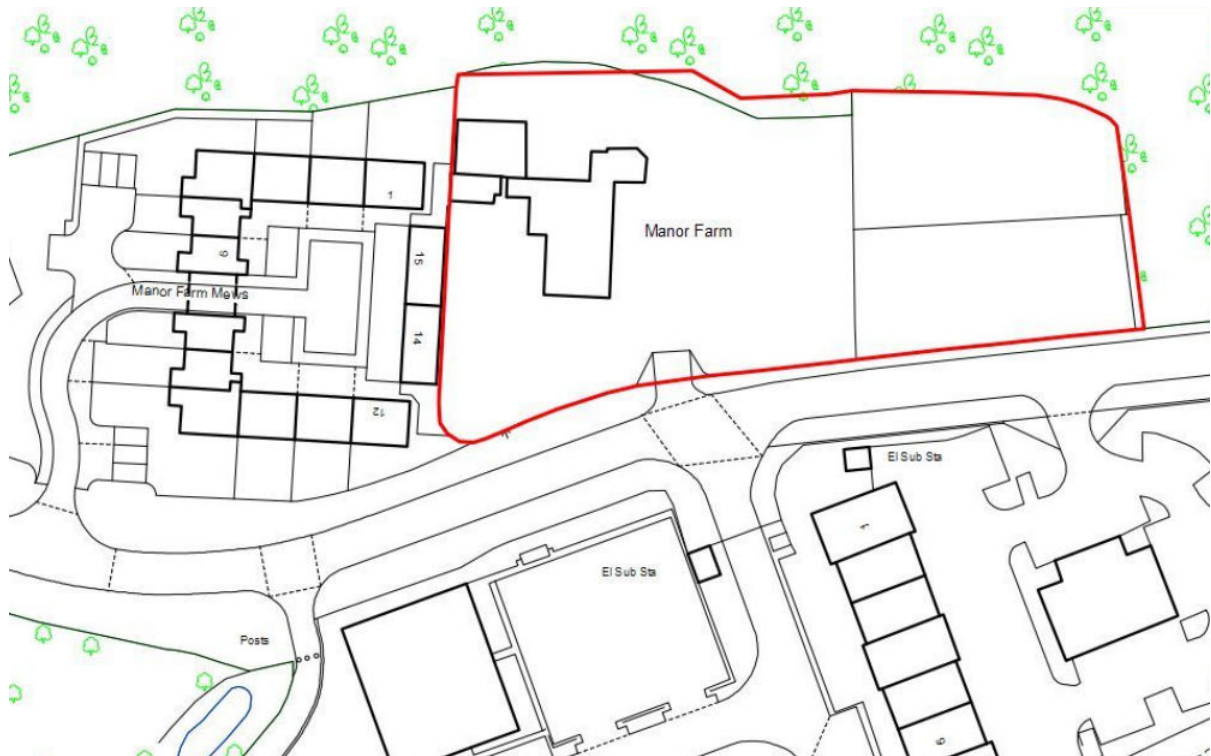


<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	14/00665/FUL
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Manor Farm, Manor Farm Road, Runcorn WA7 1TE
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Proposed demolition of existing buildings and development comprising 18 no. dwellings, associated access and open space
<b>WARD:</b>	Daresbury
<b>PARISH:</b>	None
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b>	Pauline Shearer
<b>AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):</b>	Mr Alastair Vale, Cranford Estates (Runcorn) Ltd
<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)	Primarily Residential
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	No
<b>REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	1 written representation of support and 7 objections from neighbours received from the publicity given to the application.
<b>KEY ISSUES</b>	Design and layout, Amenity, Trees and woodland and Highways,
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Grant planning permission subject to conditions and S.106 in relation to the provision of a commuted sum for off-site open space.
<b>SITE MAP</b>	



## **1. APPLICATION SITE**

### **1.1 The Site**

The site subject of the application is the existing Manor Farm which is currently not in use. The application includes the removal of the existing farmhouse and associated buildings as well as the re-use of the remaining undeveloped part of the site. The site is located in close proximity to the development of Manor Farm Mews to the west and commercial units south of the site. The land to the north and east is wooded and under the control of the Woodland Trust. The site has a direct access from Manor Farm Road. The site is designated Primarily Residential on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.

