

To **Emma Breheny**

Date 21-08-2025

Dept. Planning

Ref **23/00244/OUT**

From Highway Authority
Andrew Blackburn

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Outline planning application (with all matters other than access reserved) for the development of up to 350 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure works. Full details for site access arrangements via a new junction and emergency access on Chapel Lane (to be determined by Knowsley Borough Council only) and a secondary emergency access via Sandy Lane (to be determined by Halton Borough Council). All other matters are to be determined by Halton Borough Council only at Land At Chapel Lane Widnes Cheshire.

Halton Highways offers no objection, subject to conditions and informatives.

In highway terms, when analysing and reviewing such a submission, consideration is given, but not limited to, the following; **traffic generation, distribution and capacity impact, access to the site for all modes, and impact on Highway safety.**

Traffic generation, distribution and capacity impact

The Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, subsequent Transport Assessment Addendum and Technical Notes, regarding traffic and transport and other highway matters, were agreeable with robust modelling and junction/capacity assessments as well as appropriate trip distribution and assignment. Detailed response to further queries was also offered.

No significant queuing and/or congestion is presented about the access on Chapel Lane, nor on the signalised junction to the north on Chapel Lane with Cronton Road (A5080), nor at the roundabout junction to the south with Prescott Road, Queensbury Way and Hough Green Road.

With regards to the cumulative impact of this site with the recently committed North Widnes developments it has been demonstrated, with additional modelling and analysis, that proposed active travel and junction improvements about the Blackhorse Roundabout, to be implemented via s106 agreements regarding the aforementioned sites, will still operate within capacity taking into account the impact of this site.

S106 funds secured from the applicant relevant to this permission, for active travel improvements south from the site towards the town centre via Liverpool Road, offers the opportunity for improvement of the Liverpool Road (B5178) junction with Prescott Road and

Hale Road, in terms of reducing travel demand by private cars, improving movements for sustainable modes, mitigating the impact of this site, increasing the capacity for active travel as alternative to car journeys whilst maintaining the traffic function of the intersection.

The off-site works, to be conditioned, and contributions, above mentioned and below, further mitigate the impact of the site's traffic on the site.

With the dilution of traffic at each subsequent node, and route choice, the impact of the development on the network is not considered unacceptable, nor detrimental to the capacity and/or flow of traffic on the network.

A suitably worded Construction Management and Phasing Plan will be required to manage and control traffic associated with the development's construction, primarily HGV movements, with appropriate traffic routing and mitigation measures.

After an initial holding objection further information and assessment saw National Highways considered the developments' potential operational impact on Junctions 6 and 7 of the M62 as minimal and similar present no objection to the development.

Access to the site for all modes

As per the transport user hierarchy it is generally accepted that walking is the most important mode of travel at a local level and that 2km is a distance that people are prepared to walk to access an amenity/facility. Reference to the 2km walk distance was made in the now superseded Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 13 which advised that 'walking is the most important mode of travel at the local level and offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly under 2km'.

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation's (CIHT) document 'Guidelines for Providing Journeys on Foot' states in paragraph 1.12 that 'walking accounts for over a quarter of all journeys and for four fifths of journeys of less than one mile.' The document also identifies a walking distance of 2km as a maximum acceptable distance from a residential development to many important everyday facilities and amenities.

Though the layout of the site is a reserved matter, meaning precise walking distance is not able to be calculated, it is considered that all houses within the site will be within an acceptable distance to an existing bus stop (e.g. Queensbury Way, Cronton Road).

There are several Primary and Secondary Schools, and a Sixth Form College within walking distance of the site. The local centre at Hough Green, as well as facilities and amenities in Cronton are also accessible from the site on foot as are medical facilities and the train station, further afield.

With journeys of up to 5km expected to be made by cycle the site is considered in a sustainable location with the above and more services, and employment areas within this distance.

A number of improvements as above mentioned and detailed below will give improved route choice, connectivity and provision for active travel modes as well as to and for bus provision.

The single vehicular access is a priority junction about the existing farm access to Rose Farm on Chapel Lane, offering an arrangement that is suitable for bus access/egress should a future route service the site be forthcoming.

An additional emergency access arrangement is provided, north of this primary access, such that any works relating to the maintenance of the surface and/or other highway element requiring the closure of the single vehicle access point, or emergency situation do not prevent traffic access/egress of the site. The restricting of the access to, for example, a single carriageway is also feasible given the arrangement width/geometry offered.

Further the use of Sandy Lane as an advantageous route for emergency vehicles (only), should abovementioned circumstances arise, is facilitated with such access provision and change to the TRO. Given the location of, and route to, this emergency access it is not considered likely that this will be utilised.

Overall, whilst it is considered that emergency access(es) does not represent an ideal solution compared to multiple vehicular accesses, it is submitted as the only feasible option, given landownership constraints.

Note - To preserve the character of the existing Public Right of Way (PROW), an east west edge of field track, whilst also retaining its route and purpose, connecting Chapel and Sandy Lanes, the PROW W/16 will be diverted by applying for the appropriate legal order, see informatives below. Associated path improvements will also be sought.

Note – the arrangement regarding the continuation of the spine road and crossing of Sandy Lane is not considered part of this access application but will form part of detailed design under a remedial matters (layout) application, notwithstanding the drawings and discussion on this topic to date including the indicative arrangements presented in 5.4.2 of the TA and Fig 5.5, nor the Illustrative Masterplan.

Impact on Highway safety

The prescribed visibility splays are offered at both the accesses on Chapel Lane.

The proposals will see a resultant improvement in the environment for active travel modes both about the access on Chapel Lane and wider connections to the site.

