

Site Development Framework

Ullswater Avenue, St Helens

Date: March 2023



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WWW.STHELENS.GOV.UK

Ullswater Avenue: Development Framewo

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This document presents an illustrative development framework that demonstrates the potential for new development at Ullswater Avenue, St Helens. It sets out place focused design principles which should be integrated and delivered as part of any new development proposals.

The site is defined by a context and environmental assets that should inform any future design responses to create a responsive and distinctive development. New homes, streets and spaces can be composed to enhance sense of place, create environmental quality and support more sustainable neighbourhoods: places that promote health and wellbeing through their public realm quality and provision of green spaces.

The development framework is based on the premise that good design in the built environment is about more than the style and architecture of individual buildings. Good design is about the wider composition of natural and built environments, relationships between people and places, and shaping activity at different times of day and night. In short: it is about responsive, holistic placemaking.

To this end, the document provides information regarding the following criteria:

- Site Information
- Planning Context & Obligations
- Known Site Opportunities & Constraints
- Design Guidance
- Pre-application Discussion & Validation

This document is not prescriptive and assumes that the resultant development will meet or exceed the relevant regulations and standards. Development will be subject to normal conditions to be imposed by a Planning Consent from St Helens Borough Council Planning Services and associated Section 106 Agreement and other mandatory statutory requirements.



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2. St Helens

St Helens Borough Strategy Vision

Working together for a better borough, with people at the heart of everything we do by improving people's lives together and creating distinct, attractive, healthy, safe, inclusive, and accessible places in which to live, work, visit and invest.

2.1 The Borough of St Helens

St Helens is a large and significant borough at the heart of the North West of England which came to prominence during the industrial revolution.

The Borough has a proud heritage of coal mining, railways and world-famous glass and chemical industries. The decline of these industries led to significant economic restructuring and a resultant reduction in jobs and business opportunity, the legacy of which is still seen today.

St Helens Borough is situated in Merseyside and is proud to be part of the Liverpool City Region. It covers an area of 136 square kilometres and is home to over 180,000 people with 4,800 businesses based in the Borough.

It is a place with a strong identity and cultural history, rooted in our world-famous rugby league team and our proud industrial heritage including England's first canal, a section of the world's first passenger railway, pharmaceutical, coal and glass industries.

It is also a place of great potential with many strengths and opportunities. The strategic position at the heart of the North West provides excellent connections to and from the Borough. Its semi-rural nature, with over 65% of the area designated as green belt, makes for a very attractive place to live, with strong growth in new housing and increasing numbers of people choosing to live here.

To ensure St Helens Borough Council can deliver their ambition for the Borough, 5 key priorities established in the Local Plan are highlighted below:

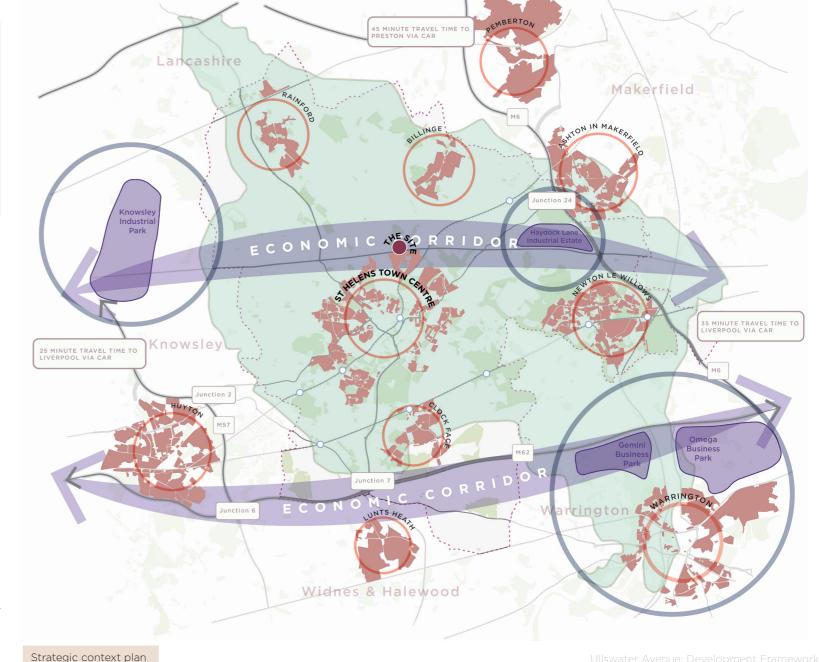
- Supporting A Growing Population And Strong **Economy**
- Continuing Commitment To Brownfield First
- Regenerating Our Town And District Centres
- Protecting And Enhancing Our Open Green
- Investing In Infrastructure And Transport

