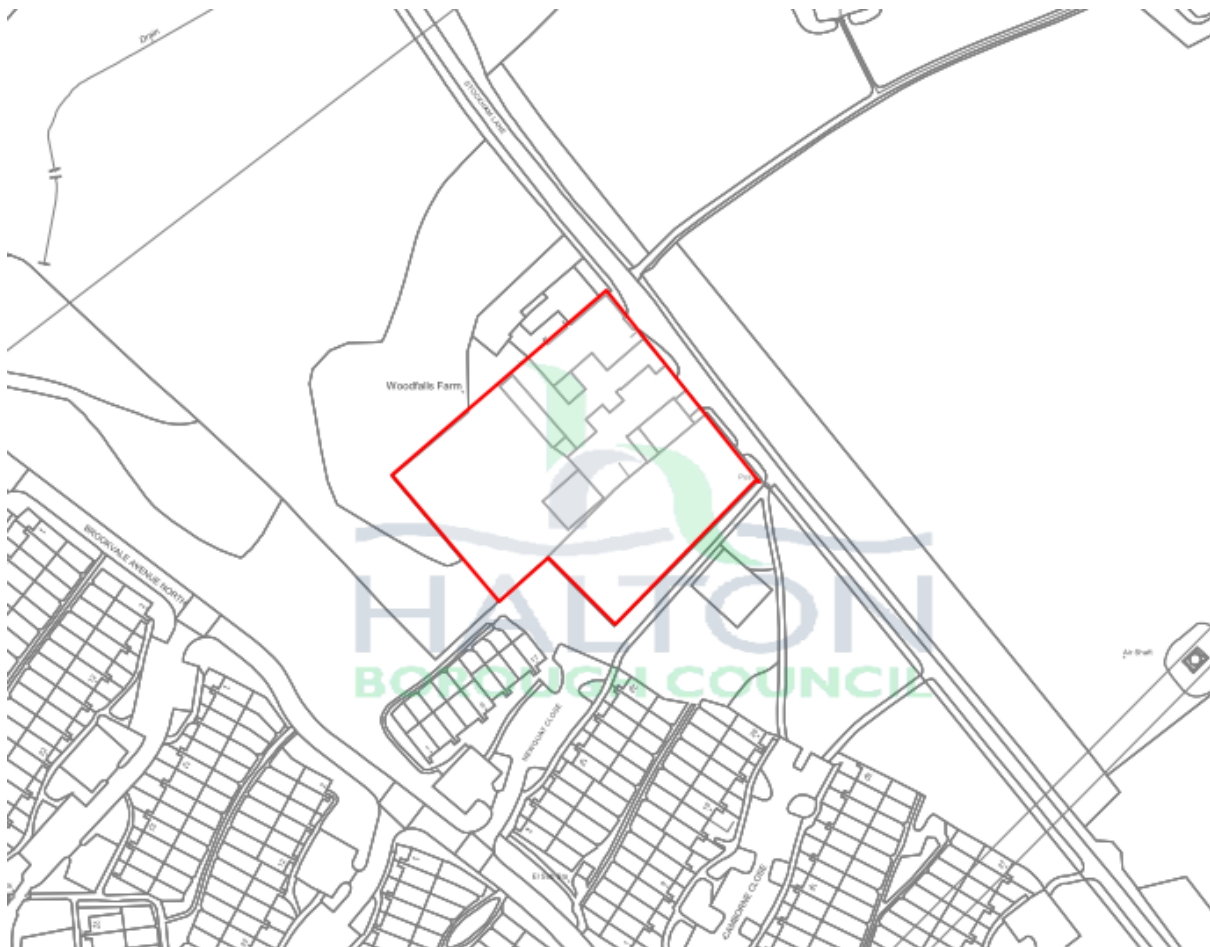


APPLICATION NO:	19/00379/FUL
LOCATION:	Woodfalls Farm, Stockham Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 6PT.
PROPOSAL:	Outline application, with appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved, for demolition of existing outbuildings, conversion of barns to 4no. dwellings and erection of new build residential development to a maximum of 10 units together with access.
WARD:	Norton South
PARISH:	None
AGENT (S):	Mr K Kirkham c/o Mr Steve Goodwin, Goodwin Planning Services Ltd, Old Church Hall, Old Coach Road, Kelsall, CW6 0QJ
DEVELOPMENT PLAN: Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Halton Core Strategy (2013) Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)	ALLOCATIONS: Part Phase 2 Allocated Housing Site / Part Unallocated – Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.
DEPARTURE	No.
REPRESENTATIONS:	One representation has been received from the publicity given to the application.
KEY ISSUES:	Principle of Residential Development and Access Arrangements.
RECOMMENDATION:	Grant outline planning permission subject to conditions and the entering into a Legal Agreement or other agreement for the provision of a financial contribution towards off-site public open space.
SITE MAP	



1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site

The site subject of the application is land at Woodfalls Farm located adjacent to Stockham Lane in Runcorn. The site is 0.51ha in area. Stockham Lane lies to the north east of the site and an public open space lies to the south east. The curtilage of Woodfalls Farmhouse lies to the north west of the site. There is existing residential development in relative close proximity to the site.

The site itself is made up of barns, associated yards and an area of rough grassland beyond.

The north western part of the site which encompasses the barns and yards is designated as Phase 2 Allocated Housing Site on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. The south eastern part of the site which is an area of rough grassland is unallocated on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.

1.2 Planning History

The site has some planning history relating to its redevelopment for residential purposes. The most recent application (94/00035/OUT) was an outline

application for residential development (max. 12 dwelling houses) re-submission of previous application 93/00580/OUT.

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 The Proposal

This is an outline application, with appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved, for demolition of existing outbuildings, conversion of barns to 4no. dwellings and erection of new build residential development to a maximum of 10 units together with access.

2.2 Documentation

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Phase I Geo-Environmental Desk Study, Ecological Appraisal, Bat Activity Report, Tree Survey and Arboricultural Plans along with the planning drawings.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

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

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

3.1 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The site is partly designated as a Phase 2 Allocated Housing Site and partly unallocated on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.

