

Planning Committee

20 July 2017

Reference:
APP/17/00306

Area Team:
North Team

Case Officer:
Mr N Williams

Ward:
**Moreton West and
Saughall Massie**

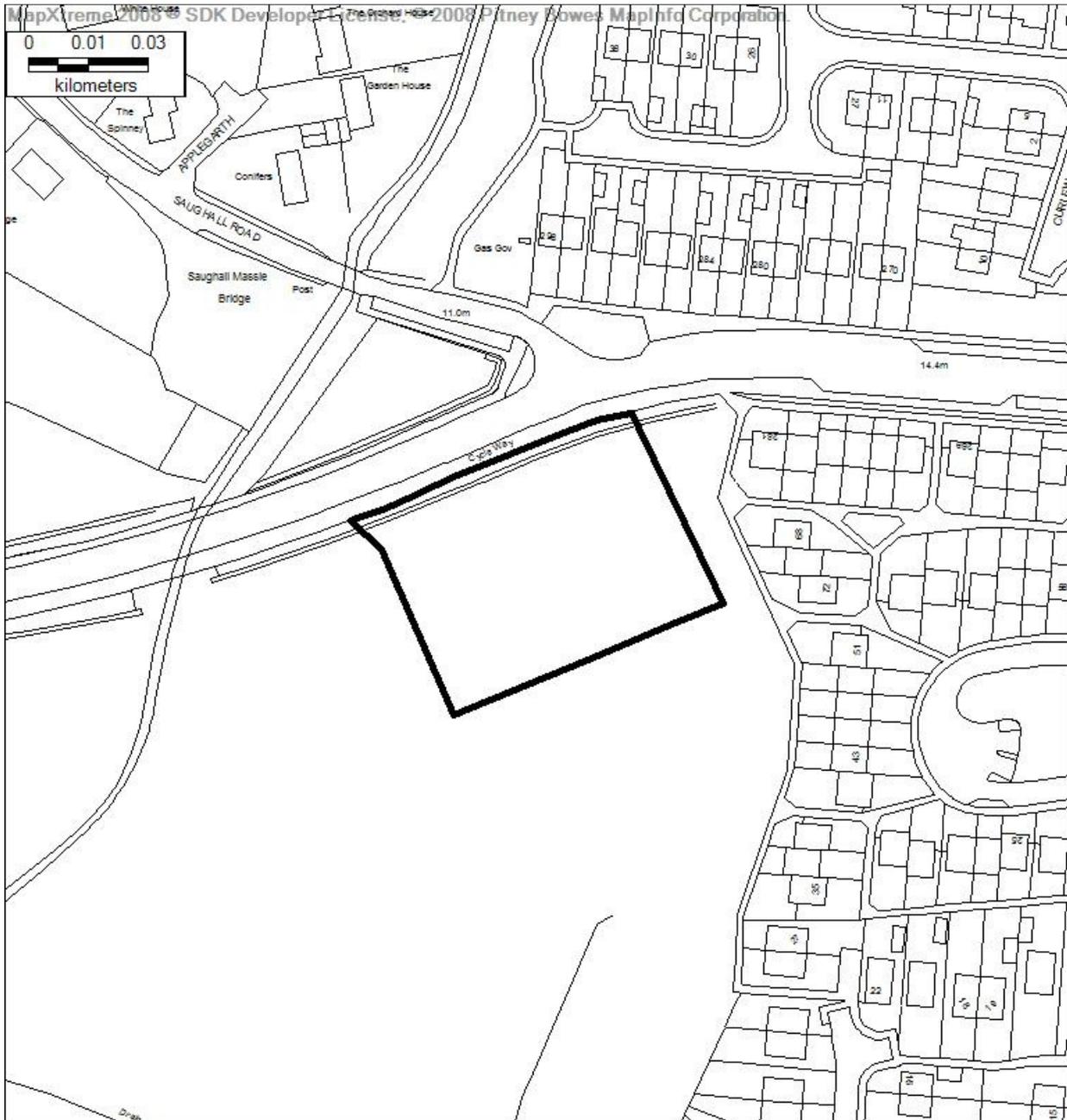
Location:
Proposal:

Land adjacent to SAUGHALL MASSIE ROAD, SAUGHALL MASSIE, WIRRAL
A single-storey two-bay community fire station incorporating operational and welfare accommodation, offices and meeting space, external drill and training facilities and associated car-parking (Amendment following refusal of APP/16/00985)

Applicant:
Agent :

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
Ryder Architecture

Site Plan:



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Development Plan allocation and policies:

Primarily Residential Area
Green Belt

Planning History:

Location: South of Conifers Saughall Massie Road Saughall Massie, and Upton,
CH46-CH49

Application Type: Full Planning Permission

Proposal: Minor realignment of a section of the Saughall Massie bypass where it
crosses Arrowe Brook to the south of Saughall Massie Road

Application No: APP/02/06227

Decision Date: 16/08/2002

Decision Type: Approve

Location: South of Conifers , Saughall Massie Road , Saughall Massie, Wirral, CH46

Application Type: Work for Council by Council

Proposal: Proposed new bridge over Arrowe Brook in association with the proposed
Saughall Massie By-Pass -alternative bridge design to that granted Planning
Permission under reference APP/2002/ 6227/D

Application No: APP/04/06012

Decision Date: 04/06/2004

Decision Type: Approve

Location: Land adjacent to SAUGHALL MASSIE ROAD, SAUGHALL MASSIE,
WIRRAL

Application Type: Full Planning Permission

Proposal: A single storey two bay community fire station incorporating operational and
welfare accommodation, offices and meeting space, external drill and
training facilities and associated car-parking.

Application No: APP/16/00985

Decision Date: 15/12/2016

Decision Type: Refuse

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**REPRESENTATIONS:**

Having regard to the Councils Guidance on Publicity for Applications 206 notifications were sent to surrounding properties and a site notice was also displayed. At the time of writing this report, a petition of objection had been received containing 4,034 signatures, together with 324 individual objections. Councillors Berry, Blakeley and Williams also object to the proposal, as do Saughall Massie Village Conservation Area Society and the Wirral Society (Campaign to Protect Rural England).

18 letters of support were also received.

The objections can be summarised as follows:

1. Refusal reason for previous application is still valid;
2. Amendments make little change to the scheme;
3. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and contrary to local and national policy;
4. No very special circumstances;
5. Land is used by the local community;
6. No reason to leave existing Upton fire station;
7. Upton has been the sole station in the area for the last 2/3 years;
8. Alternative sites at Greasby, Saughall Massie Road/Upton By-Pass, and Champions site;
9. Not in keeping with street scene;
10. Would seriously damage the amenity of local residents, particularly those in the sheltered accommodation in Woodpecker Close;
11. Land liable to flooding;
12. Harm to flora, fauna and wildlife, including bats;

13. Likely presence of Kingfishers and Great Crested Newts;
14. Traffic hazard on a very busy road;
15. Highway danger to local schools;
16. Highway danger to horse riders;
17. Access to West Kirby is via narrow, country roads - going past a farm where cows cross the road;
18. Could set a precedent for building on the Green Belt;
19. No logic in moving from a more densely populated area and risking life to residents in the Upton area;
20. Potential impact on moving further from Arrowe Park Hospital;
21. Response times is not a material planning consideration;
22. It cannot be a merger of sites seeing as West Kirby has now closed;
23. Loss of property prices;
24. Issues over potential land swap deal between MFRA and Wirral Council;
25. Environmental Impact Assessment should be undertaken;
26. Cost to the taxpayer;
27. Archaeological site;

The support can be summarised as follows:

1. Best solution to the problem;
2. More central location would provide quicker response times;
3. Safety of the area would be improved;
4. If this location results in saving one life, then it is worth it;
5. Emergency services proposals should not have to go through the planning process;
6. Proposed stations vital for west Wirral communities

A petition of support signed by 27 signatures, stating that this location will maintain the best possible response times to West Kirby and the surrounding area.