More information on St Helens Borough Council's aspirations for future development, and the Local Plan can be found via the link and QR code below:



https://sthelens.gov.uk/localplan

St Helens Borough boundary Urban settlements Employment hubs Omega Eco Corridor



2.2 St Helens Borough Housing Strategy 2022-2027

The Housing Strategy for St Helens was published in 2022 and sets out the vision and priorities for housing in St Helens for the next five-year period up to 2027, and the actions that will be taken by the Council to meet local need. It is a core document which supports the St Helens Borough Strategy.

The Housing Strategy sets out 5 core priorities which have been identified in partnership. The priorities include:

- Towards Net Zero
- Delivering Regeneration and Growth
- Creating Communities
- Improving Health and Wellbeing
- Supported and Specialist Housing

The Housing Strategy further supports the aspirations of the St Helens Borough Local Plan which, in accordance with Policy LPA04, hopes to deliver a minimum of 10,206 net additional dwellings between April 2016 and March 2037.

Further information on the aspirations of the Housing Strategy can be found via the link and QR code below:



https://sthelens.gov.uk/housingstrategy

2.3 St Helens Borough SHLAA Overview

The site is identified within the SHLAA as a suitable site for future housing development (reference number 95). The following assessment has been made for Ullswater Avenue:

Assessment	Summary	
Suitability	Suitable for housing	
Availability	The site is considered to become available in 6-10 years	
Achievability	The site is achievable	

Further information on the suitability of the site can be found via the link and QR code below:



https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/1906/SHBC004-Further-evidence-on-Housing-Supply/pdf/ SHBC004_Further_evidence_on_Housing_Supply. pdf?m=637786398765770000



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3. The Site in Context

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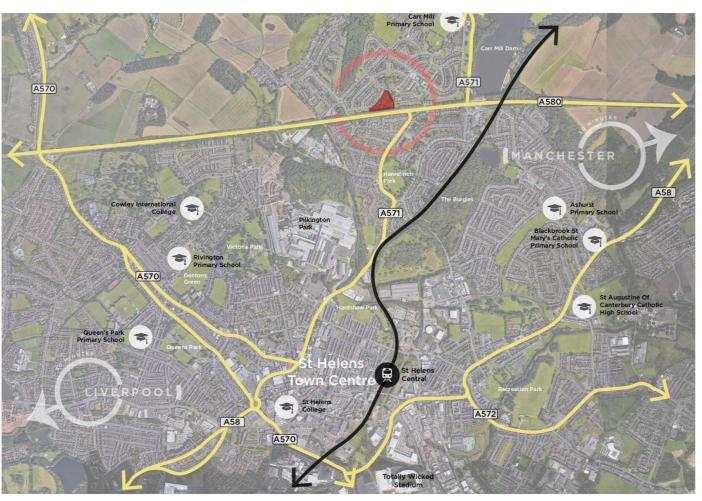
3.1 The Site

The land at the Ullswater Avenue is located north of St Helens in the Carr Mill neighbourhood. The site area is approximately **1.47 hectares.**

The site is well located in an established neighbourhood and lies in proximity to the local services and amenities in Carr Mill such as Carr Mill Infants School and St. Peter and Paul RC Primary School as well as Cowley Language College.

Due to its edge of town location, the site is also within reach of neighbouring rural areas such as Billinge and Moss Bank, as well as recreational spaces at Carr Mill Dam and Sankey Valley Linear Park. More locally, Haresfinch Park and Victoria Park can be reached within 10 minutes.

Ullswater Avenue lies close to a number of bus stops. It is also well connected to larger neighbouring cities such as Liverpool and Manchester via the A580 East Lancashire Road. The site presents an opportunity for a logical and integrated extension of the existing neighbourhood and offers potential for sustainable development.



