
**APPLICATION
NO:**

25/00283/FUL

CASE OFFICER:

Mark Quinn

WARD:

Stockbridge

PARISH:

LOCATION:

Land At Knowsley Lane, Knowsley Lane, Knowsley

PROPOSAL:

ERECTION OF A CAR DEALERSHIP INCLUDING A VEHICLE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MOT TESTING CENTRE, CAR WASH FACILITY TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED VEHICLE DISPLAY AND PARKING PROVISION.

Site Description

This application relates to 1.9 ha of land which forms part of the Earlsfield Park Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) located to the west of the main access road, Arley Drive. To the south is Knowsley Lane and existing residential development to the north is existing employment units and to the west is recently constructed residential development which also form part of the Earlsfield Park SUE. To the east is Arley Drive access road and another vacant plot.

Proposal

It is proposed to erect a car dealership for Arnold Clarke, including a vehicle repair workshop, MOT testing centre, car wash facility together with associated vehicle display and parking provision.

The building would be located towards the front of the site with vehicle display areas and customer car parking to the rear of the building. To the east of the building would be wash bays and dry valet and a large vehicle compound area.

Consultations

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority - No objections in principle.

Environmental Health – No objections subject to planning conditions covering, noise, contaminated land and a construction management plan.

Highway Authority – No objections in principle subject to various planning conditions.

FUSION 21 - Social value has been secured for the wider site under the outline planning permission.

Mining Remediation Authority - The submitted coal mining risk assessment is sufficient for the purposes of the planning system and meets NPPF in demonstrating the site has been made safe for the proposed development.

Local Plan Team - Raise objection to the car showroom due to the loss of employment land.

LLFA/Drainage – No objections subject to a condition securing a surface water drainage scheme.

United Utilities Water Ltd - No objections subject to surface water drainage scheme.

MEAS – The submitted BNG metric confirms a 30% loss on site however the 10% net gain is considered to be capable of being achieved with the addition of off- site compensation. The statutory BNG and Habitat Management and Monitoring conditions would be required.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 52 neighbours. It has also been advertised by Site Notice and a Press Notice.

There have been 2 letters of objection. The representations are summarised as follows:-

- What has happened to the original plans to build small units. The amount of traffic and noise if this goes ahead will be unbearable. My house will be one of the closest to this development.
- Don't think the land is suitable for this type of business.
- The warehouses erected have already changed the outlook and feel of the area. This proposal will worsen this.
- Adverse impact on local wildlife.
- Increase in traffic, noise crime and general disruption. Cumulative effect is detrimental to resident's quality of life.

Planning History

24/00687/FUL - Variation of condition 4 attached to planning permission 23/01429/REM (application for approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission 20/00376/OUT (outline planning permission for 30,530 sq m of employment floor space (Use Class B1 / B8) - access to be considered at this stage (all other matters reserved) - approval sought for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) to allow for the extended use of unit 3 from class B1 (now class E (g) (ii) (iii)) and class B8 to include class F1 (a), training facilities. Granted 13.03.2025.

24/00686/FUL - Variation of condition 26 attached to planning permission 20/00376/OUT (outline planning permission for 30,530 sq m of employment floor space (Use Class B1 / B8) - access to be considered at this stage (all other matters reserved) to allow for the extended use of unit 3 from Class B1 (now Class E (g) (ii) (iii)) and Class B8 to include class F1 (a), training facilities. Granted 13.03.2025

23/01429/NMA - Non material amendment following the grant of reserved matters 23/01429/REM (application for approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission 20/00376/OUT (outline planning permission for 30,530 sq m of employment floor space (Use Class B1 / B8) - access to be considered at this stage (all other matters reserved) - approval sought for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) amendments sought to approved plans for , ancillary office floorspace reduced on units 3 &, 4. Floorspace and car parking spaces reduced and motor cycle parking revised to unit 4, revisions to car park layout to unit 5, including electric vehicle spaces moved to main car park ,footpaths added to site entrance on all units, site radius altered to 15m on both sides of entrance to all units & subsequent changes to landscaping plans for all units. Granted 13.02.2024.

