

ITEM

Application Reference	DC/067478
Location:	Woodford Road Stockport SK7 1QE
PROPOSAL:	The proposed development consists of a fenced compound area with hardstanding, pumping station kiosk and vehicular access from the adjacent track
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	23.10.2017
Expiry Date:	20171218
Case Officer:	Jane Chase
Applicant:	United Utilities
Agent:	United Utilites

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Should Area Committee be minded to grant permission under the Delegation Agreement the application should be referred to the Planning & Highways Regulations Committee as the grant of permission would be contrary to the Local Development Framework.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of a water boosting station required to supply potable (drinking) water to the Redrow development at the former Woodford Aerodrome, The proposal consists of a fenced compound area with a new hedge planted around, a hardstanding, pumping station kiosk measuring 3m x 3.5m x 3m high. Vehicular access into the compound would be from the adjacent track known as Cinder Lane. The temporary diversion of the existing Public Right of Way is proposed during the construction works along Woodford Road, Jenny Lane and Hall Moss Lane.

The application is accompanied by a Planning Statement and Biodiversity Survey and Report.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located on the north side of Cinder Lane which connects Woodford Road and Hall Moss Lane. The site currently comprises part of a much larger field and is bounded to Cinder Lane by a hedgerow. Beyond the wider field are residential properties on Woodford Road, Jenny Lane and Hall Moss Lane.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications/appeals to be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Statutory Development Plan includes:-

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (SUDP) adopted 31st May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; &
- Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) adopted 17th March 2011.

N.B. Due weight should be given to relevant SUDP and CS policies according to their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') issued on 27th March 2012 (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given); and how the policies are expected to be applied is outlined within the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') launched on 6th March 2014.

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas
GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt

LDF Core Strategy/Development Management policies

CS8 Safeguarding and Improving the Environment
SIE-1 Quality Places
SIE-3 Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment
CS9 Transport and Development
T-1 Transport and Development

National Planning Policy Framework Conformity

The Planning Advisory Services' National Planning Policy Framework Compatibility Self-Assessment Checklist has been undertaken on Stockport's adopted Core Strategy. This document assesses the conformity of Stockport's adopted Core Strategy with the more recently published NPPF and takes account of saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan where applicable. No significant differences were identified.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 6 states: *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"*.

Paragraph 7 states: *“There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental”.*

Paragraph 11 states: *“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.*

Paragraph 13 states: *“The National Planning Policy Framework constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications”*

Paragraph 14 states: *“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking”.*

For decision-taking this means (unless material considerations indicate otherwise):

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i) *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - ii) *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted”.*

Paragraph 17 states: *“Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should:*

- *be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;*
- *not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
- *proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;*

- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);*
- *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;*
- *encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;*
- *promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;*
- *actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and*
- *take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs”.*

Paragraph 89 confirms that construction of buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate and lists 6 exceptions to this.

Paragraph 90 confirms that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. This includes engineering operations.

Paragraph 187 states “*Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve*

applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area”.

Paragraph 196 states *“The planning system is plan-led. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions”.*

Paragraph 197 states *“In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development”.*

Paragraph 215 states *“.....due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”.*

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DC053832 - Hybrid planning application for the redevelopment of the former Woodford Aerodrome – approved 21st January 2015

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The owner/occupiers of neighbouring properties have been notified by letter and the proposal has been advertised as a Departure from the Development Plan. To date no representations have been received.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Highway Engineer – I have no concerns from a highway perspective with this proposal. Delivery and construction is capable of management and the completed structure does not generate significant levels of traffic so the consequent impact on the right of way is negligible. Please consult the Council's Public Right of Way Officer as there may be legal issues with the use of the right of way to facilitate this structure or the transfer of rights to enable access to the facility.

Public Rights of Way – on the basis that the proposed diversion is temporary, I have no objections.

Nature Development Officer - Comments to be reported to Members

EHO (Contamination) – no objections subject to the imposition of an informative requiring the reporting of contamination if found to be present.

Environment Agency - no objection in principle to the proposed development.

