Application No: 23/2353C

Location: Land at Centurion Way, Middlewich

Proposal: Outline planning application for the erection of residential dwellings, green

infrastructure with access and scale included all other matters Reserved

Applicant: N/a, BLOK (UK) Ltd

Expiry Date: 11-Sep-2024

SUMMARY

The site is located both within the Settlement Boundary for Middlewich, as such Policy PG9 of the SADPD identifies that within the Settlement Boundary proposals 'will be supported where they are in keeping with the scale, role and function of that settlement and do not conflict with any other relevant policy in the local plan'. The site is also allocated for residential development of around 75 new homes under SADPD Policy MID 2.

As such the proposal, subject to the additional minerals assessment, is acceptable from a land use perspective and complies with the allocation under Policy MID 2.

The benefits of the proposal would be the provision of open market and affordable housing and the limited economic benefits during construction.

The proposed housing mix would be secured at reserved maters to comply with SADPD Policy HOU8.

The development appears capable of being accommodated with resulting in harm to living conditions of neighbouring properties and complies with SADPD Policy HOU12.

The proposal would not cause harm to existing landscape features and complies with CELPS Policies SE5 & SADPD policy ENV6.

The proposal would not result in any significant ecological harm and complies with CELPS Policies SE3 and SADPD policies ENV1 & ENV 2.

The proposal appears capable of being accommodated without causing harm to the character/appearance of the area to comply with CELPS Policies SE1 & SADPD policy GEN1 and the Design Guide SPD.

The development would not have significant drainage/flood risk implications and would be compliant with CELPS SE13 & SADPD ENV16.

In conclusion the proposal subject to minerals assessment and POS complies with the development plan as a whole and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the submission of an acceptable Minerals Resource Assessment. APPROVE subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement and conditions.

REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application is referred to Southern Planning Committee as it relates to a development of more than 20 dwellings.

PROPOSAL

This is an outline planning application for the erection of residential dwellings, green infrastructure. The matters of access and scale are to be determined at this stage and all other matters are reserved.

JURISTICTION

This application site crosses the boundaries of both Cheshire East (CE) & Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC).

The land in CE equates to approximately 67% of the site with the remaining 33% being in CWAC (See plan below showing the land split with north of the dotted line being CWAC and south of the line being CE).

Up to 95 dwellings are proposed across the site with the illustrative plan showing up 75 within CE and 20 within CWAC.

One over-arching proposal has been prepared within two identical applications submitted to each LPA (CE and CWAC). The LPAs then determine the part of the proposal relating to the land within their respective administrative boundaries.

A planning application should be determined by the planning authority in whose administrative area the development proposed is to be carried out. In the case of cross boundary applications, this can lead to two planning authorities making individual determinations, which lead to a conflict in the decision-making process (approve/refuse).

If CEC grant planning permission, there is a requirement for CWAC to agree in relation to the part within its jurisdiction. If CWAC refuse planning permission then the applicant does not have planning permission and cannot implement any of the permission, even the section in CEC (if approved).



SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a parcel of land sited just off the junction of Centurian Way and Holmes Chapel Road.

Area consists of predominantly residential properties to the south and west, agricultural land to the north and east. Some commercial premises are also located to the south-east.

No significant variation in land levels noted.

The site is also enclosed by 2/3m high planting.

The entire site covers 3.86 hectares with the land within Cheshire East totalling 2.56 hectares.

The site is located in the Settlement Boundary and is allocated for residential development as part of Policy MID2.

RELEVANT HISTORY

17/4705C – Outline application for the erection of up to 370 dwellings a new church with ancillary facilities and associated parking, landscaping, public open spaces and play areas – Refused 30-Jan-2019

16/3334S - Screening Opinion for mixed use development consisting of church/community, commercial uses (to be defined), up to 500 houses and associated open space - Environmental Impact Assessment Required

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Of particular relevance are paragraphs:

- 11. Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 60-84. Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
- 131-141. Achieving well-designed places
- 180-194. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Adopted Version (CELPS)

- MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
- SD2 Sustainable Development Principles
- SE1 Design
- SE2 Efficient Use of Land
- SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SE4 The Landscape
- SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
- SE6 Green Infrastructure
- SE9 Energy Efficient Development,
- SE12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
- SE13 Flood Risk and Water Management
- PG1 Overall Development Strategy
- PG2 Settlement Hierarchy
- PG6 Open Countryside
- PG7 Spatial Distribution
- SC4 Residential Mix
- IN2 Developer Contributions
- CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport
- CO4 Travel Plans and Transport Assessments
- SC5 Affordable Homes
- IN1 Infrastructure
- IN2 Developer Contributions
- SC2 Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities

Relevant policies of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD);

- **PG9 Settlement Boundaries**
- **GEN 1 Design Principles**
- **ENV 1 Ecological Network**
- **ENV 2 Ecological Implementation**
- **ENV 3 Landscape Character**
- **ENV5** Landscaping
- ENV6 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

ENV 7 Climate change

ENV16 Surface Water Management and Flood Risk

HOU1 Housing Mix

HOU3 Self Build and Custom Build Dwellings

HOU 8 Space, accessibility and wheelchair housing standards

HOU10 Backland Development

HOU12 Amenity

HOU13 Residential Standards

HOU14 Housing Densities

HOU16 Small and Medium Sites

INF3 Highways Safety and Access

INF 9 Utilities

REC 2 Indoor sport and recreation implementation

REC 3 Open space implementation

MID 2 Centurion Way

Middlewich Neighbourhood Plan (The local referendum for Middlewich NDP was held on the 14 March 2019 and returned a 'no vote)

CONSULTATIONS

CEC Highways: No objection subject to conditions requiring access works to be implemented, construction management plan and contribution to mitigate the Highways impact by contributing towards the MEB/Leadsmithy Street works with a contribution of £6,329.23 per property.

CEC Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions/informatives offered in all other regards such as working hours, electric vehicle charging, boilers, noise mitigation, piling, dust, floor floating and contaminated land.