A suite of improvements, below, will see traffic calming about the access as well as improved and additional crossing facilities as part of the off-site works, accompanying sustainable travel improvements.

No unacceptable highway safety impact is considered resultant from the proposal, nor detrimental cumulative impact.

Summary

The access proposals, given that is what the application is solely for, are considered acceptable, after much positive collaboration, not only with the applicant and their representatives, but also with Knowsley MBC Highways and Planning officers.

To reach this position, the inclusion of off-site highway works is integral; to improve the site's sustainability, primarily for active travel modes, in terms of connection to and with the environment within which it is located, encourage modal shift and mitigate effects of additional traffic.

These works include:

- a traffic calming Scheme on Chapel,
- an uncontrolled crossing on Chapel Lane (nr Parklands),
- cycle infrastructure on Chapel Lane/Prescot Rd,
- a Toucan Crossing on Old Upton Lane,
- a signalised crossing on Cronton Lane,
- improvements to Sandy Lane, including a lighting scheme sensitive to the environmental/ecological needs of the route, and
- additional signalised pedestrian crossing on Queensbury Way.

A s106 contribution for improved sustainable links from the site south towards Widnes Town Centre via Liverpool is also secured.

The proposal therefore satisfactorily meets HBC Policies; C1: Transport Network and Accessibility.

It further addresses and satisfies NPPF, notably chapter 9 109 e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and f) identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.

Encouragement of modal shift is well considered, as is movement, by all modes, having been integral in design development to date.

With all other matters reserved, detailed design will require similar collaboration to reach an overall acceptable proposal with the above-mentioned underlying principles forefront.

Whilst the officer's considerations are finely balanced, the development is considered a sustainable location, with safe and suitable access achieved for all users; presenting no detrimental residual cumulative impact on the road network, nor unacceptable safety impacts with mitigation offered, therefore Highways offers no objection, subject to conditions and s106.

Conditions

Off-site Highway works/s278

No development shall take place until a scheme for the design and layout of highway improvement works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the works shall include but not be limited to:

- a traffic calming scheme on Chapel,
- an uncontrolled crossing on Chapel Lane (nr Parklands),
- cycle infrastructure on Chapel Lane/Prescot Rd,
- a Toucan Crossing on Old Upton Lane,
- a signalised crossing on Cronton Lane,
- improvements to Sandy Lane, including a lighting scheme sensitive to the environmental/ecological needs of the route, and
- additional signalised pedestrian crossing on Queensbury Way.

The approved works shall be implemented prior to first occupation.

Reason: To ensure the provision of safe and adequate means of access to the development for all users, in the interests of highway safety and amenity, and to comply with Policy C1.

Residential Travel Plan

Notwithstanding the submitted Travel Plan, prior to the occupation of any dwelling, a Residential Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include immediate, continuing and long-term measures to promote and encourage alternative modes of transport primarily, but not limited to, to single-occupancy car journeys. For the avoidance of doubt, the Residential Travel Plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Information on existing transport policies, services and facilities, travel behaviour and attitudes.
- Access for all modes of transport.
- Resource allocation including Travel Plan Co-ordinator and budget.
- Marketing and communication strategy.
- Appropriate measures and actions to reduce car dependence and encourage sustainable travel.

- Production and distribution of an information pack for residents detailing travel options and information on all modes of transport.
- An action plan including timetable for implementation of each of the above.
- Mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and implementing the Travel Plan.

The approved Residential Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable contained therein and shall continue to be implemented so long as any part of the development is occupied.

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 5 years. The report shall include a review of the Travel Plan measures, monitoring data and updated action plan.

Reason: To maximise opportunities for travel by modes of transport other than the private car, and to ensure that the development is sustainable and complies with Policy CS(R)15.

Construction Management and Phasing Plan

A Construction Management Plan will have to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority that details the means of mitigation of construction effects. This shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) Layout of the site compound including identification of areas for the storage of plant and materials, loading/unloading and turning areas for delivery vehicles [for each phase as necessary].
- b) Site boundary treatment and access point for all modes, noting pedestrian and vehicle intervisibility, and unobstructed passage.
- c) Management of deliveries including prevention of waiting/layover of construction related traffic on the highway, measures for the control of traffic, in terms of volume and/or frequency, to and from the site and consideration of any temporary traffic management arrangements which may be necessary during periods of construction.
Note reversing on the highway is not permitted without a Banksman.
- d) Construction staff parking arrangements.
- e) Control of transfer of mud out of the site - details of wheel washing facilities including location and type.
- f) Methods for the mitigation of noise and vibration from building works also from the operation of any temporary power generation or pumping plant which will operate overnight.
- g) Methods for dust control and suppression.
- h) Adequate provision for addressing any abnormal wear and tear to the highway.
- i) A programme of works including phasing for all stages of the development.
- j) Working hours.

All site works shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan unless otherwise agreed in writing beforehand with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory development of the site and in the interests of protecting the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and to comply with Policy C1.

Informatives:

Public Rights of Way (divert)

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that there is a footpath crossing the site which it will be necessary to divert to enable the development hereby permitted to be carried out. The recommendation includes Member approval to the pursuance of the diversion of the PROW W/16 under the Town and Country Planning Act.

Highways S278 Agreement

It is an offence to carry out any works within the public highway without the permission of the Highway Authority. The grant of planning permission will require the developer to enter into an agreement under s278 of the Highways Act 1980 with the Council.

Streetworks

This permission does not entitle the developer to obstruct or carry out works within the Adopted Highway or across a Public Right of Way whatsoever. Any proposed temporary closure or works affecting either will require consent which must be obtained from the Streetworks team.