

APPLICATION NO: 24/00155/FUL

CASE OFFICER: Andrew Hunt

WARD: Prescot North

PARISH: Knowsley
Parish Council

LOCATION: Knowsley Village Stables, Knowsley Lane, Knowsley, Merseyside,
L34 9BD

PROPOSAL: ERECTION OF 8 DWELLINGS

Site Description

The application site located is an undeveloped site in the Village of Knowsley. It consists of a mixture of a paddock area to the south and east of the site, undeveloped grassland to the north and west and a river to the north of the site. There are dwellings to the south of the site (on Maypole Court), dwellings to the north (on the other side of the river) a main road to the east (Knowsley Lane) a stable building to the south west and an undeveloped grassland area to the west.

Proposal

The proposal is for the erection of 8 dwellings. This consists of two rows of 4 dwellings with 4 dwellings at the front of the site and 4 dwellings behind the first row of houses. The front row of houses would be orientated away from Knowsley Lane to the west and the back row of houses would face east directly facing the front row of houses. A new access road is proposed from the existing stables access off Knowsley Lane.

Consultations

Arboricultural Officer - Recommend removing T1 Ash on roadside and severing ivy on remaining trees.

Conservation - Knowsley Village is characterised by the space between properties and the open fields surrounding the edge of the village contribute to its rural setting. The proposed development directly abuts the boundary of the site with Knowsley Lane, which would make the proposed houses a prominent feature when viewed from the conservation area and impact negatively on the setting and the character and appearance of the area. The proposed design of the houses is suburban which is out of keeping with the rural edge village setting. Whilst the use of red brick is characteristic of the Knowsley Village Conservation Area, the introduction of the buff stone banding is out of character with the local area. The proposed development has limited proposed landscaping and is dominated by the access road and hardstanding to the front of the properties. The proposed suburban nature of the development would therefore impact negatively on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The application does not include a heritage statement or any justification for the proposal. It is therefore considered that the proposal would cause harm to the setting of the Knowsley Village Conservation Area.

Environment Agency – Objection - No flood risk assessment has been submitted. One is required by national policy due to the site being in Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3.

Environmental Health – No Objection subject to conditions in relation to contamination, a construction management plan and construction hours.

Highways – Objection pending further information. Adequate information showing vehicle turning within the site and entrance visibility splays have not been provided.

Landscaping - Would like to see the Planting schedule and specification. There is also an opportunity to establish a wildflower meadow on the Sub Station side.

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service – Additional information is needed to clarify works close to the river and their effect on ecology. This is required prior to determination. If works are to be carried out within 5 m of the top of the bank, further water vole surveys will be required prior to determination. Issues relating to lighting, vegetation clearance, hedgehogs and invasive species can be done via planning condition.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue – No Objection subject to informatives.

United Utilities – The applicant should provide a detailed drainage plan prior to determination. However, should planning permission be granted we would request details via a condition. We request informatives be added to any grant of planning permission.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 25 neighbours. 5 Objections have been received consisting of the following main points:

- Our drains flooded 5 times over the winter due to the inadequate and aging drainage and sewerage systems in the village. We've had sewage flood into our living room. A new housing development will further impact on this failing system.
- Additional traffic for the area, risk to highway safety.
- The houses are of poor design.
- Devaluation of properties.
- Flood Risk.
- More demand on schools.
- Loss of light/view for neighbours.
- Knowsley Village is a Conservation Area.
- Loss of wildlife, there are water voles on site.
- It is confusing to include the previous approved plans.
- Green space in the village is vital for the health and well being of the

community. Gelling stables is under threat, the Earls Field Estate took away one stables and so it is vital to preserve the village feel with stables and green spaces.

Planning History

An application for demolition of stables and erection for 5 dwellings at the stables to the southwest was approved. (19/00469/FUL – approved 21/06/22).

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
CS5 – Green Belt
CS7 – Transport Networks
CS8 - Green Infrastructure
CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development
CS20 - Managing the Borough's Historic Environment
CS21 - Greenspaces and Trees
CS24 - Managing Flood Risk

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

DQ4 - Trees and Development

DQ5 - Development in Conservation Areas

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the applicant. However, the issues are so fundamental to the proposal that it has not been possible to negotiate a satisfactory way forward and due to the harm which has been clearly identified within the reason for the refusal, approval has not been possible.

Assessment

Principle of Development

Policy

The application site is situated within the Green Belt.

Core Strategy Policy CS5 states that Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Green Belt except in very special circumstances in which it has been demonstrated that the harm to the Green Belt (including any harm to its openness, purposes or to its visual and recreational amenities) would be clearly outweighed by other considerations.