CEC Flood Risk: No objection subject to condition requiring drainage design and cross sections.

CEC Housing: No objection.

CEC Education: No objection subject to contribution towards secondary education and SEN.

CEC Public Open Space: Proposal has a shortfall of amenity and play space and requires a NEAP facility.

CEC Minerals and Waste Officer – Objection as more detailed ground investigations are required to provide an accurate picture of the ground conditions on the site.

Cheshire Archaeology: No objection subject to condition requiring a written scheme of archaeological investigation.

NHS: No objection subject to contribution.

Natural England: No objection.

United Utilities: No objection subject to condition requiring a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL

Middlewich Town Council – Objects on the following grounds:

- Highway safety concerns
- Road speed should be reduced
- No direct cycle or pedestrian access to Middlewich Town
- No bus stop or service
- Harm to designated wildlife sites
- Insufficient size of POS
- Road noise and air quality issues
- Impact to doctors and school places
- Contrary to Policy PG6 of the CELPS and Policies within CWAC

REPRESENTATIONS

53 letters of objection to initial scheme and 61 letters of objection to the revised scheme which raise the following issues:

- Loss of green spaces
- Harm to wildlife
- Highway safety concerns
- Road congestion
- Pollution
- Lack of public transport
- Impact on infrastructure (NHS, schools)
- Outside of CE land

APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is located within the Settlement Boundary for Middlewich, as such Policy PG9 of the SADPD identifies that within the Settlement Boundary proposals 'will be supported where they are in keeping with the scale, role and function of that settlement and do not conflict with any other relevant policy in the local plan'.

The site is also allocated for residential development of around 75 new homes under SADPD Policy MID 2 which advises that development proposals must:

1. seek to retain as much of the existing boundary hedges as possible as part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme, which should be designed to mitigate any impact of the development upon the wider landscape;

- 2. include a strategy for the provision and long term management of off-site habitat for ground nesting farmland birds;
- 3. make a contribution towards the delivery of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass; and
- 4. undertake a Mineral Resource Assessment for sand and gravel.

The current proposal across the sites seeks up to 95 houses with the illustrative plan showing 75 houses within the CEC. This proposal aligns with the land use element of the allocation MID2.

In terms of landscaping the proposal seeks to retain the majority of existing planting, bar that required for access and visibility, however compensatory planting and further enhancement can be secured at the Reserved Matters stage (landscaping is a Reserved Matter).

The management of off-site habitat can be secured by a 30-year ecological management plan and a contribution towards the bypass can be secured by S106 (both issues discussed in more detail below).

A mineral assessment has been provided which concludes that the site is not suitable for mineral extraction due to the high-water table, however further information has been requested from the Councils Minerals and Waste Officer as more detailed ground investigations are required to provide an accurate picture of the ground conditions on the site. This has been requested and will be presented in the update report along with further comments of the Councils Minerals and Waste Officer.

As such the proposal, subject to the additional minerals assessment, is acceptable from a land use perspective and complies with the allocation under Policy MID 2.

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

Housing Land Supply

The Council has deliverable supply of housing land in excess of the minimum of 5 years required under national planning policy. As a consequence of the decision by the Environment and Communities Committee on 1 July 2022, to carry out an update of the Local Plan Strategy (LPS), from 27 July (the fifth anniversary of its adoption), the borough's deliverable housing land supply is now calculated using the Council's Local Housing Need figure.

The latest published assessment of deliverable housing land supply can be found in the Cheshire East Housing Monitoring Update (base date 31 March 2022) which confirms a deliverable five-year housing land supply of 11.6 years. The 2022 Housing Delivery Test Result was published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) on the 19 December 2023 and this confirmed a Housing Delivery Test Result of 296% for Cheshire East. Under-performance against either of these can result in relevant policies concerning the supply of housing being considered out-of-date with the consequence that the 'tilted balance' at paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged.

However, because of the Council's strong performance, the 'tilted balance' is not engaged by reference to these housing supply and delivery tests.

Affordable Housing

This is an outline application and as per Policy SC5 there is a requirement for 30% of dwellings to be provided as affordable dwellings with a split of 65/35 between social rented and intermediate housing.

Cheshire East Council have an ambition to support rent levels which do not exceed either the local housing allowance for the area or regulator for social housing target rent amounts, whichever is lowest. So, the Councils Housing Officers asks for consideration of this on rental homes to ensure that this type of accommodation remain truly affordable. Due to the rental need from our Cheshire Homechoice data, a mixture of sizes should be provided.

The need in Middlewich for those with local connection and the highest need is as follows:

1 bed = 56

2 bed = 13

3 bed = 27

4 bed = 6

Local plan policy SC5 and the Housing SPD 6.43 require pepper potting of affordable homes throughout a site. The site plan provided would need further pepper potting however this is simply illustrative at this stage and this could be addressed at reserved matters stage.

If one bed homes are to be provided, bungalows or cottage style apartments are required, so the properties are given their own entrances.

The exact mix and location of the affordable dwellings can be detailed in the Reserved Matters application, with the provision secured as part of a S106 Agreement.

Education

The development of up 75 applicable dwellings is expected to generate:

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21 - Primary children (75 x 0.29) - 1 SEN
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10 - Secondary children (75 x 0.14) - 1 SEN

2 – SEN child (75 x 0.60 x 0.047)

The development is expected to impact on primary and secondary school places in the locality. Contributions which have been negotiated on other developments are factored into the forecasts both in terms of the increased pupil numbers and the increased capacity at primary and secondary schools in the area because of agreed financial contributions. The analysis undertaken has identified that a shortfall of secondary school places remains.

The Education Department acknowledges that this is an existing concern, however the 10 secondary age children expected from Land at Centurion Way, Middlewich will exacerbate the shortfall.

