

## Proposed Residential Development Land North of Chester Road, Helsby, Cheshire

### Frequently Asked Questions – Pre-Application Public Consultation

#### 1. What is the purpose of this consultation?

Hourigan Planning (Chartered Town Planners) is preparing a full planning application on behalf of Anwyl Land Limited, and Elan Homes Holdings Limited for a proposed residential development on land north of Chester Road, Helsby, Cheshire (hereafter referred to as the site).

We have been instructed to notify neighbouring homes and businesses, and other interested parties such as Ward Councillors, Helsby Parish Council and Frodsham Parish Council that a planning application is currently being prepared. We are seeking feedback from the local community on the draft proposals.

Feedback received from this current consultation will inform the preparation of the scheme before it is finalised and a full planning application is submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

#### 2. When will you be submitting the planning application?

We plan to submit the planning application to the Council in early 2026 following the closure of the consultation period and once we have had a chance to properly consider all comments received.

#### 3. What is the proposed scheme?

We are proposing to submit a full planning application.

The emerging proposals currently include the construction of circa 230 new homes across two adjacent parcels. The site comprises two areas of land, Parcel A (Elan Homes Holdings Limited), and Parcel B (Anwyl Land Limited) as identified in the Indicative Masterplan.

It is envisaged that Parcel A will accommodate around 125 dwellings and Parcel B will accommodate around 105 dwellings. At this stage, an Indicative Masterplan has been produced, which indicates at a high level how the site *might* be developed, but the design is evolving at this early stage and will be informed by any comments received during the period of public consultation.

The Indicative Masterplan has been informed by the technical work undertaken to date by the Applicants and their technical consultancy team. At this formative stage, the Indicative Masterplan shows the following key elements:

- At the outset it is important to note that Blue Bridge Lane is unadopted, privately owned and is not available to either Elan Homes Holdings Limited or Anwyl Land Limited. The approach adopted has therefore been to connect the two parcels visually (as a physical connection is not possible) as much as possible, as will be explained further below.
- A substantial area of open space is proposed to be provided in the northern and central parts of the site and across both Parcels of the site which creates large areas for public use. This will benefit both

existing and new residents. The proposed open space in the northern part of both parcels provides an undeveloped buffer between the site and the railway line to north and the open countryside beyond this. The central area of open space also creates a green corridor which preserves views to Helsby Hill.

- Parcel A has the benefit of two vehicular access points, one to Chester Road and a further access point on to Plovers Lane taking advantage of the existing field gate and dropped kerb.
- For Parcel B a single point of access to Chester Road is proposed to the west of the existing access which serves the existing commercial units.
- The development of each parcel is intended to be highly permeable from a pedestrian and cycling perspective with links to the existing pedestrian routes onto Holly Court, Plovers Lane, and Chester Road leading into the village.
- Development blocks will be outwardly facing where appropriate and connected by a network of primary streets, lanes and shared drives which create interesting street scenes and ensures passive surveillance of open spaces. This has the dual benefit of ensuring that existing hedgerow boundaries and pockets of woodland surrounding the plots are retained and enhanced wherever possible.
- The public open space will provide locations for the inclusion of an equipped play area within each parcel, overlooked by proposed dwellings. Allotments will also be provided.
- The areas of open space will be supplemented with new landscaping and planting, as such the scheme will achieve at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in line with the provisions of the Environment Act.
- In terms of surface water management, the existing topography allows for the creation of substantial SUDS at the northern end of both parcels; this will attenuate surface water run-off from the development to appropriate rates (as will be agreed with statutory consultees). The proposed surface water drainage solution will ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere (accounting for climate change).
- Locating surface water facilities in the northern section of each parcel also has the benefit of setting built development back from the operational railway (which is a Network Rail requirement) and will help to re-enforce the green corridor along the railway line through appropriate planting in the surface water features and on surrounding land. Additionally the approach will also aid in reducing the impact of noise from the railway and motorway beyond on the proposed homes.

### ***Density & Housing Mix***

We envisage that the developable area could be built at circa 36 dwellings per hectare which would yield circa 230 new homes across the two parcels. It is envisaged that the development would comprise primarily of two storey homes in a mix of house sizes and number of bedrooms ranging from 1 to 5 beds.

### ***Affordable Homes***

Policy SOC 1 of the Local Plan (Part One) requires that all residential development on sites of over 15 dwellings provide up to 30% of the residential units as affordable housing. The Applicants can currently provide 45% affordable housing in each parcel subject to the "Golden Rules" required by Paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The size and tenures will be discussed and agreed with the Council during the course of the planning application process. Any future planning application would be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Statement.

