

APPLICATION NO:	23/00368/FUL
LOCATION:	Land Within, Adjacent to and Surrounding The Uplands And Palacefields, Runcorn.
PROPOSAL:	Proposed demolition of some of the existing buildings (including 317 existing dwellings and the Palace Fields Community Centre), the closure of two existing subways, and the erection of 257 replacement dwellings, together with associated new roads, footways and cycleways, new and improved open space including a new linear park, hard and soft landscaping works, and other associated infrastructure and works.
WARD:	Halton Lea
PARISH:	N/A
APPLICANT:	The Riverside Group Ltd
AGENT:	Lichfields
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:	National Planning Policy Framework (2023) Delivery and Allocations Local Plan ('DALP') (March 2022). Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)
DEPARTURE	Yes
REPRESENTATIONS:	Public objections received, details summarised in the report.
KEY ISSUES:	Principle of development, affordable housing, connectivity, layout, highway impact, residential amenity inc. impact of overlooking and impact on interfaces to existing residents including loss of home, ecology, access, loss of greenspace, loss of a community facility (community centre).
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to planning conditions.

SITE MAP:



APPLICATION SITE

The Site

The application site is designated by the Halton DALP as Primarily Residential, Greenspace including Core Biodiversity Areas. The proposed development site measures approximately 10.01ha. The boundary consists of mature hedgerows, scattered broad leaved trees and hard landscaped boundaries along private residential boundaries.

The site is bounded by Town Park to the north, Palacefields Avenue to the east, Halton Hospital to the South and the East Lane employment site to the west consisting of Grosvenor House, East Lane House, the Royal Mail and Territorial Army sites.

The application redline features the site of the existing Palacefields Community Centre which is proposed to be demolished.

Planning History

The application site is comprised of existing developed land and undeveloped land. There is no planning history relevant to the development proposal.

THE APPLICATION

The Proposal

The planning application carries the following description of development:

Proposed demolition of some of the existing buildings (including 317 existing dwellings and the Palace Fields Community Centre), the closure of two existing subways, and the erection of 257 replacement dwellings, together with associated new roads, footways and cycleways, new and improved open space including a new linear park, hard and soft landscaping works, and other associated infrastructure and works at Land Comprising The Uplands Palace Fields Runcorn.

With regard to the demolition of the Palacefields Community Centre, the Development and Allocation Policy Plan does not designate this as a community facility. Notwithstanding, the Council will consider this loss as a community centre to be the loss of a designated community asset pursuant to planning policy ref: HC5.

Documentation

The planning application was submitted with the following supporting documentation:

- Proposed Plans
- Acoustic Report
- Air Quality Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Bat Roost Survey
- Planning Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Archaeological Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Biodiversity Metric
- Assessment of Biodiversity
- Design and Access Statement
- Crime Impact Statement
- Preliminary Risk Assessment
- Transport Statement

Policy Context

Members are reminded that planning law requires that development proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Delivery and Allocations Local Plan ('DALP') (adopted March 2022)

CS(R)1	Halton's Spatial Strategy
CS(R)3	Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
CS(R)5	A Network of Centres
CS(R)7	Infrastructure Provision
CS(R)12	Housing Mix and Specialist Housing
CS(R)13	Affordable Homes
CS(R)15	Sustainable Transport
CS(R)18	High Quality Design
CS(R)19	Sustainable Development and Climate Change
CS(R)20	Natural and Historic Environment
CS(R)21	Green Infrastructure
CS(R)22	Health and Well-Being
CS23	Managing Pollution and Risk
CS24	Waste
RD4	Greenspace Provision for Residential Development
RD5	Primarily Residential Areas
C1	Transport Network and Accessibility
C2	Parking standards
HC5	Community Facilities and Services
HC10	Education
HE1	Natural Environment and Nature Conservation
HE4	Green Infrastructure and Greenspace
HE5	Trees and Landscape
HE7	Pollution and Nuisance
HE8	Land Contamination
HE9	Water Management and Flood Risk
GR1	Design of Development

GR2	Amenity
GR3	Boundary Fences and Walls
GR5	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)

The following policies are of relevance:

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

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Below are material considerations relevant to the determination of this planning application.

National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF')

The last iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 47 states that planning law requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

Paragraph 85 states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Together, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance set out what the Government expects of local authorities. The overall aim is to ensure the planning system allows land to be used for new homes and jobs, while protecting valuable natural and historic environments.

Supplementary Planning Documents ('SPD')

- Design of Residential Development SPD

- Draft Open Spaces SPD
- Designing for Community Safety SPD

Other Considerations

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1950 ('the Convention') (incorporated in the Human Rights Act 1998), which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the Convention (incorporated in the same Act) which sets out his/her rights in respect for private and family life and for the home.

Officers consider that the proposed development would not be contrary to the human rights of surrounding residents/occupiers (set out above), on account of the fact that the formal process to promote any compulsory purchase order ('CPO') (to enable the planning permission to be implemented) would itself carry a right to recompense under the statutory compensation code. The proposed development seeks to demolish 317 dwellings, 38% of which are privately owned. A grant of planning permission for this development would not result in the immediate loss of homes to those who occupy the 317 dwellings scheduled for demolition, due to the lengthy statutory process that would be necessary to promote a CPO. This process would need to exhaust options for voluntary acquisition before establishing a compelling case in the public interest for compulsory purchase, thereby enabling any CPO to be confirmed/implemented..

Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development that justify the refusal of planning permission.

CONSULTATIONS

The application was advertised via the following methods: Site notice posted near to the site, press notice, and Council website. Surrounding and affected properties were notified by letter.

The following organisations have been consulted and any comments received have been summarised below and in the assessment section of the report where appropriate:

EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Environment Agency

No objection

United Utilities

No objection

Natural England

No objection

Cheshire Police

No objection

COUNCIL SERVICES

Public Health

No objection

Highways

Discussions are ongoing with the Applicant. An update will be presented orally on the night of Committee.

HBC Contaminated Land

No Objection – subject to use of conditions as set out in the report.

Lead Local Flood Authority

No objection – subject to use of conditions as set out in the report.

MEAS – Ecology and Waste Advisor

No objection – subject to the use of planning conditions

Open Spaces

No objection

Environmental Health

No objection - subject to use of planning conditions as set out in the report.

REPRESENTATIONS

A total of 48 objections have been recorded and 1 comments of support as a result of the publicity undertaken for application 22/00368/FUL the details of which are summarised below.

Objections:

- Loss of my home
- My home has been adapted for disabled members of my family
- Inadequate compensation offered
- I renovated my home for retirement with my life savings, alternative accommodation is inadequate
- This is a scheme of gentrification
- My taxes are being used to take my home away from me
- Local affected people are under care of medical professionals with stress and anxiety some on anti depressants
- It is cheaper and better for the environment to retrofit existing units with energy saving measures
- I have lived in this house for 41 years and don't want to move.
- I am nearly mortgage free and will have to restart
- I am not moving from my house
- My house is not for sale
- No home has been flooded on this estate
- There needs to be more proposed bungalows
- We benefit from our home as my wife needs to be located close to hospital, we will be forced away from the locality
- We are losing our forever home
- We are ineligible for a mortgage at our age
- I don't want an equity loan at my age
- If Riverside had taken better care of the area it wouldn't need regenerating
- We will lose the greenery of the area and if we are forced to leave we will lose access to Town Park
- We will lose access to shops, hospital and work place all of which we walk to.
- I am concerned about the impact from construction dust on local residents
- Four generations of my family grew up on this estate, we will lose our home as a result of this proposal
- We bought our home here to provide stability for our family and now this is being taken away
- We are mortgage free and now we are being put in uncertainty, I have nothing to leave my children

- I cant afford to move as a low income earner, my property meets my needs and I can afford it
- The Applicant did not consult everyone prior to submitting the planning application
- The scheme will use Town Park which does not require enhancing, the Council has already enhanced the park recently
- The existing housing stock is fit for purpose
- I don't want to put myself in debt through no fault of my own
- Our properties are in the way of the Applicants ambition
- The proposed scheme will displace the local population
- The Applicants terms for alternative new homes are vague
- The scheme was meant to improve Palacefields for the benefit of everyone
- The valuations put forward by the Applicant are below my expectations
- This will result in a disruption to the local community
- Development will result in a loss of aesthetic value
- Why doesn't the Applicant use their £60m funding to build something new elsewhere
- I don't want to be displaced away from my husband in a care home
- This will destroy the local community
- The loss of the community centre is unacceptable
- The proposed replacement of the community centre with the use of the new community church will lead to faith based conflicts
- I don't support the infill of subways
- Why aren't solar panels being proposed
- I feel safe in this locality if I move I won't feel safe.
- This proposal will negatively impact both home owners and landlords
- This development will produce a large amount of waste, not all of which will be recyclable
- Retaining and improving the existing housing stock is more environmentally friendly

In support:

- I support the scheme. I live in a cold damp bungalow with one room benefiting from natural light

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The development proposed by application 23/00368/FUL (the Development Proposal) is predominantly proposed to take place upon primarily residential land and allocated green space as shown on the Delivery and Allocations Plan Policies Map.