23/01420/RE - Application for approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning permission 20/00376/OUT (outline planning permission for 30,530 sq m of employment floor space (Use Class B1 / B8) - access to be considered at this stage (all other matters reserved) - approval sought for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. Plots 2-6 Earlsfield Park Granted 08.12.2023

20/00376/OUT - Outline planning permission for 30,530 sq m of employment floor space (Use Class B1 / B8) - access to be considered at this stage (all other matters reserved)
Granted 03.02.2021.

18/00062/HYB - Detailed application for 4,180 sq.m of employment floor space (Use Class B1), 3,275 sq.m ancillary floor space (Use Classes A1/A4/C1/sui generis), 154 residential dwellings, improvements to lord derby playing fields/oak plantation and associated landscaping and infrastructure including a dedicated 500kva substation for the residential neighbourhood and a 1000kva substation for the eastern employment area and the demolition of Knowsley Lane Farm. outline application for up to 26,350 sq.m of employment floor space (use classes b1) and associated landscaping and infrastructure.
Granted 17.07.2018.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development

plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles
CS4 - Economy and Employment
CS7 - Transport Networks
CS8 – Green Infrastructure.
SUE2a - Sustainable Urban Extensions - Knowsley Lane
CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS24 - Managing Flood Risk

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

EC2 - Sites Allocated for Employment Development
T8 - Transport Assessments
T9 - Travel Plans
ENV2 - Noise and Vibration
ENV5 - Contaminated Land

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application within a timely manner. However the proposed development raises fundamental issues which are contrary to local and national planning policies and which are incapable of being addressed within this application. The Local Planning Authority is willing to meet with the applicant to amplify the reasons for refusal.

Assessment

Context

The application site and adjacent land was previously designated as Green Belt and approximately 70% of the land was shown to be 'best and most versatile agricultural land' (BMV). However, in the preparation of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2016), the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study concluded there wasn't enough suitable land for housing and employment development within Knowsley to meet development requirements until the end of the plan period (i.e. 2028). The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study assessed all housing and employment evidence collated by each LCR district, determining land for meeting housing and employment growth requirements in the longer term. It confirmed significant shortages in Knowsley to be addressed through the plan making process.

Local Plan Policy

Consequently, in the preparation of the Knowsley's adopted Local Plan: Core Strategy (2016) Green Belt land was released. Policy CS5 Green Belt confirms this approach. Whereas Policy SUE1 Sustainable Urban Extensions and Safeguarded Land identifies nine sites to address Knowsley's development requirements up to 2028 and beyond. The release of the SUE's was necessary to provide an improved range, choice and quality of sites to address specific employment needs.

Policy SUE2a. allocates Knowsley Lane, Huyton (the application site) as a Sustainable Urban Extension" (SUE) for Business Uses (Use Class B1) – *now Use Class E(g)* or other appropriate employment uses, and the site was seen as a successor for Kings Business Park. The site is also allocated for new housing development.

Regarding employment development Policy SUE2a made provision for at least 16 hectares of employment uses. The reasoned justification to Policy SUE2a states, *'development proposals which would lead to employment land provision being below this amount will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that such provision is no longer required having regard to the Council's most up to date Monitoring Report and evidence base'*. Site specific development requirements are provided in Policy SUE2a to ensure appropriate highway access, gateway enhancements and good standards of amenity on Knowsley Lane.

Policy SUE2 Sustainable Urban Extensions – Development Principles set out the Council's expectations regarding how the SUEs will be developed; demonstrating a comprehensive approach to the development and to infrastructure provision; high quality design; etc. The Policy confirmed Knowsley will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Knowsley Lane to support the master planning of the site by providing a proposed spatial development framework for the site together further details of development and infrastructure requirements. With regard to the master plan Policy SUE2 says *"proposals for development...will only be granted planning permission where they are consistent with a single detailed master plan for the whole of the Sustainable Urban Extension which is approved by the Council"*.