The following policies within the adopted Unitary Development Plan are considered to be of particular relevance;

- S22 Unallocated Land in Urban Areas;
- BE1 General Requirements for Development;
- BE5 Other Sites of Archaeological Importance;
- GE21 Species Protection;
- GE27 Protection of Trees and Woodland;
- PR14 Contaminated Land;
- PR16 Development and Flood Risk;
- TP6 Cycle Provision as Part of New Development;
- TP7 Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development;
- TP12 Car Parking;
- TP17 Safe Travel For All;
- H1 Provision of New Housing;
- H3 Provision of Recreational Greenspace.

3.2 Halton Core Strategy (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Core Strategy are of particular relevance:

- CS1 Halton's Spatial Strategy;
- CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- CS3 Housing Supply and Locational Priorities;
- CS12 Housing Mix;
- CS13 Affordable Housing;
- CS18 High Quality Design;
- CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change;
- CS20 Natural and Historic Environment;
- CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk.

3.3 Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are of relevance:

- WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management;
- WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout of New Development.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The majority of material considerations are identified in the analysis section of this report.

3.4 Halton Borough Council - Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document

The purpose is to provide additional practical guidance and support for those involved in the planning and design of residential development within Halton.

3.5 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Achieving Sustainable Development

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that *the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

Paragraph 8 states that *achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

*a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

*b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*

*c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

Paragraph 9 states that *these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.*

Paragraph 10 states *so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As set out in paragraph 11 below:*

The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Paragraph 11 states that *for decision-taking this means:*

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Decision-making

Paragraph 38 states that *local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.*

Determining Applications

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

3.6 Other Considerations

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a persons rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the Convention of 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 provisions of the above Articles in respect of the human rights of surrounding residents/occupiers.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Highways and Transportation Development Control Response

The development proposes mainly 3 and 2 bed dwellings on a site of former farm with a mix of property types including barn conversion properties. The application proposes 14 residential properties with 28 parking spaces provided.