CONSULTATION:

Natural England - No objection

Merseyside Environment Advisory Service - No objection subject to the attached conditions

Wirral Wildlife - No objection

Lead Local Flood Authority - No objections subject to the attached conditions

United Utilities - No objection

Head of Environment and Regulation (Environmental Health Division) - No objection

Head of Environment and Regulation (Traffic and Transport Division) - No objection

DIRECTORS COMMENTS:

Consideration of this application was deferred from Planning Committee on 22 June 2017 to allow for a formal Member's Site Visit to take place.

REASON FOR REFERRAL

A qualifying petition of objection with a total of 4,034 signatures has been received, together with 324 individual objections.

Councillor Chris Blakeley, Bruce Berry and Councillor Steve Williams have also requested that the application be taken out of delegation and heard before Planning Committee.

INTRODUCTION

This application is for the construction of a new fire station on land to the south of Saughall Massie Road and has been submitted on behalf of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

The proposal comprises a single-storey building containing operational and welfare accommodation, offices, a two-vehicle appliance bay, external drill and training facilities and associated car parking. The

fire station will be fully operational and staffed 24 hours a day with one fire appliance crewed by whole time firefighters and a second by whole time retained firefighters.

The application is an amendment to a scheme which was refused planning permission on 15th December 2016 for the following reason:

“Having regards to the location of the development proposed and the proximity to residential properties and the nature of the activities proposed, particularly with regards to the sudden and/or emergency nature of activities, together with the character of the local highway network, the Council considers that the proposal would result in harm to the visual amenities of the Green Belt, the character of the area and the amenities of neighbouring residents and the wider locality. Therefore, the development would be contrary to Policy GB2 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

This current application proposes the following amendments:

- Reduction in developed site area from approximately 0.495ha to 0.35ha, which amounts to around a 30% reduction;
- Footprint of the building has been reduced from 737sqm to 645 sqm, equating to a 12.5% reduction;
- Reduction in the length of the building by approximately 7.6m;
- Building sited further away from Woodpecker Close properties and slight change in its orientation (resulting in parts of it being closer to Saughall Massie Road by approximately 5m);
- The sprinkler/generator building and training tower located to the west of the site, further away from Woodpecker Close properties;
- Access road to west side of building removed, reducing the amount of hard landscaping;
- Car parking moved from adjacent to the Woodpecker Close boundary to adjacent to the building itself;
- The surrounding land will be graded down in order to lessen the impact of the retaining walls;
- Additional landscaping is to be included, in part due to the reduction in the developed site area.

Further amendments requested during the application have also been submitted, resulting in:

- Replacing the proposed paladin fencing along the embankment wall to the east (between the site and properties on Woodpecker Close) with a 2m high close-boarded wooden fence;
- Changing the materials to the side elevations from aluminium cladding to timber cladding, resulting in almost the whole of the building being timber clad, rather than just the front and rear elevations;
- Incorporating a sedum roof for the whole of the roof, as opposed to just half as originally proposed.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site consists of undeveloped open grassland on the western edge of Saughall Massie, fronting Saughall Massie Road. Immediately to the east of the site is a footpath beyond which are single-storey sheltered accommodation properties. There are traditional two-storey, semi-detached properties to the north of the site on the opposite side of Saughall Massie Road.

There is further open grassland to the south and west of the site, in addition to a large woodland. The northern boundary, along Saughall Massie Road, consists of an open 4-bar timber fence and hawthorn hedge.

Nearly the whole site is designated as Green Belt in Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, besides a small section in the south west corner which is designated as a Primarily Residential Area.

The Saughall Massie Conservation Area boundary is directly opposite the site, on the other side of Saughall Massie Road.

POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate

otherwise.

The statutory Development Plan for Wirral consists of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) saved by a Direction of the Secretary of State issued on 18th September 2007 and the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside adopted on 18th July 2013.

The following policies are considered relevant:

Wirral Unitary Development Plan

Policy URN1 makes it clear the Local Planning Authority will be concerned to ensure that full and effective use is made of land within the urban areas and that various types of land including sites within the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development.

Policy GB2 establishes a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt and makes it clear that such development will not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Policy LAN1 does not permit proposals where the visual impact on the character, appearance and landscape setting of the area would be inappropriate.

Policy LA7 indicates that special regard will be given to the visual impact of proposals at the urban fringe and will require development to be designed, sited and landscaped to minimise visual intrusion.

Policy HS15 only permits small scale development in Primarily Residential Areas that does not result in a detrimental change to the character of the area nor cause a nuisance to neighbouring uses.

Policies GR5 and GR7 set out the requirements for landscaping and the protection of trees.

Policies WAT1, WA, WA2, WA3, WA4, and WA5 only permit development that would not increase the risk of flooding, where drainage and surface water runoff can be controlled with regard to the need for the protection of water resources including groundwater. In addition, Waste Local Plan Policies WM8 and WM9 set out the requirements for waste management, recycling and efficient use of resources.

Policies NCO1 and NC7 only permit proposals that would not adversely affect protected wildlife and habitats.

Policies TRT3, TR11 and TR13 make it clear that regard will be given to minimising vehicular and pedestrian conflict, securing access for disabled people, minimising the need to travel, parking and servicing arrangements and ensuring there is no negative impact on routes used by cyclists when assessing the impacts of the proposed development

Policies CHO1, CH2 and CH17 only permit development affecting the setting of the Saughall Massie Conservation Area where the visual and operational impact of the proposal can be demonstrated to preserve or enhance distinctive characteristics including important views. In addition, Guidance for the Saughall Massie Conservation Area is set out in SPG31 and in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2009).

Core Strategy

Policy CS3 in the Core Strategy Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft (December 2012) would continue to reflect the national requirement for the Green Belt and Policy CS11 would set an overall strategy to preserve and enhance the openness of the Rural Area in which the strategy would be to preserve and enhance the openness and a character of the Rural Area, and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Saughall Massie Conservation Area.

National Policy Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), at Paragraph 79, attaches great importance to the Green Belt. The fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The five stated purposes of the Green Belt are to:

- prevent unrestricted sprawl;
- prevent the merging of neighbouring towns;

- assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- assist in urban regeneration

NPPF paragraph 87 indicates that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 88 goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities 'should ensure substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt' and states that 'very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'. The NPPF makes it clear that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate development, besides limited exceptions.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposed fire station would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Both Wirral UDP Policy GB2: Guidelines for Development in the Green Belt and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicate that such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, and the potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The application is a departure from the Unitary Development Plan and must be referred to the Secretary of State if the Local Planning Authority does not propose to refuse planning permission.

KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) state that due to significant budget reductions made by the Government they have been forced to rationalise their existing stations, resulting in the closure of some stations and the merging of services within new stations located in strategically efficient locations. Consequently, MFRA have approved the closure of Upton and West Kirby fire stations, with one new station to be built to replace them.

MFRA have put forward a case that the replacement station in the Upton and West Kirby area should be located centrally within the coverage area in order to provide adequate cover and response times to the surrounding area. This is based on evidence that there is a clear relationship between response times and the level of damage, severity of injury and likelihood of death, with survivability increasing with quicker response times. The applicant therefore contends that the 'very special circumstances' is the need to provide the best achievable emergency response to the whole of the combined coverage areas of the Upton and West Kirby stations, which has a population of some 85,000.

To support the assertion of a clear link between response times and level of damage and injury and likelihood of death, MFRA have cited four academic research studies. All of these studies, including one from the Department for Communities and Local Government, found that increased response times are likely to contribute to increased fatality rates.

One study showed that of fires attended within 5 minutes 3.8% of casualties died, compared with 4.2% of casualties in fires attended in 6 to 10 minutes, and 5.5% in 11 to 15 minutes. This shows a clear increase in the likelihood of death occurring the longer it takes for a fire and rescue service to attend a fire.

Another study showed that once a fire has been burning for approximately 8 minutes, there is a chance of the fire reaching the flashover point, which is the near-simultaneous ignition of most of the directly exposed combustible material in an enclosed area which would result in the substantial, significant and critical increase in the size and scale of a fire. The importance of a response before this time is therefore paramount. This report also supported the theory that a fire's rate of growth increases with time – so the bigger a fire grows, the bigger it subsequently increases per minute and this highlights the importance of response times in dealing with fires, and how even small reductions in response times can be crucial to prevent the exponential growth of fires once they have started.

Whilst the number of research studies is not exhaustive, they do clearly show the link between survivability and response times, and highlight the critical importance of reducing response times as far as possible in order to reduce the rates of fatality, injury and damage. It would be difficult to dispute this.

Retention of Upton

A large number of objections have stated that the existing Upton Fire Station should be retained as the sole fire station for the area, thus removing the requirement for a new station. Many objections highlight

that MFRA have themselves stated that their 'fallback' position if this proposal fails would likely be to keep Upton operational. However, it is considered by MFRA that this option is only due to having an obvious requirement to provide a service and is not the desired scenario, with the longer response times to West Kirby, Hoylake and Meols being unacceptable.

Comments have been received about how the existing Upton station would still offer a 10 minute response time to the majority of the whole coverage area and how it has been providing cover for the whole area recently with the almost full closure of West Kirby having taken place. However, there is no national response standard and the 10 minute response time standard for Merseyside was only adopted in 2013 as a direct result of cuts to MFRA's budget and following extensive public consultation. They advise that it is in no way their aspiration to take 10 minutes to attend an incident, and this is supported by the Merseyside average response time being close to 5 minutes. This 5 minute response time is much more the aspiration of MFRA than what could be achieved if Upton was kept as the sole station for the area. As the submitted research studies show, the quicker the response time the higher the chances of survival and therefore being satisfied with a 10 minute response time is not considered to be acceptable.

To demonstrate that the retention of Upton should not be seen as a suitable long-term solution, and further to the above research studies, the applicant has provided an analysis of MFRA response times to the West Kirby area from the proposed fire station on Saughall Massie Road in comparison with response times from the existing Upton station. This computer modelling found that the average response times to the West Kirby area would be around 8 minutes from the existing Upton station, whilst this would be reduced to an average of just over 6 minutes from the proposed site.

A recent case study was also provided to demonstrate the difference in response times. A house fire in the West Kirby area was attended by firefighters from the existing Upton station, arriving in 8 minutes and 11 seconds (08:11). This was quicker than the modelled time of 08:48 due to the fire occurring in the middle of the night. Unfortunately, two deaths resulted from this fire.

Predictive modelling was carried out to assess what the response time from the proposed fire station on Saughall Massie Road would have been. This gave a predicted response of 06:48 and given the quicker response time in reality due to the time of the incident it is likely that this response would have been even quicker than modelled. Whilst there can be no guarantee that this quicker response would have resulted in any lives saved in this instance, the chances of survival would have been higher, and would be the case in similar incidents across the West Kirby coverage area.

Whilst the proposal would result in an increase in the average response time to the Upton area of around 1 minute, this would be outweighed by the greater reduction in response times of around 2 minutes to the West Kirby area. The response time to the Upton area from the new station would still be around 1 minute faster than the Merseyside average, with MFRA stating that this would be the equivalent of moving from "extremely fast response times to very fast response times".

The reduction of approximately 2 minutes in the average response time to the West Kirby area would result in an average time of around 6 minutes. Whilst this would still be above the Merseyside average it would at least be much closer to it and would therefore have a significant impact on raising survival chances for people involved in incidents in the area. There are parts of the West Kirby area where response times from the existing Upton station would be close to 10 minutes, and in some cases actually above it. The research studies show that survivability decreases significantly beyond 10 minutes, and therefore the reduction in the response times to these properties is therefore critical. In addition, reducing the average response time for the area from around 8 minutes to around 6 minutes would also have a significant and beneficial impact on increasing survivability rates.

In addition to this, the demographic analysis of the two wards that predominately make up the West Kirby station area (West Kirby & Thurstaston and Hoylake & Meols) has identified that there is a greater number of people over the age of 75 compared with the rest of the Borough. This age group are much more likely to be vulnerable to dying in a fire. As evidence of this, whilst the overall volume of incidents occurring in the Upton station area is higher than that occurring in the West Kirby station area, the number of fatalities over the last five years is higher in the West Kirby station area, and this can be partly attributed to the age demographics of the area.

Comments have been raised about prevention measures, such as fire alarms/ smoke detectors, being

the best way to reduce fatality rates. Whilst these measures can aid in reducing the impact of fires, there is some danger in considering them as the main solution to preventing any fire deaths occurring. For instance, these measures cannot really prevent fires from breaking out in the first place. Once a fire has broken out, there will be an immediate threat of injury/death/damage. Additionally, there is also only so much fire authorities can do to ensure prevention measures are in place. The main solution that can be taken by those in authority is to ensure that there is adequate coverage by trained firefighters, providing quick response times to deal with incidents as soon as possible. This is particularly important with an elderly demographic which will include those who are bed-ridden or have mobility issues.

It is also important to recognise the role of MFRA extends beyond fire-fighting to include attending other life-threatening situations including road traffic collisions and medical emergencies, all of which demand a rapid response to ensure survivability.

