

Application No: 11/1879N

Location: LAND NORTH OF PARKERS ROAD, LEIGHTON

Proposal: A Hybrid Planning Application Seeking Residential Development for up to 400 New Dwellings with Open Space; Comprising a Full Planning Application for Phase A of 131 Dwellings and Phase B which Seeks Outline Planning Permission for up to 269 Dwellings with Access and Associated Infrastructure. In Respect of the Outline Element (Phase B), Only Access is Sought for Approval and All Other Matters are Reserved for Determination at a Later Date

Applicant: Bloor Homes and Linden Homes

Expiry Date: 12-Sep-2011

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to Section 106 Agreement and conditions

MAIN ISSUES

**Planning Policy And Housing Land Supply
Affordable Housing,
Highway Safety And Traffic Generation.
Contaminated Land
Air Quality
Noise Impact
Landscape Impact
Hedge and Tree Matters
Ecology,
Design
Amenity
Open Space
Drainage And Flooding,
Sustainability
Education**

REFERRAL

The application has been referred to Strategic Planning Board because it is a largescale major development and a departure from the Development Plan.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site comprises 15.1ha of agricultural land (plus highway land – Parker’s Road) located on the north western edge of Crewe. The site is defined by Parkers Road to the south, Moss Lane to the east existing development to the west and a public footpath along part of its northern boundary. It is bisected by a network of existing hedgerows, some of which contain trees. In addition, there are a small number of free standing trees within fields.

Existing residential development lies to the east, south and south west of the site. Leighton Hospital lies to the west of the site. The wider site context includes Crewe Town Centre and railway station to the south west, Bentley Cars to the south on Pym’s Lane and the village of Bradfield Green to the North West.

1. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal is a “hybrid” application (i.e. part outline and part full planning permission). Full planning permission is sought for 131 dwellings in Phase A to the south of the site close to Parkers Road and outline planning permission is sought for up to an additional 269 dwellings of the remainder of the site (Phase B). In total planning permission for a maximum of 400 dwellings is being applied for.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There are no relevant previous planning applications relating to this site.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

Policy DP 1 Spatial Principles

Policy DP 2 Promote Sustainable Communities

Policy DP 4 Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure

Policy DP 5 Manage Travel Demand; Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility

Policy DP 7 Promote Environmental Quality

Policy DP 9 Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change

Policy RDF 1 Spatial Priorities

Policy RDF 2 Rural Areas

Policy L 1 Health, Sport, Recreation, Cultural and Education Services Provision

Policy L 2 Understanding Housing Markets

Policy L 5 Affordable Housing

Policy RT 2 Managing Travel Demand

Policy RT 3 Public Transport Framework

Policy RT 4 Management of the Highway Network

Policy RT 9 Walking and Cycling

Policy EM 15 A Framework For Sustainable Energy In The North West

Policy EM 16 Energy Conservation & Efficiency

Policy EM 17 Renewable Energy

Policy MCR 4 South Cheshire

Policies in the Local Plan

NE.2 (Open countryside)
NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)
NE.9: (Protected Species)
NE.20 (Flood Prevention)
NE.21 (Land Fill Sites)
BE.1 (Amenity)
BE.2 (Design Standards)
BE.3 (Access and Parking)
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
RES.5 (Housing In The Open Countryside)
RT.6 (Recreational Uses on the Open Countryside)
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)
TRAN.5 (Cycling)

Other relevant planning guidance:

PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)
PPS3 (Housing)
PPS4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Development)
PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)
PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation)
PPG13 (Transport)
PPG17 (Open Space Sport and Outdoor Recreation)
PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk)

4. OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES

Leighton Hospital

- Mid Cheshire Hospitals Foundation trust (MCHFT) wishes to make representations to the Council and make them aware of concerns that the immediate infrastructure is not suitable to support further planned development.
- MCHFT have their Leighton Hospital campus off Smithy Lane Leighton, immediately adjacent to the planned Parkers Road development.
- There are already traffic delays at certain times of the day to the Smith Lane / flowers Lane, Bradfield Road / Minshull New Road mini roundabout junctions. The poor sight lines from Smithy Lane causes traffic to back up along Smithy Lane past the hospital entrances. This means that blue light vehicles attempting to access and egress the hospital site frequently cause vehicles to have to mount the pavement. The fact that there is only a pavement on one side of the road is additionally problematic.
- The Leighton hospital site also houses Crewe West Ned Police Station.
- Delays occur at the mini roundabout due to the increased traffic leaving Bentley Motors and gaining easier access across the mini roundabout due to there being far better sight lines from Minshull New Road, giving priority to these vehicles. This causes a delay for Smithy Lane traffic.
- At the opposite end of Smithy Lane delays also occur when attempting to join Middlewich Road due to the restricted junction width at this end of Smithy Lane (i.e. no

- right turning lane). In short traffic congestion occurs at both ends of Smithy Lane and would be worsened by the development without mitigation measures being introduced.
- MCHFT would thus appeal to the Council to not make the current situation worse as a result of the Parkers Road development. It could ultimately result in a life or death issue
 - MCHFT does however, see a need for up to 25 one or two bedroom key worker housing units and as the largest rural employer in the area, can thus see a need for key worker housing. However they cannot see a need for such a high percentage of affordable housing in the more rural setting of Leighton. They would therefore appeal to the Council to consider a higher complement of affordable housing in its more urban sites such as the Coppenhall development. Thus a reduction in affordable housing at the Parkers Road site should allow additional revenue to be invested in highways infrastructure including pedestrian pavements and cycle lanes.
 - MCHFT believe that the Traffic Impact Assessment as undertaken is not sufficiently developed and should
 - o Be undertaken at peak travel time (i.e. when Bentley Motors staff change shift – early evening)
 - o Take the Council's Committee Development (i.e. Coppenhall housing) into consideration
 - o Include a long term traffic projection past 2016
 - MCHFT would like to see
 - o Road junction improvements to both ends of Smithy Lane so as to ease the impact of the additional Nantwich traffic
 - o The realignment of the mini roundabout given that the land adjacent will be owned by the applicant
 - o A second vehicular exit onto Flowers Lane so that the Middlewich Bound traffic could bypass the mini roundabout
 - o Additional pedestrian pavements and cycle lane linking the housing development to Leighton Hospital and Bentley Motors (as the two largest employers in the area) thus encouraging walking as an alternative means of transport
 - Finally as part of the major development on the land adjacent to the hospital MCHFT would wish to see it include widening and straightening of Smithy Lane, bus lay-bys at either side adjacent to the main entrance and a pedestrian crossing point, the latter items being to encourage both staff and visitors to travel by public transport.

Sustrans

If this land use is approved by the Council's planning committee comments are as follows:

- a) The site will be a generator of significant additional traffic on roads such as Bradfield Road which already carry substantial flows of vehicles
- a) The site lies within 1/2 km of the unfinished Leighton greenway, which leads to Crewe town centre, (current end point Frank Bott Avenue) and 1km of Leighton Hospital.
- b) Would like to see the developer make a contribution to the walking/cycling network beyond the site to encourage more sustainable modes of travel. Examples are: an off highway 3 metre footway/cycle track from the site to the existing facilities at Parkers Road/Bradfield Road junction.

- c) Conversion of the south footway on Bradfield Road between the toucan crossing at the Merlin to the Smithy Lane/Bradfield Road roundabout to a 3 metre shared footway/cycleway.
- d) There should be several access points, for pedestrians and cyclists only, onto Parkers Road/Moss Lane away from motor traffic.
- e) The site layout should restrict vehicle speeds to less than 20 mph.
- f) Would like to see Moss Lane closed to through traffic to stop it becoming in short-cut when all other roads are congested.
- g) Smaller properties/apartments should include storage areas for residents' buggies/bicycles.

Archaeology

- The Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the application note that a programme of archaeological assessment and evaluation has been undertaken with regard to these proposals. This work consisted of an initial desk-based assessment, which was prepared by Wessex Archaeology, and a subsequent geophysical survey of part of the site, which was carried out by Archaeo Physica. This process did not identify any major archaeological constraints and, across the bulk of the area affected by these proposals, it is advised that no further archaeological mitigation will be required. The one exception to this advice concerns a restricted area at the eastern limits of the application area and the boundary between Phases A and B of the development (c SJ6922 5820), immediately adjacent to Moss Road. Here desk-based work has identified the site of a building depicted on early 19th-century mapping and it is advised that the site of the building should be subject to an archaeological strip and record exercise, followed by the production of a report. The work may be secured by condition.

Environment Agency

No objection in principle to the proposed development but requests that any approval includes the following planning conditions.

- The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) May 2011/817B/Lees Roxburgh Consulting Engineers and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:
 - Limiting the surface water run-off generated by the development to a maximum discharge rate off the site to a maximum of 88 litres/second (calculated to be the existing greenfield run-off rate for the area of the site).
 - Provide acceptable means of on-site surface water attenuation to cater for the 100-year critical rainfall event - plus allowances to deal with the impact of climate change.
 - Raise floor levels of buildings a minimum of 150mm above surrounding ground levels.
- The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a detail design for a surface water regulation scheme has been submitted to, and approved in

writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

- The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority.

United Utilities

No objection to the proposal provided that the following conditions are met: -

- This site must be drained on a separate system, with only foul drainage connected into the foul sewer. Surface water should discharge to the soakaway/watercourse/surface water sewer and may require the consent of the Environment Agency. If surface water is allowed to be discharged to the public surface water sewerage system United Utilities will require the flow to be attenuated to a maximum discharge rate determined by United Utilities.
- Currently, United Utilities policy is not to adopt SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) structures. This stance has been taken as SUDS structures, typically ponds, do not align with United Utilities asset base and would represent a substantial maintenance liability. United Utilities will only consider the adoption of surface water sewers draining to a balancing pond (as opposed to any other SUDS structure), providing the following conditions are met: -
 - a) The Local Authority takes responsibility for the maintenance of the pond
 - a) The freehold of the land on which the pond lies is transferred to the Local Authority
 - b) That measures have been taken to prevent flooding of properties
 - c) That a legal agreement is in place between all parties.
- A water supply can be made available to the proposed development.
- Water pressure in this area is regulated to around 20metres head. This should be taken into account when designing the internal plumbing.
- A separate metered supply to each unit will be required
- United Utilities encourages the use of water efficient designs and development wherever this is possible. Including utilising drought resistant varieties of trees, plants and grasses when landscaping and installing water efficient appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines.