PARKING

The parking appears to be accommodated either by courtyard arrangement, driveway or driveway and garage combination dependent upon the property type. The re-submitted application provided for driveways of adequate capability to accommodate two cars as per our requirements as as such Highways have no objections to the parking provision presented in the re-submission. (03/10/19)

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

The submitted design includes a 4.8m shared surface carriageway with associated 2m footways. The Highway Authority have no objections to this design.

DRAINAGE

Separate details from the LLFA have been provided.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The application is acceptable in highway terms and the Highway Authority would have no objections to the application. I would happily concede that the developer has considered each of the points I have identified in my previous comments and made alterations necessary for me to withdraw my objections in full. My only remaining requirement would be the submission of a construction management and demolition plan as and when Planning Permission is obtained and a works programme is established.

4.2 Contaminated Land Officer Response

"I have considered the contaminated land implications and would make the following comments;

The application is supported by the following document;

- *Phase 1 geo-environmental desk study, Woodfalls Farm, Runcorn, ref A3129/19, Earth Environmental Geotechnical Ltd, July 2019.*

The report presents a preliminary risk assessment and conceptual site model based upon a review of the available documentary information and a site walk over.

The site has been in use as a farm from the earliest available mapping, with a number of changes in the layout of the various associated buildings. The current use is predominately storage with vehicle maintenance and repair. The site walkover identified a number of possible contamination sources, notably the vehicle maintenance area and likely asbestos containing materials. The desk study flagged the previous development of the site and the possible storage of fuels and chemicals for agricultural purposes.

Development of other former farm sites have commonly found ash and clinker to have been used to create tracks and yard areas, with associated contamination with metals and poly-aromatic hydrocarbons.

The above referenced report concludes that further assessment of the site is required to fully assess the potential land contamination risk posed to the development. It recommends that geo-technical investigation is necessary for foundation design and some soil samples should be included for environmental assessment.

Whilst I am in agreement that further on site investigations are required, there needs to be a clear investigation strategy and proposals for assessing land contamination (best practice does state that integrated investigations, geotechnical and environmental, can be appropriate, but only if the clear objectives of both elements are set and one not compromised by the other).

I would also recommend that further investigation/inspection of the buildings to be converted to residential use is conducted to assess past usage and contamination potential (this may have occurred but it wasn't clear from the text).

In summary I do not object to the proposals, but only if any approval is conditioned to require the submission of site investigation, risk assessment and, if determined to be necessary, remediation strategy and verification reporting”.

4.3 Lead Local Flood Authority

After reviewing 19/00379/OUT planning application LLFA found the following:

- The site is shown to have a low fluvial, tidal and surface water flood risk on the Environment Agency Long Term Flood Risk Maps and lies within a Critical Drainage Areas as shown in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).*
- The proposed development involves the land use change which reduces the permeability (greenfield to impermeable land). This change would increase the surface water runoff at the proposed site.*
- The information submitted with the proposed application does not include any form of Flood Risk Assessment or Drainage Strategy, however there is mention of the foul water being discharged to a mains sewer and the surface water to a soakaway in the application form.*

LLFA would recommend the following general considerations to be made at full application stage when considering the suitability of a site and proposed use relating to drainage and flood risk:

- Vulnerability class for the proposed use should be considered using the 3rd document link below. Consideration of the site area should be made together with EA (Environment Agency) flood risk maps to determine flood zone and whether a Flood Risk Assessment is required.*
- Treatment of current and future surface water risk on EA flood maps will need to be considered (threshold levels/compensatory storage etc) (see 4th link below – consideration should also be given to any river (fluvial) risk in discussion with the Environment Agency).*
- Drainage strategy should follow SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) hierarchy – i.e. in preferential order – Soakaway, Watercourse, Surface Water Sewer, Combined Sewer. Infiltration tests would be required to demonstrate whether soakaway is feasible. It should be noted that United Utilities also apply this strictly, and detailed consideration of the hierarchy will need to be demonstrated in supporting documentation.*
- Appropriate discharge rates should be calculated for 1, 30 and 100yr flood events for use in drainage design. In line with NPPF this should be attenuated to greenfield rates for greenfield sites/site area, and as close as possible to greenfield rates for brownfield areas (Halton BC SFRA requires minimum 50% reduction from existing). Climate change should be considered appropriately.*
- A conceptual drainage layout should be prepared indicating runoff areas and calculations provided including attenuation. Interceptors/filtration may also be deemed appropriate in accordance with SUDS hierarchy/guidance.*

