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Development Control Committee

Monday, 11 June 2007 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn



Chief Executive

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Paul Nolan (Chairman)
Councillor Dave Thompson (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Peter Blackmore
Councillor Sue Blackmore
Councillor Ron Hignett
Councillor Dave Leadbetter
Councillor Keith Morley
Councillor Shaun Osborne
Councillor Rob Polhill
Councillor Colin Rowan
Councillor Tim Sly

*Please contact Michelle Simpson on 0151 424 2061 Ext. 1126 or michelle.simpson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Tuesday, 17 July 2007*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	1 - 9
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached, and (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members) to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Development Control Committee on Monday, 21 May 2007 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Nolan (Chairman), Thompson (Vice-Chairman), Blackmore, Hignett, Morley, Leadbetter, Osborne, Polhill, Rowan, Sly and Blackmore

Apologies for Absence: Councillors (none)

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: P. Watts, M. Simpson, L. Beard, J. Farmer and J. Tully

Also in attendance: Cllr Wright and Hodgkinson and 33 Members of the public.

**ITEMS DEALT WITH
UNDER DUTIES
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

	<i>Action</i>
DEV1 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2007, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
DEV2 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE	
<p>The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described.</p>	
DEV3 - PLAN NO. 06/00972/FUL - PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF 43 NO. DWELLINGS TO THE LAND AT THE FORMER FIRE STATION, HEATH ROAD, RUNCORN.	
<p>It was agreed that after the receipt of amended plans and consultation that this application be deferred in order Members to visit the site.</p>	
<p>RESOLVED: The application be deferred in order for Members to visit the site.</p>	

DEV4 - PLAN NO 07/00086/COU - FULL APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE TO PARENT SUPERVISED CHILDREN'S PLAY CENTRE TO UNIT 2, ARAGON COURT, MANOR PARK, RUNCORN.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site. No comments had been received from local residents.

Ms S Hoey spoke against the application and Mr P Ross addressed the Committee in favour of the application.

The Committee held a wide ranging discussion regarding the use of the area and the location of the unit in respect of industrial traffic and possible danger to pedestrians. In addition it was noted that this application would raise policy inconsistencies and serious highway issues where young children would be involved.

RESOLVED: That the application be refused due to the unsuitability of the use and location within a Primarily Employment Area and the likely adverse impact on the existing and potential town centre indoor children's play facilities; the undesirable potential conflict with existing uses and unacceptable highway safety implications. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies BE1, LTC3, E3, 34, TP1, TP12, TP16 and TP17 of the Halton UDP and PPS6.

DEV5 - PLAN NO. 07/00093/FUL - PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY TRUCK SERVICING FACILITY AND ASSOCIATED SITE INFRASTRUCTURE TO THE LAND OFF BROWN STREET, WIDNES.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Standard commencement condition,
- 2) Amended Plans condition,
- 3) Submission of materials (BE2 Quality of Design)
- 4) Site investigation, remediation plan (PR14 Contaminated Land)
- 5) Cycle parking details (TP6 Cycling provision as Part of New Development)

- 6) Car parking layout maintained as part of this scheme (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 7) Provision of bin storage/waste (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 8) No outside storage (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 9) Wheelwash during construction (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 10) Visibility Splay (BE1 General Requirements for New Development).

The Committee were recommended to impose a further condition requiring the provision of a 10 metre radius / visibility splay.

DEV6 - PLAN NO. 07/00102/FUL - PROPOSED ERECTION OF 4 NO. TWO STOREY DWELLINGS WITH ADDITIONAL ATTIC ACCOMMODATION AND DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS TO THE LAND AT 5 HOLT LANE, RUNCORN.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site. It was reported that United Utilities raised no objections to the proposal. The Council's Environmental Health Officer had no objections, however, would require a ground investigation and remediation condition.

Mr Maylan addressed the Committee and spoke in favour of the application.