Supplementary Planning Document

In 2017 Knowsley adopted the "Earlsfield Park" SPD (Knowsley Lane Sustainable Urban Extension). The SPD explains the Council's vision for Earlsfield Park i.e. that it will become a prestigious employment and housing location, with businesses contributing to the economic growth of the Liverpool City Region (LCR), with high-quality housing enhancing liveability appeal and Knowsley's requirements for a mixed-use development.

The SPD details requirements for a site-wide masterplan preparation and for development to achieve a high-quality environment that adds value and integrates well with the surrounding areas. It also aims for the site to be an attractive gateway to Knowsley for those arriving via the M57 motorway, making for a distinctive sense of place. The SPD also requires support for the site's comprehensive development, including a phasing plan for development and an audit of infrastructure to ensure that capacity issues can be addressed.

Masterplan

Following the adoption of the SPD the 'Earlsfield Park, Knowsley Masterplan Report' was also approved in 2017. This masterplan details and informs development proposals, bridging the gap between the more strategic SPD and a detailed planning application.

The masterplan proposes a "hybrid employment park" which anticipates a demand for advanced manufacturing, research and development, and sub-regional logistics. The masterplan demonstrates these employment uses to the east of the site, combined with ancillary leisure and retail uses, a petrol filling station, a drive-through restaurant, a pub/restaurant and a 40–60 bed hotel.

The masterplan further proposes:

- 150-160 dwellings central to the site - an increase of dwellings from those detailed in Policy SUE2a and the SPD to benefit viability and create a sustainable new housing offer.
- Employment starter units to the immediate west of George Hale Avenue.
- A contribution (circa £760K) to enhance Lord Derby Playing Fields and the Oak Plantation.

The Council has previously accepted the landowner's desire for increased ancillary, facilitatory service uses via the masterplan process to safeguard the delivery of employment uses on viability grounds and to make the SUE "more attractive as an employment location". In February 2021 the Council approved a planning application which broadens the business uses on the SUE to a Class E (g) & B8 flexible use. (20/00376/OUT).

The proposed use as a car showroom is a *sui generis* use and is therefore not an employment use falling within Use Classes E or B8. The loss of this significant area of the site to a non-employment use would result in a significant loss of employment land contrary to Policy SUE1, SUE2a, the SPD and Masterplan.

Changing employment provision

As explained in the masterplan section above, the permitted uses on this site have already been expanded to include use class B8 as well as Class E (g) since the allocation of the site and justified on the basis of supporting the delivery of employment uses. In light of the site's importance economically to the Huyton and Prescott area as a successor site to King's Business Park and the loss of Green Belt and BMV agricultural land the Local Planning Authority could not support the loss of employment land for a car dealership.

Policy CS4 Economy and Employment seeks to safeguard existing employment land, which is currently in use or allocated for employment development from changes to other types of development, except where: there is no current or likely future demand for employment uses on the land; or where other uses would bring wider regeneration, environmental and amenity benefits. The LPA are not aware that there is no current or likely future demand for employment uses on this site; or where other uses would bring wider regeneration, environmental and amenity benefits therefore the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS4.

The applicant has submitted a rebuttal to the planning policy objection. This concentrates on the benefits of the proposal in terms of economic benefits, job creation & trainee/apprenticeship positions.

However, the rebuttal does not overcome the fundamental planning policy objections so therefore little weight in the planning balance can be given to these benefits.

Noise/ Residential Amenity

Paragraph 198 of NPPF states "*Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:*

a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life and

c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."

Saved Policy ENV2 (Noise and Vibration) in the Replacement UDP states that development that will either cause an unacceptable increase in noise or vibration or itself be subject to unacceptable noise or vibration from an existing source will not be permitted. It goes on to state that where developments are permitted, conditions

may be attached to ensure that effective noise insulation or other required mitigation measures are carried out.

The site is sited approximately a minimum of 33 m (the workshop/ car park) and 48m (wash bays) from the closest dwelling on Knowsley Lane.

A Noise Impact Assessment, by BWB, for Arnold Clark Automobiles Limited, Knowsley Lane, was submitted with the application. Environmental Health colleagues are satisfied with the noise impact assessment. Should permission be granted a fixed plant condition is required to ensure that the fixed plant associated with the development will not negatively impact upon the nearby residents.