- Details of the implementation, maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage (SuDS) scheme for the disposal of surface water in accordance with the SuDS hierarchy. This should be reported within the Drainage Strategy, this should include the following details:

- A management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for i) drainage to soakaway, including calculations and arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime or ii) if i) not feasible connection to any system adopted by, any public body or statutory undertaker.*
- Interceptors, attenuation structures and calculations to demonstrate a reduction in surface water runoff rate to greenfield runoff rates for the new hardstanding areas as a minimum, with additional improvements for existing runoff where practical (50% reduction required as a minimum in critical drainage areas). Calculation should demonstrate no flooding to buildings in the NPPF design event (1 in 100 year + 40% climate change allowance)*
- Consultation with the Environment Agency and assessment of safe access and egress to the site.*
- Separate consent will be required from LLFA should a development affect the flow in a watercourse or land drain, and discussions held with the LLFA if development is proposed within 8m of a watercourse.*
- There are public foul and surface water sewers within a reasonable distance of the development. Permission from United Utilities will be required to connect the drainage from the development to the public sewer. It should be noted that United Utilities will expect to see that the drainage hierarchy, as described in Part H of the Building Regulations, has been considered before allowing any discharges to the public sewer.*
- Further information on consideration of flood risk can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change>; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-for-planning-applications>; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6000/2115548.pdf; <https://flood-warninginformation.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>*
- In addition it should also be noted that the Council are currently working jointly with the Cheshire Authorities on a SUDS guidance document which will require a checklist to be completed to show that the developer has considered drainage and flood risk. This is likely to be adopted as SPD and will require a reasonable amount of information to be submitted and listed by the developer at each stage. The draft checklist is attached for information.*

Should the planning authority be minded to approve this application, the LLFA would recommend the following conditions to ensure drainage and flood risk on site is considered:

No development shall take place until details of the implementation, maintenance and management of a SuDS for the disposal of surface water in accordance with the SuDS hierarchy have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in a site specific flood risk assessment and drainage strategy. The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Those details shall include:

i. A management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for i) drainage to soakaway, including calculations and arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime or ii) if i) is not feasible then drainage to watercourse or iii) if i) or ii) is not feasible connection to any system adopted by, any public body or statutory undertaker.

ii. Interceptors, attenuation structures and calculations to demonstrate a reduction in surface water runoff rate to greenfield runoff rates for the new hardstanding areas as a minimum, with additional improvements for existing runoff where practical (50% reduction required as a minimum in critical drainage areas). Calculation should demonstrate no flooding to buildings in the NPPF design event (1 in 100 year + climate change allowance).

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

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

iv. 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.

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

4.4 Ecology and Waste Advisor (Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service)

Ecological Information

The applicant has submitted an Ecological Appraisal in accordance with Local Plan policy CS20 (Ecological Appraisal, Leigh Ecology, 14th June 2018, ref: Kirk/18-001). I advise the report is acceptable.

The amended site layout is unlikely to lead to significant additional impacts to ecology on or adjacent to the site.

Habitats regulations

The development is in close proximity to the following European sites which are protected under the Habitats Regulations 2017 and Local Plan policy CS20 applies:

- *Mersey Estuary SPA; and*
- *Mersey Estuary Ramsar site.*

I have reviewed the proposal submitted by the applicant and considered the possibility of likely significant effects under the Habitats Regulations using the

source-pathway-receptor model. I advise there is no pathway that could give rise to likely significant effects on the European sites and it does not warrant a detailed Habitats Regulations Assessment report for the following reasons:

- The small-scale of the construction, when taken into account with the distance to Mersey Estuary (4.8km) and lack of functionally-linked land in the urban fringe vicinity;
- The Manchester Ship Canal acts as a significant barrier to coastal access for proposed residents of the development and Halton residents in general; and
- There are many SANGs (Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspaces) in the local area, including the adjacent Phoenix Park. It is likely this will significantly reduce visitation to the coast both from the development's residents and residents in the Halton area.