RESOLVED: That the application be refused on the grounds that the proposal in contrary to Policy BE1, BE2, BE12, H2, the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on New Residential Development and PPS3. In particular:

1. The layout of the proposed scheme is out of character for the surrounding area and the proposal does not take account of the adjacent Conservation Area
2. The layout of the properties does not provide garden areas that are in proportion with the size of the 4 bedroom dwellings proposed. As such the layout of the private gardens give the appearance of over development and are out of character with the surrounding area.
3. In addition there is insufficient information relating to the effect the development on neighbouring trees

4. Inadequate junction visibility and would be detrimental to highway safety.

DEV7 - PLAN NO. 07/00126/FUL - PROPOSED B1, B2 AND B8 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH ASSOCIATED SERVICING AND PARKING TO THE LAND OFF DENNIS ROAD, WIDNES.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site. The Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency and United Utilities no objections were raised. However, the Environment Agency suggested that condition be added about the discharge of water and the submission of the site investigation report.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Standard commencement condition,
- 2) Amended Plans condition,
- 3) Submission of materials (BE2 Quality of Design)
- 4) Site investigation, remediation plan (PR14 Contaminated Land)
- 5) Cycle parking details (TP6 Cycling provision as Part of New Development)
- 6) Car parking layout maintained as part of this scheme (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 7) Provision of Green Travel Plan (TP16 Green Travel Plans)
- 8) Provision of bin storage/waste (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 9) No outside storage (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 10) Wheelwash during construction (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)
- 11) Environment Agency conditions (BE1 General Requirements for New Development)

DEV8 - PLAN NO. 07/00154/FUL - FULL APPLICATION FOR ERECTION OF 35 DWELLINGS OF UP TO 2 1/2 STOREYS IN HEIGHT INCLUDING ACCESS AND PARKING TO THE LAND AT NICOLFORD HALL, NORLANDS LANE, WIDNES.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect

of the site. Comments had been received from three local residents details of which were outlined in the report. In addition a further objection to 2 and half storeys and living rooms at first floor (outline planning permission for 42 dwellings. Interface distances in most areas acceptable other than those indicated in the report i.e. no.s 1-3 St Aiden's Drive) had been received, along with an continued objection from the Environment Agency following assessment of the Flood Risk Assessment submitted by applicant in response to their earlier objection. The Committee were also advised of receipt of an objection to the demolition of the hall (which did not require permission).

The Committee heard from Mr Sedgewick who spoke in favour of the application.

RESOLVED: That the application be refused as the poorly designed layout results in the provision of insufficient provision of private and communal amenity space failing to comply with polices BE1 and BE2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan, the New Residential Supplementary Planning Guidance and the principles of PPS1 and PPS3.

DEV9 - PLAN NO. 07/00271/FUL - PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING OFFICES AND ERECTION OF 1 NO. 3 STOREY AND 1 NO. 2 STOREY RESIDENTIAL BLOCK CONTAINING 36 NO. DWELLINGS TO THE LAND AT APPLETON VILLAGE, WIDNES.

The consultation procedure undertaken was outlined in the report together with background information in respect of the site.

It was reported that two letters representing two adjacent residents had been received which detailed the following:

- the proximity of the two storey side elevation of the building to the rear to the boundary wall of 20 Regent Road. (The Council's interface standards of 13m would be achieved;
- provision of car parking. (Highways were satisfied with the provision shown);
- consideration of increase in local traffic volume. (Highways were satisfied that increase in movements could be accommodated satisfactorily on the existing highways network);
- landscape considerations. (A quality landscaping scheme would be provided though the required

- conditions);
- light pollution concerns.

One letter from and adjacent commercial property relating to potential for disturbance from existing commercial use, proposed boundary treatment inadequate, views of commercial skips had also been received. In response it was noted that the boundary treatment would be covered by a planning condition and the proximity of the commercial uses would be considered fully when the submissions were made.