Amenity Greenspace

No objection subject to:

- A private management company to be set up by the developer to maintain the open spaces within the development.
- The development to incorporate an equipped children's play area conforming to NEAP Standard. This means that there need to be a minimum of 8 pieces of equipment, plus

1.4 metre high bowtop railing surround with two pedestrian access gates and a double leaf vehicular access gate. Railings to be painted green; pedestrian gates to be yellow.

- The equipment must be predominantly metal, inclusive, and conform to BS EN 1176. Equipment to have wetpour safer surfacing underneath it, conforming to BS EN 1177. The surfacing between the wetpour to be tarmacadam with pre-cast concrete edging surround.
- Access paths to gates to be tarmacadam.

Natural England

- It is noted that the development is proposed on existing agricultural land. The owner of this land will need to liaise with Natural England over the loss of land included in an Entry Level Stewardship agreement. The agreement holder will need to liaise with Natural England on how loss of this land to development might affect the agreement and payments received. However, this is a matter between Natural England and the agreement holder, and would not preclude the planning application being considered, given that the land does not have any statutory nature conservation designation.
- The wording in this *Summary of Construction Mitigation Measures* table suggests that these procedures and mitigation strategies are optional with the word 'should' used throughout. Natural England would recommend that the wording is rephrased to indicate commitment of these procedures and mitigation.
- It is noted that the photomontages provided do not provide a realistic visualisation of the proposed development in terms of landscape and visual impacts. Whilst Natural England acknowledge that this is an outline application but Natural England would expect to see realistic photomontages in the next phases of development which take into account the facade, mass and materials to be utilised in the proposed development (including the photovoltaic panels).
- Whilst Natural England support the use of renewable energy and in principle Natural England do not have major concerns about the use of photovoltaic panels on the properties proposed for Phase A, it will be necessary for these panels to be assessed for impacts on the Landscape Character and Visual Amenity of the area in which it is proposed. Thus far, there is no reference made to the photovoltaic panels in the Landscape and Visual chapter. This will need to be rectified in subsequent submission so that the effects of this development can be accurately assessed.
- Natural England note that an arboricultural survey has been undertaken on the trees within the site boundary and have highlighted a number of trees that require felling. A number of these trees have also been highlighted for their potential to support owls and bats. The Authority would need to be satisfied that if bat and owl roost are present that Natural England would be in a position to approve any licence required for the destruction of a roost. It is understood that bat surveys are underway to determine the presence of a roost. The authority would be advised to wait for the results of these surveys before determination.
- Should the surveys result in no roost, Natural England would still expect to see measures put in place to ensure that the trees are 'soft' felled and left in situ for a period of 48 hours before removal and that the Authority impose conditions that reflect the mitigation measures. As a couple of trees have the potential to have substantial cavities and good potential to offer roosting opportunities, Natural England would

recommend that these sections of trees are attached to any remaining trees thus minimising the loss of potential bat habitat. Any smaller branches and trunks could be used as suitable hibernacula and habitats in the ecological mitigation area.

- It is stated that there is no opportunity on the existing development footprint for breeding (i.e. ponds) and that there is a network of ponds that surround the site, which do support breeding newts. Natural England support the inclusion of the habitat area to the north east of the development but would recommend that this area incorporates a water body suitable to support and enhance the overall population of newts. Natural England would look favourably upon this inclusion.
- Natural England support zero carbon methodologies for housing and there is an opportunity for the development to also include biodiversity enhancements within the fabric of the dwellings that still allow for zero carbon construction. Dr Carol Williams has produced a book (Biodiversity for Low and Zero Carbon Buildings: A Technical Guide for New Build) that provides information on how to introduce low and zero carbon biodiversity into new builds. Natural England recommends that this book is utilised to help in the development of this project.
- Natural England support the proposals for mitigation (which should include the recommendations stated above). The Authority should ensure that all the mitigation measures are captured in sufficiently robust conditions should they be minded to grant planning permission. Natural England would recommend that consideration be given to the landscaping scheme and the potential for introducing night scented shrubs/ flowers that will attract insects and thus increase the food resource for bats.
- It is not clear what mechanism will be in place to ensure the success of the planting (particularly oak trees). It is acknowledged that this species will take a number of years for them to reach maturity and as such how will the success of this planting be monitored and rectified in the case of failure to survive. Natural England would recommend that an agreement (through a section 106 potentially) is considered between the applicant and the Authority.
- As previously stated above all dead trees for felling should be undertaken carefully and any sections that have the potential to offer roosting opportunities should be erected on any remaining trees within the development site.
- Natural England support the inclusion of refugia in the proposed mitigation habitat but would also welcome the inclusion of a water body. This will help to enhance the overall population and habitats available.
- Post monitoring of the habitat will be required as part of the EPS licence but Natural England would also recommend that post monitoring surveys are undertaken that include for the other species that have been mitigated for so that any alterations/ changes can be implemented to support the mitigation strategy and longevity of the biodiversity enhancements.
- Natural England support the inclusion of bird nesting boxes.
- Natural England do not agree with the residual effect of negligible for trees especially as a number of oak trees will be lost as a result of the development. The oak trees will take a number of years to mature (as acknowledged) and therefore the adverse effects are likely to remain for a number of years post construction.
- Whilst Natural England would not expect to see every dwelling cater for all species of bats there is a potential to provide roosting opportunities in 1 or more of the dwellings for brown long-eared bats. Natural England would recommend that this is investigated further.

- Natural England support the inclusion of the Travel Plan and would recommend that this commitment forms part of an appropriate condition of any planning approval.
- It is acknowledged that sustainability has been considered in this application. Natural England supports the incorporation of sustainable design solutions.
- Natural England is satisfied with the contents of the Environmental Statement, but wish the above comments (above) to be given due consideration during the development of future stages within the planning process.

Environmental Health

No objection to the application subject to the following comments

- This site is located on areas of ground which have the potential to create gas.
- The application is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present.
- As such, and in accordance with PPS23, recommend conditions requiring a phase II investigation and remediation should planning permission be granted.
- Due to the size of the development, recommend an Air Quality Impact Assessment prior to the development commencing.
- Due to the close proximity of busy roads, recommend a noise assessment survey to be undertaken prior to the development commencing.
- The hours of construction (and associated deliveries to the site) of the development shall be restricted to 08:00 to 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 14:00 hours on Saturday, with no work at any other time including Sundays and Public Holidays. To protect the amenities of nearby residents and the occupiers of nearby property.
- Where piling of foundations is necessary this is to be undertaken between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday and no works of this nature to be undertaken on Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holidays.
- Any external lighting of the proposed site should be submitted to and approved by the borough council before being installed, due to the close proximity of local residents.

Highways

- To summarise the application, the proposal is for a residential development of 400 units with two points of access: one from Parkers Road and one from Flowers Lane.
- The first junction is from Parkers Road and will provide a properly designed priority junction which will incorporate a ghost island right turn lane with a pedestrian refuge.
- In addition this junction will incorporate a right turn lane improvement for the diagonally opposed junction into Beconsall Drive which will improve traffic management between the two junctions.

- Also on this frontage, the developer will be providing a PUFFIN crossing on the notional pedestrian desire line to the local facilities, school and shop.
- The second junction onto Flowers Lane will again be a simple priority junction and this will be supplemented by an extension to the street lighting on Flowers Lane which will effectively extend the 30 mph speed limit for the full frontage of the site.
- This has multiple advantages.
- The junction will be well lit and the approach speed to the new roundabout design will be reduced.
- In addition the treatment of Flowers Lane will see significant footway improvements on both sides of the road together with the provision of a zebra crossing between the new access and the roundabout which will improve pedestrian safety.
- Bradfield Road/Parkers Road traffic signal junction: The provision of an improvement in the signal controller with the introduction of MOVA software which will improve traffic management and make the signals responsive to traffic load on the separate arms of the junction and allow more efficient queue reduction at times of peak flow.
- Bradfield Road/Flowers Lane/Smithy Lane roundabout: A new roundabout is proposed at this location to improve the capacity allowing the development traffic to be accommodated whilst offering some overall betterment to the general junction capacity. It is a non-standard roundabout design but is acceptable in terms of design and safety.
- This improvement will be made within land owned by the applicant and land which falls within the public highway.
- Flowers Lane/A530 traffic signals: A minor improvement to the signal junction has been proposal by the developer and this is now agreed by the Highway Authority.
- Smithy Lane/A530 junction: The proposal at this junction is for the provision of traffic signals to replace the existing priority junction with a ghost island right turn lane. The Highways Development Management Team consider this to be an effective proposal and the space available at the junction will accommodate an effective signal design.
- The design of this junction is agreed by the Highway Authority
- Financial Note: These highway improvement proposals have been broadly costed and the value of the works will be in the region of one million pounds.
- Contribution to the wider highway network: In addition the developer is also offering financial contribution to the wider highway network and has provisionally offered a sum of £300,000 towards the Remer Street corridor upon which this development proposal is shown to have an impact.

- The Transport Assessment offers a detailed analysis of the modal choice and sustainable links which will serve this site.
- It does show that the site has reasonable connectivity across the town of Crewe despite its location on the north west side of the Crewe area.
- There have been some lengthy discussions between the developer and the Highways Development Management team regarding the accessibility of the site and the improvements being offered.
- Improvements take the form of improved footpath links local to the site and some cycleway provision.
- The provision of the PUFFIN and zebra crossings also aid connectivity.
- Moss Lane: It is important at this point to inform members about the issues surrounding Moss Lane and the local concern about traffic impact from this development. Clearly Moss Lane is a narrow country lane which should not be burdened with additional through traffic from a new development. The development guards against this through the provision of two points of access which can be utilised from anywhere within the site. This means that if generated traffic is to travel in the direction of Middlewich or Winsford, it will use the Flowers Lane access and will not need to use Moss Lane which would be a longer and slower route.
- If generated traffic is to travel in the direction of Crewe or Warrington it will use the Parkers Road access and will not need to use Moss Lane which would be a longer and slower route.
- The Strategic Highways Manager is confident that there will not be a problem with traffic from the development using Moss Lane.
- This site is proposed for phased development of the residential units and significant negotiations have taken place regarding the internal layout.
- It is important that the site is brought forward with a design which is driven by the guidance within the Manual for Streets document issued by the Department for Transport.
- This document leads on guidance for quality development and the need to ensure residential developments provide a sense of place through quality design which will provide good social infrastructure.
- Amongst these design initiatives, the detail of highway design within residential development has changed to provide more innovative layout which supports the quality design whilst providing highway layout which supports traffic needs in a more controlled environment.
- The design being offered for this site is innovative and will provide a design of good quality and one which the Strategic Highways Manager supports.