Special Education Need provision within Cheshire East Council currently has a shortage of places available with at present over 47% of pupils educated outside of the Borough. The service

acknowledges that this is an existing concern, however the 2 children expected from Land at Centurion Way, Middlewich will exacerbate the shortfall

To alleviate forecast pressures, the below formula would be used to calculate the contribution as final numbers are not set:

£26,717 per secondary pupil place £74,920 per SEN pupil place

The Secondary money would be spent at any secondary school within 3 walking miles of the development. The SEN money would be spent on any SEN scheme within the borough. The contributions would be secured as part of a S106 Agreement.

Health

The NHS have been consulted who advise that the GP Practices most directly affected by this large-scale housing development have seen significant increases in their patient list size over the last few years. This coupled with changes into how primary care services are delivered to patients has resulted a significant lack of both clinical and administrative capacity, which directly impacts on the ability to provide appointments for patients. Any new housing development would look to continue to impact on this, and infrastructure provision is a requirement from housing developers in order to safeguard Primary Care facilities and provide a contribution towards to continued required investment.

In order to mitigate the impact of this development a contribution has been requested based on the formula below as final numbers are not set and this will be secured as part of a S106 Agreement.

Size of Residential Unit	Developer contribution per unit at April 2023
Health Infrastructure - 1 bed unit	£713.00 per 1 bed unit
Health infrastructure - 2 bed unit	£1,019.00 per 2 bed unit
Health infrastructure - 3 bed unit	£1,426.50 per 3 bed unit
Health infrastructure - 4 bed unit	£1,783.00 per 4 bed unit
Health infrastructure - 5 bed unit	£2,445.50 per 5 bed unit

As a result, the contribution is considered to be both reasonable and necessary and should be secured by way of section 106 agreement.

Open Space

Policy SE6 requires major developments (10 or more) to provide open space in line with Table 13.1 of this policy, which requires 65m² per dwelling consisting of children's play space, amenity green space, food growth and green infrastructure connectivity to be provided on site in the first instance. However, the policy also advises that in some cases, commuted sums generally may be more appropriate for improvement of other open spaces and green infrastructure connectivity.

The Councils Open Space officer has been consulted and advises that the central area of open space has widened slightly but also been dissected at the southern end with an access road making

the space fragmented. A LEAP size facility has been located on the larger space however the minimum buffers are only just being met. This may influence the design and capability/capacity of the facility. The facility should be accessible and inclusive for children of all abilities.

The Open Space Typology Plan previously showed open space in the south as G.I. Buffer to satisfy the G.I. Connectivity element of Policy SE6 some of which has now changed under the heading Green Amenity Space. Despite certain areas identified as green amenity space they are not suitable for that function. The small spaces adjacent to car parking and dwellings in the south of the development are not multifunctional and cannot be used for recreation by the community as POS as they are too small and could cause a nuisance issue for adjacent occupants. Some of the space measured are just shy of 1m wide but appear to have been included in the Green Amenity Space (1,857m²) calculation.

In terms of quantum the site requires the following minimum open space requirement:

Combined Amenity and children's play 3,800m² 2,451m² (Central POS)
G.I. Connectivity 1,900m² 7,812m² (GI Buffer)
Food production 475m² ----

Upon measuring the central combined open space, the figure offered by the applicant seem to fall short slightly.

Although the GI Connectivity minimum requirement has been met, this does not compensate for the shortfall of amenity and play space. The site allocation MID 1 contained within the SADPD requires the retention of existing mature hedgerows around the boundaries of the site as far as possible and safeguard and protect, through an undeveloped and open landscaped buffer zone. It is welcomed the applicant has taken note of the MID 1 requirements.

There may be further scope for a LAP/Play on the go on the CWAC section of the application site, however it is difficult to predict if CWAC will approve that part of the application. In addition to this, the Councils Open Space Officer is mindful of the MID 1 requirement for undeveloped and open landscape buffer therefore very careful thought would be needed if this is to be considered an option.

The Councils Open Space Officer also deems that as this site has a major barrier in the B5309, the site should be able to standalone supporting the needs of the new community. It is with this in mind; a holistic approach should be taken looking at the site overall.

A NEAP facility should be provided, for clarity this would be the case if looking at CEC side on its own merit without the addition of the 20 units on the CWAC adjoining site. Looking at the site in its entirety, a NEAP and surrounding amenity space for informal recreation is recommended.

These comments have been provided to the applicant and a response along with further review by the Council Open Space Officer will be provided in the update report.

In terms of outdoor sports facilities, the proposal will increase demand on existing facilities as such a financial contribution towards off site provision will be required. The financial contribution is required at a rate of £1564.54 per family (2+ bed) dwelling and £782.27 per bed space to a

maximum of £1564.54 per apartment. The funds would be used in line with the Council's adopted Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy.

The sustainability and future management of the GI, play and amenity should be demonstrated through the submission of a management plant at reserved matters stage.

Any POS requirement could be secured via a S106 Agreement.

Location of the site

Both policies SD1 and SD2 of the CELPS refer to supporting development in sustainable locations. Within the justification text of Policy SD2 is a sustainable development location checklist.

In this instance the supporting statement has provided a brief appraisal of the nearby amenities/facilities which advises that there is a Tesco Express, Morrisons and Lidl within walking distance with the town centre being 880m away to the west. The nearest primary school is located 1.4km to the south-west. Based on the D and G Bus website there is a bus stop located 170m away to the west with 8 services Monday to Friday and 6 services on Saturday.

This distance is within of the target walking distance of 500m as noted in Policy SD2. Also, as the site has been allocated for residential development, the site has already been deemed locationally sustainable.

As a result, the site would appear to meet a number of thresholds contained with Policies SD1 & SD2 in terms of locational sustainability.

Housing Mix

Policy SC4 advises that new residential development should maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities.

Policy HOU1 In line with LPS Policy SC 4 'Residential mix', housing developments should deliver a range and mix of house types, sizes and tenures, which are spread throughout the site and that reflect and respond to identified housing needs and demand. In particular it suggests a recommended mix as below as a starting point:

	Market housing	Intermediate housing	Affordable housing for rent
1 bedroom	5%	14%	26%
2 bedroom	23%	53%	42%
3 bedroom	53%	28%	20%
4 bedroom	15%	4%	10%
5+ bedroom	3%	1%	3%

The housing mix is not known at this stage as the proposal only seeks details of access and scale. As such suitable mix of housing would be addressed at reserved matters stage.