Replacement tree planting necessary would be achieved through the landscaping condition.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved subject to the following:

(A) The applicant entering into a Section 106 planning agreement in relation to the provision of a financial contribution towards off-site open space and the following conditions; -

(B) The following conditions,

- 1 Prior to commencement provision of pre-development site levels and proposed finished floor levels; (BE1)
- 2 Prior to commencement all materials to be submitted and approved; (BE2)
- 3 Prior to commencement details of all boundary treatment to be submitted and approved; (BE22)
- 4 Prior to commencement detailed landscaping scheme to be submitted and approved; (BE1)
x 3
- 5 Prior to commencement details of tree protection to be approved and implemented prior to commencement; (BE1)
- 6 Prior to commencement ground investigations for potential pollutants and remediation scheme where necessary; (BE1 and PR6)
- 7 Prior to commencement provision of a drainage scheme to be submitted and approved; (BE1)
- 8 Prior to commencement of development details of secure cycle storage and bin storage to be submitted and approved; (BE1 and BE2)
- 9 Prior to commencement provision and use of wheel cleansing facilities during course of

- construction to be submitted and approved;
(BE1)
- 10 Prior to commencement of development details of lighting for the site to be submitted and approved; (BE1 and BE2)
 - 11 Prior to commencement of development details of the security gates to the site entrance to be submitted and approved; (BE1 and BE2)
 - 12 Restricted hours of development and deliveries related to development during construction period; (BE1)
 - 13 No damage to trees to be retained during course of construction; (BE1) x 3
 - 14 Access, car parking including disabled car parking, servicing areas shall be laid out in accordance with approved amended plans; (BE1)
 - 15 Insertion of windows pd removed; (BE1)
 - 16 Provision of required bin storage facilities for all individual dwellings at developer's expense. (BE1)

DEV10 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

It was reported that appeals had been received following the Council's refusal of the following applications: -

06/00651/FUL Proposed two storey detached dwelling with turning space for service vehicles on Land Adjoining Casa Castana, The Common, Runcorn, Cheshire

06/00666/FUL Proposed first floor extension to rear and alteration of existing front dormer roof from flat to pitched at 2 Malin Close, Hale, Liverpool, L24 5RU

The Committee were advised that the following appeals were lodged following the Council's refusal of the following applications:

Decisions had been received as follows:

06/00561/FUL Proposed two storey extension to front at 5 Wilsden Road, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 7XS

The following appeal was dismissed:

06/00281/FUL Application for retention of boundary wall and gates at Penrhyn Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4XJ

This appeal was allowed.

The inspector stated that the wall with its piers is not obtrusive or incongruous, and is not in a prominent location. It is also a location where it does not stand out in comparison with neighbouring low walls. It therefore does not seriously harm the appearance and character of this part of Penrhyn Crescent. In most other parts of this road, this type of wall, plus wrought iron fencing, would be inappropriate.

A key factor is that these piers and parts of the wall do not intrude into the street scene in a harmful way. Another factor is that there is some justification for a higher wall in this location for this corner plot with its very limited private rear garden. The higher wall would provide some privacy for additional garden and amenity space.

It was reported that the following applications had been withdrawn:

07/00095/FUL Proposed erection of 7 No. three storey townhouses on Land Opposite Lanark Gardens, Widnes, Cheshire

07/00109/FUL Proposed demolition of existing office/storage buildings and erection of 2 No. three storey residential blocks at Whitfield & Brown, Appleton Village, Widnes, Cheshire

07/00152/FUL Proposed two storey extension to rear of 5 Herons Way, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1UH

07/00167/HBCFUL Proposed erection of gates at entrance to alleyway on Land Between 41 And 52 Levens Way, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 8EY

Meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

REPORT TO: Development Control Committee

DATE: 11th June 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Environment

SUBJECT: Planning application to be determined by the Committee

The following applications for planning permission are submitted to the Committee for consideration with a recommendation in each case. Those applications marked * are considered to have significant employment implications.

An Amendments List, containing the categorisation of planning applications, additional information and amendments to recommendations, will be circulated to Committee Members before the meeting together with plans showing the location of each application site. Those applications now before the Committee, where the planning issues are considered clear by the Chairman, will be included in List A. Unless a Member considers that additional information is required on a particular application in List A it is **RECOMMENDED** that each of the applications be determined (whether for approval or for refusal) in accordance with the conditions or the reasons printed in the Agenda and in the Amendments List previously circulated.