- The development impact has been assessed and there are mitigation measures being provided on the road network that will satisfactory cater for the development traffic and also there a financial contribution provided towards the wider strategic highway improvements that will need to come forward in due course.
- The Strategic Highways Manager does not object to the planning application subject to the applicant entering into a S106 Agreement for the sum of £300,000 towards highway improvements on the strategic road network.
- The applicant will need to enter into a S278 Agreement with the Highway Authority to provide the junction improvements identified in this report

Education

- By applying the pupil yield of 0.162 this development will generate 65 primary school places and CEC pupil projections have 28 surplus places in the "local schools" (I.e. schools within a 2 mile walking distance).
- Therefore a contribution has been sought for the additional 37 pupils which cannot be physically accommodated.
- This equates to a payment of £398,990.

5. VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

1. The infrastructure is inadequate to cope with these additional dwellings.
1. The highways will also be inadequate to cope with the additional traffic generated by 400 homes.
2. Flooding: The issue of drainage and flooding is an on-going problem in the parish, so much so that "Drainage" is a standing item on the Parish Council agendas; this development will exacerbate the problem.
3. Finally, if the Strategic Planning Board is minded to approve the application, the Parish Council would urge that landscaping measures are introduced which are compatible with the street scene on Moss Lane at Leighton.

6. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of objection have been received from 1 Barrows Close 1 Fox Covert Way 1, 15, Burton Grove 1, 6, 14, 15, Parkfield 1, 7 Tollemache Drive, 4, 9, 10 Bleasdale Road, 10 Rydal Mount 10 Verdin Court 103 Kestrel Drive 8, 9, 20, 23, 33, 35, 47, 52, 56, 57, 58, 60, 66, 69, 72, 74, 77, 81, 85, 86, 108 Beconsall Drive 6, 11, 12 19, 52, 53 Farmleigh Drive 2, 3, 11, 15 Moss fields 11, 15, 35, 37, 49 Thornfields 6, 27, 30, 33, 34, 39, 52, 61, 64, 111, 115, 117 Lamborn Drive, 5, 12, 39 Elmstead Crescent, 7, 13 Lyceum Way, 14 Burton Grove, 16 Melrose Drive 16 Mills Way, 2, 17 20, 22, 28, 29, 48, 49, 68, 70, 72, 74 , 76 Beltony Drive, 2 Fox Covert Way, 2 Simpson Court, 2, 6 Thorpe Close, 21 Ardleigh Close, 4, 5, 6, 9, 22, 27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 74 Thorntree Drive 28 Parkers Road 28 84, Verdin Court, 4, 98, Beconsall Close, 8, 9, 41 Lambourne Drive, 46 James Atkinson Way, 5 Barrows Close, 63 Lime Tree

Avenue, 7 Lyceum Close, 74 Merlin Way, 8, 9, Magecroft, 8 Parkfield, 9 Englefield Close, 9 Lawford Close, 97 Millstone Lane making the following points:-

Principle of Development

- Houses are not needed and there is no demand
- There are many unfinished developments in Crewe already- in particular the prominent location neighbouring Morrison's Supermarket.
- You cannot justify leaving that site unfinished and an obvious eye-sore to all Crewe residents and visitors to the town
- Is the due to a poor planning decision being made previously? If so it should serve as a warning to the Planning Officers investigating the above mentioned application. Maybe the Councils resources would be best used in forcing this company to complete this eyesore before approving planning applications elsewhere.
- Other areas that have been left unfinished and should be completed prior to any other building areas.
 1. Underwood Court apartments which have been closed down.
 1. Replacement of houses or apartments which were knocked down several years
 2. The proposed development local to the Cross Keys local to the end of North Street.
- Would it not make sense to complete one development before starting another?
- Maybe that option isn't as financially rewarding, and what does the Council propose to do with the anticipated profits of the proposed Bloor Homes site off Parkers Road?
- Unfinished developments are proof that there is no demand for new homes in Crewe
- The site may also not be completed leaving an eyesore
- There are many vacant properties and houses for sale which are failing to sell. The market would not accommodate a further 400 homes.
- The area has already experienced over development in the past.
- There are a large number of brownfield sites in Crewe which are in need of development.
- This is over development for the area and the taking of a green field site and is contrary to the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan.
- The local landscape is being eaten away by developers exploiting every single piece on land they can their hands on. If this was Willaston, Shavington or Wistason, there would be an outcry. The area should be left as it is.
- This proposal will also completely obliterate the current residents open space. Families & children enjoy free time here and the general country side feel to the area will be lost. Dog walkers will have no option but to revert to the streets and the routes to more than one school will become a precarious one. What kind of community will this create?
- The long period of development associated with this project and the governments own decision to stop development plans where they were not considered necessary should be taken into account
- It is ridiculous to think that all housing demand for the whole of Cheshire East will be met by putting the houses all in one town, which seems to be Cheshire East's plan. I would argue that the NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard) at Cheshire East Council have introduced this policy to keep development away Congleton and Macclesfield and such places. It is interesting to note that Congleton's MP made a comment in response to

the policy - 'Release of housing land is an issue of concern to all communities in the Congleton constituency. Residents object strongly to the release of Green Belt for housing purposes' - Fiona Bruce. There was no response listed from Crewe and Nantwich MP.

- There is no proven need for extra houses in the North West anyway. A recent report from Institute for Public Policy Research says 'The North West of England is the only region where supply could meet demand, with 40,000 extra homes compared to the number of households, due to the high rate of unoccupied premises at present'.
- Crewe is the area of the borough that least needs 'affordable homes', which seems to how these developments are justified. The house prices in Crewe are the cheapest within Cheshire East.
- Some of the terraced streets in Crewe are already starting to look run-down and since the recession some properties are boarded up. Building on Green Field sites on the edge of town will only force down prices in Crewe further and lead to further decay of the properties in the town centre.
- The people of Crewe will have to suffer increased congestion, degradation of property prices, increased pressure on public services such as schools, doctors, etc., so that building companies can do easy building on flat green fields to make huge profits. All this because Cheshire East can't be bothered to put together a properly thought-out plan, or are too afraid of litigation if they fail to release enough housing. Five years on Crewe will be more sprawling and have problems more associated with larger cities, without any of the benefits of a large city. Either that or these new developments will end up the way of the ghost estates of Ireland.
- We feel that all these should be completed as it would give a lot of additional properties for habitation before you propose to build on the Green Area for planning application ref; 11/1879N.

Highways

- The proposed access road on to the estate is almost opposite to the present access into Beconsall Drive and at the present time it is very difficult to access Parkers Road especially in the morning.
- Risk to lives as access to Leighton hospital is congested
- The local infrastructure already struggles to cope with existing levels of usage. There is severe congestion
- Many local roads are very dangerous and poorly maintained.
- The Council is already failing to maintain the existing road structures to a safe and satisfactory level, the extra traffic generated by further housing development will exacerbate the problem.
- Residents do not think an in depth survey of the traffic movements has been done especially taking into consideration the effects that another large scheme in the area is planned.
- Not only are improvements required to the immediate infrastructure there is a need also for road and safety aspects at Barrows Green and Minshull New Rd roundabout and the current proposals do nothing to alleviate this.
- The matter of an access road has not been sufficiently detailed. It gives no detailed location. It only states North of Parkers Road. Where exactly is the access road going to be? Moss Lane is unable to sustain the amount of traffic exiting from 400 houses.

Bradfield Road is West of Parkers Road as are all other roads leading to the main Middlewich – Nantwich Road.

- The period of time that the cars are "nose to tail" on Middlewich Road and the surrounding lanes is constantly increasing!
- The priority should be to redevelop and improve what we already have to enable us to cater for our existing population and not to bring more chaos.
- Parkers Road is heavily congested to the lights every weekday morning. Middlewich Road is backed up regularly in both directions and Smithy Lane is blocked every morning and night, which impedes the hospital. This is already a problem that needs solving, not compounding.
- It appears by noted current practice that Cheshire East only adopts housing estates once the maximum time period to do so has passed, and does not properly correspond to complaints regarding sewerage issues and street lighting. This practice would entail and frustrate owners of the proposed 400+ houses.
- Some residents have already had a ten year battle to have their street adopted, this is despite of (or, as the case may be, in spite of) constant complaints of drainage issues and unconnected street lighting.
- How are the hospital emergency vehicles supposed to cope with even more traffic on an already overloaded infrastructure? The period of time that the cars are "nose to tail" on Middlewich road and the surrounding lanes is constantly increasing! To compound matters the roads are in an absolutely disgusting condition.
- The infrastructure in the area is already congested with Hospital traffic and Bentley Motors employees. 400 houses will bring some additional 600 cars and the area will not cope and lives will be put at risk
- Crewe is a railway town and had lots of rail lines running through it, with bridges over at various points. This means that whatever planners try to do with the roads, there is always congestion. It's getting worse and will be worse still with thousands of extra cars which arrive with the extra homes. It takes residents longer to get from Leighton to Weston Road than it does from Nantwich to Hanley! Cheshire East planners and decision makers have obviously never had to travel around Crewe.

Design & Visual Impact

- The impact on the environment and the general landscaping will ruin the area and the tranquil setting.
- Residents have moved to the area for it's rural location, and for the country lanes surrounding, that are a precious place to walk and cycle.
- Also, green spaces lead to increased quality of life, which has quantified economic benefits
- The development will become the slums of the future, due to the developer trying to maximise the number of units through minimising the living area.

Ecology

- There will be a negative effect on local wildlife due to the destruction of large areas of green.
- The developments are on precious green spaces and there has already been massive habitat destruction in Crewe in recent years, leading to very visible wildlife deaths.