Bats

The applicant has submitted a Bat Activity Survey Report in accordance with Local Plan policy CS20 (Bat Activity Survey Report, Leigh Ecology, 22 October 2019) which meets BS 42020:2013. I advise the report is acceptable.

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).

Ecologically sensitive lighting

Habitats adjacent to the site may provide roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for bats and other animals. 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 areas in line with NPPF (paragraph 180). This can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition. It would be helpful for the applicant to refer to Bat Conservation Trust website <https://www.bats.org.uk/news/2018/09/new-guidance-on-bats-and-lighting>

Reasonable avoidance measures for hedgehog and common amphibians

The habitats on site are suitable for terrestrial mammals and common amphibians, including hedgehog and common toad (Priority species, NERC). The following reasonable avoidance measures should be put in place to ensure that there are no adverse effects on them:

- 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 for shelter.

These measures can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

Breeding birds

Confirmed breeding of house sparrow and robin has been observed in on site structures during survey, with trees also likely to provide nesting opportunities for breeding birds, which are protected. The following condition is required.

CONDITION

No tree felling, scrub clearance or vegetation management or building works 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 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.

Landscaping Plan

A detailed and appropriate landscape plan is required that provides adequate mitigation for the loss of trees and other habitats to development. This should include the following:

- *Native tree and hedgerow species of local provenance, which are informed by the aims of the Mersey Forest and Bridgewater Canal, Keckwick Road and Runcorn Ancient Woodland Corridor Nature Improvement Area (NIA)¹, both of which lie adjacent to the development boundary;*
- *Trees and shrubs which provide berry-bearing fruit to encourage foraging by birds; and*
- *Trees and shrubs which attract a range of insects which can encourage foraging by bats.*

The Landscape Plan can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

¹ Mersey Forest and Bridgewater Canal, Keckwick Road and Runcorn Ancient Woodland Corridor NIA. Available online at <http://www.lcreconet.uk/?mdocs-file=304>

4.5 Archaeology Advisor (Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service)

The barns that form part of the proposed development scheme and which are to be converted to four dwellings, together with the associated farmhouse (not part of the development scheme), are depicted on the Tithe Map for Stockham township dating to 1843. Accordingly, the farmhouse and associated barns are no later in date than early nineteenth century. The period 1750-1880 has been recognised as the most important period of farm building development in England (Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement – North West region, English Heritage 2006, p. 6); the Council for British Archaeology's 'An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 2, Research Agenda and Strategy' (Brennand 2007) has indicated that farm buildings are "an important historical research resource" (p. 140), that "there is an urgent need for all local authorities to ensure that farm buildings undergoing adaptation are at least considered for recording" so that "a regional database of farm buildings can be derived and variations across the region examined." (ibid.)

Consequently should the Council be minded to grant planning permission to this, or any similar scheme, the Archaeology Planning Advisory Service would recommend that the applicant be required to undertake a programme of archaeological building recording of the long barn building (at level 2, as defined

in Historic England 2016, Understanding Historic Buildings p.26) and that such works be secured by means of the following condition:

No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in Paragraph 199, Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

The Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service does not carry out archaeological work and the applicants will need to appoint an archaeological contractor to organise the mitigation. I will be able to supply further details of the work on request.

4.6 United Utilities

United Utilities have requested that foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems and that a surface water drainage scheme be secured by condition. Their other observations can be attached as an informative on the decision notice.

4.7 Sabic UK Petrochemicals Ltd

SABIC would have no observations to make in this instance, as the proposed works are outside of the current LUP Land Use Planning Consultation Zone and would therefore not affect SABIC pipeline apparatus.

Please note that the INOVYN Hydrogen Pipeline is within the immediate vicinity and we would respectfully suggest that you contact them if you have not already done so.

4.8 Cheshire Police

When looking at the crime figures for a 1-mile radius of the site they have been consistently very high over recent months.