The car wash and dry valet bays are acceptable providing that they are enclosed on 3 sides.

The proposed hours of use would be 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm on Saturday and 11am -5pm on Sunday. These hours are considered to be acceptable and should permission be granted can be secured by planning condition to safeguard the amenities of nearby residents.

To protect the amenity of the nearby residents, a lighting scheme will need to be submitted and approved. The scheme must demonstrate that the lights associated with the development will not negatively impact the nearby residential properties. Should permission be granted the lighting scheme could be secured by way of a planning condition.

Subject to the appropriate planning conditions the proposal would be in compliance with NPPF and ENV2 in relation to noise impacts on the amenity of local residents.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 115 in the NPPF states that in assessing applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.”*

Paragraph 116 in the NPPF states that “*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios*”.

Policy CS7 (Transport Networks) in the Core Strategy states that new development will be required to be:

- Located and designed to prioritise accessibility and sustainable modes of travel through a choice of walking, cycling, public transport and incorporate access for private vehicles;
- Where subject to a planning application, accompanied by Transport Assessments and/or Travel Plans; and
- In compliance with adopted cycle, car, disabled and service vehicle parking standards.

The proposed development will be accessed from the north via privately owned roads serving the wider commercial site. These internal roads do not meet adoptable standards for the intended vehicle types, and as it stands the Council has no plans to adopt them. Highways have also raised concerns regarding the existing roundabout's geometry for larger HGVs; and again, this junction would not be adopted in its current form.

Accordingly, the extent of adopted highway relevant to this application is limited to Knowsley Lane and its signalised junction, where no alterations are proposed. Therefore, there is no objection in principle to the site access from the public highway.

The Transport Statement demonstrates that trip generation is relatively low and within the envelope of the outline consent, but weekend trip rates are based on a very limited TRICS dataset.

The submitted Travel Plan is welcomed and broadly aligns with SPD principles. It includes appointment of a Travel Plan Coordinator, annual monitoring for five years, and measures such as welcome packs, notice boards, cycle-to-work schemes, and car share promotion. However, initial targets are based on census data rather than site-specific surveys, and measures to address limited public transport provision are weak. The Travel Plan should be updated within three months of occupation to include site-specific targets and strengthened measures for sustainable travel, including staff ticket incentives and real-time travel information. A contribution for the council to monitor the travel plan should also be secured if the proposal were to be recommended for approval.

As detailed above, the internal access roads will remain private and are not intended for adoption. However, the applicant should ensure that the internal layout provides safe and efficient circulation for all vehicles, including refuse and emergency access, and that pedestrian routes within the site are clearly defined and safe for all users.

Proposed designated crossing points are shown (zebra crossing markings) around the customer parking area, which is welcomed, however if the proposal were recommended for approval additional crossing points should be incorporated to ensure customers can access the whole site safely, which could be secured by planning condition.

The proposed development provides the following parking arrangements:

- Customer Parking: 26 spaces (17 standard, 2 disabled, 10 EV charging points).
- Staff/Compound Parking: 284 spaces.

- Vehicle Display/Demo: 139 spaces.
- Cycle Parking: 8 spaces (covered store indicated, behind swing gate within compound).
- Motorcycles: (2No spaces shown on plan 6171-101, behind swing gate within compound).

Based on the above, customer parking meets the standards set out in Knowsley's Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD based on maximum standards for *sui generis* use (1 space per 50sq.m of showroom floor area). Disabled provision (2 spaces) is acceptable for the scale of the development.

In terms of highway safety the proposal would therefore be in compliance with NPPF and Local Plan Policy CS7.

EV Charging Provision

EV charging provision is provided for 10 vehicles, 6 located at the site entrance and 4 opposite the valet area within the compound. This provides facilities for both customers and staff and is deemed acceptable regarding current SPD guidance.

Cycle Parking

Cycle parking provision of eight spaces meets the minimum requirement based on the proposed floor area; however, the location of the cycle storage is behind the swing gate within the compound and does not provide public access to customers. Cycle facilities should be available to both staff and to visiting customers.