Budget cuts have effectively forced MFRA to rationalise their stations, with the decision to close West Kirby and Upton already agreed. It is considered that a replacement station within these combined coverage areas should be centrally located in order to provide as equal a service as possible to all areas. The retention of Upton would result in a severe disparity in response times within this combined coverage area – the Upton area being served by a 3 minute average response time, whilst the West Kirby area would have an 8 minute average response time (with some properties over 10 minutes away). MFRA contend this is not considered to be acceptable or suitable and the retention of Upton as a fallback position should be given very limited weight.

Concerns have also been raised about the increase in response times to Arrowe Park Hospital. However, as is the case with all hospitals, Arrowe Park Hospital has exercised safety procedures and a fire risk assessment in place.

Some comments were received stating that an adequate response could be provided to the West Kirby area from Heswall fire station. Whilst a fire engine from Heswall has attended incidents in the West Kirby area previously, analysis shows that of the life risk incidents in the West Kirby area covered by Heswall (a total of 14 over a 21 month period), the average attendance time was practically 10 minutes (09:50), which is over 4 minutes longer than the Merseyside average. Consequently, this is not considered by MFRA to be an acceptable alternative.

ALTERNATIVE SITES

There is no policy requirement for the applicant to carry out a sequential assessment for development in the Green Belt, and whilst the lack of an alternative site partly contributes to the applicants 'very special circumstances' argument, the potential presence of any alternative sites would not automatically destroy such an argument.

MFRA have indicated that, in their opinion, there are no suitable alternative sites for a new fire station to replace Upton and West Kirby stations. They have provided information of sites they have considered and have provided reasons for them being discounted. These are:

Three Lanes End Roundabout (Farm)

This site was referred to by MFRA as the optimum site in terms of attendance times to the West Kirby and Upton areas. MFRA contacted the owners of this site but after expressing their interest in the site no further calls were returned.

This site is within the Green Belt but not on the urban fringe and would therefore potentially result in a development which would have a greater visual impact on the Green Belt than the current proposal.

Upton Bypass/ Saughall Massie Road

The applicant indicates that this site is almost a further minute from the West Kirby area than the chosen site, which itself is further from the optimum site at Three Lanes End roundabout. Whilst this site is more centrally located than other sites that have been discounted, it would potentially not offer ideal response times.

The applicant did state that there may be highways issues and restrictive covenants on the site, but it is not considered that these issues would prevent a fire station being located on this site.

The site is, however, designated as Urban Greenspace in Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, land

which the Local Planning Authority protects from this type of development unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available under UDP Policy GR1: The protection of Urban Greenspace. Wirral UDP Policy GRE1: The Protection of Urban Greenspace states that this protection from inappropriate development includes areas of visual importance to the locality or wider area, with or without direct public access.

Next to Upton Cricket Club

This site was considered to be too close to the existing Upton station, and given the small area and irregular shape of the site, any development would be constrained and may result in fire engines having to reverse onto the site, a restricted drill yard (meaning limited training options) and insufficient parking for staff and visitors.

Upton Meadow

This site was considered to be too close to the existing Upton station, and therefore too far from parts of the coverage area. The land is leased to the Woodland Trust who refused to allow any development on the site. The site is also designated as Urban Greenspace in Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, land which the Local Planning Authority will protect from this type of development unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available.

Champions Business Park

This site was discounted as it was located further from many parts of the coverage area than the existing Upton station. In addition, depending on the exact location within the site, access to the highway could be difficult which would further increase response times.

Royden Road (Overchurch Park)

MFRA stated that this site was discounted as it would create longer than ideal response times to the West Kirby area. Although this site is closer to West Kirby than other sites (including the existing Upton station) it may be fair to consider that this site is not sufficiently central to provide equal, adequate coverage to the whole area.

The site is designated as Urban Greenspace in Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, land which the Local Planning Authority will protect from this type of development and unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available. A number of trees would also likely have to be felled which would likely have a detrimental visual impact on the area.

MFRA also ruled this site out on the grounds that it is adjacent to a Site of Biological Importance and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, but provided a new building was located at the Royden Road end of Overchurch Park then it is unlikely that such a proposal would have an unacceptable impact on these designations – although further assessments would be required.

Woodpecker Close

This site was close to the chosen site and was therefore fairly centrally located. However, it was discounted as it was designated as Urban Greenspace in Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, land which the Local Planning Authority will protect from this type of development unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available. This site was also surrounded by houses, whilst a number of trees would also have to be felled, harming the character of the area.

Pump Lane 1

This site was close to the roundabout at Three Lanes End farm but was discounted due to being in the Green Belt and surrounded by open fields, meaning that the impact on the openness of the Green Belt would likely be greater than the chosen site. This site was also considered to be too small.

Pump Lane 2 (adjacent to Ashdale Park)

This site was also close to the roundabout at Three Lanes End farm but was discounted as it was within the Green Belt. MFRA also claim that several attempts to contact the landowner by telephone were made, but no response was received. In any case, this site could be compared to the chosen site in that it is Green Belt land on the edge of the urban area, and in fairly close proximity to dwellings.

Opposite St John's Church, Frankby Road

This site was within an area of Green Belt which forms an important buffer between Greasby and

Frankby. In addition, MFRA contacted the owners of the site in writing but did not receive a response.

Kinloss Road

MFRA discounted this site previously for various reasons but, regardless of this, the site is now actively being developed for residential purposes.

Greasby Library

This site was originally chosen for a new fire station and in planning terms may well have been a suitable site. The area is designated as a Primarily Residential Area with good access onto Greasby Road, although the applicant states that there may have been issues with developing the site as it was to be a complicated development including a fire station, library, children's centre and potentially a community centre. In any case, the site was subsequently withdrawn as an option by Wirral Council.

Red Cat Pub

This site was immediately adjacent to the Greasby Library site and therefore would likely have been acceptable in planning terms. However, the applicant advises that the pub was not for sale and that any offer would likely have to be in excess of the figure MFRA have for land purchase. Given the presence of a Sainsbury's Local, built in the car park of the public house, the site also appears to be too small.

Moreton Training Centre

This site was discounted as it was not centrally located and would give longer response times to West Kirby.

VISUAL IMPACT ON GREEN BELT

The site sits on the edge of an urban area, but is within the Green Belt and consists of an area of open grassland. The edge of the footpath along Woodpecker Close to the east of the site defines the boundary between the existing built form and the Green Belt.

The amended scheme proposes to reduce the site footprint by approximately 30% (from 0.495ha to 0.35ha), whilst the footprint of the fire station building itself has also been reduced by approximately 12.5% (from 737sqm to 645 sqm). This reduction in the built form will lessen the impact the proposal will have on the visual amenities of the Green Belt and the character of the area in contrast to the scheme that was refused in the previous application.

The current proposal has been designed, and amended where possible, in order to minimise the visual impact on the Green Belt. The proposed building will be single-storey and amendments submitted will ensure that it is constructed with a timber board exterior to all elevations in an attempt to appear similar to an agricultural building. This will result in a much softer appearance and will have less impact on the visual amenities of the Green Belt compared to the original proposal, which would have had aluminium cladding to the side elevations. In addition to this, a living green Sedum roof will be incorporated to further soften the visual appearance of the building. Whereas the original proposal would have had just half of the roof covered by Sedum, and the rest aluminium cladding, amendments submitted will now see the whole of the roof covered in a Sedum roof. This will soften the appearance of the building, and the incorporation of the western roof planes with Sedum will have a significantly softer impact upon the Green Belt compared to the original proposal.

