

Knowsley Council
Regeneration and Economic Development Directorate.
Delegated Planning Report

APPLICATION NO: 26/00186/FUL **CASE OFFICER:** Andrew Hunt

WARD: Halewood South **PARISH:** Halewood
Town Council

LOCATION: Getrag Ford, South Road, Halewood, Knowsley

PROPOSAL: S73 APPLICATION FOR THE VARIATION OF CONDITIONS 1 (APPROVED PLANS), 2 (TRAVEL PLAN), 3 (LANDSCAPING AND TREE MITIGATION), 4 (LIGHTING), 5 (BIRD BOXES), 9 (ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION STRATEGY) AND 10 (DRAINAGE) ATTACHED TO PLANNING PERMISSION 23/01899/FUL (PROPOSED EXTENSION TO EXISTING CAR PARK, ERECTION OF SOLAR CAR PORTS TO EXISTING AND PROPOSED PARKING AREAS, INSTALLATION OF GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR ARRAY AND ASSOCIATED WORKS) TO ALLOW FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE SOLAR PANELS ON SITE, INCLUDING A REDUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF PV MODULES, THE LAYOUT AND SPECIFICATION OF PV MODULES, RETENTION OF TREES ON THE EASTERN BOUNDARY AMENDMENT TO THE 20 FT CONTAINER AND INTRODUCTION OF INVERTERS. CONDITIONS 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 AND 10 ARE SOUGHT AS COMPLIANCE CONDITIONS.

Site Description

The application site is the Getrag Ford site at South Road, Halewood. The site consists of a large factory building, grassed areas and hardstanding which is mostly located to the south of the site, and forms a car parking area. The site is surrounded by other industrial buildings and car parks to the south, west and east. The A561 is to the south and east with a railway line to the north. Beyond the railway line to the north are residential properties.

Proposal

The proposal is for a variation of conditions 1 (Plans), 2 Travel Plan, 3 Landscaping and tree mitigation, 4 (lighting), 5 Bird Boxes, 9 (Ecological Mitigation strategy), and 10 (Drainage) attached to planning permission (23/01899/FUL). The proposed plans amend the layout and specification of the solar pv modules, retain the trees on the eastern boundary, amend the 20ft container and introduce inverters. Conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 10 are sought as compliance conditions.

The main changes from the previous approval are:

- The PV modules in the eastern solar area will now be mono-pitch rather than dual-pitch. This impacts the layout of the arrays.
- The PV modules will be arranged in shorter rows that run east-west, rather than longer rows that run north-south.
- The number of PV modules will be reducing from 2520 to 2242.

- The trees along the eastern boundary are now shown to be retained.

Consultations

Arboriculture – No objections. The retention of additional trees would be an improvement and there is sufficient information to satisfy condition 3 of the original application (Trees and Landscaping).

Environment and sustainability services – The information provided is insufficient to remove condition 9 (Bee Orchids).

Liverpool John Lennon Airport - No objection - The proposed works will have no impact on operations at LJLA.

United Utilities – Request that the application is not determined until a formal response is issued.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 14 neighbours and by site and press notices. No objections have been received.

Planning History

23/01899/FUL - PROPOSED EXTENSION TO EXISTING CAR PARK, ERECTION OF SOLAR CAR PORTS TO EXISTING AND PROPOSED PARKING AREAS, INSTALLATION OF GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR ARRAY AND ASSOCIATED WORKS – granted - 06.12.2023

23/02377/FUL - PROPOSED CAR PARK (TO THE EAST OF EXISTING CAR PARK) TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL VEHICLE AND CYCLE PARKING SPACES AND ASSOCIATED WORKS – granted - 07.12.2023

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
CS7 - Transport Networks
CS8 - Green Infrastructure
CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS21 - Greenspaces and Trees
CS23 - Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure
CS24 - Managing Flood Risk

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

DQ4 - Trees and Development
EV5 - Contaminated land

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

The main changes from the previous approval are:

- The PV modules in the eastern solar area will now be mono-pitch rather than dual-pitch. This impacts the layout of the arrays.
- The PV modules will be arranged in shorter rows that run east-west, rather than longer rows that run north-south.
- The number of PV modules will be reducing from 2520 to 2242.
- The trees along the eastern boundary are now shown to be retained.

Trees

Part 10 of Policy CS21 (Greenspaces and Trees) states that the Council will encourage proposals for new development to incorporate: a) Retention of existing

trees, woodland, vegetation and other habitat features which offer a positive contribution to the local environment in terms of visual amenity, recreation value or biodiversity/wildlife interest; b) Appropriate planting of trees, other soft landscaping and installation of habitat features for the benefit of biodiversity; and c) Adequate replacement provision where tree loss is unavoidable, comprising two additional trees for every tree lost and taking account of species and size.