- Natural ecosystems provide the air we breathe, the soil we grow our food on and the water we drink;
- There are great crested newts in the area

Infrastructure

- Does Cheshire East already plan to grant Planning Permission for not only 2,281 houses, but also all land necessary for increasing the infrastructure and if so, how and when will those plans be put to public consultation?
- Impact upon medical services in the area, are not limited to the hospital, and include GP's, health centres, midwives, health visitors, dentists, and other council services. Local services are already at stretching point and additional demand will not ease the situation.
- Whilst the report created by Bloor Homes states Doctors and Dentists are currently taking on NHS patients, residents fail to see this actually happening in the area, with many local residents already having to travel out of the area for some services.
- It is already difficult to get doctors appointments; with another 16,000 people coming in to the area it will put more strain on the system.
- Impact upon education. Local schools are already at capacity and adding additional places will only impact upon the ability to provide quality schooling. Residents fail to see how the Bloor Homes report can suggest that for 400 homes less than 150 children will arrive in the area.
- Whilst these figures are based upon some 'research' by Bloor, they do have a 'crystal ball' and cannot guarantee this statement. When the figure exceeds 150 and the situation within local schools becomes untenable, where will be Bloor Homes be then, certainly not taking any responsibility or offering to build more schools?
- Further enquiries regarding future school population numbers need to be made in depth which residents do not believe has been done.
- An E. V. A. should be done and the results fully published and made available and guarantees made that all the infrastructure and benefits are in place before the estate is built.
- This year, even without the proposed houses, residents have found that local children have found it difficult to secure places on the school rolls.
- There is a lack of local amenities, lack of local shops and already low water pressure;
- The developers have promised to deliver another childrens play area. What the area needs is a doctors, pharmacy, development of an existing or addition of a new school, a restructuring of the current road system, redevelopment of the town centre. These are the kind of things the area needs, not more housing bringing more cars and people to our already overcrowded roads.
- Both Mablins Lane and Leighton Primary Schools are full to capacity and are already having to use small porta-cabins to accommodate the extra places that were required for the new estates built in the last 10 years.
- Waste collection services are overrun and there are no plans to re-instate weekly collections. What impact will the thousand or so people have on the immediate environment?
- Bloor Homes have offered no incentive to the Local Residents (eg junction improvements, zebra crossings etc,) if this is the case, why is this application even being considered?

Lack of Jobs

- Employment in the area is very hard pressed - bringing more people into the town will not help the current residents to find employment; It will make the task even harder.
- Locate new housing development where there is work available. People who do purchase houses on the site will be travelling out of the area using fuel and putting further strain on the planets resources.
- It is a fact that large companies like Bombardier may be in decline and could well close especially since the recent disappointing news

Amenity of existing properties

- During the development, which is due to last at least 5 years, the dust, noise and general disruption will be of great disturbance and of detrimental impact to the health and well being of residents, along with the long term damage of extra congestion.
- There would be dust, mud on wet days along with noise
- The increased volume of traffic & road noise would be considerable, with at least 400-800 vehicles leaving and arriving several times daily, plus service vehicles, deliveries and visitors. The increasing road noise is already a problem and we are unable to leave windows open and at times it is impossible to relax in the garden.
- Would block view of countryside
- Residents bought houses with back gardens backing onto Parkers Road with an outlook across agricultural land which is mainly grassland used for the production of hay etc. A year or so ago a Communications Mast was erected which looks a eyesore but they live with it. Then an application is submitted for Planning permission for a residential Development for up to 400 houses!
- The whole area especially Beconsall Drive area will be surrounded by houses, and will no longer be living on the outskirts of a pleasant rural area but will be in the centre of a ever increasing housing estate.

Flooding

- Drainage and flooding issues. The proposed site and surrounding fields are renowned for their poor drainage, and the area is regularly flooded, often spilling out onto the local highways. This area is not able to deal with additional homes and is likely to increase flooding risk for future generations.
- The proposed site suffers from poor drainage and this is likely to worsen with additional concrete/tarmac coverage.
- How will adequate drainage be provided on a field that constantly floods and has done-witnessed by residents for over thirty years?
- Why has a proposed planning application been submitted for approval on what is quite obviously a flood plain?

Other matters

- Local people do not want this development
- Proposal will devalue the local area in relation to social as well as economic viability.
- Residents remember the last homes being built off Parkers Road where they had to put up with workmens caravans and portaloos during which time one resident

contracted hepatitis which they still believe was down to the drainage work being carried out.

7. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- **Arboricultural Impact Assessment**
- **Consultation Statement**
- **Draft Section 106 Heads of Terms**
- **Environmental Statement**
- **Open Spaces Assessment**
- **Planning Statement**
- **Sustainable Energy Statement**
- **Transport Assessment**
- **Utilities Assessment**
- **Affordable Housing Statement**
- **Design and Access Statement**
- **Flood Risk Assessment**
- **Landscape Statement**
- **Travel Plan Framework**

8. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Main Issues

Given that the application is submitted as a hybrid, the main issues in the consideration of this application are the suitability of the whole site, in principle, for residential development having regard to matters of planning policy and housing land supply, affordable housing, highway safety and traffic generation, contaminated land, air quality, noise impact, landscape impact, hedge and tree matters, ecology, amenity, open space, drainage and flooding, sustainability and education. In addition, the acceptability of the detailed design of the southern part of the site in respect of the access, layout, appearance, scale and landscaping must also be considered.

Planning Policy and Housing Land Supply

The site lies in the Open Countryside as designated in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, where policies NE.2 and RES.5 state that only development which is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted. Residential development will be restricted to agricultural workers dwellings, affordable housing and limited infilling within built up frontages.

The proposed development would not fall within any of the categories of exception to the restrictive policy relating to development within the open countryside. As a result it constitutes a "departure" from the development plan and there is a presumption against the proposal, under the provisions of sec.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

2004 which states that planning applications and appeals must be determined *"in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise"*.

The issue in question is whether there are material consideration associated with this proposal, which are sufficient to outweigh the policy objection.

National policy guidance (PPS3) states that Local Authorities should manage their housing provision to provide a five year supply. This suggests that Cheshire East Council should be providing its 5-year housing supply information for Cheshire East as a whole rather than the former districts or any housing market areas. Correspondence from Government Office for the North West confirms that in order to establish the appropriate housing requirement for Cheshire East, the district figures included in the published Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) should to be added together to give the new unitary authority requirement.

The RSS proposed a dwelling requirement of 20,700 dwellings for Cheshire East for the period 2003 to 2021, which equates to an average annual housing figure of 1,150 dwellings per annum. Although the Government has expressed it's intention to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy the Council's Cabinet on 18th October agreed to adopt a housing requirement figure for a minimum of 1,150 net additional dwellings to be delivered annually, pending the adoption of the LDF Core Strategy.

Paragraph 71 of PPS3 states that *" where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up to date five year supply of deliverable sites, for example where local Development Documents have not been reviewed to take into account policies in this PPS or there is less than five years supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in this PPS including considerations in Paragraph 69."*

The recently published draft National Planning Policy Framework which will replace PPS3 has reiterated this requirement and states that Local Planning Authorities should *"identify and maintain a rolling supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements. The supply should include an additional allowance of at least 20 per cent to ensure choice and competition in the market for land"*.

The above mentioned Cabinet report noted that following a review, the Council appeared to have 4.58 years housing land supply. At recent public inquiries relating to sites at Abbeyfields, Hind Heath Road and Elworth Hall Farm in Sandbach, the Council has conceded that the housing land supply situation is now worse than initially thought and that current supply stands at 3.65 years.

Consequently the Council has adopted, an Interim Planning Policy on the Release of Housing Land. This policy states that when it is demonstrated through the Annual Monitoring Report that there is not a five year supply of housing land as defined by PPS3, subject to other saved policies of the relevant Local Plan being satisfied, the Council will allow the release of appropriate greenfield sites for new housing development on the edge of the principal town of Crewe.

Members may recall that at the meeting of the Strategic Planning Board on 6th October 2010 a report was considered relating to Issues and Options for the Local Development

Framework Core Strategy, which outlined 3 options for apportioning growth across Cheshire East. Although each of the options is different, the common theme between them is an emphasis on growth in Crewe. Therefore, whilst the options are under consideration, and there is uncertainty as to which option will be taken forward, it is appropriate that any Greenfield development required to make up a shortfall in housing land supply should be directed to Crewe. This reflects the position of Crewe as a priority for Development and Regeneration within the adopted Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough entitled "Ambition for All". PPS1 2005 in *The Planning System: General Principles* at para. 14, states that *"Emerging policies in the form of draft policy statements and guidance can be regarded as material considerations, depending on the context. Their existence may indicate that a relevant policy is under review, and the circumstances which led to that review may be need to be taken into account."*

Furthermore, Paragraph 69 of PPS 3 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should have regard to a number of criteria, including, inter alia, *"ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives reflecting the need and demand for housing in, and the spatial vision for, the area an does not undermine wider policy objectives e.g. addressing housing market renewal issues."*

The proposal does reflect the spatial vision for the area both in terms of the Interim Policy and the emerging Core Strategy as it located on the edge of Crewe. In addition, the proposal supports wider policy objectives, such as achieving sustainable development, in close proximity to the more major town centres and sources of employment and supporting urban regeneration, in the parts of the Borough where it is most needed.

As well as being adjacent to the settlement boundary of Crewe, the interim policy requires that the site is, is not within the Green Gap; is not within an allocated employment area and is not within an area safeguarded for the operational needs of Leighton Hospital. It is considered that the application site meets all of these requirements.

The interim policy also states that the development must be well related to the existing fabric of the settlement. These matters will be discussed in greater detail below.

A further requirement of the interim policy is that the site is capable of being fully developed within five years of the granting of outline planning permission. In this case the applicant has confirmed that because 2 separate house builders will be involved in bringing the site forward, it will be delivered within 5 years.

The proposal will certainly increase the supply of housing in Crewe and, as will be discussed in more detail below, it will also improve the, choice and quality of housing in the town through the provision of a range of house types and tenures, including affordable housing, and through sustainable development.

'All Change for Crewe' is the route map for charting the town's development over the next two decades. The strategy intends that by 2030, Crewe will be a nationally significant economic centre with a total population in excess of 100,000 people (currently it has about 83,000), one of the leading centres for advanced, engineering and manufacturing in England and recognised as a sought-after place in the South Cheshire Belt for people to live, work, put down roots, and develop their talents. In order to achieve these objectives, significant

additional housing will be required. This proposal will go some way towards supporting the delivery of the Council's overall vision and objectives for Crewe. It therefore meets all of the requirements of the Interim Planning Policy on the release of housing sites.