ADQ (Building Regulations – Approved Document Q: Security – Dwellings) sets out strict requirements for the use of SBD (Secured by Design) standard (PAS 24 2016, equivalent, or higher) doors and windows. Whilst this aspect of the planning and building lifecycle is inspected by Building Control, I am more than happy to provide the applicant with advice.

I have listed a few points below for consideration, which will assist in enhancing the security of the development:-

- *The crown of any trees on the parking court and other parts of the development should be above two metres to allow for maximum natural surveillance.*
- *I would strongly recommend that trellis is used to raise the height of the 1.5 metre screen fences (plot dividers). This will make the fences more difficult to climb.*
- *It is good to see many of the properties have gable windows to allow for extra surveillance of paths and parking areas.*
- *I would like to see all properties have gates flush with the front of the properties where this does not obstruct the driveways.*
- *All properties should be fitted with appropriate fuse spurs to allow an alarm to be fitted easily by the owner.*
- *Given that Stockham Lane is very dark, I would like to see the lighting proposals for this development.*
- *Stockham Lane is very dark and overgrown. There is not much passing natural surveillance so it would be easy for an offender to approach the area unseen. There have been incidents where people have been robbed and assaulted in the area. I would recommend some consideration is given to opening up the area and improving the lighting before the development was given approval.*

I would welcome a Secured by Design Application for the scheme, which would enhance the development and provide greater benefits. Applicants can get more information about Secured by Design (including Design Guides) available at www.securedbydesign.com. Research has shown that this can reduce burglary by up to 75 % and criminal damage by up to 25%.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 The application was advertised by a press advert in the Widnes & Runcorn Weekly News on 15/08/2019, a site notice posted on Stockham Lane on 08/08/2019 and sixteen neighbour notification letters sent on 08/08/2019.

5.2 One representation has been received from the publicity given to the application. A summary of the issues raised is below:

- Stockham Lane is a heavily pedestrianised link-way and bridleway, used by dog walkers, ramblers, cyclists and horse riders. Using this road as the main access for the development from either end of the lane will drastically increase traffic flow and endanger pedestrians.

5.3 Following the receipt of amended plans, a further seventeen neighbour notification letters were sent on 15/11/2019. No further representations have been received at the time of writing this report.

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Suitability of the proposed use

The north western part of the site which encompasses the barns and yards is designated as Phase 2 Allocated Housing Site on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map and as such is considered acceptable in principle for residential development. It is noted that there has been previous planning permissions for residential development on this part of the site.

The south eastern part of the site which is an area of rough grassland is unallocated on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map. Policy S22 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan is relevant. It assumes that the present use will continue and that any proposals to change the use of unallocated land will be judged in accordance with the relevant policies of the Plan. There are no site specific policies in this case.

Considering the suitability of residential development on the unallocated land, it is noted that the parcel of land directly bounds with an allocated housing site and there is existing residential development in the locality and associated greenspace. It is considered that residential development on this unallocated parcel of land would be sympathetic to surrounding land uses and is acceptable in principle.

The principle of residential development on the wider site is therefore considered to be acceptable.

6.2 Affordable Housing

Policy CS13 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan states that affordable housing units will be provided, in perpetuity, on schemes including 10 or more dwellings (net gain) or 0.33 hectares or greater for residential purposes. There is an exception within this policy where it can be demonstrated that the affordable housing contribution would make the development unviable.

The applicant notes the requirement for affordable housing in their planning statement and it is considered that a planning condition which secures the submission of an affordable housing scheme would ensure compliance with Policy CS13 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

6.3 Open Space

The requirements for provision of recreational greenspace within new residential developments is set out in Policy H3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

The Open Space Requirement Calculator has identified that there is a deficit of Amenity Greenspace and Allotments in this particular neighbourhood.

As the open space requirements are not being proposed to be met on site, the policy indicates that a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision is required. This has been sought from the applicant.

The applicant has agreed to making this commuted sum and this would be secured by legal agreement to ensure compliance with Policy H3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.4 Access

This is an outline application in which means of access (covers accessibility for all routes to and within the site, as well as the way they link up to other roads and pathways outside the site) is under consideration. Whilst layout is reserved for future consideration, the means of access would be fixed should this application be granted.