Saved UDP policy DQ4 states proposed developments shall include appropriate planting of trees and other soft landscaping, having regard to the character of the surrounding area.

The approved Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement prepared by Godwins Arboricultural Ltd (May 2023) identified 25no. individual trees and 5no. groups of trees within the site. Of these, 15no. trees/tree groups were identified for removal to facilitate the approved development, including 5no. Cat 'B' trees and 10no. Cat 'C' trees. The approved scheme anticipated that these losses would be mitigated through replacement tree planting and landscaping measures.

The current submission indicates that additional trees are to be retained when compared with the approved scheme (23/01899/FUL). This is considered to represent an arboricultural improvement over the extant permission through the retention of existing tree stock and associated landscape value.

The submitted Landscape Plan demonstrates that a coherent landscaping strategy remains in place across the site and continues to provide tree planting, ecological enhancement opportunities and visual screening. The revised proposals are considered capable of maintaining the objectives of the original landscaping condition whilst reflecting the amended site layout.

The submitted information is therefore considered sufficient to satisfy the requirements of Condition 3 relating to tree replacement, retained trees and long-term landscape management. Condition 3 required the submission and approval of detailed hard and soft landscaping proposals, including tree replacement, retained trees and a long-term maintenance regime. The information now submitted is considered sufficient to satisfy those requirements and no further arboricultural details are considered necessary. This is supported by the views of the council's tree officer. An implementation condition will be imposed. Therefore, the application complies with Core Strategy Policy CS21 and UDP policy DQ4.

Amenity

Policy CS19 in the Core Strategy requires new developments to maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings by avoiding unacceptable impacts on existing residents and future occupiers.

The proposal would involve minor changes to the layout, design and specification of the panels and would not materially affect the amenity of neighbours. The nearest residential dwelling is over 300 metres away to the north of the railway line whilst

neighbouring business occupiers would not be affected by the proposed changes.

Overall, the changes would not cause harm to amenity. The development complies with Core Strategy Policy CS19.

Glint and Glare

An updated Glint and Glare study has been submitted with the proposal. Glint & Glare Assessment - 19/02/2026. The study predicted no glare towards Liverpool John Lennon Airport's Air Traffic Control Tower and towards flight path FP27. As such, a 'no impact' is predicted towards the Air Traffic Control Tower and flight path FP27. Glare with 'low potential for temporary after-image' (green glare) was predicted towards modelled flight path FP09. This is considered to be a 'low impact' and no further mitigation is required. The results of this assessment indicate that the Proposed Development does not introduce an unacceptable impact towards the surrounding light-sensitive aviation receptors.

This assessment has been reviewed by Liverpool John Lennon Airport and they have no objection to the proposal.

Conditions

The following conditions have already been discharged under 24/00335/DISCON.

- 2 - Travel Plan – a compliance condition will be added (condition 2)
- 4 - Lighting Plan – a compliance condition will be added (condition 4)
- 5 - Bird Nesting Boxes – a compliance condition will be added (condition 5)

The following condition can be amended to a compliance condition as information has been provided as part of the current application, that is considered to be acceptable.

3 - Landscape Plan

In relation to the following conditions: the information provided is not considered to be sufficient to remove the need for these conditions and therefore these conditions are proposed to be re attached.

- 9 - Bee Orchids
- 10 - Drainage Strategy

Conclusion

The proposal would be acceptable in relation to trees and amenity. The application complies with local planning policies and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition(s):-

1) Plans

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

2) Travel Plan

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Travel Plan Ref: P23 -1502_R001v0_TR_Travel Plan dated March 2024.. An annual report shall be submitted to the Council no later than 1 month following the anniversary of the first occupation of the development for a period of five years (2024-2028 as set out within the approved Interim Travel Plan). The report shall include a review of the Travel plan measures, monitoring data and updated action plan. The travel plan shall continue to be implemented as long as any part of the development is occupied and is use.

Reason: To maximise opportunities for travel by modes of transport other than the private car, and to ensure that the development is sustainable, having regard to Policies T6 and T9 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006.

3) Landscaping

Hard and soft landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved documents: - Landscaping Plan (V2 – February 2026) - Grassland Management and Monitoring Plan - Hedgerow Management and Monitoring Plan - Tree Management and Monitoring Plan

The approved landscaping works shall be implemented and completed within the first available planting season following the development being brought into use.

Any trees or shrubs planted or retained in accordance with this condition which are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure that the site is satisfactorily landscaped having regard to its location and the nature of the proposed development and to comply with Policy CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted January 2016, Saved Policy DQ4 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4) Lighting

External lighting shall be installed and thereafter retained in accordance with the approved details:

- Lighting Layout Plan (ADI18/6935R/01--01)

- Holophane Lighting Specification sheets (Q183 -1409-02)

Reason: To ensure that the impacts of the lighting scheme are mitigation on ecology. To ensure compliance with Policy CS8 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and guidance in NPPF.