Housing Mix

DALP Planning Policies CS(R)3 and CS(R)12 state that major housing proposals concerning 10 or more dwellings are encouraged to contribute to addressing identified needs (size of homes and specialist housing) as quantified in the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment, unless precluded by site specific constraints, economic viability or prevailing neighbourhood characteristics. The Mid-Mersey SHMA 2016 sets out the demographic need for different sizes of homes, identifying that the majority of market homes need to provide two or three bedrooms, with more than 50% of homes being three bed roomed. The policy justification recognises that a range of factors including affordability pressures and market signals will continue to play an important role in the market demand for different sizes of homes. Evidence from the Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) demonstrates that there is a need for a greater diversity of housing types and sizes across market housing as well as in affordable accommodation. The housing type profile in Halton currently differs from the national pattern with higher proportions of medium/large terraced houses and bungalows than the average for England and Wales. Consequently, there is under provision of other dwelling types, namely detached homes and also to a certain extent, flatted homes. The SHELMA (LCR) shows an above average representation of detached and semi-detached sales however does not breakdown for bedroom requirements. In Halton this is due to a particularly high proportion of new build sales that upwardly skew the figures for detached and semi-detached sales.

It is important to rebalance the type and size of housing across the Borough and to ensure that the most appropriate form of housing is provided by listening to the market to ensure the requirements are met for current and future residents.

Table 1 below illustrates a comparison in the residential mix between those units proposed and those existing units that are proposed to be demolished.

	Proposed new dwellings (% of total development)	Demolished dwellings (% of total demolition)
1 bed units	27 (11%)	108 (34%)
2 bed units	103 (40%)	54 (17%)
3 bed units	104 (40%)	155 (48%)
4 bed units	23 (9%)	0
Total	257	317

Table 1 Comparison of residential mix re demolition and proposed

Table 2 below provides the objectively assessed housing need breakdown as presented in the 2016 SHMAA.

	Market	Affordable
1 bed units	6.5%	44.8%
2 bed units	30.4%	28.4%
3 bed units	52.7%	23.8%
4+ bed units	10.5%	3%

Table 2 SHMAA objectively assessed need

Since the adoption of the DALP, the Liverpool City Region Authority has undertaken a HEDNA study into housing needs of the Liverpool City Region (HEDNA 2023). The local need set out in this evidence base is set out in Table 3 below.

	Market	Affordable
1 bed units	25%	25%
2 bed units	45%	45%
3 bed units	25%	25%
4+ bed units	6%	5%

Table 3 HEDNA objectively assessed need

The proposed scheme will deliver housing in the following forms of tenure, social rent and rent to buy accounting for 75% of units and shared ownership and open market sales accounting for the remaining 25%. No bedroom breakdown has been provided with regard to tenure mix. This is due to the exact tenure split not being finalised at this time on account that the scheme is heavily dependent upon grant funding. The terms and conditions of grant funding may be subject to change after the determination of the planning application. With regard to decision making the Council is limited to consider the information before it. The scheme is heavily weighted toward the delivery of affordable housing, as a result comparisons with the evidence base are made having regard to affordable need only.

When comparing the data expressed in the tables, consideration should be given toward the expectation that the SHMAA evidence base is used to determine new residential planning proposals. This planning application concerns the urban renewal of existing housing stock, specifically the new development and the existing dwellings that it seeks to replace. The outcome of which is a reprofiling of

existing housing provision. In comparison with the SHMAA the Applicant is over providing in two three and four bedroomed properties and providing below the market expectance in one bedroomed properties. However, when comparing against the existing housing stock, the assessed need of affordable housing is more aligned to the development proposal than the existing housing stock subject of demolition for 3 and 4 bedroomed properties. Comparisons with the HEDNA evidence base results in similar observations with the development proposal more aligned for the need of 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed properties than the existing properties. Neither existing or proposed perfectly align with the evidence base. Notwithstanding these comparisons, the SHMAA would not have foreseen a scheme concerning a proposed urban renewal that centres on the demolition of an existing housing stock and replacement with the new urban redevelopment scheme.

In order for an urban renewal scheme to be successful it must acknowledge the existing housing needs of the local community that it is serving to benefit. As noted the Applicant is a social landlord, as a consequence 75% of the development proposal is to be delivered as social housing. Given the Applicants proclivity to deliver social housing it would not be practical to offer 44.8% of the proposed replacement affordable housing in the form of 1 bedroomed units to meet the requirement of the SHMAA evidence base. The area is a typical new town era housing estate, that whilst incorporating an element of flatted accommodation, remains predominantly a housing area offering family accommodation. To follow the SHMAA requirement would result in a significant reprofiling of the local community which is contrary to DALP policy RD5.

The Applicant has struck an appropriate balance property types and number of bedrooms to cater for local needs. The Applicant has undertaken extensive community engagement prior to submitting the planning application in order to ascertain the housing needs of the local population. Furthermore, the Applicant is the social housing provider that serves the local population and is in a unique position to understand local housing need trends at Ward level. In comparison, the evidence base for the DALP housing need requirement is undertaken at regional level.

Whilst the mix of property types is not aligned to the breakdown of the evidence base, it is contributing toward property types which are identified as being in need. Notwithstanding, the policy requirement encourages proposals to contribute to addressing identified needs and is more advisory than a prescriptive requirement. Given the contrast of the housing mix proposed when compared to the 2016 SHMA, there is considered to be a non-compliance with Policies CS(R)3 and CS(R)12, however based on the assessment set out that there are not sufficient grounds to warrant the refusal of this planning application.

The proposal in respect of housing mix is considered to comply with the relevant parts of Policy CS(R)12 of the DALP.

Affordable Housing

Policy CS(R)13 of the DALP states that all residential schemes including 10 or more dwellings (net gain), or 0.5 ha or more in size, with the exception of brownfield sites are to provide affordable housing at the following rates:

- b. Greenfield Development: Will be required to deliver 25% affordable housing requirement.

Para 2 of CS(R)13 sets out the Council's ambition for affordable housing delivery, at approximately 74% affordable or social rented housing and 26% intermediate housing where practicable and unless evidence justifies a departure from this provision.

The Government published a written Ministerial Statement and updated national guidance on the delivery of First Homes since the DALP adoption, which is a material consideration. However, planning practice guidance provides the following clarification with regard to transition periods:

‘The new First Homes policy requirement does not apply for the following:

- Sites where local and neighbourhood plans are adopted/made under the transitional arrangements, as detailed in [paragraphs 18 and 19](#). These transitional arrangements will also apply to permissions and applications for entry-level exception sites.

In addition, the following paragraph from the Inspectors examination report to the DALP is of note:

108. The Government's policy on First Homes came into effect on 28 June 2021, pursuant to the Written Ministerial Statement of 24 May 2021. However, that Ministerial Statement explains how plans submitted for Examination before 28 June 2021 are not required to reflect First Homes policy requirements, as is the case here. In our view, review provisions and statute will provide appropriate opportunity for consideration of First Homes in time.

It is considered that in view of the guidance set out in the planning practice guidance and the opinion of the Inspector set out above, the Council does not have to consider the merits of First Homes provision as part of this development proposal.

The NPPF is also a material consideration. Paragraph 65 of the NPPF requires that planning decisions relating to proposed housing development should expect at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership (unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups).

DALP Policy CS(R)13 states that an exception applies to brownfield application sites. Approximately 36% of the proposed development is to take place upon greenfield land. The remaining 64% of proposed development will take place upon brownfield land that is exempt from affordable housing requirements.

The proposed layout details 94 units to be built upon greenfield land. Applying the 25% affordable housing requirement of Policy CS(R)13 results in a required provision of 24 affordable dwellings from a total scheme of 257 dwellings. Policy CS(R)13 requires affordable housing to be delivered with a tenure split of 76% social rent and 24% intermediary. It is the Applicants intention to deliver a tenure mix across the development site as 75% as affordable rent including right to buy and 25% comprising of shared ownership and private sales. It is not clear at this time whether the Applicant intends to provide 24 affordable residential units on existing greenfield land in line with the requirements of planning policy CS(R)13. However, given that this policy stipulation requires 24 affordable housing units and the Applicant is providing 193 affordable housing units across the entire development site, it is considered that the Applicant has exceeded the aspirations of Policy CS(R)13 whilst not necessarily following its requirements concerning affordable homes delivering on greenfield land. On this basis, it is considered that the Applicant has had due regard for the requirements of planning policy CS(R)13 and has put forward a scheme that exceeds the DALP social housing aspirations.

An additional requirement of policy CSR13 concerns affordable housing integration within the surrounding development to avoid over concentration and provide seamless design. The Applicant has put forward a modern design that best utilises the available development space. There will be an evident difference in appearance given the several decades between the eras of design. Notwithstanding, such differences are not the result of tenure.

The proposed scheme if implemented would exceed the DALPs 25% affordable housing requirement. Having had regard for the apparent policy conflicts, the proposed development is considered to be in broad compliance with the Development Plan and a refusal of planning permission cannot be sustained on these grounds.

Proposed Demolition

In order to deliver an urban renewal scheme within an existing urban area, an element of demolition is required. In the context of this application, this will result in the demolition of 317 residential units.

The affected residential units are comprised of a mix of 22% owner occupier 68% social rent and 10% privately rented. Approval of this planning application will not automatically result in the demolition of privately owned properties. Should the planning application be approved, it is the Applicant's intention to purchase the remaining privately owned properties. Any properties that are not acquired by this means may be subject of a future compulsory purchase order (CPO). It is of note

that a planning permission can form the basis of justification for the Applicant to seek a CPO.

The properties to be demolished are a mix of property types consisting of 1-2 bedroomed flats and 1-3 bedroomed residential dwellings. There is no specific planning policy contained within the DALP that is concerned with the loss of residential properties that aren't either listed buildings or located within a conservation area. Policy RD5, Primarily Residential Areas makes reference to developments within existing primarily residential areas. Paragraph 2 states,

Housing renewal and redevelopment will generally be supported in areas identified as requiring regeneration; to replace unpopular housing stock and to address any imbalances in the housing offer.