The Highway Officer has commented that the means of access includes a 4.8m shared surface carriageway with associated 2m footways and no objection is raised to this access arrangement for the new build dwellings. The proposal demonstrates that a large refuse collection vehicle can enter and exit the site in forward gear.

The one representation received raises concerns over an increase in traffic which would compromise the safety of dog walkers, ramblers, cyclists and horse riders. The proposed development may increase the usage of Stockham Lane, however the Highway Officer is satisfied that this would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

The parking would be accommodated either by courtyard arrangement, driveway or driveway and garage combination which would provide space for two cars in accordance with the Transport Parking Standards for Family Housing set out in the Appendix 1 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

Conditions which secure the implementation of the site access, parking and servicing provision and visibility splays are suggested.

From an access perspective, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and compliant with Policies BE1, TP6, TP7, TP12 and TP17 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.5 Layout

Layout is reserved for future consideration. There is no longer a requirement to provide an indicative layout to accompany an outline planning application; however the applicant has chosen to provide one to demonstrate the suitability of the amount of development being sought. The layout would not be restricted to that shown on the indicative layout. As stated in the access section above, the access arrangements which include the accessibility for all routes to and within the site would be fixed by the granting of this application.

The application seeks to gain permission for a residential development of up to 14 dwellings (4 of which would be a residential conversion and up to 10 new build dwellings) which would equate to the site being developed at a density of up to 27.5 dwellings per hectare. This is below the minimum density on

individual sites of 30 dwellings per hectare which is sought to ensure the efficient use of land in accordance with Policy CS3 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan, however it is not considered that a refusal on this issue alone could be sustained.

The layout provided with the application is purely indicative, however does demonstrate that a layout showing 14 dwellings can be achieved which has regard for the Council's guidelines including the Design of Residential Development SPD. The conversion of the historic agricultural buildings is welcomed and would help retain the historic character of the area along with the adjacent farmhouse.

Cheshire Police have made some observations which could influence the layout and design at a reserved matters stage and it is considered appropriate to attach these observations as an informative.

The layout detail would be considered as part of a reserved matters application.

6.6 Scale

Scale is reserved for future consideration. There is no longer a requirement to provide scale parameters with an outline planning application; however the indicative elevations show the proposed new build dwellings to be two storey in height which would reflect the scale of dwellings in the wider locality. Scale is something which would be considered as part of a reserved matters application.

6.7 Appearance

Appearance is reserved for future consideration. This is something which would be considered as part of a reserved matters application.

It is considered that a scheme of appropriate external appearance can be achieved which has regard for the location of the site along with a residential conversion of the former agricultural buildings in order to retain their character.

6.8 Landscaping

Landscaping is reserved for future consideration. Landscaping would be considered as part of a reserved matters application.

Tree Survey and Preliminary Arboricultural Plans accompany the application. This indicates that a number of trees would need to be lost to facilitate residential development. The trees which would be lost would be of low quality and it is considered that a replacement landscaping scheme would compensate for any loss as a result of the proposed development.

The Council's Ecological Advisor has made some suggestions with regard to the detail of a landscaping scheme which can be attached as an informative.

6.9 Ground Contamination

The application is accompanied by a Phase I Geo-Environmental Desk Study.

This has been reviewed by the Contaminated Land Officer and no objection has been raised subject to the attachment of a condition which secures the submission of a site investigation, risk assessment and, if determined to be necessary, remediation strategy and verification reporting to ensure that any ground contamination is dealt with appropriately.

The attachment of the condition above will ensure compliance with Policy PR14 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS23 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

6.10 Flood Risk and Drainage

The Lead Local Flood Authority have advised that the site is shown to have a low fluvial, tidal and surface water flood risk on the Environment Agency Long Term Flood Risk Maps and lies within a Critical Drainage Areas as shown in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The proposed development involves the land use change which reduces the permeability (greenfield to impermeable land). This change would increase the surface water runoff at the proposed site.

There is a requirement for a detailed drainage strategy for the site to be submitted.