### ***Access***

It is proposed that a new vehicular access would be created off Chester Road in the western parcel of the site in the position shown on the Indicative Masterplan. This Parcel will have a further access point off Plovers Lane, taking advantage of the existing field gate and dropped kerb. For the eastern parcel, a single point of access is proposed in the general position of the existing access point to Chester Road, serving the existing commercial units which are to be retained. A Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan will be submitted with the full planning application, which will set out the proposed access arrangements and demonstrate how the development will adopt sustainable travel principles.

In addition to the vehicular access, a number of new pedestrian footpaths and cycleways are proposed across the site, linking into the existing pedestrian footpaths from Holly Court, Plovers Lane and Chester Road.

### ***Trees, Woodland, Hedgerows & Biodiversity***

A large part of the site will remain undeveloped and given over to areas of Public Open Space.

Trees and hedgerows are to be retained where possible and would be enhanced with significant areas of new planting.

Overall, the proposals would seek to deliver at least 10% net gain for biodiversity (otherwise known as 'BNG'), and this will be illustrated in documentation submitted with the full planning application.

### ***Informal Open Space and Play Areas***

Informal open spaces and new planting are proposed to be provided throughout the site. Attractive footpaths are proposed to link these areas of open space to provide people with the opportunity to exercise amongst nature.

An equipped play area is proposed in each of the two parcels of the site set within a landscape and planted area where it would be accessible for children living in the new homes, and well as other children in the wider locality.

## **4. How have you come up with the scheme?**

The Indicative Masterplan shows how the site could be developed in line with the following principles:

- A landscape-led approach which seeks to retain and protect trees and hedgerows where possible and introduce significant new planting.
- Providing for effective transition from the built environment to the countryside through significant new areas of planting and landscaping throughout the site and on its periphery. The proposals provide an opportunity to form well-designed new settlement edge for Helsby.
- Ensuring that the development would blend in with the surrounding residential streets, respecting the topography and the character of the area.

- At this stage, the external appearance of the dwellings has not been finalised, but will be informed by further work, input from the public consultation exercise, and input from the Council's Urban Design and Planning Officers.
- We are seeking to contribute to a mixed and balanced community. Dwellings on the site will comprise a mix of sizes between 1 and 5 beds.
- Measures to attenuate surface water run-off from the development will be deployed - these measures will be fully detailed in a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy to be submitted in support of the scheme. The proposal will follow best practice in the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) hierarchy but as per the Indicative Masterplan, the proposals will aim to utilise swales and attenuation features which also have dual biodiversity benefits.

## 5. Why are you proposing this development?

The existence of “the most acute housing crisis in living memory”<sup>1</sup> in the UK is the catalyst for the Government’s reforms to the planning system, including the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), last updated on 7 February 2025. The crisis affects all parts of the country and means that home ownership is not possible for many, rents are increased due to a shortage and there are people without access to a safe and secure home. The response to the housing crisis translates into policy with the Framework’s requirement to “significantly boost”<sup>2</sup> the supply of homes and ensure that the “needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed”. These are long-standing pillars of national planning policy, first introduced in the Framework 2012 as part of the then Coalition Government’s efforts to address a housing crisis which has only got more acute in the intervening 13 years. Further to this, the new Housing Secretary, Steve Reed<sup>3</sup>, issued a “call to arms” to key developers and housebuilders as part of the next phase of getting “Britain building faster” to “break down the barriers to development and build the 1.5 million homes this country needs as part of our Plan for Change”. The Housing Secretary is expected to make further announcements to speed up housebuilding across the country before the end of the year.

In the Cheshire West and Chester authority area there is a deficient housing supply, and so there is a demonstrable unmet need for open market and affordable housing in this area.

The site in question lies adjacent to the built-up area, it has access to a range of shops, schools, and services to meet day-to-day needs and is in a demonstrably sustainable location for future development. Helsby has also been identified as a potential area for further growth as part of the Council's emerging Local Plan. Whilst the Applicants acknowledge that the site is in the Green Belt, it is capable of being considered Grey Belt land and not inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of decision-making.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Building the homes we need, Written Ministerial Statement made on 30 July 2024 (Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government).

<sup>2</sup> The Framework, Paragraph 61.

<sup>3</sup> [Housing Secretary issues 'call to arms' to 'build, baby, build' - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>4</sup> The Framework, Paragraph 155.

## **6. What are the economic benefits of the proposals?**

The construction of the proposed development would contribute to generating full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs within the construction industry over the build period, which would be a benefit to the economy of the local area.

Moreover, the proposals would also generate additional expenditure within the local economy, supporting local shops, services and businesses in Helsby village and further afield. This level of expenditure would in turn support jobs in the local areas as well as potentially creating additional public sector jobs (e.g. teachers, doctors etc.) as a direct consequence of the proposals and additional residents.