The remaining applications are included in List B. Together with those applications about which Members require further information, List B applications will be considered following determination of applications remaining in List A.

PLAN NUMBER: 06/00972/FUL

APPLICANT: Cheshire Fire Authority/ McInerney Homes

PROPOSAL: Residential development consisting of 40 No. dwellings

ADDRESS OF SITE: Former Fire Station, Heath Road, Runcorn.

WARD: Heath

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION:

The application was advertised by way of a site notice, a press notice and the neighbouring properties and Ward Councillors were also consulted.

Following the initial consultation 59 letters of representation have been received from a total of 47 properties raising concerns regarding the proposed density being too high, properties being 'crammed into site', over-development of the site, blocking sunlight into surrounding properties, decrease in property values, increase in traffic movements, detrimental to highway safety, height of building too high, proposal out of character with surrounding, safety hazard for local school children, no demand in the area for apartments, layout of the proposal is further forward than existing, increase in numbers parking on Bellingham Drive, damage to boundary fence of property adjacent, presence of asbestos on the site, protections of trees on the site, errors on plans, overlooking, inadequate drainage, no family housing provided, access not suitable, fumes and noise from car park, and light pollution.

An additional 11 letters have been received following consultation on the amended plans. The matters raised mostly relate to those mentioned above. However, there were additional comments relating to the additional plans being misleading in relation to the heights shown.

Representations have also been received from Ward Councillors and local MP. In particular, the Ward Councillors express a view that the site is incapable of accommodating the proposal as illustrated and represents an inappropriate over development of the site, which is out of character with its surroundings.

The Health and Safety Executive and United Utilities have been consulted, and do not raise any objections.

The Council's Highways Engineer, Environmental Health Officer, Trees and Woodland Officer and Waste Management Services have also been consulted and any issues raised will also be discussed in the Observations and Issues section of this report.

SITE/LOCATION:

The site is the existing Runcorn Fire Station Site and is located at the corner of Heath Road and Bellingham Drive. The site is currently accessed from Bellingham Drive, with access and egress for emergency vehicles on Heath Road. The site falls within an established residential area.

RELEVANT HISTORY:

None directly relevant although a number of previous planning permissions have been granted predominantly for telecommunications equipment and extensions or adaptations relating to the existing fire station use.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION, KEY POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES:

The site is allocated as within a residential area in the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the key policies, which relate to the development, are: -

H2: Design and Density of New Residential Development

H3: Provision of Recreational Greenspace

BE1: General Requirements for Development

BE2: Quality of Design

TP12: Car Parking

The Council's New Residential Development Guidance Note and Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing are also of relevance.

OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES:

This application was deferred at the last meeting of the Committee, so that Members could visit the site and to afford time for Officers to further consider the submitted amended plans.

Prior to the meeting Members will be provided with a supplementary report, to inform the outcome of the assessment and visit to the site.

The application is for 40 dwellings consisting of 2 no. 3 bedroom houses, 2 no. 4 bedroom houses, 6 no. 1 bedroom apartments and 30 no. 2 bedroom apartments.

Design & Access Statement Principles

The proposal comprises 40 dwellings, with 36 apartments in two blocks, and four terraced houses, covering a larger footprint than the existing fire station on the site.

i) Design- The proposed buildings are of attractive design and reflect the style and character of dominant buildings on the same side of the road. By incorporating features characterised on some of the surrounding dwellings such as timber and render, the buildings will add to and enhance the general street scene.

ii)- Access- It is proposed that vehicles will access the site from Bellingham Drive, and pedestrians will access the site via the same entrance, or via a pedestrian access from the frontage on Heath Road that divides the two apartment blocks.

Residential and Visual Amenity

The existing site when viewed in cross section varies considerably in level from nearby and adjacent dwellings, which in themselves are of generally one and two storey in height. As a consequence, the siting of the proposed building blocks, the fenestrative detailing and general massing all required

specific and careful consideration. As originally submitted, the buildings proposed were considered to be unacceptably sited and did require change.