Paragraphs 9.31 and 9.32 of the justification to Policy RD5 go on to state,

9.31. Development within existing residential areas can contribute to improving areas, increase the range or supply of housing or provide opportunities for small business and enterprise. Development in Primarily Residential Areas should not harm the residential character of the area or the living conditions of the residents in those areas.

9.32. Halton does not currently (at 2019) have proposals for significant, estate wide housing renewal, such as the Southgate (Hallwood Park) or Castlefields renewal programmes. There may be instances however where it is necessary to remove or remodel existing stock that is not suited to current needs.

The development proposal seeks to introduce a modern design to an existing urban residential neighbourhood that dates back to the New Town Corporation era. The proposed urban renewal scheme will embody a contemporary set of designs that will present a stark contrast between old and new. Notwithstanding, it is not considered that these designs will result in harm to the residential character of the area. The proposed development will result in a modest increase in the amount of hard surfaced areas. The existing area within the proposed redline is a predominantly urbanised area with large swathes of hard surfaces throughout. This is occasionally broken up with incidental areas of greenspace. Such areas are proposed to be built upon as part of the development. The loss of green space is considered in greater detail later in the Open Spaces section of the report.

In addition consideration needs to be given toward the loss of residential dwellings within the application redline boundary. The baseline housing needs evidence of the DALP, specifically that set out in the SHMAA identifies a housing need for the Borough. The description of development proposed will result in the net loss of 60 No. dwellings. Such a loss in terms of the overall number of dwellings available is contrary to the ambition of the DALP in addressing housing needs. Furthermore a loss in the overall number of residential properties would result in the displacement of a proportion of existing residents in terms of numbers alone. However, the development subject of this application is part of

the wider phase of urban renewal to be undertaken by the Applicant, which includes planning permission ref: 23/00178/FUL that was approved by the Local Planning Authority following its report to this Committee in August 2023. Taking the two applications together, the number of residential units delivered will result in a net increase of 52 dwellings.

The proposed development in combination with phase 1 will offer an increase in housing to the locality. This replacement housing will offer an improved diversity of accommodation types with a range of sizes including four bedroomed properties and some bungalow units. It is acknowledged that part of the uplift in numbers between both phases of development include a large quantity of specialist accommodation and that such provision may not be suitable for those occupiers of existing properties that are proposed for demolition. On this basis there is presumption that due to this provision of specialist accommodation, an element of these affected occupiers may be displaced from the locality. It is accepted that this is a negative impact that weighs against the development proposal. However, the redevelopment will improve areas of amenity, introduce modern energy efficient buildings that raise standards of accommodation, provide a diverse mix of accommodation offerings, and bring about off site improvements to Town Park. On balance, it is considered that the scheme benefits outweigh the negative harms caused as a result of the proposed demolition. Whilst the Applicant has not demonstrated compliance with Policy RD5 of the DALP, it is considered that the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the non compliance of policy RD5.

Existing Services and Facilities

The proposal will result in the loss of an existing community facility known as the Palacefields Community Centre, located off the Uplands. The building provides 248 square metres of community space that is currently used to provide a number of community facilities such as a venue for a local food bank, warm spaces during winter months and a distribution points for FSM during non term time.

Adjacent to the community centre is an area of incidental open space that features an area of equipped play. The planning application proposes to demolish the community centre and develop upon the land including the area of open space and equipped play.

The community centre is not designated as a community facility by the Halton Local Plan Policies Map. It is considered that this is a drafting error in the production of the Policies Map. The Applicants representing agent share this consensus. In view of this, it is agreed between the Council and the Applicant that Policy HC5 'Community Facilities and Services applies.

Paragraph 5 of Policy HC5 states:

5. Proposals involving the loss of community facilities land or buildings will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that:

- a. The loss of the existing community use would not create, or add to, a shortfall in the provision or quality of such uses within the locality; or*
- b. The building or site is no longer suitable or viable to accommodate the current community use, or the use has already ceased, and the building or site cannot viably be retained or sensitively adapted to accommodate other community facilities; or*
- c. In the case of commercial community facilities, whether the use is no longer viable (applicants will need to submit evidence to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for that use*
- d. Marketing of the land/property will be required to indicate that there is no demand for the land/property in its existing use.*
- e. Details if the current occupation of the buildings, and where this function would be relocated, will also be required.*
- f. Where an application relies upon a marketing exercise to demonstrate that there is no demand for the land/premises in its current use, the applicant will be expected to submit evidence to*
- g. Demonstrate that the marketing was adequate and that no reasonable offers were refused. This will include evidence demonstrating that:*
- i. The marketing has been undertaken by an appropriate agent or surveyor at a price which reflects the current market or rental value of the land/premises for its current use and that no reasonable offer has been refused*

The Palacefields community centre (PCC) is owned by the Applicant who rents its operation and management to a charitable organization named Four Estates. Four Estates are the responsible body who operate the PCC as a venue and organize the community use of the building.

The public consultation exercise resulted in several responses providing examples of the communities use of the PCC that highlight its importance in the local community.

The Applicant submits that the existing community centre provision is not fit for purpose given the age of the building and its inefficiency with regard to energy consumption which in turn has an impact on the operating costs of the building and its overall viability as a future community hub. The Applicant's view is that the PCC will be compensated for by a new facility providing 258 square metres of floor space set within the ground floor space of the veteran village approved by planning application 23/00128/FUL. The Applicant contends that the issues of running costs will be addressed by accommodating the Palacefields Local Centre within the new Church and Local Centre Buildings. Whilst it follows a practical common sense principle that a newer building will be more thermally efficient than an older building, the Applicant has not submitted energy certificates to support their argument in illustrating the expected differences in the thermal

efficiency of the respective existing and proposed buildings.

There is no formal response from Four Estates in response to the consultation exercise for this planning application. However, the Applicant has informed the Council that contract discussions are ongoing regarding the alternative accommodation arrangements detailed above.

In considering the change in the location of the community centre, the following considerations are of note. The proposed replacement accommodation is 450 meters away from the Palacefields Community Centre. Whilst this is noticeably further away from the existing location, it is considered that such a move is within a tolerable walking distance. It is appreciated that a change in location will inconvenience some users and benefit others due to a change in proximity. It is considered that the proposed replacement PCC venue will serve the same catchment in a more central location in terms of the overall geographic area. The proposed replacement venue is located next to a bus stop which supports its sustainable credentials as well as offering improved accessibility.

The Applicant has given consideration to a phased delivery strategy that will allow the existing PCC to remain open whilst the intended replacement accommodation of the ground floor of the veteran village is developed. Only after the delivery of the replacement accommodation would the PCC be demolished. This phasing will be controlled by way of a suitably worded planning condition.

The loss of the PCC will come as a disappointment to the local community, as can be seen in the consultation responses there is a great deal of attachment between the community and the centre. However, the Applicant has provided a suitable alternative as part of a modification to planning permission ref:23/00128/FUL as set out in planning application ref: 24/00023/S73. This new community investment will sustain the existing local community centre use within Palacefields at a sustainable location. Given the recent energy cost rises that have significantly affected non domestic properties, a modern energy efficient building is less likely to burden an operating budget. It is considered that the development complies with DALP policy HC5.

Residential Amenity

The scheme will result in a significant change in appearance to the locality of the area of Palacefields as shown within the planning application redline edge. This proposed change will be manifest through the demolition of 317 dwellings and the demolition of the Palacefields community centre and the removal of the adjacent area of equipped play. Further impact is proposed to be felt by the direct loss of designated amenity green space, associated local landscaping, mature trees. The impacts on residents will be experienced by two distinct consequences. Those who would as a result of the development lose their home and those residents that remain but whose outlook will change as a result of the development.

First it is anticipated that those that reside within the 317 dwellings proposed for demolition will be relocated from the site in due course. Whilst there is the potential for some of those displaced residents to be relocated within the application red edge, there are no firm arrangements proposed at this time. The representing planning agent has confirmed that the Applicant is taking steps to offer a number of options to existing residents in terms of offers to purchase properties, providing bridging loans and offering properties for rent within its existing property portfolio. Notwithstanding, whether such arrangements are taken up by the affected residents or not, the existing residents will be profoundly impacted upon should the proposed development be approved and implemented. Any implementation of planning permission will therefore either require agreement with all occupiers, or will require the successful promotion of a compulsory purchase order. The process for this will facilitate opportunities for residents who wish to object on the basis that there is no compelling case in the public interest for compulsory acquisition. Even if planning permission is granted, there may well therefore be implementation issues for the Applicant to resolve.

The second form of impact involves residents who reside within the redline but do not face the prospect of eviction. Whilst those residents will retain their occupancy of their properties they will be impacted from the proposed changes to the surrounding area. Specifically the loss of incidental open space and the changes to the interface distances with neighbouring properties.

An assessment regarding the loss of open space including losses of incidental open space is set out in the open space section of the report below. With regard to the loss of incidental open space and its impact on residential amenity, this is greatest felt by properties that overlook such areas of visual relief in what is a heavily urbanised landscape. Such areas of land are proposed to be developed upon thereby intensifying the appearance of the urbanised outlook.

It is considered that the combination of the compensatory landscape travel corridor and wider landscape improvements together with the proximity to and proposed improvements to Town Park offer sufficient relief to local residents. Notwithstanding, in the absence of such observations it is considered that the loss of incidental open space within the application red edge would not cause sufficient harm that would outweigh the positives of the planning application in order to justify a refusal.

The Design of Residential SPD seeks to afford higher levels of protection with regards to protecting the amenity and outlook of existing neighbours adjoining development sites. Every effort has been made through negotiation with the Applicant to minimise potential impacts where possible whilst maintaining an appropriate quantum of development.