Residential Amenity

With regards to neighbouring amenity, Policy HOU12 advises development proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers of residential properties, sensitive uses, or future occupiers of the proposed development due to:

- 1. loss of privacy;
- 2. loss of sunlight and daylight;
- 3. the overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings;
- 4. environmental disturbance or pollution; or
- 5. traffic generation, access and parking.

Policy HOU13 sets standards for spacing between windows of 18m between front elevations, 21m between rear elevations or 14m between habitable to non habitable rooms. For differences in land levels it suggests an additional 2.5m for levels exceed 2m

The main residential properties affected by this development are properties on Centurion Way to the south and properties off Byley Lane to the east.

The illustrative site plan suggests that the proposed properties would provide excess of the required 14/21m interface distances to existing residential properties.

Environmental Protection have also raised no objections subject to conditions regarding a travel plan and contaminated land. They have also suggested conditions to deal with road noise.

As a result, the layout suggests that the proposal could be provided without significant harm to living conditions of neighbouring properties. In any case the final layout would be determined at reserved matters stage.

Amenity to proposed occupants

The final layout would not be known until reserved maters stage however the illustrative plans indicate that all of the plots would appear capable of providing at least the recommended minimum garden area of 65sqm as noted in the SPG.

Therefore, the proposal complies with Policies HOU12.

Space standards/Wheelchair access

Policy HOU8 of the SADPD states that in order to meet the needs of the Borough's residents and to deliver dwellings that are capable of meeting people's changing circumstances over their lifetime, the following accessibility and wheelchair standard will be applied to major developments;

- a) At least 30% of the dwellings in housing developments should comply with the requirements of M4(2) Category 2 of the Building Regulations regarding accessible and adaptable dwellings; and
- b) At least 6% of the dwellings in housing developments should comply with the requirement m4 (3)(2)(a) Category 3 of the Building Regulations regarding wheelchair adaptable dwellings.

Policy HOU8 also requires compliance with requires that new housing developments comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)

The final layout is not known at this stage however the above requirement for wheelchair access could be secured by condition. Compliance with the NDSS would be addressed at reserved matters stage.

Contaminated Land

The application is for new residential properties which are a sensitive end use and could be affected by any contamination present. As such Environmental Health Officers have requested conditions dealing with contaminated land.

Air Quality

Policy SE12 of the CELPS states that the Council will seek to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality.

An Air Quality Assessment has been provided. The assessment considers whether the development will result in increased exposure to airborne pollutants, particularly as a result of additional traffic and changes to traffic flows. The assessment uses ADMS Roads to model NO2, PM10 and PM2.5 impacts from additional traffic associated with this development and the cumulative impact of committed development within the area.

A number of modelled scenarios have been considered within the assessment. These were:

- 2019 verification;
- 2028 future baseline: and
- 2028 future baseline + proposed development

The assessment concludes that the impact of the future development on the chosen receptors will be not significant with regards to all the modelled pollutants. However, the proposed development is considered significant in that it is highly likely to change traffic patterns and congestion in the area.

Middlewich has two Air Quality Management Areas, and as such the cumulative impact of developments in the area is likely to make the situation worse, unless managed.

Poor air quality is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the public and also has a negative impact on the quality of life for sensitive individuals. It is therefore considered appropriate that mitigation should be sought in the form of direct measures to reduce the adverse air quality impact.

A development of this scale and duration would be expected to have an adequate demolition and construction dust control plan, which should be implemented to protect sensitive receptors from impacts during this stage of the proposal and this is mentioned within the assessment as a form of mitigation.

Environmental Health Officers have been consulted who advise should the application be recommended for approval, conditions relating to electric vehicle charging points and low emissions

boilers would be necessary to ensure that local air quality is not adversely impacted for existing and future residents.

Subject to conditions the proposal would comply with Policy SE12.

Highways

Policy INF3 advises proposal should comply with the relevant Highway Authority's and other highway design guidance and provide safe access to and from the site for all highway users and incorporate safe internal movement in the site to meet the requirements of servicing and emergency vehicles.

Sustainable access

The site is within an acceptable walking distance of the employment area south of Holmes Chapel Road and also from the centre of Middlewich town centre which is approximately a 15 minute walk. There is existing pedestrian infrastructure available to these destinations which will also be improved with additional crossings as stated below.

There are bus stops within walking distance to the north of the site on Centurion Way but these are poorly located with no safe standing area provided on the eastbound bus stop. These are to be relocated outside of the site frontage on Centurion Way as seen on the latest plan and adjacent to these stops will be a new pedestrian access into the site. This service provides an hourly service to various destinations including Crewe, Congleton, and Holmes Chapel.

Safe and suitable access

Access will be provided via a new priority access with a right turn ghost island on Centurion Way, located approximately 120m north of the Holmes Chapel Road roundabout to the south and a similar distance from Byley Lane to the north. The access will also have adequate visibility and is considered acceptable to serve this level of development.

There will be a shared pedestrian/cycle path that runs along the site frontage, and this has been incorporated into the site access as detailed in DfT guidance Local Transport Note 1/20. The access works will also be subject to a Road Safety Audit during the highway's technical approval stage if the application is approved.

The shared pedestrian/cycle path within the site will connect to a pedestrian site access off Byley Lane and a new dropped kerb crossing on it, followed by a dropped kerb crossing across Centurion Way. Adjacent to the main site access will be another pedestrian/cycle access with a dropped kerb crossing on Centurion Way. The pedestrian/cycle path continues to the south of the site where another pedestrian/cycle access to the site is to be provided in the proximity of the relocated bus stops, and just to the south of this will be a signalised crossing across Centurion Way. The shortest route into Middlewich for pedestrians is to the south and the location of the dropped kerb and signalised crossings are acceptable. In addition, there will also be a staggered signalised crossing across Holmes Chapel Road.

