

## DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

*At a meeting of the Development Management Committee on Monday, 1 September 2025 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S. Hill.

Absence declared on Council business: None.

Officers present: A. Blackburn, A. Plant, L. Wilson-Lagan, G. Henry, E. Breheny, S. Moorhouse, C. Sturdy, G. Ferguson, and I. Moorhouse.

Also in attendance: 24 members of the public.

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

*Action*

#### DEV6 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2025, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### DEV7 PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE

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

*Councillor Woolfall did not take part in any debate or vote on the on the following item as he had previously expressed his views on the proposed development.*

#### DEV8 23/00244/OUT - OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION (WITH ALL MATTERS OTHER THAN ACCESS RESERVED) FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 350 DWELLINGS, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS. FULL DETAILS FOR SITE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS VIA A NEW JUNCTION ONTO CHAPEL LANE FOLLOWING THE DEMOLITION OF ROSE FARM BUNGALOW AND NEW

EMERGENCY ACCESS ON CHAPEL LANE (TO BE DETERMINED BY KNOWSLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL ONLY) AND A SECONDARY EMERGENCY ACCESS VIA SANDY LANE (TO BE DETERMINED BY HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL). ALL OTHER MATTERS ARE TO BE DETERMINED BY HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ONLY AT LAND AT CHAPEL LANE WIDNES CHESHIRE

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

Since the publication of the agenda, it was noted that additional letters had been received regarding the phasing of development sites across the borough. In the current Development Plan, there was no policy requirement to control the phasing of allocated developments in the borough. It was noted that comments regarding bats in the area were outstanding from Merseyside Environmental Trust; therefore, it was recommended that the application be approved, subject to their response.

A statement was circulated to the Committee from Councillor Ball who was a Member for Birchfield Ward. The statement highlighted in detail her concerns with traffic congestion, the impact on residents during construction, the change of use of Sandy Lane, flooding, the loss of greenbelt land and the character change to the area.

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

- There were concerns with local infrastructure if the development was built, especially with GPs, dentists, schools, roads and the loss of the greenbelt land.
- While he understood that housing was needed, he felt that full consideration was not taken with this site, especially with the additional traffic that would go to the M62 junction.
- Historically, he'd worked as a GP and specialised in road traffic accidents for 27 years before retiring.
- At the north end of Warrington Road in Widnes, which is a single-track road, vehicles would often overtake stationary vehicles and vehicles going the 30mph speed limit on blind corners. This was most dangerous by the M62 roundabout.
- Chapel Lane was a narrow country lane with blind corners and a narrow pedestrian crossing. A short-term solution would be the planned slip-road onto Queensberry Way. For this development, the exit

point should go onto the roundabout by Cronton Lane and not Chapel Lane. This should all be done prior to construction.

- Every house will have roughly two commuting cars, and this would increase with children who worked.
- As the Council has a duty of care to its residents, road safety should be the most important factor to mitigate death or serious injury.
- He appealed to the Committee to take on his advice regarding road safety and act accordingly.

The Committee was addressed by Mr O'Connor, the agent for the applicant, who supported the officer's recommendation to approve the application. He added that:

- The site formed a majority of two allocations and was acceptable under the terms of the Council's Delivery Plan. The development was applicable to all the policies as set out in Halton's Development Plan.
- The new development would include a toucan crossing on Queensbury Way, a traffic calming scheme and cycling infrastructure on Chapel Lane, and environmentally sensitive lighting on Sandy Lane.
- New homes were needed in the borough and the planned access proposals were considered to be acceptable.
- A sensitive design was planned for properties backing onto Uptone Lane.
- A slip-road onto Queensbury Way was not required to meet traffic management regulations as determined by Highways England or from planning policy.
- A six by seven-meter spine road was planned from Chapel Lane to the eastern boundary of the site. This would accommodate a bus route in the future.
- 20% of the new homes would be affordable and all will be energy efficient and built sustainably.
- Sandy Lane would become more desirable for pedestrians and cyclists and Chapel Lane would be environmentally compensated for habitat loss.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, officers stated that:

- Knowsley Borough Council would need to determine the access for Chapel Lane. In terms of highway numbers, Halton Borough Council wanted to support safety, and based on the evidence provided, there was no proof that there would be a detrimental impact because of the planned traffic mitigation measures that would alleviate traffic issues.
- Neither Warrington Borough Council nor National Highways raised any road safety issues with the

development.

