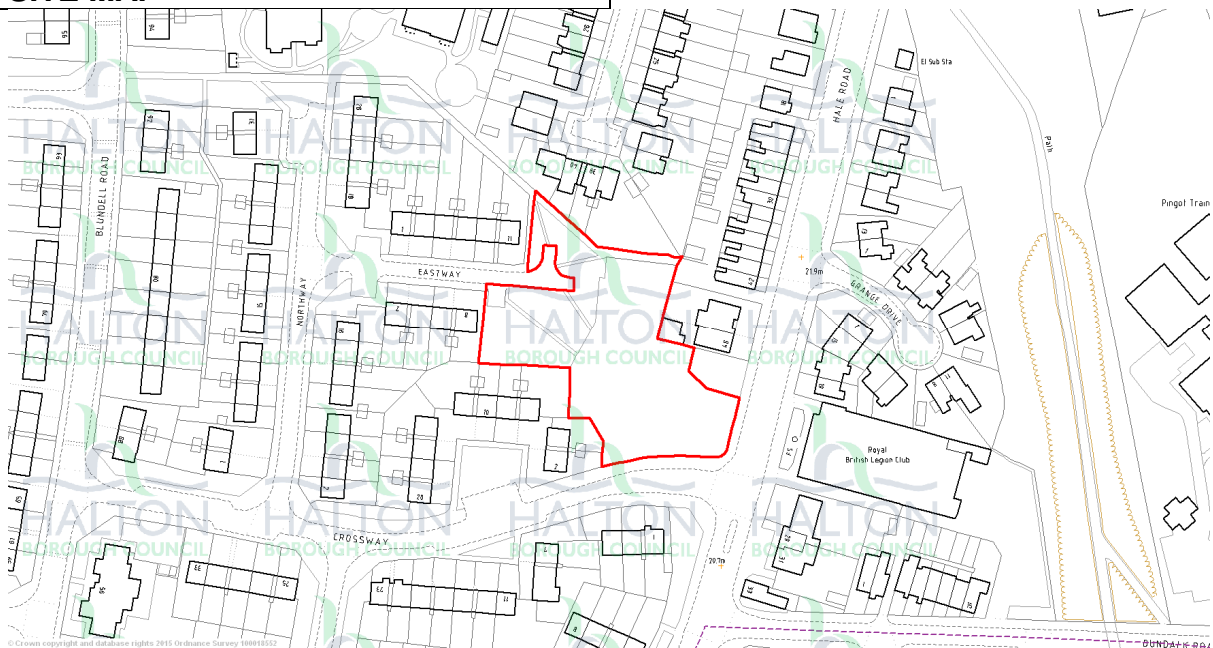


APPLICATION NO:	15/00015/FUL
LOCATION:	Land at Crossway, Widnes
PROPOSAL:	Proposed development of 4 No. three bedroom houses, 2 No. two bedroom bungalows and 6 No. one bedroom flats, access road, car parking, cycle parking and landscaping.
WARD:	Broadheath
PARISH:	N/A
CASE OFFICER:	Glen Henry
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Halton Housing Trust
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:	Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Primarily Residential Area
DEPARTURE REPRESENTATIONS:	No 8
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to Conditions.
SITE MAP	



1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site and Surroundings

Site of approximately 0.33Ha located at junction of Hale Road, Crossway and East Way Widnes. The site is currently landscaped with grass mounds, trees and worn pathways crossing the site.

1.2 Planning History

94/00630/FUL - Application for 12 No. two storey houses was withdrawn

1.3 Background

None directly relevant

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 Proposal Description

The scheme proposes the development of 4 No. three bedroom houses, 2 No. two bedroom bungalows and 6 No. one bedroom flats, access road, car parking, cycle parking and landscaping on an area of informal open space at Crossway, Widnes.

The properties are proposed to be social rented by Halton Housing Trust.

2.2 Documentation

The planning application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, Ecological Assessment, Phase 1 Site Investigation and Tree Survey.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

The government has published its finalised Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, previously NPPG) to complement the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.2 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The site lies entirely within a Primarily Residential Area.

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

3.3 Unitary Development Plan

BE1 General Requirements for Development
BE2 Quality of Design
GE21 Species Protection
H2 Design and Density of New Residential Development
H3 Provision of Recreational Greenspace
TP6 Cycling Provision as part of New Development
TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
TP12 Car Parking
PR14 Contaminated Land
TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
TP17 Safe Travel for All

3.3 Halton Core Strategy (2013)

Policy CS13 Affordable Housing is of particular relevance

3.4 Joint Waste Local Plan 2013

WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management
WM9 Sustainable Waste Design and Layout for New Development

3.5 Relevant SPDs

New Residential Development SPD; Affordable Housing SPD; Designing for Community Safety SPD; Draft Open Space Provision SPD are of particular relevance.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 HBC Highways – No Objection in principle

4.2 HBC Open Spaces – No Objection in principle

4.3 HBC Contaminated Land – No Objection in principle

4.4 United Utilities – No objection in principle

5. REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 The application has been advertised via the following methods: site notices posted near to the site, press notice, and Council website. Surrounding residents and landowners have been notified by letter. 8 letters of objection have been received raising the following issues:

- Loss of limited green space
- Loss of trees
- Loss of public right of way
- Increased noise, disturbance from parking, increased traffic. Impact on homeworker
- Loss of view/ light
- Loss of wildlife
- Detrimental impact upon residential amenities / character/ visual impact of the development from such a cramped development.
- Questioning the validity of the submitted reports
- Loss of children's play area requiring crossing busy junction to reach alternative
- Construction impacts from piling noise, dust, heavy plant
- That footpath should be closed to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Request for more landscape screening
- Lack of consultation
- Questioning the suitability of the land for building due to structural capability and existing drainage
- Insufficient parking provision
- Highway safety including excessive traffic, road capacity, means of access, visibility, car parking and effects on pedestrians and cyclists

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principle of Development

The site lies entirely within an area designated as a Primarily Residential Area in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. Proposals for residential development are therefore considered acceptable in principle. The site is currently landscaped as grassed mounds with trees and acts as informal open space. No part of the site is designated Greenspace and it is considered that the loss of the informal greenspace would not be significantly harmful to the wider area to justify refusal of planning permission in this case.

6.2 Design Character and Amenity

The scheme proposes the development of 4 No. three bedroom houses, 2 No. two bedroom bungalows and 6 No. one bedroom flats, access road, car parking, cycle parking and landscaping on an area of informal open space. They are to be constructed of traditional brick with ridged tiled roof but with modern fenestration and detailing including roof cowl sun tubes. The properties are comparable with similar properties previously approved and constructed within Widnes.

The site is currently occupied by grassed landscape mounds. The applicant has confirmed that it intends to remove any surplus material in order that finished floor levels relate closely to the existing levels of the surrounding houses on both Hale Road and Eastway. This will be agreed through later submission secured by appropriately worded planning condition.

The scheme is not wholly compliant in terms of separation and privacy distances and garden spaces when tested against standards that relate to new green field development. Due to the constrained nature of these infill sites such shortfalls are considered to be largely inevitable. It is however considered to provide an opportunity to provide a high quality development particularly given the constrained nature of the site and the context of the wider residential area. It is however considered necessary to restrict permitted development rights for the resultant dwellings to avoid potential over-development of the plots and to safeguard residential amenity into the future.

6.3 Highways, Parking and Servicing

A number of technical queries have been raised with respect to such things as refuse collection, construction management, loss of existing pathways and protection of retained rights of way. It is considered that these issues have now been satisfactorily resolved and any outstanding matters can be adequately addressed by appropriately worded planning conditions. The Council's Highways Engineer has confirmed that no significant highway issues are raised and that no highway objection can be sustained.

6.4 Contamination

The application is supported by an initial site investigation. The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has confirmed that, as the proposed development is for residential use and it is on previously developed land, there is a need for further detailed investigation assessment of the land contamination potential of the site. Within impacted areas, mitigation is expected to comprise removal of surplus material to allow creation of a break layer and 600mm cover system of clean material.

It is considered that these elements can be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions and on that basis the Council's Contaminated Land Officer has confirmed that he raises no objection.

6.5 Trees and Ecology

The proposals will result in the loss of a number of mature trees from the site. The application is supported by a detailed tree survey. Whilst the trees are considered to have amenity value in their own right, the Council's Open Spaces Officer has advised that there are no ecological constraints to the development and that trees to be removed are unlikely to be worthy of Tree Preservation Orders and that mitigation should be sought through re-planting and/ or compensation.

Whilst the loss of trees is regrettable, it is considered that the wider benefits of the scheme outweigh any harm resulting from the loss. Additional information is required with respect to the future landscaping of the site and its future maintenance. It is considered that adequate replacement planting can be adequately secured by condition.

6.6 Affordable Housing

Policy CS13: Affordable Housing of the emerging Core Strategy seeks to secure 25% of total residential units for affordable housing provision. The scheme proposes 12 houses and flats within the social rented sector. Halton Housing Trust is a registered provider of social housing and the proposals are therefore considered to accord with the aspirations of Policy CS13.

6.7 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**

The scheme proposes residential development on an area of informal open space. The site lies entirely within an area designated as a Primarily Residential Area in the Halton Unitary Development Plan and proposals for residential development are therefore considered acceptable in principle. Whilst a number of issues have been raised by objectors the benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh any resulting harm. The scheme is considered to offer a good quality of development suited to the character of the site and the wider area and it is considered that the requirements and aspirations of UDP policy and relevant SPD can be met.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Approve subject to:-

- (a) The entering into a Legal Agreement or other agreement for the provision of a financial contribution towards off-site public open space.
- (b) Conditions relating to the following:
 1. Standard 3 year permission (BE1)
 2. Condition specifying plans/ amended plans (BE1)

3. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
4. Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of both hard and soft landscaping to include replacement tree planting. (BE2)
5. Boundary treatments including retaining walls to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE2)
6. Submission and agreement of a scheme of ecological enhancement features (GE21)
7. Submission and agreement of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (BE1)
8. Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE1)
9. Submission and agreement of finished floor and site levels. (BE1)
10. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
11. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
12. Conditions relating to restriction of permitted development rights relating to extensions and outbuildings and boundary fences etc. (BE1)
13. Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)
14. Securing replacement tree planting in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and agreed (BE1).

(c) That if the S106 Agreement or alternative arrangement is not executed within a reasonable period of time, authority be delegated to the Operational Director – Policy, Planning and transportation in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Committee to refuse the application on the grounds that it fails to comply with Policy S25 (Planning Obligations).

9. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.