NPPF Para 154 states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt subject to certain exceptions, one of which e) allows limited infilling in villages.

“e) limited infilling in villages”;

The term infilling is not defined in planning policy or guidance, however it is commonly understood to be the filling of a gap between buildings in an otherwise built up frontage.

NPPF para 155 also states that other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, none of these are considered of potential relevance.

NPPF para 152 states that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Para 153 states that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

“152. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

153. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations".

In terms of the impact of the development on openness, National Planning Practise Guidance gives the following as factors to consider when assessing Green Belt openness.

"These include, but are not limited to:

- openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;*
- the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and*
- the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation".*

Assessment

In order to be considered limited infilling in villages there are 3 elements which must be demonstrated. A proposal must be all of the following in order to be considered limited infill in a village:

1. Located within a village, and
2. Infill, and
3. Limited in scale.

1. Located Within a Village

In terms of the settlement of Knowsley this has the scale and characteristics of a village and is therefore considered a village for the purposes of limited infill. However, the site is outside the village, and part of a ribbon development to the north of the village. It is characterised by a relatively small, isolated groups of dwellings with open undeveloped land in between with extensive tree cover along the main river to the north and opposite the site to the east. Overall, the site is considered to be located outside a village.

2. Infill

In terms of the site, the proposal would not represent the infilling of a small gap in a frontage. The proposal would not fill in the gap to the nearest property to the north as there would still be a river, trees and grassed area between the properties. Therefore, the proposal would not infill a small gap as a small gap would still remain. In addition, the front row of proposed dwellings faces west, (unlike the east facing properties to the north). Therefore, they cannot be considered to fill in a gap in a frontage due to their different orientation.

To the south, there would also be a gap between the properties as there would be a road and a grassed area in between. In addition, the dwellings to the south face north rather than the west facing front row of the proposed dwellings. Therefore, they cannot be considered to fill in a gap in a frontage due to their different orientation.

The 4 rear dwellings would not meet the definition of limited infill as there is no existing frontage with a gap that would be filled in. The northwestern part of the site is currently an undeveloped field and does not front onto any road. Therefore, it would not be considered to have a frontage.

Whilst there is an extant planning permission for 5 dwelling close to the site. This has not been implemented and is of limited relevance. It would not make the site limited infill even if it were implemented.

3. Limited

In terms of whether the scale of development is limited. It is acknowledged that in certain unusual circumstances 8 dwellings, may be considered limited in scale. However, this is dependent on the characteristics of the site and surrounding area and is the exception rather than the rule. The scale of development (for 8 dwellings) is much larger than is characteristic of the surrounding area. The northern part of Knowsley Village in which the application sits is relatively less developed than the rest of the village, with undeveloped greenfield land to the east and west of the site. It is on the northern edge of the village and therefore a less dense form of development is considered to be appropriate for the site context. Overall it is considered that 8 dwellings would not be limited in the site context.

Tandridge Appeal Decision

The applicant refers to an appeal decision in Tandridge (APP/M3645/W/16/3141780), however, this is considered on limited relevance for the following reasons:

1. The inspector referred to other developments of 40 dwellings approved nearby as a factor in their approval. No comparable recent development have been approved next to the application site. The stables development approved nearby was for 5 dwellings which is one eighth of the dwellings approved nearby in the appeal decision. In addition, the 40 dwellings were of a typical suburban style of dwelling unlike the stables application for 5 units which was a courtyard style development.
2. The appeal decision was from 2016 and preceded both the latest national planning policy framework and Planning Practise Guidance section on Green Belt openness. The decision has been superseded by more recent appeals.
3. The appeal was against a non-determination of an application rather than a refusal on the grounds of Green Belt and therefore the impact on the Green Belt was not a major source of contention between the parties.

Preston Appeal Decision

Appeal Ref: APP/F2360/W/21/3282566 - Land at Newgate Lane, Whitestake,

Preston PR4 4JU

A recent appeal decision in South Ribble (2022) found that 6 dwellings was too large to be considered limited infill. This demonstrates that a smaller number of dwellings than the current proposal can be too large to be considered limited infill.

“9. In addition to that, the number of dwellings on this side of the road is limited. In that context the construction of a further six dwellings is significant. Furthermore, the scale and massing of the development, which would comprise three substantial, regularly spaced buildings each accommodating a pair of dwellings, plus a private access roadway and parking /turning areas, would have a significant effect in its context.

10. Accordingly, the proposal cannot be regarded as limited infilling and on that basis the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt”.