A further important material consideration is the Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth (23 March 2011) issued by the Minister of State for Decentralisation (Mr. Greg Clark). It states that *"Government's clear expectation is that the answer to development and growth should wherever possible be 'yes', except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in national planning policy."*

The Statement goes on to say *"when deciding whether to grant planning permission, local planning authorities should support enterprise and facilitate housing, economic and other forms of sustainable development."* They should, inter alia, consider fully the importance of national planning policies aimed at fostering economic growth and employment, given the need to ensure a return to robust growth after the recent recession; take into account the need to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for key sectors, including housing; consider the range of likely economic, environmental and social benefits of proposals; and ensure that they do not impose unnecessary burdens on development.

The proposed development will help to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for housing as well as bringing direct and indirect economic benefits to the town including additional trade for local shops and businesses, jobs in construction, economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain. Provided, therefore, that the proposal does not compromise the key sustainable development principles, it is in accordance with government policy and therefore should be supported in principle.

The Cheshire east annual housing figure of 1150 homes is derived from the previous Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS quotes an annual requirement of 450 dwellings for the former Crewe and Nantwich area. This equates to a five year housing land supply requirement of 2500 units. As by far the largest town in the plan area it is to be expected that Crewe and its immediate surroundings would be expected to accommodate the greater part of this growth. Objectors and Members have previously expressed concern about releasing Greenfield land for development, whilst there are undeveloped brownfield sites remaining. Members have previously received a list of all the brownfield and mixed brownfield/greenfield sites for the Borough from extracted from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This shows that There are 125 sites in and adjacent to Crewe that are brownfield (or mixed green / brownfield) and that are considered to be "deliverable" – these have a capacity to bring forward 666 dwellings in the 1-5 year period.

If only exclusively brownfield sites are considered then the total is reduced to 121 sites with a capacity for 587 dwellings in the 1-5 year period. By any measure its clear that brownfield sites alone cannot meet the future housing needs of Crewe, never mind the Borough as a whole.

Therefore, in summary, it is acknowledged that the Council does not currently have a five year housing land supply and that, accordingly, in the light of the advice contained in PPS3 it should consider favourably suitable planning applications for housing. The current proposal is considered to be "suitable" as it is located on the periphery of Crewe, and would be in

accordance with the spatial vision for the area as set out in the emerging core strategy and the supporting evidence base, including the Crewe Vision, and the Council's Interim Policy on the Release of Housing Land which directs the majority of new development towards Crewe. The proposal also accords in principle with all of the criteria for permitting the development of sites on the periphery of Crewe as laid down by the Interim Policy. According to PPS1 these emerging policies are material considerations and consequently, these arguments are considered to be sufficient to outweigh the general presumption against new residential development within the Open Countryside as set out in the adopted development plan.

Affordable Housing

The Interim Planning Policy on the Release of Housing Land states that greenfield sites permitted under this policy will be expected to deliver: a minimum of 35% affordable housing in accordance with the Interim Planning Statement on Affordable Housing. According to the latter, the 35% provision should be split on a 65% social rent, 35% intermediate tenure basis.

The site lies partly within the Crewe sub-area and partly within the Minshull Vernon sub-area in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010. The current affordable housing need for the area in Crewe, as identified in the SHMA is for 256 new affordable homes annually. This is made up of 127x 1-beds, 20x 2-beds, 47x 3-beds, 40x 4/5-beds 26 x 1/2 bed older persons units. For the Minshull Vernon sub-area the SHMA 2010 shows there is an annual requirement for 5 new affordable homes per year between 2009/10 – 2013/14. This is made up of a need for 3 x 3 beds and 2 x 1/2 bed older persons units.

In addition to this information taken from the SHMA 2010, Cheshire Homechoice is used as the choice based lettings method of allocating social rented accommodation across Cheshire East. There are currently 1130 for Crewe the majority of which require 1, 2 and 3 bed accommodation, but there are also 54 applicants who require 4 bed or larger accommodation. For Minshull Vernon there are 3 current applicants, who require a 1 bed, 2 bed and 3 bed.

It is expected that the affordable housing to be delivered at this site will primarily serve the need for Crewe but may also assist by serving some of the need for Minshull Vernon.

The proposed layout for Phase A submitted with the application includes a schedule of accommodation indicating affordable housing provision of 11 x 2 beds, 14 x 3 beds and 1 x 4 bed, this totals 26 units which equates to only 20% of the 131 units to be developed in Phase A. This would mean a requirement that of the remaining 269 units to be developed in the subsequent phases 114 would need to be affordable in order to meet the requirement of 35% affordable across the whole site.

The reason Bloor Homes have given for the reduced percentage provision of Affordable Housing in Phase A is due to the need to kick-start the development through private market housing provision. Housing would accept the reduced affordable housing provision in Phase A subject to the S106 Legal Agreement ensuring the requirement that 35% of the 400 units proposed across the whole site are delivered as Affordable Housing.

The Affordable Housing Interim Planning Statement also requires that the affordable units should also be tenure blind and pepper potted within the development. The external design, comprising elevation, detail and materials should be compatible with the open market homes on the development thus achieving full visual integration. The location of the affordable units appears to achieve pepper potting, and the design and appearance appear to be similar and therefore the proposal is also acceptable in this regard.

Therefore the proposal is compliant with the Interim Policy in terms of overall provision. The Housing Section are also satisfied with the proposed split of type and tenure of housing, as well as its design and distribution throughout the site, including the provision of a lower percentage of affordable housing in Phase A and a higher percentage in Phase B, which will average out to 35% across the site. Therefore, it is considered that subject to a suitable prior legal agreement to control occupancy of the properties and provision of the social rented affordable units through a Registered Provider who are registered with the Tenant Services Authority to provide social housing, that the scheme is acceptable in terms of affordable housing provision.

Contaminated land

A desk study has been submitted with the application which has identified that the site comprised agricultural fields since the first edition historical map of 1875. The site has remained undeveloped until present. Former ponds were recorded in the western and central portions of the site and were backfilled by 1893 and 1977. Drainage ditches were also present on the site and some appear to have been filled in between 1977 and 1988. Given the findings of the desk study and nature of the existing use, no source of contamination has been identified. However due to its proposed use it is recommended that further investigation to identify the presence of possible contaminated land and subsequent requirements for remediation or mitigation relating to human health risks.

The Council's Environmental Health officers have examined the report and agreed with its conclusions. They have commented that the site is located on areas of ground which have the potential to create gas. The application is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present. Therefore, they have raised no objection on contaminated land grounds subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition requiring an intrusive investigation to be carried out.

Air Quality

The application has been accompanied by an Air Quality Impact Assessment which utilised 2009 monitoring data and has not highlighted any air quality issues as a result of the development. Therefore the Environmental Health Section has raised no objection subject to an updated assessment being submitted at the reserved matters stage using current data. This can be secured by condition. Environmental Health have also recommended the submission and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Travel Plan to minimise any impact on air quality arising from dust construction and traffic following completion of the development respectively. This can also be secured by condition.

Noise Impact

The developer has submitted a Noise Impact Assessment with the application which states that noise levels have been measured at a number of different locations around the site. Traffic noise levels were found to be relatively modest generally falling into Noise Exposure Category A or B of PPG 24. The highest noise levels (falling onto the boundary of NEC B/C) were measured at locations close to Parker's Road. The proposed layout with the nearest dwellings to Parker's Road facing towards the road is a good design as it means that the rear gardens will be screened effectively from traffic noise by the houses themselves. Where necessary, some acoustic fencing has been recommended. Sound insulation measures have been recommended for habitable rooms of those dwellings in Phase 1 that will be closest to Parker's Road. No special measures are required for any other areas of the site.

Subject to these recommendations being implemented, noise levels in gardens and inside rooms will be within the standards that are recommended in British Standard 8233. Therefore there will be no unacceptable traffic noise impacts on the proposed residential development.

The Environmental Health section were considering the findings of the noise impact assessment at the time of report preparation and a further update will be provided on this issue for Members prior to their meeting.

Landscape Impact

The Environmental Impact Assessment includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment undertaken using a methodology developed by Capita Symonds and states that it recognises and respects the advice contained within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2002) (second edition) (GLVIA) published by The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

The assessment concludes with comments to the effect that the site is visually well contained, has no national landscape designation and the landscape is not considered to be particularly sensitive. The conclusion is made that the proposed development will create a change in the land-use and landscape character of the development site. The nature of this change will however be similar in scale and complimentary in character to that existing elsewhere within the local area and the mitigation measures incorporated into the design will help to assimilate the development into the wider landscape and townscape context.

Whilst it does not identify that initially it would be necessary to remove a significant length of hedgerow on the Parkers Lane frontage, in general the assessment appears to be comprehensive and the Council's Landscape Officer would broadly agree with the methodology and its findings. Whilst the landscape and character of the site would be irreversibly altered, subject to landscape mitigation measures as indicated, in the local context reasonably such change could be deemed acceptable.

Overall the indicative landscape proposals appear reasonable. Taking into account the site location, the Landscape Officer has some concerns about some of the tree species proposed for use on the site, e.g. Dawn Redwood and Plane. However, such details can be agreed as part of detailed landscape proposals. For Phase A, a fully detailed and specified

landscape scheme would need to be secured by condition. Boundary treatments will also need to be given careful consideration and boundary treatment conditions should be applied.

With regard to Phase B, the Landscape Officer had expressed concern about the width of the landscape buffer to the northern boundary. The amended plans show that the buffer strip has been widened to 3m along the western half of the northern boundary and 12m on the eastern half of the northern boundary. The west facing section of the 'northern' boundary is now at a width of 8m. The applicant considers that these areas are significant and when roads and front gardens that will front the boundary are taken into account there is a very wide areas of no/low built form to the site edge. In particular, the 12m strip offers much more than simply a grass verge. This provision will support and enhance the existing public footpath (which exits the site from the north-west corner passing through the adjacent land) and will allow for future tree/shrub planting, recreational use and movement through and out of the site. From a landscape, open space, ecological and permeability perspective the developer considers that the layout offers an appropriate and balanced option for the site. The Landscape Officer has commented that there has been a marginal increase in the width of the buffer strip for the north west section of the northern boundary which is welcomed although it should be noted that it would only really accommodate the existing hedge, hedgerow trees and a wide grass verge.

The second access on to Flowers Lane, which is also shown on the amended plans will involve the loss of a hedge and possibly an Ash tree. However, the tree is in decline and a replacement hedge could be secured by condition. The amended layout also includes a reduction in the POS to the south west and places development in a more prominent position when viewed from Flowers Lane. This lane has a rural aspect and the larger area of POS would have provided a good buffer to the development. However, reduction in this area of public open space provides for a wider strip along the northern boundary than in one block at the western end of the site, and given that the application for for Phase B is only in outline, a further buffer strip could be included at the reserved matters stage.