Locating cycle storage adjacent to a bin store is not acceptable. This arrangement does not reflect best practice or demonstrate a genuine commitment to promoting sustainable travel choices. Cycle parking both for staff and visiting customers should be positioned in a prominent, convenient, and well-overlooked location that is safe, secure, and attractive to users. Facilities should reflect the increasing value of bicycles and the need to encourage modal shift, rather than being treated as a token provision.

If the proposal was to be recommended for approval an alternative location for the cycle store could be secured by planning condition.

Motorcycle Parking

The proposed plans indicate provision for two motorcycle parking bays, which meets the minimum expectation in terms of quantity. However, their location is behind the swing gates within the compound area and away from the main customer parking area. This arrangement does not provide a positive user experience, segregates motorcycle users from other customers, and fails to demonstrate a genuine commitment to encouraging alternative travel choices.

If the proposal was to be recommended for approval an alternative location for the motor cycle store could be secured by planning condition.

Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity

Pedestrian access to the site is via the footway to the northside of Knowsley Lane and continues around to the vehicular access point of the proposed site via Arley Drive. The applicant should ensure that pedestrian access into the site is both safe and

legible, and that the access is not solely for vehicles. There are several existing uncontrolled crossing points along Arley Drive which is deemed reasonable in terms of connectivity to the surrounding infrastructure. The existing signalised crossing at Knowsley Lane provides acceptable pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities and as such, no offsite highway improvement works are required.

Public Transport Access

The proposed development is located on Knowsley Lane (B5194) near the junction with Arley Drive. The nearest bus stops are situated on Knowsley Lane approximately 80-100 metres from the site access, providing very short walking times of around two to three minutes. These stops offer limited services, including routes such as 217/217A, 289, and 297, which connect to destinations including Prescott, Huyton, St Helens, and Kirkby. Service frequency is generally hourly during weekday daytime periods, with reduced coverage in the evenings and no Sunday service from these stops. This restricts the practicality of bus travel for staff working weekends or outside standard hours.

The nearest rail station is Prescott, located approximately 2.5 km east of the site, equating to a walking time of around 30 minutes or a 10-minute cycle journey. Prescott Station is served by Northern Rail with approximately three trains per hour in each direction during weekdays, providing connections to Liverpool Lime Street, St Helens, and onward to Wigan/Preston. Huyton Station is also accessible at roughly 3 km to the south of the site, offering similar service levels.

While these facilities provide some level of public transport accessibility, the overall provision is limited. Bus services are infrequent and lack Sunday coverage, and rail stations, although offering good regional connectivity, are beyond a reasonable walking distance for most users. The Transport Assessment acknowledges these limitations and anticipates that most trips will be made by private car, which is consistent with the nature of the proposed use.

On balance no public transport enhancements are required for this proposal.

Sustainability consideration

In terms of Knowsley's Ensuring a Choice of Travel SPD and national policy objectives, the site cannot be considered highly sustainable for public transport access. Although rail services are available within cycling distance and bus stops are close to the site, the frequency and coverage of bus services do not support a strong modal shift away from private car use. The Travel Plan proposes measures such as cycle-to-work schemes and car sharing, which are positive, but without enhanced public transport provision or stronger active travel facilities, reliance on private vehicles will remain high.

Subject to planning conditions securing adequate cycle/motorcycle parking, the implementation of a construction management plan and travel plan the proposal would be in compliance with saved UDP and Local Plan policies listed above and guidance in NPPF.

Drainage & Flood Risk

Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment.

Policy CS24 (Managing Flood Risk) in the Local Plan states that :

- *New development that may cause an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site or elsewhere will not be permitted.*
- *New development should preferably be located in areas of low probability of flooding.*
- *New development shall include flood mitigation measures, where necessary, to manage flood risk associated with or caused by the development.*
- *The drainage of new development shall be designed to reduce surface water run-off rates to those associated with a green-field site by treating it at its source.*

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and has a low chance of surface water flooding. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) comments are based on this information and other databases available to the Council.