Overall, the application is not considered to be limited infill in villages and is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Openness

In relation to the developments impact on openness, it would clearly erode the openness of the Green Belt as there is no built development currently on the site. There is a extensive grassed area to the north west of the site with a line of trees to the north of the site and a paddock area to the south. The land is highly visible from the main road of Knowsley Lane, which is the main road through Knowsley. The openness of the site, generally held to be the absence of development, makes a positive contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The erection of 8 dwellings compared to the undeveloped existing state of the land would cause significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It would have a permanent and irreversible urbanising effect on the area to the detriment of the Green Belt. This would result in the development as a whole having a greater impact on openness of the Green Belt than the existing site, contrary to NPPF para 155.

Conclusion

Overall, the application would not meet any of the exceptions in the NPPF for new building in the Green Belt and would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It is considered that no very special circumstances have been demonstrated by the applicant. As a result, the application is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS5, and the NPPF paras 152 to 155.

Knowsley Village Conservation Area

Policy

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that “any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from it’s alteration or destruction, or from development

within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.”.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 says that when considering planning applications that affect a listed building or the setting of listed buildings the local Planning Authority is required to “...have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. Policy CS20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy sets a similar expectation and says that new development should be sensitively designed and appropriately integrated into the settings of heritage assets.

UDP Policy DQ5 states that new development within or close to a Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Area, having regard to the following:

- a) The scale, form, massing, height, materials and architectural detail of existing buildings in the Conservation Area;
- b) Existing plot layouts and the street scene;
- c) Important views into, within and out of the Conservation Area;
- d) The need to preserve existing open spaces, structures and landscape features (such as trees and hedges, walls, and traditional paving);
- e) Likely levels of noise, pollution, traffic, parking or disturbance that may be caused by the development; and
- f) The visual impact of any vehicular access, parking or servicing/delivery areas that are needed to serve the development.

Assessment

The site is located on the edge of Knowsley Village Conservation Area and therefore has impacts on the setting of the Conservation Area.

A brief Conservation Area Appraisal was completed by Knowsley Council in 2005. Knowsley Village Conservation Area is located within a rural setting benefiting from a village green, wide open space and coppices of trees. The buildings comprise of workers cottages, lodges and farmhouses. The 1847 Tithe Award Map shows that St Mary's Church, the Parsonage and several cottages had been built by this time. The Conservation Area retains a rural character reminiscent of pre-war England. Since the Second World War, several large housing estates have been built to the east of the Conservation Area. Knowsley Lane is the main thoroughfare, passing through Maypole Green. The village primarily consists of Georgian and Victorian buildings. Highfield cottage was built in 1759 using local sandstone. St Mary's Church (Grade II listed) was built in 1844. The Derby Memorial Chapel was added in 1871 with a west tower, transepts, a clerestory and pointed lancet. Knowsley Vicarage on Tithebarn Lane was built around 1885 out of red brick, terracotta and sandstone. Many local houses of the same period share characteristics of the Vicarage (tall chimneys and jettied windows).

The village character is dependent on retaining the space between properties with the surrounding open fields contributing to the setting of the conservation area.

The application seeks to erect 8 houses on the site. The proposed site would consist of four pairs of semi-detached houses arranged with two pairs to each side of an

access road, with parking to the front. The houses would be of red brick with buff stone cills to the ground floor, a buff stone cill band to the first-floor front elevation and a decorative buff brick band at the ground floor lintel height to the rear. The roof is proposed to be dark grey concrete tiles, the external doors are proposed to be white aluminium and the windows are proposed to be white aluminium. The landscaping consists largely of new road and pavement with some small areas of grass. The proposal retains the established hedge to Knowsley Lane.

The site is currently in use for equestrian use and is a flat field, with an area designated for the riding of horses. The field is the last open green space on this side of Knowsley Lane between Knowsley Village and the adjacent industrial area. The erection of 8 houses to the site would constitute urban sprawl and would result in the last defining field between the edge of Knowsley village and the industrial area to the north being lost. Knowsley Village is characterised by the space between properties and the open fields surrounding the edge of the village contribute to its rural setting. The proposed development directly abuts the boundary of the site with Knowsley Lane, which would make the proposed houses a prominent feature when viewed from the conservation area and impact negatively on the setting and the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed design of the houses is suburban which is out of keeping with the rural edge village setting. Whilst the use of red brick is characteristic of the Knowsley Village Conservation Area, the introduction of the buff stone banding is out of character with the local area. In particular, the front triangular dormers and door roofhang coverings are not characteristic of the area and do not respect the existing form and character of the Conservation Area. The proposed development has limited proposed landscaping and is dominated by the access road and hardstanding to the front of the properties. The proposed suburban nature of the development would therefore impact negatively on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The application does not include a heritage statement or any justification for the proposal. The proposal is contrary to Policy DQ5 of the Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan which states that “new development within or close to a Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Area”. It is therefore considered that the proposal would cause significant harm to the setting of the Knowsley Village Conservation Area. Overall, the application is contrary to NPPF para 206 and UDP policy DQ5.