Hedgerow and Tree Matters

The tree survey submitted with the application identified 47 Trees, comprising 38 Oak and 9 Ash. Of these 6 were identified as category R and recommended for removal in the context of the development. Of the remainder, 38 were of high quality (category A), and 18 of moderate quality (Category B) and 7 low quality (category C).

The proposed layout for the land to the south would appear to allow for the retention of existing mature trees and the Landscape Officer is satisfied that with appropriate protection measures this should be achievable.

The proposed new access from Parkers Road would result in the loss of a length of hedgerow which contains a significant number of young trees. The trees were not included in the tree survey. However, mitigating planting could be achieved by using similar size planting stock.

Whilst only indicative, the proposed layout for the land to the north demonstrates that a layout could be achieved which allowed for the retention of existing significant trees.

The specification for tree protection fencing in the tree survey would not be sufficiently robust without additional bracing and in the event that the development is deemed acceptable, comprehensive tree protection conditions will be necessary for both phases of development. These should include arboricultural method statements specific to each phase with details of arboricultural supervision.

Where proposed development is likely to result in the loss of existing agricultural hedgerows which are more than 30 years old, it is considered that they should be assessed against the criteria in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 in order to ascertain if they qualify as 'Important'. Should any hedgerows be found to be 'Important' under any of the criteria in the Regulations, this would be a significant material consideration in the determination of the application. Hedgerows are also a habitat subject of a Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Design and Access Statement (para 5.8.3) indicates that it would be necessary to remove 65 metres of hedgerow in order to accommodate the development. However, the Ecological Assessment cites a much higher figure and it appears that approximately 160 metres would have to be removed on the Parkers Road Frontage alone and potentially two 20 metre sections mid site in Phase B to facilitate access.

Under the Hedgerow Regulations, the lengths of hedgerow proposed for removal are checked against various archaeological, historic and ecological criteria to ascertain if it qualifies as 'Important'. The site ecological survey (para 9.68) identifies that none of the hedgerows on the site were species rich and none qualifies as important under the ecological criteria in the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

The Shared Services Archaeologist has confirmed that the hedgerows have been checked against the Cheshire Historic Environment Record under the following criteria as defined in Schedule 1, Part II of the Hedgerow Regulations and that these hedgerows are not covered under the stated criteria. Consequently they are not considered to be of archaeological importance.

To turn to historic importance, an evaluation of the heritage value of hedgerows to be removed from the site has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

The hedgerows on the site are associated with agricultural field structure and are not related to any historic parish or township. They incorporate no archaeological features included in the schedule of monuments. The hedgerows are not situated wholly or partly within an archaeological site included in the schedule of monuments and are not associated with any such feature. The hedgerows are not connected to any pre-1600 estate or manor or any such associated buildings.

The hedgerows form part of a field system although the date of the formation of this system is unknown. The earliest document held at the Record Office which indicates the presence of hedgerows at the site is from 1847, which post-dates the Inclosure Act of 1845. Due to

the absence of any documentary evidence of the presence of hedgerows prior to 1845, the hedgerows on-site are not classed as important under the 1997 Regulations.

Based on the analysis presented above, the hedgerows present on the site are not classified as 'important' under the criteria specified in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Consequently, it is considered that the proposed hedgerow removal is acceptable. However, a hedgerow protection condition will be necessary to ensure that all hedgerows to be retained as part of the development are protected during the course of construction operations.

Ecology

According to the interim policy, it must be demonstrated that proposed developments and their infrastructure must not impact on designated or candidate European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation; Special Protection Areas; Ramsar Sites and Offshore Marine Sites) protected under the European Habitats Directives 92/43/EEC or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

Article 12 (1) of the EC Habitats Directive requires Member states to take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of certain animal species prohibiting the deterioration or destruction of breeding sites and resting places. Art. 16 of the Directive provides that if there is no satisfactory alternative and the derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range, then Member States may derogate "in the interests of public health and public safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment" among other reasons.

The Directive is then implemented in England and Wales by the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 ("the Regulations"). The Regulations set up a licensing regime dealing with the requirements for derogation under Art. 16 and this function is carried out by Natural England.

Regulation 3(4) of the Regulations provides that the local planning authority must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of their functions.

It should be noted that since a European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development, the planning authority must have regard to the requirements for derogation referred to in Article 16 and the fact that Natural England will have a role in ensuring that the requirements for derogation set out in the Directive are met.

If it appears to the planning authority that circumstances exist which make it very likely that the requirements for derogation will not be met then the planning authority will need to consider whether, taking the development plan and all other material considerations into account, planning permission should be refused. Conversely if it seems from the information that the requirements are likely to be met, then there would be no impediment to planning permission in this regard. If it is unclear whether the requirements will be met or not, a

balanced view taking into account the particular circumstances of the application should be taken and the guidance in paragraph 116 of PPS9.

In line with guidance in PPS9, appropriate mitigation and enhancement should be secured if planning permission is granted. In respect of this site, a number of ecological surveys have been undertaken. The Council's ecologist has commented that all of the surveys have been undertaken to a high standard by suitably experienced ecological consultants.

Great Crested Newts

Great Crested Newts, a European protected species, have been recorded breeding at a number of ponds in close proximity to the proposed development.

In the absence of mitigation the proposed development would pose a significant risk of killing/injuring any animals on the site and would result in the loss of significant areas of terrestrial habitat and potentially isolate a known breeding pond from the surrounding terrestrial habitat. No breeding ponds will be lost as a result of the proposed development.

To mitigate the risk of great crested newts being directly harmed by the proposed development the applicant is proposing their exclusion from the development footprint through the implementation of pit fall traps and amphibian exclusion fencing. This approach is in accordance with standard best practice methodologies.

To mitigate and compensate for the loss of terrestrial habitat and isolation of the ponds all immediate terrestrial habitat (within 50m of each pond) will be retained and enhanced, a new pond will be created and a buffer strip of tree planting/vegetation/ open space has been provided along the northern boundary of the site.

However, the proposed mitigation includes limited habitat creation and the strategy relies on newts having access to the open countryside to the north of the proposed newt habitat area. As such its success would be extremely vulnerable to any further development on land to the north of the site. However given that the land to the north does not benefit from any allocation or extant planning permissions for development, the proposal must be assessed on its own individual merits, and as such is considered to be acceptable. It should also be noted that Natural England appears to be supportive of the proposed mitigation and have not objected to the application. To ensure the success of the newt mitigation area the public must be excluded from accessing it and management proposals must be provided to ensure its long term viability. These can be secured by condition.

Bats

Bats are a protected species and a BAP priority species and were recorded foraging around the site. However there was no evidence of roosting bats being present. The proposed new pond and planting to the north of the site will at least partially compensate for any loss of foraging habitat and the Council's Ecologist does not anticipate that the proposed development having a significant impact upon bats.

Breeding Birds

The hedgerows and trees on the proposed development site are likely to support breeding birds including Biodiversity Action Plan Priority species. If planning consent is granted the conditions are required to safeguard breeding birds and to ensure some additional provision is made for roosting bats and birds as part of the development. Specifically, prior to undertaking any works during nesting season, a detailed survey is required to check for nesting birds and a scheme for the incorporation of features suitable for use by roosting bats and breeding birds including house sparrow and swifts, should be submitted, approved and implemented.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a local BAP habitat and a material consideration. The proposed development will result in the significant loss of hedgerows. However, this could be partly compensated for through the provision of newly planted native species hedgerows on the northern boundary of the site, which could be secured by condition.

Open space

The proposed layout makes provision for a large central formal open space, incorporating a children's play area, within Phase A and a further area of informal recreation space, adjacent to the Flowers Lane Access as Part of Phase B. Other peripheral areas of informal open spaces are also proposed. These are in addition to the wildlife mitigation areas referred to above. The Council's Greenspace Officer has examined the proposal and raised no objection to the proposed on-site provision, subject to a private management company being set up by the developer to maintain the open spaces within the development.

He has also requested that the development incorporate an equipped children's play area conforming to NEAP Standard. This means that there need to be a minimum of 8 pieces of equipment, plus 1.4 metre high bowtop railing surround with two pedestrian access gates and a double leaf vehicular access gate. The railings should be painted green and pedestrian gates should be yellow. The equipment must be predominantly metal, inclusive, and conform to BS EN 1176. Equipment should have wetpour safer surfacing underneath it, conforming to BS EN 1177. The surfacing between the wetpour should be tarmacadam with pre-cast concrete edging surround. Access paths to gates should be tarmacadam.

Subject to the above requirements, which could be secured through a Section 106 agreement, and in the absence of any objection from the Amenity Greenspaces Section, it is considered that the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of open space provision.

Drainage and Flooding

The applicant has submitted with the application, a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, which concludes the site lies in an area of Zone 1 Flood Risk. It has concluded that the risk of flooding to the development arising from external sources can be discounted. United Utilities have confirmed that their public foul system to the east has sufficient spare capacity to serve the proposed development. It is proposed to limit surface water flows from the development effectively to the greenfield run off rate and to connect into the public system to the east also as agreed with United Utilities.

The proposed drainage systems will be designed in accordance with Sewers for Adoption. The systems will be put forward for adoption by United Utilities under a Section 104 Agreement and United Utilities will therefore become responsible for the long term maintenance of the new site drainage system.

Overall the development proposals should seek to contain a 1 in 100 year event plus an allowance for climate change with additional storage to be provided along the ditch corridor at the Moss Lane boundary or alternatively increasing the capacity of the adoptable piped system. Private drainage, i.e. not adoptable, serving houses and individual units within the development will be designed to current building standards. Floor levels will be set a minimum of 150mm above external ground level.

It is concluded that in accordance with PPS25 the development is not at risk of flooding from external sources, will not increase flood risk associated with the development and its environment and is therefore appropriate and will have no adverse impacts.

United Utilities and the Environment Agency have considered the report and raised no objections subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will not adversely affect onsite, neighbouring or downstream developments and their associated residual flood risk.

Sustainability

The Council's Interim Policy carries a requirement for a high quality development designed to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or higher and Building for Life Silver standard or higher.

According to the design and access statement, the approach to meeting Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 is principally through improvements to the fabric of the building (e.g. improvements to insulation and air tightness over building regulations and the installation of a low carbon Flowsmart boiler and a solar thermal (hot water) system.