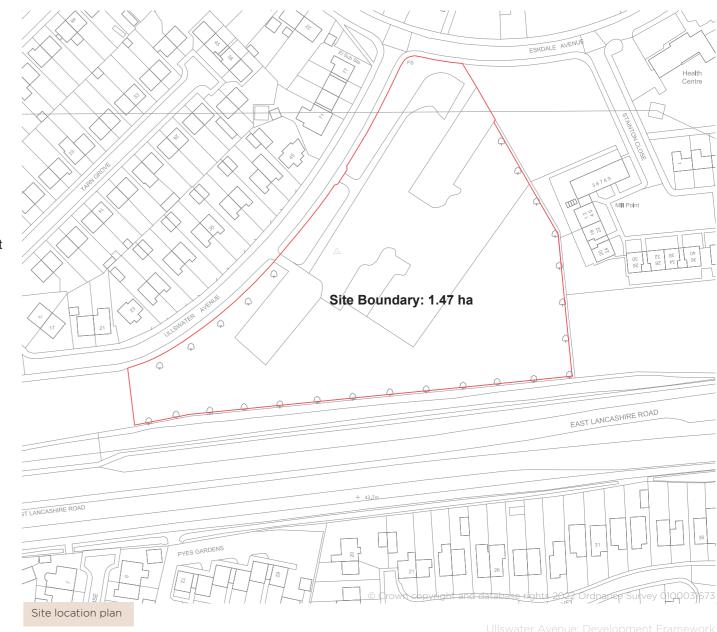
The site in context

erial image source: Google © 2023 Landsat / Copernicus

The site has lay vacant for a number of years and has since become overgrown with scrub and self seeded tree groups. The quality of existing tree groups and their ability to be integrated as part of future development would be supported by more detailed survey information to support future planning applications.

Primary access could be taken through an existing access point along Ullswater Avenue on the western boundary.

As the site sits within an existing residential neighbourhood and is bound by the east Lancashire Road to the south. Future development will need to give consideration to the interfaces between the development and these uses.



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4. Key Site Influences

4.1 Opportunities & Constraints

The site offers a prime location for residential development. Key points for consideration are indicated on the Opportunities and Constraints Plan opposite. The following summary points apply:

- The site has good connectivity to amenities within the immediate locale such as schools, employment and community leisure facilities, as well as good connections into St Helens Town Centre which sits further south.
- The site offers a good opportunity for residential development and any future proposals should complement and enhance the overall character of the surrounding area.
- An existing COMAH zone lies to the southern boundary of the site. Appropriate development offsets should be considered in future applications.
- Overhead power lines run east west across the northern extent of the site.
- Development responses should address the sensitivities of neighbouring uses; namely the residential edges of the site and the surrounding green spaces, suitable landscape buffers could be incorporated.
- A number of mature and semi-mature trees are present on the site which provide visual amenity value. Where the Council accepts that tree loss unavoidable the applicant will be required to mitigate any loss of any trees where possible.













Existing tree groups

---> Direction of fall in levels Contour lines

 Existing access point Overhead powerline

Hardstanding area

Existing Access Rroute

Noise from East Lancashire Road

Underground pipeline boundary High level flood risk

Gates bounding site

Medium level flood risk

Low level flood risk ★ St David's Church bell towe

Existing trees

4.2 Flood Risk

The site is at a low risk of both fluvial and surface water flooding, with some localised surface water flood risk to the southern edges towards the East Lancashire Road and along Ullswater Avenue. Future development will be subject to the Council's current SuDS Guidance document and checklist which contains a series of additional local standards. This document can be sourced online via the link and QR code below:



https://new.sthelens.gov.uk/media/330925/ cd-5129-the-suds-manual-ciria-reportc753-december-2015.pdf



4.3 Slopes and Elevations



The overall topography gently slopes south, with no steep level changes.



The site is fairly flat with a very gentle rise in levels from 44.5m AOD in the western corner to 50.5m in the northern corner of the site.