Design and Layout

Policy

Part 1 a) of Core Strategy Policy CS19 states that development within Knowsley will be expected to Respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment;

Part B1 of the New Residential Development SPD states that New residential development will be expected to: Respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment.

NPPF para 135 c) requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

NPPF para 139 states that Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. The NPPF places great emphasis on improving the design quality of new development.

Assessment

In relation to the design of the scheme, the general design of the scheme is a generic suburban style of dwelling not in keeping with the character of the area. In particular, the front triangular dormers and door roofhangs coverings are not characteristic of the area and do not respect the existing form and character of the surrounding area. Due to the proximity to the Conservation Area a high-quality design that reflects the materials and design of the existing building is required.

In relation to the layout and orientation of the dwellings, these do not orientate toward the major road of Knowsley Lane but turn their back towards the main road. The visual effect of this orientation leads to a sense of enclosure and harm to the street scene. Therefore, the failure to provide a frontage with the main road would create a poor relationship with the arrangement and layout of surrounding built developments. It would also lead to a lack of natural surveillance and active frontages, causing harm to the character of the area. It is also considered that the amount of development at the site would constitute over development in the context of a relatively undeveloped surrounding area.

Overall, it is considered that the development would be of poor design and would fail to match the character of the existing building on site or provide an attractive residential environment. Therefore, the development is contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS19, and NPPF paras 130 and 139.

Flood Risk

Policy

NPPF Para 173. 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. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable)

it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

Core Strategy Policy CS24 (Managing Flood Risk) 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 in areas of medium or high flood risk will only be permitted if evidence has been submitted demonstrating that the development could not be practicably located in an area of lower flood risk and if applicable the 'exception test' has been complied with, in accordance with national guidance. All development which is within or otherwise affects an area of flood risk or is larger than one hectare in size shall be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

Assessment

Parts of the site are within flood zones 2 and 3 and there is a main river directly to the north of the site. Whilst the northern edge of the site is not proposed for built development, it is within the site boundary and the presence of a main river to the north of the site is a key issue in relation to flooding and needs to be properly assessed. In addition, the drainage statement states that detailed infrastructure (including whether the water will discharge into the area) will be confirmed at a later stage. The proposal may therefore impact on the watercourse which will therefore require a flood risk assessment to consider the implications. Flooding issues are therefore of importance to the principle and layout of the site.

The failure to include a Flood Risk Assessment is therefore contrary to NPPF para 173 and Core Strategy Policy CS24 and it cannot be concluded that the flood risk impacts of the development are or can be made acceptable.

Residential Amenity

Part 2 of Core Strategy Policy CS19 requires that development proposals avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future occupiers.

NPPF para 135 c) requires that planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built

environment and landscape setting and provide a high standard of amenity for and future users.

The New Residential Development SPD states that new to new principal rear elevations for 2 storey properties should achieve a minimum of 20 metre between dwellings and a principal elevation to a gable should be a minimum of 12 metres. Garden Depths should be a minimum of 10 metres.

The proposed dwellings would meet the interface distances between dwellings and would provide acceptable light and outlook. The development would also not significantly harm the amenity of neighbours, through loss of light or outlook.

However, in relation to garden space, the 4 properties at the front would have garden depth of around 7.30 -8 metres. If the site were in an urban area with limited space, this may be on balance acceptable, however, in a small village area, this reinforces the view that the site is over developed with too high a density being proposed for the site. The garden size standards could easily be accommodated through a reduction in the number of dwellings at the site. However, it is the applicants choice not to do so.

Overall, the proposal would fail to ensure good living conditions for future occupiers by providing sufficient amenity space contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS19 and NPPF para 135.

Highway Safety

NPPF para 115 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 would be severe.