The LLFA has reviewed the submitted information, and given this is a full application, not sufficient evidence, information and details concerning drainage design and SuDS have been submitted. Of most important shortages are (i) no justification and evidence presented to justify discounting water harvesting and infiltrating-based measures from the hierarchy of drainage options, (ii) lack of sufficient SuDS features in the proposed drainage design and (iii) lack of sufficient design details including finished floor level / ground levels, cover/invert levels and details of discharge rate and storage calculations. Therefore, the proposed drainage design provided does not meet the minimum requirements of Knowsley LLFA.

Despite this, considering the site location and characteristics, the LLFA is of the opinion that a sustainable drainage design based on the principles of the SuDS Manual (C753) (updated version June 2025) would be achievable. Therefore LLFA raise no objection subject to a surface water drainage scheme being secured with a pre commencement planning condition should permission be granted.

This would ensure compliance with Local Plan policy CS24.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

A BNG assessment and statutory BNG metric have been submitted to support this application:-

The submitted BNG metric shows that the development is unable to achieve 10% net gain requirement on site. The metric confirms a loss of 1.17 habitat units (-30.4%). Therefore mandatory 10% BNG is not currently achieved. However, the applicant has stated their intention to purchase units from a habitat bank. Therefore, the BNG information is accepted.

With the addition of offsite compensation, it is considered that the development is capable of delivering the required minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity post development and is accepted.

The following onsite habitat interventions (other neutral grassland and urban trees) are considered to be significant enhancements and should the application be recommended for approval would be required to be secured for 30 years through a S106 agreement and a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will be required which can be secured through a planning condition.

Contaminated Land

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that: *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that: a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation); b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments.”*

Saved policy ENV5 (Contaminated Land) of the replacement UDP states that new development will not be permitted if there is existing contamination which could because of the proposed development place the uses at unacceptable risk. Where there is evidence that a site may be affected by contamination, proposals should be accompanied by a site investigation report and schedule of remedial measures and a verification report shall be submitted before the development is brought into use.

A phase 1 preliminary risk assessment has been submitted and following this a further assessment of the land contamination risks associated with the proposed development is required which could, should permission be granted be secured by a pre commencement planning condition.

Conclusion

The Earlsfield Park SUE site was removed from the Green Belt specifically for meeting housing and employment needs during the plan period and beyond. The need for these uses also outweighed the loss of BMV agricultural land.

Through the master planning process the Council previously accepted the landowner's desire for increased ancillary, facilitatory service uses to safeguard the delivery of employment uses on viability grounds and to make the SUE “more attractive as an employment location”. The Council has also subsequently approved a planning application which broadens the business uses on the SUE to a Use Class E (g) /B8 flexible use. However, the LPA are concerned that purpose of the SUE allocation will be eroded detrimentally by any further increases in non-employment uses.

Consequently, the LPA deem the proposal unacceptable in accordance with Local Plan Core Strategy policies SUE1, SUE2, SUE2a, the “Earlsfield Park” SPD and the ‘Earlsfield Park, Knowsley Masterplan Report’ on the basis that the proposal is introducing a non-employment use which is not listed as a use permissible for this strategic mixed-use allocation. Furthermore, Policy SUE1 clarifies that SUE’s are for meeting development requirements until 2028 and beyond, therefore in planning policy terms there are no time limits to determine planning applications for proposals which are compliant with the aforementioned policies in the adopted Local Plan.

The proposal is acceptable (or could be made acceptable through planning conditions) in terms of highway safety, noise & disturbance, residential amenity, drainage and BNG,

Recommendation

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed car showroom would not fall within any of the employment uses permitted on the site (Use Class E(g) or B8) and as such would lead to a significant loss of employment land on this site. Therefore, the proposal would be detrimental to the wider development of the Earlsfield Park Sustainable Urban Extension and contrary to policies SUE1, SUE2, SUE2a and CS4. of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.

Signed Case Officer¹:

Mark Quinn

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:**

Jo Sheridan

Date:

22/05/2026

¹ I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

² I confirm that I do not have a personal relationship with the applicant, agent or other interested parties; I also confirm that I do not have a financial interest in the site or the development proposed