The surrounding area is both residential and commercial with the large developments of Sandymoor to the south and Manor Park to the east and west. The site is in close proximity to the A558 Daresbury Expressway.

## **2. THE APPLICATION**

### **2.1 The Proposal**

The application proposes the demolition of existing buildings and construction of 18 no. two storey dwellings with associated access and on site open space.

Access into and out of the proposed development will be by way of a one way arrangement, with the access located at the existing entrance to the site and the egress further toward the eastern end of the site.

The final layout of the scheme has been largely determined by the existing tree positions, in particular the mature oak tree located near the existing farmhouse.

## 2.2 Documentation

The planning application is supported by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, a Topographical Survey, Tree Survey, Tree Works Plan, Landscape Proposals, Affordable Housing Viability Assessment, Planting Plan, Proposed Site Levels, Draft S.106 and a Preliminary Risk 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.

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 allocated as a Primarily Residential Area 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;
- GE24 Protection of Important Landscape Features
- GE27 Protection of Trees and Woodlands
- PR14 Contaminated Land;
- PR15 Groundwater;
- PR16 Development and Flood Risk;
- TP1 Public Transport Provision as Part of New Development;
- TP6 Cycle Provision as Part of New Development;
- TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development;
- TP12 Car Parking;
- PR14 Contaminated Land
- 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;
- CS13 Affordable Housing
- CS15 Sustainable Transport;
- CS18 High Quality Design;
- CS20 Natural and Historic Environment
- 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

There are no objections, in principle, to the proposal subject to further amendments to provide details of the following: hard landscaping; footways; landscaping for adoptable areas; clear demarcation of adoptable areas; street lighting; an increase in the width and length of the footpath from Manor Farm Road into the site; pedestrian visibility splays at plots 17 & 18; demonstration of cycle parking; garages being a minimum of 6m x 3m; and highway drainage. Members will be updated regarding the submission of these amended and additional details. However, these requirements can be the subject of additional planning conditions if by the time of the Committee amendments are not received. The submission of a construction management plan should also be secured by condition.

#### 4.2 Environmental Health – Ground Contamination

No objection to the proposed development.

#### 4.3 Open Spaces Officer – Trees

The proposed development site contains a TPO and is adjacent to the Woodland Trust owned Lodge Plantation which is a designated Local Wildlife Site. Tree removal and replanting is acceptable as too is the TPO protection. A license is required from Natural England as the site is important for roosting bats and a Great Crested Newt has been recorded on the site. No objection is therefore raised. The mitigation measures proposed are generally appropriate, however, these should be extended to more than one

garage/plot. A condition will be attached to address this and to ensure tree protection; landscaping; and bird nesting legislation.

#### 4.4 Environment Agency

Due to the size of the site and scale of the proposal the Environment Agency's standing advice will apply. The vast majority of the site is within a Flood Zone 1 with a very small portion in Flood Zone 2, the latter will have no built development upon it.

#### 4.5 United Utilities

No observations received at the time of writing this report.

#### 4.6 Woodland Trust – Woodland Trees

Preference for a buffer zone to mitigate potential for interference from future residents to the adjacent woodland (owned by the Woodland Trust). Need for mitigation measures for bat habitat in farm building.

#### 4.7 Cheshire Wildlife Trust - Habitat

Preference for a buffer zone between the development and the woodland. Mitigation measures are required for Bats and Great Crested Newts prior to the determination of the application. Surveys required for water vole and nesting birds during the appropriate seasons.

#### 4.8 CW&C Conservation Consultant – Manor Farmhouse

Advised that although the building of Manor Farmhouse is not listed, nor in a conservation area, that it is of some considerable age and has some historic merit. A condition is recommended to require recording and analysis of the building prior to demolition.

#### 4.9 Sandymoor Parish Council

No comments received at the time of writing this report.

#### 4.10 Health & Safety Executive

Does not advise against the proposal. In addition, confirmation has been received that none of the Essar Pipelines or Shell operational pipelines should be affected by the proposal.

#### 4.11 Natural England

No objection but advised the requirements to adhere to wildlife and habitats legislation.