For the proposed highway works a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been carried out with various recommendations including a speed limit reduction along the site frontage and associated highway

design changes. These recommendations will be implemented and further RSAs carried out during detailed design stage and post opening.

Network Capacity

The development would typically generate approximately 60 vehicle trips during a peak hour and in addition would generate trips from pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users.

The previous application on this site obtained contributions towards highways improvements and to mitigate its own impact upon the highway. This current development should also contribute on a level reflecting the previous one, adjusted for inflation. Taking into consideration the additional cost of the highway works proposed to be carried out within a s278 by the applicant the required contribution will therefore be £6,329.23 per property.

Around 20 of the properties are in Cheshire West who have acknowledged in their Highways response to the application that the majority of the highways impact will be in Cheshire East. A highways contribution from all properties is therefore requested which will go towards and MEB and/or the associated Leadsmithy Street junction proposals.

Conclusion

The access is acceptable to serve the development and there will be associated speed limit reduction and road markings. Pedestrian access into Middlewich will also be improved and no objection is raised subject to the following conditions and informative:

Therefore, the proposal can be accommodated without severe highway impacts and complies with CELPS Policy CO1 and SADPD Policy INF3.

Landscape

Policy SE4 of the CELPS advises that the high quality of the built and natural environment is recognised as a significant characteristic of the borough. All development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes.

A landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been provided in support of the application.

The Councils Landscape Officer has been consulted on this who advised that the proposals don't really have a tree lined avenue on the main route in, whilst there are trees planted along route the intentions of the design guide are for something more substantial, therefore he wishes to see this enabled with a more detailed application stage by condition should the application be successful. This could be addressed at reserved matters stage as part of the landscaping scheme.

The Landscape Officer does however consider the size of the scheme and other considerations throughout the scheme do in general give this proposal lots of areas of good green intervention. He does however have concerns how proposed trees located in from and back gardens can be secured indefinitely without threat of resident removal. He also suggests some increased planting to the adjacent highway, areas of large broadleaf native trees to fill gaps in the boundary editable fruit

trees and native mix damson be included. This can be addressed at reserved maters stage to increase planting.

In general, he broadly agrees with the conclusion of the submitted LVIA with regarding impacts of the proposal. Given this and that the fact that the site has been allocated for development some landscape impacts are inevitable, but it appears that they can be limited here subject to acceptable details being submitted at the Reserved Matters stage.

As such the proposal could be accommodated without significant landscape impacts and complies with CELPS Policies SE4, ENV3 & ENV5 of the SADPD

Trees

Policy SE 5 of the LPS and ENV6 of the SADPD require that retained trees should be successfully integrated into the development design and take into account the ultimate mature size of trees and their relationship to buildings and private amenity space to avoid future conflict with residential amenities.

The site does not presently benefit from any established tree cover within or adjacent to the development area. The site is bordered by hedgerows some of which may need to be removed to create the new access and associated visibility splays.

Local Plan Policy SE 5 requires that all developments should ensure the sustainable management of trees, woodlands and hedgerows including the provision of new planting within new development to retain and improve canopy cover, enable climate adaptation resilience and support biodiversity.

This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate new planting in accordance with this policy.

The Councils Forestry officer has also been consulted who raises no objections but suggests conditions which require the submission of a landscape scheme to meet the requirements of this policy and for any reserved matters application to be supported by a hedgerow assessment and include a plan which confirms intentions regards retention/removal of hedgerows and a scheme for protection measures during any construction period.

Therefore, it appears that the proposal can be accommodated without harm to existing landscape features and complies with Policies SE5 & ENV6.

Design

In this instance as the application has been submitted in outline form, no details of design, appearance or layout have been provided and thus such impacts would be addressed at reserved matters stage.

Access and Connectivity

The site is allocated under Policy MID2 of the SADPD and as a result the location and wider connectivity to a range of existing services and facilities is accepted.

With regard to vehicular access, in urban design terms the central location along the Centurion Way boundary opens up the site and enables a sensible layout.

The indication of multiple pedestrian and cycle connections to both Centurion Way and Holmes Chapel Road are welcomed on the indicative layout, and it is strongly recommended that this approach is carried through as the design develops through the Reserved Matters process.

Internally, the indicative layout is well connected, with the perimeter path welcomed as this not only assists connectivity but would also serve to promote activity.

Site Layout

Whilst the site layout provided is only indicative, this is an outward looking layout, with frontages overlooking open space and the open countryside and this is in line with the guidance set out in the CEBDG (CEC, 2017ii, ii|62, p.22) which states:

"Where development forms a new urban edge to a settlement it should create an outward looking positive relationship with the adjoining countryside. The temptation in such locations is to totally hide the development from the wider countryside by screening with trees and mounding. This approach does not accord with the character of the borough...".

Other aspects of the indicative layout show promise, with what appear to be a good mix of house types, addressing streets well and turning corners to provide effective passive surveillance.

Streets

Again, the layout is only indicative, but there appears to be a suitable hierarchy of streets. Going forward it will be expected that this fully complies with the guidance set out in the CEBDG (CEC, 2017ii, p34 onwards) including the design and specification of hard surfacing materials in line with the palette for the Salt and Engineering Towns (p.51).

Parking

Again, the layout is only indicative, but there appears to be a suitably mixed parking strategy emerging across most of the site. However, the design of the parking court to the flats is potentially problematic as a result of the number of uninterrupted adjacent bays and the enclosure with what appears to be rear and side garden boundaries. As the design develops some guidance is provided in the CEBDG, but it is suggested that planting and specification of surface materials will be key – in short this will need a more landscape-led approach in this edge of settlement location.

The properties to the Holmes Chapel Road frontage will have their parking areas immediately front the road. This would need addressing at reserved matters stage to prevent the frontage being dominated by parking. This could be resolved by tweaking the layout or introducing planting/green area between highway and driveway.

Open Space and Landscape

The POS is well-located at the centre of the indicative layout and the surveillance over this space is generally good. One area for improvement is the positioning of the garage to the north-eastern

corner of the POS, ideally this should be removed and the house to be dual aspect. This can be addressed at reserved matters stage.