The proposed development will take place amongst a number of retained properties. As a result there will be a mixture of interfaces between existing and new build properties in addition to the interfaces between new to new properties.

The proposed development has retained the separation distances of the existing properties along streetscenes. This typically results in interfaces in the range of

19-20m. Whilst this is below the recommended interface of the SPD, it is consistent with the existing streetscene. In similar approach the interfaces between new to new in terms of streetscene, side to rear and rear to rear interfaces have followed the overall established level of interface that exists in the Uplands resulting in a modest shortfall in the SPD recommended interfaces. The Council accepts that the interface at street level is less sensitive than that of a private rear garden and it is of note that the Council has accepted similar interfaces elsewhere in the Borough.

The SPD guidance sets out a recommendation that the rear to rear interfaces between existing and proposed residential units of equal size be set to 21m. This requirement is set to maintain an appropriate level of privacy and to ensure that there is an acceptable amount of daylight retained to existing properties.

Following an assessment of the proposed plans, the interface distances between existing and proposed properties falls short of the SPD interface standard. The following interfaces are of note:

- Interface 1: 16-25 The Uplands, a rear to rear interface of 18.5-21m
- Interface 2: 95-97 The Uplands, a rear to rear interface of 15.3-21.2m
- Interface 3: 128-136 The Uplands, an existing rear to proposed rear interface of 17.2m to 22.6m
- Interface 4: 260-268 The Uplands, a rear to rear interface range of 16.45m-18.2m.
- Interface 5: 275-285 The Uplands, a rear to rear interface of 16.4m-17.65m.

On first review, these interfaces appear substantially short of the 21m interface required by planning policy. In order to mitigate this the Applicant has designed a set of proposed elevations that do not feature windows at first floor. The consequence of this design feature is that there is no prospect of overlooking, therefore the interface is akin to that of a blank gable which the SPD sets a required interface of 13m. Interfaces that fall below the guidance set out in the SPD have been assessed against the 25degree requirement to ensure excessive overshadowing is avoided. The Applicant has struck an appropriate balance that maintains the existing separations distances of the Uplands streetscene whilst having regard for the interface guidance set by the Council thereby meeting the protective aspirations of the SPD whilst facilitating the necessary form of development at this location. It is considered that the design of the proposed scheme complies with the SPD.

In order to maintain suitable privacy for the future occupation of existing residential units, a condition will be attached prohibiting the insertion of new windows at first floor level.

The proposed scheme does offer the potential for significant investment and regeneration of the area creating new residential properties and an improved urban landscape incorporating modern design and principles of designing out

crime. In that context it is considered that satisfactory provision has been made for ensuring appropriate levels of amenity for existing and future residents.

Scale and massing

The Applicant has designed an urban renewal scheme that retains terraced rows of existing housing stock within the application red line. Implementation of the scheme will result in pockets of development being built out as separate phases.

The development proposal comprises a mixture of property types typical of an urban scheme including, bungalows, small houses and larger residential structures that include four bedroomed houses and apartments. The proposed mixture of building types whilst different in appearance owing to the approximate fifty years separation in development era designs remain of an appropriate scale and massing to the existing building stock and are therefore considered acceptable.

Design and Appearance

The planning application redline boundary contains 413 dwellings. Of this existing housing stock the development proposal seeks to demolish 317 dwellings and develop 257 dwellings. DALP policy RD5 applies.

Paragraph 2 of RD5 states:

Housing renewal and redevelopment will generally be supported in areas identified as requiring regeneration; to replace unpopular housing stock and to address any imbalances in the housing offer.

The Applicant submits that the design of the existing build stock is of its era and is considered not fit for current purposes with particular emphasis on energy efficiency and inflexible spaces for community uses. The proposed development offers a higher quality design and modern material palette that is commensurate to the expectation of a new urban development.

As a whole the scheme represents a noticeable change to the existing build stock of the Uplands. The overall impact will bring a more urbanised appearance to the application site. This is borne as a result of the increase in building mass that is proposed to be developed along with the loss of incidental open space and loss of mature landscaping that currently provides a break in the urbanised locality. The Applicant submits that this is necessary to maximize the developable area to ensure that sufficient residential units are developed to make the scheme financially viable. The Applicant has undertaken efforts to address this by incorporating mixed use highways and landscape planting throughout areas of incidental open space.

The proposed design will present a juxtaposition between old and new. This is unavoidable given the span of multiple decades with regard to the design and associated building materials that will separate the two eras of development.

Notwithstanding, the proposed development is of high quality with a bold modern design and accompanying materials palette that will enhance the existing urban appearance of the locality and provide new modern housing to the local community. The appearance of urban development schemes within established residential areas be they urban renewal or vacant plot development infills become accepted over time, particularly as landscape schemes mature. Similar new designs within the new town era stock of housing have taken place elsewhere in the Borough with no ill effect upon the urban environment. Examples include Castlefields, Juniper Grove, and Lacey Street.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development will have a significant impact on the appearance of the local area, it is considered that the design and appearance of the development is in line with the expectations of DALP policies GR1 and GR2.

Greenspace Provision for Residential Development

Policies RD4, HE4 and HE5 of the Halton DALP set out the Council's expectations for the provision and protection of open space, green infrastructure and trees in new developments. Policy RD4 underlines the importance at para 9.18 of the DALP where it states:

The provision of greenspace underpins people's quality of life. The Council views such provision as being important to individual health and wellbeing, and to the promotion of sustainable communities.

Paragraph 9.23 of the DALP goes on to say:

The provision of attractive and functional open space has an important role to play in ensuring a satisfactory housing estate design. It is vital that it should be considered as an integral element of the overall residential layout. The type, location and amount of areas of open space must be one of the starting points in drawing up the design of a new development. However, it should be noted that not all residential development will create a need for all types of open space and the type and amount will be guided by site specific circumstances.

Policy RD4 'Greenspace Provision for Residential Development', states; all residential development of 10 or more dwellings that create or exacerbate a projected quantitative shortfall of greenspace or are not served by existing accessible greenspace will be expected to make appropriate provision for the needs arising from the development, having regard to the standards detailed in the table presented at policy RD4. The Halton Open Space Study 2020 (OSS) forms the evidence base for this policy. The application site is located in the Halton Lea Ward which forms part of 'Neighbourhood Area 5 (NA5) within the (OSS). With regard to the open space provision within NA5, the OSS demonstrates a deficit in parks and gardens, natural and semi natural open space and allotments. However, the OSS presents a surplus for children's play space and amenity green space.

The proposed development is not providing semi natural open space or

allotments. As identified above the Council has a deficit in the locality. Ordinarily, this assessed level of deficit would require an off site financial contribution to improve existing areas of open space. However, in this instance the development proposal details a net loss of residential units. Therefore, the quantum of development does not create additional pressure upon existing green space provision and prima facie case that it would reduce deficit. The exception to this approach concerns the loss of existing amenity green space, designated parkland green space and area of equipped play adjacent to the PCC that will be built upon as a result of the implementation of the proposed development.

Amenity Green Space – The development proposal does not include development of new amenity green space. The OSS has confirmed an existing over supply of amenity green space (AGS) of 18.2 hectares. Implementation of the development proposal will result in a loss of 0.013 hectares, on this basis it is considered that the loss of AGS would not result in a significant loss to Neighbourhood 5 for this open space typology and can therefore be justified to be in compliance with the above identified DALP policies.

Equipped Play - No equipped play is required as part of this development proposal due to the net loss of residential dwellings. However, due to the development resulting in a loss of existing equipped play, the Council has requested that the Applicant give consideration to a replacement of this provision. The Applicant has confirmed that a replacement provision will be delivered at Woodland Walk located approximately 509m distance away in line with the accessibility criteria within policy RD4. It is accepted that the displacement of the existing provision will result in a negative impact for some users and a benefit for others owing to the change in proximity. The new location will still be located centrally within the wider residential area of Palacefields and is therefore on balance it is considered to comply with paragraph 4b of DALP policy HE4. The replacement provision will be secured by a suitably worded planning condition that will prohibit the development from taking place upon the existing area of equipped play until the alternative provision has been delivered.

Parks and Gardens - The planning application proposes to develop 28 residential units occupying 1.06hectare of Town Park (TP). This is contrary to the development plan. The OSS has identified a surplus of 0.38 hectare for the Parks and Gardens typology for Neighbourhood 5. It is of note that this measurement concerns the area of Town Park located within Neighbourhood 5. Anyone familiar with Runcorn will be aware that Runcorn Town Park is a significant area of parkland provision, the latest Council survey confirmed that it occupied an overall area of 184 hectares. The reported surplus of 0.38 hectare for Neighbourhood 5 is derived from the Neighbourhood boundary exercise that apportioned 9.5 hectare of Town Park to Neighbourhood 5. However, this does not represent a fair reflection upon the suitable area of parkland that is accessible by local residents. It is of note that the development site is located at the northern border of Neighbourhood 5. By contrast the adjoining Neighbourhood 4 has been assessed by the OSS to have a surplus of 64.3 hectares. Due to the proximity between these two neighbourhoods, it is considered that residents of

Neighbourhood 5 will retain sufficient access to parkland in line with DALP policies HE4 and RD4. On this basis it is considered that upon implementation of the proposed development there would not be a shortfall with regard to the parks and gardens typologies of open space. The planning application is compliant with planning policy HE4.

As part of the consideration of the planning application, the Council's Open Spaces Department have raised concerns. Discussions about the appropriate mitigation are ongoing. However, this mitigation would be a condition of the permission. An update will be made orally.