Other measures include reducing water usage internally, attenuating the rate and volume of surface water runoff so it does not exceed the current rate post development and using building materials that have a low environmental impact. These measures, in conjunction with others required to meet code level 4, standards will help to fulfil the developments responsibilities with regard to sustainability and climate change.

RSS (Policy EM18) policy also necessitates that in advance of local targets being set, large new developments should secure at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable.

The developer has prepared an energy strategy for the proposed development to optimize the energy consumption of the site which considers the following measures:

- Maximising the thermal efficiency of individual buildings through thermal mass and insulation

- Minimising demand for water heating, space heating and cooling, lighting and power in individual dwellings through efficient equipment and controls
- Calculating the residual energy demand for the site
- Maximising the amount of the residual demand which can be provided through on-site generated renewable energy (either collective or on individual dwellings)
- Meeting the remaining demand efficiently, e.g. CHP (non-biomass or waste powered), district heating and cooling, ground source heating and cooling

The development will take into account the following hierarchy for feasible heating systems:

1. Solar Water heating
1. Co-generation, preferably powered by renewable
2. Community Heating
3. Heat pumps
4. Gas condensing boilers and efficient temperature and timer controls

The energy strategy considers appropriate on site renewable energy production including those listed and assesses which is the most feasible for the site. At least 10% of total site energy demand will be produced from an on-site renewable scheme. The energy strategy demonstrates that this target will be met through energy efficiency measures and the installation of 160 kWp photovoltaic panels.

The information submitted by the developer indicates that it is viable and feasible to meet the requirements of the RSS policy and a detailed scheme can therefore be secured as part of the reserved matters through the use of conditions.

Design

Phase A of the development has been laid out with 4 blocks of properties along the southern boundary facing on to Parkers Road, and a number of detached dwellings on the eastern boundary orientated towards Moss Lane. This creates an active frontage to both roads, which adds visual interest and improves the security of this area. The main gateway to the development is from a T-junction access mid-way along the Parkers Road frontage with a main spine road running due north from this junction and bisecting the site. This provides a welcoming and interesting gateway to the development.

Moving through the development the site has been subdivided into a number of blocks of houses by a series of streets and squares, in accordance with current urban design and Manual for Streets thinking. The squares are overlooked by the properties, which ensures natural surveillance and creates a sense of place. It also helps to create a sense of anticipation as the visitor moves through the site from one square to the next and each space is gradually revealed. Amended plans have been secured to include a second access point to Flowers Lane, which as well as providing a better highway access solution, which is discussed in more detail below, also improves pedestrian and cycle permeability of the site. This is particularly important for people travelling to and from the development and other residential areas to the east and south east, towards Leighton Hospital which lies directly to the west. The roads and squares will be lined with trees, which helps to compensate for existing trees that will have to be removed, and will create a more pleasant residential environment. Shared surfaces have been utilised in accordance with Manual for Streets best

practice, to slow vehicle speeds, reduce the visual impact of highway over-engineering and to give pedestrians natural priority.

At the heart of the development, as stated above, is a large central formal open space, incorporating a children's play area. This is overlooked by properties, and will benefit from natural surveillance as a result, as well as contributing to a pleasant residential environment.

The indicative layout to Phase B shows a continuation of the main spine road and the remainder of the site divided up into blocks, similar to those within Phase A, by secondary vehicle and pedestrian routes. A further area of open space is shown adjacent to the Flowers Lane access. The amended plans also provide for an increased landscape buffer to the northern boundary of the Phase B site where it adjoins open countryside.

To turn to elevational detail, the surrounding development comprises predominantly modern, suburban, cul-de-sac, development, on the adjacent housing estates to the south and west. To the north and west is open countryside with sporadic traditional vernacular farm buildings, which pre-date the expansion of Crewe. There is consistency in terms of materials with most dwellings being finished in simple red brick, and grey / brown slates / concrete / clay tiles.

The proposed house types have been influenced by the form and mass of surrounding residential properties. The dwellings include traditional features such as, chimneys and stone cills and lintels to windows. The use of half dormers and bay windows to feature house types helps to break up the massing of the buildings and maintain visual interest. The predominant roof forms are gables although some are hipped, which reflects the general mix in the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will sit comfortably alongside the mix of existing development within the area.

Although external appearance and design of Phase B are reserved matters, on the basis of the designs which have been produced for Phase A it is considered that an appropriate design can be achieved for the remainder of the site.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in design terms and compliant with the requirements of Policy BE2 (design) of the adopted Local Plan.

Amenity

A distance of 21m between principal windows and 13m between a principal window and a flank elevation are generally regarded to be sufficient to maintain an adequate standard of privacy and amenity between residential properties. The layout provided for Phase A demonstrates that distances in excess of 25m will be maintained to the nearest neighbouring dwellings on the opposite side of Parkers Road to the south. A distance of approximately 35m will be maintained between the nearest proposed dwelling and The Gables Nursing Home which is situated to the east of the site. An even greater separation will be achieved between the proposed development and the properties to the east in Thorn Tree Drive and the other dwellings on Bradfield Road and Flowers Lane to the west. Intervening landscaping both existing and proposed will also help to mitigate any adverse effect on amenity of existing dwellings outside the site.

To turn to the amenity standard that would be achieved within the development, in the majority of cases, the recommended minimum separation distances set out above would be achieved. However, there are a number of cases where separation distances between principal windows have been reduced to 18m to the rear of properties and 15m to the front of properties.

In most cases, reduced distances between rear windows only apply where properties are not directly facing and measurements are taken at the closest point. Furthermore, whilst the minimum density standard of 30 dwellings per hectare has been omitted, Government advice in PPS.3 indicates that local planning authorities should still have regard to the need to make effective and efficient use of land in the consideration of planning applications. If the minimum standards were to be achieved, it would not be possible to accommodate the number of dwellings which are currently proposed and additional greenfield land would be required in order to meet the housing land supply shortfall which currently exists.

In respect of separation distances to the front of dwellings, modern urban design principles encourage tightly defined streets and spaces, with parking to the rear to avoid car dominated frontages. The reduction of separation distances between front elevations helps to achieve these requirements. Furthermore, those rooms which face on to the highway are always susceptible to some degree of overlooking from the public domain. On this basis, it is considered that, where it is desirable in order to achieve wider urban design objectives, a reduction to 15m between dwellings could be justified.

A private amenity space of c.50-60sq.m is also usually considered to be acceptable for new family housing. The indicative layout indicates that this can be achieved in the majority of cases. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development would be acceptable in amenity terms and would comply with the requirements of Policy BE.1 of the Local Plan.

Education

A planning obligation must comply with the following three tests as set out in the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

In effect this means that contributions towards new education facilities can only be sought where the education authority is able to demonstrate that new housing development is likely to generate more children than local primary and secondary schools can accommodate, and that the contribution should be proportionate to any shortfall in capacity.

It is accepted and common practice for local authorities to consider capacity at all primary schools within walking distance of an application site. In the case of primary schools, the Department for Education defines walking distance as a two mile radius from a pupil's home address. CEC's education department recently provided data which showed the pupil roll and current capacity at each primary school within this two mile zone. It showed that according to pupil projections there are 28 surplus places in the "local schools".

The proposed development is expected to generate demand for an additional 65 primary school places, based on CEC's own child yield assumptions (0.162 primary school age children per dwelling). This would mean whilst there is some capacity in local primary schools, there would be a shortfall in capacity of 37 places. In accordance with Circular 05/05 it is necessary for the developer to contribute toward the cost of provision for an additional 37 primary school places in order to meet the need for school places in the future.

To calculate the S106 contributions required for 15 additional primary school places, the education department have used the latest DfE building cost multiplier for the period 2008/09. This is £12,257 (Q4 2008) which, when indexed, gives a current multiplier of £11,850. Cheshire East Council's regional weighting factor is 0.91. The proposed contribution has therefore been calculated as follows: $15 \times £11,850 \times 0.91 = £398,990$.

This is a widely accepted method for calculating contributions which we have seen applied by numerous Councils on previous planning applications for housing developments. Furthermore, it is considered that a contribution of £398,990 is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010.

Highway Safety and Traffic Generation.

This site has been the subject of extended highway negotiations both at pre-application stage and since it was registered with the Local Planning Authority. A scope was agreed with the developer's highway consultant and a draft Transport Assessment provided shortly before the application was submitted. Subsequently there have been two revisions to the Transport Assessment as the Strategic Highways Manager has asked for improved analysis and additional information.

Most recently, the developer and their highway consultant negotiated with the Highways Development Management team a significant new package of measures which demonstrated a more thorough approach towards the mitigation of development impact. These proposals have now been the subject of a technical addendum note to the Transport Assessment and were received by the HDM team on 14th September.

Access to the site

The proposed development will have two points of access from the existing highway infrastructure. The first junction is from Parkers Road and will provide a properly designed priority junction which will incorporate a ghost island right turn lane with a pedestrian refuge. In addition this junction will incorporate a right turn lane improvement for the diagonally opposed junction into Beconsall Drive which will improve traffic management between the two junctions. Also on this frontage, the developer will be providing a PUFFIN crossing on the notional pedestrian desire line to the local facilities, school and shop.

The second junction onto Flowers Lane will again be a simple priority junction and this will be supplemented by an extension to the street lighting on Flowers Lane which will effectively extend the 30 mph speed limit for the full frontage of the site. This has multiple advantages.

The junction will be well lit and the approach speed to the new roundabout design will be reduced.

In addition the treatment of Flowers Lane will see significant footway improvements on both sides of the road together with the provision of a zebra crossing between the new access and the roundabout which will improve pedestrian safety.

Impact on the Wider Network

The new proposals also offer more significant improvements to the local highway infrastructure and this is seen as a much more positive position by the Strategic Highways Manager. The Transport Assessment has identified an impact at the following junctions and accordingly a number of highway improvements have been negotiated, which would be provided by the developer under a Section 278 Agreement under the Highways Act 1980. These are detailed below.

Bradfield Road/Parkers Road traffic signal junction: The developers propose the provision of an improvement in the signal controller with the introduction of MOVA software which will improve traffic management and make the signals responsive to traffic load on the separate arms of the junction and allow more efficient queue reduction at times of peak flow. The Strategic Highways Manager is satisfied that this is a straightforward improvement that will mitigate any adverse impact at this junction.