### **5. REPRESENTATIONS**

5.1 The application has been advertised by a press advert in the Widnes & Runcorn World on 03/12/2014, two site notices posted on Manor Farm Road on 19/12/2014 and 23 neighbour notification letters sent on /12/2014.

5.2 Eight representations have been received from the publicity given to the application. One in support of the proposal and seven raising objections or making comments. A summary of the issues raised is as follows:

- The planning department need to affirm that future access will be deeded to existing residents for access for maintenance of their properties.
- That existing residents should be notified when contaminants are to be removed from the site and that they are enclosed to avoid them becoming air bound.
- Unique footprint in terms of wildlife and trees – several varieties of birds and woodland wildlife are present and habitat should be protected.
- Loss of outlook from adjacent property.
- Loss of privacy in relation to No.15 Manor Farm Mews and proposed adjacent plots.
- Potential damage to property during construction of new dwellings.
- Provision of an access into the woods.
- Restricted construction hours are needed.
- Insufficient neighbour consultation as it was over the Christmas period.
- Lack of open communication between neighbouring residents and Emery Planning Partnership Ltd regarding boundary treatment.
- Lack of transparency.
- Boundary fence does not need replacing and there has been a lack of discussion between owner of No.1 Manor Farm Mews and Emery Planning Partnership Ltd.
- Boundary encroachments.
- Use of the side wall of the existing property will result in disturbance from children playing and retention of the boundary wall would prevent this.
- Increasing the height of an existing 1.8m boundary wall to 2.1m will affect the existing view of the neighbouring occupier and reduce light to a lawn area.
- Replacement of a boundary wall will affect existing climbing plants.
- Presence of newts in an adjacent occupier's garden area.
- Need to retain a sandstone wall boundary between the site and No.14 Manor Farm Mews.
- Loss of another locally historic building in Halton. It would have been preferable to see the building repaired and re-used and incorporated within the scheme.
- Minimise and mitigate dust emissions from construction.
- Minimise and mitigate noise emissions from construction.
- Proposed building design is out of place and ruin the charm of the woodland and farm building.
- Site is not big enough for 18 dwellings.
- There is little or no woodland left in the Sandymoor area this development is not needed unless preserves/enhances the original characteristics of the farm land.
- Sandymoor is the more suitable location for this development.

## 6. **ASSESSMENT**

### 6.1 Design and Layout

The site is 0.53ha, has a density provision of 34 dwellings per hectare and is within a Primarily Residential Halton UDP allocation and therefore the principle of development is accepted. Permission was granted in 2007 on

application reference 06/00879/OUT for the demolition of building and the erection of 17 no. dwellings. A further application was submitted in 2011, reference 11/00280/OUT for a similar proposal which was subsequently withdrawn due to insufficient information.

This proposal seeks permission for 18 dwellings, resulting in the removal of the existing buildings including the farmhouse. The farmhouse and buildings are not listed, are not within a conservation area and currently Halton does not have a list of locally protected buildings. Several of the comments received refer to the age of the farmhouse and regret its removal. The Council's conservation consultant has provided advice in relation to this and although not protected, has recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission to ensure that the buildings undergo analysis and recording prior to their removal.

The proposed dwellings are two storey and a mix of fourteen 3-bedroom and four 4-bedroom houses. Each dwelling is provided with two off-street car parking spaces, and sufficient private garden space. Bin storage is provided to the rear for all but two of the plots. Those two plots have provision at the front incorporated into the decorative landscaping. Whilst this is not ideal, these two plots are situated within a non-adopted courtyard and set sufficiently within the front plot curtilage to have a minimal effect on the street scene.

The house types and elevation treatment are of a character similar to that of Manor Farm Mews adjacent and with the incorporation of arched window lintels, window proportions, single apex roof design and chimneys, and the use of some timber finishes, they provide a rustic nature to the scheme. The applicant has ensured that these details are included in the rear and side of those dwellings on plots which are adjacent to Manor Farm Road, to ensure that the street scene is not compromised and that the scheme character is viewed favourably from the road frontage. Final materials will be agreed prior to commencement through planning condition.