The building will have two separate pitched roofs, with the eastern section having a maximum height of 6.5m, and the western section being 8m. The appliance bay will be in the western part, the height of which is dictated by the need to accommodate emergency service vehicles. These heights are not considered to be excessive, and the reduction in the length of the building will lessen its impact on the Green Belt in comparison to the previous application.

In order to provide a relatively flat site, the site will be partially excavated – in particular towards the rear (south east). This will require a green embankment wall which rises to 2.5m high in the south east corner, and this will help to lower the height of the building, lessening the visual prominence of the proposal on the wider area. The amended scheme introduces a larger amount of landscaping along the top of this embankment and this, which includes a native hedgerow, will further help to screen the development and soften its appearance. The large woodland to the south of the site will help to limit the visual impact of the proposal to some extent. Whilst it is accepted the proposal is an inappropriate development in the Green Belt, the location of the proposal on the edge of Saughall Massie will mean that it only extends the built form marginally when compared to the extensive areas of open land to the

south and west of the site.

The training tower will be located to the rear (south west) of the building, which is a slight change from the previous scheme where it was located along the rear (south) boundary of the site. This change will likely have minimal effect upon reducing its visual impact on the Green Belt. However, this training tower is retractable and will only be extended to its full height during training. When demounted, the tower will be lower than the building and this will help to limit its visual impact. A condition can be applied to ensure that the tower is only extended to its full height during training.

It is therefore considered that the amended design, scale and materials of the proposed building, its position in relation to the existing built environment and the use of landscaping will ensure that the visual impact upon the Green Belt will be minimised as far as possible.

IMPACT ON CONSERVATION AREA

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 place a statutory duty on the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings and preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. The boundary of Saughall Massie Conservation Area is located approximately 65 metres away from the application site. The Conservation Area can be seen from the site and the site can be partly seen within the Conservation Area and forms part of its rural setting. The impact of this proposal on the setting of the Conservation Area therefore needs to be assessed.

In terms of the views of the application site from within the Conservation Area, the submitted Heritage Statement states that a limited view of the application site can be seen beyond Saughall Massie Road, although the intervening trees and hedges block or filter the view to varying degrees. From some locations the vegetation completely blocks that view but from the junction of West Kirby Road and Saughall Road, a narrow filtered view of the site can be seen when the trees/hedges are not in leaf. However, from that point the application site is not a prominent part of the village scene as it is in the mid-distance, beyond the paddocks and the road, and it is the surrounding historic buildings, stone walls, bridge and vegetation which dominate the view.

When assessing views of the Saughall Massie Conservation Area from the application site, on the footpath on the eastern edge of the site or in the dwellings on Woodpecker Close, it is possible at present to see the south end of the Conservation Area. However, the historic buildings within it are largely screened from view by the existing trees. These trees, and the houses on Saughall Massie Road, dominate the view. The view of the historic buildings is further restricted in the summer months when the vegetation is in leaf. At all times, the view is fundamentally of trees with the buildings of the Conservation Area very much background features. The application site and the view to/from it make minimal contribution to the heritage significance of the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area retains much of its rural character due to the buffer zones of undeveloped land immediately surrounding it. In and around the village the vegetation helps to screen the nearby housing from view. When leaving the Conservation Area via Saughall Road (a one way road) over the Thomas Brassey Bridge (Grade II Listed), the 20th Century suburban housing terminates the view on the skyline, albeit softened to a small degree by the planting along the boundary. This view out of the Conservation Area from Saughall Road will only be slightly altered and it is considered that the proposed fire station would have no adverse impact upon the character of the Saughall Massie Conservation Area.

The amended application results in the fire station building being located further forward on the site and therefore marginally closer to the Conservation Area than the previous scheme. However, this difference is considered to be negligible when assessing its impact upon the Conservation Area, especially as the building and site has been reduced in scale. The proposed fire station will include a wooden front fascia and a sedum (grass) roof and this will further lessen the visual impact of the building on the Conservation Area.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely impact on the distinctive characteristics of the Saughall Massie Conservation Area, including important views into and out of it and the relationship between its buildings, structures, trees and characteristic open spaces, and can therefore be accepted within the terms UDP Policies CH1, CH2 and CH17.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY ISSUES

The original application proposed a building with its side elevation located directly opposite the front elevations of 68 – 72 Woodpecker Close at a distance of approximately 38m (No. 68), 40m (No. 70) and 42m (No. 72).

The amended scheme has reduced the length of the building by approximately 7.5m. This reduction, together with a slight re-orientation of the building results in the side of the new building being angled slightly away from 68 – 72 Woodpecker Close, at a distance of approximately 42m (No. 68), and 43m (No. 70). Due to the reduction in the length of the building, No. 72 will only face the rear corner of it, at a distance of approximately 44m.

The reduction in the site footprint has also allowed for a larger buffer area of improved landscaping between these properties and the site, whilst alterations to the grading of this landscaping area will also help to provide a softer appearance, minimising the impact of the retaining walls.

The site is set lower than the adjacent dwellings, and this will result in the side elevation of the proposed building being largely screened by the improved landscaping, which will include a 2m high close-boarded wooden fence and native hedgerow. The Sedum roof will also soften the appearance of the building to neighbouring properties. It is not considered that the proposal will harm the outlook of these properties to such an extent as to warrant refusal of the application.

The Generator/Sprinkler, which was originally to be located in the south-east corner of the site, has now been moved to the western boundary of the site. This results in it not only being more than 30 metres further away from the residential properties on Woodpecker Close, but also in it being partially screened from them by the main building itself. It is recommended that any external plant should be of a type that results in a noise level of no more than 5db and a condition can be applied to ensure compliance with this.

The parking spaces originally proposed to be located on the eastern boundary of the site have been relocated directly next to the building, and will now utilise Grass Grid (reinforced grass paving). This will move these parking spaces slightly further away from the residential properties whilst also reducing the visual aspect of the site, in contrast to traditional hard-standing.

A Noise Impact Assessment was submitted with the application and sets out the operation of the site, stating that:

- The fire station will be operational 24 hours a day;
- During the hours of 23.00 - 07.00 the yard will only be used when returning from an incident;
- The training yard will normally only be operational for periods between 9.30 - 16.30;
- Siren usage will only occur when there is significant road traffic and at the drivers discretion. At night, their use will be restricted to when there is a 'life risk' call out.

It identifies the residential properties on Saughall Massie Road and Woodpecker Close as the nearest "noise sensitive receptors".

It concludes that the results of the daytime activity indicate that there is a no- to low-level of adverse noise impact, although the testing of the audible warning system will increase the audible impact. However, this would only be undertaken during daytime hours and the nature of this in the context of the existing traffic noise levels along Saughall Massie Road is not considered to give rise to any unacceptable adverse noise and amenity issues.