5. Planning Context

5.1 Policy Context

The important policies that will guide the development and be used to evaluate a planning application are outlined in this section. Any application must guarantee that the entire spectrum of planning policies is covered.

Planning Policy

The goal of this planning policy analysis is to study national and local planning policies that are pertinent to the proposals of each site, in accordance with s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and to evaluate the proposals in light of these policies. The National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Frameworks/Local Plans are part of a hierarchical network of guidelines and plans that govern both national and local planning.

Policy Framework

The Development Plan includes the following adopted policy papers, which must inform the generation of proposals for the site:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- St Helens Local Plan up to 2037 (2022)

Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Design Guidance (SPD)
- Ensuring a Choice of Travel (SPD)
- List of Locally Important Buildings (SPD)
- New Residential Development (SPD)
- Trees and Development (SPD)
- Design and Crime (SPD)

- Affordable Housing (SPD)
- Transport and Travel(SPD)
- Design SPD (update to the above)
- Developer Contributions (SPD)
- Nature Conservation (SPD)
- Open Space Provision and Enhancement (SPD)

Planning Policy Review

National Planning Policy (NPPF)

The government's planning policies for England are outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework, which was published on March 27, 2012. A crucial factor in planning decisions is the NPPF.

A presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be viewed as a golden thread flowing through both plan-making and decision-taking, is at the core of the NPPF.

The NPPF highlights the need for building strong, competitive economies. Specifically, it identifies the importance of creating conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

The NPPF affirms the significance of LPAs adopting proactive policies to reduce and adapt to climate change and acknowledges that maintaining and enhancing the natural environment is essential to the overall sustainability of places. Risks should be handled through appropriate adaptation strategies, and new developments should be planned to prevent growing susceptibility.

The NPPF places a strong focus on the requirement to provide a variety of high-quality homes in order to increase chances for home ownership and build mixed, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

The design of the built environment is given significant weight within the NPPF, establishing that it is inextricably linked to sound planning. It is recognised as a crucial component of sustainable development and ought to help make cities better for residents.

In order to create appealing and welcoming locations to live, work, and visit, good design should establish a strong sense of place using streetscapes and buildings. The site's potential for development should be maximised, a suitable mix of uses should be established and maintained (including the inclusion of green and other public space as part of developments), and safe and hospitable environments should be created where crime and disorder do not degrade quality of life or community cohesion.

Local Plan Up To 2037

The St Helens Borough Local Plan lays the foundation for the Borough's expansion and development. It specifies where and how new development and regeneration should occur, promoting and managing the Borough's future growth in the process. It will also influence the Council, other governmental and non-profit organisations, and the private sector's investment plans.

5.2 Site Specific Policy

Policy LPA01: Spatial Strategy

Policy LPA01 delineates the focus areas of development for St Helens up to and beyond 2037. These are St Helens Core Area, Blackbrook and Haydock, Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown, Rainford, Billinge, Garswood, and Rainhill. With emphasis on sustainable development solutions, much of the spatial strategy is consistent with national planning policy. Hence, there is clear impetus on, retention and enhancement of the natural environment, employment, health and wellbeing, and more.

Policy LPA02: Development Principles

New development will be required to support the following development principles where relevant:

- Create sustainable communities with a strong sense of place.
- Meet the challenges of population retention and growth.
- Improve the economic wellbeing of the Borough's residents.
- Contribute to inclusive communities by seeking to address the requirements of the population.
- Contribute to a high quality built and natural environment.
- Minimise the need to travel and maximise the use of sustainable transport.
- Promote healthy communities by improving access and opportunities for formal and informal recreation, improving cycling and walking routes, and minimising air, soil and water pollution.
- Lower St Helens Borough's carbon footprint and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Policy LPA04: Meeting St Helens Borough's Housing Needs

This policy sets out the scale of housing development in St Helens until 2037. 10,206 net additional dwellings should be provided, with a minimum annual delivery of 486 dwellings. To accompany this, Policy LPA04 sets out minimum housing densities to optimise housing delivery. Within or adjacent to St Helens or Earlestown town centres, the minimum density is 40 dph. Outside of this, the minimum is 30 dph. To ensure the above requirements are met, housing delivery will be monitored annually. Ullswater Avenue has the potential to push the density towards minimum density of 40dph for town centre sites due to its location along a significant highway connection.