The existing site benefits from a sandstone boundary wall to the front along Manor Farm Road and partly to the western side of the site. The scheme incorporates this around the frontage of the site, but has shown some changes to it along the western boundary. The retention of it around the front ensures that the scheme integrates well into its surroundings and maximises the street scene appearance. The boundary to the west is of lesser concern in relation to visual amenity but does present questions regarding potential future neighbour conflict. The applicant has discussed the treatment of the boundary to the western side of the scheme with those neighbours directly affected and who have raised concerns through their comments. An amended plan has been submitted and is the subject of a re-consultation. This drawing shows elements of the boundaries with the existing occupiers as retained and additional treatment proposed to protect privacy i.e. a new 1.8m close boarded fence with a 0.3m trellis on the inside of the boundary of plot 5; existing stone wall surrounding plot 4 to be increased to 1.5m high using reclaimed stone on site; 1.5m intermediate fences between the new plots and

a 1.5m fence alongside plot 14 to prevent potential nuisance from the use of the driveway adjacent on plot 4.

Whilst further objection has been received from the affected neighbours with regard to this, it is considered that the applicant has undertaken reasonable negotiations with the affected occupiers and the amended boundary treatments offer a responsible approach to achieving privacy whilst minimising disturbance to their existing outlook.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of scale and compliant with Policies BE1, BE2 and BE22 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

## 6.2 Amenity

The nearest affected residential occupiers are those on Manor Farm Mews. No.'s 1 and 12 have side elevations facing the proposal and No's 14 and 15 with rear elevations along the western boundary of the site. None of these elevations have habitable room windows which the proposal affects. The dwelling on Plot 5 does not encroach beyond a 45 degree angle when viewed from the rear windows of No.1 Manor Farm Mews and as a result, does not adversely affect the outlook of the occupiers of this existing property. In its relationship with other existing properties the proposal meets the interface standards of the Council and complies with Policies BE1 and BE2 of the Halton UDP.

Comments have been received in relation to the impact of the height of proposed boundary walls. The treatment of the western boundary is still under negotiation at the time of writing this report and members will be updated verbally on the conclusions of these negotiations at the committee meeting.

Comments relating to the boundary also refer to the need to allow access by existing residents on Manor Farm Mews for maintenance of their property. The proposal does not alter the existing situation whereby occupiers of the properties on Manor Farm Mews have to obtain permission from the owner of Manor Farm for the same access. This is not an issue to which members should attach particular weight when determining this planning application and is essentially an issue between private parties.

## 6.3 Highway Considerations

The principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a highway safety perspective. Further amendments have been requested from the applicant to ensure that the internal arrangements of the site operate successfully. These include the following: hard landscaping footways/landscaping for adoptable areas; adoptable areas clearly demarcated; street lighting details required; increase in width and length of footpath from Manor Farm Road; pedestrian visibility splays at plots 17 & 18; demonstration of cycle parking; garages a minimum of 6m x 3m; drainage details of highway needed.



Members will be updated regarding the submission of these amended and additional details, however, these requirements can be the subject of additional planning conditions if, by the time of the Committee, amendments are not received.

The standard requirement for a construction management plan, including the need for a wheelwash, is also recommended.

On the basis of this and on the assumption that the requested amendments and additional information are provided, the proposal is deemed acceptable and complies with Policies BE1, TP6, TP7 and TP17 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

#### 6.4 Trees & Woodland

The site is considerably constrained by the presence of a protected oak tree (TPO Ref: 112). The site is also adjacent to Lodge Plantation which is in the ownership of the Woodland Trust and is a designated Local Wildlife Site. The application was accompanied by an Arboricultural Survey and Implications, together with tree constraint drawings. The scheme successfully deals with the constraints resulting from the TPO and adjacent woodland in terms of the siting of the dwellings and boundaries and the protective measures for the tree to be retained. The applicant has undergone discussion with the Woodland Trust to agree the principle of some tree removal and crown lifting. The Council has not received any comments from the Woodland Trust at the time of writing the report and members will be updated verbally of the agreed work. As the Woodland Trust is beyond the control of the Local Authority, the agreed works to trees will be incorporated into a legal agreement and be the subject of a planning condition.

The application was accompanied by an ecological report in relation to the wildlife impacts of the proposal. The applicant has been requested to provide details of mitigation for the loss of habitat identified; bats and great crested newt. Further survey work to assess habitat for water vole and bird nesting has been advised during the appropriate seasons. The applicant's response to these requests will be presented to members either by update or verbally at committee.