ANALYSIS

The main issue for consideration is the impact of the development upon the openness of the Green Belt. In this respect it is noted that whilst the saved policies in the UDP Review do not allow for the nature of works proposed by this application, the NPPF which offers a more up to date position on planning policy in relation to the Green Belt confirms that engineering operations are appropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The proposed development which comprises the installation of a water boosting station is considered to be an engineering operation. The development proposes the removal of a short section of hedging to Cinder Lane, the laying of a hardstanding 14.6m x 14.2m, the erection of a small kiosk and the enclosure of the formed area with a 1.2m high post and rail gate to Cinder Lane and 1.2m high post and rail complete with a rabbit fence and hedgerow comprising of hawthorn, blackthorn and elder to the other boundaries.

These works will be viewed in the context of the existing hedgerow to Cinder Lane and given the limited footprint/height of the development proposed and enclosure with a post/rail fence and native hedgerow, it is not considered that they will appear obtrusive in the landscape, detract from the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

On this basis the development is considered compliant with para 90 of the NPPF and saved policy LCR1.1 of the UDP Review.

It is not considered that the development will give rise to highway safety issues once constructed and a condition can be imposed to secure the submission, approval and implementation of a construction management plan to ensure that no highway issues arise during construction works. The Public Rights of Way Officer confirms that the temporary diversion is acceptable and conditions can be imposed to secure this diversion for a limited period of time together with details of signage advertising the route of the diversion.

The Biodiversity Report submitted with the application confirms that:-

The hedgerow and adjacent trees have the high potential to support nesting birds and where removal/pruning is required, this should be undertaken outside of the main bird breeding season (which runs March-August inclusive). Where this is not possible, pre-clearance vegetation checks will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to clearance and the start of works;

One hedgerow will be affected under current proposals. The hedgerow bounds the public footpath/bridleway and is species-rich, native, overgrown and mature, providing high ecological value and a priority habitat as listed under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. The hedgerow will be largely retained with the exception of a 5m stretch to facilitate access into the new Woodford Booster Pumping Station compound. Removal of this stretch should be undertaken in accordance with the nesting bird constraints and great crested newt constraints. Replacement planting will be incorporated into the works;

Two ponds are located within 250m of the proposed working area. Pond 1 is seasonal and located approximately 100m north of the proposed works within the same semi-improved, sheep-grazed grassland field. Pond 2 is located 190m south west within a residential garden. Pond 1 has a Habitat Suitability Index score (for great crested newts) of 'below average' and Pond 2 has a 'good' score. Based on the ponds' distances away, and based on the scale of the proposed works, great crested newt surveys are not deemed necessary and a precautionary approach, taking reasonable avoidance measures, is considered to be more suitable. Therefore the works will be carried out under a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS).

A mature oak tree is located immediately to the south-west of the proposed access point, further down (to the south-west) H1. This tree was assessed to have a low bat roosting potential with no obvious bat roosting features seen from ground level. It is recommended that the tree is retained in situ with root protection areas established. The remainder of the habitats recorded during the survey will remain unaffected by the proposed works. The working areas have been identified to be of negligible value for reptiles and a nearby ditch (to the south of the access point) was unsuitable for otter and water vole. Some badger foraging/commuting evidence was recorded across the site in 2016, although no setts were recorded.

The report is being considered by the Council's Nature Development Officer and Members will be advised of the Council's position in this respect at the Area Committee. Subject to no adverse comment and to the imposition of conditions, the development can be concluded to be acceptable in this respect.

As the application is contrary to policy GBA1.2 of the UDP Review, the application must be treated as a departure to the development plan and can only be approved by the Planning & Highways Committee. Members of the Area Committee are therefore requested to simply note and agree the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION Grant subject to the imposition of conditions

**BRAMHALL AND CHEADLE HULME SOUTH AREA COMMITTEE 14TH
DECEMBER 2017**

The Planning Officer introduced the application. Members were advised that since writing the report the Council's Nature Development Officer had confirmed that subject to the imposition of conditions, there were no objections in relating to the impact of the development upon ecology. Members considered the report and plans and agreed the recommendation.