The drainage strategy for the development should/shall demonstrate use of the drainage hierarchy, as described in Part H of the Building Regulations/ NPPF, (This is the same as the standard condition requested by United Utilities). The requirement for the submission of an appropriate drainage strategy and its subsequent implementation to satisfy both the Lead Local Flood Authority and United Utilities can be secured by condition.

This would ensure compliance with Policy PR16 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS23 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

6.11 Ecology

The application is accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal and a Bat Activity Survey Report. It is recommended that these documents are accepted as an accurate assessment of the current ecological content and value of the future housing site. Our Ecological Advisor raises no objection to the proposed development subject to the attachment of conditions which secure breeding bird protection, reasonable avoidance measures for hedgehogs and common amphibians and an ecologically sensitive lighting scheme.

Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with Policy GE21 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS20 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

6.12 Archaeology

The Council's Archaeology Advisor has noted that the farmhouse and associated barns are no later in date than early nineteenth century. The period 1750-1880 has been recognised as the most important period of farm building development in England and that there is an urgent need for all local authorities to ensure that farm buildings undergoing adaptation are at least considered for recording" so that "a regional database of farm buildings can be derived and variations across the region examined.

They advise that the applicant should undertake a programme of archaeological building recording of the long barn building (at level 2, as defined in Historic England 2016, Understanding Historic Buildings p.26) and that such works be secured by condition.

This would ensure that the proposal is compliant with Policy BE5 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS20 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

6.13 Risk

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is a statutory consultee for certain developments within the Consultation Distance of major Hazard sites / pipelines. This site is outside of the consultation distance for major Hazard sites / pipelines including the nearby SABIC Ethylene Pipeline. SABIC have been consulted on the application and have no observations to make in this instance. Accidental risk is therefore not considered to be a constraint to the proposed development.

6.14 Waste Prevention/Management

Policies WM8 and WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are applicable to this application. In terms of waste prevention, construction management by the applicant will deal with issues of this nature and based on the development cost, the developer would be required to produce a Site Waste Management Plan.

In terms of on-going waste management, there is sufficient space on site to deal with this.

The proposal is considered to be compliant with policies WM8 and WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the proposal would bring forward residential development on designated housing allocation and whilst part of the application site is unallocated, the proposal demonstrates that a residential land use would be sympathetic to surrounding land uses.

The Highway Officer has commented that the means of access to the proposed development is acceptable. The proposal demonstrates that a large refuse collection vehicle can enter and exit the site in forward gear. Sufficient parking would be provided to accord with the Transport Parking Standards for Family Housing set out in the Appendix 1 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

A reserved matters application which provides detail relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping would be required.

The proposal is considered to accord with the Development Plan and would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Halton.

The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and the entering into a Legal Agreement or other agreement for the provision of a financial contribution towards off-site public open space.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Grant outline planning permission subject to conditions and the entering into a Legal Agreement or other agreement for the provision of a financial contribution towards off-site public open space.

9. CONDITIONS

1. Time Limit – Outline Permission.
2. Submission of Reserved Matters.
3. Development Parameters.
4. Breeding Birds Protection – (Policy GE21)
5. Hours of Construction – (Policy BE1)
6. Implementation of Site Access – (Policy BE1)
7. Parking and Servicing – (Policy BE1)
8. Visibility Splays on Stockham Lane – (Policy BE1)
9. Reasonable Avoidance Measures – Hedgehogs and Common Amphibians – (Policy GE21)
10. Ecologically Sensitive Lighting Scheme – (Policy GE21)
11. Foul Water – (Policy PR16)
12. Drainage Strategy – (Policy PR16)
13. Ground Contamination (Phase 2 Site Investigation, Remediation Strategy, Validation Report) - (Policy PR14)
14. Programme of Archaeological Building Recording – (Policy BE5 and Policy CS20)

15. Affordable Housing Scheme – (Policy CS13)

Informatives:

1. Highway Informative.
2. Landscaping Informative.
3. Cheshire Police Informative.
4. United Utilities Informative.

10. 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.

11. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2019);
- 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.