It should be noted that MFRA have a legal duty to ensure that firefighters possess and maintain the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to carry out all elements of the service they provide. On-site training is therefore a crucial aspect of the day-to-day role of firefighters and the training tower and yard is therefore an essential part of this application. In any case, the applicant advises that training will normally only occur between 09:30 and 16:30, ensuring that this will be carried out during daytime. A condition has been attached to ensure that training only takes place between 09:30 to 20:30. This will allow for some flexibility in the hours for training whilst also ensuring it only takes place during the daytime.

A detailed analysis has also been carried out to assess the night time noise levels. Based on data

provided, it is likely that on average there will be approximately 3 call outs per week between 23:00 and 07:00 hours. Whilst the use of sirens at these times cannot be fully ruled out, it is considered that during these periods the traffic will be lighter and the protocol that is in place which indicates that sirens will not be used unless they are completely necessary should ensure that the residential amenities of the surrounding occupiers are not impinged unnecessarily through adverse noise and general disturbance.

The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that the proposed development would result in a 'low adverse impact' in accordance with BS4142:2014 (Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound), and this conclusion can be accepted.

This was the same conclusion that the Noise Impact Assessment reached for the original application, and the subsequent changes to the scheme will therefore have likely further reduced the potential impact on residential properties, with the building, car parking area, training tower and sprinkler generator being moved further from these dwellings. In addition to this, the applicant now proposes to erect a 2m high close-boarded fence along the top of the eastern part of the embankment wall, in place of the previously proposed paladin fence. This will be a more solid structure and will therefore have the effect of reducing further the potential impact of the operational and visual impact of the proposed development on the adjacent residential properties.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

The Head of Environment and Regulation (Traffic and Transportation Division) advise that the proposal will generate only low levels of vehicle movements on the adjacent network and will therefore have minimal impact on existing traffic conditions in the area. It is not considered that the amendments proposed as part of this current proposal changes this position.

An independent traffic survey, funded by local Councillors and Saughall Massie residents, was submitted with the previous application. This revealed that more than 222,000 vehicles passed the site of the proposed fire station in a two-week period, with an average speed in both directions of circa 40mph, a full 10mph above the statutory speed limit. There were also top speeds of vehicles recorded along Saughall Massie Road of between 81mph and 120mph.

In response to the survey results, the Head of Environment and Regulation (Traffic and Transportation Division) does not consider that 222,000 vehicles over two weeks is an excessive number. The survey for Saughall Massie Road indicates weekday morning peak flow is around 800-900 vehicles per hour eastbound (towards the motorway) and afternoon peak flow is 700-800 westbound – these numbers are well within capacity for the road as defined in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. For comparison, Greasby Road (which might be considered similar in nature to Saughall Massie Road in that it is a classified link between East & West Wirral) carries approximately 124,000 vehicles each week with a peak flow over 1000 vehicles per hour during weekdays.

With regard to vehicle speeds on this stretch of road, the 85%ile speed (which is an industry standard measurement) is about 40mph in each direction which is obviously higher than the speed limit at this point. The police were subsequently notified of this with a request that they take appropriate enforcement action.

There are some items in the data that show, in the 81-120mph band, three groups of two vehicles going eastbound and a single vehicle going westbound during peak hours on different days of the first week; and in the second week, one group of two vehicles going westbound in that speed band during peak hours. The view is that there is a very high probability that these are anomalies or errors in the data collection.

As with the last application, concerns were received from Lavelles, the farmers at Three Lanes, who state that they have a herd of some 350 cows and move around 200 of these (some in various stages of pregnancy) twice daily across Pump Lane at a crossing point no more than 10 metres from the roundabout that links West Kirby Road with Saughall Massie Road, Pump Lane and Heron Road. They advise that it takes around 20 minutes to move the cows across Pump Lane and brings traffic to a standstill. They express concern that a fire engine with its siren on will create a real danger if it arrives at a time when cattle are being moved causing cows to move in all directions, causing serious consequences to the handlers, traffic and possible miscarriages. There is also the potential for this to delay the fire engine. The farm also has to move all of its equipment on these roads. These concerns appear to be two-fold – firstly, that a fire engine with its siren on could cause distress to cows (with

associated consequences) and secondly, that it could cause a delay to an engine responding to a call.

The MFRA are aware that this is a matter they will need to consider in relation to their operational service. They advise that there are other farms on Merseyside that have to take cows across the road and that this situation could also occur now with engines responding from Upton station. Whilst there may be potential for delay, this would in no way be a regular occurrence. Overall this issue, including the potential distress to cows, is not considered to be sufficient reason to warrant refusal of the application.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA Screening opinion request was submitted on behalf of the applicant to determine whether an EIA would be required. The proposals are classed as 'Urban Development' under Clause 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2011 (as amended). Screening is only required for sites less than 1ha (which the application site is) if the location can be regarded as environmentally sensitive.

Paragraph 32 of National Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that sensitive locations are those with the following designations: European nature conservation sites, SSSIs, National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Sites and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. None of these designations apply to this location. Although the location borders a conservation area, no relevant local designations or factors have been identified to apply at the site itself (Green Belt is not relevant for EIA purposes) and therefore the location is not considered to be environmentally sensitive for the specific purpose of the EIA Regulations.

Because the proposals are not in a sensitive location and fall below the specified threshold above which EIA Screening would be required, it is considered that no further consideration of EIA Screening is required in this case and that the proposals do not constitute EIA Development.

Nature Conservation

The applicant has submitted an Ecological Appraisal and an Amphibian Report which were assessed by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) on behalf of the Council. These reports found that there is no evidence of Great Crested Newts on the site or in the pond in the woodland immediately to the south. The submitted reports and verification by MEAS confirm that there are no protected species or valuable habitats that will be lost or damaged as a result of this proposal. The site is characterised as neutral grassland and whilst the proposed development will clearly lead to the loss of an element of this open space, the majority of the field will remain open following construction of the fire station. Additional landscaping is proposed along the edge of the site and a green roof is proposed which will offset to a degree the physical loss of the green space.

A Bat Activity Survey was also submitted as the proposal would introduce lighting into an unlit area, which affects the local foraging site for bats. This report concludes that bat activity recorded during the transect survey tends to follow the natural linear features occurring in the wider areas and does not appear to enter the area which will be affected by the lighting associated with the application site. Therefore, it is unlikely that this lighting will have a negative impact on the activity of local bat populations. The requirement for a detailed lighting plan can be secured through a planning condition.

Flood Risk

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 sets out the requirement for Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) to manage 'local' flood risk within their area. 'Local' flood risk refers to flooding or flood risk from surface water, groundwater or from ordinary watercourses. The site was considered to be outside Flood Zones 2 or 3, and therefore automatically in Flood Zone 1, as defined by the Environment Agency. A Flood Risk Assessment was submitted with the application and the LLFA have raised no objection to this proposal subject to conditions. The Environment Agency is not a statutory consultee for developments located within Flood Zone 1, and the LLFA are the correct body to comment on such matters, as set out in Schedule 4 of the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Archaeology

There are no known archaeological remains recorded within the proposed development site, however, less than 100m to the west worked wood and animals bone (cattle and horse) were recovered from the bank of the Arrowe Brook in 2005. The wood is thought to be from a structure in the river and has been

dated to the Iron Age (800-530BC), whilst the bones assemblage is thought to be consistent with such a date and the cattle bones show clear sign of butchery marks. The evidence suggests that a settlement of an Iron Age date is therefore likely to exist nearby, and the proposed development site cannot be ruled out as the possible location for it. A condition has therefore been attached requiring an archaeological evaluation of the site, in order to determine the full nature, extent and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits.