In relation to these issues, amended plans have been agreed to by the applicant to reduce the apartment block to 2.5 storeys, and to reposition the apartment block adjacent to 120 Heath Road in order to preserve the amenity of the neighbouring property. As a consequence of these alterations the building block position and relationship to site levels has changed.

The development includes an area of on site amenity space for use by future residents of the proposed scheme. The amenity space will be to the rear of the proposed buildings, separating the apartments from the car parking area.

Density

This type of development by its very nature provides a high density solution and in this respect could be considered to be out of character. However, having regard to the levels of parking and amenity space, which can be provided on site, and that the buildings can be positioned without detrimental impact on the neighbouring properties on Heath Road, Bellingham Drive and Abbots Close if tested against normal separation distances.

As a consequence of the number of properties proposed there are, however, issues in respect of levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings now proposed. This matter is still being discussed with the developer.

Open Space and Landscaping

The developer has offered to pay a commuted sum in respect of off- site open space provision.

Currently Heath Road is lined with mature trees at intervals, and the proposal includes the planting of trees at regular spaced intervals along the road frontages, along with grassed areas, shrub and hedge planting at various points within the site. It is however, questionable whether or not the levels of planting shown can be achieved or sustained in the longer term.

There is an existing tree within the curtilage of the site adjacent to the boundary with 120 Heath Road, and one nearby on the boundary, both are subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

The scheme has been amended to pay regard to these trees, however, again it is questionable whether the trees will be capable of longer term retention. The impact of the amended plan upon existing and proposed landscape is currently being discussed with the applicant. Members will be updated orally on this matter.

Contaminated Land

The Council's Environmental Health Officers have commented that the proposal is particularly sensitive to contamination, and as recommended in PPS23 the possibility of contamination should be assumed. The use of the site as a fire station with diesel storage tanks means hydrocarbon contamination is possible. These issues will be dealt with by way of conditions.

Highways Issues

Whilst the Council's Highways Engineer has confirmed that no significant highway objections are raised in principle, the application as submitted raises minor concerns relating to parking provision and the width of the footway along the frontage of the site, however it is felt that these matters can be resolved via amendments.

The above issues are still subject to discussion, and will be reported orally to the Committee.

Conclusion

The proposed use is considered to be acceptable and the design of the buildings of an appropriate high quality generally. The proposed buildings are of a scale, character and quality considered to be in keeping with surrounding residential area, and will present attractive frontages on Heath Road. The buildings originally proposed were shown to be surrounded by amenity space, and planting schemes enhance the development. A number of issues have, however, been raised as outlined above, and negotiations are ongoing. It is considered that the matters can be resolved satisfactorily through further amendments and change to the current scheme and/ or additional information and Members will be updated fully. It is considered that all other matters can be adequately controlled by condition and, on that basis, the application is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to the following conditions:-

A) The applicant entering into a legal agreement in relation to the payment of a commuted sum for the provision and improvement of off-site open space.

B) Conditions relating to the following;

- 1) Standard commencement condition.
- 2) Condition specifying amended plans (BE1).
- 3) Construction hours (BE1).
- 4) Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE1)
- 5) Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)

- 6) Boundary treatments to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE2)
- 7) Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
- 8) Conditions relating to restriction of permitted development rights relating to boundary fences, extensions and enclosures and windows, (BE1)
- 9) Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)
- 10) Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of both hard and soft landscaping to include replacement tree planting. (BE2)
- 11) Drainage condition, requiring the submission and approval of drainage (BE1)
- 12) Conditions relating to tree protection during construction and lifetime of development (BE1)
- 13) Submission and agreement of finished floor and site levels. (BE1)
- 14) Condition requesting structural calculations for retaining walls within 4.0m of any highway/footway (BE1).
- 15) Condition to ensure that windows on the east elevation (adjacent to 120 Heath Road) are obscure glazed.