Crucial to the Outline permission is the compliance with Policy MID2 of the SADPD and as such the retention of all possible existing hedgerows, and the replacement of those that will unavoidably have to be removed (for visibility splays etc.) is appreciated.

Similarly, the detailed landscape strategy produced by Urban Green is considered to be successful. it constitutes a suitable response to the requirement to produce a comprehensive landscape scheme to mitigate the impact of the development.

Scale and Massing

The development ranges from 3-storeys for the apartments to the southern boundary to a mix of 2 and 2.5 storey (with a maximum of 2.5) to the remainder as outlined in the parameter plan on p.14 of the DAS. Given the location of the site, this is a sensible arrangement with the denser layout to the south. However, there are some issues:

- The near 'wall' of 3-storey apartments to Holmes Chapel Road is problematic. Whilst detailed design is reserved, and there is some indication that these blocks may be broken up with lower linkages, the monolithic effect of this wall needs further work to break it up and provide a more porous edge on this gateway route.
- Going up to 2.5 storeys across the rest of the site is acceptable in principle, but the majority of the development should be at 2-storeys, with taller buildings only located at key locations.

This would be addressed at reserved matters stage, but clearly can be accommodated.

Architecture and Materials

For the reserved maters application, a commitment to context including locally inspired detailing and materials specification will be sought going forward as per Vol.1 of the Cheshire East Borough Design Guide (CEC, 2017i) specifically under the section relating to Salt and Engineering Towns (p.51-58).

Overall

The Councils Design Officer therefore raises no objection and the design matters can be adequately assessed at the Reserved Matters stage. Therefore, it appears that the proposal can be accommodated without causing harm to the character/appearance of the area and complies with Policy SE1 of the CELPS, GEN1 of the SADPD and the Cheshire East Urban Design Guide SPD.

Ecology

Statutory Designated Sites

The Councils Ecologist advises that the site of the proposed development falls within Natural England's SSSI impact risk zone for residential development. He notes that Natural England initially requested further information in respect of bird species associated with the Sandbach Flashes

SSSI. Following the submission of further information Natural England have made further comments advising that they have no objection in this regard.

Breeding Birds

The bird survey undertaken to inform an earlier application at this site identified the presence of a number of priority species. Priority species are a material consideration for planning. An updated breeding bird survey has now been submitted which recoded evidence of only a single relatively widespread priority species as possible breeding on site.

The regular presence of 'probably' breeding Yellow Wagtail would be sufficient for the site to qualify as a Local Wildlife Site.

It is likely that skylark and yellow wagtail, which are ground nesting open country species, would be adversely affected as a result of the proposed development if they were breeding on site.

The updated breeding bird survey found no evidence of breeding by Skylark or Yellow Wagtail on site. Therefore, ground nesting birds, such as these two species, are not likely to be affected by the proposed development.

The retention of the majority of the existing hedgerows and the addition of further planting would help to reduce the impacts of the proposed development upon bird species associated with these habitats.

The site-specific policies for this allocated site include the need for a strategy for the provision of long term management of off-site habitat for ground nesting birds, but based on the latest survey ground nesting birds would not be affected by the proposed development.

If outline consent is granted, the Councils Ecologist advises that standard conditions to safeguard nesting birds be applied at the reserved matters stage and features for birds can be secured through an ecological enhancement condition.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and hence a material consideration. It is likely that the proposed development would result in the loss of existing hedgerow to facilitate the site access. If outline consent is granted it must be ensured that any hedgerow unavoidable lost at the detailed design stage is compensated for through suitable replacement hedgerow planting. The loss of hedgerows has been considered as part of the submitted Biodiversity net Gain report discussed below.

Lighting

Whilst the application site offers limited opportunities for roosting bats, bats are likely to commute and forage around the site to some extent. To avoid any adverse impacts on bats resulting from any lighting associated with the development the Councils Ecologist recommends that if outline planning permission is granted a condition should be attached requiring any additional lighting to be agreed with the LPA.

Hedgehog

No evidence of this priority species was observed during the submitted survey report, however the submitted ecological assessment however advises that it may be present on site. The Councils Ecologist advises that the application site does not offer optimal habitat for this species and so the proposed development would be likely to result only in a low impact upon this species is present. The incorporation of features for hedgehogs can be secured through the ecological enhancement condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Local Plan Policy SE 3(5) requires all developments to aim to positively contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and Policy ENV2 requires schemes to deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain. In order to assess the impacts of the development the applicant has undertaken and submitted an Biodiversity Metric calculation.

The submitted metric shows that the proposed development would result in a net gain for biodiversity for both area-based habitats and hedgerows provided the habitat enhancements included in the metric are incorporated into the detailed design at the reserved matters stage.

If planning consent is granted a condition is required to ensure the delivery of a Biodiversity Net Gain.

Ecological Enhancement

This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the development in accordance with Local Plan Policy SE 3.

If outline planning permission is granted a condition should be attached which requires the submission of an ecological enhancement strategy.

Therefore, subject to the suggested conditions it appears that the development can be accommodated without significant ecological impacts and complies with Policies SE3 of the CELPS and ENV1 & ENV2 of the SADPD

Flood Risk

The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency Flood Maps however the site area is over 1 hectare, therefore a Flood Risk Assessment is required.

An FRA has been provided in support of the application and concludes that the Environment Agency maps indicate that the site is within a flood zone 1 with low probability of fluvial flooding. All other sources of flooding for the site has been investigated and shown to be of minimal or no risk. The proposed development is therefore considered to be appropriate and sustainable in the terms set out in the NPPF.

The Councils Flood Risk Team have been consulted who initially requested further information regarding finished floor levels, cross sections and the exceedance plan shows flood path off site to Byely Lane/Byely Road. Further information has since been provided and consequently they raise

no objection subject to conditions requiring full details and cross sections of all drainage strategy assets and for the drainage design, excluding cross section detail, must proceed in accordance with the submitted Causeway Flow report.