CONCLUSION

The site is located within the Green Belt and therefore the proposal constitutes inappropriate development, as set out in both local and national planning policy. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances.

Substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt that could arise from the proposed development. Harm would arise from the permanent loss of openness, the limited local visual impact and conflict with three purposes of the Green Belt including the aim to prevent unrestricted sprawl, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and to assist urban regeneration. Consequently, this leads to a finely balanced conclusion.

The applicant has provided academic research to show a direct and clear link between response times and survivability. In order to provide adequate response times to the whole of the combined coverage area, MFRA require a more centrally-located fire station which can serve the area adequately. This would ensure that response times are within 10 minutes for practically the whole of the combined coverage area, whilst also allowing for a more even response time within the combined coverage area which would be closer to the Merseyside average of around 5 minutes.

The community benefits of improved emergency coverage and quicker response times to the whole of the combined coverage area can on balance be considered to constitute very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt in this particular case.

Further, the applicant has demonstrated that there is no adequate, available alternative site which would be located in a similarly central location, and this further supports the opinion that the applicant has demonstrated very special circumstances.

To lessen the visual impact that the proposal would have on the visual amenities of the Green Belt, amendments have been proposed to the building, with the building now being almost completely timber-clad and with a Sedum roof for the whole of the building. The footprint of the building and the developed site has also been reduced. In addition to the low-lying position of the site, the use of extensive landscaping and the location of the site on the edge of the built environment, the impact of the proposal on the visual amenities of the Green Belt would be localised and minimised as far as possible.

The potential impact of the proposed development on the amenities of nearby residential properties has been lessened by the amendments to reduce the size of the scheme, relocate the generator/sprinkler and parking area further from residential properties, and the incorporation of a close-boarded fence.

The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that the proposal would result in a 'low adverse impact', and this is accepted. Conditions relating to compliance with the recommendations in this Assessment, and other issues such as hours of training would ensure that the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

The proposal will generate only low levels of vehicle movements on the adjacent network and will therefore have minimal impact on existing traffic conditions in the area.

It is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect the setting and distinctive characteristics of the Saughall Massie Conservation Area, including important views into and out of it, and the relationship between its buildings, structures, trees and characteristic open spaces.

In the overall balance of all the factors arising in this particular case, it can be accepted that the reduction in response times to the West Kirby area from the proposed fire station, and the increased rates of survivability related to those quicker response times constitutes very special circumstances to outweigh the harm and justify inappropriate development in this Green Belt location. The lack of any available alternative sites in suitable locations would further support this conclusion. The proposal will

not have any highway management implications which would warrant refusal of the application on those grounds, whilst the proposal will also not harm the Saughall Massie Conservation Area. Amendments made to the scheme will lessen the impact of the scheme on the visual amenities of the Green Belt, when compared the scheme that was previously refused and includes measures to prevent unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

The development must be referred to the Secretary of State, as required by the Town & Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, who has powers to call the application in for determination by the Government if members are minded to grant planning permission.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to recommend the grant of Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

On balance, it can be accepted that the reduction in response times to the West Kirby area from the proposed fire station, and the increased rates of survivability related to those quicker response times constitutes very special circumstances to outweigh the harm and justify inappropriate development in this particular case. The lack of any available alternative sites in suitable locations would further support this conclusion. The proposal will not have any highway management implications which would warrant refusal of the application on those grounds, whilst the proposal will also not harm the Saughall Massie Conservation Area. Amendments made to the scheme will lessen the impact of the scheme on the visual amenities of the Green Belt, when compared the scheme that was previously refused, and includes measures to prevent unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.

Recommended Approve
Decision:

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 28th March 2017 and listed as follows: 2864-01 3001 Revision P7; 2864-01 3603 Revision P2; 2864-01 3801 Revision P2; 2864-01 9001 Revision P5; 28042-615 Revision P4; 28042-620 Revision P4; 28042-691 Revision P4; 28042-692 Revision P4; 28042-693 Revision P4; 3371 02 Revision A; 3371 04 Revision A; Q10568-01

and the amended plans received on 6th June 2017 and listed as follows:
2864-01 1402 Revision P3; 2864-01 2001 Revision P14; 2864-01 3002 Revision P4;
2864-01 3601 Revision P5; 2864-01 3602 Revision P8; 2864-01 3901 Revision P3; 2864-01 3903 Revision P2; 2864-01 3904 Revision P2; 3371 01 Revision B

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

3. Before any construction commences, samples of the facing and roofing materials to be used in the external construction of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved materials shall then be used in the construction of the development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

4. The hard and soft landscaping scheme hereby approved shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective shall be replaced with others of a species, size and number as originally approved in the first available planting season unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy GR5, GB2, LAN1 and LAN7 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

5. Surface water sustainable drainage works, comprising all components of the surface water drainage system, shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained within the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (March 2017/Revision 4/LRD28042/ Sutcliffe) and Foul and Surface Water Drainage Strategy (March 2017/Revision 2/LRD28042/ Sutcliffe) approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in conjunction with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

The surface water sustainable drainage scheme shall be fully constructed prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing/phasing arrangements embodied within the approved Surface Water Drainage, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory drainage facilities are provided to serve the site in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 103 and Policy CS35 in the Core Strategy Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft.

6. No development shall commence until full details of a scheme for a surface water sustainable drainage system to serve the site, and method of implementation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Lead Local Flood Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timetable. Thereafter the surface water sustainable drainage system shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory drainage facilities are provided to serve the site in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 103 and Policy CS35 in the Core Strategy Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft.

7. No development shall commence until details of an appropriate management and maintenance plan, including arrangements to secure funding for the lifetime of the development through an appropriate legally binding agreement, for the surface water sustainable drainage system, comprising all components of the surface water drainage system, have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, in conjunction with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

The plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of any of the buildings, or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Thereafter the surface water sustainable drainage system shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory management and maintenance of the approved surface water drainage facilities is provided for the site for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 103 and Policy CS35 in the Core Strategy Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft.

8. PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, a full scheme of works for the construction of the new vehicle accesses from the highway and amendments to the existing highway made necessary by this development, proposed highway drainage and the reinstatement of the footway / cycleway adjacent to the development, shall be submitted to

and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be completed in full prior to first use of the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policy TRT3, TR11 and TR13

9. No development shall take place until a site waste management plan confirming how construction waste will be recovered and re-used on the site or at any other site has been submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the proposed development would include the re-use of limited resources, and to ensure that the amount of waste for landfill is reduced in accordance with Policy WM8 of the Waste Local Plan.