The development will deliver 45% affordable housing, helping to address affordable housing needs in the administrative area by providing opportunities for lower income households to own their own home or to secure affordable accommodation.

New residents occupying the development would also generate demand for health, education and other services off the site (e.g. schools, hospitals, public administration), thus supporting further public sector employment. Where necessary financial contributions will be paid to mitigate the impact on social infrastructure.

Lastly, the proposals would generate an additional capital receipt for Cheshire West and Chester Council via New Homes Bonus payments, based on the properties adding to the net supply of housing in the District.

Overall, it is evident that the application proposals are fully commensurate with the economic dimension of sustainable development and would represent a significant economic boost for the area.

## **7. What are the social benefits of the proposals?**

There is no doubt that the proposals would make a meaningful contribution to meeting housing need within the local area both in terms of both open market and affordable homes.

Indeed, increasing the overall supply of housing improves affordability by redressing supply/demand issues and reduces prices overall thereby allowing more people access to the housing market and enhanced social mobility, which is a positive social benefit.

The proposals could also result in the creation of a high-quality living environment comprising a mix of dwellings and would support any future community's health, social and cultural well-being. It would also facilitate the creation of jobs within the local labour pool, both during construction and the operational phase.

The site is well located in relation to local services and has the potential to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle and encouraging more sustainable forms of travel. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposals would also be socially sustainable.

Moreover, the proposals include for generous amounts of public open space and play space on land that is currently private and inaccessible to the community. The Indicative Masterplan demonstrates how the site could provide a publicly available network of recreational footpaths, which would be a significant benefit to the health and wellbeing of people in the area. These social benefits would not materialise without the development proposed.

## **8. What are the environmental benefits of the scheme?**

The proposed development presents an opportunity to improve and enhance the biodiversity credentials of the subject site through proper management of existing trees and hedges, supplementary landscaping with additional

planting of trees and carefully designed areas of open space. The proposals will also deliver at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity.

The full planning application will be accompanied by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment as well as Ecology Survey reports and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and a Habitats Management and Maintenance Plan.

The applicants are committed to ensuring that any future residential development adopts a fabric first approach and utilises renewable sources of energy. The proposals could include air source heat pumps and solar panels, as well as other energy efficiency measures deemed appropriate, thereby allowing the proposals to exceed the requirements of existing Building Regulations. Each home would also be built with its own Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVC) as well as secure cycle parking.

## **9. What about impacts on local infrastructure?**

The provision of adequate leisure, community and cultural infrastructure is essential to the creation of sustainable communities. These facilities help to create social cohesion and encourage people to feel a sense of pride and belonging in their local areas. The Helsby Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges that the village has a range of facilities, including shops, a post office, a health centre, a library, two good primary schools and a high school. There is also a dental surgery. The provision of new dwellings can create an increase in demand for these facilities, and it is important to ensure that suitable provision is made for this growth in the community and the increased demand that will be placed on local community facilities.

Policy STRAT11 of the Council's Local Plan (Part 1) confirms that new development that generates a requirement for infrastructure will normally be permitted if the necessary on and off-site infrastructure required to support and mitigate the impact of that development is delivered. This can be in the form of financial contributions to services like education, primary care, bus services, and it can also be in the form of physical improvements, such as highways improvements.

When a planning application is submitted, the Council will seek responses from statutory bodies who will set out what site-specific mitigation might be required and why. Where such requests meet the CIL<sup>5</sup> Regulations, site-specific mitigation may be the subject of a Section 106 Agreement. With this in mind, the community can therefore rest assured that this development will mitigate any impact it has on local infrastructure.

## **10. What about disruption to local people whilst the scheme is built?**

The Council can control how the scheme is delivered by way of a planning condition imposed on any planning permission granted. This could for example regulate delivery and construction times so as to minimise (and potentially avoid) disturbance to local residents.

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<sup>5</sup> Community Infrastructure Levy.

## 11. How can I get involved?

All of the consultation material can be found online at our website:

[www.houriganplanning.com/consultations](http://www.houriganplanning.com/consultations)

There are a number of ways to comment on the draft proposals:

**By email:** [hello@houriganplanning.com](mailto:hello@houriganplanning.com) using “Land north of Chester Road, Helsby Consultation” as the email subject line.

**By Post:** Land north of Chester Road, Helsby Consultation, Hourigan Planning, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor Chancery Place, 50 Brown Street, Manchester, M2 2JG.

**Consultation Period Closes:** **Midnight on Sunday 21 December 2025.**

**Please note:** Comments received will be summarised and addressed in a Statement of Community Involvement to be submitted with the planning application. No personal details will be published. The local community will also have a further opportunity to comment on the scheme once a formal planning application is lodged with the Council.