C) That if the legal agreement is not executed within a reasonable period of time authority be delegated to the Operational Director- Environmental and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman to refuse the application on the grounds that it fails to comply with UDP Policy S25 Planning Obligations.

APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY ADJACENT AUTHORITIES

PLAN NUMBER: 03/00034/ADJ

APPLICANT: D Morgan PLC

PROPOSAL: Adjoining authority consultation on the amended description of development for planning application P/2003/0005 (St. Helens MBC):
Extraction of 2.43 million cubic metres of sand/sandstone to a depth of 15 metres above ordnance datum (AOD) (previously 2.6m cubic metres to 13m AOD). Progressive backfilling with construction, demolition and excavation materials. Restoration of the landscape to original topography for use in agricultural including implementation of a 5 year aftercare plan.

ADDRESS OF SITE: Bold Heath Quarry, Mill Green Lane, Bold Heath, St Helens.

WARD: Adjoining Authority Consultation

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Objection

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION:

Reference 03/00034/ADJ relates to an adjoining authority consultation that Halton Borough Council has been sent in relation to a St. Helens Council planning application (Ref: P/2003/0005) for development at Bold Heath Quarry.

Details of this application were provided through a standard neighbour notification exercise, the display of a site notice and the publication of a press notice (produced by St. Helens MBC). 9 individual letters and e-mails objecting to this planning application have been received from local residents. Objection details contained within their correspondence relate to:

- an unacceptable increase in vehicle movements, particularly heavy vehicles on Derby Road;
- an unacceptable increase in the levels of dirt and dust, not only from the site workings but the spread of material onto surrounding roads, land and peoples houses;
- the levels of noise and dust pollution will increase significantly;
- the proposal will lead to an unsafe environment for local people, wildlife, trees and plants;
- the fear of risk to human health.

- the site has not been restored as originally proposed
- impact on the water table
- reduction in property values (not a material planning objection)

A detailed letter of objection has also been received from Halton Friends of the Earth. Objections contained within that letter an unacceptable increase in vehicle movements, proximity to electricity pylons, noise and dust and pollution from vehicle movements, impact on the water table, potential leachates effecting agricultural land.

SITE/LOCATION:

Bold Heath Quarry is located to the south of St Helens, within an area of largely agricultural land bounded by the M62 motorway approximately 2km to the north; Warrington approximately 2km to the east; and Widnes approximately 1km to the south-west, and Barrows Green Lane 0.5km to the south-west. Access to the site is gained off the A5080 (Derby Road). The existing site occupies a rectangular approximately 40ha, surrounded by undulating arable land. The site has been partially worked in the northwest corner of the site (an area of approximately 7.9ha, (a further 3.8ha has been stripped of topsoil) though in recent years the site has remained dormant.

RELEVANT HISTORY:

The site currently has a planning permission granted in June 1990 (App Ref: 590/102). That permission is for the extraction of sandstone material followed by restoration to agriculture. In 1999 St Helens MBC served an Enforcement Notice on the site, relating to the site operators failure to carry out phased restoration of the site, a failure to operate the site in accordance with the approved scheme of working, and a failure to submit an aftercare scheme. The operator appealed against this Notice, and following two Public Inquiries in 2000 and 2002 an Inspector upheld the Notice with minor variations. This Enforcement Notice (as amended) has still not been complied with and has been held in abeyance subject to a decision being made on this application.

Following this enforcement action and subsequent appeal they later applied for planning permission (ref:03/00034/ADJ) in 2003 for the extraction of 2.6m tonnes (in 2003 approx 1.3m remained un-worked), a reduction in the area of land to be worked from 40ha in total to 24.3 ha (only 17.93 ha to be worked) and a maximum depth of working of 13m AOD. The proposal also included restoration (infilling) with inert construction, demolition and excavation materials. Four years on no decision notice has yet been issued, due to unresolved issues and the need for further information.

This most recent consultation relates to an amendment to the description of above application (ref:03/00034/ADJ), essentially this is a reduction in the amount of material to be extracted, to 2.43 million m³, and a maximum working depth of 15m AOD. The proposal still includes backfilling with inert construction, demolition and excavation materials. Further information has also been submitted to St Helens, which includes a restoration plan.