10. Prior to the commencement of development arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse, and vehicular access thereto, shall be made for inclusion within the curtilage of the site, in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full before the development hereby approved is brought into use unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance and adequate standards of hygiene and refuse collection, having regard to Policy WM9 of the waste Local Plan

11. The training tower hereby approved shall only be extended to its full height whilst training is being carried out and should be demounted at all other times unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and having regard to Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policy GB2

12. NO DEVELOPMENT SHALL TAKE PLACE until details of secure covered cycle parking and/or storage facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved details and made available for use prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted and shall be retained for use at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that satisfactory facilities for the parking of cycles are provided and to encourage travel by means other than the private car, having regard to Policy TR12 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

13. The training yard will only be operational for periods between 09:30 and 20:30

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby residential properties

14. PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT details of the Proposed external plant shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The external plant shall be designed so that the rating level of noise is 5dB below the existing background noise level at 1m from the nearest dwelling house. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the nearby residents.

15. PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, full details of all external lighting, having regard to the Institute of Lighting Engineers Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution 2000 and Bats and Lighting in the UK, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any external lighting shall only be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained as such thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of ecological mitigation and impact on adjacent properties

16. PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, full details of the proposed sedum roof, together with a maintenance schedule, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved roof shall be constructed concurrently with the remainder of the development in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained as such thereafter

Reason: In the Interest of biodiversity and to ensure a satisfactory form of development.

17. PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT a written scheme of investigation for archaeological work shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To protect and record any archaeological deposits on the site, in compliance with Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework

18. Prior to the commencement of site clearance, demolition, storage of plant (non-tree related), materials, machinery, including site huts and WCs, Tree Protection Barriers shall be installed immediately following tree works and Barriers shall conform to the specification within an approved method statement. The Tree Protection Barriers and Ground Protection shall not be removed, breached or altered without prior written authorisation from the local planning authority or client arboriculturist, but shall remain in a functional condition throughout the entire development, until all development related machinery and materials have been removed from site. If such protection measures are damaged beyond effective functioning then works that may compromise the protection of trees shall cease until the protection can be repaired or replaced with a specification that shall provide a similar degree of protection.

The tree protection measures shall not be dismantled until all construction related machinery and materials have been removed from site and not without written authorisation from the local planning authority or client arboriculturist. Once authorisation has been given the protection measures can be removed by hand and transported off site. During which time, no machinery or vehicles shall enter the area previously protected. No excavations, storage of materials, soil stripping, the raising or lowering of levels or the laying of hard surfacing without prior approval of the arboricultural consultant and / or the local planning authority. Any issues regarding tree protection should be agreed and implemented prior to commencement of development.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality.

19. The following activities must not be carried out under any circumstances:
- a. No fires to be lit within 20 metres of existing trees and shrubs to be retained.
 - b. Storage of removed topsoil should be located outside of the Root Protection Areas of retained trees and away from those parts of the site allocated for soft landscaping.
 - c. No equipment, signage, fencing, tree protection barriers, materials, components, vehicles or structures shall be attached to or supported by a retained tree.
 - d. No builders debris or other materials to be stored within the Root Protection Areas.
 - e. No mixing of cement, associate additives, chemicals, fuels, tar and other oil based liquids and powders shall occur within 10 metres of any tree Root Protection Area. A dedicated washout area shall be a used and located not within 10 metres of any Root Protection
 - f. No alterations or variations to the approved works or tree protection schemes shall

be carried out without the prior written approval of the LPA.

- g. No excavations, trenches, stripping, cultivation with a rotavator or changes in surface level to occur within the Root Protection Area, unless authorised.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality.

20. All tree, shrub and hedge planting proposed shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and in accordance with BS 3936 (parts 1, 1992, Nursery Stock, Specification for trees and shrubs, and 4, 1984, Specification for forest trees); BS4043, 1989, Transplanting root-balled trees; and BS4428, 1989, Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces).

If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, [or becomes, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective] another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality.

21. No works or development shall take place until a scheme of supervision and monitoring for the arboricultural protection measures in accordance with para. 6.3 of British Standard BS5837: 2012 - Trees in Relation to design, demolition and construction - recommendations has been approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme of supervision shall be carried out as approved and will be administered by a qualified arboriculturist instructed by the applicant. This scheme will be appropriate to the scale and duration of the works and will include details of:

- a. Induction and personnel awareness of arboricultural matters;
- b. Identification of individual responsibilities and key personnel;
- c. Statement of delegated powers;
- d. Timing and methods of site visiting and record keeping, including updates;
- e. Procedures for dealing with variations and incidents.

This condition may only be fully discharged on completion of the development subject to satisfactory written evidence of contemporaneous supervision and monitoring of the tree protection during construction by a suitably qualified and pre-appointed tree specialist.

Reason: To ensure the appropriate retention and protection of suitable trees for applications which involve complex tree issues in accordance with policies GR7 of the adopted UDP.

Further Notes:

- 1. Details of a scheme for a surface water sustainable drainage system, comprising all components of the surface water drainage system, should:
 - i) Include information about the lifetime of the development and design of the sustainable drainage system, including storm periods and intensity (1 in 1, 1 in 30 & 1 in 100 year plus appropriate allowance for climate change), methods employed to delay and control surface water discharged from the site, and appropriate measures taken to prevent flooding and pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface

- ii) waters, including watercourses;
- ii) Demonstrate that the peak surface water runoff rate from the development to any highway drain, sewer or surface water body for the 1 in 1 year rainfall event and the 1 in 100 year rainfall event should never exceed the peak greenfield runoff rate for the same event;
- iii) Demonstrate that where reasonably practicable the runoff volume from the development to any highway drain, sewer or surface water body in the 1 in 100 year, 6 hour rainfall event should never exceed the greenfield runoff volume for the same event;
- iv) Demonstrate that, unless an area is designated to hold and/or convey water as part of the design, flooding does not occur on any part of the site for a 1 in 30 year rainfall event
- v) Include details of a comprehensive site investigation and test results to confirm infiltration rates;
- vi) Include details of how any flood water, including depths, will be safely managed in exceedance routes so as not to cause flooding to buildings within the site or elsewhere outside the site boundary;
- vii) Include a timetable for implementing the scheme.

2. Details required by Condition 7 shall include:

- i) The arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, or management and maintenance by a Management Company or other private body;
- ii) Arrangements concerning appropriate funding mechanisms for its on-going maintenance of all elements of the sustainable drainage system (including mechanical components) and will include elements such as:
 - a. on-going inspections relating to performance and asset condition assessments
 - b. operation costs for regular maintenance, remedial works and irregular maintenance caused by less sustainable limited life assets or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime;
- iii) Means of access for maintenance.

3. Consent under the Highways Act is required for the construction of a new or the amendment/removal of an existing vehicular access. Such works are undertaken at the developer's expense, including the relocation/replacement and/or removal of street furniture and vegetation as necessary. Submission of a S50 Highway Opening Notice is required prior to commencement of any works on the adopted highway. Please contact the Council's Highway Management team, area manager via www.wirral.gov.uk prior to the commencement of development for further information.

Consent is required for the formal closure of an existing highway. All costs will be recharged to the applicant, who should contact the Council's Highway Management team via www.wirral.gov.uk for further information.

Last Comments By: 03/05/2017
Expiry Date: 27/06/2017