United Utilities have been consulted and have raised no objection in principle. However, they do query discharging to the public UU surface water sewer, and they suggest a condition requiring details of a sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme.

As a result, it is not considered that the proposal would pose any significant drainage/flood risk issues and drainage details could be secured by condition and complies with Policy SE13 of the CELPS and ENV16 of the SADPD.

Climate Change

Policy ENV7 of the SADPD requires that all 'major' residential development schemes should provide for at least 10% of their energy needs from renewable or low carbon energy generation on site unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that having regard to the type of development and its design, this is not feasible or viable. This could be controlled via the imposition of a planning condition.

Minerals

The application site lies within an area of known sand and gravel resources. The current sand and gravel landbank in Cheshire East is at 4.11 years which is well below the 'at least 7 years' provision required by CELPS policy SE10 and NPPF over the plan period, therefore the loss of any mineral resource in Cheshire East is an important consideration.

The site is not identified in the existing Cheshire Replacement Minerals Local Plan 1999 as an area for future mineral extraction.

The NPPF requires mineral resources to be safeguarded by defining Mineral Safeguarding Areas; and requires LPAs to adopt policies that prevent sterilisation of mineral resources by non-mineral development. It also supports the prior extraction of minerals where practical and environmentally feasible, if non-minerals development is necessary.

CELPS policy SE10 states that minerals in Cheshire East will be safeguarded through the definition of Mineral Safeguarding Areas, which will be defined in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document and within these areas, mineral resources will be protected from unnecessary sterilisation by other development.

The SADPD however does not define any mineral safeguarding areas or include any policies on mineral safeguarding as it was intended that these would be included in the new Minerals and Waste Plan. Whilst the emerging draft Minerals and Waste Plan does identify the site as within a sand and gravel safeguarding area, no weight can be applied to this plan as progress has only reached regulation 18 stage. Therefore, at present Cheshire East does not currently have any mineral safeguarding areas or specific policies for safeguarding aside from the general provisions set out in the CELPS.

SADPD policy MID2 includes a requirement for a mineral resource assessment.

A Minerals Resource Assessment (MRA) has been submitted which identifies that the site is underlain by sand and gravel deposits. This has been assessed by the Council Minerals and Waste Officer who advises that the proposal would result in the loss of sand and gravel resource which could potentially in future (subject to securing planning permission) contribute towards improving the overall sand and gravel landbank in the authority which is currently below the 7-year policy requirement. However this loss of mineral resource has already been accepted in the allocation of the site under MID2 subject to the provision of an MRA.

The scope of the MRA does not follow established guidance referenced in SADPD policy MID2 (Minerals Safeguarding Practice Guidance v1.4 (2019, The Mineral Products Association &The Planning Officers Society) and in particular does not meet the components listed in Annex 1 of the guidance. In particular it does not address:

- The economic value and viability of the mineral i.e. the market interest; and
- Potential options for prior extraction including the nearby operators that could extract and process the material, and consideration of opportunities for on-site use

The MRA is not based on any ground investigations carried out on the application site; it instead relies on limited data obtained from BGS GeoIndex Onshore borehole records based on three boreholes located in the wider area which are between 20m and 130m away from the site (the precise locations of which are not provided). The MRA should be based on detailed ground investigations carried out on site to provide an accurate appraisal of the potential mineral yield and exact depth of the water table (and indeed this is recommended in the MRA). In the absence of these investigations, the borehole data can only provide a broad indication of the likely mineral resources in the area and potential environmental conditions on the site.

The Council accept the points made in the MRA that there would likely be a need for a standoff from receptors in this location which would sterilise part of the potential mineral resources available, and which could potentially adversely impact the overall viability of extracting the mineral resources. It also accepts that a high-water table would be likely to significantly impact on the viability of future development on the site. The absence of detailed ground investigations however means that it is difficult to accurately assess these impacts and conclude on the overall likely extent of sterilisation and viability of extraction.

Overall therefore, it is considered that there are shortcomings in the submitted mineral resource assessment and more detailed ground investigations are required to provide an accurate picture of the ground conditions on the site.

Therefore further information has been requested from the applicant, which is expected to be available for the update report along with revised comments on the Councils Minerals and Waste Officer.

CIL Compliance

In order to comply with the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 it is necessary for planning applications with planning obligations to consider the issue of whether the requirements within the S106 satisfy the following:

(a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The development would result in increased demand for education provision in Middlewich where there is limited spare capacity. In order to increase capacity of the local schools which would support the proposed development, a contribution towards education provision is required. This is considered to be necessary and fair and reasonable in relation to the development.

The development requires on-site POS and the site is in an area of the Borough where there is a shortfall in provision and would require outdoor sport mitigation in accordance with Policies within the CELPS. This is considered to be necessary and fair and reasonable in relation to the development.

The development would directly impact on medical provision in the local area, therefore contributions towards the NHS is required to mitigate impacts in accordance with Policies in the CELPS. This is considered to be necessary and fair and reasonable in relation to the development and surgeries have been identified where this could be spent.

The development requires contributions towards highways improvements and to mitigate its own impact upon the highway in accordance with Policies in the CELPS. This is considered to be necessary and fair and reasonable in relation to the development and a scheme where this will be spent has been identified.

OTHER

The majority of neighbour responses have been addressed in the report above. The following issues remain which will be addressed below:

- Road speed should be reduced the Councils Highways Engineer has considered the proposal and not advised a speed reduction
- Outside of CE land two applications have been submitted to CEC and CWAC for consideration

PLANNING BALANCE

The site is located both within the Settlement Boundary for Middlewich, as such Policy PG9 of the SADPD identifies that within the Settlement Boundary proposals 'will be supported where they are in keeping with the scale, role and function of that settlement and do not conflict with any other relevant policy in the local plan'. The site is also allocated for residential development of around 75 new homes under SADPD Policy MID 2.

As such the proposal, subject to the additional minerals assessment, is acceptable from a land use perspective and complies with the allocation under Policy MID 2.