Policy CS7 states that new development will be required to be:

- a) 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 deficiencies are identified, developer contributions will be required to improve the accessibility of the location;
- b) Located and designed to ensure that larger scale proposals (attracting a lot of visitors, customers and/or employees) are located in the most accessible locations;
- c) Where subject to a planning application, accompanied (except in the case of smaller scale proposals) by Transport Assessments and/or Travel Plans;
- d) In compliance with adopted cycle, car, disabled and service vehicle parking standards for different types and scales of new development;
- e) Inclusive of measures that will mitigate carbon emissions and improve air quality where appropriate; and
- f) Consistent with safeguarding arrangements that secure the operational integrity and safety of Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

In relation to highways impacts, the applicant has failed to demonstrate sufficient turning space within the site to accommodate all relevant vehicles. In addition, the

applicant has failed to show sufficient visibility splays at the entrance for the site to demonstrate that safe access can be achieved for the site. Overall, in the absence of this information being provided it cannot be concluded that the development would not cause unacceptable highways impacts. Therefore, as it stands the application is contrary to NPPF para 115 and Core Strategy Policy CS7.

Trees

In relation to tree impacts, there are trees within the northern edge of the site, however, these are proposed to be retained as part of the development. Overall, there would be no harm in relation to trees. This is supported by the views of the council's arboricultural officer who has no objection to the development.

Ecology

Core Strategy Policy CS8 states that planning powers will be used to Protect, enhance and/or introduce biodiversity into existing areas of Green Infrastructure, through integration into the design of new development and public realm projects.

NPPF para 186 states that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

In relation to ecology the applicant has submitted a water vole survey, however this is considered deficient as only one survey was undertaken. This survey is contrary to guidance which recommends two surveys (one in the first half breeding and one in the second half of the breeding season). The report also does not show the extent of the area that could be surveyed and states that a 20 m stretch of the ditch off-site could not be surveyed. The report also does not provide comment on the suitability of the habitat to support water vole or provide a detailed description of the type of habitat present.

The proposed site plan also implies that previous habitat in the area will be removed whilst the drainage statement states that detailed infrastructure (including whether the water will discharge into the area) will be confirmed at a later stage. Additional information is required to understand the extent of the habitat works within 5 m of the top of the ditch bank, and the construction of outfalls that may be installed. Without this information it is not possible to conclude that there will be no harm to Water Voles or that any impacts can be made acceptable.

These elements are too fundamental to the development's ecological impact to leave to a planning condition. The surveys may reveal findings which may require alterations to the scheme, which would be too late at condition stage. In addition, any recommendations of the reports for mitigation measures would not be able to be secured via condition as this would be too late.

In relation to other ecology matters relating to lighting, vegetation clearance, hedgehogs and invasive species, these can be addressed via planning conditions.

Overall, the development is contrary to Core Strategy policy CS8, and NPPF para 186.

Other Considerations

In relation to property prices, this is not a material planning consideration that can be taken into account.

Conclusion

The proposal is unacceptable in principle, and the development would cause significant harm in relation to the openness of the Green Belt, design and layout of the buildings, the Knowsley Village Conservation Area, Highway Safety, residential amenity, ecology, flood risk

The development is contrary to the Core Strategy and Unitary Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and New Residential Development and Design Quality in New Development Supplementary Planning Documents.

Recommendation

Refusal

That Planning Permission be refused for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposal to erect eight dwellings constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The site is not considered to amount to an infill plot, and it is considered that the applicant has failed to demonstrate any very special circumstances to justify the proposal which would harm the character and openness of the Green Belt contrary to Green Belt policy. Therefore, the development is contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS5, and National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 152 to 155.
- 2) The application has failed to demonstrate that the ecological impacts from the development are or can be made acceptable. Specifically with regard to the impacts on water voles. Therefore, the development is contrary Core Strategy Policy CS8, and National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 186.
- 3) The application has failed to demonstrate safe and sustainable access and manoeuvring can be achieved for the site. Therefore, it has not been demonstrated the proposal is acceptable in respect of highway safety and is contrary to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 115 and Policy CS 7 of the Local Plan Core Strategy.

- 4) The application has failed through the provision of a sustainable flood risk assessment to demonstrate that flooding impacts on the site are or can be made acceptable, the application is therefore contrary to National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 173 and Policy CS 24 of the Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 5) The proposal would result in harm to the setting of the Conservation Area by eroding the semi-rural setting of the Conservation Area. for which no justification has been provided. The development is therefore contrary to UDP policy DQ5, Policy CS 20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 206.
- 6) The layout and orientation of the proposed dwellings do not respect the character and appearance of the area to the detriment of the street scene, nor do they provide adequate amenity space for future occupiers resulting in significant harm to their living conditions. The proposal is contrary to Core Strategy Policy and CS19, and National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 135 the New Residential Development SPD and the New Residential Development SPD.

Signed Case Officer¹:

Andrew Hunt

**Signed Authorising
Officer²:**

K Foster

Date:

28 June 2024

Informatives

N/A

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