Ullswater Avenue is one of a number of small sites identified across the Borough which will contribute towards the total requirement for new housing. In addition to this, development of the site at Ullswater Avenue will support the aspirations for residential development within the St Helens Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2017 (as updated with the latest information as of 1 April 2021). The SHLAA & Local Plan reference for the site is number 95.

Avenue: Development Framework

Policy LPC05: Open Space

Any new residential development will be required to contribute towards provision, expansion or enhancemen of open space. Hence, development proposals that would result in the loss of open space will only be permitted where:

- a) it has been clearly demonstrated that the open space (having regard to the standards referred to in Table 8.1 of the policy) is surplus to requirements; or
- b) the open space that would be lost would be replaced by new provision that is equivalent or better in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the proposed development is for alternative sports and / or recreational provision, the benefits of which would clearly outweigh the loss of the existing open space.

Policy LPC07: Greenways

The Council place clear impetus on a developed strategic network of greenways which will provide continuous off-road movement connections, improve the existing network of wildlife corridors, and improve the economy through aesthetically enhanced routes that link homes and workplaces.

Policy LPC08: Ecological Network

This policy seeks to bolster the existing natural environment to secure a net gain in biodiversity. This will include a focus on the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Ecological Network, concentrating on wildlife sites, ecological corridors, and steppingstone habitats.

Policy LPC10: Trees and Woodland

Policy LPC10 highlights the need for increased tree cover across the Borough, hence preserving and improving trees, woodland and hedgerows. Indeed, new developments will be required to contribute to this aim through the provision of new trees, woodlands or hedgerows, and will need to preserve and enhance existing trees, woodland or hedgerows.

Policy LPC12: Flood Risk and Water Management

Reflecting national policy, LPC12 states that new development should be located in accordance with the sequential approach, and that major developments should incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems unless there is clear evidence this would be inappropriate. In this respect, a hierarchy is set out for

Open Space Typology	Quantity Standard (minimum number of hectares per 1000 population)	Accessibility Standard (Maximum distance between dwelling and nearest open space of this type)	Quality Standard	
Parks and gardens	0.8	1.2km	To be determined in a SPD	
Natural and semi-natural open space	2	1.2km	To be determined in a SPD	
Amenity greenspace	1	400m	To be determined in a SPD	
Provision for children and young people	0.1	800m	To be determined in a SPD	
Allotments	0.1	1.2km	To be determined in a SPD	
Outdoor sport	Refer to needs assessment and site-specific recommendations in the Council's latest Playing Pitch Strategy and related action plan			

the management of surface water, with the preferred option being the provision of an adequate soakaway or other form of filtration system.

The Local Plan covers flood risk and water management in significant detail, and flood risk and drainage issues will be considered in full detail through the planning application process for all sites.

Policy LPC13: Renewable and Low Carbon Development

The Council's prioritisation of sustainability is evident which is consistent with the 'golden thread' of sustainable development through planning policy within the NPPF. Thus, any new developments will need to be sustainably designed, constructed and use energy efficient systems.

Policy LPD01: Ensuring Quality Development

Quality development contributes to a sustainable urban realm which has longevity built in. Indeed, all proposals for development will be expected to meet or exceed a set of design quality requirements.

Policy LPD02: Design and Layout of New Housing

It is important for new developments to complement the existing character and identity of a place. Thus, this policy outlines requirements that new housing will have to meet. These describe the need for good design, enhancement of local distinctiveness, safety, green infrastructure and more.

Policy LPD03: Open Space and Residential Development

Policy LPD03 highlights the fact that access to high quality open space contributes to an improved quality of life. For instance, it requires new developments of 40 dwellings or more to make provision for new open space, or enhancement of existing open space. Furthermore, open space can be in the form of sports facilities, parks and more. Once developed, open spaces will be afforded protection in accordance with Policy LPC05.

Policy LPD09: Air Quality

This policy describes the need for new developments to mitigate any potential decrease in air quality. Specifically, developments must not impede any objectives set out in the Air Quality Management Area Action Plan, introduce any new air pollutants, or lead to any decline in air quality.