Indicative landscaping details are shown on the originally submitted site plan which are acceptable.

Conditions are recommended for amended plans to address the concerns relating to: the interface between the scheme and the woodland; the provision of wildlife habitat mitigation measures; updating of the landscaping layout drawing; tree protection measures; Woodland Trust tree removal, pruning and planting; and landscaping provision.

On the basis of the above and further information in relation to mitigation and impact on woodland, the application is acceptable and complies with Policies BE1 and GE27 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

## 6.5 Site Levels

The application is accompanied by a tree works drawing which shows existing site levels. These have been considered and would result in an acceptable development in terms of relationships to existing roads. It is considered reasonable to attach a condition which for the requirement of existing and proposed site and finished floor levels, but with a comparison to adjoining land.

This would ensure compliance with Policy BE1 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

## 6.6 Flood Risk & Drainage

The application site is less than 1ha in area in Flood Zone 1 and is in an area which is at low risk from flooding.

In relation to drainage, a drainage layout plan accompanies the application. Some further details / clarifications will be needed before the drainage strategy can be agreed. The implementation of the drainage strategy can be secured by condition.

The proposal is considered to be compliant with Policy PR16 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS23 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

## 6.7 Affordable Housing

The Halton Core Strategy includes Policy CS13 which requires residential development proposals over 10 units to deliver 25% affordable dwellings on the site. In cases where the applicant considers that the scheme would return insufficient value to make this infeasible, the application is accompanied with a viability assessment. The Council has taken full consideration of the viability.

The analysis of the information provided, including development costs and likely market values of the plots, indicates that the viability of the development is marginal where an element of affordable housing is included either for the 4 four units to achieve the 25 % and for allowing just 2 units. In addition, it is likely that the provision of affordable housing will impact on the values of the remainder of the development, by say a 10% reduction, which again depresses the viability.

The levels of % profit return flagged up by the analysis where provision for some affordable housing is included is less than we would reasonably expect for a viable scheme based upon previous schemes considered. In addition, the applicant has identified requirements in connection with provision of replacement bat roosts, additional fencing and tree works which will add to the development costs and impact on the viability.

On this basis, the applicant has successfully demonstrated that the imposition of Policy CS13 in this case would result in development which is unviable and would put a brake on this development. Members are advised to consider this as material to the determination of the application and approve the scheme in compliance with the requirements of Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy.

#### **6.8 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 principle of residential development has previously been established and the proposal would develop a vacant site, have a positive impact on the locality by providing homes of mixed size and contribute to Halton's housing provision without serious harm to the existing amenity of existing occupiers; trees; wildlife and highway safety. The proposal offers a sensitive design and layout which continues the semi-rural character of Manor Farm Mews and the surrounding woodland area.

The application is recommended for approval subject to S.106 (off-site public open space) and conditions.

### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions and a S.106 Agreement for a contribution towards off site open space.

### **9. CONDITIONS**

1. Time Limit – Full Permission.
2. Approved Plans (Policies BE1 and BE2).
3. Legal agreement with Woodland Trust for tree works in woodland adjacent to the site (BE1 & GE27)
4. Submission of exiting site levels and proposed site and finished floor levels - (Policy BE1)
5. Facing Materials - (Policies BE1 and BE2)
6. Landscaping – (Policy BE1)
7. Boundary Treatments Scheme – (Policy BE22)
8. Tree Protection measures (BE1 and GE27)
9. Breeding Birds Protection – (Policy GE21)
10. Recording and analysis of farmhouse and buildings (Policy BE1)

11. Submission of a revised wildlife mitigation strategy (Policy GE27)
12. Removal of Permitted Development Class A & E – Plots 3; 6; 7– (Policy BE1)
13. Hours of Construction – (Policy BE1)
14. Submission of a Construction Management Plan (Highways) – (Policy BE1)
15. Ground Contamination - (Policy PR14)
16. Provision & Retention of Parking - (Policy BE1)
17. Drainage Strategy – (Policy PR16)
18. Submission of details of street lighting (Policy BE1)

#### Informatives

1. United Utilities Informative.
2. Environment Agency standing advice

### **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.