THE PROPOSAL:

The main aspects of the planning application, which is accompanied by a detailed Environmental Statement, can be summarised as follows:

- Reduction in the surface area of the total site from 40ha in total to 24.3 ha
- Increase in depth of quarrying from 19.5m to 15m (previously submitted as 13m in 2003)
- Increase in the output of quarried material;
- Restoration of site to original land levels by landfilling of inert wastes;
- Revised restoration to agriculture and woodland.

The 1990 permission related to a working area of some 36.4 hectares. The current planning application seeks to reduce the surface area of the working quarry, so that mineral is only extracted from 17.9 hectares of the original area. In essence the surface area to be quarried is halved.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION, KEY POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES:

The site falls under an area covered by the St. Helens Unitary Development Plan.

OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES:

This neighbouring authority consultation is for the amendment of an existing planning application submitted to St. Helens Council in 2003, and reported to Halton's Development Control Committee on 31 March 2003. Much of the issues remain the same.

In 2003 the applicant applied for the extraction of 2.6million m³ (at the time in 2003 approx 1.3m m³ remained un-worked), a reduction in the site area from 40ha in total to 24.3 ha (only an area of 17.93 ha to be worked) and a maximum depth of working of 13m AOD. The proposal also included restoration (infilling) with inert construction, demolition and excavation materials. Four years on no decision notice has yet been issued, due to unresolved issues and the need for further information. The applicant has recently submitted an amended proposal and further information to supplement the application.

Essentially the implications of these amendments are that the proposal has reduced the total amount of sand and sandstone to be extracted from 2.6 million m³ to 2.43million m³, and reduced the maximum working depth to 15m AOD (previously 13m). Backfilling and restoration with inert construction materials is still proposed, although there will be implications on quantities required due to the amendments in the amount of sand and stone to be extracted. Further information has also been submitted to supplement the environmental statement as well as an operational, restoration and aftercare plan.

The amendments to the application do not alter the original reasons for objecting to the proposal reported to the committee on 31 March 2003. As concluded previously considering the history of the site and the current amended application details, it is felt that the on-site impacts of this proposal are unlikely to have any significant adverse impacts on residents of Halton. However, the aspects of the application that originally formed our objection still raise significant concerns and will have consequential impacts on Halton and the local area.

These issues are significant enough to justify objecting to the application and are shown below:

- Firstly, it is still felt that the applicant has not fully justified why the inert materials proposed should be disposed of by land filling. Planning Policy Statement 10 states that landfill is at the bottom of the waste hierarchy, every effort should be made to reduce, reuse and recycle materials, and only land filling when non of these solution are appropriate. There are still doubts over the need for the site for the disposal of inert waste, and there are still concerns over whether or not the required volumes of inert fill will be available over the specified time period, thus meaning the site would not be completed within the stated timescales, subsequently lengthening its impacts on the environment and local residents;
- As indicated in the previous committee report, there are still concerns over the potential for the type and amount of inert waste to run out due to increased technology for re-use and recycling. As such, the effects of the Borough and its residents given the potential for the applicant to utilise other forms of waste cannot be ignored;
- There would still be an increase in traffic caused by more intensive working of the site and importation of inert construction wastes associated with the progressive restoration of the site, and will lead to significant highway problems and amenity impacts on residents of Derby Road, particularly in terms of the likely vehicle numbers that would be generated when the site is operating intensively.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Borough Council objects to the proposal for the reasons outlined above.

1) The following applications have been withdrawn :-

07/00157/FUL Proposed demolition of existing factory unit and erection of three storey block containing 14 No. apartments at 5 Thomas Street Widnes

07/00175/FUL Proposed demolition of four storey hotel and erection of 16 No. self contained flats in a four storey block at Panorama Hotel Castle Road Runcorn

07/00188/FUL Proposed subdivision and conversion of existing dwellinghouse, swimming pool and landscape to form two residential dwellings at Castle View 54 The Underway Runcorn