

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Development Management Committee on Wednesday, 14 January 2026 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Leck (Chair), Thornton (Vice-Chair), Hughes, P. Nolan, Philbin, C. Plumpton Walsh, Polhill, Rowe, Thompson and Woolfall.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S. Hill.

Absence declared on Council business: None.

Officers present: A. Blackburn, H. Bradley, E. Breheny, G. Henry, C. Nixon, A. Plant, S. Moorhouse and I. Moorhouse.

Also in attendance: 36 members of the public.

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

Action

DEV15 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2025, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

DEV16 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the following applications for planning permission and, in accordance with its powers and duties, made the decisions described below.

DEV17 25/00346/REM - APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS, NAMELY LAYOUT, SCALE, APPEARANCE AND LANDSCAPING PURSUANT TO CONDITION 2 ATTACHED TO OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION 22/00423/OUTEIA COMPRISING 500 DWELLINGS, INTERNAL ESTATE ROADS, OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING, AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS. ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS ADDRESSED IN THIS APPLICATION INCLUDE CONDITIONS 3 (DESIGN PARAMETERS), 5 (PROW), 6 (PHASING). LAND OFF HALE GATE ROAD, WIDNES

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

Since the agenda was published, additional variations of the provision to the offsite highway improvements, and amendments to the affordable first homes provision within the Section 106 agreement for the site had been made.

The AB list should have referred to application 25/00346/REM rather than 25/00346/OUT. The outline application (25/00346/OUT), approved in July 2024, granted permission for 500 dwellings, a local centre, a later living scheme, a new primary school, and access points, with scale, layout and landscaping reserved for future determination.

Residents and the Parish Council requested further consultation and a redesign; however, neither were a statutory requirement. The applicant carried out a leaflet drop and met with the Parish Council, while Halton Borough Council undertook its public consultation and issued 105 letters to residents and published a press notice.

The proposal complied with the National Model Design Code and the Council's supplementary planning document (SPD). Officers considered the site acceptable. The scheme included four areas: the historic edge near Hale Bank, the rural edge adjoining the field, the Hale Bank fringe and the Hale Bank core.

A heritage statement was not required as the outline application concluded that the development would not harm the conservation area. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), any low-level harm must be balanced against public benefits and optimal site use. The Conservation Officer recommended strengthening the green buffer to mitigate potential harm, and the application included measures to address this.

Although the draft 2007 Open Space SPD was not met, it was advisory and not a Council adopted policy. The scheme met the requirement for 20% affordable housing and provided 74 affordable rented homes and 26 affordable ownership homes. While no specialist housing was included, 144 homes were adaptable. For new builds, the Halton Housing Needs Assessment recommended 25–30% two-bedroom homes and 35–40% three-bedroom homes; this scheme provided 13.6% two-bedroom and 53.36% three-

bedroom properties.

The Committee was addressed by Mr Anderton who objected to the proposal. He presented the following points:

- Residents were in 'disbelief' of the application due to the local infrastructure and amenities being inefficient for a new development;
- Ditton Railway Bridge was due to have a structural survey in 2026. Members were made aware of the Bridge's condition for decades through infrastructure reports;
- Burst water mains on the Bridge led to long traffic delays;
- The public consultation was inefficient as not all residents were contacted about the development;
- In the public meeting with residents, it was requested that residents discuss their concerns with the applicant and that the site be redesigned. These requests were denied by the applicant;
- The development was detrimental to the area due to external social and economic factors, and more community engagement should be done to mitigate these concerns;
- Section 106 funding will not be spent on the local community;
- Constituents did not feel supported by their local Councillors; and
- The application should be deferred until an independent review of Ditton Railway Bridge was conducted to confirm its safety, the developer agreed to a NPPF consultation with residents, and the developer went on a site visit with residents to discuss concerns.

The Committee was addressed by Mr Gee, the Planning Consultant hired by Hale Bank Parish Council who objected to the proposal. He presented the following points:

- The application was a "Reserved Matters Application" and the housing in the application was not scrutinised;
- The public consultation of the application was insufficient, there was no design review and limited digital access;
- The house designs did not consider Hale Bank's character;
- There was no heritage impact assessment and there was no evidence that there was no impact;

- The Parish Council was concerned about the standard of housing for the site as only 49% of the homes would meet National Space Standards and there was no wheelchair accessible homes;
- There was no certainty that the later life scheme, new school and local centre would be delivered; and
- The development did not address Ditton Railway Bridge which was 'structurally deficient'.

The Committee was addressed by Ms Ashworth, the agent for the applicant, who supported the officer's recommendation to approve the application. She added that:

- Halton needed new homes, and the outline application was approved in July 2024;
- The proposal conformed with the outline parameters with layout, scale and appearance;
- The applicant worked collaboratively with all consultees during the pre-application and application stages;
- The proposal improved the permeability of the site, maximised pedestrian and residential connections, provided new play areas and 'ecological features';
- The applicant's Social Manager worked with the local community in unemployment and adult learning sessions in Widnes and Runcorn and a design competition with the pupils at the local primary school was held. Riverside College students also helped design the site;
- Feedback from residents was incorporated into the proposals; and
- The homes were energy efficient, building regulation compliant and met Central Government's housing standards.