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6. Illustrative Framework

6.1 Illustrative Framework Plan

The illustrative framework plan on the facing page sets out a high level development concept shaped by the key site influences summarised in the preceding section. The plan provides a vision and foundation for development structure and placemaking features, aligning to local and national design guidance.

The high level development framework plan is intended to inform future design responses to the site. The plan illustrates a potential development approach that responds to known constraints of the site and combines sound urban design principles to maximise the opportunities of the site.

Future design responses to the site, brought forward by interested parties, should look to apply the principles of the framework adjacent. The key spatial principles of the framework include:

Environmental sustainability

- Environmental sustainability embedded through the proposed green infrastructure approach to the north and south of the site.
- Sequence of varied green, social open spaces that can contribute to health and wellbeing.
- Landscape embedded at the centre of the design process, with consideration to all features of the natural environment and how these function together to contribute towards quality of place.
- A particular emphasis on ecology and response to ecology assessment recommendations.
- Appropriate offsets from the COMAH zones and buffering from the A580.

Access, inclusivity and movement

- Establish a legible and inclusive street network which connects to the existing surrounding streets, encouraging a sustainable movement network.
- Route choice and promotion of active travel through clear, legible and direct pathways which connect to green infrastructure.
- Creating attractive people-friendly streets and spaces within the development with opportunities to connect to surrounding walking and cycle routes.
- A network of routes and spaces that has potential to provide for the needs of all by being safe, overlooked and integrated with green spaces.

Character

- Existing special environmental characteristics of the local area central to the proposed site structure and composition.
- Layout, form and scale responding to surroundings and enhancing local distinctiveness, considering approach views to the site and views within the development looking outward.
- Future potential for visual appearance and materiality to further enhance local character.

Going forward, the development proposals can be refined further through collaborative working with St Helens Borough Council, key stakeholders and consultees including the local community.

Development setback to avoid overhead power lines and orientated towards new proposed green space and St. David's Church.

Single primary vehicle access point from Ullswater Avenue into an internal street network.

Potential pedestrian connections through to Eskdale Avenue and Stainton Close.

Landmark buildings with frontage openings, expressions of height and accented roof ridge lines create approach views and help with legibility into the site.

Greenspace and residential amenity buffer providing setback to the A580 and utilising space within COMAH Zone.

Retained trees to the east of the site help to provide visual amenity and screening to existing residential areas.



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6.2 Green infrastructure

The illustrative development framework sets the basis for a distinctive landscape structure. Future proposals should further informed by landscape assessment, ecological assessment and arboricultural survey. The structure and character of open space shown is influenced by existing features of site and local context. Retention of existing trees and hedgerows will be supported to enhance the environmental setting of the site, subject to further arboricultural assessment.

Green infrastructure would help to define and enhance the character and distinctiveness of development, not only provide a high quality setting for new homes, but creating links to the greenway through the internal public realm of the site. There may be potential for these links and spaces to integrate surface water drainage attenuation features.

Landscape design and open space provision can be detailed at reserved matters stage, for which this document provides a development framework.

6.3 Movement

The aim of the development framework is to demonstrate that it is possible to create a permeable and accessible development that provides for vehicular movement and prioritises pedestrian and cyclist movement, encouraging active travel.

The development framework demonstrates potential for a network of legible and people-friendly streets as the foundation to development, well integrated with its surroundings;

- Primary access point from Ullswater Avenue to allow for vehicular movement.
- Pedestrian and cycle connections providing opportunities for active travel across the site.
- Pathways passing through hedgerows and green corridors in controlled locations, maximising connectivity but aiming to reduce environmental and /or ecological impact.
- Small scale tertiary streets and landscaped parking courts helping to manage vehicular speeds whilst providing for variation in character of the development and enhancing local distinctiveness.
- Car parking requirements are assumed at 2 per dwelling and should measure 5.5m by 3.3m wide to lifetime homes standards. The parking will be predominantly on plot, with some shared surface parking courts.

6.4 Density and Scale

The development framework aims to show how the efficient use of the site could be maximised whilst integrating successfully into the local area. The plan adopts best practice urban design principles, but also aims to push the density higher that the immediate setting.