The Applicant submitted an arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) and tree survey and constraints report in support of the application which surveyed 160 individual trees and one group within the site boundary. The report finds that the majority of the trees are category B trees and therefore deemed to be of moderate quality with a smaller proportion being categorised as category C or less. In order to address this loss, the Applicant has proposed to undertake significant tree planting at the Town Park interface incorporating new areas of woodland and understorey planting. Despite the proposed loss of trees it is considered that the Applicant has sought to retain as many trees as possible, an example of which is the mature trees located along the application sites boundary with Palacefields Avenue. The AIA concludes that the retention of significant arboricultural assets has been achieved where possible. Whilst it is acknowledged that the immediate loss of mature trees regardless of measured quality will be a negative impact to local residents, it is considered that the establishment of the replacement trees will deliver a long term improvement to the local amenity once establishment. On this basis it is therefore considered that the proposed scheme complies with policy HE5

Having regard for the assessment of DALP Policies HE4 and RD4, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme outweigh any areas of policy non compliance with regard to Policies RD4 and HE4.

Ecology

The proposed development site is located within the Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone. The proposals do not specifically trigger consultation with NE in terms of residential development. However, NE advise that residential developments in this area should consider recreational disturbance impacts on the coastal designated sites. With reference to Halton Council's Interim Approach to recreational disturbance the site is located outside the zones where recreational disturbance is considered an issue due to the distance from the coast and the difficulty in accessing the coast from this location. It is important to note that the application concerns an urban renewal development. Of the 462 dwellings within the application site boundary, 317 are proposed to be demolished, with 257 dwellings being developed in their place. This results in an overall net loss of 60 units within the application site boundary. Therefore the proposed development when implemented will result in less harm than the

current baseline. On this basis it is considered highly unlikely that the development will result in a significant disturbance to the coastal sites, therefore a Habitats Regulations Assessment is not considered necessary. Notwithstanding this assessment, the Council consulted Natural England (NE) as a precaution. NE responded with no objection.

As noted above, the Council's retained ecology advisor has issued a response of no objection. This opinion is dependent upon the use of a schedule of recommended planning conditions that will contribute toward off site mitigation to compensate on site losses. The following comments are of note:

Biodiversity Net Gain/ No Net Loss – The Applicant has submitted outline details of a scheme for compensating for the loss of the existing habitat and ensuring that there will be a net biodiversity gain on the site which involves planting of native species, meadow and grassland and hedgerow planting. The delivery of this scheme will result in an increase of 19.95 habitats units (81.88%) which is welcomed. Delivery of the BNG scheme will be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

Biodiversity enhancements – Pursuant to the new biodiversity duty and paragraph 186 of the NPPF, the Applicant should provide biodiversity enhancements such as bat roosting boxes and bird nesting boxes. This will be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

LEMP – The Applicant has proposed an acceptable landscaping strategy. The production of a full and detailed landscape and Ecological Management Plan which details the management of the site for the lifetime of the development is required to be submitted. This will be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition.

Bats - Bats are a protected species. Therefore DALP policy CS(R)20 applies. The Applicant has undertaken an extended phase 1 habitat survey, bat roost assessment, emergence surveys reporting exercises in support of the planning application. These documents have been assessed by the Council's retained ecology provider who has made the following comments:

The report states that no evidence of bat use or presence was found. The Council does not need to consider the proposals against the three tests (Habitats Regulations).

The applicant states that delivery of the Uplands parcel (to which this application relates) will not likely start until mid 2025. If demolition of the buildings and tree removal is not completed by the end of 2024 updated bat surveys of all buildings and trees to be affected by the proposals must be carried out prior to the start of any demolition and clearance works. This can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

Habitats adjacent to the site may provide roosting, foraging, commuting habitat for bats. Lighting for the development may affect the use of these areas. A lighting scheme can be designed so that it protects ecology and does not result in excessive light spill onto the habitats, in line with NPPF

(paragraph 186). This can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition. It would be helpful for the applicant to refer to the 'Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' guidance which has been produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals in conjunction with the Bat Conservation Trust.

The Applicant has undertaken a robust examination of the development proposal with regard to its potential impact upon a protected species. The subsequent reporting exercise has been reviewed by the Council's retained ecology advisor who has confirmed that the Council does not need to consider the proposal against the three tests of the habitats regulations.

Terrestrial Mammals - In addition the Council's advisor has given consideration to terrestrial Mammals. The habitats on site are suitable for badger and hedgehog. These are protected species, therefore Policy CS(R)20 applies. The following reasonable avoidance measures should be put in place to ensure that there are no adverse effects on them:

- A pre-commencement check for badger and hedgehog;
- All trenches and excavations should have a means of escape (e.g. a ramp);
- Any exposed open pipe systems should be capped to prevent mammals gaining access; and
- Appropriate storage of materials to ensure that mammals do not use them.

These measures can be addressed by way of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). A CEMP can be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition.

Birds – Built features and vegetation on site offer the potential for nesting opportunities for breeding birds which are protected. Therefore Policy CS(R)20 applies. In order to ensure sufficient avoidance measures are implemented the following condition is recommended:

No tree felling, scrub clearance, hedgerow removal, vegetation management, ground clearance or building work is to take place during the period 1 March to 31 August inclusive. If it is necessary to undertake works during the bird breeding season then all buildings, trees, scrub, hedgerows and vegetation are to be checked first by an appropriately experienced ecologist to ensure no breeding birds are present. If present, details of how they will be protected are required to be submitted for approval.

The proposed development will result in the loss of breeding bird habitat. Therefore, DALP Policy CS(R)20 applies. To mitigate for this loss, details of bird boxes that are to be erected on site are to be provided to the Council for agreement. The following condition is recommended:

The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until details of bird boxes to include number, type and location on an appropriately scaled

plan as well as timing of installation, has been provided for approval and implemented in accordance with those details. Evidence of implementation (i.e. photographs) will need to be provided to the Local Planning Authority to enable discharge of the condition.

Core Biodiversity Area

There are four areas within the planning application site boundary that are designated as core biodiversity woodland by the Liverpool City Region. This designation is carried through to the DALP Allocations Map. The four areas are each considered to be a core biodiversity area (CBA) and are denoted by the hatching in figure 1 of this report. It is of note that the four areas are shown as washed over residential land on the Halton DALP Policies Map. The four areas are:

- CBA1 - Land opposite 198-205 and 262-267 the Uplands
- CBA2 – Land opposite 293-295 and 337-340 the Uplands
- CBA3 – Land to rear of 321 the Uplands adjacent to Palacefields Avenue
- CBA4 – Land adjacent to 16 the Uplands and land adjacent to 25 the Uplands. This also includes 16-25 the Uplands.

Policy HE1 states '*any development which may affect a designated natural asset will be considered in line with the mitigation hierarchy*'. For the avoidance of doubt the hierarchy is as follows, avoidance, minimization mitigation compensation. Paragraph 5 of Policy HE1 confirms that where significant harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or compensated, planning permission should be refused.

The Applicant has identified the interface with Town Park as an area of improvement. There are detailed landscape plans that show improvements to the area. The CBA set out in the application site feature a range of appearances. CBA1 is an area of mown incidental open space devoid of any trees. CBA2 is an area of incidental open space featuring an amenity square of mown grass and 5 semi mature- mature trees. CBA3 11 is an area of incidental open space that faces out on to Palacefields avenue and appears as an extension of the highway verge featuring an area of mown grass and 11 mature tree specimens and a number of smaller self seeded trees that are semi mature. CBA4 consists of a car park with 4 mature trees, the private gardens of 16-25 the Uplands as well as the physical fabric of the dwellings and an area of incidental open space featuring 4 semi mature trees and one mature tree.

The Applicant submits that the number of trees lost will be compensated for by replacement planting elsewhere in the scheme. Notwithstanding, the loss of the trees will form part of the no net loss/BNG measures set out earlier in the ecology section of the report. On this basis it is considered that the development has been designed to avoid any adverse impacts resulting to this designated priority habitat, by appropriate forms of mitigation. The Council considers that the

scheme complies with DALP Policy HE1.

In summary, the Applicant has given due consideration to the ecological impacts brought on as a result of this development, having measured the impacts in terms of the loss of biodiversity, including impacts on habitats and impacts on terrestrial species. These losses are to a certain extent inevitable due to development taking place upon undeveloped areas of green space. Where loss and impact has been identified the Applicant is prepared to provide suitable mitigation. It is considered that the development complies with DALP policies CSR20 and HE1.

Highways

The development proposal has been reviewed by a highway engineer on behalf of the Local Highway Authority. The comments from whom are set out in full below.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for sufficient housing in a sustainable manner.

The NPPF states that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties, and further that good quality discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

Collaboration with the applicant's design team had begun in earnest at the first opportunity application 22/08039/PREAPP.

Following approval of the Local Centre, application 23/00128/FUL, all parties and personnel remained for this portion of the scheme with advantageous continuity.

Also, within the NPPF it is stated that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and this portion of the overall redevelopment offered an innovative and community-focused fundamental feature, a central "green avenue", or linear park; a sustainable and innovative design for the housing estate, which was a challenging proposition given the retention of certain areas and renewal of others.

Periodic, round-table, design reviews and ongoing conversations were central to reaching a design that was acceptable.

In an unprecedented step, the applicant's team took the opportunity to have an independent third party undertake a Quality Audit of the design, involving various reviews (below), to ensure the novel, in local terms, design, and elements within, would meet all considerations for all users e.g. safe, legible, functional and user-friendly.

The extensive and lengthy, cooperative and iterative process has enabled Highway to determine that full support can be offered, with conditions and informatives, below. In highway terms, when reviewing such a submission, consideration is given, but not limited to, the following; traffic generation, distribution and capacity impact, access to the site for all modes, layout, adequacy of parking and servicing arrangements, and impact on Highway safety.