The benefits of the proposal would be the provision of open market and affordable housing and the limited economic benefits during construction.

The proposed housing mix would be secured at reserved maters to comply with SADPD Policy HOU8.

The development appears capable of being accommodated with resulting in harm to living conditions of neighbouring properties and complies with SADPD Policy HOU12.

The proposal would not cause harm to existing landscape features and complies with CELPS Policies SE5 & SADPD policy ENV6.

The proposal would not result in any significant ecological harm and complies with CELPS Policies SE3 and SADPD policies ENV1 & ENV 2.

The proposal appears capable of being accommodated without causing harm to the character/appearance of the area to comply with CELPS Policies SE1 & SADPD policy GEN1 and the Design Guide SPD.

The development would not have significant drainage/flood risk implications and would be compliant with CELPS SE13 & SADPD ENV16.

In conclusion the proposal subject to minerals assessment and POS complies with the development plan as a whole and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the submission of an acceptable Minerals Resource Assessment. APPROVE subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement with the following Heads of Terms:

S106	Amount	Triggers
Affordable Housing	30% on site provision (65% affordable/social rent and 35% intermediate tenure).	
Education	£26,717 per secondary pupil place generated by the development. £74,920 per SEN pupil place generated by the development.	To be paid prior to the occupation of the 20th dwelling
NHS	1 bed - £713 2 bed - £1019 3 bed - £1426.50 4 bed - £1783 5 bed - £2445.50	To be paid prior to the occupation of the 40th dwelling
POS	Provision of Open Space, and a NEAP/LEAP (to be confirmed) and a scheme of management. Allotment/food growth contribution: £562.50 per dwelling	Open Space Scheme and scheme of management to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development.

	Outdoor sport facilities contribution: £1564.54 per family (2+ bed) dwelling and £782.27 per bed space to a maximum of £1564.54 per apartment.	Contributions to be paid prior to the occupation of the 40 th dwelling
Highways	Middlewich Eastern Bypass/ Leadsmithy Street works £6,329.23 per property	50% be paid prior to the occupation of the 20th dwelling. 50% be paid prior to the occupation of the 40th dwelling

AND the following conditions:

- 1) Standard Condition time limit submission of the Reserved Matters
- 2) Standard Condition time limit implementation of development
- 3) Standard Condition submission of the Reserved Mattes (to include the internal road network)
- 4) Approved Plans
- 5) Sustainable surface water drainage scheme and a foul water drainage scheme
- 6) The access works shown on plan J32-5520-PS-001 should be complete prior to first occupation (this includes off-site highway works, the crossing points, bus stops and the combined footway/cycleway)
- 7) Construction Management Plan should be submitted and approved which provides details of contractor and construction vehicle parking, loading/unloading locations, storage areas, and details of wheel wash facilities.
- 8) Reserved matters to include features for nesting birds.
- 9) Reserved matters to include lighting scheme.
- 10)Reserved matters application must be accompanied by a habitat creation method statement; ecological monitoring strategy and a 30 year habitat management plan for the retained, enhanced and newly created habitats for that phase of the development.
- 11)Reserved matters application should be supported by a strategy for the incorporation of features to enhance the biodiversity value of the proposed development.
- 12)Prior to occupation, full details and cross sections of all drainage strategy assets must be provided to and agreed by the LPA.
- 13) Drainage design, excluding cross section detail, must proceed in accordance with Causeway Flow report.
- 14)Reserved matters application shall be supported by a hedgerow assessment and include a plan which confirms intentions regards retention/removal of hedgerows and a scheme for protection measures during any construction period
- 15)Prior to occupation of the development, the developer shall submit information confirming that all installed gas-fired boilers

- 16) Noise mitigation measures to be submitted and approved as part of the Reserved Matters application.
- 17)Contaminated land risk assessment
- 18)Contaminated land verification report
- 19)Contaminated land soil importation
- 20)Contaminated land unexpected contamination
- 21)Prior to commencement of development, a written scheme of archaeological investigation
- 22) Prior to the occupation/use of the hereby approved development, a programme for postexcavation assessment/reporting and (where required), analysis, publication, and archiving.
- 23) Development to proceed in accordance with details and measures in the ecological assessment.
- 24)At least 30% of the dwellings in housing developments should comply with the requirements of M4(2) Category 2 of the Building Regulations regarding accessible and adaptable dwellings.
- 25)At least 6% of the dwellings in housing developments should comply with the requirement m4 (3)(2)(a) Category 3 of the Building Regulations regarding wheelchair adaptable dwellings.
- 26) The Reserved Matters application shall include a statement to confirm that all dwellings comply with the NDSS.
- 27)Low emission boilers
- 28)10% of energy needs to be from renewable or low carbon energy

In order to give proper effect to the Board's/Committee's intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.

Should the application be subject to an appeal, the following Heads of Terms should be secured as part of any S106 Agreement:

S106	Amount	Triggers
Affordable Housing	30% on site provision (65% affordable/social rent and 35% intermediate tenure).	In accordance with phasing plan.
Education	£26,717 per secondary pupil place generated by the development. £74,920 per SEN pupil place generated by the development.	To be paid prior to the occupation of the 20th dwelling
NHS	1 bed – £713 2 bed – £1019 3 bed – £1426.50 4 bed – £1783 5 bed – £2445.50	To be paid prior to the occupation of the 40th dwelling

POS	Provision of Open Space, and a NEAP/LEAP (to be confirmed) and a scheme of management. Allotment/food growth contribution: £562.50 per dwelling Outdoor sport facilities contribution: £1564.54 per family (2+ bed) dwelling and £782.27 per bed space to a maximum of £1564.54 per apartment.	Open Space Scheme and scheme of management to be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of development. Contributions to be paid prior to the occupation of the 40 th dwelling
Highways	Middlewich Eastern Bypass/ Leadsmithy Street works £6,329.23 per property	50% be paid prior to the occupation of the 20th dwelling. 50% be paid prior to the occupation of the 40th dwelling