The block structure is defined by the on-site constraints. Block dimensions allow for flexibility in mix of house types and servicing and parking arrangements whilst achieving spacing and amenity / privacy standards.

Layout elements form subtle but distinct character for the site, helping to create depth and variety within the scheme. Going forward this suggested character can be further articulated through detailed design including materials, landscape detail, boundary treatments etc.

The site poses an opportunity for town houses semi detached units as well some apartments, in an attempt to diversify the housing offer in the area.

The gross density for the illustrative layout is approximately 45-85 dwellings per hectare (dph). This estimation assumes that the density of the scheme will push slightly higher than the density of the neighbouring residential areas but still be in keeping with the locale, and that the housing mix will be a variety of one, two and three bedroom homes.

Example environments



Planting within the streetscape could allow for SuDS systems.



Modern, attractive terraced homes create a distinctive neighbourhood character.



Localised areas of play or places to dwell enhance the green space offer of the site

Ullswater Avenue: Development Framewoo

Ullswater Avenue: Development Framework

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The illustrative sketch applies some of the key principles of the development framework. It shows the potential for new homes to front onto a people orientated street and provide a distinctive and high quality setting.

- Properties on corner plots with openings and aperatures on both elevations to provide greater levels of passive surveillance.
- 3 storey development to the north of the site can provide enclosure and a scale whilst also sited to provide through views to St. David's Church.
- Safe and legible pedestrian connections as part of the street network.
- In-curtilage, front of property car parking as part of the streetscape.
- Potential to open up views through to St. David's Church bell tower.



Approximate view point



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7. Moving Forward

7.1 Planning Obligations

Through the determination of planning applications, St Helens Borough Council will consider if developer contributions are necessary to seek to mitigate against any impacts of the development.

Such planning obligations will be secured through a S106 legal agreement, between the Council and Landowner and any other party with a legal interest in the development site.

For further information on what the developer contributions will include, please see the following policies within the Local Plan:

- In relation to Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces, the Local Plan sets out expectations through Policies LPA08. LPC05 and LPD03.
- In terms of transport and travel, the expectations are set out in Policy LPA06.
- In terms of providing affordable housing, the requirements are set out in Policy LPC02.
- Policy LPA07 provides the mechanism to deliver infrastructure required to mitigate the impacts of new development, including social infrastructure, such as health and education, where necessary.

Applicants are advised to consult the Council's Planning Service at an early stage in the planning process to discuss the requirements relating to specific development proposals.

7.2 Pre Application Discussion and Validation

There is an expectation from the Council that developers will engage in early Pre-Application discussions with the local planning authority.

There are considerable benefits in seeking advice before making an application as it provides an opportunity to understand how policies will be applied to the proposed development and should ultimately help speed up the planning process.

In order to provide a quality Pre-Application Advice service a range of charges have been introduced, in addition to the fees payable for the submission of applications.

As an indication of the likely supporting documents needed to support a residential planning application on this site, please refer to the list below.

- Transport Statement / Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Renewable Energy Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Biodiversity Survey and Report
- EIA Screening Letter
- Foul Sewerage Assessment
- Land Contamination Assessment
- Lighting Assessment

- Noise Impact Assessment
- Open Space Assessment
- Parking and Access Arrangements
- Photographs and Photomontages
- Planning Obligations Draft Head(s) of Terms
- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Draft Travel Plan
- Tree Survey
- Utilities Statement
- Site Waste Management Plan

A breakdown of application fees can be found via the link and QR code below:



https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/ english_application_fees.pdf

7.3 Conclusion

This document has assessed the future development of land located at Ullswater Avenue, St Helens. It has considered the site context, defined the known opportunities and constraints, outlined relevant planning context and set out design criteria to inform developer proposals.

A fundamental guiding principle for the development of this site is to deliver a scheme that is characterised and distinguished by quality.

To this end, the design guidance has specifically considered: layout, scale, landscape, open space, site access, frontage to neighbouring residential, as well as car parking standards and the impact of the COMAH zones to the south of the boundary. An Illustrative development framework plan has also been produced to inform initial responses.

In addition, to provide further clarity, known planning obligations are defined as well as the local authority's expectations of the developers approach to preapplication discussions.



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