Traffic generation, distribution and capacity impact: Given the like for like proposition of residential dwelling replacement, with a reduced overall total of dwellings compared to current quantum, no significant nor detrimental, impact is considered likely on the highway network due to the development proposal. The demolition and construction phases will require a condition (Demolition and Construction Management Condition(s)) to understand the management of site traffic such that remaining residents and lock highway users are not detrimentally affected by operations or associated vehicles.

Access to the site for all modes: Ensuring that the site connects with its existing surroundings and highway network, for all modes, was an inherent consideration. The relationship with and impact to the Town Green open space area, to the north of the site, was vital. Therefore, the design progress was predicated on approval, by the Green Spaces Team, of any impact to this area, which was forthcoming. This included off-site highway works with improved connectivity and routes (Off-Site Highway Works Condition – linkage to woodland walk and connections to Town Green).

The existing vehicular access arrangements, on Palace Fields Avenue, and associated footways will be improved, as well as further upgrades to sustainable links about the site i.e. walking and cycling provision, and bus infrastructure. Enhancement and rationalisation of the network of pedestrian and cycle accesses and routes into the site will offer active surveillance, flat and level surfaces, and legible, connected links based on desire lines improving connection between the site and external environment.

Routes will be more attractive, practical and well-connected, accompanied with the existing subways being closed off and at-grade crossing routes installed in their place; observing principles and guidance of Manual for Streets (MfS) and LTN 1/20 - fundamental to active travel design and use. A condition regarding agreed structural detail of the subway closure proposals and associated works is required (Subway Closure Condition). The Development Management Committee is requested to approve the Stopping-Up plan to expedite and facilitate matters under the Stopping Up Orders Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; Sections 247 and 248. Applications for Section 247/248 Orders can be submitted in advance of planning decisions being made or when the planning permission has been granted.

Connection to bus infrastructure was also integral to design, with bus operators canvassed for their input on proposed amendments about the south of the site on, and about, the busway. The link and arrangement about the busway between the site and the hospital will require a condition for detailed design (Busway Infrastructure Condition).

Layout: The layout and arrangement was designed to create a well-connected neighbourhood with clear orientation through a logical hierarchy of streets with the promotion of sustainable travel alternatives. Widths of carriageways, footways and other elements, geometry e.g. radii at junctions and bends were informed by swept path with localised widening or amendment offered accordingly.

Whilst incorporating retained blocks of dwellings, the designing out of considered ASB issues, and following principles and best practices of placemaking e.g. Secured by Design, the design offers overlooked streets and spaces and removes barriers to movement e.g. the subways. Further, the central green spine and linkages within the site and to the external environment, e.g. Town Green, Shopping City and Local Centre, creates a connected sustainable site.

The layout design proposed follows the prescribed user hierarchy with access, circulation and route choice for all modes; with cycling and walking foremost. Externally, the site connects satisfactorily into existing development or transport networks and offer linkage to active travel routes.

The layout and design of footways, and shared spaces, with regards to internal site accessibility provides convenient, appealing, overlooked, and safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists taking into account of the type and function of adjacent carriageways, location of apparatus for statutory and other services, street furniture as well as pedestrian movements (desire lines) and requirements for vulnerable road users.

The provision of streets, footways, footpaths and cycle provision were designed in accordance with MfS and LTN 1/20, and the DfT published guidance on how to design for [‘Inclusive Mobility’](#), so that all modes are accommodated safely within the highway network. A looped internal layout, around perimeter blocks of dwellings, offer permeability, connectivity and route choice, for all modes.

The highway arrangement deters speeds in excess of 20mph. These features are primarily, as is preferable, horizontal features, e.g. straights with a maximum 60m unrestrained, with vertical speed calming features such as traffic (t)humps where necessary. Detailed design under a s38 agreement will ensure the optimum arrangement. The shared private drives and cul-de-sacs within the estate are acceptable; necessary where topography, or other constraints dictate. The Green Avenue offers a

central thoroughfare where priority is accordingly given to pedestrians and cyclists, and in sections vehicular movement is directed and controlled (i.e. one way) and its design occupied much of the process to determine an acceptable scheme. This spine, running north/south, links to east west routes giving a permeable layout or route choice and circulation for all modes.

Signing and lining of the highway arrangement will be conditioned, supporting the layout as the best use of the available space and safe highway design (Signage and Lining Condition). The voluntary, but highly agreeable, submission of the designs for scrutiny by an independent third party (PJA) further highlighted the applicants desire to ensure an innovative and acceptable layout.

The following audits were conducted under the coverall title of Quality Audit:

- Road Safety Audit (RSA), Stage 1,*
- Accessibility Audit,*
- Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding Assessment & Review (WCHAR), and*
- Functionality and Visual Appearance Audit.*

The findings and recommendations, and acceptable incorporation of their findings into the design, were the final step of the Highway design process. Periodic review by the s38 officer was offered to ensure that the design would not alter significantly at detailed design stage i.e. buildability issues were resolved downstream where such issues are accommodated more readily; typically with such a complex and major development minor changes occur at construction phase. Highway long or cross sections will be required to be provided to show that proposed levels and gradients are acceptable and demonstrated in a vertical plane, as well as the horizontal plans offered, at the detailed design phase/s38 Agreement (alternatively a Ground Level including Sections Condition is suggested).

Adequacy of parking, servicing arrangements: There is currently a large amount of unallocated and informal parking within the site. This situation is considered to be improved upon by the proposal with in-curtilage parking and formalised parking areas, and additional visitor parking provision. The total of 381 private parking spaces offered, as well as 30 visitor spaces, is deemed satisfactory to complement the 139 spaces that remain with the existing properties. Whilst the total amount falls short of the adopted standards (>10%), in accordance with Policy C2 Parking Standards of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan point 3., justification and mitigation was required and satisfactorily offered. The residences will be managed by Riverside, with parking information forming part of the tenancy agreement. Further, the applicant has extensive experience

regarding the type and mix of tenure and of managing such sites. A suitably worded condition for controlling, monitoring and managing parking provision will be required (Car Park Management Policy Condition).

Consideration to existing levels of parking was also taken into account, with site visits showing spare parking capacity, reflecting recorded census car ownership levels in Runcorn. The design/layout also allows for a certain level of informal parking as typically occurs within such estates. In the round, the provision of in-curtilage, courtyard, off-street and additional visitor parking provision is considered sufficient and acceptable against Policy C2 Parking Standards.

A Framework Travel Plan submitted to date further enables, supports and promotes modal shift from car use to sustainable travel alternatives. A condition for a full travel plan is required (Residential Travel Plan Condition). EV charging, for the site, will be required to meet policy and standards (EV Charging Condition) .

Parking standards extend to cycle provision to enable and encourage sustainable journeys; long-term residential cycle parking was duly factored onto design evolution and demonstrated on the plans. Detail will be secured by way of a suitably worded condition (Cycle Parking Condition).

Safe and acceptable circulation and flow within the site i.e. the ability of the site to be adequately serviced by waste and tracking vehicles, as well as delivery and other servicing vehicles, has been demonstrated with swept path of the largest vehicles anticipated to regularly utilise the site, including at the site access. Further, a suggested efficient route to service the site, minimising repetition of sections and/or manoeuvres is also offered.

Highway Safety: Collision Stats, within the site and adjacent network, show no concerning patterns, clusters or number of incidences over the last 5 years. Visibility splays from junctions and each driveway, and forward visibility and visibility to the back of footway are provided, where appropriate, in line with MfS and supported by associated front boundary treatment design. Details of soft landscaping and planting will similarly ensure intervisibility is protected and potential highway encroaching issues are designed out.

Intervisibility at all access junctions will be conditioned to preserve safe sight lines. (Vehicular, and Pedestrian, Visibility Splay Conditions, Boundary Treatment and Landscaping Conditions).

As above mentioned the design speed, within the site, is 20mph, with horizontal and vertical design measures accordingly. Therefore, the proposed design is considered to present a safe layout and arrangement for all modes; the additional audits and reviews offering a level of scrutiny and feedback not typically afforded with such applications.

Summary: The proposed development site comprises a mixture of existing and proposed residential plots. As part of the site masterplan, a north-south 'green avenue' route is proposed which contains planting, play, cycle, and pedestrian infrastructure. Vehicles can access the proposed development via two all modes accesses located on Palace Fields Avenue. Pedestrians and cycles can also access the site via multiple modal filtered accesses around the perimeter of the site.

The proposal provides safe and convenient site access and links through, and within, the site enabling connectivity to adjoining routes and services, for all users. The design of the layout gives priority to pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users and provides for safe and convenient movement, circulation, parking and manoeuvring, including the accommodation of larger, e.g. waste servicing, vehicles.

From early engagement and continued design evolution and collaboration, internally and with external agents, the design presented is considered acceptable and has full Highway Support, with conditions to ensure it meets policies, standards and aspirations within, but not limited to, all relevant Halton Borough Council Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) Policies e.g. C1 Transport Network and Accessibility, C2 Parking Standards, GR1 Design of Development, GR2 Amenity, GR3 Boundary Fences and Walls, CS24 Waste, CS(R)7 Infrastructure Provision, CS(R)15 Sustainable Travel, CS(R)18 High Quality Design, the SPD Design of Residential Development, Vehicle Crossing Guidance, NPPF, Manual for Streets (MfS) and LTN 1/20.