Officers clarified that in the outline planning application, a survey was carried out on Ditton Railway Bridge, and it was deemed acceptable for the development. Therefore, it could not be considered as part of this application. Additionally, the Parish Council submitted their objection to the application much later than the 21-day deadline as they submitted it over three months late.

In response to points raised by the Committee, it was noted that:

- If the application was refused and went to appeal, it was possible that planning permission would be granted;
- Ditton Railway Bridge needed to be fixed to resolve

the flooding issue, but a set amount could be reserved to install a relief road for the bridge;

- The amended drainage system had been presented to United Utilities, and the development could not progress until they stated that they were happy with it;
- Network Rail would organise any surveys for Ditton Railway Bridge and the Council would resolve any highway issues with it;
- The Council did not adopt the National Space Standards in the local plan, but they could be added to a future policy; and
- The Committee was informed that considering the noncompliance with the space standard when balanced against the benefits of the scheme would not outweigh the grant of permission in this case.

After consideration of the application and updates provided by officers, the proposal was Moved and Seconded and the Committee voted to approve the application.

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

- 1) Deed of variation relating to the provision for open space, BNG and affordable housing
- 2) Schedule of the following conditions:
 - Plans condition listing relevant drawings
 - Tree protection
 - Noise mitigation scheme
 - Drainage
 - Landscape management plan
 - Hard and Soft Landscaping
 - Boundary treatment
- 3) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Planning to determine the application following submission of an acceptable drainage scheme.

[The Meeting was suspended at 19:12 to allow members of the public to vacate the public gallery. The Meeting reconvened at 19:15.]

DEV18 25/00384/FUL - PROPOSED EXTENSION TO EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BEDSIT STUDIOS TO FORM NEW BLOCK C - CONSISTING OF 19 NEW ONE-BEDSIT STUDIOS. MIDWOOD HOUSE, TRAVIS STREET, WIDNES, WA8 6FT

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

Officers highlighted the key points as stated in the

report and noted that no representations on the application were submitted and recommended that the application be approved, subject to the conditions.

After consideration of the application and updates provided by officers, the proposal was Moved and Seconded and the Committee voted to approve the application.

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

1) S106 or other appropriate agreement securing financial contributions for Greenspace Provision (£9,702.81) and Recreational Pressure Mitigation (£5,286.94)

2) Schedule of the following conditions:

- Standard Full Permission 1
- Approved Plans (Policy GR1)
- External Facing Materials (Policy GR1)
- Standard Hours Condition (Policy GR2)
- Site levels (Policy GR1)
- Parking and Servicing Implementation (Policy C1 and C2)
- Details of cycle and motorcycle parking (Policy C1)
- Waste and Storage Collection (Policy WM9)
- Ground Contamination (Policy CS23 and HE8)
- Acoustic Report (Policy HE7)
- SUDS (Policy HE9)
- Bird and Bat Boxes (Policy HE1)
- Breeding Birds (Policy HE1)
- Site Waste Management Plan (Policy WM8)
- Climate Change - (Policies CS(R)19 and GR5)
- Arboricultural Method Statement (Policy HE5)
- Recreational Pressure Householder Leaflet CS(R)20

3) That if the S106 or other appropriate agreement is not secured within a reasonable period of time, authority be given to refuse this planning application.

DEV19 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

The following applications had been received / were in progress:

22/00569/OUT - HEATH BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL PARK

The Secretary of State called in the planning application. This was considered in a Public Inquiry held over September into October 2025. The appointed Inspector appointed presented their draft report to the Secretary of State. The Council expects of the informed of the decision

on or about 9 March 2026.

25/00254/COUGEN - APPEAL AGAINST ENFORCEMENT NOTICE ROTHERHAM HOUSE HEATH ROAD WIDNES

In view of the dismissal of the appeal against the refusal of the application for the proposed change of use at Rotherham House reported below, the Council requested an early decision on this Enforcement Appeal. An update will be provided at a later date.

25/00261/COU - 1-4 SALISBURY STREET WIDNES

Proposed change of use of the first floor and part ground floor from E-Class to twelve (12) Sui generis single occupancy HMO rooms and retention of E-class floorspace on ground floor at 1-4 Salisbury Street, Widnes.

25/00272/COU - ODDIES SOCIAL CLUB

Proposed change of use of ground floor of premises from extant (sui generis) licenced social club use with ancillary car park to storage and distribution class (B8) use with ancillary car park at Oddies Social Club, Hale Road, Widnes.

The following appeals have been determined:

25/00254/COU - ROTHERHAM HOUSE

Proposed change of use to flexible letting at Rotherham House, Lunts heath Road, Widnes, WA8 5BB
APPEAL DISMISSED

Meeting ended at 19:21