5) Bird Boxes

The bird boxes shall be installed in accordance with the approved Landscaping Plan (V2 – February 2026) prior to first use of the solar panels and shall be retained at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity conservation and to comply with Policy CS8 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted January 2016.

6) Reasonable Avoidance Measures

The following reasonable avoidance measures should be put in place throughout the duration of development :

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

Reason : To ensure the protection of hedgehogs which are a priority species and to ensure compliance with policy CS8 in the Knowsley Local Plan, Core Strategy.

7) Contamination

If contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development on the part of the site affected must be halted and a risk assessment carried out and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where unacceptable risks are found remediation and verification schemes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall be implemented prior to the development (or relevant phase of development) being brought into use.

Reason: In the interests of safety, to prevent pollution of the water environment and to comply with Policy ENV5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006

8) Soil Importation

No soil is to be imported to the site until it has been tested for contamination and assessed for its suitability for the proposed development; a suitable methodology for

testing this material should be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to the soils being imported onto site. The methodology should include the sampling frequency, testing schedules, criteria against which the analytical results will be assessed (as determined by the risk assessment) and source material information. The analysis shall then be carried out and evidence submitted to and approved in writing to by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of safety, to prevent pollution of the water environment and to comply with Policy ENV5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted June 2006

9) Bee Orchids

Within 3 months of the date of this decision a mitigation strategy to compensate for the loss of the locally rare bee orchids shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy should include the salvage of remaining soils to suitable receptor site within the application site, provision of details as to how the Bee Orchids will be encouraged to grow and provision of a grassland management regime. The mitigation strategy shall be implemented in accordance with an agreed timescale and managed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason : To mitigate for the loss of the locally rare bee orchids and to ensure compliance with policy CS8 in the Knowsley Local Plan, Core Strategy.

10) Sustainable Drainage Scheme

Within 3 months of the date of this permission a detailed SUDS based drainage scheme based on the principles of The SUDS Manual (C753) and the criteria as set out within Knowsley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA, Levels 2), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority . The applicant should provide suitable drainage drawings, summary calculations and results of all investigations detailing the surface water drainage works as set below. The maximum rate of discharge, off-site, shall not exceed 4.5l/s regardless of the surface water discharge destination (i.e. infiltration or discharge to surface water drainage systems). The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme in accordance with an agreed timescale and maintained as such thereafter.

The submitted drainage strategy shall include the following :

- a. Any drainage strategy proposal should clearly demonstrate how the movement down the hierarchy has been considered and that the selection of the most appropriate set of SuDS techniques has taken into account the site geological and topographical characteristics. To assess the feasibility of infiltration techniques as part of the proposed drainage strategy, evidence must be provided to show that a suitable number of soakaway tests have been completed across the whole site within different geology and to a suitable depth (i.e. a similar depth to the proposed infiltration devices). The tests should be completed according to the BRE 365 method and their results should be submitted with the full application.

- b. Drainage Plan showing drainage layout, manholes including cover and invert levels, proposed levels, pipe sizes and gradients, all on -line controls, on and off line storage structures and outfall details.
- c. Design details of the online control device (e.g. orifice), attenuation storage, and intercepting drains proposed at the north boundary of the site will be required.
- d. Plan showing overland exceedance routes in the storm event in excess of the 1 in 100 + 40% CC storm event. A 1 in 200 years plus 40% event would normally be recommended as the Exceedance event and expected that where manholes are surcharged to be identified, and volume and maximum depth of flood water and where the flood water pools or flows to be determined.

Reason : To ensure a satisfactory drainage system is provided to serve the site in accordance with Paragraph 163 of the National Planning Policy Framework, House of Commons Written Statement 161 for Sustainable Drainage Systems, Non Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) and Policies CS2 and CS24 of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy (January 2016).

Signed Case Officer¹: Andrew Hunt

Signed Authorising Officer²: Jo Sheridan

Date: 10/07/2026

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

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
17/04/2026	-	V2	Landscaping Plan
17/04/2026	-	-	Lepton Solar Spec Sheet
17/04/2026	ADI18-6935R-01	-	Lighting Layout
17/04/2026	OSE1010-101.2 REV 0	0	PV Layout and sections
17/04/2026	Q183-1409-02	-	Holophane Lighting

17/04/2026	SE90K	-	Solar Edge inverter datasheet
17/04/2026	S1000-S1200_DS-000122	-	Solar Edge Power Optimiser
17/04/2026	-	-	Solarport digital brochure

Informatives

1) N/A