Flowers Lane/A530 traffic signals: The proposal by the developer was for an altered design of these traffic signals which when assessed by the Highways Development Management team did not adequately satisfy standards and therefore needed to be revisited in order to find a solution. This work has now been carried out and the Strategic Highways Manager is satisfied with the design that has been put forward.

Smithy Lane/A530 junction: The proposal at this junction is for the provision of traffic signals to replace the existing priority junction with a ghost island right turn lane. The Highways Development Management Team consider this to be an effective proposal and the space available at the junction will accommodate an effective signal design.

Bradfield Road/Flowers Lane/Smithy Lane roundabout: The developers have proposed an improvement to the size and geometry of the roundabout to improve capacity and mitigate development traffic impact whilst offering some overall betterment to the general junction capacity. This improvement will be made within land owned by the applicant and land which falls within the public highway and as originally proposed, involved the construction of a non-standard roundabout (and was the subject of concern. Highways audited the scheme and provided safety comments on it. An amended design was then submitted but again safety (and potentially capacity) remained compromised. To try and overcome these issues highways have looked at a double-roundabout design with a view to discussing such a proposal with the Applicant and their consultant. Whilst this is a safer design it would not work in capacity terms.

The highways team are currently looking at another design that involves a non-standard (though larger) type of roundabout and may require more land in the control of the Applicant. A further update on this matter will be provided to Members at committee.

Moss Lane: There is significant local concern about traffic impact from this development on Moss Lane, which is a narrow country lane which should not be burdened with additional through traffic from a new development. The development guards against this through the provision of two points of access which can be utilised from anywhere within the site. This means that if generated traffic is to travel in the direction of Middlewich or Winsford, it will use the Flowers Lane access and will not need to use Moss Lane which would be a longer and slower route. If generated traffic is to travel in the direction of Crewe or Warrington it will use the Parkers Road access and will not need to use Moss Lane which would be a longer and slower route. The Strategic Highways Manager is confident that there will not be a problem with traffic from the development using Moss Lane.

Contribution to the wider highway network: In addition the developer is also offering financial contribution to the wider highway network and has provisionally offered a sum of £300,000 towards the Remer Street corridor upon which this development proposal is shown to have an impact.

Accessibility

The Transport Assessment offers a detailed analysis of the modal choice and sustainable links which will serve this site. It does show that the site has reasonable connectivity across the town of Crewe despite its location on the north west side of the Crewe area. There have been some lengthy discussions between the developer and the Highways Development Management team regarding the accessibility of the site and the improvements being offered. Improvements take the form of improved footpath links local to the site and some cycleway provision. The provision of the PUFFIN and zebra crossings also aid connectivity.

Internal Layout

This site is proposed for phased development of the residential units and significant negotiations have taken place regarding the internal layout. It is important that the site is brought forward with a design which is driven by the guidance within the Manual for Streets document issued by the Department for Transport. This document leads on guidance for quality development and the need to ensure residential developments provide a sense of place through quality design which will provide good social infrastructure. Amongst these design initiatives, the detail of highway design within residential development has changed to provide more innovative layout which supports the quality design whilst providing highway layout which supports traffic needs in a more controlled environment. The design being offered for this site is innovative and will provide a design of good quality and one which the Strategic Highways Manager supports.

Conclusion

The development proposal for this site is considered to have sound potential. The highway improvements and designs for the site are also comprehensive in their intent, and the overall package is an acceptable one. With the exception of the non-standard roundabout (ovalabout) at Minshull New Rd/Smithy La/Flowers La/Bradfield Rd the Strategic Highways Manager is satisfied the proposals can be suitably delivered through a Section 278 agreement, subject to compliance with road safety audits. The financial contribution and

provision of the Minshull New Rd/Smithy La/Flowers La/Bradfield Rd can be achieved through the Section 106 Agreement. Therefore, in summary, the Applicant has overcome the transport issues associated with the development proposal, and only the Minshull New Rd/Smithy La/Flowers La/Bradfield Rd issue remains outstanding. The Highways Team are working with the Applicant to overcome this and a further update will be provided to Members at their meeting.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, in summary, it is acknowledged that the Council does not currently have a five year housing land supply, which is a requirement of both current advice contained within PPS3 and the recently published Draft National Planning Framework. Accordingly, in the light of the advice contained in PPS3 it should consider favourably suitable planning applications for housing. The current proposal is considered to be “suitable” as it is located on the periphery of Crewe, and is in accordance with the Council’s agreed position to manage the supply of housing land as set out in the Interim Policy on the Release of Housing Land, which directs the majority of new development towards Crewe. It is also consistent with the emerging Core Strategy which, although it includes a number of options for growth, directs the majority of new development towards Crewe. Housing development in Crewe is also supported by the Crewe Vision which recognises that population growth is key to economic growth and regeneration of the town itself. According to PPS1 these emerging policies are important material considerations.

It has also been demonstrated that the current housing requirements for Crewe cannot be met through the redevelopment of existing brownfield sites.

The proposal is also supported in principle by the Government’s “Planning for Growth” agenda which states that Local Authorities should adopt a positive approach to new development, particularly where such development would assist economic growth and recovery and in providing a flexible and responsive supply of housing land. This proposal would do both. The Government has made it clear that there is a presumption in favour of new development except where this would compromise key sustainability principles.

It is considered that the development is acceptable in terms of affordable housing provision and that the highway safety and traffic generation issues can be addressed through a number of junction improvements, which would be provided by the developer through a combination of Section 278 and Section 106 Agreements as well as appropriate developer contributions to other off-site highway improvements along the Remer Street corridor, although the detailed design of Minshull New Rd/Smithy La/Flowers La/Bradfield Rd is still to be negotiated. Matters of contaminated land, air quality and noise impact can also be adequately addressed through the use of conditions.

Although there would be some adverse visual impact resulting from the loss of open countryside, it is considered that due to the topography of the site, this would not be significant relative to other potential housing sites in the Borough. Furthermore, it is considered that the benefits arising from housing land provision would outweigh the adverse visual impacts in this case. The proposal is acceptable in terms of the proposed landscaping strategy and it is considered that through the use of appropriate conditions significant trees can be incorporated into the development. The hedgerows on site to be removed are not

considered to be significant under the criteria set out in the Hedgerow Regulations in respect of archaeological, historic or ecological value.

With regard to ecological impacts, the Council's ecologist and Natural England are satisfied with the proposed mitigation measures and have withdrawn their initial objection to the scheme in respect of the impact on Great Crested Newts. Any adverse impact on Breeding Birds can be mitigated through the use of an appropriate condition relating to the timing of works.

The scheme complies with the relevant local plan policies in terms of amenity, policy requirements in respect of public open space provision have been met within the site, and it is considered that the layout and design respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The Flood Risk Assessment has not identified any significant on or off site flood risk implications arising from the development proposals that could be regarded as an impediment to the development

The information submitted by the developer indicates that it is viable and feasible to meet the requirements of the RSS policy in respect of renewable energy and to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and therefore a detailed scheme can therefore be secured as part of the reserved matters through the use of conditions.

The proposed education contribution has been calculated using a recognised methodology and is considered to be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, in accordance with Circular 05/05.

The highway impacts of the scheme, both in terms of highway safety and traffic generation, have been fully assessed and subject to an appropriate package of mitigation measures to be secured through a combination of Section 278 and Section 106 Agreements, as well as conditions, it is considered that these can be mitigated.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with the relevant local plan policies and would not compromise key sustainability principles as set out in national planning policy. Therefore there is a presumption in favour of the development and accordingly it is recommended for approval.

9. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to completion of Section 106 legal agreement to secure the following:-

- 1. Provision of education contribution of £398,990**
- 1. Provision of £300,000 towards highway improvements to the Remer Street corridor**
- 2. Provision of a new roundabout at Minshull New Rd/Smithy La/Flowers La/Bradfield Rd junction.**
- 3. Provision of public open space including amenity greenspace and an equipped children's play area conforming to NEAP Standard, to include:**

- a. A minimum of 8 pieces of equipment,
 - b. 1.4 metre high bowtop railing surround with two pedestrian access gates and a double leaf vehicular access gate.
 - c. Railings to be painted green and pedestrian gates to be yellow.
 - d. Equipment to be predominantly metal, inclusive, and conforming to BS EN 1176.
 - e. Equipment to have wetpour safer surfacing underneath it, conforming to BS EN 1177.
 - f. Surfacing between the wetpour to be tarmacadam with pre-cast concrete edging surround.
 - g. Access paths to gates to be tarmacadam
4. Provision for future management of children's play areas and amenity greenspace to include transfer to and future maintenance by a private management company.
 5. Provision of 35% of the 400 units proposed across the whole site as affordable housing in perpetuity. Provision within Phase A shall be 26 units comprising 11 x 2 beds, 14 x 3 beds and 1 x 4 bed, this totals which equates to only 20% of the 131 units to be developed in Phase A. The tenure split to be on a 65% social rent, 35% intermediate tenure basis. The mix of house types and tenure for within Phase B to be agreed as part of subsequent reserved matters applications.

And the following conditions

1. Standard 3 year time limit (Phase A)
1. Standard outline time limit (Phase B)
2. Submission of reserved matters (Phase B)
3. Plans
4. Materials
5. Boundary Treatment
6. Landscaping submission
7. Landscaping implementation
8. Breeding bird survey to be carried out prior to commencement of any works during nesting season
9. Features for use by birds and bats
10. Habitat creation and management plan
11. Design of proposed pond
12. Design and layout of the proposed newt mitigation area including proposals to ensure no public access.
13. Submission of details of bin storage.
14. Archaeology investigation / report
15. Compliance with flood Risk Assessment
16. Restrict surface water run-off
17. Surface water attenuation
18. Minimum Floor Levels
19. Surface Water Regulation Scheme
20. Site to be drained on a separate system
21. Phase II contaminated land investigation and remediation
22. Travel Plan

- 23. Updated Air Quality Impact Assessment**
- 24. Limit hours of construction to 08:00 – 1800 Monday to Friday and 0900 – 1400 on Saturday with no working on Sunday or Bank Holiday**
- 25. Details of external lighting to be submitted and approved**
- 26. Construction of Access**
- 27. Provision of Parking**
- 28. Highway Construction details to be submitted**
- 29. Replacement hedge and tree planting**
- 30. Tree / hedge protection measures**
- 31. Implementation of Tree / hedge Protection**
- 32. Arboricultural Method Statement**
- 33. Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4**
- 34. Provision of 10% renewable energy on site unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable.**