Informatives

- *It is an offence to carry out any works within the public highway without the permission of the Highway Authority. This grant of planning permission does not negate the need for the submission and approval of highway engineering details for inclusion in an agreement under s38 and/or s278 of the Highways Act 1980 (for roads proposed for adoption and off site highway works respectively).*
- *This permission does not entitle the developer to obstruct or carry out works within the Adopted Highway or across a Public Right of Way whatsoever. Any proposed temporary closure or works affecting either will require consent which must be obtained from the Streetworks team. Please contact the NRSWA team for further information.*
- *Notwithstanding LFFA response, provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water such that none runs onto the highway. The applicant should ensure they have met their obligations under NPPF particularly regarding discharge rates.*

- *Where private accesses/drives fall towards the highway, final levels are to be such and gullies are to be installed to prevent surface water discharging onto the highway. Where possible avoid ACO drains at back of footway, dish channels may be acceptable subject to prior written approval from the Highway Authority.*
- *Any new, or extended, areas of hardstanding are required to be constructed of porous materials or provision made to allow for direct run-off water from a hard surface to a permeable or porous area or surface within the curtilage of the dwelling to prevent surface water runoff onto the highway. Driveways shall be hard surfaced. Additional information can be found within;
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf*
- *Gradients shall be a maximum of 1:20, with DDA compliance. Levels will be required to be presented.*
- *The developer will be responsible for paying for the installation and/or relocation of any existing signs/columns, which must be agreed in advance.*
- *Where special materials or products with shorter life expectancies are used, or high-maintenance designs that will necessitate increased levels of care are implemented (such as drainage attenuation and/or landscaping), payment of appropriate commuted sums will be required by the Highway Authority and addressed in an Agreement to cover the additional costs of future maintenance.*
 - *A Construction Management Plan (CMP) will be required that will cover, but not be limited to, the management of vehicle movement on the public highway, time of working and the management and cleaning of debris on the highway.*

In order to avoid pre-commencement conditions it is recommended that a CMP is offered at time of application.

Conditions List:

- *Construction Management Condition*
- *Off-Site Highway Works Condition – linkage to woodland walk and connections to Town Green*
- *Subway Closure Condition*
- *Signage and Lining Condition*
- *Ground Level including Sections Condition*
- *Car Park Management Policy Condition*
- *EV Charging Condition*
- *Cycle Parking Condition*

- *Residential Travel Plan*
- *Vehicular, and Pedestrian, Visibility Splay Conditions*
- *Boundary Treatment/Landscaping Condition(s)*

The Council's Highways officer has presented a detailed set of comments that set out the comprehensive overview of the considerations that have been undertaken with regard to highway safety and matters concerning access and active travel improvements. Having reviewed the advice of the Highways Officer it is considered that the proposed development complies with DALP policies C1 and C2.

Drainage and Flood Risk

The application site is located entirely within flood zone 1. The planning application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and drainage strategy site. This documentation has been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The LLFA have confirmed the following:

Fluvial risk: The nearest watercourse to the site is an unnamed watercourse to the northeast of the development site boundary which discharges to Phoenix Park Lane approximately 1.3km north of the development. The proposed quantum of development is appropriate within Flood Zone 1.

Surface water flood risk: The submitted FRA indicates a very low to medium risk of surface water flooding occurring within the site boundary. Following the implementation of mitigation measures the risk of surface waterflooding to the stie can be considered to be low.

Groundwater: The submitted FRA indicates the risk to the stie to be low. The LLFA is satisfied that the proposed buildings will likely note be at risk of groundwater flooding.

Drainage strategy: The site comprises a brownfield land classification. Preliminary ground investigation work carried out by Sutcliffe in January 2021 confirmed the soil strata to be very stiff clay overlying mudstone. Therefore, the natural soil strata is unlikely to support infiltration. The LLFA requests infiltration tests to demonstrate if soakaways are feasible. In the absence of a soakaway, a feasibility study or justification is required to demonstrate why it is not feasible to discharge to a nearby watercourse.

SUDS: The Applicant has proposed to attenuation in oversized pipework, cellular attenuation and permeable paving. The attenuation is sized to store 865cubic metres to contain flows on sites up to and including 1 in 100 year +45% climate change event. The LLFA has a preference for above ground SUDs systems and would require further justification for the use of below ground components.

Runoff rates: It is stated that the runoff rates form the site will be restricted to 50% reduction of the existing 1 in 2 year peak flows, this has been calculated to

be 217.4 and 63.4l/s for the northern and southern networks. The LLFA agree to flows being limited to these rates.

Drainage performance: The proposed attenuation has been designed to accommodate a 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. The Applicant has submitted microdrainage calculations in support of the design to demonstrate that there would be no flooding for the critical design storm event. LLFA agrees with the provided calculation in principle. However, would note that the proposed northern network has a flow rate higher than that was agreed above and request that the S25 surface water attenuation polystorm cell is updated to reflect the volume used in the calculations. It is also requested that attenuation crates are modelled with a porosity of 95% unless a higher porosity attenuation crate can be justified. The LLFA require a plan showing exceedance routes should the surface water system be overwhelmed or fail.

Maintenance and management: The piped network and flow controls will be offered for adoption via S38 of the a S104 agreement to be managed and maintained in accordance with their in-house maintenance process. The SUDS features within public spaces will be managed and maintained by the management company in accordance with their in house maintenance process.

The LLFA has assessed the Applicant's drainage proposals as part of the planning application and agrees that the assessment of flood risk to and from the site has been undertaken sufficiently. The Applicant has provided a clear drainage strategy. The LLFA support the drainage strategy subject to the use of the following conditions:

- No development shall take place until details of the implementation, maintenance and management of a SUDS scheme for the disposal of surface water in accordance with the SUDS hierarchy have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Those details shall include:
 - o Infiltration testing, soakaway design and/or attenuation and filtration structures and calculations to demonstrate a reduction in surface water runoff rate to greenfield rates for new roof/hardstanding areas.
 - o Justification as to why discharging the surface water runoff, from at least some of the site, to the watercourse near the northeastern boundary is not feasible.
 - o Justification of why more sustainable drainage cannot be included to reduce the runoff from the site.
 - o Consideration of water quality with water treatment included as appropriate.
 - o The LLFA would also require a plan showing exceedance route should the surface water system be overwhelmed or fail.
 - o MicroDrainage calculations are updated to ensure consistency between

the drainage strategy, general arrangement and calculations, with the attenuation crate porosity updated.

o The LLFA would request an impermeable areas plan to accompany the hydraulic calculations.

- No development shall be occupied until a verification report confirming that the SuDS system has been constructed in accordance with the approved design drawings (including off site alterations) and in accordance with best practice has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. This shall include:

o Evidence that the SuDS have been signed off by an appropriate, qualified, indemnified engineer and are explained to prospective owners & maintainers plus information that SuDS are entered into the land deeds of the property.

o An agreement that maintenance is in place over the lifetime of the development in accordance with submitted maintenance plan; and/or evidence that the SuDS will be adopted by third party.

o Submission of 'As-built drawings and specification sheets for materials used in the construction, plus a copy of Final Completion Certificate.

The flood risks have been assessed by the Lead Local Flood Authority. Planning conditions have been recommended. These have been agreed by the Applicant and form part of the schedule of planning conditions below. It is considered that the development proposal complies with DALP Policy HE9.

Contaminated Land

As part of a package of supporting documentation, the Applicant has submitted a ground investigation report. This has been reviewed by the Council's contaminated land officer, the following observations from whom are of note.

Proposed demolition of some of the existing buildings (including 317 existing dwellings and the Palace Fields Community Centre), the closure of two existing subways, and the erection of 257 replacement dwellings, together with associated new roads, footways and cycleways, new and improved open space including a new linear park, hard and soft landscaping works, and other associated infrastructure and works at Land Comprising The Uplands Palace Fields Runcorn

I have considered the land contamination implication for the above scheme and have the following comments.

The application is supported by two documents.

- *Phase 1 preliminary risk assessment at Uplands Runcorn. Ref*

31465-SUT-ZZ-00-RP-G-701-0001. Sutcliffe Ltd. February 2021.

- *Ground investigation datasheet report, The Knoll and The Uplands, Runcorn. Ref 31465-SUT-ZZ-00-RP-G-702-0002. Sutcliffe Ltd, June 2021.*

The above reports document the findings of a preliminary risk assessment, based upon a desk study and site visit, and a site investigation. The datasheet report presents only the 'headline' details of the site investigation and risk assessment, and does not contain the full interpretation and risk assessment details.

The reporting indicates that there is a very low potential for land contamination based upon the site history (open agricultural land prior to the construction of the current residential estate), and the site investigation confirmed that with very little by way of potentially significant contamination, either in terms of soils or ground gases.

The report does mention one location where a fragment of asbestos board was identified, and the ground gas assessment needs to be refined to consider the significance or otherwise of the elevated carbon dioxide concentrations (only moderately elevated, with no significant gas flows or likely ongoing source).

The scope of the site investigation was a little limited and there are two areas that should be considered for further investigation.

The preliminary assessment identified an area of a least one former pond (in the gap between 315 and 316 The Uplands – poor ground conditions may be the reason for that gap in the original housing layout). This should be targeted for further investigation.

Consideration should be given to additional site investigation post-demolition, with particular focus on the community centre (there is no reference in the preliminary review as to whether there is the potential for heating oil storage and use).

Broadly, I have no objection to the scheme, but would make recommendation for a condition to require the additional investigations, a refinement of the ground gas risk assessment and a plan to mitigate against the potential for asbestos containing materials to be encountered.

