – (Policy H3)
9. Hours of Construction – (Policy BE1)
10. Implementation of Construction Management Plan (Highways) – (Policy BE1)
11. Restriction of Hours of Use – Phase 3 land – Open Storage Use – (Policy BE1)
12. Provision of Affordable Housing – (Policy CS13)
13. Implementation of Acoustic Fences – (Policy PR2)
14. Ground Contamination - (Policy PR14)
15. Off Site Highway Works – (Policy BE1)
16. Provision & Retention of Parking for Residential Development – (Policy BE1)
17. Highway to be made good following connection works – (Policy BE1)
18. Precise Access Details to be submitted – (Policy BE1)
19. Implementation of Drainage Strategy – (Policy PR16)
20. Biodiversity Enhancements – (Policy GE21)
21. The requirement for a further Bat Survey if works not commenced within two years of date of decision – (Policy GE21)

### Informatives

1. Bat Informative
2. Coal Authority Standing Advice
3. Cheshire Police Informative
4. Tree 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.