- In the UK, there were 1.2 cars per household on average so in peak times there would be 4 vehicles leaving the site per minute. This traffic would dilute at every junction.
- Roughly 10% of the traffic leaving the site may reach the Warrington Road which means there would be an increase of one car every two minutes reaching the motorway junction.
- Chapel Lane would see an increase in traffic, but it would not be detrimental and the planned measures that would come with the site would mitigate this.
- No organisation expressed their objection to the development due to traffic concerns.
- Regarding safety, the application was initially made in 2023, so a road safety assessment was done in between 2017-2021 where there was one recorded collision on Chapel Lane and there were no fatalities on the M62 junction as of 2024. There were no clusters of collisions.
- There were two applications for this site, Knowsley Borough Council were yet to determine the application whereas Halton Borough Council were determining the application for the access point in its area.
- The Committee were looking at material considerations and highway officers looked at traffic considerations offsite.
- The trees to the right of Sandy Lane were not part of the site proposals.
- The left side of the site was part of W5 in the application.
- It was confirmed that another application would come forward regarding the site as it was currently in the outlying stage.
- If the application was refused based on highway safety, it was stated that an appeal would look at the evidence presented from a safety point of view. The evidence available was in favour of the officer's recommendation.
- It was unknown when Knowsley Borough Council would discuss this item but if they refused it and the applicant lost the appeal then the development could not go ahead.

Further to the publication of the AB Update List, it was noted that the Council's Highway Engineer had made several points of clarification to the published report – as listed in the AB Update List.

*[Following three warnings to the public attendees regarding their disruption of the meeting, the Meeting was suspended at 19:12 and reconvened at 19:20].*

In response to additional questions raised by Members, officers stated that:

- Statistics provide scenarios not certainties, but the overriding NPPF principle of safe and suitable access to the site for all users is met with mitigation offered.
- Mitigation offered includes measures for influencing control of speed as well as improvements to sustainable modes of travel and travel environment.

The Committee noted that a rejection was not strong enough if it was because of 'highway-related' reasons, especially if evidence suggested no significant congestion/capacity issues resultant from the proposal, or mitigation where an impact was noted. If Knowsley Borough Council determined that it was detrimental then the Committee could look at this again when the application returned at a later date.

Officers noted that appropriate access needed to be given for the site and the development could not go ahead if this was not proven.

After careful consideration of the application, updates and comments made by the speakers, the proposal was moved and seconded and the Committee voted to approve the Application.

#### **RESOLVED:**

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

S106 agreement relating to off-site highway works, Open Space, Affordable Housing, habitat loss compensation and Green Belt compensation.

a) Schedule of the following conditions:

- Standard Outline Condition
- Condition specifying approved plans
- Levels
- External Materials & surface materials
- Boundary treatment details
- Site investigation, remediation and mitigation
- Any unidentified contamination
- Affordable housing plan
- Tree protection and Arb Method Statement
- Woodland Management Plan for minimum 30 years

- Site Waste Management Plan
  - Site Bin storage, servicing plan and tracking
  - Details of noise mitigation measures
  - Hours of construction
  - Recreational Pressure Home leaflet
  - Ecology lighting scheme for bats
  - Bird and Bat boxes
  - Breeding birds
  - CEMP/agreement of ecological enhancement features
  - Drainage Strategy
  - Drainage Verification
  - Pedestrian and cycle links
  - Scheme of speed calming measures
  - Cycle parking
  - Vehicle access and parking constructed prior to commencement of use
  - Details and implementation of measures for low carbon and renewable energy proposals
- b) If the S106 agreement is not signed within a reasonable period of time, authority given to refuse this planning application.

#### DEV9 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

The following applications had been received / were in progress:

##### **24/00463/PRIOR**

The Secretary of State had called in the planning application for the Heath Business and Technical Park, Runcorn. This will be considered at a Public Inquiry.

The following appeal had been determined:

##### **25/00001/NONDET**

Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use of a building falling under Use Class E into a mixed use, Class E at ground floor and 2 flats (2 x 6 bed) Class C3 at first floor. **(ALLOWED)**

*Meeting ended at 7:30p.m.*