The Council's Contaminated Land Officer (CLO) has examined the accompanying ground investigation reporting data submitted in support of the application. A concern has been raised that requires further examination of ground conditions prior to development taking place. The Applicant's advisor has considered this and raises no objection to the recommendation made. The additional ground condition survey work will be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition. In addition, a further condition will be added that in the event of unforeseen contamination being discovered, development ceasing until such time that testing. A final condition will be added concerning a

verification and validation report to be submitted to the Council demonstrating that any identified contamination has been mitigated. The use of such planning conditions is routine and considered good practice by the Council. Having considered the opinion of the LCO, it is considered that sufficient mechanisms are in place to safeguard the safety of future land users from any potential land contamination. Therefore, the development complies with DALP Policy HE8.

Noise

The application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment. This has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer. They have provided the following comments.

The applicant has submitted an acoustic report reference 50-7733-R3-1, dated June 2023 in support of the application. The impact of existing sources of noise that may affect the development site are assessed in order to ensure that sound levels specified in BS 8233:2014 Guidance on Sound Reduction for Buildings can be achieved at all properties within the development site. This is an agreed assessment methodology. The report identifies that the main source of noise affecting the development site is Palace Fields Avenue to the east of the development site. Having assessed this road traffic noise the report concludes that a scheme of acoustic mitigation is not required to mitigate against this. This report and its conclusions are accepted.

As with all developments of this size, we would wish to ensure that the hours of construction and demolition works are appropriately controlled. Environmental Health has no objection to the application, subject to the following conditions being applied, in accordance with Policy GR2 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Plan, paragraph 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and in the interests of residential amenity.

- *All construction activity should be restricted to the following hours;*
 - *Monday – Friday* 07:00 to 19:00 hrs
 - *Saturday* 07:30 to 13:00 hrs
 - *Sundays and Public Holidays* Nil

- *Prior to the commencement of the construction and demolition phase, the applicant shall produce site specific Dust Management Plan, adhering to the principles set out in 'Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction' published by the Institute of Air Quality Management. The Dust Management Plan shall be strictly adhered to at all times during the construction and demolition phase.*

The Applicant has undertaken an appropriate level of assessment with regard to potential noise impacts upon the proposed developments future occupants The assessment has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer who accepts the conclusions. The EHO has recommended that the hours of construction are appropriately controlled. A suitably worded planning condition will be used to control the hours of development and appropriately safeguard the amenity of existing residents during the development of the site.

Air Quality

The applicant has submitted an Air Quality Assessment in support of the application. This has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, their comments are set out below.

The applicant has submitted an Air Quality Assessment reference 6393-1r1, dated 23 June 2023 in support of the application. The potential negative impacts from dust emissions during the construction phase of the development has been assessed, in accordance with The Institute of Air Quality Management Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction. This an agreed assessment methodology.

Due to the nearby Halton Hospital and the presence of occupied residential units on the development site, the effect on human health without any form of mitigation is determined to be high during the demolition phase, and medium for the remaining construction phases. It is therefore imperative a scheme of dust mitigation is implemented.

A model dust management plan is proposed in table 18 on pages 28-30 of the air quality report. The application will need to develop this into a site specific dust management plan.

The Air Quality Assessment goes on to consider the increase in Annual Average Daily Traffic from the site once operational, and whether this increase is significant in terms of air quality, based on criteria taken from Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality produced by Environmental Protection UK and The Institute of Air Quality. It is found that the impact from the operational phase is not significant. This methodology and conclusion are accepted.

The development proposal has been reviewed by the Council's EHO has reviewed the scheme and raised a concern regarding the resultant dust born from the proposed demolition. A dust management plan is proposed within the Applicants Air quality report, the EHO has recommended that this is developed into a specific dust management plan. The EHO comments have been reviewed

by the Applicant's advisor who raises no objection to the recommendation. A dust management plan can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition. The wider conclusions of the air quality impact assessment have been accepted by the Council's EHO. It is considered that the Applicant has undertaken a suitable assessment of the proposed developments air quality impacts.

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

Sustainability - Policy CSR19 of the DALP addresses sustainable development and climate change. It requires all new development to be sustainable and be designed to have regard to the predicted effects of climate change. The policy recommends that developers consider the guidance as laid out within national guidance to ensure development is sustainable and appropriate to the location.

Policy GR1 states all major development proposals must demonstrate how sustainable design and construction methods will be incorporated to achieve efficiency and resilience to climate change in accordance with CSR19 taking into account the site-specific viability of the development where appropriate.

The Applicant submits that the development has been designed to meet or exceed the energy performance requirements of the building regulations current at the time, which will be dependent on phasing and the timing of delivery of each respective phase of development. This is likely to encompass the transition to the Future Homes Standard, which is expected to apply to all homes built from 2025.

The applicant is yet to undertake a cost-analysis exercise on the package of measures that will optimise achieving the carbon reductions required under the standard for the best value for money. As a result, the exact measures to be implemented cannot be confirmed at this stage and will be determined on a case-by-case basis to achieve the maximum benefit to users and residents, factoring in a number of considerations including building orientation and likely energy usage. However, a fabric first approach will be adopted as a baseline, including improved insulation levels throughout and improved air-tightness. Other technological measures, including mechanical ventilation heat-recovery [MVHR], PV and Solar Panels, waste water heat recovery [WWHR] and Air Source Heat Pumps, will be considered either singularly or in combination to suit each property following detailed design. This will account for meeting the new Part L energy performance and Part O overheating requirements.

It is considered that an appropriate scheme can be secured by appropriately worded planning condition sufficient to demonstrate compliance with DALP Policy CS(R)19

Health Impacts

A health impact assessment (HIA) has been submitted by the Applicant in support of the planning application. This has been reviewed by the Council's Public Health Department who has confirmed a position of no objection.

The findings from the HIA note that the proposed development will have beneficial effects to human health. Examples include:

- The provision of replacement modern high-quality affordable and energy efficient homes.
- The scheme will provide a mix of house types and sizes to cater for the needs of both families and young professionals.
- The scheme will address long established concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and the perception and fear of crime by creating new and improved safe, overlooked and accessible routes through the site and to the surrounding area in line with designing out crime guidelines. This will result in the removal of existing crime hotspots which will deter anti-social behavior and increase the likelihood of residents taking up provided opportunities to participate in active travel.
- The scheme has also been designed to better integrate the application site into Town Park. It is anticipated that such connection will lead to increased use of the park for mental wellbeing and exercise.
- The proposals will result in the loss of Palacefields Community Centre. It is understood to not be fully utilised on a daily basis at present. This HIA acknowledges the range of existing community facilities within the vicinity of the site considered to be suitable to accommodate existing services held at the facility. These will also be complemented by the creation of a new community hub. Riverside remain committed to ensuring the needs of both Four Estates and the wider community can continue to be met and will continue to work with Four Estates, as well as the external organisations that currently hire the space going forward to ensure no shortfall in the provision, nor the quality of the existing provision, reduces as a result of the proposals. Consequently, through these mitigation measures, it is not considered that the proposals will not have a detrimental impact on the health and welfare of existing and future community members.
- The overall health impact of the development would be positive, with no negative effects found. Of the fifteen determinants assessed, the proposed development was considered to have a positive effect on all but three, which scored neutral. Health and wellbeing are vital factors in the planning balance and as such the positive effects associated with the development should be afforded considerable weight in the determination of this planning application.

Conclusion

The application site is predominantly an existing area of primary residential land as allocated by the Halton DALP Policies Map. The loss of 317 residential dwellings as a result of the development proposal will cause disruption to those

affected inhabitants. Notwithstanding, the Applicant is undertaking efforts to provide alternative accommodation solutions to enable the development to take place upon a grant of planning permission. The replacement of existing housing with proposed modern high-quality housing is acceptable. A modern energy efficient housing stock that is better suited to local need will be able to better serve the local housing needs.

Development upon green space has been assessed and is considered appropriate given the wider benefits of the scheme and the compensatory measures put forward regarding the use of Town Park and the compensatory area of equipped play at Woodland Walk.

It is recognised that the proposed development will result in the loss of the Palacefields Community Centre. However, the Applicant has put forward a larger alternative provision which will be secured prior to demolition of PCC to ensure continuity of community services. The provision of a new community centre with improved facilities in a more sustainable location representing a betterment for the local community.

Having assessed the impacts of the scheme upon the locality and having undertaken an assessment of the relevant policies it is the recommendation of the Council that the planning application be approved subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the application be approved subject to the following:

- a) Schedule of conditions set out below

CONDITIONS

1. Time Limit – Full Permission.
2. Approved Plans
3. EV charge parking spaces to be detailed
4. Construction management plan including avoidance measures re habitat/ mammal/ bird nesting/ amphibians
5. Construction waste audit
6. Landscape and environmental management plan
7. Hedgehog highway network measures
8. Lighting scheme to limit impact on nocturnal species
9. Ecological protection strategy
10. Ecological habitat management plan
11. Bat license
12. Bat mitigation
13. Bird and bat boxes details
14. Domestic refuse storage details
15. Suds verification report

16. Removal of GPDO Schedule 2, Part 1, Class F – no fences forward of front elevation.
17. LLFA – Sustainable drainage details
18. LLFA – validation report
19. Prior to development a noise impact assessment
20. Contaminated Land survey
21. Contaminated Land validation report
22. Contaminated land unforeseen contamination strategy
23. Landscape management plan
24. Demolition strategy
25. Construction operating hours
26. Dust mitigation strategy
27. BNG no net loss off site delivery
28. Boundary treatment details
29. Restriction on the demolition of Palacefields Community Centre until such time that alternative accommodation provision is made available.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The submitted planning applications are background papers to the report. Other background papers specifically mentioned and listed within the report are open to inspection at the Council's premises at Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2021);
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2015.

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.